



University of Vermont

Chief Human Resources Officer

University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont

THE SEARCH

The University of Vermont (UVM), the oldest university in Vermont and a public land-grant research university, seeks an innovative and strategic leader to serve as its next Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). This is an incredible opportunity to shape UVM's future at this pivotal moment of new leadership and the recent designation as a very high research activity university, or R1 institution, by implementing modern systems, creating organizational continuity, and fostering a supported, connected, and thriving workplace.

UVM plays a vital role in the well-being of communities and people across the state. The University community includes 4,482 faculty and staff and an enrollment approaching 15,000, including nearly 12,000 undergraduates. Today, UVM is a Public Ivy and research university of an ideal size, large enough to offer a breadth of ideas, resources, and opportunities, yet small enough to enable close faculty-student mentorship across all levels of study, from bachelor's to doctoral programs. Here, the UVM experience and activities are enriched by our location — from the energy and innovation of Burlington to the forests, farms, mountains, and independent spirit of Vermont.

This is an exciting time for a new leader to join UVM, a time when intentional organizational change is not only possible but desired. The University is ready for evolution and to more fully embrace its grand mission of education, research, and stewardship. Over the last year, the University has undergone many positive changes, including the appointment of a new President, a new Vice President for Finance and Administration, and achieving R1 status. New leadership and a new strategic planning process have generated energy and enthusiasm on campus for a more collaborative shared future. A central part of UVM's success will be a modern and interconnected human resources office. The CHRO will join an organization and leadership team that is ready to lead through action and build long-term systems, future-

oriented workforce strategies, and competitive total rewards incentives to ensure the entire UVM community feels valued.

The CHRO will oversee an office of about 40 staff and be responsible for the core HR functions that serve UVM's employees. Overall, the CHRO will be charged with leading the development and implementation of an HR strategy, including integrating a new ERP system, that is modern, proactive, and supports faculty and staff in their efforts to prepare ethical, engaged leaders who are ready to tackle complex challenges to benefit society. Given the decentralized nature of HR at UVM, the CHRO must serve as a collaborative and trusted counsel to the broad community of stakeholders across all units of the University. With overall accountability for HR performance across the University, the CHRO will work to ensure compliance with federal, state, and University labor standards and policies. They will also have responsibility for planning, developing, and implementing university-wide initiatives and strategies that support employee engagement, development, and UVM's aspiration to recruit and retain exceptional talent. They will develop strategies for their team to deliver proactive, high-quality service and communication while effectively leading through change. The most successful candidates must demonstrate knowledge of this current moment in higher education and, based on that, a vision for leading within a complex public university.

UVM has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications with cover letters should be submitted in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Established in 1791 as the fifth college in New England, UVM derives some of its distinctive character from Vermont's unique culture and sense of place. The campus spans Burlington's highest ridgeline overlooking Lake Champlain, between the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains. It is surrounded by Burlington (perennially voted one of America's most exciting small cities) and is housed in a classic New England campus that is both preserved and beautifully revived. The University draws students from more than 80 countries and almost 80 percent of students hail from outside Vermont, with nearly 50 percent coming from outside New England. It has attracted increasingly distinguished faculty over the years, including members of the National Academies, Fulbright scholars, fellows of leading professional organizations, NSF CAREER awardees, and NIH Outstanding Investigator awardees. UVM is ranked among the [top 100 public research universities](#) in the U.S., according to the National Science Foundation. The University also received the No. 1 ranking on *Princeton Review's* 2024 list for "Best Schools for Making an Impact." UVM has also made *Princeton Review's* "Green Rating Honor Roll" in recognition of sustainability-related practices, policies, and academics, and it ranked first among institutions with larger populations in its list of top green colleges.

The University today encompasses more than six million square feet of space, much of it housed in historic buildings. Over the past decade, UVM has invested nearly \$500 million in new construction and

renovations of teaching areas, research laboratories, athletic facilities, offices, residential halls, dining halls, and libraries, with new construction yielding an approximate 10% growth in physical space.

