



**WASHINGTON
& JEFFERSON
COLLEGE**

Search for the VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE/CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE
WASHINGTON, PA

THE OPPORTUNITY

[Washington & Jefferson College](#) (“W&J” or “the College”)—a private, residential, liberal arts college with roots dating back to 1781—seeks an accomplished, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as its next Vice President for Business and Finance/Chief Financial Officer (VPBF). Located on a picturesque campus in Washington, PA, just 30 miles south of Pittsburgh, the College offers a transformative liberal arts education that is both broad and practical, preparing students as ethical leaders poised for professional success. The ideal candidate will be an accomplished financial and administrative leader with experience in strategic planning and facilities management, who can provide clear fiscal and operational guidance as W&J navigates the many changes, challenges, and opportunities within the field of higher education.

Reporting directly to the President, the VPBF is responsible for a broad portfolio which includes Information Technology Services, Financial Operations, and Facilities Management. The VPBF is W&J’s chief financial officer and oversees an annual institutional budget of \$48 million. In addition to serving as a key member of the Senior Leadership team, they will also liaise with three board committees (Financial Stewardship, Audit & Risk Management, and Property, Buildings, & Grounds).

The next VPBF will arrive at W&J in the midst of changing demographics, increasing competition for students, and greater public uncertainty about the value of higher education. They will play a key role in helping W&J to navigate these emerging challenges and enact strategies that position the College at the forefront of liberal arts education. Serving as a strong partner to the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, fellow senior leaders, and the Board of Trustees, the VPBF will provide strategic leadership for all short- and long-term financial decision-making. They will be a motivating and inspiring change agent, working across the campus community to identify growth opportunities and new revenue streams, cost efficiencies, and the best use of resources. Overseeing complex operational units, they will implement best practices and innovative uses of technology to

strengthen essential College administrative functions and advance strategies for campus maintenance, improvement, and space utilization.

The next VPBF will be a vital member of the W&J community and will employ strong communication and interpersonal skills to connect and collaborate with a wide range of highly engaged constituents. They will bring a deep appreciation of the College's liberal arts mission and, in line with W&J's values, possess a track record of fostering and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in a complex institution. Finally, they will serve as an ethical leader, guiding and supporting a large team, and modeling a culture of trust, accountability, openness, high-quality service, and transparency.

The College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next VPBF. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE

A selective, private, residential college, W&J sets itself apart by providing an exceptional liberal arts education that emphasizes professional preparedness and ethical leadership. Its mission is "to graduate people of uncommon integrity, competence, and maturity who are effective lifelong learners and responsible citizens, and who are prepared to contribute substantially to the world in which they live."

Throughout its history, W&J has learned that success depends on adaptation. The College has constantly evolved to meet the changing needs of the times, and it will continue to do so moving forward. The faculty are committed to being innovative with the curriculum and their pedagogies; the student body grows increasingly diverse, both demographically and geographically; and the programmatic offerings continue to evolve to meet market need. Owing in part to this willingness to adapt, *Washington Monthly* ranked the College among the Top 10 liberal arts institutions nationwide in the "Earnings Performance" of graduates; *College Raptor* placed W&J in the top 25 colleges and universities in the U.S. on its annual list of "Most Affordable Hidden Gem Colleges for The Middle Class;" and the institution was recognized in the top tier of *Third Way's* national ranking of "institutions that are fulfilling higher education's purpose of promoting economic mobility for their students."

Academics

The academic experience at W&J is built upon a traditional liberal arts model, and the College has and will continue to innovate its offerings to ensure students are prepared to find success in today's changing world. Students enjoy a robust, comprehensive learning experience in which they are required to pursue two areas of study from among the existing [33 majors and 52 minors](#).

Pre-professional programs, including Pre-Law and Pre-Health, further supplement the traditional liberal arts offerings on campus, providing options for students seeking targeted professional preparation. In addition, the College recently announced the creation of a new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. To extend the opportunities available to students, W&J has built [partnerships](#) with several institutions, including the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University, the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University, West Virginia University, Duquesne University, Case Western University, and Columbia University, among others.

