



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Director, Honors College

Leadership Profile

October 2023



*WittKieffer*

## Executive Summary

Auburn University seeks a student-centered, forward-looking leader to serve as the next director of the Honors College.

The next director of the Honors College will join as Auburn University is completing its current [strategic plan](#) and shaping [the next iteration of its strategic plan](#). This individual will be expected to work closely with those within the college and across the university to ensure distinctive student experiences, manage growth and enhance resources for the college, and advance inclusive excellence. The director should have

an understanding of national trends related to honors programs as well as the ability to leverage the unique aspects of Auburn in shaping future plans for the college.

The Honors College at Auburn University is designed to provide a select cohort of high-ability students a means to experience, explore, engage, and elevate their academic dreams. The Honors College has 13 staff and supports more than 2,000 students. Additional information about the Honors College can be found in its most recent [annual report](#).

Auburn University is one of the nation's premier public land-grant institutions, and in 2023, it was ranked #93 nationally by *U.S. News and World Report*. Auburn, an R1 research university, maintains high levels of research activity and high standards for teaching excellence, offering bachelor's, master's, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees in the arts and sciences, agriculture, engineering, and the professions. Its 2023-24 enrollment of 33,015 students includes 26,874 undergraduates and 6,141 graduate and professional students. The university is nationally recognized for its commitment to academic excellence, positive work environment, student engagement, and beautiful campus.

For information regarding how to apply, submit nominations, or inquire about the role, please see the section "Procedure for Candidacy" at the end of this document.



## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next director of the Honors College will be expected to advance the following key priorities, among others:

- **Envision the future.**

The new director of the Honors College will join as Auburn University is completing its current [strategic plan](#) (2019-24) and shaping [the next iteration of its strategic plan](#). The director will join at an ideal time to work with those within the college and partners across the university to shape a strategy for the Honors College that advances the goals of Auburn and builds upon the university's reputation as a leading public land-grant institution that provides students an exceptional education and experiences. This individual should have an understanding of national trends related to honors programs as well as the ability to leverage the unique aspects of Auburn in shaping future plans for the college.

- **Ensure distinctive student experiences.**

Auburn's Honors students benefit from a number of experiences and resources, including small class sizes, Honors seminars and research seminars, the new [LEAD Honors Peer Mentorship Program](#), study and travel experiences, supportive advisers, and participation in the [Week of Service](#), among others. More than 50% of students participate in undergraduate research during their time as Honors students. These experiences lead to significant student learning, engagement, and satisfaction, as well as prestigious recognitions, including Truman and Goldwater Scholarships, Phi Kappa Phi Fellowships, and NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, among others. The next director will be expected to build upon the college's current foundation and work with staff, faculty, and university leadership to explore new opportunities that will expand and enhance the student experience and student outcomes.

- **Manage growth and enhance resources.**

The Honors College has continually grown in recent years and currently has over 2,000 students. In fall 2023, 625 freshmen were admitted from approximately 1,200 applications (Auburn's entering Freshman class is approximately 5935 students). The college's growth – both in terms of students and programs – has at times stretched college staff and advisors in support of students. The next director will provide innovative direction in the development, coordination, administration, and evaluation of honors programs and curricular offerings, and provide leadership on planning and budgetary decisions in a student-centered environment in which student experience remains exceptional. This individual should be skilled at effectively utilizing existing resources, while also identifying new resources that will support the goals of the college. The college has had success in fundraising in recent years, and the next director will be expected to engage with donors, alumni, and other internal and external constituents to advance the goals of the Honors College.

- **Advance inclusive excellence.**

As Auburn continues to take [intentional steps towards inclusive excellence](#), opportunities exist for the Honors College to enhance its diversity as well. Minority students represent 13.5% of the college's total population, which is slightly less than the overall student population at Auburn but much less diverse than [the demographics of the state of Alabama](#). The director will play a key role in examining

processes and procedures, enhancing recruitment efforts, acquiring resources (including scholarships), and ensuring a climate that supports the university's efforts to advance diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the director should examine the representation of students from Auburn's colleges and work to attract students from disciplines that are underrepresented.

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The successful candidate must possess a terminal degree and academic credentials that merit appointment with tenure at the rank of professor in one of Auburn's academic departments. Additionally, this individual should have:

- Strong administrative and leadership skills, including the ability to support staff, build strong teams, and effectively manage resources.
- The ability to work across all scholarly activities to advance interdisciplinary experiences that enhance student learning.
- A record of advancing teaching excellence and high-impact practices that support the growth and success of high-ability students.
- Familiarity with national and international fellowship programs for undergraduate students and the ability to cultivate an environment that ensures competitiveness for these programs.
- A history of a collegial and collaborative approach to working with colleges and units and the ability to work with senior leadership, fellow deans, advisory councils, and others to shape a vision for the college that advances the goals of the university and ensures a distinctive experience for Honors students.
- Demonstrated experience in fostering inclusive and excellent academic environments and an unequivocal commitment to increasing diversity and strengthening inclusion among underrepresented or marginalized members of the university community.
- The ability and willingness to engage donors, alumni, and other external partners in the work of the Honors College, including skills that support the university's fundraising efforts and advance the work of the college.
- In addition, the candidate selected for this position must meet eligibility requirements to work in the United States when the appointment is scheduled to begin and continue working legally for the proposed term of employment.

