
MILLS

Executive Director, Mills Institute

Mills College at Northeastern seeks applications and nominations for the inaugural Executive Director of the Mills Institute.

Beginning in July 2022, Mills College and Northeastern University are merging to create a bicoastal university powered by Northeastern's global experiential learning and research and strengthened by Mills' legacy in women's leadership, equity, and social justice.

At this pivotal moment for both institutions, the Mills Institute has been purposefully created to preserve and further the legacy and mission of Mills College, which "...educates students to think critically and communicate responsibly and effectively, to accept the challenges of their creative visions, and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effect thoughtful changes in a global, multicultural society." The University will continue to honor that mission through the enduring educational and research work at the Mills campus that will be conducted by the Institute and the University. The Institute will also double down on the deep commitments both Mills and Northeastern share with respect to equity, inclusion, and antiracism.

This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic, forward-thinking leader to build and develop a new institute that will join the ranks of the [many prominent institutes of Northeastern University](#) while sustaining the values and rich history of Mills College.

ABOUT THE MILLS INSTITUTE

Building on the legacy of Mills College, the Mills Institute strives to meet changing educational needs in higher education and research issues related to gender and racial justice and the advancement of women, gender non-binary individuals, and communities of color. The Mills Institute will do this through programs and partnerships that support transformative teaching and learning, research, and career development for women, gender non-binary individuals, and historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

As a foundational support for this work, Mills Institute has received \$30M in seed funding, including support from both Mills College and Northeastern University. The Institute will offer research and learning programs focused on transitional moments: from high school to college, from college to advanced study or career, from one career to another, or into any form of leadership (community, workplace, or organizational). Programs will connect research and practice for teachers and students, concerning topics such as effective pedagogies, high-impact teaching practices, community service learning, experiential learning, and internships.

On its own and in partnership with colleges, universities, and other nonprofit organizations with similar missions, the Institute may offer programs such as seminars, non-credit courses, and summer camps that combine classroom experience with community engagement. In the future, the Institute may organize conferences to bring together scholars, students, and other experts on topics related to the mission.

The Mills Institute will be housed on the Mills campus in Oakland and will be part of the Northeastern global university system, affording it numerous opportunities to engage and collaborate across the system. The Institute will partner closely with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion and will pursue opportunities to collaborate and partner with other research and policy initiatives and academic programs across the University in ways that advance the Institute's mission. As leader of the Mills Institute, the Executive Director will also play a key role in guiding the Institute in response to strategic initiatives underway at Northeastern, such as the impact engines generated by the [academic plan](#).

The incoming Executive Director will have the opportunity to hire and build a strong team to lead the Institute, including program directors and staffing to support administrative and philanthropic endeavors. The Institute's staff is likely to begin with a team of approximately three and will grow in accordance with administrative and programmatic needs.

ABOUT MILLS COLLEGE AND ITS MERGER WITH NORTHEASTERN

Located in Oakland, California, in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area, Mills College is a liberal arts college for women and gender non-binary students, with graduate programs for all genders. Consistently ranked one of the top master's universities and one of the best value colleges in the West by *U.S. News & World Report*, Mills also has been named one of the Best Colleges in the nation by *The Princeton Review*.

The Mills experience is distinguished by small, interactive classes, one-on-one attention from exceptional faculty, a culture of creative experimentation, and cutting-edge interdisciplinary learning opportunities which empower students to make a statement in their careers and communities. As [one of the most diverse liberal arts colleges in the country](#), Mills has a strong record of academic success with first-generation students, students of color, Latinx students, LGBTQ students, and other underrepresented students. In 2017, Mills College became a Hispanic Serving Institution.

On July 1, 2022, Mills College will become a part of Northeastern University, a global, experiential, research university built on a tradition of engagement with the world, creating a distinctive approach to education and research.

Founded in 1898, Northeastern offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate and graduate programs leading to degrees through the doctorate in nine colleges and schools and select advanced degrees at campuses in Boston; Arlington, VA; Charlotte, NC; Seattle; Silicon Valley; San Francisco; Toronto; Vancouver; London; Portland, ME; and now in Oakland.