The University offers a rich complement of academic programs, including more than 100 bachelor's degree programs, 57 master's programs, 36 accelerated master's programs, 27 doctoral programs, and an MD program. The University's academic units include the Colleges of [Agriculture and Life Sciences](#), [Arts and Sciences](#), [Education and Social Services](#), [Engineering and Mathematical Sciences](#), [Nursing and Health Sciences](#), the [Larner College of Medicine](#), the [Grossman School of Business](#), the [Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources](#), the [Patrick Leahy Honors College](#), the [Graduate College](#) the [Division of Professional and Continuing Education](#), and the [UVM Libraries](#), as well as [UVM Extension](#). As the state's only research university and only medical college, UVM plays a special role in the region as a research hub. UVM houses state and federal research expertise and facilities such as the Vermont State Climate Office (VSCO), USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, and a first-of-its-kind [USDA-ARS Food Systems Research Center](#). Established in 2019 with federal funding appropriated by Congress, the center is the first new physical location established by the Agricultural Research Service with a university partner in more than two decades.

Strategic Plan: Green, Gold, and Bold – Green Mountains, Gold Standard, Bold Future

Recognizing the vital role the University plays in the state and in the broader world, UVM has embarked on a new strategic planning process that aims to shape its future by fostering open, transparent engagement, honoring Vermont's distinctive character, and underscoring the University's "[Our Common Ground](#)" values. In Fall 2025, UVM worked to gather feedback across campus through direct communication that integrates digital and interpersonal interactions to foster meaningful connections and promote constructive progress. Leveraging this data, the University has begun to define a new, three-pronged strategic approach to the future. While it highlights three areas of success, the efforts will be interrelated, working in concert with one another to fully realize UVM's significant potential. These three prongs are: student success and experience; focusing on and expanding upon UVM's distinctive research strengths; and better realizing UVM's land-grant mission by partnering with the surrounding communities, businesses, and state. With this plan, UVM will champion sustainable, hopeful, and bold futures and a campus community that is empowered to forge purposeful paths into work and life.

Read more about the [current strategic planning efforts](#) at UVM.

State and Region

UVM has a unique sense of community, culture, and character, building on the state of Vermont's culture, which values people and the natural environment. With a population of 647,000 and as the state with the highest percentage of its residents living in rural areas, Vermont's size offers the opportunity for students and faculty to identify and test out real and scalable solutions to address complex societal and environmental issues critical to rural areas across the nation. From workforce development, internships, research, Extension, and community outreach, UVM is embedded across Vermont. It is well positioned to

continue to address challenges thanks to several cross-cutting research and outreach initiatives, including the [Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships](#), [UVM Center on Rural Addiction](#), [Center for Research on Vermont](#), and [Center for Rural Studies](#).

UVM is also a major driver and partner in industry research and workforce development in the state. In 2023, Vermont GaN—a partnership between UVM, GlobalFoundries, and the state—was designated as one of 31 [Tech Hubs](#) by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, unlocking up to \$75 million in federal grants for advancing research in semiconductor technology.

Leadership

Dr. Marlene Tromp | President

Dr. Marlene Tromp became the 28th president of the University of Vermont in July 2025. Prior to her role at UVM, Dr. Tromp served as president of Boise State University for six years. She worked in partnership with the faculty to increase the academic excellence and research profile of Boise State and shattered graduation, research funding and philanthropy records throughout her presidency. She increased access for students from all backgrounds, providing exceptional opportunities and integrating the University deeply with the local community and the state's economy. With academic leaders, she created pathbreaking partnerships with industry and nonprofits to advance students and the state. She has spent the majority of her administrative career at AAU institutions. She served as the campus provost and executive vice chancellor at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where she oversaw one of the most outstanding faculties on the continent. She also served as a dean and vice provost at Arizona State University, named the most innovative in the nation ten years in a row.

Alicia Estey | Vice President for Finance and Administration

Alicia Estey joined UVM as [Vice President for Finance and Administration](#) in August 2025, bringing 20 years of leadership experience in higher education. Her expertise includes governance, stakeholder engagement, and financial stewardship aligned with academic and public service missions. Previously, Alicia served as Chief Financial and Operating Officer and Vice President for Finance and Operations at Boise State University, where she managed the University's budget and led teams in finance, legal, compliance, facilities, capital projects, IT, and public health and safety.

At UVM, Alicia serves as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Finance and Administration, overseeing financial stability, operational integrity, human resources, facilities management, capital projects, transportation, maintenance, custodial services, sustainability, the budget office, financial shared services, and auxiliary units. Alicia holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Idaho, a Master of Public Health from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accountancy from Boise State University.

Governance and Unions

UVM administration, led by the President and the Provost/Senior Vice President, and the [Faculty Senate](#) share responsibility for managing the University's academic affairs. The [UVM Staff Council](#) plays an advisory role in raising staff issues and concerns, as well as planning a variety of activities for staff. The [Student Government Association](#) and [Graduate Student Senate](#) also play advisory roles to the administration, recognize student clubs and organizations, and allocate funding generated through student activities fees.

