Director of Athletics and Chair of the Department of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation

Leadership Profile
Winter 2026



PARKER
Executive Search

About Williams College



Founded in 1793, Williams College is a highly selective, private, residential liberal arts college of about 2,100 undergraduate students located in the Berkshire Hills of northwestern Massachusetts. The College is distinguished by its commitment to academic excellence and to learning both inside and outside the classroom, in an environment characterized by close faculty-student relationships and a deeply engaged residential community.

Williams offers a rigorous and comprehensive liberal arts curriculum encompassing more than 50 areas of study across the arts and languages, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics. The College's academic program emphasizes interdisciplinary inquiry, close faculty mentorship, and opportunities for students to engage deeply in research and creative work, experiential learning, and study away. Williams is particularly distinguished by its tutorial program, which provides an intensive, discussion-based educational experience for small groups of students, and by Winter Study, an innovative January term that enables students and faculty to pursue focused academic and experiential interests beyond the traditional curriculum.

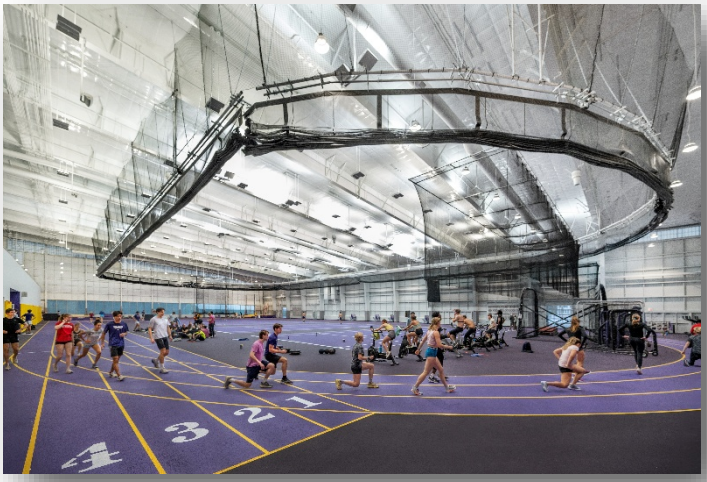
At the heart of Williams' mission is a deep conviction in the transformative potential of a residential liberal arts education that challenges and nourishes both the mind and body. The College seeks to foster academic vitality, intellectual curiosity, creativity, openness, empathy, and self-reflection, while encouraging students to engage deeply with ideas and learn across differences of thought, experience, and perspective. Through close interactions among students, faculty, staff, and alumni, Williams strives to cultivate an inclusive community in which all can thrive and to prepare graduates to lead lives of meaning and purpose.



The College is committed to attracting and supporting talented students from all backgrounds, admitting U.S. students without regard to their ability to pay and meeting 100 percent of every admitted student's demonstrated financial need for four years. It is the first school in the country to offer "all-grant" financial aid, with no loans or required earnings contributions. Just over half of all Williams students receive financial aid from the College.

Williams continues to invest in its future through significant campus-wide initiatives, including the development of a new Williams College Museum of Art, transformative investments in athletics and recreation facilities, and improvements to residential life, dining, and campus infrastructure. These investments reflect the College's commitment to enhancing the academic and student experience, advancing sustainability, and strengthening its campus community. Williams' location in the Berkshires further contributes to its distinctive character, offering a setting that combines natural beauty, cultural resources, and a strong sense of community.

About Williams College Athletics



Williams College is a member of the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) and competes in NCAA Division III. The Department of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation supports a varsity athletics program with a strong tradition of competitive success, having won the Directors' Cup a record 22 times. The program features 32 teams and approximately 750 student-athletes; a physical education curriculum that serves all students as a graduation requirement; a thriving club and intramural sports program; and a robust outdoor recreation program. Faculty and staff in the department balance achieving competitive excellence with fostering and supporting a rigorous academic experience for student-athletes. The department is a central contributor to student life, community and alumni engagement, and the College's educational mission. The connection between athletics and the academic experience is further strengthened through Williams' Faculty Affiliate Program, which pairs academic faculty members with varsity teams to foster meaningful relationships among students, faculty, and coaches.