The College is fully accredited through 2027-2028 by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). MSCHE authorized Washington & Jefferson College to allow certificate and graduate programs in 2013-2014. The College currently offers a novel graduate program in Professional Writing.

Faculty and Staff

The College's 153 faculty—including 102 full-time and 51 part-time members—are the backbone of the institution. The number of faculty has stayed relatively constant over the past eight years, and the College currently provides a student-to-faculty ratio of 10:1. Of the full-time faculty, 87% are tenured or tenure-track, and 91% hold terminal degrees in their disciplines. Approximately 56% of the full-time faculty identify as women, and approximately 16% identify as people of color.

W&J's 232 staff—including 200 full-time and 32 part-time members—are integral contributors to the campus community. Deeply committed to the institution, they create and innovate to foster a transformative student experience, support faculty teaching and research, and ensure the College runs smoothly and efficiently.

Student Experience and Outcomes

The student body consists of approximately 1,160 students, 98% of whom live on campus. For the most recent class admitted, the acceptance rate for first-time students was 81.3%, and the yield of accepted students was 13.4%. The first-year retention rate is approximately 81.9%. The four-year graduation rate over the past three years is approximately 65.6%, and the six-year graduation rate over the past three years is approximately 73%. The College is committed to admitting, retaining, and supporting a student body that is diverse across multiple dimensions: approximately 47% identify as women, 22% identify as domestic students of color, and 2% are international. During the 2022-2023 academic year, 28% were Pell grant recipients, and 18% were in the first generation in their families to go to college. Students come to W&J from 30 states and 18 countries, and approximately 73% of students come from Pennsylvania.

On campus, students enjoy a wide array of extra-curricular activities and leadership development opportunities to supplement their academic journeys, including [student clubs and organizations](#), [Greek](#)

[life](#), and [athletics](#). The College is home to eight Greek Letter organizations, and 17% of students are members. All Greek organizations reside on campus in college-owned housing.

Athletics have played an important role in the student experience for over a century. The College fielded its first intercollegiate football team in 1890, and they competed in the legendary 1922 Rose Bowl. Today, W&J sponsors 26 varsity athletic programs that primarily compete in the NCAA Division III Presidents' Athletic Conference. The College also offers ten club teams and organizations open to all students as well as a robust intramural sports program. Approximately half of all students are varsity athletes, and 15% participate in club or intramural sports. W&J's athletic teams have won 143 conference championships over the College's history, and 69 students have been named NCAA Academic All-Americans.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The College is committed to creating a vibrant community for everyone who comes to campus. W&J began admitting Black students in the late 19th century, and it is committed to advancing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The College has grown increasingly diverse in recent years—approximately 8% of the student body identified as domestic students of color in 2009, and approximately 22% currently identify as such—and it endeavors to grow even more welcoming to people from all backgrounds, identities, and walks of life.

Financial Outlook

The College has an annual operating budget of \$48 million and an endowment totaling approximately \$137 million. It maintains a BBB+ bond rating with a stable outlook from Standard & Poor's. Its most recent comprehensive campaign, which concluded in 2017, was highly successful and totaled \$115 million, exceeding its goal by 15%. The College is currently in the silent phase of a capital campaign, which it hopes to take public with the next president's tenure. In October 2023, the College announced that it would receive [the largest gift in its history](#): approximately \$50 million to establish an endowed scholarship fund for regional students with financial need.

