



Search for the VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

THE SEARCH

Transylvania University (Transylvania or Transy) seeks an experienced, ambitious, and strategic leader to serve as its next Vice President for Enrollment Management (VPEM). Building on the University's rich institutional history as it approaches its 250th year, its reputation for academic excellence, and a strong sense of community on campus, the next Vice President will be tasked with shaping a comprehensive enrollment strategy while forging a forward-looking, analytical, student-centric, collaborative, ethical, and access-oriented approach to enrollment management.

Founded in 1780, Transylvania University is the 16th oldest institution of higher learning in the country with approximately 1,000 students. Transylvania University is a top-ranked private liberal arts college that features a personalized approach to undergraduate education through its 46 majors. The university is experiencing significant momentum with newly enhanced facilities, a growing diversity among students, and outstanding student outcomes, highlighted by impressive acceptance rates into professional schools. Notably, 95 percent of Transylvania graduates are either pursuing graduate education or employed within six months of graduation. Additionally, Transylvania University has earned distinction in *The Princeton Review's Best Colleges* guide, placing it among the top 15 percent of the nation's schools.

Reporting directly to the president, the VPEM works with the President's Cabinet as well as faculty, staff, students, alumni, and regional leaders to build on the strengths of the University and honor the institution's long history while preparing Transylvania for a future that embraces innovation. The Vice President is expected to be a powerful proponent of liberal education and deeply dedicated to building a diverse and energetic campus community. This individual will play a pivotal role in advancing Transylvania's academic excellence, achieving enrollment targets, and preserving the passion and sense of community and spirit that has defined its evolution. The ideal candidate will be an analytical and

creative thinker with the ability to nimbly plan for the future, strategically steward financial aid, build sustainable systems and processes using contemporary technology where applicable, ambitiously fuel innovative marketing campaigns, and mentor emerging professionals in the field.

Transylvania University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search and to help identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY

Mission and Values

Through an engagement with the liberal arts, Transylvania prepares its students for a humane and fulfilling personal and public life by cultivating independent thinking, open-mindedness, creative expression, and commitment to lifelong learning and social responsibility in a diverse world. As pioneers, the University's centuries-long commitment to achieving excellence in liberal arts education is guided by five essential values: integrity, innovation, diversity, community, and perseverance. These values define the institution's character and inform everything that it does.

History

The name Transylvania comes from Latin and means "across the woods" — a good description of the vast, heavily forested area between the Ohio and Cumberland rivers first settled by American colonists in the 1770s. A group of pioneers, whose chief scout was Daniel Boone, chose the name Transylvania Colony when they established a settlement near modern-day Lexington. The colony did not last but the name lived on when Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, and the Virginia Assembly chartered Transylvania Seminary in 1780 as the first college west of the Allegheny Mountains.

By the time Kentucky became a state in 1792, Transylvania had already earned the reputation of offering a first-class education. In its early years, Transylvania included a medical school, a law school, a seminary, and a college of arts and sciences that educated thousands of the young nation's leaders. Its list of notable alumni includes two U.S. vice presidents, two Supreme Court justices, 50 U.S. senators, 101 U.S. representatives, 36 governors, and 34 ambassadors. Old Morrison, a National Historic Landmark, and the University's administration building was completed in 1834. It was overseen by Henry Clay, who was a law professor and member of Transylvania's Board of Trustees. Old Morrison served as a makeshift hospital for both Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War, and it is the centerpiece of the city seal of Lexington.

Following the war, Transylvania saw several mergers and operated under the name Kentucky University as a law school, a seminary, a college of arts and sciences, and an agricultural and mechanical (A & M)

college. In 1878, the A&M college separated and eventually expanded to become the University of Kentucky, the state's flagship public university. Shortly thereafter, Transylvania returned to using its original name. Transylvania established an affiliation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1865. The history of the Disciples reveals a focus on unity in faith, higher education as a path to understanding, and tolerance when faced with differences. Transylvania welcomes students of all faiths.

Today, the campus includes 28 buildings, including the Old Morrison National Historic Landmark, four athletic fields, and a new Campus Center (opened in fall 2020) located just four blocks away from the town center of Lexington. Now in its third century, Transylvania continues to draw inspiration from its history while embracing the present and future as one of the nation's top liberal arts colleges.

