



ISAACSON, MILLER  
www.imsearch.com



**Provost and Dean of the Faculty  
New England Conservatory of Music  
Boston, MA**

*New England Conservatory educates and trains musicians of all ages from around the world. NEC is dedicated to inculcating the highest standards of excellence and nurturing individual artistic sensibility and creative growth. Understanding that music is one of the transcendent expressions of human civilization, NEC aspires to ensure it a central place in contemporary society.*

## THE SEARCH

The New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) seeks a Provost and Dean of the Faculty (Provost) to join the Conservatory's senior leadership team in the summer of 2021. The provost should be an innovative and collaborative leader who will partner with colleagues across the Conservatory to drive programmatic development and transformation; who will embrace the opportunities and realities facing today's students and alumni, exploring new pedagogical approaches while maintaining the highest standards of curricular and artistic excellence; who will advocate for and support the faculty across all of the Conservatory's schools; who will appreciate and prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of their work; and who will collaborate with fellow senior leaders and the board to guide the Conservatory's growth into the future.

Founded in 1867, NEC is the oldest independent school of music in the U.S. and a cultural icon of national and international standing. It is recognized as a leader among music schools, educating and training musicians of all ages from around the world. In delivering a superlative educational experience to over 2475 students across its College, Preparatory School, and School of Continuing Education, NEC draws on the deep reservoir of talent and experience of its 458 distinguished faculty (full- and part-time), a group of internationally esteemed artist-teachers and scholars who work across the Conservatory's three schools. Notably, NEC pushes the boundaries of making and teaching music through college-level musical training in classical, jazz, and contemporary improvisation. It offers dynamic interdisciplinary programs such as *entrepreneurial musicianship* and *community performances and partnerships* that empower students to create their own musical opportunities. At all levels, an NEC education is at once rigorous and nurturing. Staff, faculty, and students alike attest to the power of the distinctively inclusive, encouraging, and supportive community one discovers upon arriving on campus.

Reporting to NEC's president, the provost will oversee the academic and artistic agenda for the College, the Preparatory School, and the School of Continuing Education, along with admissions and financial aid, student life, the registrar's office, and library services. The provost will help to bring organizational clarity and transparency to these areas, clearly articulating and reinforcing the roles and responsibilities of key staff. In addition, the successful

candidate will cultivate musicianship at the highest level; will foster innovative and integrative teaching and learning, including tech-empowered work; will bring a deep appreciation for the importance of including diverse voices and perspectives in curriculum and programming; and will support and encourage collaboration.

The provost will join NEC at an exciting and momentum-building time in the Conservatory's history. The caliber of the faculty and students remains exceptional, and the musical training is best in class. The College's co-curricular offerings ensure that NEC graduates are well prepared to navigate the dynamics of today's professional world with confidence and success. The Prep and Continuing Education programs – key connection points to aspiring musicians and music lovers in the community – highlight the far-reaching impact of NEC across the greater Boston area and beyond. Looking ahead, the provost will be expected to capitalize on and enhance this impressive foundation, support pedagogical and artistic excellence across campus, and encourage continued programmatic innovation and development.

Even during the current school year, as institutions of higher learning grapple with the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic, NEC remains an active and vibrant community. This fall, the Conservatory has powerfully demonstrated that music-making is not only possible, but vital, in the most challenging of times. While the pandemic has brought changes to the way NEC teaches, learns, makes music, and collaborates, the Conservatory remains a cohesive, close-knit community committed to supporting each other, to celebrating great artistry, and to sharing in the power of music.

## **ABOUT THE INSTITUTION**

### **The College**

Today, NEC enrolls over 750 students across a variety of majors, including brass, chamber music, collaborative piano, composition, conducting, contemporary improvisation, jazz studies, music history and musicology, music theory, percussion, piano, strings, voice and opera, and woodwinds. Degree offerings include the Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts. NEC also offers the Undergraduate Diploma, Graduate Diploma, and the prestigious and highly selective Artist Diploma.

NEC's faculty is best in class across a wide array of musical disciplines. The College is home to 237 artists who are pre-eminent in their fields, 31 of whom are members of the renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra, and numerous others who are distinguished composers, soloists, performers, and scholars in their own right. NEC also boasts eleven current or former faculty and/or alumni who are MacArthur Fellows. Students are drawn to NEC, first and foremost, because of the caliber of NEC's faculty members and for the opportunity to study with artists who are masters of their craft. The faculty's commitment to excellence and to student achievement is the foundational through-line for NEC's esteemed legacy.

