



**Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Liberal Arts
Search for the Dean
Rochester, NY**

THE SEARCH

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), one of the world's largest private research universities renowned for creativity and technical innovation, seeks a Dean of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA). Reporting to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the next Dean will lead a diverse college that is central to the university's academic and scholarship mission to leverage the power of technology, the arts, and design for the greater good. CLA is well-positioned to contribute to the Institute's goals of providing leading research that impacts society and an academic experience that provides all RIT students with sought-after skills such as critical thinking, ethical decision making, and well-reasoned communication, among others. Further, this is an exciting opportunity to showcase the importance of the liberal arts in a technology driven institution and to lead collective efforts to meet challenges of liberal arts education as an engaged partner. The Dean will shape the direction and identity of the college, provide resources to academic programs and innovative curricula across disciplines, support and promote faculty scholarship and creativity, grow enrollment, and forge deeper connections with other colleges on campus and the surrounding community.

RIT was founded in 1829 and today is a nationally ranked doctoral university that prepares students for success in a globally integrated society. Over the past 10 years, RIT has seen advancement in every key institutional metric. Applications have increased 70 percent. Enrollment has grown 20 percent to more than 19,000 students, with both student caliber and the diversity of the student population on the rise. Cooperative education, a pillar in the university's educational philosophy, has thrived, both domestically and internationally, helping to demonstrate the value of an RIT education with a 96 percent post-graduation placement rate. Faculty have grown in number, diversity, and scholarly stature as RIT has increased its research productivity while remaining deeply student focused. Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness, a \$1 billion blended fundraising campaign that was publicly announced in July 2018, has reached and exceeded its goal and will fuel the university's continued upward trajectory.

[The College of Liberal Arts](#) offers both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) degrees spanning many disciplines in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. In addition, CLA plays a critical role in the general education core for students across RIT, and new investments showcase CLA's integral role in the university's commitment to provide an education at the crossroads of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics. Recent developments include a new [School of Performing Arts](#) and the [Performing Arts Scholarship Program](#), a new Institute for Interdisciplinary Innovation, a new multi-college master's

[Program in Artificial Intelligence](#), a new flagship degree program in Humanities, Computing and Design, [majors in English and History](#), and a multi-college [PhD program in Cognitive Science](#). The Institute has also embarked on major space initiatives, including construction of the newly completed [Student Hall for Exploration and Development \(SHED\)](#), a 100,000-plus-square foot creative hub, home to a sophisticated black-box theater, large dance studio, music rehearsal space, and CLA's new [Expressive Communication Center](#). In addition, in 2023 RIT began the construction of a 750-seat theater as the first phase in their Performing Arts Center.

The Dean will be a highly collaborative, team-building leader who will support faculty, alumni, administration, and students in their innovative endeavors and engage them to chart a course for the college through a clear articulation of its mission, a vision for its future, and an ability to build consensus and garner support from various constituencies. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success in transparent leadership, building distinctive programs, supporting innovative curricula, advocating for their academic unit, optimizing student experience, recruiting and retaining faculty and staff, enabling faculty to succeed in scholarship and research, and convening diverse groups to solve problems through shared governance. The Dean will have a record as a passionate supporter of faculty and students and a deep appreciation for the liberal arts, with experience engaging across a range of academic disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts.

RIT has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications with cover letters should be submitted in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

[Rochester Institute of Technology](#) is home to leading creators, entrepreneurs, innovators, and researchers. The university enrolls 16,668 undergraduates and 2,904 graduate students in more than 200 programs across nine academic colleges, four [international campuses](#), and other degree-granting units, making it among the largest private universities in the U.S. RIT is internationally [recognized and ranked](#) for academic leadership in business, computing, engineering, imaging science, sustainability, and fine and applied arts. RIT is also home to the [National Technical Institute for the Deaf](#) and offers unparalleled support services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The [cooperative education program](#) is one of the oldest and largest in the nation. The university implemented its 2025 strategic plan, [Greatness Through Difference](#), in the fall of 2018. The plan leverages RIT's unique history with a renewed focus to use the interdisciplinary power of [technology, the arts, and design](#) to shape the future and improve the world. Efforts to begin the next strategic plan are underway.

