



Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer
Salisbury University
Salisbury, MD

THE SEARCH

Salisbury University (SU) seeks an innovative and results-oriented change leader to serve as its next Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer (AVP-CHRO). This is a tremendous opportunity for a seasoned, inspiring human resource leader to galvanize the campus community and maximize the potential of all its members. The new AVP-CHRO will be a transformational people and culture leader dedicated to creating optimal working environments and nurturing interconnected systems and policies for SU employees. The AVP-CHRO will bring a proven record of positive change management and a forward-looking approach to HR, responsive to the evolving landscape of higher education.

Founded in 1925, Salisbury is a residential institution serving approximately 6,300 undergraduate and 730 graduate and post-baccalaureate students from across the U.S. and more than 50 countries. It boasts its focus on student-centered learning, hands-on experiences, and a commitment to both academic excellence and community engagement, all within a vibrant, accessible, and affordable environment.

Reporting to the Vice President of Administration and Finance, the AVP-CHRO will be responsible for leading a human resources function and strategy that aligns with and advances Salisbury's mission and strategic direction. The AVP-CHRO will develop and administer human resource policies, procedures, programs, and services that meet the University's needs, goals, and objectives. They will deliver a best-in-class human resource function aligned with evolving workforce trends and the unique needs of the Salisbury community.

The AVP-CHRO will be a seasoned, strategic, and collaborative human resources leader with extensive experience in a broad range of functional areas and a proven track record of overseeing large-scale, complex initiatives. They will bring a visible, transformative, and collaborative approach to HR, working closely across the campus community on strategic human resources issues and institutional priorities.

Salisbury University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

[Salisbury University](#) is a medium-sized, public, residential liberal arts institution in Salisbury, Maryland, serving 7,025 students: 6,288 undergraduates and 737 graduate students. Most students (82% of the total student population) come from the State of Maryland, the majority from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. SU is also home to over 200 international students from more than 50 countries.

Established in 1925 with a need to meet the demand for teachers in rural areas, Salisbury has since evolved into a hub of academic excellence and innovation. From its humble beginnings as a “normal school,” SU has grown into a comprehensive university offering diverse undergraduate and graduate programs. The first Bachelor of Science curriculum was introduced in 1935, followed by the first masters-level curriculum in 1962, and the first doctoral program in 2012.

A proud member of the [University System of Maryland](#) since 1988, Salisbury is among “America’s Top Colleges.” SU leads nationally in sustainability and public engagement, while initiatives in diversity, study abroad, and student life have opened many doors for faculty, staff, and students.

Salisbury University is an NCAA Division III member of the Coast to Coast (C2C) Conference (18 sports) and the New Jersey Athletic Conference (Football). With over 500 student-athletes in 23 varsity sports, SU is recognized as one of the nation’s most competitive intercollegiate athletics programs, regardless of division. The Sea Gulls have won a combined 23 team national championships, 24 individual national championships, and 201 conference championships and have produced 50 Academic All-Americans.

SU’s 600+ faculty are recognized nationally and internationally, notably in the areas of research, scholarship, and creative achievement. The rich environment for teaching and learning is supported by 405 full-time tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track instructional faculty.

Essential to all University activities and initiatives are the employees who tirelessly support and advance the institution’s mission and enhance the student experience at Salisbury. The University employs more than 1,000 staff members in a variety of non-faculty roles.

Salisbury University embraces a strong shared governance model to achieve academic success. Salisbury’s longstanding core values are excellence, student-centeredness, learning, community, civic engagement, and diversity and inclusion. These values must be lived and experienced as integral to everyday campus life so that students make the connection between what they learn and how they live.

Salisbury’s scenic 200-acre [campus](#) is conveniently situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. The easily accessible campus includes nearly 100 buildings. The Shore’s first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified new construction project, recognized by the U.S. Green Building Council, was built at SU and 10 additional such buildings have followed in the last decade. SU also has some of the best athletics facilities in NCAA Division III. Beyond the main campus, the Nanticoke River Center in nearby Riverton serves students studying the

environment; and the Plaza Gallery Building in downtown Salisbury, home to art, science, and a future entrepreneurship center, is playing a visible role in the urban center's renaissance. Since 2000, SU has seen some \$350 million in new construction. Known as "Maryland's Coastal College Town," the [City of Salisbury](#) has long been the crossroads of the historic Delmarva Peninsula. With a population of some 30,000, it's the largest city on the Eastern Shore and the No. 1 fastest-growing city in Maryland, according to city officials. Founded in 1732 and incorporated in 1854, it also is the county seat for Wicomico. The area offers the ideal mix of an urban center, nestled within a scenic rural region, centrally located to major metropolitan areas. Salisbury is approximately a 2.5-hour drive from major cities like Baltimore, Washington D.C, and Philadelphia, and less than four hours from New York City. Salisbury has been named one of the "150 Best Places to Live in the U.S." as well as one of the safest cities to live.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

President | Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre

Dr. Carolyn "Lyn" Ringer Lepre became [Salisbury University's 10th president](#) on Friday, July 15, 2022. She came to the Delmarva Peninsula from Radford University in Virginia, where she formerly served as interim president.

Lepre began her academic career as a faculty member at California State University, Chico; the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY. During her tenure at Marist, she served as chair of the Department of Communication and director of the college's Honors Program. In 2013, she was named assistant dean of Marist's School of Communication and the Arts, advancing to interim dean in 2014 and then dean in 2016.

Prior to joining SU, President Lepre served as provost and vice president for academic affairs and interim president at Radford from 2021 to 2022. There, she collaborated with the academic leadership team and student-centered faculty and staff to advance critical initiatives designed to foster the delivery of high-quality academic programs and experiences and support the University's strategic plan.

President Lepre earned her B.A. in English and journalism at Miami University (OH), her M.S. in journalism from Ohio University, and her Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Florida.

Vice President of Administration and Finance | Aurora Edenhart-Pepe

Aurora Edenhart-Pepe became Vice President of Administration and Finance at Salisbury University in October 2023. Aurora oversees the University's budget, financial operations, and administrative functions. As a member of the President's Cabinet, Aurora contributes to key decision-making processes that shape the University's direction and enhance opportunities for students and stakeholders.

Before joining SU, Aurora served as the Chief Administrative Officer at Wake Forest University School of Law. During her tenure, she provided organizational and operational leadership, particularly during the

challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic. She successfully managed all business administration, operations, and financial aspects of the law school.

Aurora's career also includes human resources and organizational leadership positions at Georgetown University Law Center and Duke University.

ROLE OF ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

The AVP-CHRO oversees the implementation, administration, and assessment of a comprehensive human resources program, positioning Salisbury University as a leader in higher education HR administration. Reporting to the Vice President of Administration and Finance, the AVP-CHRO will serve as an internal consultant and collaborative business partner across the University. The AVP-CHRO oversees and leads a team of ten human resource professionals responsible for all HR activities and operations. This includes but is not limited to: human resource operations, employee experience, benefits and leave administration, recruiting and position management, employee and labor relations, talent and organizational development, and HRIS. Learn more about HR at Salisbury [here](#).

In alignment with the [university's goals](#), the AVP-CHRO will drive the human resources strategic plan and help shape the future of HR at Salisbury. With the recent introduction of Workday, the AVP-CHRO has the opportunity to identify service gaps, understand campus needs, and improve innovative systems, programs, and processes to support campus efforts. The AVP-CHRO will be a seasoned HR leader who partners with institutional leadership and takes a consultative approach across the University to develop and implement priorities and initiatives, ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the University System of Maryland (USM) and University policies and procedures.

The AVP-CHRO will provide consultation and guidance to senior staff and department managers on human resources issues pertaining to staff, faculty, and student employees. They will serve as an internal resource for policy development and coordination of all official policies within the University, as well as in the design of programs and services. They will address day-to-day HR needs while strategically shaping the HR function to meet current and future demands.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Serving as the Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer for the University, the successful candidate will bring substantial leadership and change management experience, as well as the ability to work collaboratively and decisively with senior leadership across Salisbury. This person will possess the management and technical skills to execute the opportunities and challenges below:

Serve as a catalyst for campus collaboration and strategic HR leadership

The AVP-CHRO will be a highly visible member of the University, engaged across the campus, and recognized as a valuable resource and collaborator on organizational development and strategic

initiatives. They must actively build and develop strong, synergistic relationships with staff and faculty leadership to support human resource needs and advance Salisbury's mission.