In addition to its core musical training and studio work, NEC places significant emphasis on liberal arts, music history and music theory, which it believes contribute importantly to the development of well-rounded musicians and arts leaders. Full-time NEC undergraduates have cross-registration opportunities at Tufts University and schools in the ProArts Consortium: Emerson College, MassArt, Berklee, and Boston Architectural College. Approximately 44 NEC undergraduates are enrolled in five-year joint degree programs with either Harvard College or Tufts University.

As part of its core mission to produce well-rounded musicians, active life-long learners, and responsible citizens, the College has long supported and encouraged cross-departmental collaborations, as reflected in the recent

Collaboration Challenge, which resulted in new interdisciplinary approaches to coursework this past fall. Unsurprisingly, chamber music and small ensembles are at the heart of NEC's approach to musical artistry: most NEC students participate in chamber music/small ensembles nearly every semester, learning the art of collaboration and collective musical decision-making alongside incredible faculty coaches.

NEC has long been a pioneer in musical education beyond the classical canon, as evidenced by the leading Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation programs. The formal jazz program was founded in 1969 under the leadership of President Gunther Schuller, making NEC the first major classical conservatory to offer a degree program in jazz studies. The Contemporary Improvisation program, founded by Schuller shortly thereafter, supports musicians who seek to move beyond traditional genre boundaries with an emphasis on ear training, technique, conceptual ideas, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a wide range of improvisational traditions. It is widely regarded as one of the most innovative programs of its kind in the world. NEC maintains the highest standard of music-making, with deliberately permeable lines between genres, and supports a confluence of different types of musical study and performance.

As a meaningful complement to these interdisciplinary musical programs, NEC is also home to leading-edge work in Entrepreneurial Musicianship (EM). The EM program offers a range of courses, seminars, and visiting artist programs that help emerging artists articulate the impact they want to make as musicians and build the professional skills to do so. Faculty, staff, and alumni advisors work closely with students to help equip them with a more robust professional toolkit, tackling everything from writing resumes and grant proposals to brand-building and financial planning. EM's grant program provides support for students seeking to work on innovative and impactful projects to further their independent professional growth.

### **The Preparatory School**

The New England Conservatory Preparatory School (NEC Prep) offers open-enrollment educational opportunities for pre-college students across New England. It currently serves 1400 students in the region, including those enrolled in NEC through a partnership with Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Prep musicians attend individual lessons and classes, and participate in chamber music and 20-22 large ensembles, including orchestras, choruses, and wind ensembles. It is one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation.

In 1962, NEC Prep established one of the finest youth orchestras in the world: the highly selective Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (YPO), which tours internationally once every two years and has performed in some of the finest concert halls in the world. Prep is also home to the highly celebrated and selective NEC Youth Chorale, Youth Camerata, Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Ensemble.

### **The School of Continuing Education**

The School of Continuing Education (SCE) opens the doors of NEC to the broader New England community of adult music lovers and learners, offering an expansive array of musical training from private instrument lessons to full certificate programs in a range of subjects. Workshops, masterclasses, ensembles, and summer institutes are all taught by the area's most highly qualified musicians. Over 300 students are enrolled in SCE each year. Both the Preparatory School and the School of Continuing Education help to deepen NEC's ties to and reach within the wider Boston community and play an important role in supporting the Conservatory's overall mission.

## **The Library**

The Blumenthal Family Library opened in Fall 2017 and is comprised of the Spaulding and Firestone collections. It is home to one of the major music collections in the United States, including over 150,000 volumes of scores, sound and video recordings and books about music, as well as subscriptions to all of the major music journals and electronic music databases. In addition, the library archives and special collections boast a rich treasure of manuscripts, 1st editions, personal papers and recorded performances of many of the great composers and musicians who have taught and performed at NEC over the past 150 years. NEC has been collecting library materials to support the performance and study needs of its students and faculty since its very founding in 1867.

## **Facilities and Finances**

Located in Boston on the Avenue of the Arts in the Fenway Cultural District, the NEC campus consists of four buildings that stretch along St. Botolph Street and Huntington Avenue. The campus is bounded by Symphony Hall, the Northeastern University campus, the YMCA, and commercial and residential buildings.

