



McMURRY
UNIVERSITY

University President



EFL Associates, Inc.
700 W. 47th Street, Suite 1100
Kansas City, MO 64112
<https://eflassociates.cbiz.com/>



McMurry University invites applications from, and nominations of, dynamic and inspiring leaders for the position of University President.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Board of Trustees at [McMurry University](#) has launched the search for its 11th president. The Search Committee invites nominations of, and applications from, accomplished, dynamic and inspiring professionals who will provide the university with outstanding and visionary leadership.

Located on 52 acres in Abilene, Texas, a city of more than 122,000, McMurry University is poised to excel in its *Second Century*. The next McMurry president will inherit superb administrative and academic teams, a solid financial foundation, growing enrollment, spirited athletics and student activities, and a caring community.

ABOUT MCMURRY UNIVERSITY

Founded as a Methodist institution in 1923, [McMurry University](#) is a vibrant and comprehensive center of undergraduate education. After a highly successful eleven-year tenure, President Sandra Harper will retire in January of 2025, leaving McMurry University poised for continued excellence in its *Second Century*.

At McMurry, students find a welcoming, friendly, and supportive campus community. They experience personalized and interactive learning while growing personally and gaining independence.

McMurry celebrated its Centennial in 2023. It currently enrolls over 1,200 full-time students with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. No graduate assistants teach courses, and 69% of professors have achieved the highest degree in their academic discipline. Students experience nationally recognized liberal arts and sciences education while preparing for a fulfilling career and lives of purpose.

McMurry University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees. The University also is accredited by the Texas Education Agency and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. McMurry is a member of the North American Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and

Universities (NAAMSCU), the National Collegiate Honors Council, the Council of Independent Colleges, the Association of Governing Boards, and the College Board. McMurry is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

In cooperation with the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) and Abilene's Dyess Air Force Base (AFB), McMurry is making it easier than ever for active military personnel to earn their college degree. Through an initiative referred to as Blue Streak, active duty military personnel can take selected courses through the University at the Dyess AFB campus, main campus, or online. Blue Streak classes count both toward the CCAF General Education Course component, as well as a full, four-year undergraduate degree from McMurry or other schools.

Mission

Shaped by Christian principles, McMurry University challenges students to examine our complex world from multiple perspectives in preparation for lives of leadership, service, and professional success.

Core Values

- **CHRISTIAN FAITH** as the Foundation of Life.
- **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS** as the Catalyst for Life.
- **LEARNING** as the Journey of Life.
- **EXCELLENCE** as the Goal of Life.
- **SERVICE** as the Measure of Life.

Recognitions

As a higher education thought-leader, McMurry University's total student enrollment has increased by almost 80% from 1,244 in spring 2023 to 2,237 in spring 2024. The launch of the McMurry Dual Credit Academy has significantly boosted enrollment in dual credit programs at McMurry, providing high school students with an opportunity to explore the benefits of a private, affordable college education.

McMurry University achieved national recognition again this year for its outstanding academic programs.

2023 U.S. News & World Report Rankings

- #23 Regional Colleges West
- #5 Best Value Schools
- #5 Best Colleges for Veterans
- #7 Top Performers in Social Mobility

STRATEGIC PLAN – The Second Century

[The Second Century](#) provides strategic direction for McMurry as it embarks upon its next century of education. The plan identifies several macrotrends—demography, the value proposition of higher education, and the challenges of maintaining financial stability – all of which are permeating through the higher education environment.

The plan describes the planning process, the McMurry Identity, Vision 2030, and the Second Century Pillars. The five Second Century Pillars, upon which all activity for the next seven years will be focused are the following:

- I. Enhance institutional self-esteem and community perception by increasing the frequency and the quality of internal and external messaging.
- II. Advance Academic Program Development that is mindful of vital skills (specifically oral communication, critical thinking, ethical judgment, working effectively in teams, working independently, self-motivation, written communication, servant leadership, cultural competence and real-world application of skills and knowledge) needed for the 21st century workplace leading to the professional success of McMurry graduates.
- III. Recruit, Retain, and Graduate a diverse student body by developing engaged learners with the propensity to connect proactively in their communities.
- IV. Recruit, Retain, and Advance/Develop a diverse and engaged McMurry faculty, staff, and administration by investing in employee talent attraction, alignment, and a culture of belonging.
- V. Enhance McMurry’s financial stability and long-term viability through investment, development and acquisition of traditional and alternative revenue streams, and intentional acquisition and management of its physical and technical resources.

