Announcing the search for Purchase’s next Dean of the School of the Arts

Purchase College, State University of New York, invites nominations and expressions of interest for the position of Dean, School of the Arts, to succeed Dean Ravi Rajan who has been named as the new president of California Institute of the Arts. The Dean will be the chief executive of the School and will report directly to the Provost.

This is an exciting opportunity for an arts leader who wants to make a profound impact on a campus widely recognized as a premier public institution. Purchase College, incorporating Schools of the Arts, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Continuing Education, offers a unique combination of innovative liberal arts programs and distinguished professional training in the visual and performing arts. Its prestigious faculty is composed of scholars, industry professionals, and artists dedicated to student learning, liberal education, interdisciplinary studies, and professional training. The position is available July 2018.

Key Opportunities

The College’s Strategic Plan states: “Purchase is at the crossroads—of the liberal arts and conservatory education; of affluent and aspiring communities...These intersections present challenges as well as opportunities.” This statement was true in 2010 and remains true today. Embracing these challenges as transformational is key to understanding the opportunities for the new Dean.

Paramount to the School of the Arts, and critical to its efforts to address transformational opportunities, is the role of the Dean in cultivating and securing the resources needed to promote Purchase’s public position and to assert itself in the 21st century. Access and affordability are central challenges we face, but they are also fundamental values that continue to shape our decision-making. President Schwarz has lead in this effort by freezing all increases in fees, advocating that tuition rates should not be raised, and raising money that directly funds scholarships for students. These efforts, and others like it that create access to quality education in the School of the Arts, will play a central role in the Dean’s focus.

The new Dean will not be alone in this effort. Dr. Suzanne Kessler, Dean, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, is also heavily invested in securing resources that will sustain Purchase College. Working with a new advancement team, led by Catherine Brod, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, assisted by the skilled staff of the Purchase College Foundation and the newly formed centralized Advancement Services area, the Dean will execute direct development efforts that extend the college’s philanthropic outreach. Rather than a lone actor, the new Dean will join a team that is realizing success in the cultivation and stewardship of new donors.
Key Challenges

The School of the Arts occupies a position of prominence within the College, a prominence unique among public institutions whose programs are not devoted solely to the arts. The Dean of SOA will help to increase the reputation and notoriety of the institution and to expand the resources and capacity of the College; other responsibilities include overseeing academic programs and services, curriculum development and assessment, faculty development and support, and supervision of the School budget.

As we move forward, and while there’s much we do not know, there are values that will persist. We will continue to be a learning-centered institution committed to sustaining an environment that encourages creativity, diversity, individuality, and collegiality. The new Dean will play a key role in our efforts to advance students’ talents and their civic, ethical, personal, and physical well-being by providing opportunities for engagement inside and outside the classroom. Crucial to the Dean’s agenda will be supporting the intensive relationships that exist between our directors, faculty, staff, and students, which ignite their work in the conservatories and classrooms, and forge the very means to sustain the high quality practices of our students and faculty alike.

The Dean will join a School of the Arts committed to the mission of the college, expressed within the modern context of the best arts education available grounded in the principles of inclusivity, diversity, and innovation. Working as a member of the Provost’s team, the new Dean, in partnership with leaders in Academic Affairs, will have the opportunity to intensify cross-college collaborations as new graduate programs in Entrepreneurship and Media Arts mature; as a new programming mission takes hold in the Performing Arts Center; as the Neuberger Museum of Art continues to curate resonant and important exhibits; and, most importantly, as faculty continue to define the role of the arts in the ongoing global dialogues on important issues we face. In these efforts, transformational change is underway and the opportunity to lead, champion, and excite support for it, stands at the forefront of the Dean’s call to lead.

The Dean will address additional key opportunities and challenges as outlined below.

- Partner with Institutional Advancement in an effort to build resources and secure funding in support of curricular activity, scholarships, faculty research, and for the enhancement and creation of new facilities
- Serve as the public voice of the school and externally advocate and articulate why education matters, shaping public discourse surrounding art and value with local, state, national, and international communities
- Link the work of School of the Arts faculty and students to other disciplines, communities, and interests within and outside of the school and promotes initiatives on and off campus to advance scholarship and education
- Actively engage with and support the activities of students in the School of the Arts
- Take an active role in leading the School of the Arts’ commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity in educational programs and with student, faculty, and staff recruitment
- Lead the day to day activities of the School, and manage the budget and facilities
- Extend current communications and organizational practices of the Dean’s Office to support and mentor faculty and staff
- Forge connections within the arts and, in partnership with the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, between the arts and the liberal arts
About Purchase College
Purchase College, a cultural center with a celebrated architectural design, is often referred to as the “gem” of the State University of New York system. In addition to excellent professional studio and conservatory programs in the arts, as well as excellent programs in the humanities, natural, and social sciences, the College is home to The Performing Arts Center and the Neuberger Museum of Art. These facilities are among the finest on any campus in the nation and play a key role in the education of students and the cultural life of the community. The College enrolls approximately 4200 students, with more than 2600 in residence, and is located on 500 acres in Westchester County, a half hour north of New York City.

