

# SEARCH PROFILE:

PRESIDENT



**HESSTON  
COLLEGE**   
**START HERE, GO EVERYWHERE**

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The Hesston College Board of Directors has launched a national search for the college's next president. Through work with their partner search firm, Academic Search, the search committee invites applications, nominations and expressions of interest in the opportunity.

## ABOUT HESSTON

Hesston College is a faith-based academic institution that educates and nurtures each student within Christ-centered community, integrating thought, life and faith for service to others in the church and the world. Who Hesston is as a college is articulated in its mission, vision and values statements and expressed through its programs. Student success is developed through supportive relationships between students, professors, staff and connections with fellow students, creating a culture of community, peace, unity, comfort, respect and love. This culture enables Hesston students to adopt a philosophy of leadership based upon their own faith and abilities, as well as through supportive relationships with each other.

Hesston College introduces all students to an Anabaptist-Mennonite way of knowing and following Jesus while respecting all students' backgrounds and encourages faithfulness to God regardless of the faith tradition from which each comes.

Affiliated with Mennonite Church USA, Hesston College is governed by the Hesston College Board of Directors. Click here to explore more about the [Mennonite Church USA](#) and Anabaptist Christianity.



# HISTORY

In 1909, the Mennonite Church founded Hesston Academy and Bible School, the precursor to Hesston College. For most of its history, the college has been a junior college, offering a variety of associate degrees that served as career training or preparation for transfer to other Mennonite Church colleges in Indiana and Virginia.

In its first half-century, it was also an academy, or high school. The college upgraded its programs in nursing, aviation and business to baccalaureate level coursework and added a bachelor of science in engineering in the last decade, the first bachelor's degrees granted by Hesston since a brief period a century earlier.

## MENNONITE VALUES

### Community

Mennonites hold many common core beliefs and value their history as a people of God. These beliefs in God and Jesus Christ link Mennonites with other Christian denominations, however, Mennonites try to live out God's call in some ways that are distinct. Worshiping as a community of faith and studying the Bible to listen to what God is saying to the church today are very important to Mennonites. They also believe the church is called by God to share the good news of Jesus in action through service, collaborating and working together to assist and improve the lives of those in need, especially through organizations like Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service.

### Adult Baptism

Mennonites practice adult (or believer's) baptism. At baptism, people make a public commitment to identify with and follow Jesus, to live and actively participate in a local congregation and to give and receive counsel as a member of the faith community.

### Historic Peace Church

For Mennonites, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and his example of nonviolence in all of life are central to understanding the Christian message. Historically, European Mennonites moved from country to country to avoid being required to take up arms against others and many Mennonites in the U.S. were conscientious objectors during the wars of the 20th Century, serving in alternative service programs like Civilian Public Service. Ultimately, Mennonites hold that allegiance to Christ supersedes allegiance to any nation.



HESSTON COLLEGE  
ESTABLISHED 1909





## HESSTON MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### MISSION STATEMENT

Hesston College, a college of Mennonite Church USA, educates and nurtures each student within Christ-centered community, integrating thought, life and faith for service to others in the church and the world.

### VISION

Hesston College graduates change the world Hesston College graduates change the world as they serve through their vocations, churches, families and individual commitments to follow Christ.

Hesston College is a transforming community where students, faculty and staff dedicate their intellect, passion and skill to a future where:

Hope replaces despair.

The poor are clothed and fed.

The sick are made whole.

Peace replaces war and conflict.

Justice replaces oppression.

Creation is renewed.

The gospel is proclaimed.

To make this vision a reality:

- We will strive for excellence in all we do. We will measure our results and aspire to greatness in all areas of college life.
- Our graduates will be fully prepared to take the next steps in their education, professions and relationships.

All academic and student life programs will be infused with the values of Christian community, stewardship of gifts and service to the world.

### VALUES

#### Excellence

Aspire to high performance in all courses, programs and activities, measuring our results with accepted standards of achievement.

Give and expect each other's best efforts in teaching and learning. Encourage creativity, curiosity and critical thinking.

#### Christian Community

Invite students to follow Christ and to create Christ-centered community on campus.

#### Culture

Celebrate differences in backgrounds and cultures and make every effort to learn from each other.

#### Relationships

Create space and time to develop relationships so that faculty, students and staff learn together.

#### Creativity

Strive to break through to new ways of learning and service.

#### Stewardship

Care for the financial, physical, spiritual and emotional resources entrusted to us. Serve as stewards of the environment and work to develop sustainable facilities and practices.

#### Joy

Model lives of joy, eagerly working hard to achieve, and welcoming humor and fun along the way.