FAST FACTS

- **School (Founded):** McMurry College (1923) became McMurry University (1990)
- **President:** Dr. Sandra S. Harper
- **Church Affiliated:** The United Methodist Church
- **Campus:** 52-acre campus
- **Enrollment:** 2,550 Fall 2023
 - 1,150 full-time
 - 1,400 dual [credit](#)
- **Degrees:** 54 majors and 10 pre-professional programs
- **Student-to-Faculty Ratio:** 12:1
- **Average Class Size:** 14
- **Campus Activities:** 40 clubs and organizations
- **Community Engagement:** 24,500 service hours annually
- **Conference:** American Southwest Conference
- **NCAA Classification:** Division III with 20 intercollegiate sports
- **Nickname:** War Hawks
- **Mascot:** Wally
- **Colors:** Maroon and White
- **Alumni Network:** 11,000+ live in 50 states and 11 countries

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP



Dr. Sandra S. Harper, President

Dr. Harper is the tenth president of McMurry University. Dr. Harper will have completed more than 20 years of combined service (1985–1995 and 2013–2025) at McMurry University. Most recently she led the University through the yearlong, highly successful, centennial celebration. During her presidency, she has enriched campus life by leading infrastructure initiatives like the reimagined and expanded Garrison United Methodist Campus Center, which opened this February, the building of the Edwards Field softball stadium, and the addition of new on-campus apartments (Centennial Commons). When serving as a member of the faculty in 1989, she oversaw McMurry College’s transition to McMurry University. Her impact will be felt for years to come as she spearheaded the development and adoption of the University’s new strategic plan, *The Second Century: 2023-2030*.



Mrs. Lisa Williams, Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief of Staff

Mrs. Williams serves as the Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief of Staff for McMurry University, having been appointed as Controller in 2001, VP for Finance and Administration in 2005, and adding Chief of Staff in 2020. Mrs. Williams earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Abilene Christian University in 1982.



Dr. Matthew Draud, Vice President of Academic Affairs / Dean of Faculty

Dr. Draud serves as the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty for McMurry University, having been appointed June 2020. Dr. Draud earned his Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Thomas More University in 1987. He earned a Master of Science in Biology from the University of Louisiana Lafayette in 1990 and a Ph.D. in Biology from Lehigh University in 1996.



Dr. Grant Greenwood, Vice President for Enrollment Management

Dr. Greenwood serves as the Vice President for Enrollment for McMurry University, having been appointed April 2020. Dr. Greenwood earned his Bachelor of Business Administration in Economics from Hardin-Simmons University in 2010. He earned a Master of Business Administration from Hardin-Simmons University in 2012 and a Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration from Texas Tech University in 2023.



Mr. Michael Hutchison, Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Mr. Hutchison serves as the Vice President for Institutional Advancement for McMurry University, having been appointed July 2021. Mr. Hutchison earned his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from McMurry University in 1987 and a Master of Education from University of Texas, El Paso in 1995.



Ms. Robin Daniels, Vice President of Marketing and Communications

Ms. Daniels serves as the Vice President of Marketing and Communications for McMurry University, having been appointed December 2018. Ms. Daniels earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Southern Methodist University and a Master of Business Administration from Southern Methodist University.



Mr. Larry Dockery, Athletic Director

Mr. Dockery serves as the Athletic Director for McMurry University, having been appointed February 2024. Mr. Dockery earned his Bachelor of Science from Southern Nazarene University in 2017 and a Master of Arts from Southern Nazarene University in 2018.



Mr. John Yarabeck, Dean of Students & Campus Life Student Relations

Mr. Yarabeck serves as the Dean of Students & Campus Life for McMurry University, having been appointed July 2023. He also serves as the Chief Student Affairs Officer. Mr. Yarabeck earned his Bachelor of Science in Human Development & Family Studies from Colorado State University in 1980 and a Master of Education in College Student Personnel Administration from Colorado State University in 1984.



Rev. Ricky Harrison, Director of Religious Life and University Chaplain

Rev. Harrison serves as the Director of Religious Life and University Chaplain for McMurry University, having been appointed August 2023. Rev. Harrison earned his Bachelor of Art in Religion from McMurry University in 2014 and his Master of Divinity from Duke University Divinity School in 2017.

