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Inviting Applications and Nominations for

Vice President for Finance and Administration and CFO



MYERSMcRAE
EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND CONSULTING



Pennsylvania Western University (PennWest), with campuses in California, Clarion, Edinboro, and Global Online seeks an experienced professional and proven leader to serve as the **Vice President for Finance and Administration and CFO**. This is an exceptional opportunity for an experienced and accomplished financial and administrative leader with substantial experience to guide, marshal, influence, shape, and advance the mission of the University

- ▶ Through innovation, academic excellence, and empowering environments, Pennsylvania Western University provides accessible education that cultivates career-ready, life-long learners and leaders, who enrich and engage each other, their communities, the region, and beyond.
- ▶ PennWest is a university centered on the student experience, where decision-makers consider students first. Deeply rooted in service to the people and communities of western Pennsylvania, our community of educators is committed to providing exemplary, career-relevant higher education for learners at all stages of life while supporting the region's economic and workforce needs.



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

PennWest is a next-generation university formed in 2022 through the integration of California, Clarion, and Edinboro universities—each with deep roots in Pennsylvania's higher education landscape.

As the second largest institution in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), PennWest serves more than 10,500 students across three campuses and online, delivering high-quality, affordable education that meets the evolving needs of today's learners and tomorrow's workforce.

Capitalizing on the strengths of four unique campuses—California, Clarion, Edinboro and Global Online—with one shared vision, PennWest gives students more opportunities to thrive. Our reach spans from Lake Erie to the West Virginia border, with an annual economic impact exceeding \$750 million. PennWest is a regional leader in providing career-relevant academic programs within a strong liberal arts foundation. We offer over 90 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs across three academic colleges, supported by expert faculty and dedicated staff.

PennWest students are diverse and driven: 34% are first-generation, 37% are Pell-eligible, and 30% pursue fully online programs. Whether on campus

or online, students benefit from flexible learning options, student-centered support services, and a commitment to academic quality—every course is taught by credentialed faculty, never by graduate assistants. The university is proud of its vibrant campus life, NCAA Division II athletics, and its 204,000-strong alumni network. Recent investments in student success, campus facilities, and emerging technologies—including a new center for artificial intelligence—highlight our commitment to innovation and impact.

Under the leadership of President Jon Anderson, PennWest is charting a bold course forward, marked by strong outcomes: 96% of graduates are employed or pursuing further education within six months of graduation. We are expanding access through dual enrollment, pioneering workforce development programs, and strengthening pipelines in STEM, healthcare, and education.

PennWest is one university with a shared mission: to serve students, communities, and the Commonwealth with excellence, equity, and purpose.



PennWest California

Home to the California Vulcans, PennWest California is situated along the scenic Monongahela River, less than an hour from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With more than 100 student clubs and organizations, 18 NCAA Division II athletic teams, and women's flag football, the campus offers students countless opportunities to get involved, grow, and thrive.

PennWest Clarion

Home to the Clarion Golden Eagles, PennWest Clarion is nestled in a charming town amid the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania. Students enjoy access to more than 150 student organizations, 14 NCAA Division II athletic teams, Division I men's wrestling, and abundant outdoor recreation along the Clarion River and in nearby Cook Forest State Park.

PennWest Edinboro

Set on a picturesque 250-acre campus with a lake and natural surroundings, PennWest Edinboro is home to the Fighting Scots and located just 20 miles from Erie, Pennsylvania. A hub for artists, athletes, and outdoor enthusiasts, the campus offers more than 140 clubs and organizations, 18 NCAA Division II teams, Division I men's wrestling, and nationally recognized Wheelchair Basketball.

PennWest Global Online

PennWest Global Online delivers accessible, high-quality education through a dynamic platform that unites the strengths of its California, Clarion, and Edinboro campuses. With 20+ years of experience in online learning, PennWest offers flexible, affordable programs led by dedicated faculty who provide personalized support and engaging instruction. Serving a global community of learners, its interactive, tech-enabled environment prepares students for success in today's evolving workforce.

All four campuses comprise Pennsylvania Western University.



VISION AND VALUES

Our Vision

Pennsylvania Western University empowers students to achieve meaningful goals through a broad array of nationally accredited undergraduate and graduate programs, career-focused learning, and support systems that foster lifelong success.

PennWest's innovative four-campus model was designed to expand opportunities for students while positioning the university for a strong and sustainable future. We have a steadfast dedication to operational efficiency and utilize technology not only as a teaching tool, but also to align processes and procedures as we deliver services to students, faculty, and staff.

As a state-owned university, PennWest embraces its role as the higher education option of choice for a population that includes many rural, urban, low-income, and first-generation students, including those who require substantial levels of financial, academic, and/or personal support to thrive in a university setting. We provide a strong scaffold of support for our students, empowering them to be successful in their studies and their lives.

Our Values

Learning: We are a community of educators who provide a learning environment where students thrive and achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals.

