



MACALESTER

Vice President of Administration and Finance & Chief Financial Officer
Macalester College
Saint Paul, Minnesota

THE SEARCH

[Macalester College](#), a private, residential liberal arts college in Saint Paul, Minnesota, invites inquiries, applications, and nominations in its search for Vice President for Administration and Finance & Chief Financial Officer (VPA&F). Reporting directly to President Suzanne M. Rivera and serving as a key member of the College's Senior Leadership Team, the VPA&F leads a broad portfolio that includes finance and business services, human resources, facilities services, public safety, and auxiliary operations.

The VPA&F will join a respected, values-driven institution known for academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, civic engagement, and a deep commitment to preparing students for lives of leadership and social responsibility. Macalester is a place where bold ideas are encouraged, questions are welcomed, and students, faculty, and staff bring energy, conviction, and care to the work of building a more just and humane world. Located in the heart of Saint Paul, the College combines the intimacy of a residential liberal arts community with the opportunities and responsibilities of an urban setting, fostering a campus culture that is intellectually vibrant and highly engaged.

Macalester, which maintains a strong financial position, seeks a VPA&F who will honor this legacy while helping the College align resources, operations, and administrative practices with its highest aspirations. At Macalester, financial and operational decisions are expressions of institutional values: they shape access and affordability, support faculty and staff, sustain the student experience, steward the campus, and help the community navigate the real tensions between ambitious goals and finite resources. To be successful, the VPA&F will bring technical expertise, strategic judgment, and the ability to communicate with clarity and candor across constituencies, serving as a trusted partner in advancing the College's financial health, operational effectiveness, and institutional priorities. In doing so, they will address several key opportunities and challenges, listed below and outlined in detail in this document:

- *Provide strategic, values-driven institutional leadership at a consequential moment for higher education;*
- *Contribute intentional, innovative, and effective knowledge and implementation of financial, administrative, and operational practices;*
- *Serve as a collaborative, responsive member of the College's Senior Leadership Team and campus community;*

- *Advance the modernization of financial and administrative systems, including the new Workday Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system;*
- *Operate efficiently, authentically, and transparently within a highly engaged shared-governance context; and*
- *Lead the talented team of professionals within the Administration and Finance Division.*

ABOUT MACALESTER COLLEGE

Founded in 1874, Macalester College is a private, residential, nationally recognized liberal arts institution in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Macalester's [distinctive mission](#), talented [faculty and staff](#), and highly engaged [student body](#) have earned it a reputation as one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges. In recent years, it has [earned distinction](#) as #25 in National Private Liberal Arts Colleges, #9 Best Undergraduate Teaching among National Liberal Arts Colleges, and #15 in Most Innovative by US News and World Report, as well as #1 Best Student Support and Counseling by The Princeton Review.

Macalester offers a [broad liberal arts and sciences curriculum](#) through more than 30 [academic departments and programs](#), and combines the close-knit learning environment of a residential liberal arts institution with the opportunities of a dynamic metropolitan location. This distinctive position enables students to connect classroom learning with meaningful experiences in the community and around the world. Through partnerships with local organizations, schools, nonprofits, and civic institutions throughout the Twin Cities, Macalester serves as an active contributor to the region's economic, cultural, and social vitality while preparing graduates to make meaningful contributions both locally and globally.

Imagine, Macalester Strategic Plan

The College's current strategic framework, [Imagine, Macalester](#), establishes priorities for the institution from 2022-2030 and identifies Financial Sustainability—along with Academic Distinction, Social Responsibility, and Community Well-being—as one of its foundational imperatives. The strategic plan also addresses access and affordability, community and belonging, and Macalester's role in the broader world. A [Comprehensive Campus Plan](#) was created with broad input during the 2023-24 academic year and captures priorities for Macalester's physical infrastructure in alignment with *Imagine, Macalester*.

Students

Macalester enrolls approximately 2,100 undergraduate students in an academically rigorous liberal arts environment characterized by close faculty-student engagement and global perspectives. With a student-to-faculty ratio of approximately 10:1, students benefit from personalized mentorship and meaningful opportunities for intellectual exploration both inside and outside the classroom. Drawn from across the United States and around the world, Macalester's student body includes students representing more than 100 countries and reflects the College's longstanding commitment to internationalism and cross-cultural understanding.