UVM faculty also established a chapter of United Academics (AAUP/AFT) full- and part-time faculty unions in the early 2000s. Faculty from the Larner College of Medicine and the program in military studies are not part of these collective bargaining units. There are also six bargaining units representing Full Time Faculty, Part Time Faculty, Custodial and Trades Staff, Professional and Clerical Staff, Police Services, and Graduate Students. 59% of all university employees (excluding student employees, grad assistants, postdocs, and temps) fall under one of these collective bargaining agreements. All other employees (41%) are non-union.

ROLE OF THE CHRO

The CHRO serves on UVM's leadership team and reports to the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The CHRO is responsible for overseeing approximately 40 HR professionals, including a team that oversees the areas of Total Rewards, HR Technology & Data, Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, HR Communications, and Equal Opportunity. The CHRO effectively manages a central HR staff as well as business partners embedded across the University by establishing clear goals and performance metrics, creating more consistent HR policies, providing timely feedback and coaching, and developing a consultative approach to human resources. As a process engineer and subject matter expert across all areas of human resources, the CHRO aligns HR operations with UVM's mission by diagnosing, designing, and developing strategies, frameworks, and programs that continuously improve operations and enhance the employee experience.

Across campus, this leader serves as a principal advisor to the Vice President for Finance and Administration, General Counsel, and other university leaders on all matters related to human resources. Further, they act as a trusted partner to union and non-union staff, faculty, and retirees as they guide the ongoing evolution and refinement of UVM's HR systems, processes, and technology. They oversee the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce and promote greater employee engagement through innovative, cost-effective programs and policies. Leveraging data and HR best practices, the CHRO assesses organizational health, makes policy recommendations, and facilitates comprehensive workforce planning to enhance UVM's organizational impact.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHRO

The next CHRO will be energized and inspired by the following opportunities and challenges:

Continue to develop modern, trusted, and collaborative HR functions

Over the last few years, the HR office has gone through significant changes in leadership, staffing, and structure. The next CHRO will be charged with creating stability while promoting forward thinking within the office and university-wide, developing a modern and trusted HR infrastructure. Doing so at UVM will require authentic community engagement and building trust over time with intentional change. The CHRO should lead with a consultative approach, guiding their team to meaningfully engage various parts of the campus community around HR needs and pain points. At the same time, they must be able to move decisively from engagement to concept to execution and clearly communicate about timelines and desired outcomes. To be effective, the CHRO will support and mentor the HR team centrally, ensuring that leaders and staff have the necessary skills, confidence, and training to lead within their subject areas. The CHRO will also empower their team for proactive collaborations with the HR functions across the University. By clarifying reporting structures, creating operational frameworks, and investing in team development, the CHRO will work to build a more connected and strategic HR office grounded in customer service, trust, and HR best practices.

Partner closely with university leadership to evolve HR objectives in support of UVM strategic planning

In addition to changes in the HR unit's leadership and structure, UVM has undergone broader shifts in recent years. These changes have made this a pivotal and exciting time for the University. A new CHRO will work closely with university leadership to harness the optimism and energy around innovation across campus by helping to build a clear operational roadmap for change management over time to achieve UVM's larger goals. As a keen change manager, the CHRO will be expected to assess the current organizational capacity, propose ideas for a more engaged and supported workforce, work collaboratively to find solutions, and cultivate capacity for further evolution.

The CHRO will promote creativity to accomplish goals while ensuring adherence to best practices and compliance. Over the next few years, many public institutions of higher education are likely to face further scrutiny from state and federal agents. 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. To be successful, the CHRO must lead with UVM's spirit of shared governance and demonstrate the ability to listen, synthesize, and provide expert guidance to navigate HR issues, lead difficult conversations, and resolve conflicts.

Develop strategies to ensure the recruitment, development, and retention of a future-oriented workforce

The CHRO must be a champion of the entire life cycle of the employee experience from onboarding through retirement. UVM is one of the largest employers in Vermont, and its impact on the state's economy and workforce is a central part of its mission as a land grant university. It is vital that the CHRO bring a deep understanding of this moment in higher education to build a modern approach to recruiting, developing, and retaining a top-notch workforce that is ready for UVM's current moment and vibrant

future. The CHRO, working alongside colleagues in Finance and Administration, will review and revise UVM's approach to compensation and classification to ensure that UVM can offer a total rewards package that is competitive in the market and financially sound. Additionally, they will refine existing or create new initiatives in workforce planning, benefits and retirement, performance management, staff engagement, and professional development to ensure that UVM continues to be an employer of choice.