In 2019, RIT moved into the high research activity institution or "R2" category under the updated Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning, ranking it among the top six percent of colleges and universities in the nation for research activity, and the University is working toward R1 designation. In 2020, the University joined the [Public Interest Technology Network \(PIT-UN\)](#), a national partnership of

universities and colleges convened by New America, the Ford Foundation, and the Hewlett Foundation to build the field of public interest technology and grow a new generation of civic-minded technologists.

U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) now ranks RIT No. 98 in its “National Universities” category. The publication also ranks RIT No. 5 in the U.S. for co-op or internship programs and No. 42 among best-value schools. Sponsored research awards totaled over \$94 million in fiscal year 2023. Today, RIT counts more than 145,000 alumni around the world. Its endowment is currently valued at approximately \$1.3 billion, and the university benefits from sound financial management. For more information on RIT, please see the appendix at the end of the document.

THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Established when RIT acquired Eisenhower College in 1979, the College of Liberal Arts is today central to the university’s ability to provide an excellent and well-rounded undergraduate education. The College is responsible for 25 percent of total credit hours taught and a quarter of the core curriculum classes on campus. Acknowledging the extraordinary privilege of reaching so many RIT students, CLA strives to prepare students for a lifetime of personal growth, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship in an increasingly technological and rapidly changing society by engaging in research and scholarship at the intersection of science, technology, the arts, humanities, and social sciences. By exploring challenging questions through diverse lenses and enhancing students’ abilities to reason critically and communicate effectively, CLA endeavors to make a positive and long-lasting impact on society and the world through comprehensive education.

The College of Liberal Arts offers bachelors of science degrees, masters of science degrees, a PhD program, and multiple double degree programs, as well as a 3+3 Accelerated Law Program (BS/JD) in partnership with Syracuse University College of Law and University at Buffalo School of Law. The college also offers accelerated graduate degree pathways for education and counseling through 4+1 programs with both the University of Rochester Warner School of Education and Roberts Wesleyan University. During the 2023-2024 academic year, CLA enrolled 568 undergraduate majors across 14 programs and 73 graduate students in the five masters programs. It also enrolled 863 students across 51 unique minors. The college comprises 170 full-time faculty, 120 adjunct faculty, and 58 staff who teach and support the following units:

- School of Communication
- Department of Criminal Justice
- Department of Economics
- Department of English
- Department of History
- Department of Modern Languages and Cultures
- School of Performing Arts
- Department of Philosophy
- Department of Political Science

- Department of Psychology
- Department of Public Policy
- Department of Science, Technology, and Society
- Department of Sociology and Anthropology
- Institute for Interdisciplinary Innovation
- Humanities, Computing and Design Program
- International and Global Studies Program
- Women's and Gender Studies Program

CLA at the Moment

Recent years have seen updated, state of the art facilities, the development of creative new programs, expanded multidisciplinary research, and the recruitment of faculty who are excellent teachers and scholars. This strong foundation positions CLA to fulfill its key role in the university's ambitious plans for new creative programs, research growth, and increased public engagement while continuing to provide students an invaluable grounding in the liberal arts.

Space

In alignment with the Institute's strategic goals to foster unique curricular experiences between the STEM and non-STEM disciplines and develop the leading performing arts program in the nation for non- majors, the SHED offers abundant opportunities for CLA. For students interested in the performing arts, the Sklarsky Glass Box Theater, practice rooms, dance studio, lounge, and music rehearsal studio provide state-of-the-art facilities for the pursuit of artistic ventures and the expansion of course offerings. The SHED and adjacent library are also home to 27 new classrooms with cutting edge video technology and flexible furniture for group work, lectures, and special events, as well as seven makerspaces that enable exciting, cross cutting collaborations.

