



**An Invitation to Apply  
President, Saint Joseph's College of Maine  
Standish, Maine**

*Saint Joseph's College of Maine, sponsored by the [Sisters of Mercy](#) and animated by the vision of Catherine McAuley, is a Catholic college in the liberal arts tradition distinguished by its welcoming community. It fosters an ongoing dialogue between faith and reason so as to prepare learners to live meaningful lives that improve the world around them.*

## **THE SEARCH**

Saint Joseph's College of Maine (Saint Joseph's, SJC, or the College) seeks a dynamic, innovative, strategic, and pragmatic leader to serve as the institution's 15th president. Building on a rich history and in the Catholic Mercy tradition, the president will lead Saint Joseph's to actualize the best of modern learning communities and leadership in service to others.

Founded in 1912, SJC is the only Catholic college in the state of Maine and one of 17 Mercy colleges across the country. As an institution founded by the Sisters of Mercy, SJC strives to develop not only the mind but the whole person. Drawing upon their long-standing concern for justice and service to the poor, the College has a fundamental commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a commitment to the environment is reinforced by its inspiring location nestled on the shores of Sebago Lake.

SJC is home to approximately 700 campus-enrolled students and 2,500 online students across nine major areas of study, including Business, Education, Health Administration, Leadership for Sustainable Development, Nursing, Science, Social Sciences and Humanities, Sports and Exercise Science, and Theology. SJC offers both undergraduate and graduate degree programs. In line with a service ethos, more than 80% of SJC students engage in experiential learning, and roughly one-half of undergraduates are D-III student-athletes. Approximately 40 percent of undergraduates are first-generation students, and the College is committed to helping all students succeed.

The Saint Joseph's Community seeks a leader who will be engaged, inspiring, and strategic; present with faculty, students, staff, alumni, and the Maine community; and armed with the experience and vision to strengthen the College's position overall. The next president will bring intellectual vitality, a collegial and

transparent leadership style, and the strategic, financial, management, and community engagement skills to lead a complex institution. They will be a catalyst for the institution, able to recognize and actualize opportunities for impact. The president must embrace and live the Mercy principles that are the foundation of the institution; foster inclusivity and a sense of belonging; and possess a deep commitment to Catholic higher education.

The board of trustees has established a committee of representatives from across the College to conduct this search in consultation with Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ABOUT SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE OF MAINE**

### **History**

Saint Joseph's College of Maine is a private, Catholic liberal arts college that welcomes women and men of all faiths and ages. Located on a 430-acre campus on the shores of Sebago Lake, Saint Joseph's stands on what was once a large estate owned by the Verrill family of Portland. In addition to its traditional campus, Saint Joseph's operates an extensive online program.

Saint Joseph's was founded in 1912 and chartered by the Maine Legislature in 1915. It is Maine's only Catholic college and is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Founded by Catherine McAuley in Dublin, Ireland in 1831, the Sisters of Mercy currently sponsor 17 institutions of higher education in the United States. Saint Joseph's has a 23-member Board of Trustees, at least two of whom must be Sisters of Mercy.

From 1915 to 1956, Saint Joseph's was located on the grounds of the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in the Deering district of Portland. In 1949, its name was changed from Saint Joseph's to The College of Our Lady of Mercy, but with the relocation to Standish in 1956, the original name was resumed. In 1970, Saint Joseph's became a coeducational institution. Saint Joseph's began offering distance education programs in 1976.

Today, Saint Joseph's provides certificates and undergraduate and advanced degrees for working adults through an online learning program that operates in collaboration with SJC's Sebago Lake campus. More than 100 years after its foundation, and with its motto of *Fortitudo et Spes* ("Courage and Hope"), Saint Joseph's is determined to meet today's and tomorrow's opportunities for service to the local, state, national, and global communities.

### **The Sisters of Mercy and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition**

Inspired by the Gospel and by the example of their founder Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy envision a just world for people who are poor, sick, and uneducated. They commit to serving, advocating

for, and praying with those in need around the world. Today, that commitment is focused on five “critical concerns” (Earth, Immigration, Nonviolence, Anti-Racism, and Women) that they address through attention to personal and institutional choices, advocacy with legislators and other government leaders, and corporate engagement. These concerns are rooted in the principles of Catholic social teaching.

This relationship results in an emphasis on the integration of knowledge from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Saint Joseph’s identifies itself as a “liberal arts college that nurtures intellectual, spiritual, and social growth in students of all ages and all faiths” where “we seek to combine faith with reason in the pursuit of academic excellence.”

