



Search for the President
Association of Jesuit Colleges & Universities
Washington, D.C.

THE SEARCH

The [Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities – North America](#) (AJCU or “the Association”) seeks a visionary, collaborative, and mission-driven leader to serve as its next President. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead a distinguished association of institutions dedicated to the transformative power of Jesuit higher education.

The President will help AJCU reimagine its future, bringing greater coherence to the organization’s work, sharpening its priorities, and taking a fresh look at legacy structures and programs to enhance their value and impact. As the collective voice for 28 Jesuit colleges and universities, AJCU represents its member institutions to policymakers and various other constituencies, provides a forum for the exchange of information and experiences in Jesuit higher education, and encourages and facilitates collaborative initiatives among its network. In close collaboration with the Board of Directors, the President will guide this work forward, stewarding the Association’s resources and supporting the pursuit of AJCU’s goals and strategic vision.

This is a pivotal moment to join AJCU; the next President will lead the Association and its members at a time when faith-based higher education faces urgent questions about its future. As such, the Association has a responsibility not only to promote the value of Jesuit higher education, but also to advocate for access and opportunity to higher education more broadly.

Deeply grounded in Jesuit higher education and Ignatian spirituality, the next President must be able to unify and collaborate across a wide-ranging network of institutions, elevate Jesuit higher education nationally and globally, and help AJCU institutions adapt to a changing context. Success will come from building partnerships and cohesion, as well as setting a clear strategic direction that positions AJCU for the future. To accomplish this, the next President must be a visible and persuasive champion for Jesuit

values while also guiding the Association to think boldly about what it can and should be moving forward. This includes setting a clear strategic vision and shared priorities; exploring new ways and avenues to collaborate; evaluating and refining programs and initiatives; advancing strategies for its member institutions to address financial pressures; and developing approaches to sustain the sense of mission and community that have long defined Jesuit education.

Given the external nature of this role, AJCU seeks a leader who can be a visible and credible public voice, as well as a unifying convener and skilled facilitator of its member institutions as it looks towards its next chapter. The next President will also leverage the strength of AJCU's networks of over 50 professional affinity groups, from academic deans to student affairs and financial directors to mission officers, whose collaborations inform best practices and foster connections across the Association.

The next President will address a set of key priorities, opportunities, and challenges, outlined in this document. A detailed list of the desired qualifications and characteristics may be found starting on page 6. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

AJCU is a membership organization representing the 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and one Jesuit college in Belize, with three associate members in Canada. Rooted in the nearly 500-year-old educational tradition of the Society of Jesus, AJCU fosters collaboration, advocacy, and the deepening of Jesuit identity among its member institutions. The presidents of the 28 member institutions sit on the Association's Board of Directors. The board, working with its executive committee, oversees the AJCU president and sets strategy for the direction of Jesuit higher education in the United States and Belize. AJCU works in partnership with the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU), the provinces of which sponsor its member colleges and universities. The Association is also a member of the Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES), which serves as a forum for Chief Executive Officers of national higher education associations.

Jesuit education is distinguished by its commitment to *cura personalis*—the development of the whole person, intellectually, spiritually, and ethically—for lives of leadership and service. This educational philosophy emphasizes academic excellence, the pursuit of justice, and the formation of individuals who are “men and women for others.”

Since its founding in 1970 (as a successor to the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the Jesuit Educational Association), AJCU has had the following purposes: 1) continued study of new educational problems in light of Jesuit policy and practice; 2) continued effort to improve educational effectiveness of Jesuit colleges and universities; 3) formation of member school leaders in the Ignatian tradition; 4) effective promotion of inter-institutional cooperation, especially among Jesuit institutions; 5) a unified influence in national organizations, programs, and developments; 6) effective assistance in participating in federal and other national programs supporting research and educational projects; 7) effective

dissemination to member institutions of important information; and 8) a forum for the exchange of experiences and information.

In keeping with the Jesuit tenet of *magis*—the restless pursuit of excellence and the call to do more for the greater good—AJCU remains an organization committed to advancing these purposes in new and better ways. In the years to come, AJCU will continue to be a dynamic organization that will take every opportunity to support its membership with new ideas, programs, and services, and foster collaborations. Like all Jesuit works, AJCU roots its specific mission of higher education in the broader mission of the Society of Jesus.

In August 2025, Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., concluded his five-year term as president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU). He stepped into the role after decades of leadership in Jesuit higher education, including fourteen years as president of Loyola University Chicago. Under his leadership, Fr. Garanzini strengthened AJCU's advocacy and convening efforts, expanded AJCU's mission and leadership formation programs, and helped strengthen ties with Jesuit institutions worldwide. During this leadership transition, the Board of Directors has appointed Jenny Smulson, Vice President of Government Relations at AJCU, to serve as the interim executive director of AJCU.

