



**Wesleyan University
Associate Vice President for Human Resources
Middletown, Connecticut**

Wesleyan University is dedicated to providing an education in the liberal arts that is characterized by boldness, rigor, and practical idealism. At Wesleyan, distinguished scholar-teachers work closely with students, taking advantage of fluidity among disciplines to explore the world with a variety of tools. The University seeks to build a diverse, energetic community of students, faculty, and staff who think critically and creatively and who value independence of mind and generosity of spirit. – Mission Statement

THE SEARCH

Wesleyan University seeks a strategic, collaborative, and innovative leader to serve as its next Associate Vice President for Human Resources (AVP-HR). Human Resources supports the mission of Wesleyan by providing services and programs that attract, develop, and retain a highly qualified and engaged workforce. This vital leadership position offers a unique opportunity to influence the future of the University through effective human resources management and a deep commitment to service and excellence.

Situated centrally between New York City and Boston in Middletown, CT, Wesleyan's 316-acre campus houses 350 buildings and offers an intimate and collaborative learning environment supported by renowned faculty, cutting-edge facilities, and unique research opportunities. Wesleyan is a private, coeducational, non-sectarian liberal arts university. Wesleyan has been a leader in curricular innovation since its founding in 1831 and is consistently ranked among the nation's top liberal arts colleges. Primarily an undergraduate institution with approximately 3,000 full-time undergraduates, Wesleyan also offers a bachelor of liberal studies, a master of arts in liberal studies, a master of philosophy in liberal arts, and PhDs in six disciplines.

Reporting to the Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer and Treasurer, the AVP-HR is a key member of the Finance and Administration team that provides strategic and operational leadership and day-to-day oversight for the human resources department. The AVP-HR is expected to guide staff through a wide range of HR issues while ensuring that decisions and strategies are aligned with the University's mission and objectives. As a dynamic leader, the AVP-HR will supervise and develop a strong team that has responsibility for talent acquisition, professional development, employee and labor relations, performance management, compensation, benefits and wellness, compliance, human resources technology, human resources budget, and employee programs for approximately 1,000 employees,

including a partially unionized workforce.

Wesleyan University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Since its inception, Wesleyan has been known for curricular creativity. At a time when classical studies dominated the American college curriculum, emulating the European model, Wesleyan's first president, Willbur Fisk, sought to put modern languages, literature, and natural sciences on an equal footing with the classics. When Judd Hall, now home to the Psychology Department, was built in 1870, it was one of the first American college buildings designed to be dedicated wholly to scientific study.

In the mid-1900s, Wesleyan pioneered interdisciplinary study. The Center for Advanced Studies (now the Center for the Humanities) brought to campus outstanding scholars and public figures who worked closely with both faculty and students. Graduate Liberal Studies, founded in 1953, is the oldest program of its kind, and grants the master of arts in liberal studies (MALS) and the master of philosophy in liberal arts (MPhil) degrees. In this same period, the undergraduate interdisciplinary programs, the College of Letters, and the College of Social Studies, were inaugurated. Wesleyan's model program in world music, or ethnomusicology, also dates from this period. Doctoral programs in the sciences and ethnomusicology were instituted in the early 1960s.

Wesleyan also took a leading role in the social and political movements of the 1960s. The campus was the site of speeches and protests in support of Civil Rights, including a commencement speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1964. Wesleyan began to actively recruit students of color that decade and created its African American Institute, now the Center for African American Studies. An early pioneer in co-education, Wesleyan reverted back to an all-male institution in the early 1900s. In 1970 it began to admit women again. Enrollment quickly expanded with the move back to co-education and the number of women on campus soon equaled that of men.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Michael S. Roth, President

Michael S. Roth '78 became the 16th President of Wesleyan University on July 1, 2007. Formerly President of California College of the Arts (CCA), Roth is known as a historian, curator, author, and public advocate for liberal education. Since becoming President of Wesleyan, Roth has undertaken a number of initiatives that have helped to make a Wesleyan education more affordable, including a three-year degree program that can save families as much as \$70,000. He has eliminated loans for the neediest students, replacing

them with grants, and ensured that other students receiving financial aid are able to graduate without a heavy burden of debt. In an effort to attract more students from under-represented groups, he eliminated the standardized test requirement, and he has welcomed undocumented applicants who have grown up in the U.S. as admissions candidates eligible for the same robust financial aid as American citizens. In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to end affirmative action, Roth ended preferential treatment for "legacy applicants" and reaffirmed the University's commitment to a diverse learning environment—making clear that this includes intellectual diversity requiring a commitment to free expression and thoughtful engagement across differences. As part of his commitment to internationalization, he launched the Wesleyan African Scholars program, providing a select group of undergraduates from Africa with 100% cost of attendance scholarships for four years.