NEC's premier performance venue, the historic and acoustically superb Jordan Hall, is one of the world's most admired concert halls. It provides an intimate and versatile setting for a wide variety of performances and recording sessions featuring NEC students and faculty, with seating for over 1,000. On weekends, the hall is used by some of Boston's top professional arts organizations, including the Celebrity Series, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, and the Boston Early Music Festival. In addition to Jordan Hall, NEC has seven other performance spaces on campus, including three acoustically superb, state-of-the-art performance spaces in the newly constructed Student Life and Performance Center (SLPC). This variety of performance venues enables NEC to host more than 1,000 performances each year.

To sustain the enterprise and its \$51.9 million annual operating costs, NEC – like many other conservatories – relies heavily on tuition. The Conservatory draws roughly 72% of its revenue from tuition and room-and-board (\$34.7M), 12% from the endowment (\$5.7M), and 13% from major gifts and annual fund support (\$6.3M). As of June 2020, the Conservatory's endowment totaled \$119.2M, and the Conservatory typically raises approximately \$10M through annual fundraising efforts. In the most recent academic year, NEC provided \$22M in aid to students, of which \$16M was direct scholarship support.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PROVOST AND DEAN OF THE FACULTY**

The provost and dean of the faculty serves as the Conservatory's chief academic and artistic officer. This role reports to the president and serves on the president's senior leadership team alongside the chief strategy officer and vice president for advancement, engagement, and partnerships; the vice president for finance and administration; the vice president for communications; and the chief information officer. The provost's direct reports include the dean of community engagement and professional studies, the dean and director of the Preparatory School, the registrar and dean of institutional research, the dean of students, the dean of admissions and financial aid, the dean for academic affairs and administration, the dean of artistic administration, and the director of library services (currently vacant). The provost will oversee a \$30M budget and a total staff of 70.

The key responsibilities for the Conservatory's next provost will span the following areas:

## Academic and Artistic Leadership

As the institution's chief academic and artistic officer, the provost must oversee the critical work of advancing the institution's commitment to artistic excellence and evolving the current educational model. Across the College, Prep, and SCE, innovations in curriculum are already underway. In the wake of the pandemic, which has forced sudden, and near ubiquitous remote teaching and learning, the community has come together to adapt and opportunities to reconsider and reshape teaching practice have emerged. At the start of 2020, NEC had launched the [Collaboration Challenge](#), which invited NEC community members to design proposals for new innovative pedagogies, musical technologies, performance configurations, or partnerships that might catalyze collaboration and learning to reach new depths. NEC received almost 200 submissions from across the institution – an exciting signal about the imagination, creativity, and energy of the NEC community.

The provost will be expected to champion and encourage this culture of innovation. Further, they will serve as a thought leader and academic visionary, spearheading efforts to infuse fresh and forward-looking approaches into NEC's musical education. There are opportunities for both programmatic review and enhancement, in addition to the creation of entirely new academic programs and co-curricular offerings. NEC has a well-earned reputation for best-in-class instruction; for thinking creatively across disciplinary lines; and for thoughtfully building out courses and services to help graduates prepare for the challenges awaiting them in today's professional marketplace. The provost will partner with all of NEC's stakeholders, foregrounding faculty and students across all three schools, to craft a transformative strategy for the Conservatory's curriculum and pedagogical models. They will provide action-oriented leadership, driving plans from idea to implementation and generating buy-in along the way. This work is core to the ongoing strategic planning exercises across NEC, and in its early stages has already generated interest and momentum within the campus community.

To support NEC's goals for programmatic innovation, the provost should bring an understanding of how digital tools can enhance academic and musical instruction and learning. The provost should be familiar with current trends in pedagogy and should have a sense for best practices and emerging tools in the field. As NEC continues to think more critically about its approaches to digital and technologically-supported learning and music-making, the provost should be a central and well-informed voice in these conversations.

## Culture, Cultural Equity, and Belonging

NEC maintains the highest standard of music-making and music education while holding fast to a set of shared cultural values and principles that define the institution. Faculty, staff, students, and trustees describe a cooperative community of learning built on open-mindedness, high standards, mutual respect, an innovative spirit, artistic integrity, individual expression, life-long learning, responsible citizenship, and a fierce belief in the life-changing power of music. NEC's leadership and faculty alike are dedicated to creating a supportive and learning environment that maximizes the individual attention each student receives and enables self-exploration. This is not a culture of cutthroat competition; it is one of unusually deep and mutual admiration and collegiality.