Faculty and Staff

Macalester's success is driven by a talented and deeply committed community of faculty and staff who bring the College's mission to life each day. The College employs approximately 900 faculty and staff, creating an environment where collaboration, mentorship, and service are highly valued. Faculty are distinguished by their commitment to teaching and scholarship and play an active role in the intellectual life and governance of the institution, while staff are widely recognized as dedicated partners in supporting student success and advancing institutional priorities. Together, they foster a culture that combines academic rigor with a strong commitment to internationalism, multiculturalism, civic engagement, and student development.

Financial Position

Macalester's financial resources include an endowment of approximately \$1 billion, an annual operating budget of approximately \$136 million, and an Aa3 credit rating from Moody's. The College's principal revenue sources are tuition and fees, endowment income, gifts and grants, and other operating revenue, and it operates within an incremental budget model. Current fundraising production is approximately \$34 million annually.

Macalester is in the public phase of a \$250 million comprehensive fundraising campaign—[Brighter: The Macalester College Campaign](#)—which is on pace to exceed its goal by May 31, 2029. Campaign priorities include financial aid; faculty scholarship and teaching; high-impact practices such as internships, student research, and study away; and construction of a new residence hall and admissions welcome center.

Campus

Macalester operates a residential campus of approximately 53 acres in the Mac-Groveland neighborhood of Saint Paul. The College's physical assets include academic and administrative buildings, residence halls, athletic facilities, dining facilities, libraries, and other student and campus spaces. The College has continued to invest in its campus and facilities as part of its long-term planning and will open a [new residence hall](#) in 2027. The five-story building provides 224 beds of student housing with a ground-floor Welcome Center below. The building anchors the northwest corner of campus, serving current students, prospective students, and the broader Macalester community in one integrated space.

College Leadership

President Suzanne M. Rivera

[President Suzanne M. Rivera](#), the College's 17th president, is a nationally recognized academic leader, and an advocate for equitable access to higher education. She is a frequent speaker and writer on the public purpose of colleges and universities, the importance of the liberal arts for a thriving democracy, and the contributions made to society by pluralistic academic institutions. Prior to her arrival at Macalester, Dr. Rivera served in academic and leadership roles at Case Western Reserve University, UT Southwestern

Medical Center, and the University of California–Irvine. A scholar of bioethics and public policy, her research is focused on the moral dimensions of science. Dr. Rivera earned a BA from Brown University, a MSW from the University of California–Berkeley, and a PhD in public affairs from the University of Texas at Dallas. She and her spouse, American literature scholar Dr. Michael Householder, have two adult children, Antonio (married to Eliza) and Elena.

Senior Leadership Team

The VPA&F serves as a key member of Macalester's [Senior Leadership Team](#), working closely with Dr. Rivera and a collaborative group of institutional leaders that includes the Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice President for Admissions and Financial Aid, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Information Technology Services and Chief Information Officer, Vice President for Institutional Equity, Dean of the Faculty, and Chief of Staff to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees. Together, these leaders guide the College's strategic priorities, address cross-functional opportunities and challenges, and steward the institution's mission through a highly collaborative approach to leadership and decision-making.

Shared Governance

Macalester has a longstanding tradition of participatory shared governance that is regarded as one of the institution's defining strengths. Successful leaders at Macalester embrace consultation, transparency, and consensus-building, recognizing that durable decisions are strengthened through broad engagement across the campus community; senior leaders engage regularly with faculty, staff, students, and trustees through a variety of formal and informal shared-governance structures, including the Faculty Advisory Council, Staff Advisory Council, Macalester College Student Government, faculty governance bodies, and other representative committees and working groups.

Board of Trustees

The College is governed by an active and engaged [Board of Trustees](#). The VPA&F serves as the primary liaison to the Finance, Infrastructure, Audit and Risk, Investment, and the High Winds Fund Committees, which play important roles in institutional oversight and long-range planning. More information on the High Winds Fund can be found below.

Administration & Finance Division

Macalester College's [Administration & Finance division](#), led by the VPA&F, provides financial, administrative, human resources, facilities, and operational services across the College. The division includes Business Services, Human Resources, Facilities Services, the High Winds Fund, and investment-related functions.