Like most liberal arts colleges, W&J relies heavily on tuition revenue to fund its operations. With increasing enrollment challenges related to the demographic cliff, the College is facing financial headwinds. In response, W&J is differentiating itself from competing institutions in multiple ways. In addition to creating new programs that build upon the College's commitment to professional preparation—such as a new [Bachelor of Science in Nursing program](#) that will launch in Fall 2024—the College also made the bold decision to [“simplify” the cost of attendance](#). For the 2023-24 academic year, moving away from the widespread pricing model of high tuition costs and significant discounting, W&J reduced its published tuition price by 44.4%, to \$27,605. Housing, food, and fees amount to \$14,490, for a total cost of attendance of \$42,095. This strategic move helps families better understand the actual cost of attendance. Initial reception of this change has been positive, with early application numbers and admission inquiries in the current fiscal year appearing promising.

Facilities and Physical Campus

The College has a blend of historic and modern facilities, with more than [55 buildings](#) on a [65-acre campus](#), including a 57-acre field station. All facilities are within easy walking distance of each other. Distinctive buildings include McMillan Hall, which was built in 1793, making it the oldest building on campus and the eighth oldest academic building in the United States; Old Main, which is adorned by two iconic towers representing the College's namesakes; the Olin Fine Arts Center, which is home to the Olin Fine Arts Gallery and a 488-seat auditorium; the state-of-the-art Tech Center; the Rossin Campus Center; and The Commons, which provides a gathering space for the campus community.

With a current inventory of approximately 950 trees from 60 species, the campus has its own Campus Arboretum, which is annually recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation. In addition to the main campus, the College also maintains the 57-acre Abernathy Field Station, a biological field station that offers students and faculty hands-on research experience just five miles from campus.

In recent years, the College has invested significantly in both new construction and renovations of existing facilities, resulting in an even more beautiful campus. Improvements have been made to increase the usability of the campus. Still, some deferred maintenance remains, and the historic nature of many of the buildings can cause challenges and limitations to accessibility. Recent projects include:

- The 2010 construction of the [John A. Swanson Science Center](#): a 58,000-square-foot building that houses the Chemistry and Physics Departments, Environmental Studies Program, the Writing Center, classrooms, laboratory spaces, student study lounges, faculty and staff offices, and a four-story atrium;
- The 2015 construction of the [Janet Swanson Tennis Center](#);
- The 2017 construction of the [James David Ross Family Recreation Center](#): a 30,000-square-foot expansion to the existing gymnasium, which includes a 167-meter, three-lane track; three athletic courts with markings for basketball, volleyball, and tennis; a wrestling room; a general exercise room; and office space to house all athletic coaches;
- The 2019 complete interior renovation and exterior upgrades of the [Clark Family Library](#);
- Ongoing interior and exterior renovations to the [student residence halls](#).

Location in Washington, PA and Proximity to Pittsburgh, PA

The College is located in a residential neighborhood in the center of Washington, Pennsylvania. With a population of about 13,100, Washington is a great place to live within easy commuting distance of Pittsburgh. One manifestation of the "town-gown" relationship between the College and the city is the [Ignite Business Incubator and Co-Working Office Space](#), which supports small businesses, nonprofits, and entrepreneurial efforts.

Located just 30 miles north of campus, [Pittsburgh](#) offers the W&J community all the opportunities of a major metropolitan area. Long cited as an exemplar of urban transformation, Pittsburgh—in partnership with renowned local universities including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon—has converted its manufacturing-based profile into a diversified economy that features financial services, healthcare, and technology. The city contributes world-class museums, orchestras, theatre, and dance troupes to the richness of the region’s cultural offerings, and it is recognized for its successful [professional sports teams](#). Pittsburgh is regularly recognized as one of the [best places to live](#) in the United States, as well as one of the [top cities for “foodies.”](#)

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

President John C. Knapp, Ph.D.

John C. Knapp, Ph.D., is the 13th president of Washington & Jefferson College, one of America’s oldest and most distinguished liberal arts institutions, founded in 1781. He also serves as a professor of religion in the college’s Department of Philosophy.

Dr. Knapp is an internationally known author and speaker with leadership experience spanning the education, non-profit, and business sectors. Prior to joining W&J in 2017, he was president of Hope College in Holland, Mich., where he led the development and implementation of a 10-year strategic plan to enhance academic quality, campus diversity, employee development, and post-graduation outcomes for students. Previously, he was the founding director of Samford University’s Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership, concurrently serving as University Professor and holding an endowed professorship.