Williams' distinctive athletic identity is embodied by the Purple Cow, while its teams and student-athletes are known as the Ephs, a name derived from Ephraim Williams, the College's founder. The Purple Cow has been part of Williams lore for more than a century, with the student body voting in 1907 to adopt the Purple Cow as the mascot. Today, the Purple Cow is known as Ephelia and represents a playful dimension of Williams' identity alongside the College's longstanding purple colors and the more traditional "Ephs" designation.



Building upon this tradition of excellence, Williams is entering a significant period of investment in athletics and recreation, highlighted by plans for a transformational Athletics and Recreation Complex. This major institutional initiative will be a central priority for the next Director/Chair, requiring close collaboration with College leadership, campus partners, and College Relations to advance planning, facilities development, and fundraising efforts. The project represents an opportunity to enhance the student experience, support competitive excellence and campus wellbeing, and strengthen the role of athletics and recreation in the broader Williams community.

About the Position



Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty and working closely with the President and other members of the College's senior staff, the Director of Athletics and Chair of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation (Director/Chair) provides strategic and administrative leadership for a department that plays an integral role in the Williams College experience. The Director/Chair is responsible for advancing a program that combines competitive excellence with the College's commitment to a rigorous and transformative liberal arts education.

The Director/Chair oversees intercollegiate athletics, physical education, club and intramural sports, outdoor recreation, athletic facilities, and departmental administration, with responsibility for strategic planning, fiscal stewardship, fundraising partnerships, and facilities development. The Director/Chair is supported by a senior administrative team that includes a Deputy Director of Athletics and two Senior Associate Directors of Athletics, all with sports supervision duties, as well as an Associate Director for Operations and Facilities, Associate Director for Budget and Finance, Associate Director for Inclusion, and a Director of Athletics Communications.



The next Director/Chair will build upon Williams' tradition of excellence while providing the leadership necessary to guide the department through its next chapter. Williams seeks a visible, engaged, and decisive leader who can develop and empower coaches and staff and build strong relationships across the College. Success will require sound judgment, an appreciation for Williams' distinctive academic culture, and the ability to navigate competing priorities, make difficult decisions, and translate institutional goals into meaningful action.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership and Long-Range Planning



- Provide strategic leadership in advancing a bold, forward-looking vision for Williams Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation that builds upon the department's tradition of excellence and aligns with the College's strategic plan and long-term institutional priorities.
- Provide leadership for a department balancing competitive excellence with a rigorous educational experience for student-athletes.
- Play a lead role in the planning, design, and development of a transformational athletics and wellbeing facilities project, partnering with campus colleagues to advance capital projects aligned with the College's strategic priorities.
- Build initiatives to realize the convening power that athletics and recreation bring to the entire community.
- Champion diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across all aspects of the physical education, athletics, and recreation program.
- Translate strategic priorities into actionable plans, establishing clear expectations, benchmarks, timelines, and accountability measures to evaluate progress and organizational effectiveness.
- Demonstrate sound judgment and decisiveness in navigating complex challenges, balancing competing priorities, and leading organizational change while preserving the values and traditions that distinguish Williams.
- Foster transparent and collaborative decision-making processes, communicating the rationale behind key decisions and building understanding and support among coaches, staff, faculty, students, and institutional leadership.
- Anticipate and respond effectively to emerging trends in intercollegiate athletics, NCAA Division III, and NESCAC governance.

External Relations, Fundraising Partnership, and Professional Engagement

- Establish a strong partnership and collaborate closely with the Office of College Relations leaders to advance fundraising priorities, alumni engagement, and stewardship initiatives, with particular emphasis on cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding philanthropic support for athletics and wellbeing.
- Play a pivotal role in capital fundraising initiatives related to new athletics facilities, renovations, and program enhancements, effectively articulating the department's needs and the broader institutional value of these investments.
- Serve as a compelling and credible advocate for Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation, communicating a clear vision for the department and its contributions to the College's educational mission, student experience, and broader community.
- Build and sustain collaborative relationships with senior institutional leadership, faculty, alumni, parents, donors, and other key stakeholders, demonstrating the ability to navigate differing perspectives, build consensus, and advance departmental priorities.
- Serve as a visible and accessible representative of the department, engaging internal and external constituencies and promoting athletics as a co-curricular classroom for leadership, learning, and personal growth.
- Represent Williams College within the NCAA, NESCAC, and broader higher education and athletics communities, advocating for the College's interests and contributing to the advancement of intercollegiate athletics.