College Mission, Vision, and Values
Mission: Purchase College, SUNY, offers a unique education that combines programs in the liberal arts with conservatory programs in the arts in ways that emphasize inquiry, mastery of skills, and creativity. Our graduates work as professionals in their chosen fields and actively contribute to the arts, humanities, sciences, and society.

Vision: Purchase College is recognized nationally and internationally as a leading public institution for the pairing of conservatory programs in the arts with liberal arts programs. We will continue to create opportunities for transformative learning and training in a community where disciplines connect, intersect, and enhance one another.

Values: Purchase College celebrates individuality, diversity, and creativity in a community of educational excellence.

School of the Arts Students and Curriculum
The School of the Arts comprises the School of Art+Design, the conservatories of Dance, Music and Theatre, and the Arts Management and Entrepreneurship programs.

The School’s faculty challenge students to master the creative, interpretive, and critical processes they will need in their work as artists and working professionals. The thriving intellectual culture in the School of the Arts is enhanced by its unique synergistic relationship with the broader College community. The School’s vibrant performance and studio-based degree programs challenge students to be reflective and articulate, productive and entrepreneurial, and creative and innovative practitioners of their respective art forms.

School of the Arts Faculty
Given the College’s proximity to New York City, Purchase is in the unique position to recruit its faculty from among the top artists and working professionals in the world. The students benefit from the world class faculty. The faculty benefit from our world class facilities and the top students we attract.

Qualifications and Characteristics
Candidates should have earned a terminal degree in their fields and have demonstrated significant administrative experience. Candidates must also have a strong commitment to the arts and liberal arts; and a demonstrated capacity to work collegially with and be an effective spokesperson for the artistic and academic community.

Purchase seeks candidates who possess many of the following:

• A scholarly, artistic or professional accomplishment commensurate with tenured faculty in the arts at Purchase College
• A deep understanding for, and commitment to, the value of an arts education
• An understanding and appreciation of excellence in the many diverse disciplines represented in the School of the Arts
• Experience with, and aptitude for, fundraising
• The ability to be a visible spokesperson for the arts and a persuasive advocate for the College
• The ability to delegate, prioritize and make timely, transparent and collaborative decisions, followed by determined implementation
• The capacity to identify and think strategically about opportunities for creative partnerships across schools, divisions, and disciplines
• A talent for bringing diverse groups together and building momentum toward a common goal
• An informed grasp of key issues affecting public higher education; faculty recruitment, retention, and promotion; and scholarly productivity
• A demonstrated support for traditional and emerging technologies and the development of innovative curricula
• Success in the alignment of resources with strategic goals
• Experience managing budgets and finances in a large, complex organization; working knowledge of budgeting and expenditure using fund accounting
• Experience with the creation of new initiatives to generate earned revenue in the context of higher education
• A personal, demonstrable commitment to the education, persistence, and timely graduation of students
• A record of recruiting and supporting faculty and staff to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion
• A managerial style that is personable and collaborative
• Personal qualities that inspire trust, and uncompromising standards of honesty and integrity

Purchase College Governance

All 64 campuses of SUNY function under the overall authority and responsibility of the University Board of Trustees, subject to the general guidelines of the Board of Regents of the State of New York. The Board of Trustees delegates administration of the University to the Chancellor of the State University of New York and her staff, known as the System Administration, which implements University-wide academic, fiscal, personnel, and facilities policies. The System Administration serves as liaison between the campuses and such State offices as the Division of the Budget, the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations, the Department of Civil Service, and the Office of the State Comptroller.

The Purchase College Senate and its standing committees function as the representative decision-making bodies of the college, embracing processes of shared governance, whereby faculty, staff, administrative, and student representatives formally and openly communicate, share responsibility, and take cooperative action on matters of importance to the college.