Dr. Knapp earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in theology and religious studies at the University of Wales, United Kingdom. Dr. Knapp also holds a Master of Arts degree in theological studies at Columbia Theological Seminary; and a Bachelor of Science degree in urban life with a concentration in communication at Georgia State University.

Dr. Knapp’s full biography can be found [here](#).

Presidential Search

In the Fall of 2023, W&J’s Board of Trustees launched a [national search](#) for the College’s 14th president following President Knapp’s announcement that he would retire when his contract ends June 30, 2024. The Board appointed 14 members of the W&J community to assist in the search for the next president; the committee includes members of the Board, faculty, staff, and students. After an extensive review of national executive search firms, Isaacson, Miller was selected to assist the committee and the Board of Trustees in managing the search process and actively recruiting a deep and diverse pool of candidates.

Given that Isaacson, Miller is managing both the Presidential search and this search, the teams are coordinated and in close communication. The timelines of the searches have been aligned with the goal that once selected, the incoming president may be involved in the final selection of the VPBF.

Governance

W&J has well-articulated governance structures on multiple levels. The institution is governed by a [Board of Trustees](#), which is committed to the principles of shared governance. The College Bylaws outline the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the trustees, president, and faculty, among others. The faculty are represented through the Faculty Executive Committee and serve on select board committees. Students are represented through the Student Government Association.

THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE

As a member of the Senior Staff and reporting directly to the President, the Vice President for Business and Finance (VPBF) serves as the Chief Financial Officer for the College. This position is responsible for the financial operations of the College, information technologies (IT), and facilities. The VPBF is expected to provide strategic financial leadership, manage the fiscal resources, and strengthen the budget strategies for the College.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities:

- Keeps President informed concerning financial affairs and other pertinent matters.
- Oversees the College's financial operations, including the controllership, business office, and planning and budgeting processes.
- Leads policy review and development in areas of fiscal management and business operations.
- Serves as the Senior Staff support for the Board's Financial Stewardship; Property, Building & Grounds; and Audit & Risk Management Committees.
- Oversees a broadly participatory budget-development process, including the College Budget Committee.
- Coordinates and reviews all College financial reports, financial projections, and fiscal audits.
- Oversees Business Office functions, including billing student receivables and collections, cashier functions, short-term cash management, insurance, accounts payable, and payroll.
- Oversees the operation and maintenance of the facilities and leads union negotiations with SEIU labor union that represents members of the facilities team.
- Oversee the management of information technologies (IT), including matters of cybersecurity.
- Acts as campus liaison with the College's endowment consultants.
- Coordinates matters requiring outside legal services.
- Oversees lease/use of College facilities.
- Leads major campus construction and renovation projects.

- Assists in negotiating major contracts for services and products.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the President of the College.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The VPBF will be a key leader in moving W&J forward and helping it take bold steps toward furthering its vision to provide transformational educational experiences through the liberal arts.

Strategic Planning, Vision Setting, and Financial Leadership

In joining the executive leadership of the College, the VPBF will serve as a strong and trusted partner to the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Senior Leadership team, and College governance groups to bring vision and strategic thinking to the financial and operational management of W&J. The VPBF will lead the annual budgeting process, collaborating closely and transparently with leaders across the College to set parameters, articulate priorities, and prepare and present the budget for Presidential and Board approval. While overall, W&J is in a strong financial position, ongoing budget deficits have been a recent challenge, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic; the VPBF will need to lead and engage College leadership and the wider campus community in tough yet empathetic conversations and decision-making processes to eliminate the deficit going forward through creativity, resource reallocation, and revenue generation.