Programs

As a testament to CLA's commitment to the Institute's vision, several new programs have launched in recent years. In 2019, CLA launched the Performing Arts Scholars program to attract multidimensional students to RIT. In fall of 2022, 482 first-year students accepted scholarships to join this program, regardless of major, bringing the total number of PA Scholars to 1,800 students who persist and graduate at a higher rate than the campus average. In 2017, RIT launched its National Academy of Engineering Grand Challenges Scholars Program – a joint program between CLA and the Kate Gleason College of Engineering – which is one of the few such programs in the nation that formally partners engineering with the liberal arts by challenging students to deliver technical solutions while considering their social impact. In Fall of 2023, RIT launched a new interdisciplinary and cross-college PhD program in Cognitive Science that is housed in CLA's department of psychology, a new cross-college MS in Artificial Intelligence (AI) that leans heavily on CLA faculty to design and teach courses in ethics and psychology, and a new Science, Technology, and Society minor. Two RIT interdisciplinary degree

programs – International and Global Studies, and Museum Studies – are run entirely by CLA faculty. RIT’s flagship “new economy major,” Humanities, Computing and Design, is taught by faculty from three colleges, and is hosted and administered through CLA. A full list of the academic programs offered by the CLA can be found here: <https://www.rit.edu/liberalarts/study>.

Research

CLA’s faculty are actively engaged in research that reflects the virtues of the traditional arts, humanities, and social sciences in the midst of technological innovation, including work in the history of technology, crime analytics, computational linguistics, perception and cognition in animals to aid conservation efforts, and examination of energy consumption of video game consoles. CLA also has initiatives in areas that integrate traditional research in the social sciences and humanities with new interdisciplinary fields in health, computing, science, and engineering. Interdisciplinary research and an emphasis on community engagement and global perspectives represent defining characteristics of the college’s research portfolio. Since 2019, CLA has been awarded over \$12.3 million in sponsored research funding. CLA is home to the following research centers:

- [Center for Engaged Storycraft \(CES\)](#)
- [Center for Public Safety Initiatives](#)
- [Center for Statesmanship, Law, and Liberty](#)
- [Center for Worldbuilding and Storytelling](#)
- [Expressive Communication Center](#)
- [Health and Addictions Research Center \(HARC\)](#)
- [Modern Languages Technology Center \(MLTC\)](#)

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts reports to the provost and oversees a college operating budget of \$27 million and \$3.4 million in endowment, scholarship, and gift accounts. The Dean’s team includes two associate Deans, an assistant Dean, and a director of financial planning and college operations. The Dean is supported and advised by both a [Student Advisory Board](#) and a [National Council](#). The Dean is responsible for improving and promoting the quality and effectiveness of the college’s programmatic, teaching, and research missions.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT DEAN

The Dean has an opportunity to further distinguish and support CLA by leveraging its unique breadth and resonance with the university’s strategic priorities. To ensure CLA’s vitality and distinction, the next Dean will be expected to address several key opportunities and specific challenges:

Establish a shared identity and vision for the future.

CLA and RIT are at an exciting stage of development. The university continues to attract talented faculty, grow research, and provide creative students with a unique educational experience that prepares them for lives as productive citizens and professionals. CLA finds itself at the center of many of these efforts and changes, and the Dean will have the opportunity to seize the momentum at both the college and the university level while balancing a need for collective input, thoughtful consideration, and transparent action. The Dean must develop a sense of shared identity for the college around a vision and concrete goals that cut across the humanities, arts, and social sciences to re-invigorate the college with a unified purpose. The Dean will facilitate strategic change via shared governance and model a can-do spirit for the college community, imbuing it with a sense of creativity, pride, and optimism.

Drive creative program development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and pedagogical innovation, positioning CLA as a leader in addressing contemporary challenges.

The university strategic plan calls for the creation of new programs that respond to the increasingly diverse, multi-talented student body and their corresponding interest in crosscutting education. The Dean will develop and lead a strategic path forward for CLA, with a particular focus on bolstering innovative programs that leverage the breadth of the college and the strengths of one of the nation's leading universities working at the intersection of technology, the arts, and design. In addition to the newly created majors in traditional areas such as English and History, faculty are pursuing multiple opportunities to develop creative multidisciplinary programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to boost enrollment. The next Dean will need to be a thought leader, creatively leading the college in support of these innovative programs that reimagine the role of a strong liberal arts college within a technical research university.

