



---

# Position Specification

Director, Davis Museum and Cultural Center  
Wellesley College

---

# Position Specification

**Director, Davis Museum and Cultural Center  
Wellesley College  
[www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu/](http://www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu/)**

Page 1 of 3

---

## Our Client

Wellesley College, founded in 1870, is one of America's foremost liberal arts colleges. Its mission is to provide an exceptional education for women who will make a difference in the world. The college's 500-acre campus, located 16 miles west of downtown Boston, is home to 2,300 undergraduate students representing all 50 states and 70 countries worldwide. Wellesley is committed to academic excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the cultivation of global responsibility. The college's distinguished faculty offers courses in a wide variety of disciplines and encompasses a diversity of perspectives. Exchange programs with MIT, the Olin College of Engineering, Babson College, and Brandeis University broaden the college's cultural and institutional reach.

The history of collecting and exhibiting the visual arts at Wellesley began in 1889 with the opening of the Farnsworth Art Building. The College became known in the early twentieth century for the "Wellesley Method" of teaching art history, which encompassed direct encounters with original works of art and hands-on studio explorations alongside traditional lectures. In 1958, the Jewett Arts Center, designed by Paul Rudolph, created new homes for the departments of Art and Music (and for a period, Theatre); the College museum's galleries were placed at the center of this arts complex, offering students extraordinary new opportunities for contact with original works of art. The dedication in 1993 of the Davis Museum and Cultural Center, a 60,000-square-foot building designed by the Spanish architect Rafael Moneo, marked the beginning of an ambitious new chapter in the College's history. Today, the DMCC contains some 10,000 objects from antiquity to the present, from Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. The recent thematic reinstatement offers diverse ways for students of all levels and backgrounds to engage with works of art.

Fostering a vibrant and robust intellectual community at the College is a key priority of Wellesley's president, H. Kim Bottomly, and the DMCC is viewed as a vital force in that effort. It is committed to making its collections an inspiration for teaching and research in all fields, and a dynamic extension of the classroom, advancing creative teaching and active learning by collaborating with faculty, students, and staff across the disciplines and encouraging teaching within the galleries. The DMCC seeks to create a challenging environment that inspires new ideas and critical thinking and promotes visual literacy.

The museum houses eight galleries for exhibition of the permanent collection, four galleries for special exhibitions (including a gallery for new media), a print study room, a seminar room, permanent collection storage areas, and the Collins Cinema, a 168-seat lecture theater fully equipped for presenting film and electronic media. The building also includes collection care areas, staff workspaces, and a number of offices for full-time and part-time employees. For 2010, the DMCC operating budget is over \$2 million.

## The Role

The Director will provide strategic leadership, curatorial oversight, effective management, and academic inspiration to the Davis Museum and Cultural Center. Reporting to the Dean of the College, College's chief academic officer, the Director will oversee the museum's curatorial, educational, financial, and administrative activities and the staff working in those areas, as well as collections care and management. He or she will also oversee the museum's fundraising and public relations efforts, in close coordination with designated staff members of these College departments. He or she will develop comprehensive knowledge of potential donors of works of art and will solicit gifts to fulfill the Davis's collecting objectives. The Director will build productive relationships with Wellesley's faculty, administration, students, and alumnae, as well as the broader arts community in Boston and further a field, representing the Museum's interests to the public and to professional audiences.

In the daily operations of the DMCC the Director will ensure that the institution's mission is clearly understood and that its strategic objectives are fully articulated and effectively pursued. He or she will be an inspiring, energetic and collaborative leader who will fully embrace the museum's contribution to the educational mission of Wellesley College through its exhibitions, programming, research, and engagement with curricular initiatives. It is expected that the Director will teach an annual museum studies course within the Art Department, in which he/she will hold an appointment as Senior Lecturer, and will be welcomed as a colleague and a contributor.

The Director's priorities will be to:

- Thoroughly understand all facets of the DMCC and its role on the campus and in the broader community.
- Forge strong, collaborative relationships with staff, faculty, administration, students, alumnae, and trustees.
- Work with the appropriate constituencies to develop a strategic plan for the Museum that builds upon the strengths of the collection, the Davis's support base, and the expertise of faculty and staff.
- Ensure that the Museum's operating policies and procedures are clearly articulated and implemented.
- Manage, motivate, and lead a multi-talented staff, maximizing its diversity of experience and perspectives.
- Oversee the completion of the assessment of the collection and the analysis of potential for its future growth. Based on these, develop a clear acquisition plan and a set of collecting priorities that contribute to the overall mission of the Museum and support the College's academic goals. Cultivate potential donors of works of art and solicit gifts that fulfill collecting objectives, in addition to pursuing art purchases.
- Oversee and contribute to the creation of vibrant, varied exhibitions and programs that draw upon the collective talents and expertise of the College and enhance local and national awareness of the relevance of art to multiple areas of intellectual inquiry.
- Encourage use of the Museum in teaching across the curriculum. In particular, make the Museum a welcoming venue on the Wellesley campus for the study of the visual arts and of the role of the creative mind.
- Foster students' use of the DMCC, both in and outside of class. Provide opportunities for pre-professional exposure to museum careers for interested students.

- Working with the College President, Dean, Trustees, and representative alumnae, determine and implement the most effective structure for the Museum's governance and oversight.
- Prepare the Museum for accreditation by the American Association of Museums.
- With the College's development staff, strengthen financial support for the Museum; work closely with the Friends of Art as well as individual donors to enhance revenue, build interest, and secure the Museum's future. Provide effective stewardship of supporters, and pursue grant opportunities.

### **Candidate Profile**

The successful candidate must exemplify dedication to learning, intellectual curiosity and leadership, and a passion for the arts. She or he must exhibit a thorough knowledge of art history, a commitment to liberal arts education, and the ability to lead, collaborate with, and motivate a diverse community. She or he will have a record of respected intellectual and curatorial achievement, with demonstrable success cultivating relationships with, and building bridges among, diverse constituencies; the candidate should be an articulate, dynamic, and effective communicator in person, in print, and through exhibitions.

The candidate should possess experience in developing and implementing strategic initiatives within an organization and a track record of successful grant applications and fundraising. Expertise in recognition and stewardship of donors to the museum is required. Management experience in a museum or arts-related organization, including exhibition organization, publications, public relations, education, and budgeting is necessary.

Since this position includes an appointment in the Art Department, experience in undergraduate teaching and in developing offerings that engage students in museum operations is desirable. An advanced degree in Art History or a related discipline is required. Strong interpersonal skills are critical; demonstrated achievement in teambuilding through attracting, motivating, and managing a talented staff is desirable. It is also crucial that the director has access to national and international networks of artists and arts professionals who can be called upon on the Museum's behalf.

0902-061NA

Contact