The VPBF will anticipate and provide information required for decision-making, laying out alternatives, options, and comparisons. They will identify problems and offer new approaches to advance the institution over the short and long term. The VPBF must lead the College with a business mindset regarding growth opportunities, cost efficiencies, and deployment of resources. In addition to possessing the financial acumen to make strategic budget decisions, the VPBF will also have the capacity to articulate the impact of major programmatic decisions on W&J's future in a matter that is clear and easy to understand by the campus community.

Collaboratively Create New Revenue Streams

Looking to the future, as the competition facing liberal arts colleges continues to grow increasingly fierce, the VPBF must lead with a strategic business mindset regarding growth opportunities, cost efficiencies, and deployment of resources. More than many other liberal arts colleges, W&J is marked by its willingness to push boundaries, its commitment to professional preparation, and its ability to innovate. Most recently, these distinctive characteristics are reflected in the College's new [nursing program](#) and the [strategic decision to simplify tuition](#). As such, the next VPBF will join a community that is unafraid to take bold yet calculated risks. With financial pressures mounting from all sides and increasing pressure from a shrinking student population, the VPBF will play a key role in identifying opportunities for strategic investment and developing new streams of revenue. Working closely with Senior Leadership and Academic Affairs, the

VPBF will explore opportunities for new resource pipelines in areas including student recruitment and retention, athletics, fundraising and grant support, curricular and co-curricular program delivery, and external partnerships, particularly those that leverage the College's proximity to Pittsburgh.

Operational Leadership and Management

W&J's campus requires considerable oversight of diverse functions across operations, facilities, infrastructure, and services. Given the age and large scale of the campus, the VPBF will need to remain attuned to and prioritize deferred maintenance needs of existing facilities, some of which date back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, while intentionally planning for future capital projects, such as enhancing student residences. They will need to rely on their senior leaders as subject matter experts and empower them to take ownership of initiatives and move them forward. The VPBF will also be approachable and accessible, able to communicate and engage with staff at all levels of the organization.

Technology and Business Process Improvement

In the spirit of continual improvement, the VPBF must lead and champion business process redesign efforts across the College, identifying opportunities to improve services, support institutional culture, and provide the best learning, teaching, and working environment possible. Working with Senior Leadership, the VPBF will serve as a change agent to implement process improvements, proactively collaborating, collecting feedback, and generating buy-in with departments and units across the College to ensure that solutions increase efficiency and effectiveness, while also being tailored and sympathetic to the needs and priorities of diverse campus stakeholders and valued elements of institutional culture. The VPBF will strategically leverage technology to move initiatives forward, harnessing data and systems to better understand and improve services and operations that support institutional capacity and impact.

Of particular relevance, W&J has recently engaged an outside consultant to conduct a best practice review of the Information Technology Services department. A report outlining findings from this review should be completed by the time the new VPBF assumes the role and will provide a current assessment of the department, identify blind spots, and outline priorities. It will be critical that the VPBF engage carefully with these findings and work with the Technology team to implement prioritized recommendations.

Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

W&J has grown increasingly diverse in recent years, particularly among the student body. The College aspires not only to continue diversifying the campus community but to further integrate the values of equity and inclusion into the very fabric of the College, as with the recent implementation of a vendor diversity policy. The VPBF must be aligned with these values and bring an understanding of the educational value of a diverse and inclusive community, as well as the ways that these principles are central to W&J's goals. Working in partnership with senior leaders, the VPBF will lead practices that

expand and support DEI efforts to the benefit of staff, faculty, and students, doing so in a way that is transparent, collaborative, and accountable. In particular, the VPBF will be proactive and intentional about embedding DEI into all the work they do, including hiring and promotion, campus safety, accessibility, and resource transparency.

Collaborate, Engage, and Communicate within the W&J Community

W&J is a tight knit, residential campus where purposeful relationships are built upon trust and defined by a commitment to uncommon integrity and ethical leadership. It will be critical for the next VPBF to become enmeshed within the character that undergirds W&J's campus and uphold a values-based leadership style that emphasizes transparency and accountability. The VPBF will be a visible member of this community, taking the time to genuinely engage, ask questions, and learn about the needs and goals of the campus community. They will demonstrate a sincere interest in the life of the College, an appreciation for shared governance, and excitement for the dedicated work of students, faculty, and staff.