Energizing the curriculum has been a priority for Roth, and he has overseen the launch of five new interdisciplinary colleges emphasizing advanced research and cohort building: the College of the Environment, the College of Film and the Moving Image, the College of East Asian Studies, the College of Integrative Sciences, and the College of Design and Engineering Studies. Other notable initiatives include the Shapiro Center for Writing and Criticism, which brings together students and faculty seriously engaged in writing, and the Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship, which builds capacity for developing organizations that address major social issues. Roth created a program for cohorts of military veterans, and he has invited retired military officers to teach at Wesleyan in an attempt to broaden campus perspective and to take steps to bridge the military civilian divide. Under his leadership, the University has launched new interdisciplinary colleges emphasizing advanced research and cohort building, including the Bailey College of the Environment, the College of Film and the Moving Image, the College of East Asian Studies, the College of Integrative Sciences, and the College of Design and Engineering Studies. Other notable initiatives include the creation of the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, the Shapiro Center for Creative Writing and Criticism, and the Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship.

Roth is currently overseeing the largest fundraising initiative in Wesleyan's history—This is Not a Campaign. This is Wesleyan. —with a \$600 million goal. Since its public launch in 2023, this initiative has raised over \$420 million to support financial aid, faculty research and support, new campus facilities, and more. The initiative is guided by its commitments to realizing an environment free from discrimination , aligning the University's spaces as powerfully as possible with its educational programs and more fully engaging the world-changing community of Wesleyan graduates.

Andrew Tanaka, Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer and Treasurer

The Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer and Treasurer (SVP) provides leadership for managing the institution's financial resources and achieving its overall strategic goals. The SVP is responsible for operations including finance, budget, legal, risk management, human resources, facilities, and auxiliary services. Reporting directly to the president and as a member of the cabinet, the SVP serves

as Wesleyan's treasurer, an appointment conferred by the Board of Trustees.

Prior to joining Wesleyan in 2004 as a major gift officer in University Relations, Andrew Tanaka '00 worked for the consulting firm Towers Perrin and then as a national accounts executive at Aetna. He most recently served in the Office of the President as Vice President and Chief of Staff. He graduated from Wesleyan with a BA in economics and earned his MBA through the executive program at Cornell University. Andrew serves on the boards of the Middlesex YMCA, the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, the Connecticut Science Center, and the Community Foundation of Middlesex County.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Wesleyan is among the most selective institutions in the country, with a 17% acceptance rate for the Class of 2028. The student body is comprised of 53% women and 45% men from 52 states and territories and 65 foreign countries. Students of color account for 50% of the student population, and 15% of students are Federal Pell Grant recipients. Wesleyan awards financial aid to the full demonstrated need of every student.

Of Wesleyan's 430 faculty members, 46% are women and 54% are men; 26% are persons of color. Wesleyan's faculty includes several recipients of Rockefeller, Guggenheim, and other national awards for research and teaching. Faculty at Wesleyan are also among the top researchers and scholars in their fields; Wesleyan's 7:1 student-faculty ratio facilitates close relationships between students and faculty and enables students to do advanced independent work. Wesleyan is among the most productive liberal arts colleges in the nation in the number of undergraduates who go on to earn PhDs. Wesleyan also ranks highly among liberal arts colleges in federal funding for research in science and mathematics.

The University's open curriculum offers more than 1,000 courses and 45 major fields of study. Wesleyan students can study in nine interdisciplinary colleges and academic centers on campus as well as at international programs in France, Italy, Spain, and 150 other approved programs. Wesleyan is a participant in the Twelve-College Exchange Program.

Wesleyan University's Olin Memorial Library is one of the finest small academic libraries in the United States with holdings of more than 1.5 million items in a variety of formats, including a rapidly growing collection of electronic resources and an extensive special collections and archives.

THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

Reporting to the Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer and Treasurer, the AVP-HR will lead a staff of nine people, including three management level direct reports, the Director of Talent Acquisition and Employment, the Director of Employee Benefits, and the Director of Labor and Employee Relations.