Finances

The University has an endowment of \$244 million. The college typically receives total annual donations of approximately \$5.25 million. Tuition, room and board, and fees (currently \$65,232) represent 65 percent of gross revenue. Transylvania was the first institution of higher education in Kentucky to offer merit scholarships. Today, it awards more than \$22 million in scholarship money for merit and financial need each year, and nearly 100 percent of students receive some form of financial aid. Transylvania's discount rate of 60 percent is lower than other small private colleges in Kentucky. Approximately 25 percent of financial aid expenditures are funded by endowment income.

Academics

A Transylvania education is rooted in the transformational nature of a highly personalized learning experience delivered by an incredibly dedicated faculty and staff, coupled with a strong liberal arts core that exposes students, often from under-resourced or increasingly underrepresented backgrounds to a new world of personal and professional possibilities and opportunities.

While Transylvania has a strong regional draw, the academic programs are nationally competitive. Students engage with a traditional liberal arts curriculum with 46 majors, can design their own course of study, and have an opportunity for pre-professional preparation in law, medicine, and engineering. A number of dual-degree programs exist in collaboration with other universities, including a 3+2 engineering program and a 3+4 pharmacy program, both with the University of Kentucky; a 4+1 MBA with UK Gatton College of Business and Economics; and an MBA at Marshall University. The academic calendar consists of two 14-week terms (fall and winter), an optional summer session, and a May term where students concentrate on just one highly interdisciplinary course and often study abroad alongside Transylvania faculty. Many students also engage in undergraduate research with faculty, and some are supported by summer research grant awards of up to \$3,500. The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the bachelor's degree and is a member of the Annapolis Group.

Faculty and Staff

Transylvania has 85 full-time faculty, 95 percent of whom hold terminal degrees. Faculty are dedicated to undergraduate teaching and to involving students in creative scholarship. With a student-to-faculty ratio of 11:1, they teach in a very personalized environment with an average class size of 14 students.

To emphasize its commitment to teaching and to reward faculty who fulfill that commitment, Transylvania has the innovative Bingham Fund and the Bingham Center for Excellence in Teaching. The unique Bingham program, established in 1987 and now with an endowment in excess of \$100 million, is administered by an independent Board of Trust to provide financial awards to faculty for teaching excellence. Since 1990, the program has also offered support for continuing professional growth through the David and Betty Jones Faculty Development Fund, providing grants to members of the faculty as well as to students working on projects supervised by the faculty. Many staff are long-time Transylvania employees who live in Lexington and contribute valuable institutional memory while adding to the sense of community on campus.

Students and Campus Life

The current student body of just over 1,000 undergraduates hails from 20 states (80 percent are from Kentucky) and several different countries. Transylvania has had significant success in diversifying its student population recently, with students of color making up 18.8 percent of the student body.

Over 70 percent of students live on campus or in affiliated housing, and most are actively involved in campus life. Almost half belong to national sororities or fraternities, and approximately 90 percent participate in community service opportunities. More than 50 student organizations offer students opportunities for developing leadership skills and personal growth.

A new 97,710-square-foot, \$30 million Campus center opened in the fall of 2020. Serving as a physical connection between the academic and residential sides of campus, it provides a dedicated, central space to house most student life functions. The new facility includes event spaces for the Transylvania community and outside groups, a fitness center, classrooms, common study spaces, and dining areas like the Great Hall which seats up to 450.

Many of the institution's physical plant needs have been addressed in recent years, including three new residence halls, and a complete renovation of our largest classroom building. The campus has a state-of-the-art sports and recreational center (home to our defending National Champion Women's Basketball team), which includes a performance gym that seats 1,200, an indoor track, and a well-equipped fitness studio. A relatively new athletics complex features a lighted turf field for soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey and an NCAA-regulation eight-lane track. Campus facilities also include a competitive swimming and diving pool.

Athletics

In addition, athletics play a vital role at Transylvania and are deeply woven into the fabric of campus life. Intercollegiate athletics have been an important part of the Transylvania campus and student life for over 120 years since Transylvania participated in the first organized football game in the South in 1879. Today, Transylvania competes as an NCAA Division III member of the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference. With more than 400 student-athletes, student trainers, sports information assistants, cheerleaders, and dancers, nearly half of the student population is involved in athletics. Transylvania's faculty and coaches alike embrace the true scholar-athlete ideal, valuing the importance of competition while balancing it with the pursuit of excellence in the classroom.