Northeastern strives to create a vibrant and diverse community, characterized by collaboration, creativity, an unwavering commitment to excellence, and an equally unwavering commitment to exhibiting respect for one other.

Additional information about the Mills College merger with Northeastern can be found [here](#).

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Since its founding in 1852, Mills has always been a leader in providing opportunities for women to pursue higher education and has continued to break barriers by providing underserved students access to a top-ranked college education. The Mills Institute will continue the College's legacy of leading the charge to create an inclusive and just society and build on its longstanding commitments to women's leadership, equity, social justice, and antiracism. It will also leverage and uphold Northeastern University's vision for diversity: to value and celebrate diversity in all its forms and strive to foster an inclusive culture built on respect that affirms inter-group relations and builds community, which is vital to learning and discovery.

LEADERSHIP

Elizabeth L. Hillman, an internationally recognized scholar of history and law, is the 14th President of Mills College.

A well-known leader in promoting gender and racial equity and a respected voice in the U.S. military justice system, President Hillman is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and taught history and law at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Yale University, Rutgers, and the University of California Hastings College of the Law. Since arriving at Mills in 2016, President Hillman has advanced Mills' mission and values of access, equity, social justice, and women's leadership through partnerships with UC Berkeley, California community colleges, and Oakland Promise. She led a tuition reset in response to the rising cost of college education and, most recently, spearheaded a transformative merger with Northeastern University that leverages the complementary strengths of both institutions and ensures that Mills remains a vibrant center of learning with deep connections to the broader Oakland community.

President Hillman is engaged locally and nationally in civic and higher education leadership and serves on numerous boards and committees, including the Oakland Workforce Development Board of the City of Oakland, the WASC Senior College and University Commission, the Women's College Coalition Board, and the executive committee of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities. During 2017–2018, she served on a blue-ribbon study group, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Committee Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Science, Engineering, and Medical Workplaces, that released a path-breaking report in 2018.

She came to Mills from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, where she served as Provost and Academic Dean. She received her Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from Duke University, an MA in history from the University of Pennsylvania, a JD from Yale Law School, and a PhD in history focusing on women's history from Yale University.

CAMPUS AND LOCATION

The Mills Institute will be located on the Mills College campus, which boasts 135 wooded acres in the foothills of Oakland, California, on the east shore of the San Francisco Bay and within a half-hour of both San Francisco and Berkeley. Designated a "must-see city" by *National Geographic* and *Conde Nast Traveler*, Oakland is home to many arts organizations, healthcare providers, tech giants, and nonprofits, all of which provide opportunities for Mills students and faculty to authentically engage within their community. Additionally, the San Francisco Bay Area is unparalleled in its opportunities to engage within

the community and experience its many world-class offerings, including international cuisine, outdoor activities, science and learning centers, and arts and cultural museums.

THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MILLS INSTITUTE

The Executive Director will be the executive and educational head of the Institute, reporting to the president of Mills College at Northeastern. The Mills Institute will engage with faculty, staff, alums, students, and other constituencies to realize its vision, furthering the legacy of Mills College while leveraging the strengths and deep global networks of Northeastern University. Additionally, the Executive Director will collaborate with an advisory board and a leadership council including local Oakland leaders and the broader Bay Area, as well as national experts in women's leadership and gender and racial justice.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

With the Mills Institute still in its early phases of development, the incoming Executive Director will play a crucial role in setting the tone and goals for an Institute that is not only critical to furthering the mission of Mills College but is also poised to serve as a force for impact within the local and regional community and a nationally-recognized space for knowledge and resources that advances women, gender non-binary individuals, and members of historically marginalized and underrepresented racial and ethnic communities. The Executive Director will also play a key role as a leader within the surrounding Oakland and Bay Area community, building strong relationships on behalf of the Institute and Mills College at Northeastern.