Additionally, the AVP-HR will oversee relations with five bargaining units including Physical Plant, Public Safety, Secretary/Clerical, Residential Life Student Workers, and Graduate Students. As a steward of Wesleyan, the AVP-HR will work actively in collaboration with the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and other campus leaders - to support an environment free from discrimination of any kind. Further, the AVP-HR will lead employee investigations and work closely with the Office for Equity and Inclusion to ensure compliance with Title VII and Title IX regulations.

As a subject matter expert in all areas of human resources, the AVP-HR will design and develop programs that continuously improve HR and overall organizational effectiveness in the short- and long-term. They will be expected to effectively manage HR staff by establishing clear goals and performance metrics, providing timely feedback and coaching, and balancing resources with staffing needs to meet the realistic expectations of a demanding private university environment. Additionally, the AVP-HR must excel in relationship management, developing strong connections with staff, faculty, students, senior leaders, and other key stakeholders. They will collaborate with University Communications to develop a strategic communications plan for HR to deliver timely and informative communications to faculty, staff, and other university stakeholders. Further, the AVP-HR will leverage webpages and social media as essential tools to promote the University as an employer of choice, attracting top talent to the community.

Across the broader University, the AVP-HR will engage with university leadership to provide guidance on succession planning, ensuring a robust pipeline of talent for the future. They will oversee the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified workforce, promoting employee engagement through programs that foster networking and community building. In order to cultivate a motivated and high-performing workforce, the AVP-HR will oversee the annual staff performance review and merit increase process, along with the design and management of employee recognition programs. In managing compensation programs and overseeing the administration of university benefits, the AVP-HR will ensure compliance in these programs. They will also be responsible for negotiating and implementing collective bargaining contracts, managing the annual HR budget, and collaborating with Information Technology Services to oversee HR management systems and data. A critical aspect of this role involves leading the creation of data and metrics to assess organizational health, facilitate workforce planning, and inform policy recommendations. Based on those metrics and policy recommendations, the AVP-HR will assess and design training and development plans that are intentionally designed to both support individual career growth and meet the evolving needs of the University now and into the future.

You can read more about the HR Department [here](#).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Continue to create and invest in programs and guidelines that strengthen HR operations across the University.

Over the last few years, the HR Department at Wesleyan has grown and evolved by introducing improved processes, implementing an enhanced professional development program for staff, increasing transparency around salaries and benefits, and participating in the transition to Workday. As such, it will be essential that the next AVP-HR possesses a strong track record of operational success across the broad range of HR functions. An ongoing challenge for this next leader will be maintaining a rigorous focus on compliance with state and federal mandates while fostering a supportive and human-centered workplace culture. Further, the AVP-HR will need to be innovative and entrepreneurial in how they deploy HR services by balancing needs with the resources available to the office.

While the HR office continues to professionalize and modernize, the next AVP-HR must be able to lead through this growth and maintain its trajectory. Key to this continued evolution will be leveraging existing, and, where possible implementing new, technologies and processes to improve organizational capacity and efficiency. By investing in the office's administrative structure, the AVP-HR will ensure that the office is aligned with the University's mission and goals.

Develop a dynamic HR team that provides best-in-class customer service.

The next AVP-HR will inherit a team that is eager to continue the growth of the office and their own skills as HR professionals. This leader must be able to quickly earn the trust of their team and work to unify them across HR subject area silos. To ensure that everyone in the office is working to their full potential, this next leader must be an advocate for the growth of their team by providing learning opportunities that strengthen their existing knowledge bases.

With a sharp eye toward customer service, the AVP-HR will tailor strategies to ensure consistent, high-level service delivery across all HR functions. This leader must find ways for the HR team to be more visible and connected to the campus community, intentionally fostering stronger working relationships with constituents and improving overall service delivery. In service to this goal, over the next few months, Wesleyan will be working with consultants to examine HR workload and current staffing levels in the department to determine appropriate alignment between expectations and resources.

Engage with leadership, stakeholders, and community members across Wesleyan to support an environment free from discrimination of any kind.

The AVP-HR will be charged with advancing current work focused on building a dynamic community that balances emotional intelligence with informed practice. Essential to this will be balancing the more compliance-focused facets of HR with a human-centered approach that prioritizes non-discrimination. This leader will be expected to work closely with the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion to create initiatives that further weave principles of non-discrimination into how Wesleyan approaches HR, staff recruitment and retention, campus climate and culture, employee/labor relations, and more.