Alumni

Transylvania's alumni, nearly 15,000 strong, continue to distinguish themselves. Within six months of graduating, 95 percent of Transy students are either employed or enrolled in graduate school. More than a third of Transy students pursue graduate study, and 100 percent of students recommended for law school and over 90 percent of recommended medical school are successfully accepted.

Transylvania alumni are deeply committed to their alma mater. Typically, between 25 and 30 percent of the alumni give annually to the University. They are also generous with their time in supporting the University and current students. The [100 Doors to Success](#) program pairs students with alumni mentors who help guide them in their college experience and the transition to career or graduate school. More than 300 students participate each year.

Lexington, Kentucky

While it is rare to find an urban liberal arts institution, Transylvania's beautiful, red-brick, 70-acre campus is located in downtown Lexington, KY, a thriving community of 320,000 people — including almost 30,000 higher education students — in the heart of the Bluegrass region. Lexington is a college town with a high-quality public school system and a broad range of cultural offerings. The city serves as the professional center for central and eastern Kentucky, with excellent medical, legal, and financial services. Lexington was ranked the #3 safest city in *America by SafeWise* in 2019, #8 best city to live in America by *Money* in 2018, and #31 most livable U.S. city by *USA Today* in 2017. Conveniently located near the juncture of I-64 and I-75, the campus is within easy drives of both Cincinnati and Louisville and is less than a day's drive from major hubs like Atlanta, Chicago, and St. Louis.

LEADERSHIP

[Brien Lewis](#) became Transylvania University's 28th president on July 1, 2020. Prior to joining Transylvania, he spent eight years as president of Catawba College, a private liberal arts institution in Salisbury, North Carolina. Throughout his 25-year career in higher education, Lewis has distinguished himself with a strong

dedication to student development and effective institutional stewardship. At Catawba College, he achieved significant milestones, including an increase in undergraduate enrollment and improved first-year student retention rates. Under his leadership, Catawba College successfully completed two major fundraising campaigns, expanding the college's endowment by 87percent. Lewis also initiated new academic and athletic programs, while enhancing campus infrastructure to support these initiatives. Beyond his role in academia, Lewis has contributed to various organizations, serving on the boards of the United Way, the Crosby Scholars, the UNC Nutrition Research Institute, and the National Sports Media Association. Originally from Toronto, Canada, Lewis holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was honored as a Morehead Scholar and served as student body president. He furthered his education with a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Toronto.

THE ENROLLMENT DIVISION

The Vice President for Enrollment Management (VPEM) leads the recruitment efforts needed to attract, recruit, and yield a broadly diverse incoming class of students who will contribute to the Transylvania community. The VPEM directs initiatives to build an undergraduate student body consistent with the University's mission, academic programs, and particular strengths.

The Office of Admissions

The Office of Admissions is committed to enabling the best-qualified, most talented, and broadly diverse students to attend Transylvania University, regardless of their families' financial circumstances. The Office of Admissions works to build an incoming class that is consistent with the University's mission, values, academic programs, and strengths. In building this community of learners, Transylvania offers a holistic admissions review process, carefully considering all aspects of the admissions application, including the high school transcript and the submission of optional standardized test scores. Applicants may also choose to submit recommendation letters, essays, and college transcripts if college-level courses were elected during high school. Transylvania offers an internal application and is also a member of the Common Application. Applications are accepted in three rounds for first-year students—Early Action 1, Early Action 2, and Regular Decision and in August or December for transfer students planning to enroll for the upcoming fall or winter terms, respectively.

For the Fall 2023 class, Transylvania University received 2,015 completed applications and admitted 1,742 students with an acceptance rate of approximately 86 percent. Of the admitted students, 23 percent came from outside Kentucky, 11 percent came from outside the United States, and 24 percent of students represented diverse backgrounds. Transylvania enrolls a highly talented group of students with the Fall 2023 class having an average 27 ACT composite and a 3.75 high school GPA. Transylvania also demonstrates its growing commitment to enrolling transfer students, as the incoming class consisted of 24 transfer students. On average, the first-year retention rate is 82 percent, the four-year graduate rate is 69 percent, and 24 percent of students are federal Pell Grant recipients.