PennWest is devoted to helping our students reach their goals. We encourage the personal, intellectual, and professional development of our students

by supporting their academic needs; recruiting, mentoring, and retaining high-quality faculty and staff; cultivating a widespread culture of assessment; and providing a cohesive support system that utilizes a full range of stakeholders (students and families, faculty, staff, and administrators) to deliver student success.

Growth: We are student ready, guiding our students towards personal, financial, and academic success.

PennWest is invested in the personal and social development of our students. We work to create a welcoming, diverse campus culture that respects and celebrates a sense of belonging. Across our four campuses, we identify and implement best practices that support the student experience; encourage participation in co-curricular activities and leadership opportunities; and utilize a holistic well-being model that seeks student input and provides the support programs, services, and resources students need.

Inclusion: We advocate for all members of our campus communities and provide an equitable, supportive environment that builds a sense of belonging and togetherness.

PennWest is committed to an inclusive environment where all stakeholders are valued and supported. By prioritizing access, dignity, and a culture of respect, we foster a sense of belonging and drive student success. These principles are embedded in our strategic vision and reflected in our operational practices across the institution.

Collaboration: We engage in innovative partnerships, programs, and opportunities to address the needs of our regional communities and the commonwealth.

PennWest is focused on understanding western Pennsylvania's unique strengths and needs, and helping to transform not only our students, but our communities as well. We work to align our programs and partnerships to advance existing regional and commonwealth plans for economic, workforce, and community development. We seek to grow innovation, entrepreneurship, and small businesses on our campuses and in our region, and to build the university's reputation through mutually beneficial engagement with our communities and their leaders.

Culture: We share a sense of purpose that unites the PennWest community at large and provides opportunities to learn, work, and thrive.

PennWest is a people-first organization that promotes lifelong learning. Within a culture built on collaboration and a commitment to personal growth, we aim to ensure the wellbeing of our workforce and celebrate its accomplishments. We invest in the professional and leadership growth of our faculty and staff, recognize the accomplishments of our students and employees, and actively work to foster a culture of collaboration across our four campuses.





THE OPPORTUNITY

PennWest is seeking a proven leader, problem-solver, and financial executive for the position of Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer. The Vice President reports to the University President and requires a combination of strategic leadership and hands-on management. This position supports executing the President's agenda and strategic vision for the Institution.

Responsibilities

Manages the offices of Fiscal Affairs (Accounting, Accounts Payable, Financial Planning and Budgets, and Student Accounts), Human Resources, Information Technology Services, and Administration (Facilities, Safety and Risk Management, and Office of General Services).

- Serves as a key member of the President's Cabinet assisting in the overall financial management of the university.
- Leads the annual budgeting processes to reflect the University Strategic Plan and monitors actual budget and implementation of budget related initiatives.
- Acts as a highly transparent and visible executive leader with regular accountability to stakeholders including governing boards, faculty and administrative labor unions, university affiliates, donors, and legislators.
- Collaborates with PASSHE Office of the Chancellor, working strategically with the Executive Vice-

Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, designing, and implementing initiatives in achieving sustainability for PennWest University.

- Provides innovative strategies to improve space utilization including the engagement of third parties to drive down costs or increase revenue.
- Provides workforce planning, organizational structure, labor relation interpretations, and collective bargaining agreement guidance to University administrators.
- Provides direction for purchasing services and management of the procurement of materials and services for all University departments based on State System and other applicable policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Represents the University on State System related governance groups including the CFOs and other teams, as necessary.

Operational Activities

- Creates, implements, and oversees the financial and administration functions, policies and systems needed to support the operations of the University.
- Provides executive leadership and direction to senior division managers to ensure efficient operation of the Finance and Administration Division, which significantly impacts operations of the entire University.

- Manages and oversees accounting and budgeting, compliance, financial reporting and analysis, risk management, and auditing functions and processes for Fiscal Affairs.
- Administers cash management and investment programs and oversees equipment and facility needs through bond financing and other financing mechanisms.
- Ensures collaboration with the Student Accounts and Financial Aid Office operations, which includes resources from federal, state, institutional, and outside sources.
- Manages and oversees billing and collection of University tuition and fees to students and third-party vendors and develop effective billing and payment plan strategies for students and parents, to make the University an affordable option for current and prospective students.
- Directs the overall management of the University's physical plant, including building and grounds maintenance, utility services, architectural, contracting, and quality assurance services, project management, and facilities financing.

- Develops capital funding requests, manages campus deferred maintenance plan and oversees land acquisition transactions.
- Provides leadership in the continual evaluation of the University's long-range Campus Master Plan.
- Oversees planning and direction of the University Information Technology Services department.
- Oversees planning and direction of the University's HR Department.
- Leads university activities related to State System office shared services including procurement and HR.

Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications

- Master's degree in business administration, Finance, Management, Accounting, or related discipline is required.
- At least ten (10) years of progressive management experience in financial and administrative affairs within a complex public, nonprofit, or private university environment or other complex organization.