DIVISIONS AND SCHOOLS AT MCMURRY

Division of Science and Mathematics

- [Biology](#)
- [Chemistry and Biochemistry](#)
- [Computer Science](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Physics](#)

Division of Humanities, Religion, and Social Sciences

- [Communication Studies](#)
- [English](#)
- [History](#)
- [Political Science](#)
- [Religion and Philosophy](#)
- [Sociology and Criminology](#)
- [Servant Leadership](#)
- [Spanish Studies](#)

Division of Visual and Performing Arts and Education

- [Art](#)
- [Curriculum and Instruction](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Theatre](#)

Division of Human Wellness and Health Sciences

- [Human Health Science](#)
- [Kinesiology and Health Fitness](#)
- [Psychology](#)

Walter F. and Virginia Johnson School of Business

- [Walter F. and Virginia Johnson School of Business](#)

Patty Hanks Shelton School of Nursing

- [School of Nursing](#)

Interdisciplinary Studies

- [Interdisciplinary Studies](#)

Online Campus

- [Online Campus](#)

ATHLETICS

McMurry University has accepted an offer of membership into the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC), becoming the 10th NCAA Division III conference member beginning in the Fall of 2024. By moving to the SCAC, the University unified all its sports into one conference. McMurry scholar-athletes also benefit from the SCAC conference scheduling model which aligns better with the institution's academic priorities.

Men's Sports

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Football
- Golf
- Soccer
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis
- Track

Women's Sports

- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Softball
- Swimming & Diving
- Tennis
- Track

Coed Sports

- Esports

Spirit

- Cheer



THE CAMPUS AND FACILITIES

The McMurry University campus is a beautiful and well-maintained site with the centerpiece being Old Main. There are 23 buildings on the 52-acre campus, including [three residence halls and two student apartment complexes](#).

Among the facilities are:

Old Main (the original administration building)

Construction of the Administration Building (later named **Old Main**) began in April 1922, and was completed by opening day on September 19, 1923. The science laboratories and fine arts department shared the third floor. The library was located on the west end of the second floor, and the classrooms were on the first and second floors. The college administration offices and auditorium completed the first floor. Over the years, the beautiful auditorium that hosted the opening day ceremonies in 1923 sank into a state of disrepair until a massive building campaign in 2014 when Old Main and the historic auditorium was restored to its former grandeur. Today the building includes classrooms, offices, the Gypsy Ted II Gallery and the Matthews Auditorium, in recognition of the financial commitment of the Matthews Family to the restoration project.



Radford Auditorium

Located on the northeast corner of the campus, the iconic Radford Auditorium enhances the dignity and beauty of McMurry University. The building is a gift from Mrs. J.M. Radford, philanthropist and prominent McMurry benefactress. Standing as a beacon to Christian higher education, the tower of this building, which rises to a height of over 100 feet, may be seen from a distance of over twenty miles. Modern Gothic in architectural style, the heart of this building is its spacious auditorium and sanctuary, which seats 1200 people. Admissions offices are located in Radford.



Furr Welcome Center

The Furr Welcome Center, which opened in September 2007, serves as a welcome center for future McMurry students and guests. It houses personnel from Admissions and provides a meeting and gathering place for McMurry Alumni and friends as well as for outside groups. Its addition to the Radford Auditorium improves the accessibility and usability of the auditorium. Abilene architect Rick Weatherl designed the building to complement Radford with the Welcome Center closely resembling the original sketches of the Radford Building that included two wings for additional space.



Library Facilities

The Jay-Rollins Library and its Learning Commons serve the University's students, faculty, and staff and the Abilene Community as a member of the Abilene Library Consortium. The library contains over 156,550 volumes and a growing collection of digital and print resources, including databases, online books, journals, and media. The Learning Commons encompasses a student computing area, a Periodicals reading area, and the Student Success Center (Supporting STEM student Success). Two classrooms, the Wylie Seminar Room (WSR) and Library 201, are located on the 2nd floor.



Campus Center

The Garrison United Methodist Campus Center has undergone a massive \$26 million renovation including the addition of the second floor. The reimagined campus center offers the campus community a gathering space for socialization, meeting and resources. The new structure will be used for dining, special events, group study, wellness, worship services, Esports competition, student government, and campus activities. It will also house the War Hawk Success Center and the career development, student affairs, and religious and spiritual life offices.