Bringing a skill set that spans entrepreneurial, executive, educational, and community leadership, the inaugural Executive Director of the Mills Institute will have the opportunity to:

- Develop a compelling strategic plan focused on academic excellence, diversity, social justice, antiracism, open access, and sustainability that can unite members of the Mills community and inspire internal and external constituencies;
- Raise funds, steward resources, strengthen and diversify revenues, control costs, and develop a sustainable economic model for the Institute;
- Explore entrepreneurial opportunities consonant with the Institute's mission;
- Promote and facilitate pedagogical, intellectual, and creative excellence;
- Partner with faculty across the College and University to deliver a distinctive educational experience;
- Organize efforts to collaborate with research and policy initiatives across Northeastern in support of the Institute's mission;
- Explore, learn, and build partnerships with community organizations, groups, and other institutions of learning in Oakland and beyond with a proven history of successfully addressing the roots of racial and gender inequities;
- Enhance the Institute's visibility by participating in public conversations about local, national, and global issues; and
- Attract, recruit, develop, and retain staff and program directors on behalf of the Institute.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

To fulfill these aspirations, the Search Committee seeks to appoint a creative, thoughtful, and entrepreneurial individual with a record of effective leadership and scholarly achievement, a passion for liberal arts education, and a global and strategic perspective. The incoming Executive Director must demonstrate deep empathy, curiosity, and character and possess a record of working directly with communities that have been historically underrepresented and marginalized.

Additionally, the Search Committee seeks candidates with many of the experiences, skills, and qualities in the following areas:

- **Values and mission of the Mills Institute**
 - An appreciation of the value of women’s education and leadership and an unyielding commitment to it;
 - High standards of intellectual curiosity and academic rigor;
 - Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism;
 - Strong commitments to social and environmental responsibility; and
 - Evidence of personal integrity and high ethical standards.

- **Financial stewardship and fundraising**
 - Business skills and experience with financial stewardship;
 - The ability to create a financially viable strategy based on the Institute’s culture and values;
 - The ability to develop and build relationships with internal and external community members, major donors, foundations, and corporate partners;
 - The potential to raise funds on behalf of an organization; and
 - The ability to lead large multi-million-dollar grant initiatives.

- **Organizational and managerial leadership**
 - The ability to work collaboratively and effectively with the College president, senior administrators across the University, faculty, staff, alums, and students to formulate and execute ambitious plans;
 - Experience leading and building community and influencing others in a time of change;
 - The capacity to hire and develop a team and to lead, manage, and motivate colleagues, students, and staff to work toward a shared vision;
 - The ability to think and act strategically;
 - An understanding of program evaluation and measurement;
 - The skill to deploy human and physical resources wisely; and
 - The willingness to make timely and responsible decisions.

- **Academic leadership**
 - A commitment to shared governance and a good working relationship with faculty;
 - The capacity to guide and participate in reasoned debate and nurture consensus;
 - An agility in anticipating and responding to the challenging trends affecting higher education; and

- A vision for developing the capacity for community engaged research.
- **Communication**
 - Strong interpersonal and communication skills;
 - The ability to foster connections with other centers and programs within the University as well as community and corporate partners;
 - The capacity to navigate relationships and complex situations with diplomacy and sensitivity;
 - The ability to model excellence and continual learning by listening actively, engaging seriously, and communicating honestly and authentically with all the Institute's constituencies; and
 - A strong sense of humor and optimism.

Additionally, the incoming Executive Director of the Mills Institute should possess a PhD or appropriate terminal degree and either a strong scholarly or strong public service/foundations profile, ideally both.

CONTACT

Persons wishing to be considered for this exciting position should submit a curriculum vita. While a letter expressing interest is not required, the committee welcomes such letters, particularly those that highlight past accomplishments. Nominations and referrals are also strongly encouraged. All submissions should be sent in confidence by email to:



Susan VanGilder, Managing Director
Julia Patton, Senior Associate
Storbeck Search
MillsInstituteExecutiveDirector22@storbecksearch.com

Mills College encourages diversity in hiring and particularly welcomes applications and nominations from women, gender non-binary individuals, and minorities. Mills College seeks to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as a reflection of our commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice and our desire to maintain the excellence of our faculty. In so doing, we offer our students not only the opportunity to learn about varied disciplines but to engage with diverse perspectives and ways of knowing and learning. For more information, please visit www.mills.edu.