## About the Honors College

The Honors College at Auburn University is designed to provide a select cohort of high-ability students a means to experience, explore, engage, and elevate their academic dreams. The Honors College offers smaller class sizes, priority registration, undergraduate research and internship opportunities, study and travel experiences, access to graduate-level courses, peer tutoring sessions, a more flexible curriculum, and designated Honors housing and study areas. These amenities and advantages are typically limited to small colleges but can be found within the Honors College at Auburn University. Honors students also have access to the myriad opportunities available at a large and diverse research university. Honors students engage in an academically challenging set of courses and programs meant to provide a deeper and more complex understanding of the class material. Through rigorous Honors-level courses, graduate courses, specialized advising, and regular exposure to diverse social and co-curricular programs, Honors College students forge closer connections to faculty and with fellow students, providing a sense of community and identity within the larger university context.

The Honors College has 13 staff and supports more than 2,000 students. Additional information about the Honors College can be found in its most recent [annual report](#).

College	Percentage of Honors Enrolled Students	Percentage of Auburn Undergraduate Students
<a href="#">Agriculture</a>	3%	4%
<a href="#">Architecture, Design and Construction</a>	3%	6%
<a href="#">Business</a>	13%	22%
<a href="#">Education</a>	3%	6%
<a href="#">Engineering</a>	31%	19%
<a href="#">Forestry, Wildlife and Environmental Sciences</a>	1%	2%
<a href="#">Human Sciences</a>	4%	6%
<a href="#">Liberal Arts</a>	15%	18%
<a href="#">Nursing</a>	3%	4%
<a href="#">Sciences and Mathematics</a>	23%	9%

## About Auburn University

### Overview

Auburn University is one of the nation's premier public land-grant institutions, and in 2023, it was ranked #93 nationally by *U.S. News and World Report*. Auburn, an R1 research university, maintains high levels of research activity and high standards for teaching excellence, offering bachelor's, master's, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees in the arts and sciences, agriculture, engineering, and the professions. Its 2023-24 enrollment of 33,015 students includes 26,874 undergraduates and 6,141 graduate and professional students. Organized into 12 academic colleges, Auburn's 1,435 faculty members offer more than 150 educational programs. The university is nationally recognized for its commitment to academic excellence, positive work environment, student engagement, and beautiful campus. Auburn is currently working through a university [strategic plan](#) that runs through 2024.



### Vision and Mission Statement

Auburn University will emerge as one of the nation's preeminent comprehensive land-grant universities in the 21st century. Central to all its functions will be the university's historic commitment of service to all Alabamians as the state becomes a part of a global society with all of its challenges and opportunities.

### Leadership

#### President Roberts

Dr. Christopher B. Roberts officially became Auburn University's 21st president on May 16, 2022, beginning a new era of continued excellence for the university he's called home for nearly three decades. He began his career at Auburn in 1994 as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering and became department chair in 2003. He was named dean of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering in July 2012.

Dr. Roberts earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Missouri in 1990 and master's and doctoral degrees in chemical engineering from the University of Notre Dame in 1992 and 1994, respectively.

## Provost Nathan

Dr. Vini Nathan began serving as Auburn University's provost and senior vice president for academic affairs in May 2023 after serving as interim provost since March 2022. Prior to the provost's office, Dr. Nathan was dean and McWhorter Chair of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction (CADC) from 2011-2022. She is also a tenured professor of Architecture and Interior Architecture and is a Senior Fellow of the Design Futures Council (DFC). Dr. Nathan previously served as the dean of the School of Architecture at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and has held faculty positions at New York Institute of Technology and Michigan State University.

Dr. Nathan earned her master's degree from Virginia Tech in 1990 and her doctoral degree in architecture from the University of Michigan in 1994.



## Auburn, Alabama

Auburn residents enjoy a thriving community, recognized as one of the "best small towns in America," with a moderate climate and easy access to major cities, beaches, and recreational mountain facilities. Situated along the rapidly developing I-85 corridor between Atlanta, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama, the combined Auburn-Opelika, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia, statistical areas have a population of over 500,000, with excellent public-school systems, outstanding recreation areas and an exceptional regional medical center.

## Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile and a CV or resume. WittKieffer is assisting Auburn University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by January 3, 2024. Application materials should be submitted using [WittKieffer's candidate portal](#). Nominations and inquiries can be directed to Ryan Crawford and Natalie Song at [Auburn-Honors@wittkieffer.com](mailto:Auburn-Honors@wittkieffer.com).

*Auburn University is an EEO/Vet/Disability Employer and committed to building an inclusive and diverse community.*