

# Leaders

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## OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

**President, Alberta University of the Arts**

**Location: Calgary**



## About Alberta University of the Arts

<https://www.auarts.ca>

Founded in 1926, the Alberta University of the Arts has become a significant contributor to visual culture in Canada and around the world. AUArts is known for its world-class facilities, award-winning faculty, and the talent and professionalism of its graduates. AUArts is a leading centre for education and research, and a catalyst for creative inquiry and cultural development.

Originally called the Alberta College of Art (ACA), the college was initially part of what is now the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). While the two campuses still border each other, ACA officially separated from SAIT in 1985 to become an autonomous, free-standing, publicly funded art and design college.

One of Canada's four innovative universities dedicated to art, craft and design, AUArts is proud to play an important role in our country's visual culture. AUArts graduates have gained significant national and international reputations as artists, designers and creative leaders.

AUArts' talented community of emerging creatives learns from the best – experts who are among the country's most acclaimed practicing artists and academics, across a diverse range of degree programs and disciplines. AUArts is a place where students can continue their education, earn an undergraduate degree or achieve their MFA.

**Mission Statement** Alberta University of the Arts is a diverse and inclusive community committed to leading education and research in creative practices.

**Vision Statement**      To change the world through art, craft and design while enriching creative communities and economies.

### Values

AUArts is a diverse community of critical thinkers driven by curiosity and inspired by imagination. We create, make, shape, explore and help emerging artists, craftspeople and designers find a career path while finding themselves. Together, our students, alumni, faculty, staff, and our many collaborators transform perspectives, spark discussion, and ignite change. We use visual art, craft and design as powerful vehicles to change the world.

- **PASSION:**      We are curious and thoughtful risk-takers; we celebrate our creative process.
- **RESPECT:**      We build relationships based on trust and accountability; we are connected to one another's success and wellness.
- **OPENNESS:**      We embrace diversity and inclusivity in culture, identity and perspective; we are transparent, confident, approachable and welcoming.
- **UNIQUE:**      We pursue excellence in our studio-based practices, and in our support for our learners, faculty, staff, and external partners.
- **DARING:**      We are courageous and deeply committed to experimentation, free enquiry, and research.

Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) is situated on the ancestral land of the Siksikaitsitapi – Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani) and the shared territories of the Tsuut'ina – North Dene Sarcee, Iyarhe Nakoda-Stoney (Bears paw, Chiniki, Good Stoney) and homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta Region III. The City of Calgary has long been called Moh'kins'tsis by the Siksika, Guts'ists'i by the Tsuut'ina, and Wîchîspa by the Nakoda.

Calgary offers the best of all worlds – a vibrant, cosmopolitan urban centre, a safe and friendly atmosphere, and outstanding potential for adventure in the natural areas of the nearby Canadian Rockies. Calgary is the sunniest city in Canada and ranked the 7th most liveable city in the world. Culturally and artistically diverse, the city enjoys numerous festivals ranging from the well-established to the many new and growing influences in arts, theatre and music. Calgary's Arts Commons and Contemporary Calgary showcase local, national and international artists as part of the dynamic and growing arts scene in Calgary's downtown core.



## The Role – President

Reporting to the Board of Governors, the President provides inclusive and strategic leadership to AUArts by engaging with both internal and external partners to inspire confidence and to ensure that future artists, craftspeople, and designers receive a quality education that is relevant to the global community.

As the inspirational and strategic leader of the institution, this role is responsible for championing and integrating equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, strategic partnerships, and implementing the AUArts Strategic Plans and determining priorities and allocation of resources. The role requires a transparent and communicative leadership style to foster open and productive dialogue with students, faculty and staff.

The President is the formal representative of the University and its public-facing leader engaging with alumni, donors, student leadership, national and international post-secondary leaders, key partners as well as the representative for government contacts, liaisons, and committees.

As the leader of the President’s Cabinet, this role is responsible for the overall management of University operations ensuring the most effective and cost-efficient use of its resources, within the University’s governance structures, policies and growth strategies including areas ranging from academic oversight, strategic enrollment growth, expanded continuing education, teaching and learning, policy, corporate operations and labour relations.

Key leadership initiatives include but are not limited to: diversification of revenue, financial sustainability, development of external partnerships, increasing advancement profile, program innovation and relevance, new curriculum exploration and development, expanding scholarly research and creative activities, encouraging research grant development and strategic enrollment.