The Dean will also encourage pedagogical innovation. The Covid-19 pandemic has driven higher education to be more creative, and RIT's ability to innovate has served it well. The Dean should work to continue this innovation, especially as it pertains to expanding its reach in the online and adult learning space.

Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across all facets of the college.

CLA's range of academic programs positions it as a natural leader at the university around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The college is home to a program in Women and Gender Studies and offers a minor in Black Studies and an immersion program in American Indian and Indigenous Studies. More broadly, faculty expertise across sociology, communications, digital humanities, and criminal justice – to name a just a few – provide CLA with a wealth of expertise in areas shaping the national dialogue around these important areas.

RIT has a long history of valuing diversity in all its forms, but more must be done around faculty and student recruitment and retention and in continuing to build an inclusive and positive environment on campus. The Dean's commitment will be explicitly evident in the recruitment, retention, professional development, and support of faculty, students, and staff. The Dean will foster a respectful and inclusive climate, environment, and culture through visible action, leading by precedent, and showcasing the strength that comes from diversity.

Manage, advocate for, and generate resources for the college.

The Dean will oversee the budget of \$27 million and must make creative and prudent decisions around resource allocation while advocating for resources both internally and externally. RIT operates on a historical incremental budget model, but there are opportunities for a creative Dean to secure additional funds by aligning college initiatives with the university's strategic priorities. The university plans to expand the number of faculty lines by 30 by the year 2025 and has made efforts to create more flexibility for students to take classes beyond their majors and to double major. Curricular efforts that transcend disciplines and create unique opportunities for faculty and students will be particularly valued.

The college raised \$39 million as part of the university's capital campaign and the Dean is expected to work with University Advancement to continue garnering philanthropic commitments to help achieve the goals of CLA.

Nurture and expand community facing partnerships.

The college has developed numerous external partnerships with community organizations, including the Genesee Country Village and Museum, and the City of Rochester. These relationships provide research and experiential learning opportunities and are avenues to highlight the talents of CLA faculty and students. The Dean will support these partnerships and encourage the pursuit of opportunities to build additional mutually beneficial relationships with the community that showcase the liberal arts as vital, not only in their complementary application to traditionally STEM focused domains, but of their own accord.

Develop, recruit, and retain excellent faculty.

The Dean will be attuned to academic trends and will work with department leaders and faculty to make competitive offers in areas of growth for the college. They will strategically manage resources for faculty hires and leverage university-wide initiatives in growth areas that support and encourage faculty. The Dean will listen closely to develop a nuanced understanding of research, scholarship, and teaching across a variety of disciplines, working with faculty to manage issues and develop policies around teaching loads and support for research and scholarship to ensure CLA is producing research and

scholarship commensurate with the University's aspirations to become a Carnegie-classified Very High Research Activity (R1) institution.

Simultaneously, the Dean must also balance the needs of faculty who were hired in the past across a range of expectations for research and scholarship, advocating for resources to help them achieve their goals, and work strategically to help individuals maximize their contribution to the college. The Dean will work with the program directors and chairs to incentivize and support faculty to ensure their success in teaching, research, publication, and the pursuit of national awards across a variety of disciplines.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will possess the following personal and professional qualifications and values:

- A doctorate and a record of teaching and scholarship that merits an appointment of full professor with tenure in the college;
- Experience as an inspirational and inclusive leader with a demonstrated ability to bring constituencies together around common goals;
- A track record of working across disciplines and managing and marketing interdisciplinary degrees;
- Successful experience or demonstrated potential in fundraising and advancement activities; evidence of success in developing relationships with external partners;
- A track record of effective planning, administration, and personnel and fiscal management;
- A thorough understanding of the goals and values of an arts, humanities, and social sciences education in the 21st century and how a liberal arts education supports and enhances professional preparation and global citizenship;
- A deep understanding and appreciation of shared governance; a commitment to a culture of transparency and collegiality;
- An understanding and respect for all disciplines and a desire to work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administrators to promote the collective goals of an institution;
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to make the case for the importance of liberal arts in society; an approachable leader, good listener and active learner who can understand issues from multiple viewpoints;
- An energetic, entrepreneurial, and collaborative leadership style that inspires faculty, students, and staff and builds pride in and commitment to the college and university;
- The confidence, wisdom, and courage to make difficult choices when needs are abundant and resources are not; a demonstrated ability to advocate for needed resources

