



**Executive Director of Museum
Development**
Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Colby College (Waterville, Maine) and the Colby College Museum of Art, seeks an experienced, strategic, and inspirational Executive Director of Museum Development. The Executive Director will lead the planning and strategic execution of fundraising efforts that support current programming, as well as near-term plans for a transformational capital project and significantly expanded programming.

Colby's Dare Northward campaign is one of the single largest campaigns at a liberal arts college in history. After surpassing the original goal of \$750M in November 2023, the Board of Trustees voted to extend the campaign to \$1B to support the people, programs, and facilities that will position the College as one of the preeminent liberal arts colleges in the world. With an anonymous nine-figure gift to the sciences, Dare Northward has surpassed \$1B and looks to complete its investments in financial aid, the sciences, and a Colby Museum expansion project.

The Colby College Museum of Art, including the Lunder Institute of American Art, continues to be one of the College's greatest assets. As one of the best college art museums in the country, the Colby College Museum of Art is renowned in the fields of American art and contemporary art. It remains at the forefront of its peers through an incredible collection, ground-breaking exhibitions, unique partnerships, and a deep commitment to the communities it serves. The Colby arts ecosystem also includes the Paul J. Schupf Art Center, Greene Block & Studios, and the Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts. Located in downtown Waterville, the Schupf Art Center includes the Colby Museum's Joan Dignam Schmaltz Gallery of Art, and the Greene Block + Studios is the home to the Lunder Institute of American Art.

Following the adoption of a new strategic plan, the Carolyn Muzzy Director of the Museum, Jacqueline Terrassa, and the Museum Board of Governors are actively planning future growth opportunities for both capital projects and enhanced programming. Achieving this vision will require a comprehensive fundraising initiative.

The Executive Director will be responsible for all aspects of fundraising and donor engagement for the museum. The new leader will be an experienced, senior advancement professional with a compelling combination of fundraising, campaign oversight, and program/personnel leadership experience and achievement. The ideal leader will demonstrate a personal track record of considerable success cultivating major and principal gifts and developing fundraising plans and driving success through individual and collaborative efforts.

Colby seeks an executive who has outstanding organizational and communication skills and demonstrated experience leading, managing, and continuously assessing and identifying opportunities to leverage visibility to secure philanthropic support. The selected candidate will have a record of success leading a comprehensive advancement program of similar scope and complexity. At least 10 years of envisioning, shaping, and implementing a successful philanthropic program, preferably with experience or familiarity with art and art communities, including demonstrated responsibility for initiating and closing major and principal gifts and leading a high-level fundraising initiative. The Executive Director will be a champion of the arts and understand and embody institutional values of honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

The Role of the Executive Director of Museum Development

The advancement program at Colby College has enjoyed remarkable success. While there are several indicators of this success, perhaps none is quite as striking as the success of the recent fulfillment of the College's challenging comprehensive campaign goal. In 2017, Colby launched Dare Northward, a daring campaign with an ambitious goal of raising \$750M to transform Colby and Waterville. Colby is still actively in the Dare Northward campaign and recently surpassed the revised goal of \$1B and ending through December 31, 2027.

At a defining moment in the College's history, the Executive Director will develop a strategy, harness enthusiasm, and drive activity to secure philanthropic support that will enable the Colby College Museum of Art to realize its vision of becoming the preeminent global center for American art and liberal arts engagement. This will be done in partnership with the Museum Director, curatorial, education, and other museum staff, the Museum Board of Governors, and Colby Advancement staff. The Executive Director will also be responsible for overseeing and directing staff responsible for crucial ongoing annual fundraising that supports current operations, including the Museum's annual fund, MBOG Fund, Foundation support, and sponsorship of the Museum Summer Luncheon from individuals, corporate entities, and galleries. Reporting to the Chief Advancement Officer, Lisa Donham, and working in a close, strategic partnership with the Carolyn Muzzy Director of the Museum, Jacqueline Terrassa, the Executive Director will bridge the gap between artistic ambition and institutional sustainability.

In addition to putting systems in place to ensure continued annual support for existing programs and to successfully complete the Dare Northward campaign, the Executive Director will prepare for and lead a future transformational, comprehensive fundraising initiative, designing the roadmap for the Museum's physical and programmatic expansion. This mandate includes architecting high-level philanthropic strategy for individual cultivation, complex solicitations, and innovative stewardship that aligns with the Museum's mission. By acting as the primary liaison and strategic coach for philanthropy and donor relations to the museum's director, leadership team, and Museum Board of Governors, the Executive Director will leverage high-powered networks to grow the community of Museum donors and maximize institutional impact while articulating the Museum's role as a vital laboratory for interdisciplinary learning.