### Reporting to the President are:

- VP, Finance & Operations
- VP, Advancement
- Dean, Academic Programs
- Dean, Students
- Dean, Innovation, Learning & Development
- Executive Director, People & Culture
- University Secretary
- Executive Assistant

### Strategic Organizational Leadership

- Provide strategic vision and inspirational leadership to the entire AUArts community including the actions to develop, champion and implement strategic vision and planning for the University such as the AUArts Strategic Plan for the Future and AUArts Academic Plan.
- Provide direction regarding organizational goals and initiatives including equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, organizational projects, lead change management initiatives and actively demonstrate the vision and culture of the organization.
- Foster an effective shared governance framework, maintaining accountability to the Board of Governors and the General Faculties Council while providing overall leadership and direction to AUArts and ensuring that the institution operates within the policy framework established by the Board. This includes providing appropriate and timely advice, background information on potential issues, opportunities, significant activities, and financial matters to support the Board and the General Faculties Council in carrying out their governance responsibilities.

### Operational Leadership

- Provide oversight and direction to a team of senior leaders (President's Cabinet) facilitating and leading meetings, setting operational and long-term goals and ensuring accountability and progress among teams in alignment with the vision and strategic goals of the University.
- Actively monitor and manage the operational and financial performance of the institution in conjunction with senior leaders. Respond proactively to operational and budget needs of the University in a strategic and accountable manner. Actively review, monitor and manage financial approvals including University capital projects, assets, liabilities; provide authorizations for major financial expenditures and related actions.
- Develop and sustain an effective organizational structure that supports the development and implementation of strategic goals and initiatives that further strengthen the capacity of AUArts. Authorize, delegate and approve actions related to collective bargaining, grievances, arbitrations, Human Rights complaints and significant breaches of University policies and procedures.
- Lead the academic operations of the University, setting operational and long-term goals, activities and acting as arbiter for academic policy disputes.

## University Governance

- Steward and lead the governance operations of the University, managing actions among decision-making bodies and senior University leaders to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the bicameral system of governance, as per the *Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act*. Oversee the development of policy creation, amendment and direct/approve all relevant policy and procedure actions related to overall University governance and accountability.
- Together with the senior academic leadership, ensure that the highest standards for curricula development, teaching and learning are met and maintained. Lead and facilitate the activities of the General Faculties Council (GFC), and their various committees, to ensure the effective and efficient operation of University governance.
- Liaise with the AUArts Students Association to ensure matters of academic concern are addressed and to examine ways of increasing student participation in academic governance.

## External Relations

- Represent the University effectively to all levels of government and develop partnerships to attain shared goals. This includes working proactively to obtain and attract resources from government, philanthropy and other programs.
- Provide leadership and build relationships within the arts, business and political communities locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.
- Engage with the donor and alumni community through shared vision of the expansion of AUArts vision and strategic plans. Forge relationships and enhance networks globally in the development of alumni relations for the institution and to leverage the success of the institution and its graduates.
- Foster open communications and connect with a strong internal community which includes faculty, staff, students and administration through visible and transparent leadership. Represent AUArts for media, donor relations, external committees and promotional activities.
- Engage with the donor and alumni community through shared vision of the expansion of AUArts vision and strategic plans. Forge relationships and enhance networks

Through an extensive and confidential consultation process that includes students, alumni, faculty, staff, community partners and the Board of Governors, the following strengths, opportunities and challenges have been identified:

## Strengths

- **Unique Institution:** AUArts is one of only four dedicated art and design universities in Canada, providing a unique environment with a strong focus on creativity and the arts.
- **Small but Mighty:** The institution's size allows for significant impact and collaboration, making it attractive to candidates who wish to drive change and innovation.



- **Centennial Celebration:** AUArts will celebrate its centennial in 2026, offering a high-profile leadership opportunity.
- **Dedicated Team:** The existing senior leadership and faculty are described as collaborative, dedicated, and high-quality, providing a strong foundation for the new president.

### Opportunities

- **Growth and Diversification:** Expanding student enrollment and developing innovative new programs and partnerships to increase revenue and financial sustainability.
- **Research and Studio Practice:** Enhancing research opportunities and studio practices by providing more resources and time for faculty to pursue academic research and innovative projects.
- **Government and External Relations:** Strengthening relationships with the government, local industry, local arts organizations, and other post-secondary partners to enhance funding and support for the arts.
- **Community Engagement:** Increasing opportunities (in-person events, gallery events, receptions, etc.) to foster stronger connections between students, staff, and the broader community.
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA):** Promoting EDIA initiatives, supporting Indigenous communities, and ensuring diverse perspectives are integrated into University policies and practices.