### **Current Context and Strategic Direction**

Saint Joseph’s recognizes itself in a critical moment in its history. Enrollment trends suffered with the pandemic and have just started to recover with the most recent class. Online enrollment remains a priority but must now compete in a saturated marketplace post pandemic. While metrics around the current incoming class look strong, there is recognition that coming demographic changes will pose a challenge going forward. The market forces and student expectations that drive change in higher education are accelerating coming out of the pandemic. Operational decisions in recent years have been shaped by the need for austerity. Yet SJC has a base of strength from which it is building. This includes a \$6.4 million investment in its new Center for Nursing Innovation, a state-of-the-art nursing simulation lab, which is opening this Spring. Additionally, SJC took advantage of several key leadership vacancies during the pandemic to bring on board outstanding new heads of Academics, Enrollment, and Finance to complement the strong leaders already in place in other disciplines. As the only Catholic institution in Maine, a veteran player in the world of distance education, with core programmatic strength in areas of societal need and economic growth, such as Nursing, Healthcare Administration, Business, Sports Science, Education and Natural Sciences, and strong functional leaders, the College has significant assets. The next president has a tremendous opportunity to shape the institution into the best of innovative and accessible Catholic education.

### **Academics**

Saint Joseph’s prides itself on providing purposeful structure for learning of all kinds. Such dedication drives the College to think intentionally about conceptualization, design, and delivery of its programs for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and life-long learners, framed by the Catholic identity and Mercy traditions. Across the College's academic offerings is a commitment to preparing students for leadership in service to others, for contributions to sustainability and resources stewardship, and contributions to the integral ecology of communities.

SJC offers 40 on-campus undergraduate programs, 50 undergraduate and graduate online programs, and multiple certifications across nine academic platforms: Business, Education, Health Administration, Leadership for Sustainable Development, Nursing, Science, Social Science and Humanities, Sport and

Exercise Science, and Theology. The College plans to launch a Masters in Health administration in the fall of 2023. SJC prides itself on personalized attention and a close community. At the undergraduate level, the student-to-faculty ratio stands at 11:1, with an average class size of 14, and students and staff alike exhibit a sincere commitment to service, with over 4,050 hours of service contributed domestically and abroad. Experiential, tight-knit classes ensure that students feel connected and are able to pursue their co-curricular interests. Roughly 83% of students participate in an experiential learning opportunity, including study abroad, the Environmental Science Semester, and international service trips to partner sites in Haiti and Guatemala.

Committed to serving the student community, faculty members at SJC pride themselves on their accessibility to students and one another, and students cite this warmth and accessibility as a hallmark of the SJC experience. SJC has 190 full- and part-time faculty members committed to the future of the institution through a robust culture of shared governance and dedicated to serving a remarkable student community.

Online learning is primarily administered in a separate structure, with an emphasis on providing students with flexible learning options. Courses are offered in an asynchronous format. Most programs operate on 10-week terms, with five term start dates offered throughout the calendar year. The Nursing and Graduate Theology courses are offered on four 12-week terms. Admissions is a rolling process throughout the year. Faculty are, for the most part, adjunct faculty teaching exclusively in the online program. Online students have a dedicated academic advisor with whom they have a close relationship.

### ***Centers and Institutes***

Saint Joseph's College of Maine is a learning and cultural destination that has been inspiring and empowering students of diverse backgrounds since 1912. As a multi-generational educational community that addresses several of Maine's cultural and workforce development needs, SJC has several strategically developed Centers and Institutes that engage with the greater community.

#### **Center for Faith and Spirituality (CFS)**

Established in 2017 and rooted in the College's mission and core values of faith, excellence, and community, the Center provides a space to foster faith and spirituality for people from diverse communities and religious backgrounds within the Portland metropolitan area and surrounding Lakes Region. The Center endeavors to touch and intersect with important areas of faith and spirituality in tangible and dynamic ways for individuals, groups, and communities through a variety of programming, both in-person and online.

### Center for Sustainable Communities (CSC)

In 2015, guided by Mercy Critical Concerns, the strategic plan, and the College's mission and core values, SJC adopted a [Climate Action and Sustainability Plan](#) and founded the Center for Sustainable Communities. The Center sets benchmarks and monitors progress toward the goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2036; promoting a culture of sustainability among students, faculty, staff, administration, and surrounding communities; establishing the campus as a living laboratory for sustainable solutions; and informing effective and inclusive sustainability.