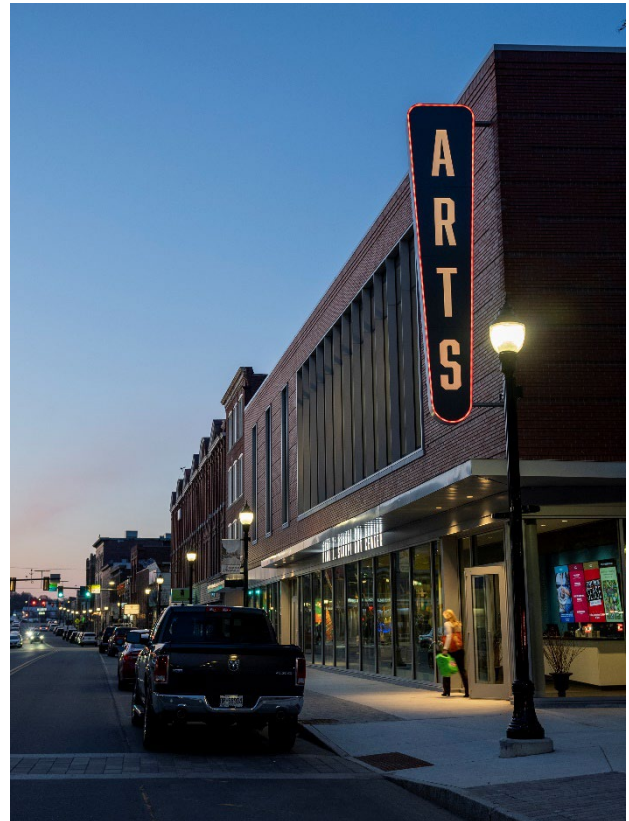
The incumbent will manage their own portfolio of individuals and foundations, in addition to collaborating with colleagues in Colby Advancement to ensure a robust cadence of activity that leverages the entire Colby network and expands the network through strategic partnerships with the MBOG and other Colby connections. The Executive Director will also supervise a Leadership Annual Giving Officer, who manages a portfolio and is responsible for coordinating annual giving appeals and securing sponsorships, as well as a portion of an administrative assistant.

The successful candidate will be a sophisticated leader who has led previous large-scale campaigns and is capable of navigating the intersection of the fine arts world and higher education. They will possess a deep connection and keen interest in art, and the intellectual depth to engage donors around the power of art in an academic environment. They will be committed to immersing themselves in the Colby community, deeply engaged in the life of the CCMA, and will maintain a regular presence on campus and at the Museum. By fostering a culture of philanthropy and a network that extends beyond the Colby community, the Executive Director will secure the resources necessary to ensure the Museum remains a cornerstone of the Colby experience and a leader in the local, national, and international arts community for generations to come.

Essential Functions

To perform successfully in this position, an individual must be able to perform essential duties satisfactorily as well as possess education/experience, employ the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed in a representative fashion. Colby College actively supports the Americans with Disabilities Act and will consider reasonable accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position. This listing of essential duties is not all-inclusive, but representative; other duties may be assigned.

- Serve as the primary leader for a transformational fundraising initiative to support the expansion of the museum facility and programming. Develop the strategic plan for how to execute the fundraising initiative, conduct a feasibility assessment, mobilize Museum Board Governors, coordinate communications, support and guide the Museum Director and the museum leadership team's work with donors.
- Partner with Advancement staff on strategies, cultivation, and solicitations. Drive the pipeline to ensure steady progress toward fundraising goals.
- Support all museum fundraising and gift acquisitions, including from individuals, corporations, and foundations.
- Manage a targeted prospect portfolio of the museum's top supporters capable of making principal, planned, and major gifts, and work with other prospect managers and the Carolyn Muzzy Director of the Colby College Museum of Art on cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies for the museum's most highly rated prospects.
- Develop and execute annual and multi-year fundraising plans to ensure a robust and sustainable pipeline of support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government entities, as appropriate. This work must be done while planning takes place for capital expansion and growth of programming.
- Provide strategic leadership, effective management, and inspiration to the Museum Board of Governors for fundraising activities; this will include close coordination with the Museum Resources Committee.
- Supervise the Associate Director of Museum Development, who is dedicated to increasing entry-level philanthropy and engagement for the Colby Museum, including annual fund support, sponsorships, and major giving opportunities.
- Oversee revenue-generating and engagement programs, including regional donor-focused events and the sponsorship program around the Museum Summer Luncheon.
- Co-lead exhibition and project fundraising with partner institutions and museum staff through oversight of prospect lists and strategies, and as a solicitor.
- Work with the museum's director and curators in the cultivation, documentation, and stewardship of gifts of art.
- Support and leverage the hallmark 500 guest Museum Summer Luncheon in collaboration with Museum staff and Museum Board of Governors.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Building on the momentum and success of *Dare Northward*, the Executive Director can take full advantage of the great work this team is already doing. Specifically, the Executive Director will be expected to assume a leadership role in a number of areas to realize this potential:

Cultivate a more robust pipeline of major gift donors.