#### Transparency

Share information regarding our performance, finances and future plans within the organization, with our supporters and with those we serve.

#### Caring

Act with compassion and honesty, extending dignity and respect to all.

## HESSTON TODAY

Hesston College recently shifted direction to focus on expanding its bachelor's degree programs. As with many small, faith-based institutions of higher education in the United States, Hesston College has had its share of hardships and decreasing enrollment. It became increasingly clear over the last decade that Hesston's previous education model as a two-year institution was not financially sustainable. Much of this was due to the many credits students were bringing with them out of high school, the reluctance students have about transferring after their sophomore year and the inability to compete on price at the two-year level. The need for change was even more evident as each of the college's historically strong prospective student markets experienced declines. These include regional Kansas students, Mennonite and legacy students, as well as adult learners.

Even with the new focus on bachelor's programs, Hesston will continue to offer Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS) and Associate of General Studies (AGS) degrees in liberal arts, as well as Associate of Applied Arts and Sciences degrees. Students will receive an associate degree as a value add while on their path toward a bachelor's degree at HC. The new academic profile will sharpen with unique professional programs like engineering, nursing and aviation, which many private schools in Kansas and other Mennonite colleges do not offer.

The academic shift will be fully implemented by the fall of 2024. See [Vision 2025](#). To review more about this transition over the past year, please visit: [Academic Restructuring – Two-year to Four-year academic model](#).

### [Strategic Plan – I Am Because We Are](#)

The current Hesston College strategic plan has six aspirations which provide the foundation for the current paused capital campaign.

#### **Hesston College aspires to be a global community:**

- Centered on Jesus Christ, where we start a distinct journey toward the healing of our relationship with God, ourselves, friends, enemies and creation, nurtured through an invitation to faith formation and service to the world.
- Dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning, where innovation, collaboration and individualized experiences prepare students to meet personal and professional goals.
- Engaged through mutual respect, where diverse stories, experiences and perspectives are honored in authentic relationships.

Devoted to creation care, where our physical and virtual spaces are welcoming, safe, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

Energized by growth, where academic development, increased enrollment, financial stewardship and institutional partnerships lead to long-term viability.

Built on integrity, where faculty, staff, administrators and board members are engaged in the constant improvement of transparent leadership, communication, mutual accountability and employee development.

### **FUNDRAISING**

As the college continues to face current enrollment and financial difficulties, a campaign that was in the quiet phase has been paused. The new president will have the opportunity to build upon that early phase donor response as a springboard to re-engage donors and resume the campaign. While a challenging time to raise money, former and current donors are more positive about supporting the college given the clearly defined direction the institution is now pursuing.

### **THE “HESSTON EXPERIENCE”**

For more than a century, Hesston students have been shaped and nourished by the unique, student-centered and socially rich learning community. It involves a long history of offering the Hesston Experience, where the college has been committed to providing a transformative and foundational experience within the first two years, differentiating themselves from other four-year schools that naturally give more attention and priority to the junior and senior experience. Hesston's dedication to providing this experience will continue while extending through the junior and senior years.





## ACCREDITATION

Hesston College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604-1411; 800-621-7440) and is authorized to grant degrees by the State of Kansas. The Higher Learning Commission is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

[Higher Learning Commission Reaffirmation Open Action Letter](#) – March 12, 2021

[Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative Report and Recommendations](#) – July 8, 2021

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing at Hesston College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education ([www.ccneaccreditation.org](http://www.ccneaccreditation.org)). The BSN

program is approved by the Kansas State Board of Nursing (900 SW Jackson, Suite 1051, Topeka, KS 66612-1230; 785-296-4929; [ksbn.kansas.gov](http://ksbn.kansas.gov)).

[CCNE Letter of Accreditation, Certificate of Accreditation](#)

Kansas State Board of Nursing [letter of approval](#) and [certificate](#), July 2023 to Dec. 2024

### MEMBERSHIPS

Hesston College is a member of the [Kansas Independent College Association/Kansas Independent College Fund](#), the [Council of Independent Colleges](#) and the [Association of American Colleges and Universities](#). Hesston College is a member of the [National Junior College Athletic Association](#) and the [Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference](#).

## ACADEMICS

Hesston's career-focused bachelor's degree programs equip students with practical knowledge and experience, giving them an advantage in their job search. With four-year programs available in the high-demand fields of aviation, business management, engineering - mechatronics and nursing, Hesston is dedicated to providing students with the necessary skills for a smooth transition from college to the workforce.