In 2022, the College earned STARS Gold rating from the [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education \(AASHE\)](#) in recognition of its campus-wide sustainability achievement. It has twice been recognized by the Princeton Review for its environmental responsibility and is featured in the 2023 edition of [The Princeton Review's Guide to 399 Green Colleges](#).

### Institute for Integrative Aging (IIA)

The Institute for Integrative Aging at Saint Joseph's College is a program that provides rural older adults access to a creative, age-friendly learning environment. The Institute's programming is structured around health and wellness activities and education, encouraging older adults to nourish their emotional, intellectual, creative, physical, and spiritual selves. At the same time, through its course offerings and certificate programs focused on bi-directional learning and intergenerational connectivity, it is preparing a student body and workforce to support a rapidly growing aging population.

### **Campus, Location, and Student Life**

The co-curricular community of Saint Joseph's is an integral part of the student experience for in-person learners. Students take advantage of weekly programming and the more than 30 clubs and organizations on campus. The student experience is intimately tied to the location of Saint Joseph's. Located in Standish, ME, the campus is situated along the beautiful shoreline of Sebago Lake, with postcard-worthy sunset views of the White Mountains and only 40 minutes from the beautiful Maine coastline. Lake access allows students to kayak and paddleboard directly from campus. Skiing is a 30-minute drive. Despite the rural and natural feeling of campus, Portland, ME is only 15 miles away. The largest city in Maine, it routinely appears in the top 10 of lists noting the best places to live in the United States. Students frequent the city on weekends to take advantage of the historic downtown on the water, with a tremendous music, art, and food scene.

Seventy-nine percent of full-time undergraduates live on campus in one of nine pet-friendly residence halls. With current housing occupancy at seventy-nine percent and residential placement offerings that include traditional, suites, triples, quads, and pod-style configurations, SJC provides on-campus housing that meets every student's needs. All students can take advantage of the recreation-focused Alford Center, which includes a gymnasium, swimming pool, running track, fitness center, aerobics and dance

room, climbing wall, and saunas. The Saint Joseph's Health and Wellness Center offers walk-in and appointment-based health services for students, and the Counseling Center provides confidential mental health services with licensed professionals.

The Mercy Center and Campus Ministry offer students challenging, entertaining, and meaningful opportunities for students to explore and fuse faith with daily life in the Mercy Center. The Mercy Center serves as a gathering place for prayer, learning, and service, providing inter-departmental connections to create co-curricular models of the intellectual, spiritual, and socially responsible life that the College nurtures. The Center links faculty and students with community partners in mutually supportive relationships that enhance the distinctive Mercy character of a Saint Joseph's education.

The Sebago Center, known colloquially as the Stone Barn, is an 18-acre farm near the shores of Sebago Lake. The Stone Barn itself, on a beautiful piece of the property, is an event venue that provides additional revenue while drawing people to SJC's beautiful campus.

### ***Athletics***

Saint Joseph's offers 21 varsity sports programs and is a member of the NCAA Division III and the Great Northeast Athletic Conference. The Monks compete among many top-ranked teams and long-time local rivals during the teams' respective regular seasons and consistently advance into conference tournament play. Saint Joseph's is dedicated to the NCAA DIII philosophy of making athletics an integral part of the educational experience and creating an opportunity for student-athletes to become well-rounded individuals. The College also places emphasis on the primary tenets of the GNAC: Community, Sportsmanship, and Integrity.

In all, nineteen of SJC's programs participate in the GNAC: men's and women's cross country, field hockey, golf, men's and women's soccer and volleyball in the fall; men's and women's basketball and women's swimming, men's and women's indoor track & field in the winter; and baseball, men's and women's lacrosse, softball, and men's and women's outdoor track & field in the spring.

### **Finances & Advancement**

The College, which is a tuition-driven institution, has an operating budget of approximately \$33 million. The sticker price of tuition and fees in 2021-2022 was \$39,986, with an average housing cost of \$14,936. In 2021, the institution awarded more than \$24 million in financial aid. Approximately 96% of students receive financial aid, including both institutional and federal grants and loans, and the average cost of attendance after aid is \$11,549. As of January 2023, the endowment totaled \$15 million, and the endowment draw is budgeted at 4 percent.

In recent years, the institution has been successful in generating grant rewards, with multiple six-figure awards from the federal government and private organizations. Significant capital improvements include

the Jeanne Donlevy Arnold Center for Nursing Innovation, for which the College has raised more than \$3.5 million in foundation and private donations.