The Colby Museum of Art has cultivated relationships with several prospects who have transformational giving potential, and some of this potential has been realized in the past few years. In addition to maintaining their own portfolio of major and principal gift donors, the new Executive Director will develop a plan for efficiently connecting with these potential donors, effectively working with advancement staff, while cultivating these prospects toward ultimate solicitation. The goal is straightforward: to engage new and impactful philanthropic partners who understand the contributions and potential of the Colby Museum of Art and wish to help it achieve even greater success. Carolyn Muzzy Director of the Museum, Jacqueline Terrassa, and the Colby College Museum of Art Board of Governors, welcome a partner who clearly communicates and will work as a true leader to them in maximizing philanthropic support for the museum.

Work with the Advancement team to complete the current capital campaign and advance the next ascent.

Colby's current campaign effort, *Dare Northward*, has been the largest in its history. The Executive Director will be expected to build upon and expand donor relationships to position the museum for philanthropy with the next generation of donors for sustainable future growth. The Executive Director will join at an ideal time to help complete the current campaign and to guide the museum's vision and strategic planning, working with the advancement team to design and implement the next set of philanthropic priorities.

Partner with a collaborative Advancement team.

The Colby Office of Advancement is led by Lisa Donham, a highly experienced and accomplished leader. Reporting to the Chief Advancement Officer, the Executive Director will build strong relationships within the Advancement team and will serve as a senior member of that team. Working collaboratively with Advancement colleagues, the Executive Director will help leverage existing donor relationships and Colby's strong brand to support the Museum.

By forging close partnerships across the Advancement team and fully utilizing Colby's visibility and reach, the next Executive Director will be well positioned to accelerate the Museum's advancement efforts and philanthropic goals.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Executive Director of Museum Development must thrive in Colby's distinct culture – collegial, collaborative, student-centric, intellectually driven, and typified by intense alumni loyalty. Colby is an environment in which the key question, the conversation, and the intelligent exchange of ideas are the pathways to institutional change. Thus, a leader who is supremely collaborative, collegial, transparent, and oriented toward teamwork will have the greatest opportunity for success in this culture.

Leading the Colby College Museum of Art fundraising program in this way will therefore also require a person with significant integrity, judgment, creativity, decisiveness, the ability to assess risk, the willingness to accept reasonable risk, courage of convictions, diplomacy, the ability and willingness to speak truth to power, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a sense of humor. A bachelor's degree is required, and an advanced degree is preferred.

Of particular importance for the new Executive Director is the ability to advocate passionately and effectively for the arts. While this attribute is not restricted to those with a liberal arts background, direct experience within cultural arts institutions will be a distinct advantage.

In addition, the Position Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or the equivalent in education and experience.
- Minimum of 10 years of experience envisioning, shaping, and implementing a successful philanthropic program, preferably with experience or familiarity with art and art communities, including demonstrated responsibility for initiating and closing major and principal gifts and leading a high-level fundraising initiative.
- Successful track record of achieving aspirational fundraising and engagement goals individually and as part of a development program.
- Experience managing staff, appropriately delegating responsibilities, and ensuring accountability.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically and long-term while successfully attending to more immediate goals and tasks; strong critical thinking, project management, and problem-solving skills.
- Excellent oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills, including strong relationship skills and ability to work with people across a wide range of levels of power and influence. Must be comfortable initiating and advancing conversations with individuals about significant philanthropic commitments, art, and higher education.
- Excellent organizational skills, ability to consistently meet deadlines and follow through on assignments, and attention to detail.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office software, Google applications, and with donor database systems.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail. Proven ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Unflappable in the face of multiple challenges, highly motivated, disciplined work ethic, a competitive nature, a creative approach, and a proven ability to lead.



About the Colby College Museum of Art

Since its founding in 1959, the Colby College Museum of Art has been dedicated to its mission of access to, meaningful engagement with, and joyful connection through art.