- [Business Services](#) is responsible for the College's core financial operations, including accounting, financial reporting, audit and tax, grants administration, purchasing and accounts payable,

budgeting, cash management, cashiering, financial systems, payroll, and risk management. The area also provides oversight of several outsourced auxiliary and business services, including dining, retail, vending, central receiving, document services, and mailing services.

- [Human Resources](#) supports the College's workforce through compensation and benefits, talent acquisition, employee relations, training and development, HR information systems, and related human resources functions.
- [Facilities Services](#) is responsible for the maintenance, repair, safety, and security of College buildings and grounds, as well as campus building construction and renovation projects. The unit works to provide a campus environment where living, teaching, learning, and working can happen in spaces that are safe, reliable, efficient, and comfortable. This area includes Public Safety, Reservations and Event Operations, Environmental Health and Safety, Sustainability, Buildings & Grounds, Energy Management, and Custodial Services.
- [High Winds Fund](#) is a special endowment fund established in 1956 to maintain and improve the beauty, safety, and stability of the residential and commercial neighborhood around campus. The fund owns and manages local residential housing (including apartments and campus houses) for faculty, staff, and community members, alongside commercial real estate bordering the campus on Grand Avenue to support local businesses.

The division also encompasses the College's [investment functions](#), managed by an external vendor, as well as related administrative responsibilities.

A significant recent initiative for the division has been the implementation of Workday HR, Payroll, and Finance through [Macalester Optimizes Our Operations \(MOOO\)](#). As of June 2026, Workday is live and replaces the College's legacy system for key human resources, payroll, and finance processes. The initiative includes changes to budgeting, expense management, reimbursements, payroll, benefits, and other administrative processes. Additional implementation efforts are planned to continue through 2028.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The VPA&F serves as Macalester's chief financial and administrative officer and is a key member of the [Senior Leadership Team](#). Reporting directly to the President, the VPA&F oversees a wide-ranging portfolio, described above. Direct reports include the Associate Vice President for Finance, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management, and Director of the High Winds Fund.

Beyond the management of a complex portfolio, the VPA&F leads and develops a talented administrative of 116 FTE, fosters coordination across functions, and establishes policies, processes, and systems that support effective and responsive operations.

As the College's senior financial leader, the VPA&F is responsible for developing annual and long-range budget models, managing institutional debt, maintaining relationships with the College's debt-rating agency and the Minnesota Health and Education Facilities Authority, and stewarding Macalester's risk management framework. As chair of the campus budget committee, the VPA&F develops budget proposals for review by the Senior Leadership Team and subsequently presents recommendations to the Finance Committee and full Board of Trustees for approval. The VPA&F also oversees the College's use of legal services, often working closely with retained counsel to resolve legal matters for the College. Additionally, the VPA&F manages institutional memberships and contracts.

As one example of the collaborative and shared-governance culture at Macalester, the VPA&F chairs the [Task Force on Budget](#) (TFOB), a representative body that brings together leaders from Administration and Finance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Admissions and Financial Aid, Advancement, Information Technology Services, Institutional Equity, and Institutional Research, along with students, faculty, and staff. Through TFOB, the College engages a broad set of perspectives in the development of annual budget recommendations and the consideration of strategic financial decisions. This process reflects Macalester's commitment to shared responsibility: ensuring that difficult choices about resources, priorities, and tradeoffs are informed by data, grounded in institutional values, and shaped through meaningful community input.

The VPA&F is a principal liaison to the Board of Trustees, serving as the primary administrator for its Finance, Infrastructure, Audit and Risk, and Investment [Committees](#), as well as the [High Winds Fund Committee](#). In this capacity, the VPA&F supports thoughtful shared governance, provides clear and timely information, and helps trustees understand the opportunities, risks, and tradeoffs associated with significant financial and operational decisions.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VPA&F

Provide strategic, values-driven institutional leadership at a consequential moment for higher education.