## **THE ROLE**

The president of Saint Joseph's College of Maine will lead the institution in its continued evolution as a distinctive and dynamic educational institution in the Mercy tradition. The president will be expected to respond nimbly to the accelerating pace of change in the market dynamics of higher education while maintaining a standard of excellence in the teaching and learning experience. As chief executive, the president is responsible for the overall management and direction of the institution. The president will propel a collective vision for the future, develop and maintain relationships with a diverse array of constituents, represent Saint Joseph's externally, and serve as the chief fundraiser for the institution. The president is responsible for fostering, creating, and maintaining a culture of equity and inclusivity based on collaboration, teamwork, and growth.

The president reports to a 23-member board of trustees selected from the community, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, the alumni body, and at-large representation from the state and nation. The board is actively engaged with the president and senior leadership on key strategic questions and is deeply invested in the long-term success and health of the institution.

The president will participate as an active member of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, particularly through the Mercy Presidents Council, and will maintain communication with the Conference for Mercy Higher Education related to significant issues of Catholic identity and the Mercy mission.

The president is currently supported by a ten-person cabinet, which includes the senior vice president for finance and administration, the senior vice president of learning and programs, the vice president for enrollment, the vice president and chief sponsorship and mission integration officer, the interim vice president and chief advancement officer, the vice president of campus life and chief student development officer, the associate vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion, the associate vice president & chief brand and marketing officer, the associate vice president and chief athletics and recreation officer, and the associate vice president and chief information officer.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT**

Saint Joseph's possesses natural strengths that provide a tremendous opportunity for the next president to move the institution into an ambitious, and promising chapter. The next president will champion the following significant opportunities while navigating through the current challenges:

***Strengthen and advance Saint Joseph's commitment to its Mercy mission, identity, and academic excellence***

The president will embrace and be an advocate for SJC's Catholic mission and Mercy tradition, and how it informs a transformational educational experience. The mission includes an emphasis on intellectual challenge, deep inquiry and discernment, advocacy and justice, the value of taking action, care for the whole person, and a deep respect for the dignity and care of every individual. SJC's president must embody and model the College's commitment to its mission and see it as an opportunity for engagement, and as the basis for the diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging that are at the heart of its identity. The president will ensure that these principles are central in decision-making and will be transparent about how decisions support the mission.

Society is seemingly at a spiritual crossroads. Social responsibility and justice, which are at the core of the Mercy and Catholic value systems, are embraced more by our current generation of youth than by any prior generation. At the same time, however, the participation by youth in organized religion is at an all-time low. SJC has an opportunity, and perhaps an obligation, to provide a community where students can embrace these core values and express them in a framework that embraces all religions across a spectrum of constructs.

***Provide visionary and pragmatic leadership for Saint Joseph's***

Saint Joseph's finds itself at a critical moment, having weathered the difficult years of the pandemic. It is navigating the looming demographic changes in college-bound students and the rapidly evolving online distance education market. The president will be responsible for charting a path forward for the institution, one that energizes and unites the broad community of learners that is Saint Joseph's. Such a vision must ensure that the institution continues to meet its critical mission and ensure that Saint Joseph's continues to deliver an exceptional education across all learning modalities and constituencies. While the president will lead this process, partnership and collegiality across the institution will be critical in successful realization. The next president must possess the wisdom and confidence to provide decisive and collaborative leadership, lead with authenticity and transparency, generate buy-in, and connect with the wide variety of stakeholders that comprise Saint Joseph's community.

***Stabilize and grow enrollment***

Stable enrollment is the lifeblood of a tuition-driven institution. A slow decline in enrollment was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and enrollment has yet to fully rebound. The next president, along with the senior leadership, will be tasked with growing the College's enrollment. As higher education enrollment becomes ever more competitive in a demographic downturn, SJC will need to examine, with great care, how it deploys its people, how it improves time to degree, how it raises and disburses financial aid, and how it adjusts to an increasingly diverse and cost-conscious student audience. The next decade will see business model shifts in higher education nationwide, and the next president will lead a careful,



strategic discussion about the College's business model. SJC will need an innovative leader, an excellent narrative, and every tool in its enrollment toolbox.

***Develop and enrich academic programs***

The next president will assess SJC's existing portfolio of academic programs, strategically invest, and identify opportunities to develop and launch new programs that meet rapidly changing regional and societal needs and bolster enrollment growth. The president will enhance and expand SJC academic offerings, taking advantage of the nimble nature of distance learning in areas like certificate and accelerated programs. The institution must define and capitalize on areas of strength, connecting with societal needs and successful student outcomes, while staying true to the broad character of liberal arts education on campus.