Free and open to all, with locations on the Colby College campus and in downtown Waterville, the museum advances Colby College's educational and research mission, enriches the region's cultural and community life, and contributes to the great field of American art. With an outstanding permanent collection, community-engagement programs, and path-setting exhibitions, publications, and convenings, Colby Museum has earned a reputation as both a leading teaching museum and premier destination for American art.

The museum and its Lunder Institute for American Art bring extraordinary art experiences to central Maine and generate new scholarship with national and international impact. As forums for experimentation, research, and dialogue, the

museum and its Lunder Institute convene different perspectives to explore—and expand—our understanding of today's most vital questions. Thoughtful transformations have turned the Colby College Museum of Art into a multifaceted and community-engaged institution functioning across various sites of action, including the campus, downtown Waterville, the wider regional area, and the fields of American art and museum practice. Multiple factors uniquely position the Colby Museum as an influential forum that brings people together around art to explore and embrace the American experience in all its complexity and, in doing so, heighten the value of art in our lives.

For more information about Colby College Museum of Art visit: [Home | Colby College Museum of Art](#)



About Colby College

Overview

Founded in 1813, Colby College is the 12th-oldest liberal arts college in the nation and one of America's most selective colleges. A residential, four-year institution serving only undergraduates, Colby offers an [academic program](#) rooted in the deep exploration of ideas and enriched by partnerships with world-class faculty scholars. Colby reimagines the liberal arts experience — providing access to a global experience, research, and internships for all students regardless of their background. This integrated educational experience prepares Colby students to be critical and imaginative thinkers; intellectually curious, proficient communicators; and responsible and active global citizens. With [58 majors](#), [35 minors](#), and independent major options, Colby students have the flexibility to set their own course of study. Situated in central Maine, Colby's 714-acre campus is regarded as one of the most beautiful in the nation.

Colby's history is extraordinary, but there has never been a more dynamic and exciting time for the College. Colby is in a period of fast-paced progress — defined by ambitious institutional priorities to reimagine student opportunity and postgraduate success. The College's reputation and resources have expanded dramatically under President Greene's leadership over the last eleven years.

The College employs more than 225 teaching faculty members. Colby's 2022–23 fiscal year operating budget was more than \$300M, and the market value of Colby's endowment is valued at approximately \$1.2B. The College is committed to building and nurturing a work environment in which our faculty and staff can do their best work and thrive. We believe the experience of our faculty and staff has a significant impact on the experience of our students. Building a sense of community across all members of Colby is a strategic priority.

Colby's 714-acre campus, known as Mayflower Hill, is regarded as one of the most beautiful in the nation. The [campus](#) has 64 buildings, including 30 residence halls, the new \$200M Harold Alfond Athletics and Recreation Center, the more-than-\$100M Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts, 50 acres of fields, three dining halls, three libraries, a student union, and one of the nation's premier institutions of American art, the Colby College Museum of Art. Most of Mayflower Hill, including all of the 128-acre Perkins Arboretum and Bird Sanctuary, is a State Wildlife Management Area. Colby is also the steward of Allen and Benner Islands, its Island Campus in the Gulf of Maine.

Colby's [commitment to environmental sustainability](#) is evident in almost every department and program across campus. The College embraces policies and practices that respect the environment and promote sustainable-living principles. In April 2013, Colby became one of the first colleges in the country to achieve carbon neutrality. The College uses a mix of renewable energy sources and purchases carbon offsets to achieve net carbon neutrality, while continuing to innovate new ways to reduce its overall footprint. During fall 2017, a 5,300-panel solar installation on Colby's campus began producing an expected 15% of its total electricity needs.

Campaign: Dare Northward

Over the past seven years, outreach efforts to communicate the value and impact of a Colby education have resulted in more than doubling the number of students seeking admission to Colby and setting several institutional records for funds raised. Major initiatives made possible through Colby's campaign, [Dare Northward](#), are enriching the student experience and positioning Colby's home city, Waterville, as a destination for the arts and culture.



With the success of the campaign, the College is known for a distinctive set of multidisciplinary academic offerings and as an even more cohesive and accessible institutional culture for students from all backgrounds; the foremost arts and athletic and recreation facilities in the educational sector; a welcoming, thriving, and dynamic surrounding community; increased global connections and resulting perspectives; the richest set of universal student experiences to enhance the Colby academic program; and the capacity to support the postgraduate success of every one of its students.

Thus far, more than 30,000 alumni and friends have made donations in support of initiatives such as the downtown Waterville revitalization, academic partnerships, financial aid, and global experiences and internships. Furthermore, Colby has increased annual giving from approximately \$6M to over \$11M. At the same time, the College's cash and assets have grown from \$20M annually to approximately \$65M a year. With over one hundred \$1M+ donors to the *Dare Northward* campaign and roughly 20 donors at over \$5M, Colby exceeded the new goal of \$1B+ in 2025 with two years remaining in the campaign.