In addition to bachelor's degree programs, Hesston offers associate degrees in various disciplines. The two-year

programs provide a foundation of knowledge that can be applied to one of the four-year programs or to allow students to continue their education elsewhere. Hesston provides many unique opportunities that help students develop leadership skills, gain self-confidence and build relationships.

Please visit the [Programs of Study](#) page to review the full list of all academic programs.





## ENROLLMENT AND FINANCE

Last year, Hesston's total enrollment was 308 students (151 new). Next year (2024-25) the college is projecting a total enrollment of 370 (220 new). This represents a total enrollment increase of 20% year over year and a new student increase of 32% year over year.

Bachelor's degree programs (business, engineering, nursing, aviation) are all on track to have record new student enrollment for the fall of 2024.

While the typical tuition increase has been around three percent in recent years, the increase for the 2024-25 school year will be five percent due to inflation.

## ATHLETICS

Currently, Hesston is a member of the National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association - NJCAA. The college recently launched the esports and powerlifting programs that are already contributing to the new student enrollment growth plan. Now Hesston is building

momentum toward submission of formal application to the NAIA to transition our athletics programs to a four-year competition model, creating a positive impact on enrollment and an increase of sport opportunities.

## STUDENT LIFE

Student care and success are deeply commingled with the mission and vision of Hesston College. A robust set of programs and activities allow for student engagement and collaboration. Students are offered numerous opportunities to build community on and off campus and are stewards of Hesston's mission and values.

The heightened awareness for student safety following the [2023 Title IX review](#) led to numerous positive changes to policy and overall student care and awareness. This past year, students reported feeling much safer among

their peers and on campus. Continued efforts allow for better student interaction with each other, with faculty and staff and with the outside community.

The living arrangement for students at Hesston is distinct. Students live in what are known as "nests" which provide a more casual and comfortable environment that fosters lifelong relationships. In each nest, there are 15 to 32 rooms and 30 to 60 students total. The nest becomes a core group of friends for many students.





## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY

International students and U.S. students from a broad range of backgrounds add life and diverse viewpoints to the Hesston College community. The world comes to Hesston every year with 15% of students arriving

from outside the U.S. and the college embraces the perspectives and cultures these students bring to the learning environment.

## THE REGION

Hesston is a town in south-central Kansas with a population of approximately 3,900. Hesston is in Harvey County and is known as one of the best places to live, rated fifth out of 111 places by [Niche](#). Low crime, great schools and a low cost of living in Hesston offers residents a suburban feel with a rural lifestyle, and most

residents own their homes. Many young professionals and retirees live in Hesston. Hesston is a 45-minute drive from Wichita, and the small city of Newton is just about 10 miles south where you can find shopping, restaurants and many types of entertainment.





## THE OPPORTUNITY

The search for Hesston College's next president calls for a dynamic and visionary leader who will be entrusted with the role of chief executive officer, reporting to the board of directors. The president is not only the spokesperson for the college but also a representation of its values, priorities and mission of student success. In this pivotal position, the president must possess a deep understanding of the intricate landscape of higher education and chart a clear path for Hesston's continued regional and national prominence as a small, faith-based institution.

The president will nurture, foster and promote a faith-based environment that is foundational to the culture of the college as an academic institution that embraces stewardship, peacemaking, social justice, nonviolence, servant leadership and global citizenship. This includes establishing and maintaining relationships with other faith-based academic institutions, including those affiliated with the Mennonite Education Agency.

The president is the executive agent of the board of directors. This authority, which is derived from the board of directors, encompasses all aspects of educational and managerial affairs.

The president is tasked with leading the college, implementing board policies and ensuring the board is well-informed on matters of significance. Additionally, the president will serve as the college's key spokesperson, representing Hesston in all official capacities.

The president has the authority to execute documents on behalf of the college and the board of directors, always maintaining alignment with board policies and the college's best interests. The president will also hold an ex-officio position on the board of directors and its finance committee, further contributing to the institution's fiscal health, governance and leadership structure.

While academic credentials are valued and a terminal degree expected, it is imperative that the president comprehends the multifaceted nature of college operations in the ever-changing higher education environment, both

from academic and business perspectives. Furthermore, the ability to foster a shared vision among all members and stakeholders of the Hesston community is paramount, with an unwavering commitment to nurturing a learning-centered environment.

As Hesston College is moving forward with continued plans toward Higher Learning Commission accreditation for four-year programming, the new president will embrace those plans and direct HC forward in that path.