- A commitment to building a strong learning environment for students that stresses academic quality, student engagement, experiential learning, and global perspectives;
- A deep commitment to and appreciation for diversity in all forms; demonstrated success in enhancing an inclusive, equitable, and diverse culture at their institution;
- Culturally well-versed and considerate of the needs of students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds;
- Energy, integrity, creativity, transparency, passion, openness and flexibility.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Salary: \$240,000-\$320,000

Anticipated Start Date: January 2025

In compliance with New York State's Pay Transparency Act, the salary range for this position is listed above. Rochester Institute of Technology considers factors such as (but not limited to) scope and responsibilities of the position, candidate's work experience, education/training, key skills, internal peer equity, as well as market and organizational considerations when extending an offer. RIT does not discriminate. RIT promotes and values diversity, pluralism and inclusion in the workplace. RIT provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, marital status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status or disability in its hiring, admissions, educational programs and activities. RIT provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the New York Human Rights Law, or similar applicable law. If you need reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the search consultants listed below. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

TO APPLY

ALL applications, nominations and inquiries may be directed in confidence to:

Greg Esposito, Partner

Ellen Egitton, Associate

Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/rochester-institute-technology/Dean-college-liberal-arts>

RIT uses E-Verify to confirm employment eligibility for new and existing employees working on federally funded contracts that contain that requirement. Before considering employment with RIT, please read the language from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Justice by clicking on the associated links below:

- [English E-Verify Participation Poster](#)
- [Spanish E-Verify Participation Poster](#)
- [English Right to Work Poster](#)
- [Spanish Right to Work Poster](#)

You must have Adobe reader to view these posters.

Clery Act Safety Information:

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is committed to the safety and security of all members of its community. The Clery Act information is provided in compliance with federal law to inform current and potential RIT students and employees of crime reporting procedures; Campus Safety law enforcement authority; crime statistics for three previous calendar years; and other matters of importance related to safety and security on campus. You can obtain a copy of the annual Safety and Security report online at: <http://www.rit.edu/fa/publicsafety/federalcompliance.html> and selecting the link for the Annual Fire and Safety Report or by contacting the Office of Public Safety at (585) 475-2853 or by sending a request to RIT Public Safety 61 Lomb Memorial Drive Rochester, NY 14623-5603.

APPENDIX

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

History

From its beginnings, RIT has been deeply connected to the educational and practical training needs of citizenry and industry. The university's roots go back to 1829 when the city's founder established the Rochester Athenaeum, a literary society that offered public lectures and debates and attracted such luminaries as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes. In 1891, the Athenaeum merged with the Mechanics Institute, which had been created and funded by local business and community leaders to provide technical training to meet local industry's growing demand for skilled workers. The merged institution—the Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute—combined cultural education and practical technical training. In 1912, cooperative education was added to the programmatic mix and the core foundation was in place for Rochester Institute of Technology, as it has been named since 1944. In 1968, RIT left downtown Rochester for a 1,300-acre new campus in the suburban town of Henrietta. The new landscape also led to RIT being chosen as the home campus for the federally sponsored National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Since the original campus opened, the university has added 50 more buildings, 12 PhD programs, and several international locations.

Diversity and Inclusion

RIT has long recognized the importance of diversity for enriching the educational experience and preparing students for productive lives as professionals and community members. The university has been recognized as a prestigious "Diversity Champion" by INSIGHT into Diversity magazine for eight consecutive years (2016-2023). In addition, RIT is a five-time recipient of the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award, recognizing colleges and universities that demonstrate outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. Adding a social and educational dynamic not found at any other university are nearly 1,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing students supported by RIT's [National Technical Institute for the Deaf](#). The Division of Diversity & Inclusion works collaboratively with academic and administrative units to provide a holistic range of services and support. Collaboratively, the division enhances access and success for historically underrepresented students, and faculty and staff, along with supporting education and scholarship, in addition to ensuring a welcoming, inclusive, vibrant, and accessible environment for everyone.