Scholarships and Grants

Transylvania's tuition and fees fall below the national average for comparable private liberal arts colleges, and 99 percent of students receive scholarships or grants to bring that cost even lower. Through the [Pioneer Pledge](#), Transylvania commits to making a high-quality liberal arts education affordable to all students. Transylvania is consistently ranked as one of the nation's best buys in higher education, with tuition and fees often falling below the national average for liberal arts colleges. Based on full-time enrollment, tuition and fees for the 2024-25 academic year is \$46,870. Transylvania offers exceptionally competitive [merit-based scholarships](#) ranging from \$12,000 to full tuition, [departmental fine arts scholarships](#) with varying award amounts, and additional scholarship opportunities for [designated groups of students](#) such as (International Baccalaureate, ROTC, First-Generation, etc.) Transylvania prides itself on its [Pell Guarantee](#) program, which ensures full tuition and fees will be covered for in-state Pell Grant-eligible students through a combination of institutional, state, and federal grants and scholarships. 99 percent of students receive financial with financial aid packages averaging almost \$34,000. Learn more about scholarships and additional aid programs at Transylvania University [here](#).

THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Reporting directly to the President, the Vice President for Enrollment Management (VPEM) will serve as an extension of the president's office by providing leadership, management, and coordination of strategic enrollment initiatives and emerging priorities for the University. As a key member of the president's executive management team, the Cabinet, and the Strategic Leadership Teams implementing the new Strategic Plan, the VPEM provides strategic counsel and recommendations. Additionally, the VPEM will serve as a primary liaison for Transylvania University, connecting with internal and external stakeholders such as the Board of Trustees, advisory boards, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, community organizations, schools, and other entities, to bolster financial, human, and community support while enhancing the university's visibility and reputation.

The VPEM will be expected to develop strong key partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, e.g., central marketing and communications, academic affairs, student life, athletics, etc., to advance the mission of enrollment management, ensure recruitment and overall branding messages are aligned, attract a steady pipeline of quality students over time, and ensure a high degree of service is offered in every student interaction. The role of the VPEM will offer the opportunity to innovate and further develop professional staff, while also creating forward-thinking systems and procedures to promote collaboration among campus leaders and push the student's lifecycle—from prospect to graduation—into a new era at Transy. This position requires a thought leader with strategic vision, change-management expertise, and in-depth knowledge of both emerging national trends and issues facing higher education enrollment functions. The new VPEM must be well qualified to motivate and manage staff committed to academic excellence, and to develop and implement innovative enrollment strategies that involve the entire university.

The VPEM provides the University with nimble executive leadership and will convene and liaise with other senior campus officials to establish goals, policies, and practices consistent with strategies for full lifecycle enrollment management. The VPEM will oversee and manage an operating budget of \$1.4 million and a total staff of approximately 15 full-time employees. Depending on the background and expertise of the new VPEM, additional areas of responsibility may be added as part of a strategic realignment of administrative structures.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT

The VPEM will join Transylvania University at a moment of great promise. Following a period of challenges brought upon by COVID, leadership and staff transitions, and flat enrollments, the University is now at an inflection point, poised to build on recent growth, innovation, and a renewed sense of community. The next VPEM will be a key leader in moving Transylvania forward and helping it take bold steps toward furthering its vision to provide transformative educational experiences through the liberal arts. More specifically, the VPEM will work to address the following opportunities and challenges:

Develop and implement an overarching enrollment strategy to grow the applicant pool and improve yield.

The VPEM will be a strategic thought partner to the President, senior leadership, and Board of Trustees on enrollment strategy. Serving as the chief architect in strategic planning for the enrollment division, the VPEM will find new ways to attract applicants nationally and internationally, with an eye toward academic and inclusive excellence, talent, and potential. Upon hire, the VPEM will be expected to invigorate efforts and create a formal strategic plan for enrollment growth. This individual will work closely with communications, institutional effectiveness, academic affairs, student life, athletics, and other units across campus to identify and achieve targets that contribute to the success and growth of the University. The VPEM must bring a record of success using data and metrics to realign and reshape the enrollment direction of Transy in response to today's enrollment challenges. The VPEM will monitor and evaluate the plan's programmatic and operational effectiveness on an ongoing basis, adjusting as needed to compete in a highly dynamic higher education landscape.

Enhance marketing and communication efforts to sharpen Transylvania's brand and reach to attract and retain a diverse student body.

Working with the University's Marketing and Communications team, the VPEM will be expected to evaluate current outreach efforts and find new ways to expand outreach and establish a stronger brand identity while also paying special attention to community-based organization partnerships and other relationships that allow the University to build pipelines for students from diverse backgrounds and experiences. In partnership with the marketing and communications team, the VPEM will spearhead an effort to brainstorm fresh strategies for recruitment and streamline effective outreach campaigns, ensuring consistent branding and impactful messaging. The VPEM will evaluate current third-party vendor

relationships and develop a strategic enrollment marketing and communications plan inclusive of, but not limited to website enhancements, social networking, multi-media, advertising buys, and list buys for campaigns.