Faculty Leadership and Physical Education

- Serve as Chair of the Department of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation, holding a faculty appointment.
- Recruit, develop, evaluate, and retain outstanding coaches, faculty, and staff through intentional mentorship, professional development, clear performance expectations, and accountability, supporting their continued growth and effectiveness as educators and leaders.
- Provide leadership and oversight within Williams' distinctive faculty-coach model, including responsibility for hiring, mentoring, and evaluating varsity head coaches through established faculty review processes, while recognizing and valuing the essential contributions of administrative and support staff.
- Empower and develop the department's senior leadership team through effective delegation, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and shared accountability for departmental priorities.
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive departmental culture that promotes open communication, mutual respect, and strong working relationships among faculty, coaches, and staff.
- Actively participate in faculty governance, committees, and academic partnerships, reinforcing athletics, physical education, and recreation as essential components of the liberal arts educational experience.
- Provide administrative leadership for a Physical Education curriculum that is a graduation requirement and serves the entire student body.

Athletics Program Oversight, Student Experience, and Departmental Operations

- Foster a departmental environment and culture that prioritizes student-athlete health, safety, academic success, and personal development, including growth, resilience, and life skills development through leadership and teamwork.
- Advance a comprehensive and inclusive approach to physical education, athletics, and recreation that supports the health, well-being, engagement, and sense of belonging of the entire Williams student body.
- Strengthen collaboration across varsity athletics, club sports, intramurals, physical education, and recreation to expand opportunities for student participation, connection, and community building.
- Ensure coordination of the department with the Dean of the College Office, Student Medical Services, Integrative Wellbeing Services, the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, academic faculty, and other campus partners to support holistic student well-being.
- Promote a culture of academic and competitive excellence that respects Williams' rigorous educational environment while upholding sportsmanship, integrity, and ethical conduct consistent with NCAA, NESCAC, and College standards. Oversee the development of effective strategies for recruiting and supporting student-athletes consistent with the College's strategic priorities and academic mission.
- Support high-quality sports medicine, strength and conditioning, and performance services.
- Cultivate an inclusive departmental culture that reflects Williams' institutional values and fosters a sense of community across all areas of physical education, athletics, and recreation.



Financial Management and Departmental Operations



- Establish budget priorities and work with the Associate Director of Athletics for Budget and Finance to manage the athletics operating budget in alignment with institutional priorities and principles of fiscal stewardship.
- Oversee resource allocation to ensure equity, sustainability, and transparency across all programs.
- Incorporate sustainability principles into departmental operations, facilities planning, and travel decisions, consistent with college policies and goals.
- Ensure compliance with all NCAA, conference, and institutional policies.
- Provide executive oversight of all varsity, club, and recreational athletics programs, including staffing, scheduling, facilities, and game operations.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Master's degree in a related field.
- Minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in collegiate athletics administration, including demonstrated leadership in staff supervision, budget and facilities management, and sport program oversight.
- Strong understanding of the priority of education as a primary tenet of the athletics program and the integration of athletics within the broader institutional mission.
- Appreciation of the importance of a physical education program and campus wellness offerings that reach the entire student body.
- Demonstrated commitment to student-athlete development, academic integrity, and ethical leadership.
- Knowledge of NCAA rules and regulations, with an appreciation for the philosophy and values of NCAA Division III athletics.
- Exceptional communication, interpersonal, and relationship-building skills, with the ability to establish credibility, navigate differing perspectives, and strategically engage internal and external constituencies.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and execute a long-term strategic vision, exercise sound judgment, make difficult decisions, and lead effectively within a complex institutional environment.
- Proven ability to recruit, develop, mentor, and empower high-performing teams while fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising, donor engagement, and advancement partnerships, including experience with capital campaigns or major facilities projects.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience having worked in an elite liberal arts college or similarly intense academic environment, with collegiate coaching experience strongly preferred.
- Experience leading or contributing to significant athletics facilities planning, construction, or renovation projects.
- Proven ability to lead complex organizations through collaboration and shared governance.
- Experience advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within athletics or higher education.