Formation Programs

AJCU sponsors a range of programs to strengthen leadership, the integration of the Jesuit mission, and governance across its member institutions through the following programs:

- **AJCU Trustee Forum:** Provides trustees with the opportunities to ground their service in the heart of the Jesuit mission, connect with peers across institutions, and sharpen their skills needed for contemporary board leadership.
- ***In Fides* Magazine:** Free digital publication that is issued biannually for AJCU trustees. It focuses on the interests and development of trustees, including key issues of mission governance and pressing higher education topics affecting Jesuit colleges and universities. It also features insights from leaders across the network.
- **Ignatian Leadership Seminar:** Designed for faculty and administrators who are new to Jesuit higher education or to new leadership roles. The seminar builds knowledge of the Jesuit mission and spirituality, fosters leadership skills, and creates a cross-institutional peer network.
- **Ignatian Colleagues Program:** Seeks to educate and form administrators and faculty more deeply in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition of **higher education**. Participants learn through academic and experiential opportunities while building relationships with colleagues across Jesuit colleges and universities.
- **Ignatian Executive Leadership Academy (IELA):** A six-month program for executive-level leaders and senior administrators preparing for advanced roles in higher education, including the

presidency. IELA combines leadership training with formation to support leaders in discerning their individual desires and career paths.

These programs provide a strong foundation for formation across the AJCU network, with the understanding that new ways to deepen and expand the work will always emerge in service of Jesuit higher education.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

Reporting to the AJCU Board of Directors, the President serves as chief executive officer of the Association, and oversees all aspects of its strategy, operations, programs, and advocacy. The President is responsible for implementing the strategic vision and priorities for AJCU as defined by the Board, managing its staff and resources, and ensuring the effective delivery of initiatives that advance the mission of Jesuit higher education.

As the public face of AJCU, the President represents the Association in Washington, D.C. and nationally, cultivating relationships with federal policymakers and member institutions, including presidents, faculty, trustees, and mission officers, to develop and sustain initiatives that strengthen Jesuit colleges and universities. One of the most important relationships that the President must cultivate is the one with the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU) as the JCCU promotes common goals and coordinates common projects for the Jesuit provinces of Canada and the United States. The President also engages additional partners nationally and globally that will broaden AJCU's reach and help reinforce a shared sense of Jesuit identity across institutions. Internally, the President will professionalize AJCU's operations and cultivate a staff culture that is rooted in care, trust, and appreciation. Working closely with the Board, the President will clarify governance roles and organize the Board's work for greater effectiveness.

The President will oversee the Association's annual budget and steward resources to ensure AJCU's long-term sustainability. The President will oversee a staff of nine and manage an annual operating budget of approximately \$2.9 million.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT

To ensure that AJCU continues to serve as a vital convener and voice for Jesuit higher education, the next President will carry forward the Association's many strengths and better define the future. These strengths include a strong reputation for advancing the mission of Jesuit higher education, a committed network of member institutions, and a respected presence in Washington, D.C., where AJCU serves as a strong advocate on federal education policy issues. Building on this foundation, the next President will carry this work forward through the assessment and creation of a more focused, high-impact portfolio of meaningful programs that connect and strengthen its member institutions while also guiding the Association into a new chapter of collaboration, potential shared services, strategic direction, advocacy,

and global engagement. In stepping into the role, the President will address the following opportunities and challenges:

- **Strategic Leadership and the Future of Higher Education:** Collaborate with the presidents of the member institutions to shape AJCU's strategic vision and shared priorities, guiding deep, outcome-oriented collaboration among institutions and navigating the relationship with the Jesuit community. Help guide the membership to address the myriad challenges and opportunities presented to higher education in the current moment while being ever aware of but not overawed by the political, cultural, and policy landscape. Convene thought leadership on important topics like demographic changes and workforce shifts, understand the often competing nature of higher education and how issues impact the member institutions, and translate insights into practical collaboration and shared service opportunities.
- **Advocacy, Communications, and Representation:** Serve as the chief advocate and spokesperson for AJCU, representing Jesuit higher education before government agencies, policymakers, foundations, and other peer organizations. Balance direct lobbying with partnership strategies, particularly with other higher education advocacy groups, and help the network take a collective stance on issues that affect all members. Enhance AJCU's visibility and reputation nationally and globally, articulating its mission, values, and contributions to a wide range of audiences with clarity and confidence.
- **Member Engagement and Collaboration:** Foster strong relationships with presidents and senior leaders of member institutions, promoting and facilitating the sharing of best practices, resources, and innovative programs with deep and abiding links to the Jesuit mission. Ensure alignment between Board priorities, staff programming and initiatives, and member needs. Strengthen onboarding and support for new presidents across the network to help foster continuity within the network; shape board and member meetings to be purposeful and results-oriented. Strengthen the Association's 50+ self-organized professional "networks" of leaders, supported by AJCU staff.
- **Mission and Program Development:** Deepen the integration of the Jesuit charism and values into all AJCU activities. Sustain Jesuit identity in leadership by supporting Jesuit presence within AJCU and across institutions. Oversee, implement, and refine AJCU's portfolio of programs and initiatives, especially formation and leadership development, ensuring that they serve the needs of member institutions, evolve as appropriate, and advance shared goals. Conduct regular assessments of AJCU offerings to identify opportunities for collaboration expansion. Establish program metrics to track progress and value delivered to participants to amplify impact.
- **Mission Priority Examen (MPE) Oversight:** At the request of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, the U.S. Provincials (regional leaders of the Jesuits) and AJCU have established a self-study and peer review process for reaffirming the Jesuit, Catholic mission priorities of North American Jesuit colleges and universities. The AJCU president provides executive leadership for