### Challenges

- **Funding and Budget Constraints:** Addressing chronic underfunding, budget cuts, and the need to diversify revenue streams while managing limited resources.
- **Transparent and Trusting Relationships:** Fostering trust and maintaining a culture of collaboration and open communication within the University community with students, faculty, staff, etc. Rebuilding productive and influential relationships with external stakeholders, especially government.

- **Balancing Financial Sustainability and Academic Priorities:** Navigating the continued transition from college to University, appropriately resourcing for both teaching requirements and academic and research goals.
- **Political Climate:** Ensuring that the government understands the value of prioritizing arts and culture, and addressing issues such as funding, support, and legislative impacts on students and faculty.

## The Person

### Candidate Qualifications

The successful candidate will bring a record of distinguished and inspired leadership with experience in the arts, an awareness of the challenges facing Universities, and the business, administrative, and communication skills required to advance AUArts' institutional goals. Outstanding skills in leadership, planning, administration and human relations, community relations, and resource development will be critical to the President's success.

- A graduate degree (doctorate, preferred) or a terminal credential in the candidate's field, from an accredited institution. 10+ years of recent, relevant senior administrative experience at the post-secondary level with a grounding as an educator and related achievements that will foster credibility within the University community and beyond. ***In alignment with the principles of inclusion, individuals with alternative equivalent qualifications, experience and leadership will be considered.***
- A leader who has demonstrated a commitment to instilling the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within their organizations.
- A strong focus on student success and satisfaction, and commitment to working and engaging alumni.
- A reputation for integrity and openness, and an ability to engender trust in lasting relationships.
- Intellectual depth and an understanding of the academy, an understanding of the research landscape and studio practice, within the Canadian or and/or global context, and a passionate commitment to post-secondary institutions in general.
- A public persona that is articulate, engaging, and highly visible, with the ability to motivate and inspire the entire University community to champion its unique position and strengths.
- A collaborative and consultative management style, along with outstanding interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to bring people together to develop and work collaboratively toward shared goals.
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial leadership skills, including the ability to deal creatively with complex issues and balance the competing demands of various constituencies.
- Senior level planning experience involving the setting of strategic direction, priority development, resource allocation, and transition and change.

- The ability to lead the development of effective relationships with the business community, community driven organizations, Indigenous communities, alumni, and other key external partners.
- A record of successful advocacy in developing strong relationships with all levels of government supporting the University’s aspirations for growth.
- A proven track record of successful philanthropy, and the ability to develop an ongoing philanthropic capacity to support new levels of excellence.
- The ability to recruit, motivate, empower, and retain outstanding faculty and staff, combined with a strong commitment to professional and leadership development.

## Competencies

AUArts has established five common competencies to promote unity of vision and action in the organization.



**ACTIVE  
INCLUSION**



**COLLABORATIVE  
PRACTICE**



**CREATIVE  
INNOVATION**



**HEALTHY  
SPACES**



**STRATEGIC  
LEADERSHIP**

## Responsibilities of senior leaders include the following:

### Healthy Spaces

- Govern by example fostering respectful workplace principles.
- Inspire organization proficiency in physical and mental health, safety, and wellness.

### Active Inclusion

- Govern by example advancing Indigenous strategies, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility principles throughout the organization.
- Inspire organizational proficiency in Indigenous, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility programs, policies, and communications.

### Creative Innovation

- Govern by example advancing innovation and change mandates.
- Inspire change and develop new initiatives to the betterment of the organization that focuses on people as an essential component of success.

### Collaborative Practice

- Govern by example cultivating effective communication throughout the organization.
- Champion, lead, and promote strategic external partnerships.



### **Strategic Leadership**

- Govern by example developing vision and strategic plans.
- Inspire, lead, and promote a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

## **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (EDIA)**

AUArts is an equal opportunity employer and is strongly committed to fostering diversity within our community. AUArts hires on the basis of merit, and is committed to the principle of equity in employment. We welcome diversity and encourage applications from all qualified women and men, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities, and persons with minority sexual orientation or gender identities.

## **Compensation**

A competitive compensation package will be provided. Further details will be discussed in a personal interview.

## **Express Your Enthusiasm**

Passionate about art and design education? We'd love to hear from you. Email a convincing cover letter and tailored resume (PDF or Word) to **Shalini Bhatti, Heather Fookes and Allan Nelson** at **[calgary@leadersinternational.com](mailto:calgary@leadersinternational.com)** indicating the job title in the subject line of the email.

### **Leaders International Executive Search**

[www.leadersinternational.com](http://www.leadersinternational.com)