Macalester's strategic framework, *Imagine, Macalester*, provides an important foundation for the VPA&F's work, identifying Financial Sustainability as a core institutional imperative, alongside Academic Distinction, Social Responsibility, and Community Well-being. The next VPA&F will help the College make meaningful progress toward these strategic priorities, bringing a fresh, optimistic, and pragmatic approach, pairing disciplined financial stewardship with a deep appreciation for Macalester's values and commitments. While Macalester maintains a strong financial position, it is not immune to the broader pressures facing highly selective residential liberal arts colleges, including student market competition, a relatively small revenue base, thin operating margins, deferred maintenance needs, and sector-wide pressures related to compensation, benefits, inflation, and affordability. In this context, the VPA&F will balance strategic vision with disciplined execution, sound decision-making, and clear communication about tradeoffs, priorities, and long-term sustainability.

Contribute intentional, innovative, and effective knowledge and implementation of financial, administrative, and operational practices.

Macalester seeks a VPA&F who can bring both experienced judgment and a spirit of thoughtful innovation to the College's financial, administrative, and operational practices. The next leader will inherit strong foundations, while also identifying opportunities to improve processes and decision-making, strengthen accountability, and ensure that administrative systems and services are responsive to the needs of students, faculty, and staff. These responsibilities will require a leader who can assess existing practices with curiosity and discipline, introduce change in ways that are well communicated and well managed, and help the College translate its values into effective financial and operational choices.

Serve as a collaborative, responsive member of the College's Senior Leadership Team.

The VPA&F serves as a critical member of the College's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), with oversight of one of the largest and most wide-reaching portfolios on campus. The VPA&F will work collaboratively and proactively with this group to understand, address, and advance institutional-level initiatives, responding swiftly and appropriately when cross-functional issues arise. The SLT practices equity-driven leadership, embedding planful, intentional consideration of potential community impact into their decision-making processes and procedures. The VPA&F will be an active participant in these discussions, communicating candidly and respectfully while providing a clear perspective on the role that financial and administrative leadership can play in a given question, goal, or strategic initiative.

Advance the modernization of financial and administrative systems, including the new Workday ERP system.

Following over a year of planning, Macalester launched Workday for financial and human resources functions in June 2026, replacing Banner as its ERP system. As the College looks ahead, the VPA&F will play a central role in advancing the ongoing refinement of the system and socialization amongst campus members about uses of the system. This activity will require working closely with technology and human resources leadership to address implementation challenges, deliver training as needed, and prepare for the next stage of implementation in 2028. This work will require careful prioritization and change management, recognizing both capacity constraints and residual fatigue from the initial rollout. Through thoughtful resource allocation, collaboration, listening, and transparent dialogue, the VPA&F will continue to advance this project, ultimately improving data capture, forecasting, efficiency of operations, and reporting capacity for the College.

Operate efficiently, authentically, and transparently within a highly engaged shared-governance context.

Macalester prides itself on being a highly engaged community where faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders are expected—and encouraged—to share their perspectives. The VPA&F will fully appreciate this environment and work effectively across constituencies, communicating with clarity and candor to advance the College's broader goals and aspirations. This will include engaging thoughtfully with the

Board of Trustees, the Task Force on Budget, faculty and staff governance bodies, students, community members, and employee groups. As collective bargaining and related conversations continue to require significant attention across campus, the VPA&F will bring strong judgment, process discipline, and relationship-building skills to help the College navigate complex issues efficiently, transparently, and constructively.

Lead the talented team of professionals within the Administration and Finance Division.

The VPA&F leads a talented team of highly engaged professionals across finance, human resources, facilities, and the High Winds Fund. This role will foster a collaborative, transparent, and service-oriented culture within the division by communicating clear, reasonable expectations and ensuring accountability. The VPA&F will delegate effectively to eliminate bottlenecks, leverage the team to boost efficiency, and empower unit leaders to drive initiatives, answer questions, and make decisions as appropriate. They will bring a focus on staff wellness and morale and will be a strong advocate for the division, providing opportunities for professional development and advancement for team members at all levels.

Value, support, and contribute to a learning-centered community.