Student Life

Admission to Colby is highly selective; the College enrolled 628 students for the class of 2028. Selections were made from the record-breaking 19,188 students who applied, representing the largest and most competitive applicant pool in the history of the College. This translates to an acceptance rate of 7%. The admitted class hails from 40 states and 50 countries, and nearly 445 high schools are represented. The median ACT score is 33, and the median SAT score is 1510.

Colby's commitment to diversity and access is reflected in its aggressive and generous need-based financial aid program, which meets 100% of demonstrated financial need without student loans. Families with a total household income of \$75,000 or less with typical assets expect no parent or guardian contribution. Through the Fair Shot Fund, families making up to \$100,000 expect a parent or guardian contribution of no more than \$10,000, families earning up to \$150,000 expect a parent or guardian contribution of \$15,000 or less, and families making up to \$200,000 expect a parent or guardian contribution of \$20,000 or less. Financial aid is received by 46% of enrolled students, and the average financial aid package for enrolling students is nearly \$67,000. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently recognized Colby as having the fourth-most generous financial aid program to the neediest students of any U.S. college or university.

Colby's strong liberal arts curriculum provides excellent preparation for an unlimited range of career choices and graduate studies while giving students a better understanding of the world and their places in it. It is



defined by deep intellectual inquiry, substantial research opportunities, and world-class teaching. The academic curriculum at Colby is enhanced by real-world problem-solving across all disciplines. Colby's inter-session term in January, known as [Jan Plan](#), is a time for focused study, internships, and/or research. Students and faculty benefit from the [Davis Institute for Artificial Intelligence](#), the first cross-disciplinary institute for AI at a liberal arts college as well as four distinct labs (the [Linde Packman Lab for Biosciences Innovation](#), the [Buck Lab for Environment and Climate](#), the [Lyons Arts Lab](#), and the [Halloran Lab for Entrepreneurship](#)), which provide resources and support for new experiences and academic research. They also gain from the extraordinary collection and resources of the [Colby Museum of Art](#) and the [Lunder Institute for American Art](#).

During the academic year and summer, students benefit from access to world-class research institutions through partnerships and collaborations with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Smithsonian Archives, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, the Jackson Laboratory, Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory, and many others. Colby students are supported in pursuing these opportunities by [DavisConnects](#), an innovative program that provides funding and advising to all students and guarantees access to research, internships, and global experiences.



Waterville, Maine

Located in central Maine, the city of Waterville sits on the banks of the Kennebec River and provides access to a range of artistic, cultural, recreational, and athletic experiences in the local area and beyond. Waterville is approximately 60 minutes from Portland, just over an hour from skiing at Sugarloaf Mountain, two hours from Acadia National Park, and three hours from Boston.

At home in Waterville, Colby is partnering with the city, making investments to revitalize Waterville's historic downtown, improving the streetscape, integrating the arts into downtown, attracting more visitors and residents, and increasing economic activity. Opened in fall 2018 and located in downtown Waterville, the [Bill and Joan Alford Main Street Commons](#) houses 200 Colby students, faculty, and staff who are deeply engaged in the city and also serves a variety of business, civic, and community organizations. A \$6.5M arts collaborative, [Greene & Block Studios](#), opened in fall 2021 and presents vibrant arts programming for all ages, and provides space for interdisciplinary artistic collaboration. In addition to new facilities and programs, the [Paul J. Schupf Art Center](#), which opened in late 2022, provides a distinctive hub for visual arts, performing arts, arts education, and film to children and adults downtown. Colby's downtown revitalization efforts have become a national model for post-industrial city renewal and garnered the attention of national press.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as two separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Colby College in this search, which will remain open until an appointment is made. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Mercedes Chacón Vance and Jevon Walton

ColbyCollegeEDMD@wittkieffer.com

Colby is a private, coeducational liberal arts college that admits students and makes employment decisions on the basis of the individual's qualifications to contribute to Colby's educational objectives and institutional needs. Colby College does not discriminate in its educational programs or employment on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, national origin, age, marital status, genetic information, or military or veteran's status. Colby is an equal opportunity employer and operates in accordance with federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination. Colby complies with Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in an institution's education programs and activities. Questions regarding

Title IX may be referred to Colby's Title IX coordinator or to the federal Office of Civil Rights. We encourage inquiries from candidates who will contribute to the diversity of our College, including its cultural and ethnic diversity.

