



Chief Financial and Operating Officer  
New England Conservatory  
Boston, MA

## THE SEARCH

[New England Conservatory](#) (NEC), a premier incubator for musical excellence, seeks a strategic, collaborative, and mission-driven Chief Financial and Operating Officer (CFO/O) to provide enterprise-wide leadership across its financial and operational functions at a pivotal moment for the institution's evolution. The CFO/O will join NEC during a period of opportunity, playing a central role in strengthening the institution's financial and operational foundation in support of artistic excellence, student success, and long-term sustainability.

The CFO/O will oversee and coordinate a broad administrative portfolio that includes finance and accounting, security, information technology, and legal and compliance. In this role, the CFO/O will provide stewardship of NEC's institution-wide operating budget, ensuring that financial and capital resources are thoughtfully aligned with NEC's artistic, educational, and strategic priorities. The CFO/O will play a critical role in advancing NEC's long-term vision, serving as a trusted advisor and partner to senior leadership and the Board of Trustees on issues of resource allocation, operational sustainability, and institutional risk in support of NEC's mission and future aspirations. Bringing disciplined judgment, strategic perspective, and a collaborative approach, they will guide system modernization, strengthen operational effectiveness, and bring financial rigor to both ongoing and emerging initiatives. As a key member of NEC's executive leadership team, the CFO/O will thoughtfully steward NEC's legacy while helping to position NEC for innovation and enduring sustainable impact.

To be successful, the CFO/O will address a number of key opportunities and challenges, listed below and outlined in detail on pages 5-6 of this document:

- Provide strategic financial and operational leadership at a consequential moment for the institution;
- Serve as an enterprise leader, cohesively aligning finance, operations, risk, technology;
- Advance modernization and integration of financial, academic, and administrative systems;
- Support and evaluate emerging and expanding revenue streams; and

- Operate effectively within a highly engaged leadership and governance context.

Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, is assisting the New England Conservatory in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

New England Conservatory educates and trains musicians of all ages from around the world, drawing on our distinguished faculty's deep reservoir of talent, as well as our creative community and educational partnerships. We are devoted to inculcating the highest standards of artistic excellence and nurturing individual artistic sensibility and creative growth. Understanding that music is one of the transcendent expressions of human civilization, NEC is committed to advancing music's contribution to contemporary society.

### The College

Today, NEC enrolls approximately 750 graduate and undergraduate students from 46 states and 39 countries across a variety of disciplines, including: brass; chamber music; collaborative piano; composition; conducting; contemporary improvisation; jazz studies; music history and musicology; music theory; percussion; piano; strings; voice and opera; and woodwinds. Degree offerings include the Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts. NEC also offers the Undergraduate Diploma, Graduate Diploma, and the prestigious and highly selective Artist Diploma.

### Expanded Education

As part of NEC's mission to make lifelong music education available to everyone, Expanded Education (comprising Preparatory School, Adult Education, and Summer Programs) delivers training and performance opportunities for children, pre-college students, and adults. NEC Prep offers open-enrollment educational opportunities for pre-college students across New England. It currently serves 1400 students in the region, including those enrolled in NEC through a partnership with Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Prep musicians attend individual lessons and classes, and participate in chamber music and 20-22 large ensembles, including orchestras, choruses, and wind ensembles. It is one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation.

In 1962, NEC Prep established one of the finest youth orchestras in the world: the highly selective Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (YPO), which tours internationally every two years and has performed in some of the world's finest concert halls. Prep is also home to the highly celebrated and selective NEC Youth Chorale, Youth Camerata, Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Ensemble.

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Expanded Education also opens the doors of NEC to the broader New England community of adult music lovers and learners, offering an expansive array of musical training, including private instrument lessons, ensembles, and classes. Workshops, masterclasses, ensembles, and summer institutes are all taught by the area's most highly qualified musicians. More than 300 students are enrolled in adult programming each year.

## Faculty and Staff

NEC's faculty is best in class across a wide array of musical disciplines. The Conservatory is home to over 500 faculty artists who are pre-eminent in their fields, 31 of whom are members of the renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra, and numerous others who are distinguished composers, soloists, performers, and scholars in their own right. The NEC faculty has always included many BSO musicians (131 over the years), and, currently, 50 members of the BSO have at least one NEC affiliation — whether as an alumnus, a current faculty member, or a parent of an NEC Prep or College student. NEC also boasts 11 current or former faculty and/or alumni who are MacArthur Fellows. Across various non-faculty roles, the Conservatory employs over 165 part-time and full-time staff and manages a robust student employment program. The employee commitment to excellence and student achievement is the foundational thread of NEC's esteemed legacy.

## Facilities

Located in Boston on the Avenue of the Arts in the Fenway Cultural District, the NEC campus consists of four buildings that stretch along St. Botolph Street and Huntington Avenue. The campus is bounded by Symphony Hall, the Northeastern University campus, the YMCA, and commercial and residential buildings.