Act as an HR subject matter expert across campus to build relationships and increase collaboration between units.

Central to the AVP-HR role is working closely with other university leaders to collaboratively troubleshoot issues while educating on best practices in HR and employee relations. This leader must be an HR subject matter expert with the ability to advise and collaborate across the wide range of HR service areas. In order to cultivate more administrative consistency between units, the AVP-HR needs to be adept at leveraging those relationships to influence the community in the absence of specific policies and guidelines. To be effective, this leader must be adept at quickly building trust and be genuinely engaged in the life of the campus community.

Continue to develop a long-term strategy for HR communications across the University.

The AVP-HR will continue to develop an overarching communications strategy for the HR department that includes more efficient channels of communication between HR and staff. Leveraging technology and other tools, the AVP-HR will ensure that all HR staff speaks with a singular voice and perspective that is rooted in compliance and best practices in HR and communication. To be successful, this leader must be skilled at translating often complex HR issues and jargon into understandable terms for all staff levels, keeping in mind the varied levels of education, capacity, and perspective present in Wesleyan's workforce.

Ensure that Wesleyan is a destination of choice for employees.

It will be vital for the next AVP-HR to understand Wesleyan's complex workforce and the unique needs of faculty, staff, and unions as they intersect with HR. This leader must continue to refine systems and guidance around performance management and employee accountability, celebrating employee success and effectively managing performance issues. Further, this leader must find ways to support staff throughout the entire life cycle of their tenure to create a consistent culture of support that conveys Wesleyan's values. This includes everything from improving the onboarding process for new hires, ensuring employee benefits are competitive and cost-effective, to ensuring that employees leaving the University are provided accurate and timely information regarding the end of their employment. Given the increased responsibilities for managers across Wesleyan, it will be necessary that the AVP-HR continues to make management training accessible to supervisors to help them resolve issues that may arise.

Additionally, the AVP-HR will work with Wesleyan's unions to ensure contract negotiations and other administrative needs are attended to in a timely and transparent manner. Two union contracts at Wesleyan are scheduled for renegotiation in Spring 2025 and negotiations are beginning in December 2024 with the newly formed student union, so the next AVP-HR will inherit that process at the beginning of their tenure. As such, the most successful candidates will have experience working with unions and will be well versed in negotiations.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring a strategic vision for the future of Wesleyan University, with a demonstrated track record of operational success leading the various HR functions. While no single candidate will have all the qualifications, the search committee seeks candidates with a well-rounded combination of the following abilities:

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree and at least seven years of progressively responsible human resources leadership/supervisory experience, or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience.
- Experience with and knowledge of all human resources functional areas (talent management, labor and employee relations, training and development, compensation, benefit and wellness, performance management, risk management, compliance) and demonstrated commitment to best practices.
- Current knowledge of federal labor laws, rules and regulations related to all human resources areas.
- Demonstrated experience with data informed decision making.
- Experience with evaluating, improving, and recommending processes.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to resolve complex employee relations issues with clarity, integrity, and respect for all parties.
- Demonstrated creative problem-solving and strategic-thinking skills.
- Demonstrated commitment to work within a diverse environment and interact openly with individuals of diverse backgrounds.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Advanced degree in Human Resources, Organizational Development, or related field.
- Experience/competency with Workday functionality.
- Experience with varied performance review, compensation, employee engagement and retention models.
- Previous experience designing and implementing training and development programs.
- Demonstrated experience managing strategic communication with all constituencies.
- Prior experience as an innovative change agent.
- Experience with unions that includes contract negotiations.
- SPHR or SHRM-SCP Certification.

LOCATION AND COMPENSATION

This role is an on-campus position. The Human Resources office is located at 55 High Street, Middletown, Connecticut.

The salary range for this role is \$184,425 - \$222,475.

TO APPLY

Interested candidates must submit a letter of interest and a current resume or curriculum vitae to be considered for the position. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and application materials should be directed to the [Isaacson, Miller website linked here](#).

Dan Rodas, Partner (he/him)
Angelo Alexander, Senior Associate (they/them)
Seema Khan, Senior Search Coordinator (she/her)

Wesleyan University, located in Middletown, Connecticut, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, marital status, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, political belief, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information or criminal record. We welcome applications from women and historically underrepresented minority groups. Inquiries regarding Title IX, Section 504 or any other non-discrimination policies should be directed to the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, Title IX and ADA/504 Coordinator.