Preferred Qualifications

- A demonstrated commitment to establishing and sustaining a culture of excellence and accountability among members of the Division
- A record of accomplishment in developing effective financial strategies that promote principled fiscal strength and sustainability
- The diplomatic skills necessary to navigate the political and legislative processes associated with the role
- Comfort dealing with complexity, competing demands, ambiguity and change while providing balanced, value-based leadership
- Demonstrated commitment to transparency and inclusive decision making
- The capacity to make well-reasoned, tough decisions in a timely manner
- The ability to articulate complex financial and other concepts to non-technical audiences
- An understanding of and respect for the PennWest University tradition, while challenging the University to improve its operating effectiveness
- The poise, presence, and interpersonal skills to communicate effectively with a variety of constituents and stakeholders, and to establish productive working relationships both within and outside the University
- Strong supervisory and leadership skills
- High level of energy and initiative
- Prior experience administratively supervising Facilities, Human Resources, and Information Technology Service is highly preferred





UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Dr. Jon Anderson, President

The Vice President of Finance and Administration reports to Dr. Jon Anderson, President. Dr. Anderson began his term as the second president of Pennsylvania Western University on July 1, 2024, leading the institution into an exciting era of growth and innovation. As the second largest public university in western Pennsylvania, PennWest serves more than 10,500 students and boasts a proud network of 204,000 alumni across its campuses.

A growth-oriented and collaborative academic leader, Dr. Anderson brings extensive experience in multi-campus leadership, prioritizing student success, streamlining budgets, optimizing enrollment, and fostering shared cultures. Before joining PennWest, he served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Southern Utah University, and as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Middle Georgia State University. He also served as the Deputy Provost, Associate Dean, Accreditation Liaison, and other administrative positions at the University of West Georgia, where he advanced academic initiatives and institutional success. President Anderson is a business

faculty member by training and has taught in the classroom and online for more than two decades.

Under Dr. Anderson's leadership, PennWest has already achieved remarkable milestones, including dual enrollment surging by 270%, an 8% increase in online enrollment, and transfer enrollments on the rise for Fall 2025. The university also secured a \$3.2 million gift for early childhood education and launched the PennWest Center for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies, positioning itself at the forefront of innovation and community engagement.

An advocate for connection and dialogue, Dr. Anderson hosts *The Power of PennWest* podcast, where he engages with students, faculty, alumni, and staff to share stories and insights that shape the university.

Dr. Anderson holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration from the University of Kentucky, a master's degree in business education from the University of West Georgia, a Bachelor of Science in Sociology from Utah State University, and an associate's degree from Ricks College. Recognized as one of Pennsylvania's most influential leaders in City & State's 2024 *PA Fifty Over 50*, he is committed to empowering students and advancing PennWest's mission to serve its communities.



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

At PennWest University, students (and the Vice President/CFO) have the opportunity to choose from three distinct campuses, each nestled in a picturesque, vibrant town. Whether one prefers a serene lakeside community or a campus along a sprawling river bend, PennWest offers an amazing backdrop. Each campus is located near Pittsburgh or Erie and the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania.

Long recognized as a powerhouse of American industry, western Pennsylvania is a large geophysical and socio-economic entity. It encompasses that portion of the state to the west of the Appalachian divide and included within the Mississippi drainage system of rivers. Pittsburgh is the region's principal city, with

a metropolitan area population of about 2.4 million people and serves as its economic and cultural center. The three towns of California, Clarion, and Edinboro are primarily known for producing natural gas, oil, lumber, and coal.

While each district is comprised of exceptional public schools, each one also has excellent private schools. Each of the three towns has medical centers, hospitals, and many private physicians as well.

Each of the California, Clarion, and Edinboro boroughs has shops and restaurants that are easily accessible along with various scenic attractions, nature areas, festivals, entertainment, sports, and clubs. Each town is about two hours from the other.

Application & Nomination Process

Confidential inquiries are welcomed, and nominations are invited.



Applications

All application packets must include the following:

- 1) A letter of application that includes the candidate's (a) interest in and qualifications for the position, (b) leadership philosophy, and (c) vision for PennWest's VPFA/CFO position
- 2) Current curriculum vitae
- 3) At least four references with full contact information including e-mail (*References will not be contacted without consent from applicant.*)

Submit application materials online, preferably as PDFs. Additional information is requested with the submission of materials. **Applications will be reviewed as received, and the position will remain open until the position is filled.**

APPLY HERE

Nominations

Submit nominations with complete contact and e-mail information for the individual being nominated.

NOMINATE HERE

Consultant

PennWest has retained **Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting** to assist the Search Committee in its identification and review of VPFA/CFO candidates. **Jennifer Barfield**, Executive Vice President of Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting, is the lead consultant for this search. **Request a conversation regarding this search at JenniferBarfield@myersmcrae.com.**



PennWest is committed to equal employment and equal educational opportunities for all individuals regardless of gender, gender identity, race or color, ethnicity, national origin or ancestry, age, mental or physical disability, religion or creed, genetic information, affectional or sexual orientation, veteran status, or other classifications that are protected under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other pertinent state and federal laws and regulations.