The Blumenthal Family Library is home to one of the major music collections in the United States, including more than 150,000 volumes of scores, sound and video recordings, and books about music, as well as subscriptions to all of the major music journals and electronic music databases. In addition, the library archives and special collections boast a rich treasure of manuscripts, first editions, personal papers, and recorded performances of many of the great composers and musicians who have taught and performed at NEC over the past 150 years.

NEC's premier performance venue, the historic and acoustically superb Jordan Hall, is one of the world's most admired concert halls. It provides an intimate and versatile setting for a wide variety of performances and recording sessions featuring NEC students and faculty, with seating for over 1,000. On weekends, the hall is used by some of Boston's top professional arts organizations, including Vivo Performing Arts, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, and the Boston Early Music Festival. In addition to Jordan Hall, NEC has seven other performance spaces on campus, including three acoustically superb, state-of-the-art performance spaces in the Student Life and Performance Center (SLPC). This variety of performance venues enables NEC to host more than 1,000 performances each year.

## Finances and Philanthropy

To sustain the enterprise and its annual operating costs of \$63 million, NEC, like many other conservatories, relies heavily on tuition. In fiscal year 2025, the Conservatory drew roughly 68 percent of its revenue from tuition and room-and-board (\$37.7 million) and 14 percent from the endowment (\$7.5 million). As of June 2025, the Conservatory's endowment totaled \$195.1 million.

In fiscal year 2025, Advancement raised \$27 million in private philanthropy; in the same year, unrestricted giving resulted in \$4 million to the NEC Fund. In fiscal year 2026, the team is working to meet its major giving goal of \$20 million, in addition to meeting an unrestricted giving goal of \$4.3 million.

## Role of Chief Financial and Operating Officer

The Chief Financial and Operating Officer will serve as NEC's chief financial and business officer responsible for finance and administrative operations, overseeing financial planning, budgeting, accounting, audits, risk management, and business operations.

In addition to leading core financial functions, the CFO/O will oversee and coordinate a broad administrative portfolio that includes security, information technology, and legal and compliance operations. This portfolio encompasses responsibility for institutional risk management; emergency preparedness and response; the safeguarding of students, faculty, staff, and visitors; and the systems and infrastructure that support NEC's academic, artistic, and administrative activities. The CFO/O will provide executive oversight of NEC's technology environment, including enterprise systems, cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and performance and instructional technologies essential to NEC's educational and artistic mission.

The CFO/O will ensure that NEC's financial systems are transparent and provide the necessary data for effective decision-making and for understanding this data throughout the institution. The CFO/O will lead through collaboration, clear communication, and hands-on engagement, bringing cohesion and accountability to NEC's financial and operations functions. The CFO/O will be a key partner to senior leadership and the Board of Trustees—including the Finance, Investment, and Audit Risk and Compliance Board committees—helping translate strategy into executable financial and operational plans and ensuring sound decision-making across the enterprise.

The CFO/O will oversee a team of five direct reports.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The CFO/O will join NEC to lead a newly structured Finance and Administration division, aligning financial and operational functions under the purview of this single cabinet-level leader. In this context, the CFO/O will thoughtfully address the following key opportunities and challenges:

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**Provide strategic financial and operational leadership at a consequential moment for the institution.**

The CFO/O will provide clear, accountable, and effective financial and operational leadership as NEC continues to navigate a period of fiscal pressure and institutional evolution. Building on recent momentum, this leader will work with senior leaders to clarify priorities, articulate tradeoffs, and reinforce confidence in NEC's direction. They will be a disciplined steward who can balance immediate operational needs with long-range financial planning and an eye towards future growth. Grounded in NEC's mission, the CFO/O will help ensure that NEC's financial strategy and decision-making support artistic excellence, student success, and long-term sustainability.

**Serve as an enterprise leader, cohesively aligning finance, operations, risk, and technology.**

The CFO/O will serve as an enterprise-wide leader with visibility across a newly configured, broad, and interconnected administrative portfolio. Success will require strong partnerships across academic and administrative units, bringing alignment and clarity to complex operations. In a lean organizational environment, this leader must move fluidly between strategic thinking and hands-on engagement, staying close to the work while maintaining a comprehensive view of institutional impact. The CFO/O will also serve as an effective manager, establishing clear expectations, strengthening coordination, and ensuring that administrative functions effectively support NEC's core mission.

**Advance modernization and integration of financial, academic, and administrative systems.**

The CFO/O will play a central role in advancing the modernization and integration of NEC's financial and administrative systems. This work will require careful prioritization, recognizing both capacity constraints and the pace of change across the institution. Through thoughtful change management and collaboration, the CFO/O will help improve data transparency, forecasting, and reporting. Ultimately, these efforts will better equip leaders at all levels to make informed, timely, and mission-aligned decisions.