The VPBF must create strong, collaborative working relationships with students, faculty, and staff members across the institution, in addition to members of the Board of Trustees, serving as a trusted thought-partner and leader to support and develop existing and emerging initiatives. As a key representative of the College's Senior Leadership team, the VPBF must be a clear communicator and active listener, possessing the approachability and patience to present complex financial information and operational processes and policies to a wide variety of audiences while being receptive to input and feedback from the extended campus community.

Bring Expertise to Areas of Compliance and Contract Management

W&J does not have a general counsel; the VPBF is responsible for handling legal questions, including issues relating to compliance and contract management. The VPBF will bring a level of familiarity with these issues, knowing how best to outsource legal issues when they arise. They will work to streamline contract management while striving to reduce risk, ensure compliance, and advance institutional goals.

Lead a Strong Team and Manage Union Relations

The VPBF will provide leadership and supervision to the Business and Finance Division which includes Information Technology Services, General Accounting, Post Award Grant Accounting, Student Accounts, Budget, Treasury Management, Debt Oversight, Purchasing and Procurement, Accounts Payable, Payroll, and Facilities Management. As the leader of this large and diverse division, the VPBF will cultivate effective teams, leveraging the institutional knowledge of seasoned members and building expertise among new staff while serving as a willing mentor to all. It will be important that the VPBF instill a culture of communication and collaboration within and across teams, building productive working relationships throughout the campus community. Additionally, the VPBF will cultivate a spirit of innovation,

transparency, mutual respect, and shared accountability, motivating teams to continue to provide a high level of service across units of the College.

After years of stability and long tenures amongst the VPBF's direct reports, recent retirements in Facilities and Information Technology present an opportunity for the VPBF to build their team. It will be essential that the VPBF assess current needs and priorities in these departments to shape the recruitment of top talent.

W&J's Facilities team includes members of the SEIU labor union. The VPFA will be expected to work with the union representatives and represent the College in collective bargaining every two to three years.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The successful candidate will have a strong track record of success in financial administration within a higher education institution and have the requisite experience to lead and develop teams in financial and administrative operations. The VPBF will be an energetic and accomplished leader with a passion for the mission and core values of W&J.

A minimum of seven to ten years of progressive responsibility in a senior financial leadership role is required. Graduate degree(s) in business, finance, or related field is preferred.

The successful candidate will possess most if not all the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Track record of successful strategic and fiscal planning.
- Experience with compliance and fiscal control responsibilities and financial systems applications.
- Understanding of informational technologies (IT) policies and practices and experience with oversight of IT operations preferred.
- A demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit, reflected in successful business development and revenue-enhancing initiatives.
- The ability to articulate a financial vision and to motivate the W&J community to use its resources efficiently and creatively.
- Superior strategic and long-range planning skills and the ability to set and achieve ambitious goals and objectives.
- An open, collaborative, and engaging management style that promotes partnerships and builds strong relationships both across the campus and throughout the surrounding communities.
- The ability to create a strong working partnership with board leaders and members.
- A documented history of realistic, accurate, transparent budget development and management, modeling and planning, financial analysis, capital construction projects, debt management and restructuring, and investment management.
- Demonstrated evidence of familiarity with the national trends and best practices in higher education financing.
- Excellent communication and leadership skills.

TO APPLY

The College has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All applications, nominations, and inquiries should be sent in confidence to:

Dan Rodas, Partner
Amble Ryan, Senior Associate
Seema Khan, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/washington-jefferson-college/vice-president-business-and-financechief-financial>

Washington & Jefferson College is committed to increasing diversity in our community and actively pursues individuals from all backgrounds. Additionally, W&J complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and provides equal opportunity in all educational programs and activities, admission of students, and conditions of employment for all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, gender identity, or national origin.