Meet Maud S. Mandel

President



Maud S. Mandel joined Williams as the college's 18th president in July 2018. The joys of learning and working with students are central to her leadership, and she continues to teach as a Professor of History. Her tenure as president has been marked by a collective vision that has clarified, endorsed, and funded innovations across the College.

Under her guidance, the College launched its current strategic plan in 2021, providing a guiding framework for strategic academic, co-curricular, affordability, and alumni-engagement initiatives. A highly collaborative leader, Mandel paved the way for Williams to launch its first-in-the-nation all-grant financial aid program, renew its distinctive Winter Study program, and launch campus-wide discussions about the implications of technology, including AI, for teaching and learning. She has advanced the school's mission through support for the new Williams College Museum of Art, the Davis Center, and campus sustainability, and under her leadership the College is engaged in a transformative investment in college facilities for athletics and recreation and renewals of dining and residential life spaces and programs.

In her scholarship, President Mandel studies the ways that policies and practices of inclusion and exclusion affect ethnic and religious minorities, especially Jews, Armenians and Muslim North Africans in 20th-century France. Her research has been recognized with numerous awards and fellowships. She earned her B.A. from Oberlin College and her master's degree and Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan.

Meet Lara Shore-Sheppard

Dean of the Faculty



Lara D. Shore-Sheppard serves as Dean of the Faculty and is Kimberly A. '96 and Robert R. '62 Henry Professor of Economics at Williams. As Dean of the Faculty, she is the College's chief academic officer, working closely with faculty and institutional colleagues to advance Williams' educational priorities. The Dean is charged with stewarding the curriculum and academic programs; managing the budgets and staffing of the instructional activity of the College; and overseeing faculty hiring, evaluation, and promotion.

In line with the College's mission to provide an educational experience that challenges and nourishes both the mind and body, the Department of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation is in the Dean of the Faculty's purview, with senior department administrators and head coaches holding faculty appointments. Since stepping in as Dean in 2023, Shore-Sheppard has guided the department in a strategic planning effort that resulted in a modernization of the department's structure, with senior associate athletic directors hired to support the work of the coaches and

the Athletic Director. Shore-Sheppard has also worked closely with the Athletic Director and other institutional partners to guide a comprehensive needs assessment and plan for the reimagination and renovation of the College's athletics and wellbeing facilities and is now co-leading the work to develop a new Athletics and Recreation Complex.

An accomplished scholar in health economics, labor economics, and public policy, Shore-Sheppard's research examines the intersection of social safety net policy, healthcare access, parental employment, and the wellbeing of children and their families. She is a Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. She earned her B.A. from Amherst College and her master's and Ph.D. degrees in economics from Princeton University.

Nomination and Application Process

Application Process:

Williams College invites nominations and applications or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting the university. Applications must include a cover letter, resume or curriculum vitae, and a list of references. For full consideration, application materials should be submitted to Parker Executive Search's **website**. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made.

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Williams College provides equality of employment opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Policy applies throughout the college; all departments and employees are responsible for its implementation.

The pay range for the position is from $240,000 - 275,000, commensurate with experience. The role is based on the Williams College campus in Williamstown, MA.

All offers of employment are contingent upon completion of a background check. Further information is available at: http://dean-faculty.williams.edu/prospective-faculty/background-check-policy/.

It is unlawful in Massachusetts to require or administer a lie detector test as a condition of employment or continued employment. An employer who violates this law shall be subject to criminal penalties and civil liability.

Beyond meeting its legal obligations for non-discrimination, Williams College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive. As part of this commitment, we will ensure that persons with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations. If reasonable accommodation is needed to participate in the job application or interview process, please contact Parker Executive Search.