**Support and evaluate emerging and expanding revenue streams.**

The CFO/O will bring financial rigor and analytical insight to the evaluation of emerging and expanding revenue opportunities across the institution. As NEC continues to explore expanded education offerings, non-degree programs, and potential partnerships, this leader will help assess sustainability, scalability, and associated risk. The role requires comfort navigating ambiguity while applying disciplined financial judgment. The CFO/O will help ensure that new initiatives align with institutional priorities and strengthen NEC's resources rather than strain them.

**Operate effectively within a highly engaged leadership and governance context.**

The CFO/O will operate effectively within a highly engaged leadership and governance environment, serving as a trusted advisor to the Executive Council and Board of Trustees. They will translate complex financial and operational information into clear, actionable insights that support sound decision-making, requiring strong judgment, discretion, and the ability to communicate with clarity and candor. The CFO/O will build trust by being transparent, well-prepared, and attentive to both data and institutional context.

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## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

New England Conservatory seeks an experienced and collaborative financial and operational leader with a deep understanding of complex nonprofit or educational institutions.

An ideal candidate will bring many of the following professional experiences and personal characteristics:

- A bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, business management, public administration, or a related field is required; a Master's degree is preferred.
- 8+ years of progressively responsible experience in fiscal, human, and physical resources management.
- Significant senior-level experience in finance, administration, or operations within higher education, the nonprofit sector, or a comparably complex organization.
- Demonstrated experience overseeing budgeting, financial planning, audits, controls, and risk management.
- Evidence of managing and developing strong teams across multiple functional areas.
- Proven ability to be a creative and flexible problem-solver, using data and principles to align activities with strategic priorities while working at both strategic and detailed levels.
- Experience with continuous quality improvement, aligning programs and processes with a mission and strategic plan.
- Experience guiding organizations through change with transparency, empathy, and sound judgment.
- Ability to quickly assess situations, adapt as needed, and apply personal wisdom and experience to develop effective solutions.
- Excellent listening, verbal, and written communication skills, with the ability to convey complex financial information in accessible terms.
- Unparalleled personal integrity, discretion, and a commitment to NEC's values of community and belonging.

## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The final salary will be commensurate with experience, with an expected range of \$300,000 to \$325,000. Senior Leadership will determine the selected candidate's actual compensation based on experience and qualifications. The Chief Financial and Operating Officer is a full-time role based in Boston, Massachusetts. NEC employs a hybrid workforce. The CFO/O is expected to be a visible leader on campus and be available to work on-site.

## 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: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/new-england-conservatory-music/chief-financial-and-operating-officer>.

*Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.*

Dan Rodas, Partner  
Carley Davenport, Managing Associate  
Amy Gillespie, Senior Associate  
Seema Khan, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*NEC is an Equal Opportunity Employer that recruits and hires qualified candidates without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, or veteran status.*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by NEC Music. 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 NEC Musci would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*

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## APPENDIX

### Leadership

#### **Andrea Kalyn, PhD** **17th President of NEC**

New England Conservatory's 17<sup>th</sup> and first female president, Andrea Kalyn began her tenure in 2019. Kalyn's deep commitment to musical excellence, her strong relationship with faculty, and her profound sense of responsibility for music education are hallmarks of her leadership. She is fundamentally committed to advancing the place of music in the world and to strengthening connections among composers, performers, and audiences. A musicologist and pianist, Kalyn holds a PhD from the Eastman School of Music, where her research centered on 20<sup>th</sup>-century American music. She serves on the Board of Trustees of WGBH and the ProArts Consortium, for which she previously served as chair.

#### **Kathleen Kelly** **Executive Vice President**

Kathleen Kelly brings more than 25 years of experience in designing and implementing entrepreneurial fundraising strategies, leading campaign planning, driving stakeholder engagement initiatives, and building impactful relationships with diverse constituencies, including board leadership and prospective donors. Prior to joining NEC, Kelly led strategic planning and successful fundraising initiatives garnering more than \$250 million for institutions including WGBH, Concord Academy, Milton Academy, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Northeastern University, and Providence College. Kathleen holds a M.Ed. in Counseling and a B.A. in Social Science with a concentration in History from Providence College.

#### **Jennifer Hecht** **Chief Human Resources Officer**

Jennifer Hecht joined NEC's Executive Council in August 2025, following more than 20 years of leadership in people management, talent strategy and analytics, and HR operations in the private sector. Prior to NEC, Jennifer held HR executive positions at Posit, PBC, Revvity/Perkin Elmer, Biogen, and Fidelity Investments. An empathetic and values-focused leader, Jennifer has grown strong talent pipelines, catalyzed healthy cultures, and created solid operational infrastructure to build thriving organizations in a wide variety of contexts. Jennifer holds a BA in English and an MA in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota, and she is a lifelong participant and advocate for the arts.