THE PRESIDENT

A visionary leader, the President serves as the chief executive officer responsible for steering the University towards excellence in education, service, and community engagement. This role demands strategic foresight, a commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment, and the ability to cultivate partnerships locally, nationally, and globally. The president serves as the guiding force in shaping, supporting, and achieving the institution's mission, values, and long-term objectives, ensuring its continued advancement and impact in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education.

Position Profile

Strategic Leadership: Provide visionary leadership to advance the University's mission and strategic goals, fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and academic excellence.

Institutional Governance: Oversee the effective governance of the University, working closely with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students to ensure transparent and accountable decision-making processes.

Financial Stewardship: Ensure the institution's financial sustainability through prudent fiscal management, resource allocation, and revenue generation strategies.

Academic Excellence: Promote a rigorous academic environment that supports student success, faculty scholarship, and interdisciplinary research initiatives.

Student Success: Recruit, retain, and graduate students through constant improvement of the student experience, to include facilities, services, spiritual & personal support, athletics, and clubs.

Inclusion: Champion inclusion efforts, fostering a campus culture that values and respects the contributions of all members of the University community.

External Relations: Cultivate strategic partnerships with alumni, donors, government agencies, industry leaders, and other stakeholders to enhance the University's reputation and support its strategic priorities.

Community Engagement: Foster meaningful engagement with the local community and beyond, leveraging the University's resources and expertise to address societal challenges and promote positive social change.

Essential Characteristics

- Steadfast commitment to the development of faculty, staff, and students, and a proven track record of inspiring people and organizations through principled leadership;
- Expertise in assessing institutional strengths, opportunities, threats and weaknesses, and using solid analytical skills and exceptional financial acumen to assist in the development and execution of a strategic plan and ongoing operations;
- An operating style and professionalism that enables the academic community to flourish.

VALUING FAITH AND CHRISTIAN CONNECTION

McMurry values its history and bond with the United Methodist Church. Its campus culture, rooted in its foundational values, fosters inclusivity, acceptance, and respect for all individuals, alongside a strong dedication to service. The incoming president's recognition of McMurry as a community that upholds spiritual principles will be important.

THE COMMUNITY

McMurry University is an integral part of Abilene, Texas, which is also home to Dyess Air Force Base, a significant economic influence on the area and one of the city's largest employers. The cultural aspects of Abilene are centered on a mix of the local college and university campuses, the agriculture community of the surrounding area, and numerous churches. Abilene is home to the restored The Historic Paramount Theatre, the Abilene Philharmonic, The Grace Museum, Center for Contemporary Arts, Abilene Zoo and more.



Abilene's affordable cost of living, abundant parks, and large student population gives it a modern feel. The city was listed as one of *CNNMoney.com's* Best Places to Launch a Small Business.

With a population of roughly 122,000 people, the city offers outstanding public schools, superior health care, a thriving arts scene, family friendly adventures and historical sites. Some of these include:

[Frontier Texas! History Museum](#)

[Abilene Zoo](#)

[The Grace Museum](#)

[Fort Phantom Hill](#)



[Adventure Cove Aquatics Park](#)

[Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra](#)

[Primetime Family Entertainment Center](#)

APPLICATION & NOMINATION PROCESS



EFL Associates (<https://eflassociates.cbiz.com>), an executive search firm, is assisting McMurry University with its search for this important leadership position. All calls and inquiries should be made through the search firm.

Nominations and applications will be held in strict confidence and candidates will remain confidential until the final stage of the search, at which time the express permission of finalists will be obtained before making their candidacy public.

Application Process

- **STEP 1:** Complete a brief online application (2-3 minutes)
 - [Online application link](#)
- **STEP 2:** Send us your cover letter and résumé or curriculum vitae
 - Send in **PDF format**
 - Send to ApplyHigherEd@eflassociates.com
 - Email subject line should read "McMurry – President Application"

Key Dates

- Application deadline - **June 30, 2024.**
- Semifinalist Video Interviews - **August 21, 22 & 23, 2024.**
- Finalist On-Campus Interviews – **Week of September 23, 2024.**

Confidential Inquiries

Steve Waldron, JD
Managing Director, Higher Education Practice
816-945-5423 (direct)
swaldron@eflassociates.com

Application Questions & Nominations: If you would like to provide a nomination, please email all pertinent information (including an email address and phone number of the nominee) to:

Edith Ketay
Project Manager
816-831-4001 (direct)
Edith.Ketay@eflassociates.com