Using data, leverage enrollment modeling best practices to support institutional priorities.

In collaboration with campus partners, the VPEM will help the institution leverage enrollment modeling techniques to inform a data-driven approach to all enrollment strategies, including how the institution will continue to communicate, market, distribute, strategize, and ultimately award both merit and need-based aid. The VPEM will be a system thinker, leveraging technology and predictive analytics to improve Transy's ability to forecast, recruit, and yield students effectively.

Steward financial aid resources strategically and responsibly.

With the impending enrollment cliff and U.S. Supreme Court decision, the VPEM plays a crucial role and must continue to formulate strategies to enhance the socioeconomic, gender, multicultural, and international diversity of the institution. The VPEM should bring insights regarding national trends in tuition and aid practices to guide institutional strategy, including how best to strategically and proactively utilize both need-based and merit financial aid to attract, yield, and shape a diverse student body. The VPEM will help to educate the team about financial aid practices so that, together, they can work to improve the recruitment and retention of top talent, first-generation, and low-income students by thinking creatively about the use of merit scholarships and the strategic deployment of resources for student success. Working with the Director of Financial Aid, the VPEM will be expected to provide guidance and will be held responsible for ensuring that Transylvania is always compliant with federal and other laws.

Serve as a unifying and inspiring leader to develop the broader team.

The VPEM will be expected to unite admission and financial aid around a comprehensive vision and strategy through team building, professional development, and process improvement. The VPEM will employ best practices to develop a strong sense of teamwork, equity, and investment among the staff. With a new era of Transylvania enrollment on the horizon, hiring and retaining a strong, diverse, and talented team will be integral to succeeding in this role. This individual will serve as a mentor and coach and will nurture a culture that aspires to excellence. The VPEM must be approachable, clearly communicating across the division in a timely and consistent manner, and support professional development opportunities for all staff.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Transylvania University seeks a Vice President for Enrollment with demonstrated success as an enrollment thought leader coupled with strategic vision, energy, and creativity. The VPEM should also have a demonstrated knowledge of state, national, and international demographics and in-depth knowledge of both emerging national trends and issues facing higher education enrollment. The following qualifications represent the broad set of skills and personal qualities deemed important for success as the next Vice President for Enrollment. While no candidate will embody every quality, ideal candidates will bring many of the following professional qualifications and attributes:

- A bachelor's degree is required; a graduate degree is highly desirable.
- Experience with strategic enrollment management assessment and planning.
- Executive leadership experience with and proven success in developing and implementing sophisticated admissions and financial aid strategies.
- Excellent collaborative, relational, and interpersonal skills with a high level of transparency; past success in hiring, retaining, leading, and mentoring a strong and diverse team
- In-depth experience with data-driven analyses of enrollment information, including modeling and forecasting as a basis for broader institutional decision-making.
- Current knowledge of best practices in enrollment marketing, recruitment, and communication strategies, as well as a firm understanding of demographic trends and how to optimize them to achieve enrollment goals; experience integrating technologies is highly desirable.
- Proven ability to analyze, summarize, and present complex data to various constituencies, including administration, faculty, staff, alumni, the board, students, and families.
- Deep and demonstrated commitment to student recruitment, retention, and success, emphasizing inclusive excellence.
- Ability to maintain effective working relationships across a centralized university and to facilitate institutional change in a collegial environment.
- Unwavering commitment to mentorship, professional development, and team building.
- A proven capacity for decisive, highly skilled, creative, and courageous leadership and strategic thinking.
- A record that demonstrates the highest degree of integrity, transparency, honesty, and fairness.
- Exceptional capacity to listen to and for both written and oral communication; an effective public presence reflecting comfort and skill as a spokesperson.
- Experience with Slate, Colleague, and PowerFails.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, 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 for the search: [Transylvania University Vice President for Enrollment Management](#). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Kate Barry, Partner

Alycia Johnson, Managing Associate
Lehman Robinson, Associate
Kaitlin Cruz, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Transylvania University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and recognizes the value of historically excluded and underrepresented backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences that enrich the university's environment for colleagues and students alike. We are committed to enhancing the diversity of the university community and encourage all who are interested to apply.