### REQUIRED EXPERIENCE FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF HESSTON COLLEGE

- Successful candidates must hold a minimum of a master's degree, with a terminal degree strongly preferred.
- Successful candidates will demonstrate leadership experience (dean-level or above) in higher education, with a preference for experience (dean level or above) leading efforts to launch new programs, increase enrollment of new students and retain returning students; stabilize, improve and sustain financial health; recruit and retain faculty and staff; establish and maintain relationships with donors, funders, students, families and alumni; and proactively address challenges.
- The successful candidate will have knowledge of and affirm Anabaptist Christianity in its varied multicultural and faith-based dimensions. In so doing, the candidate will model the faith-based vision and core values of Hesston College, ensuring that all academic and student life programs will be infused with the values of compassionate peacemaking, stewardship of gifts, acceptance of all communities of faith and those with none, servant leadership and service to the world.
- The successful candidate must embody honesty and integrity; have experience establishing and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with faculty, staff, students and the broader community; and embrace the values and mission of the college. Hesston seeks a caring, authentic and transparent president.



## THE OPPORTUNITY (CONT.)

### DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF HESSTON COLLEGE

**Readiness for Higher Education Leadership:** With a readiness to lead a storied academic institution and the courage to confront a shifting higher education landscape, the president should be able to relate in an open and transparent manner to the academic community, understanding the intricacies of the academy and possessing a belief in the value of education in today's changing world. The president will also demonstrate an openness to embrace innovative approaches to higher education which embody best practices and ensure financial sustainability.

**Exceptional Financial and Business Acumen:** A strong understanding of fiscal management is vital. Hesston's next president should possess in-depth financial knowledge and excel in fiscal and operational management, understanding the financial considerations necessary for higher education today.

**Strategic Enrollment Commitment:** Skill in utilizing dynamic and unique approaches to outreach, engagement and enrollment management is crucial to recruit prospective students and sustain a steady number of enrolled students. This includes the ability to engage in forward thinking and innovative strategies in partnership with staff, faculty, students, alumni, donors and community members.

**Fundraising and Community-Driven Leadership:** The readiness to lead and to support Hesston's recent fundraising experience will be a critical skill for the next president. The next president must be prepared to build and maintain relationships with current and prospective donors and engage with alumni, the board, the community and the region to find new resources to contribute to Hesston's long-term vitality and success.

**Entrepreneurial Spirit:** Hesston's next president should be entrepreneurial and future-focused, emphasizing results and outcomes; driving innovation and productivity; and fostering a culture of innovation that supports strong academic programs, growth and advancement within the mission of Hesston College.

**Exceptional Communicator:** The next president should be an outstanding communicator with a collaborative mindset who possesses excellent communication skills and the ability to tell the Hesston story effectively, engaging various constituencies within and outside the college. The Hesston College president must be highly relational with an action bias in decision making to facilitate resolution of issues proactively.

**Strategic Visionary:** The president must be a strategic thinker, capable of understanding and implementing change effectively, while developing a vision for Hesston's future that aligns with the institution's mission and aspirations.

**Decisive and Collaborative Team Leader:** The next president will build on and support a strong senior leadership team at Hesston through both collaboration and decision making that welcomes and invites input and feedback. This leader will bring strong team building skills that bring out the best in people making the collective outcome greater than the sum of the parts.







## APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS

Hesston College is assisted by Academic Search. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting Senior Consultant Kate Nolde at [kate.nolde@academicsearch.org](mailto:kate.nolde@academicsearch.org).

Applications should consist of a substantive cover letter, a CV and a list of five professional references with full contact information. No references will be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate. Please also read the [Philosophy of Faith Formation](#) and respond to it as part of the candidate material.

**Applications, nominations and expressions of interest can be submitted electronically and in confidence to:** [HesstonPresident@academicsearch.org](mailto:HesstonPresident@academicsearch.org).

The position is open until filled, but only applications received by **Friday, September 20, 2024**, can be assured full consideration.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

*Hesston College does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, religion, gender, perceived gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity or national origin, citizenship status, age, ancestry, color, marital or family status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, genetic information, military or veteran or military discharge status or any other characteristic protected by local, state or federal law. As a religious institution, Hesston College is committed to the historic Anabaptist identity and the teachings of Mennonite Church USA, and expressly reserves the legal right to hire and employ individuals who support the values of the college. Candidates for hire and current employees should share our values to educate and nurture each student within a Christ-centered community, integrating thought, life and faith for service to others in the church and the world. Characteristics of these values can include but are not limited to: acting with integrity, honesty, dedication, compassion, justice, humility, perseverance and a willingness to serve and respect others. Concerns related to Title IX should be directed to the [Title IX Coordinator](#), and additional information can be found in the [policy](#).*



# ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Hesston College in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute.

