

Our Team

Michigan State University
Search for the President

John Isaacson | Chair
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John founded Isaacson, Miller (IM) in 1982 and has been involved in virtually all of the firm's practice areas. In the last 25 years, he has focused principally on top leadership searches in higher education and academic medicine. Among many others, these include presidential searches for the following institutions: Amherst College, Bowdoin College, Brown University, Claremont, McKenna College, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Howard University, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University, Northwestern University, Tufts University, the University of Massachusetts Boston, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the University of Michigan, the University of Missouri System, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Rhode Island, the University of Southern California, the University of Virginia, , the University of California System, the University of North Carolina System, Washington University in St. Louis, and Williams College.

At IM, John has helped the firm develop its cumulative knowledge of the craft of search and has attended, with increasing interest, to the missionary purposes of institutions, the political and economic disciplines of specialized markets, and the emotional and intellectual learnings that leaders acquire in a committed working life.

John serves on the boards of: Management Sciences for Health as Chair of the Board, The Boston Debate League as a Board Member and Founding Chair, and Claremont-McKenna College. He holds a BA from Dartmouth College, a BA/MA from University of Oxford, and a JD from Harvard Law School.

Joanna Cook | Managing Associate
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Since joining Isaacson, Miller in 2016, Joanna has worked on a variety of recruitments for operational and technology leadership at organizations across higher education and healthcare, including Harvard University, Museum of Science, Boston, the American Society for Clinical Oncology, Trinity College, and New England Conservatory, among others. She has also recruited STEM leaders across many deanships and chair roles including at Washington University School of Medicine, Tulane University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and University of Massachusetts Amherst. Notably, she has completed searches for leadership of organizations with complex governance structures and active external stakeholders, including the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation at the University of Chicago and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Previously, Joanna focused on public and nonprofit management at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

Her commitment to growing diversity within executive leadership is fueled by her belief that organizations benefit from leaders with a range of experiences, cultures, and perspectives.

Debbie Scheibler | Senior Associate

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Debbie Scheibler, Ed.D. (she/her) joined Isaacson, Miller as a Senior Associate in 2022. Prior to joining the firm, Debbie served for 15 years as a senior administrator in Higher Education, most notably in housing and residence life, student behavioral management, and crisis response. In addition to her diverse housing experiences, Debbie brings expertise in curriculum development, professional association leadership, policy creation, Title IX case management, student rights and responsibilities, and high-level crisis management. She has previously been an involved member of the Association of College and University Housing Officers - International, the Mid-Atlantic

Association of College and University Housing Officers (where she served as the association's president), NASPA- Student Affair Administrators in Higher Education, and is a life member of Omicron Delta Kappa. Outside of her work with IM, Debbie serves as an adjunct faculty member, teaching both undergraduate and graduate-level courses, and currently serves as a member of the Antiracism Collective in her local community.

Mindy Cimini | Senior Search Coordinator

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Mindy Cimini joined Isaacson, Miller as a Search Coordinator in 2021 and provides organizational and communication management for searches with John Isaacson, primarily in higher education. She has supported searches for presidents and provosts at institutions such as the University of Michigan, Amherst College, Tufts University, New York University, the University of Rhode Island, Tuskegee University, and Dillard University.

Prior to joining the firm, Mindy worked as the Education Operations Manager for From the Top, organizing educational programming for young classically-trained musicians nationwide. She also works as a music director, instructor, and accompanist for regional theaters across the country, as well as Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Boston University. She holds a BA from Brandeis University and an MFA from Boston University.



The Firm

Isaacson, Miller is one of the country's premier executive search firms devoted to recruiting exceptional leaders for mission-driven organizations. We conduct 500 retained executive searches a year and have completed over 8,500 searches throughout our history, with more than half of them in higher education, recruiting college and university presidents, vice presidents, provosts, and deans. Our higher education practice is the nation's largest and most comprehensive.

In 2021, **56%** of our placements identified as women and **47%** were people of color.

In thousands of searches across the entire academy, we have served the most distinguished public and private research universities and selective liberal arts colleges. Many are repeat clients; a growing number are international. New presidents have turned to us to help them shape their cabinets.

Many of our clients and past candidates become part of an extended network and share our goal of strengthening civic infrastructure. They see their own missions reflected in the work of the firm and choose to assist us, generously, in our quest for the finest talent in their fields. In 2021, 80% of our searches were for returning clients.

Our Approach

We conduct a simple but disciplined process built around a schedule, with each deliverable and decision point planned with you at the search launch. Our practice consists of three essential steps:

Definition: Listening sessions with leadership, staff, and key decision makers to gather input and gain a shared understanding of the search that we translate into a thorough position profile.

Candidate Discovery: A meticulous networking process to systematically examine all appropriate candidates. We use our proprietary database and extensive outreach to ensure a diverse group of candidates is identified and recruited.

Selection: A clearly facilitated process for evaluating a long list of potential candidates and narrowing the field that includes interviews with IM, interviews with you, and extensive reference checking and due diligence.

Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity + Inclusion

Isaacson, Miller was founded in 1982 with a clear and ambitious mission: to strengthen and diversify leadership in the civic sector. The commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion was fundamental to the creation of the firm and continues today as the bedrock of our values and culture. We have become well-known for our success in recruiting candidates from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. We have established an extensive network of contacts who share our commitment to diversity, and we call and build upon this network in every search. In 2021, 56% of our placements identified as women and 47% were people of color. As a firm, we strive internally to be a diverse and welcoming community of colleagues where everyone can learn, thrive, and be empowered to contribute to a vital and powerful civic sector.