As an engaged presence on campus, the AVP-CHRO will communicate with University units and other key stakeholders, clearly articulating priorities and soliciting feedback. Given HR's interface with all units across the University, the AVP-CHRO must effectively communicate information to constituents with varied knowledge and relationships to HR. The AVP-CHRO must possess a clear, concise, and compelling communication style that fosters buy-in and instills trust and credibility, especially when interfacing with high-level executives.

Develop, implement, and steward HR systems and processes that support best-in-class HR functions

The AVP-CHRO will have broad opportunities to leverage technology to attain operational efficiencies across the human resources function. Salisbury University went live with Workday as its system of record in July 2024. Within this context, the AVP-CHRO has important opportunities to continue building out and documenting this system to best support the University's current and future needs. Through this work, they will champion data-driven decision-making and human resources processes that reduce transactional tasks, resulting in a more consultative human resources approach.

Coalesce constituents around a unified strategic HR vision

The AVP-CHRO must bring a nimble ability to understand past, present, and future – Salisbury's history, the current work of the HR team, and recent changes that have been implemented and have yet to be made and continue to actualize the vision for the future through paperwork, people work, and project management. This AVP-CHRO will identify the metrics against which to benchmark success and will be responsible for developing strategies to address weaknesses, enhance user experience, and garner additional trust and support of the department.

Develop communication and engagement programs to socialize a customer-focused Office of Human Resources that supports an engaged and productive workforce

The AVP-CHRO will develop HR communication plans to help the SU community better understand the University's human resources value proposition, total rewards programming, and HR initiatives. The successful candidate will engage staff and faculty leadership across SU to support the recruitment and retention of high-performing employees. The AVP-CHRO will ensure that current employees receive updated details about the University's total rewards offerings and that the University's various constituent groups are provided with communication and engagement to support their diverse HR needs.

Lead the HR office and staff

The AVP-CHRO will be an advocate for and energizing leader to HR staff, supporting their professional growth and needs and continuing to develop networks of constructive relationships to support University and department needs. The AVP-CHRO will strategically review the current office structure to ensure

optimal alignment with the needs of the SU community, articulating and executing a long-term vision for HR that will allow the department to realize its potential as a strategic and trusted campus partner. They will also oversee and maintain a cost-effective budget for the Human Resources function.

Support and welcome a diverse employee community

The AVP-CHRO will steadfastly ensure that the human resources practices of the University serve all members of Salisbury's workforce in an inclusive and welcoming way. They will actively support and prioritize equity and inclusion initiatives, ensuring that human resources policies and practices reflect these values. They will engage with leadership and stakeholders to strengthen and grow programs that contribute to the recruitment, development, and retention of a talented, diverse workforce. Additionally, they will stay current with trends and changes in workforce development and management to build and foster a welcoming, engaged community.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Business Administration, or other related field and 8+ years of progressively responsible human resources experience, including at least 4 years of leadership/management experience.
- Experience with and knowledge of human resource functional areas (talent management, labor and employee relations, training and development, benefit and wellness, performance management, risk management, and compliance) and demonstrated commitment to best practices.
- Current knowledge of federal labor laws, rules, and regulations related to all human resources areas.
- Experience developing and executing large-scale HR programs
- Experience with evaluating, improving, and recommending processes.
- Demonstrated creative problem-solving and strategic thinking skills
- Appreciation and support of shared governance
- Excellent presentation and communication skills and ability to resolve complex employee relations issues with clarity, integrity, and respect for all parties.
- Demonstrated commitment to work within a diverse environment and interact openly with individuals of diverse backgrounds.

Preferred Qualifications

- Previous higher education experience.
- Proven experience with or competency in Workday functionality.
- Previous experience designing and implementing systems and processes.

- Experience with unions that includes contract negotiations.
- Demonstrated experience with data-informed decision-making.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is an on-campus position. The salary range for this role is \$170,000-\$180,000.

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. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rebecca Kennedy, Partner (she/her)
Lehman Robinson, Senior Associate (he/him)
Cortnee Bolland, Senior Search Coordinator (they/them)
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/salisbury-university/avp-chro>

Diversity and inclusion are core values of Salisbury University. We strive to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives of our community is harnessed to create value for our institution, today and in the future. To this end, the University recruits exceptional and diverse faculty, staff, and students from across Maryland, the United States, and around the world, supporting all members of the University community as they work together to achieve institutional goals and vision. To learn more about the University's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus, please visit <http://www.salisbury.edu/equity/>

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