Oversee and refine existing and new union relationships

UVM is home to six unions, all in various stages of development, including a staff union that unionized in 2021 and a burgeoning graduate student union. With this growth, there is an opportunity to build better working partnerships with union leaders and define a new future for labor relations at UVM. To do so, the CHRO must be responsive to the different needs of each union while ensuring that uplifting UVM's mission is at the center of any negotiations. They must bring a track record of cultivating strong working relationships with union leaders, rooted in good faith negotiations, and the ability to lead through influence. Additionally, they must balance institutional priorities with employee needs and, when necessary, thoughtfully lead conversations to ensure equitable outcomes for everyone.

Lead efforts to modernize technologies, HR systems, and processes

The CHRO must be a nimble leader, adept at tailoring established best practices for UVM's evolving organizational context. In their continuing efforts to modernize, UVM is currently undergoing an RFP process to select a new university-wide ERP system. Strategically, the goal is to move toward integrated technology across the University. The CHRO will be a key team member in the rollout, integration, and cross-campus training of the new system. Outside of technology, the CHRO will need to assess existing structures, systems, and processes, some of which may be inchoate, to ensure policies and practices are compliant, impactful, and equitably enforced. With an eye toward risk and efficiency, they will evaluate processes and programs to ensure the University is serving all employees. As new systems and processes come online, the CHRO, in collaboration with other campus leaders, will ensure that new policies and procedures are widely known, adopted, and thoughtfully integrated into existing strategies. Using these new systems and practices, the CHRO must leverage data-driven insights to guide long-term strategies for their office and the University.

Cultivate and lead a proactive and comprehensive HR communications strategy

As UVM continues to evolve, there is a desire across campus for greater transparency and collaboration around decision-making, and for understanding the drivers of organizational change. To meet this demand, the CHRO will build an overarching communications strategy for the [HR division](#) that includes clear channels of communication between HR and staff. When transparency is not possible due to compliance or legal issues, the CHRO will strive to provide updates and information where appropriate. To build credibility as a leader and operate within UVM's decentralized administrative system, the CHRO must ensure that changes are developed in consultation with the affected constituency groups and then clearly and proactively communicated across campus. The CHRO will establish a regular cadence of

communications both within their team structure and university-wide to ensure that HR communications are timely and accessible.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

For consideration, candidates must have the following qualifications:

- A Bachelor's degree is required, with an advanced degree preferred; Professional HR certifications (SHRM-SCP, SPHR, etc.) are strongly preferred.
- At least 10 years of demonstrated leadership experience in human resources, including expertise in key areas such as compensation, classification, benefits, workforce development, succession planning, collective bargaining, contract administration, and change management.
- Experience in conflict resolution and negotiation.
- Experience in higher education or similar shared governance environment is highly desirable, along with knowledge and experience related to federal and state laws and regulations as related to HR and higher education (Title IX, ADA, Affirmative Action).
- Experience working with unions, including negotiating CBAs, is required.

While no candidate will embody every quality, successful candidates will possess many of the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience consulting and advising senior-level executives in broad areas of human resources; must demonstrate a commitment to an inclusive and collaborative leadership style and have strong interpersonal and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, labor law, and data-based evaluation.
- Demonstrated experience dealing with highly sensitive and confidential situations and a history of successful collaboration with multiple diverse constituencies.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The compensation for this role is expected to be \$225-270K. The demands on the role necessitate a commitment to being a consistent physical presence on campus.

Located in [Burlington, Vermont](#), one of the top 25 best college towns in the U.S., UVM's campus sits between the shores of Lake Champlain and the slopes of the Green Mountains. Far from the middle of nowhere, Burlington is less than a 2-hour drive from Montreal, a 4-hour drive from Boston, and connected to hundreds of destinations through Burlington International Airport.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website [linked here](#).

Lindsay Gold, Partner
Angelo Alexander, Senior Associate
Julia Hochner, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

The University of Vermont is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any category legally protected by federal or state law. The University encourages applications from all individuals who will contribute to the diversity and excellence of the institution.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the University of Vermont. 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 the University of Vermont would supersede any conflicting information in this document.