Governance and Administration

Rochester Institute of Technology is governed by the Board of Trustees, consisting of 42 active trustees, including the president of RIT and representatives of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and the National Advisory Group of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, plus 31 individuals holding emeritus or honorary status.

University Council is an integral part of shared governance at RIT. It brings together representatives from the three governance groups of the university: Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student

Government. The president, provost, vice presidents, and Deans are also represented on the Council, which addresses university-level policies and facilitates communication among the constituents of the university.

The College of Liberal Arts has a collegial, passionate culture and a history of faculty involvement in governance and planning. Faculty meet monthly as a group, and there are several faculty committees to ensure transparency and give clear vehicles for feedback to leadership on a number of issues. The college completed its strategic plan – affirmed by the faculty and endorsed by the staff – last year.

Leadership

President-David C. Munson Jr.

RIT is led by Dr. David C. Munson Jr., who became the 10th President of Rochester Institute of Technology in 2017. Dr. Munson has 45 years of experience in higher education, which includes serving as the Robert J. Vlasic Dean of Engineering at the University of Michigan from 2006 to 2016. He earned his BS degree in electrical engineering (with distinction) from the University of Delaware in 1975. He earned an MS, MA, and PhD degrees in electrical engineering from Princeton University.

Provost Prabu David

Dr. Prabu David became the Provost and Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2023. Dr. David previously served as vice provost for faculty and academic staff development, interim vice provost for Teaching and Learning Innovation, and Dean of Michigan State’s nationally ranked College of Communication Arts and Sciences for nearly nine years. During his term, the college made significant strides in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and launched six new undergraduate majors, two new online master’s programs, and a new doctoral curriculum. David also served in leadership positions at Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University and Ohio State University. His research focuses on media and cognition with active projects in AI and leadership. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in physics from Loyola College, Chennai, India, earned a master’s degree in journalism from Ohio University, and completed his doctoral degree in mass communication from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Rochester, New York

Situated between Lake Ontario and the scenic Finger Lakes region, Rochester is the third largest metro area in New York. As of the 2020 census, the metropolitan statistical area had a population of 1.1 million. The region is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity and is known for its intellectual capital, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit. Scientific Reports named Rochester 18th among “the world’s leading science cities,” and The New Republic reports Rochester as one of the most innovation-intensive metro areas in the country. Significant investments are underway to revitalize and enhance the

downtown core. Atlantic Magazine listed Rochester as one of 35 innovation hubs in the country, based on start-up companies, patents, and entrepreneurs per capita. Rochester is a six-hour drive to New York City and a three-hour drive to Toronto, and its airport includes non-stop flights to 18 cities in the U.S.

The region has an exceptional quality of life, with cultural amenities and recreational activities; [affordable healthcare](#) and cost of living; excellent schools; and the arts, culture, sports, and nightlife of a big city with the ease and comfort of a small town. It is one of the least-congested cities in the U.S., with an average commute of under 20 minutes. The region has been ranked 6th among 379 metro areas as one of the “Best Places to Live in America” by Places Rated Almanac and first by Expansion Management Magazine’s ranking of metropolitan areas having the best quality of life in the nation. Rochester is located on the historic Erie Canal, which is populated by idyllic villages and is edged by a 363-mile towpath now enjoyed by runners and cyclists. The Finger Lakes Region is home to glacial lakes, a Great Lake, and waterfalls; wineries, craft breweries, and wide-ranging cuisines; and many locales for skiing, hiking, golf, fishing, and other outdoor adventures.

The Rochester region is home to 19 colleges and universities, enrolling more than 83,000 students. It is one of the most academically productive regions in the country, ranking third in college degrees per capita and first for degrees in STEM fields, according to the latest U.S. Department of Education reports.