Macalester's mission as an educational institution serves as both core and foundation to the academic and administrative endeavors of the college. Students come to Macalester with a diversity of experiences, perspectives, aspirations, interests, and identities. As a residential, liberal arts college, Macalester provides opportunities for students to engage learning inside and outside of the formal classroom, as scholars who conduct summer [research](#) and pursue independent projects as [Mellon Mays Fellows](#); as leaders in [athletics and club sports](#), [student organizations](#) and [student government](#); and as community organizers who develop action projects with funding from the [Chuck Green Fellowship](#) and the [Live It Fund](#). These are but a few examples of the myriad ways that Macalester students take an active role in their education and in the life of the college. The VPA&F will embrace the responsibility and opportunity to support and participate in student learning and engagement with institutional operations and administrative functions. Macalester students graduate to become active alumni who sustain a lifelong relationship with the college, and who are eager to continue their learning and provide generous support for future students.

QUALIFICATIONS & CHARACTERISTICS

Macalester College seeks an experienced financial and administrative leader committed to transparency, collaboration, and student success. We understand that candidates will not possess all of the following qualifications and characteristics. Strong candidates will demonstrate awareness of the strengths, skills, and experience they bring to the position, as well as the unique perspectives they will contribute to the Macalester community. The successful candidate should have many, though not all, of the following qualifications, skills, knowledge, and experience:

Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree required; Master's Degree as well as a specialized certification such as a CPA or CMA preferred;
- 8+ years of progressively responsible experience in fiscal, human, or physical resources management, or the equivalent;
- Significant senior-level leadership in finance, administration, or operations within higher education, the nonprofit sector, or a comparably complex organization; and
- Demonstrated knowledge of budgeting, financial planning, audits, controls, or risk management.

Skills, Knowledge, and Experience

- Excellent personal integrity, discretion, and a commitment to equity and inclusion;
- Enthusiasm for working in, contributing to, and supporting a learning-centered environment;
- Demonstrated success in managing and developing strong teams across multiple functional areas;
- Effective application of continuous quality improvement and ability to align programs and processes with a mission and strategic plan;
- Ability to translate and apply policies to practices and protocols;
- Ability to effectively communicate financial models, administrative procedures, and operational tasks to a broad audience, including trustees, students, faculty, staff, alumni, governmental and other external partners;
- Experience guiding organizations through change with transparency, empathy, and sound judgment;
- Excellent listening, verbal, and written communication skills with honesty, clarity, and curiosity;
- 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;
- Demonstrated ability to create and implement effective metrics and assessment;
- Experience with collective bargaining;
- Knowledge and experience working within shared-governance structures and complex organizational management; and
- Experience with incident management and the ability to respond to and manage emergencies and unexpected circumstances.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The VPA&F is a full-time, in-person role located in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

While the final compensation package for this position will be commensurate with experience, the expected salary range for this role is \$225,000 - \$275,000 annually. Macalester also offers an excellent comprehensive employee benefits package.

Macalester College is located on historic Summit Avenue in Saint Paul, Minnesota, a vibrant and historic city known for its distinctive neighborhoods, cultural institutions, parks, and strong civic and educational communities. The College's campus is less than a mile from the Mississippi River and is situated within easy reach of both Saint Paul's and Minneapolis's many restaurants, arts and cultural attractions, businesses, and outdoor amenities. Together, the Twin Cities offer the resources and opportunities of a major metropolitan area while retaining the welcoming character and accessibility of a close-knit community.

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, where you will also find a full position profile: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/macalester-college/vice-president-administration-and-finance-and-chief-financial>.

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Macalester College is an intentional community of thinkers and doers that brings together more than 2,000 curious, motivated students representing over one hundred countries and a wide breadth of lived experiences. As an internationally recognized small liberal arts college located in St. Paul, Minnesota, our focus on academic distinction, social justice, and global citizenship prepares students to create a more just and peaceful world. The college's strategic plan equips our community with a clear road map for the future, and the progress we're shaping together builds on our longstanding mission and values.

At Macalester, employees engage in people-centered work and gain career-defining experience. Drawing on a holistic lens, we are committed to a respectful and supportive work environment. We facilitate professional learning and growth for all employees, and we recognize employee well-being as necessary and important, demonstrated in generous comprehensive benefits and wellness programs. We value a diverse community representing all backgrounds and perspectives, and encourage applicants from all sexualities, races, ethnicities, national origins, cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, genders, religions, abilities, and ages.

Macalester College does not discriminate on the grounds of sex, gender identity, race, color, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, genetic information, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, veteran status, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance, or other categories protected by law. For additional information, see Macalester College's full Notice of Nondiscrimination.

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