***Effectively articulate Saint Joseph's identity***

SJC has an opportunity to better define the uniqueness of its educational experience both in terms of its academic programs, such as Nursing and Business, and in terms of its cultural strengths such as commitment to social responsibility, including environmental responsibility, commitment to DEI, commitment to spiritual as well as academic growth, and support of athletic and other extracurricular community involvement. The harnessing of such a definition is essential to the College's enrollment goals, and there is a sense that SJC has not yet clearly articulated its identity and value proposition to prospective students, and the community at large. There exists a need to better define and communicate the Saint Joseph's brand.

***Expand Saint Joseph's fundraising and revenue capacity and shepherd resources***

Saint Joseph's has a successful history of raising advancement support and executing high-impact projects, most recently for its athletic fields, Stone Barn, and Center for Nursing Innovation. A similarly strong track record of grant work exists. Alumni networks, while not yet fully organized and integrated, are supportive. The cumulative effort, however, has not yet yielded a sufficient endowment fund to allow the College to easily invest in transformational projects. The president is the chief fundraiser for the institution and, in concert with the senior leadership team, is responsible for driving institutional development. Strengthened fundraising contributing to institutional financial stability will be essential in any strategic vision for the institution. In addition to engaging alumni and other members of the SJC community, other avenues for fundraising, including donor cultivation and stewardship, grant work, community engagement, and civic partnerships, must be strengthened. The president will be an enthusiastic champion for SJC, able to recognize and capitalize on opportunities to build bridges and grow the development profile of the institution at many levels.

The president of SJC, in their role as chief executive officer, is responsible for the strategic allocation of institutional resources. The president must possess financial and strategic acumen to ensure that the

institution operates sustainably and to address financial stressors proactively. The president will ensure that the programmatic and structural orientation of the institution is positioned to capture the full potential of the institution and ensure that the College's units, programs, offices, facilities, and community connections are well-positioned to meet the long-term needs of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and guests.

### ***Grow community engagement***

As higher education evolves, it is increasingly evident that institutions cannot function as a finite campus environment nor confine their mission to students in a traditional four-year, post-high school window. To maximize impact in a more complex and interconnected world, students expect a more dynamic and connected institution. The president must take the lead in establishing community connections that provide students with high-impact experiences and valuable professional skills, provide a service to the community, and benefit the institution's needs. In building these points of connectivity, the president will embrace the inclusive definition of a learning community that defines SJC.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the president exercises broad responsibilities for all aspects of the academic, student, financial, spiritual, and administrative dimensions of the institution. Presidential leadership calls for the incumbent to demonstrate wide latitude in judgment and creative action.

The successful candidate will exhibit many of the following experiences, abilities, and qualities:

- A deep professional and personal commitment to the mission and traditions of Catholic education and Mercy Values;
- A dynamic and strategic leader with a demonstrated record of success who will inspire the Saint Joseph's community;
- Commitment to academic excellence and innovation across the liberal arts, pre-professional, and professional education;
- Intellectual presence and vitality; passion for teaching, learning, and scholarship; and belief in the transformative power of education for students, community, and society at large;
- An established record of fundraising, including an ability to engage a broader community in support of the College, and an enthusiasm for and successful experience with major donor, foundation, and corporate relationships, or evidence of such capacity;
- Deep knowledge of the issues and challenges facing higher education, including finances, athletics, and shifting market dynamics; understanding of the interplay between academic priorities and resource requirements; and experience setting and overseeing budgets;
- A proven commitment to embracing and fostering the success of a diverse student, faculty, and staff community and the will to embrace diversity in all aspects within the Saint Joseph's community;

- Significant and successful experience managing, allocating, and prioritizing financial, physical, technological, and human resources;
- Proven strength in metric-driven accountability, leading and delegating to a senior team, and reporting to the board of trustees, along with a record of effectively recruiting and retaining diverse talent at all levels;
- A collaborative and transparent leadership style that fosters an environment of trust, empowerment, and shared governance; proven experience and leadership in times of uncertainty; ability to connect with others and to create meaningful dialogue;
- Honesty, integrity, and courageous leadership;
- A Ph.D. or terminal degree is preferred.

**TO APPLY**

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and résumés/curriculum vitae with cover letters can be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Phillip Petree, Partner  
Andrew Marshall, Senior Associate  
Debbie Scheibler, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/saint-josephs-college-maine/president>

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