the Mission Priority Examen process, including setting goals, coordinating logistics, and overseeing activities between the provincials and the presidents. The AJCU president serves as co-chair of the Joint Commission of the AJCU and the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU), which oversees the MPE and provides a venue for common projects between the AJCU and JCCU. The Joint Commission works to provide an appropriate balance of involvement between the provinces and the universities, honoring both the autonomy of each institution and the institutional sponsorship of the Society of Jesus. The President works with the Joint Commission, presidents, and provincials ensure transparency and learning across institutions and to balance this reflective process with demonstrated outcomes.

- **Organization and Financial Stewardship:** Lead, support, and develop AJCU staff, fostering a culture that balances care with productivity, collaboration, and an inclusive work environment. Strengthen internal communication and clarity across a dispersed team. Manage AJCU's finances responsibly, ensuring long-term financial health and aligning resources with priorities. Diversify revenue streams to support strategic priorities.
- **Innovation and Collaboration:** Working generatively with member institutions, the president will identify and develop opportunities for collaboration among member institutions and with external partners. Pilot shared services and initiatives that can be scaled for greater impact.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will be a mission-driven, strategic, and persuasive leader, with political savvy, a collaborative spirit, and ambition to guide AJCU into its next chapter. The Board of Directors welcomes Jesuits and lay individuals with a deep understanding of Jesuit/Catholic higher education for consideration. The President will bring many, if not all, of the following qualifications, experiences, skills, and abilities:

- A deep and demonstrated understanding of the Jesuit charism, Ignatian spirituality, and the mission and values of Jesuit higher education.
- A distinguished record of leadership experience in higher education, a Jesuit institution, or a related field.
- Experience convening senior leaders and facilitating collaborations; ability to unify institutions with different institutional characteristics, geographies, and contexts is strongly preferred.
- A strong commitment to the mission and values of Jesuit education.
- Exceptional strategic thinking, communication, listening, and interpersonal skills.
- Proven ability to build and maintain effective relationships with diverse stakeholders, including university presidents, faculty, staff, trustees, donors, and policymakers; demonstrated skill in building trust and consensus among diverse constituencies.
- Demonstrated understanding of the current challenges and opportunities facing higher education.
- Experience in advocacy, public policy, and government relations is highly desirable.

- Successful experience in fundraising and development is highly desirable.
- Strong financial management skills and experience in overseeing complex budgets.
- Ability to engage and work effectively with the Board of Directors to set strategic priorities. Experience strengthening Board organization and clarifying governance roles.
- Bring both a seriousness of purpose and sense of humor to challenges.
- Ability to articulate the value of Jesuit higher education to a variety of audiences, nationally and internationally.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$275,000-\$325,000 annually. The specific base compensation offered to a candidate may depend on various factors, including, but not limited to, the candidate's experience, special qualifications, and other factors the Board may consider in formulating an offer of employment.

AJCU is headquartered in Washington, D.C. While it is ideal for the next President to be based in D.C., the position may also be managed remotely with regular travel to maintain an active and engaged presence in Washington.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/association-jesuit-colleges-and-universities/president>.

Julie Filizetti, Pam Pezzoli, Leslie Lemus, Gabi Harrington, and Melissa Barravecchio
Isaacson, Miller

AJCU affirms its longstanding commitment to the principle of equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, veteran's status, or national origin.

AJCU affirms its commitment to abide by state regulations and federal laws pertaining to equal employment opportunity.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by AJCU. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by AJCU would supersede any conflicting information in this document.