At the same time, like many American institutions today, NEC is renewing the conversation around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on campus. The Conservatory has [begun a process](#) of commitment to self-examination and systematic advancement of core values of respect, equity, and justice while looking to dismantle systemic racism, unconscious bias, and white supremacy both inside NEC's walls and beyond.

The next provost will be a key leader in this effort. They will work to safeguard and strengthen the close-knit and relational culture that is core to NEC's identity and distinguishes it among its peers; and they will work to preserve NEC's high artistic standards while diversifying curricular offerings and expanding definitions of excellence. Among

the provost's team of direct reports and across the faculty, the successful candidate will set and uphold an internal organizational culture of trust, transparency, teamwork, rigor, and accountability.

### **Operational Oversight and Management: the College, Prep, and SCE**

The provost will partner with the president, other members of the senior leadership team, and the board to provide strategy and direction for broad institutional initiatives. The complexity of the operations required to effectively deliver an excellent educational experience across the College, Preparatory School, and School of Continuing Education is significant and growing. Over time, the programs delivered have outgrown the existing systems, infrastructure, and staffing configurations. The next provost will assess the office's overall structure and operations for effectiveness and efficiency and consider adjustments for improvement. Part of this work will include a process to clarify and sharpen the distinctions of staff roles and responsibilities, as well as supporting clearer lines of communication across—and collaboration between—units and departments. This person must also provide sound fiscal oversight.

NEC Prep and the School of Continuing Education are two of NEC's best linkages to the broader Boston community and beyond. The provost will partner with the leaders of these units to expand their reach, developing new programs and partnerships to spark increased interest in and excitement about NEC's offerings. This work should include a commitment to connecting with more diverse audiences and potential students and to exploring opportunities to use technology and digital platforms to grow NEC's reach. Strong collaboration and team-building skills will be critical to these efforts, drawing on faculty and staff expertise along with student input to build on the Conservatory's existing programs and services.

### **Faculty & Staff: Community Building, Engagement, and Professional Development**

Critical to all of the above work is the support of an exemplary faculty and staff, upon which NEC's artistic and academic excellence depends. Robust and ongoing faculty engagement, recruitment, and retention must remain a top priority for the provost. Indeed, faculty and staff partners will be essential to the provost's work, and this person must bring exceptional skill in mentoring, relationship-building, and team-building. The provost should have experience conceptualizing and growing new and evolving programs, and doing so in concert with others; inviting diverse voices into the decision-making stages of the work, and then drawing on this input to drive development and implementation forward. Part of this work will likely include offering professional development and training to faculty and staff and providing opportunities for people to pilot and explore new ideas and approaches.

### **QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE**

New England Conservatory seeks a creative, forward-thinking, and adaptable leader; a bold thought partner and pedagogical expert who will energetically lead the institution's academic and artistic enterprise. In addition to a passion for the performing arts, familiarity with the field of higher education, and appropriate administrative and management experience, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, characteristics, and abilities:

- Profound understanding of excellence in the arts with a personal commitment to supporting the role of the arts in society and the education and training of the next generation of musicians and arts leaders;

- Deep respect for the community and culture of NEC; an appreciation for the spirit of partnership among faculty, students, and staff, and the ability to harness this collaborative spirit to drive toward new opportunities and goals;
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to addressing pipeline and representation issues in the performing arts; evidence of one's connection to this work and to leading these important conversations, particularly in relation to curricular and programmatic initiatives;
- Administrative, operational, and interpersonal smarts; a record of success managing people and teams, partnering effectively with faculty, and building support for and leading groups through change initiatives;
- Experience with teaching, developing and/or redesigning curricula, and a demonstrated dedication to fostering students' growth—in an arts organization or otherwise—will be an asset;
- An understanding of admissions in higher education and/or conservatory admissions—including an attention to the delicate student-to-faculty ratio balance required for the conservatory pedagogical model of one-on-one, tailored instruction;
- A track record of innovation and strategic risk-taking, creative problem-solving, and impeccable judgement; experience building programs – moving from idea to action – and in generating buy-in for these efforts;
- Emotional intelligence, including warmth, approachability, and empathy.

**TO APPLY**

Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent electronically to:

Katie Rockman, Partner  
Chloe Kanas, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

[www.imsearch.com/7558](http://www.imsearch.com/7558)

*New England Conservatory of Music does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, genetic make-up, or veteran status in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, or other Conservatory-sponsored activities.*