

SEARCH PROFILE

PRESIDENT



FINLANDIA

UNIVERSITY

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The Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Committee invite inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of president of Finlandia University. Finlandia seeks in its next president a seasoned mission-driven leader with financial acumen who will strengthen the university's academic

program, aligning it with the current needs of higher education's changing landscape, further advance the university's dedication to student success while growing student enrollment, and enhance community engagement.

ABOUT FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY

Finlandia University, the only private university in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is a co-educational liberal arts college. Established in 1896 as Suomi College by Finnish Lutherans looking to make a better life for future generations, Finlandia celebrated its [125th anniversary](#) this past December. Finlandia is the only institution of higher learning in North America founded by Finns, and Finlandia's Lutheran influence can still be felt on campus, as it is one of 26 colleges and universities affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Finlandia's Finnish roots continue to run deep. Its campus is home to the Finnish American Heritage Center (FAHC), which serves as the hub of Finnish American life for Finlandia University, the region, and the broader North American Finnish community. The FAHC houses the Finnish American Historical Archive, the world's largest and oldest collections of Finnish American archive materials and works of art, as well as hundreds of museum pieces, and publishes

the monthly international newspaper "The Finnish American Reporter". In addition, the university hosts a unique curriculum and library of resources focused on Nordic studies and several Finnish exchange students and interns each year.

This past fall, Finlandia celebrated its largest incoming class in five years. The university's overall enrollment grew by six percent with the on-campus student population increasing by nine percent. This full-time-equivalent growth brought 25 more students to campus than in fall 2020, giving Finlandia an enrollment of 430. With an average class size of 11:1, Finlandia offers an intimate education. Approximately 30 full-time faculty and 25 adjunct faculty are committed to students' personal and intellectual growth, serving not just as educators but as mentors.

Named a 2021 Best Value College by University Research & Review and the Best Colleges in Michigan in 2022 by Intelligent.com, Finlandia's academic programs of study lead to associate and

ABOUT FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

baccalaureate degrees in the disciplines of art and design (BFA), business (BBA), liberal studies (BA, AA, AGS), health sciences (BSN, AAS), biology (BS) and psychology (BS). Finlandia is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and the next reaffirmation of accreditation is in 2024-2025. One hundred percent of Finlandia's full-time domestic students receive some sort of financial aid. Nearly 70 percent of Finlandia's fall 2021 student body is from Michigan and the Upper Great Lakes region, although overall Finlandia's students represent 38 states and nine countries. About 42 percent of students live on campus; 49 percent are male, 51 percent are female; 24 percent are students of color; and 92 percent are degree-seeking (77 percent bachelor degree / 23 percent associate degree).

Finlandia student-athletes make up nearly 80 percent of the student body. The University offers 10 NCAA Division III sports: Men's and women's basketball, volleyball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's hockey, football, baseball, and softball. In addition, the athletics program includes the ACHA D2 men's ice hockey program and a co-ed Esports program.

Finlandia University is governed by an active and engaged Board of Trustees and has a very dedicated alumni and friends, including an Alumni Board and the Finnish Council.

For a campus tour, please click [here](#), and for a look at the athletics facilities, click [here](#).

THE KEWEENAW PENINSULA

Finlandia is located in the City of Hancock. Founded in the 1850s by early copper explorers, Hancock is a progressive and welcoming city of 4,500 residents in Michigan's northernmost region, the Keweenaw Peninsula. The region offers many natural beauties, a thriving arts community, and year-round outdoor recreational opportunities. Finlandia University faculty, staff, and students enjoy miles of public beaches, more than 25 local waterfalls, and easy access to Lake Superior, the largest body of fresh water in the world. Adventurous spirits find inspiration and

enjoyment on local trails, at two national parks and four state parks, and on acres of pristine, natural forest land. Residents and university constituents can take advantage of mountain biking, hiking, fishing, camping, canoeing and boating, and with an average annual snowfall of 250 to 300 inches, snowboarding, skiing, and ice hockey. The City of Hancock has been consistently ranked as the third-snowiest city in the United States by The Weather Channel.





LEADERSHIP AGENDA FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

The president is the chief executive officer of the University, responsible for its effective administration and for its continued improvement and advancement. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the 17th president of Finlandia University will have proven leadership experience and capabilities, will understand the opportunities and challenges confronting private higher education today and in the ever-evolving future, and will demonstrate a determination and the confidence to set aspirational goals to advance Finlandia University in the following areas.

PROVIDE DIRECTION AND VISION

Critical to this role is the deep dedication of this individual to the mission of the university as a Lutheran liberal arts institution with Finnish roots. Finlandia seeks to draw upon themes and values inherent in its ethnic and spiritual heritage. Thus, the next president must work with the Board of Trustees and the University's many constituents, including faculty, staff, and students as well as alumni and community members, to identify ways to capitalize on the institution's history and values, champion a liberal arts education, and bring innovative vision and strategy to promote academic excellence. The campus community will look to the president for empowerment, collaboration, and leadership to strengthen the institution and position it for long-term success. The University seeks an experienced leader with the ability to examine current programming and to seek out new opportunities and programs related to emerging trends in higher education to better market the university, within a sustainable financial mode. The next president will work with academic leadership to

advance and strengthen program quality and develop innovative modes of instruction to suit learners of all types. The next president will also be charged with developing community and galvanizing the various constituent groups within the campus community around common goals, including engaging in a strategic planning process and planning for the future of the institution.

ENSURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Essential to the presidency will be the ability to enhance the financial stability and long-term economic sustainability of the University through appropriate allocation of resources and fundraising necessary to achieve responsible financial longevity. The next president will strengthen the University's finances and its structural health through diversified revenue streams and a fresh examination of the business models and their operation, while maintaining a high-quality education and commitment to students' success. The president will serve as the chief ambassador, advocate, and fundraiser for the University, while connecting with alumni, friends, foundations, corporations, and organizations. In addition, the University's endowment and debt will need the immediate and focused attention of the next president, as will the institution's physical plant. Finlandia's current 12 major buildings are aging, and deferred maintenance projects are not being addressed in a timely fashion. Instructional and athletic spaces require furnishing, technology, and accessibility upgrades across the board. Athletics is also in need of additional practice venues and locker rooms.



LEADERSHIP AGENDA FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT (CONT.)

INCREASE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION/STRENGTHEN STUDENT EXPERIENCE

To support and strengthen overall enrollment growth strategies, the new president must quickly assess current enrollment issues, particularly around new student recruitment and retention. The president has the opportunity to work with faculty and staff to bolster the curricular and co-curricular programming to keep it current with a rapidly changing world and take more effective approaches focused on student retention, growth, and success. This will also require the new president to work with the college deans and chairs to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by each individual college. In addition, the new president will work closely with the Board of Trustees and current management team to propose and advocate optimal achievable goals for enrollment. A clear focus on students' needs and satisfaction is required to strengthen support services and current student life activities, as well as to address the need for facilities that provide a more inviting atmosphere for students. A holistic evaluation of the institution's marketing plan and how it can be adapted and integrated to better support enrollment goals is also a priority. The president must work with the University's constituents to brand, promote, and cultivate Finlandia's distinctiveness and niche relative to competitors.

ATTRACT AND RETAIN ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Faculty and staff turnover has taken a toll on campus morale, as has a cluster of leadership vacancies in recent years. In particular, at the management level there is need for a permanent Chief Financial Officer as well as Advancement Officer. In addition, a vacancy in the high levels of HR needs to be filled. Finlandia must capitalize on the strength and dedication of its current faculty and staff. Many of these committed individuals have served the University for several decades while others are relative newcomers. The president must actively help boost employee morale by creating a culture in which all feel valued and inspired. Essential to a successful presidency will be a concerted effort to improve communication between the senior administration, faculty, staff, as well as alumni and friends to instill a spirit of teamwork, information-sharing, mutual respect, trust, and transparency in decision making. The next president will need to work with the University's constituents to examine the current organizational structure, streamline roles and responsibilities, and improve the resources and support available for continued professional growth and development of faculty and staff as well as to improve their recruitment, onboarding, and retention.

LEADERSHIP AGENDA FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT (CONT.)

ENGAGE COMMUNITY

The new president must demonstrate an approachable and welcoming demeanor that invites conversation and engagement with all stakeholders, internally and externally, to expand Finlandia's standing and reputation. The next president will be a visible leader who will help to foster a greater connection to the local community both in Hancock and the larger Upper Peninsula by being proactive in expanding relationships, partnerships, and opportunities with businesses/corporations, foundations, and other philanthropic entities, as well as local healthcare agencies, the K-12 system, and other higher education entities. In addition, it is expected that the new president will nurture, create, and sustain dynamic relationships with alumni, the Finnish Council, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) members and see them as partners in moving the institution into the future. There is an opportunity to also engage Finnish Americans nationally and to make more advanced connections with Finnish educational institutions and businesses to provide value-added education to students and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND CAPABILITIES

- An earned doctoral degree or other appropriate terminal degree
- An appreciation of Finlandia's special niche as an institution with a strong Finnish heritage and ties to Finland, and the opportunities this presents
- Ability and commitment to sustain and reinforce Finlandia's distinctive culture, mission, and values as a Lutheran institution
- An understanding of, commitment to, and respect for shared governance, and the ability to build bridges and interact successfully with diverse constituent groups in fostering an inclusive environment across campus
- Experience at a higher education institution of similar size and scope and a demonstrated commitment to a liberal arts education
- Significant and progressive academic administrative experience at the cabinet level or above
- Understanding of the changing landscape of higher education and knowledge of current and emerging best practices in the academy
- A student-centered leader with a proven ability to recruit and retain a diverse student body, and a track record of connecting, engaging, and communicating with students and alumni
- Ability to recruit and retain a diverse administration, faculty, and staff and a demonstrated commitment to their professional development
- Strong financial acumen with a demonstrated record of sound fiscal management and fundraising experience
- Ability to develop, articulate, and implement a shared vision and foster a collaborative culture to achieve institutional goals
- Successful experience in strategic planning, enrollment management, program development, and accreditation, including knowledge of outcomes assessment
- Experience with intercollegiate athletics and working with the NCAA
- Evidence of a respectful, consultative, and accessible leadership style that will energize and inspire the campus community
- The skill to listen closely, make informed, data-driven decisions firmly, and communicate those decisions clearly and effectively in a timely manner, as well as hold others accountable
- A leader who demonstrates a high level of integrity, trust, and resourcefulness
- Experience effectively connecting with the surrounding community and leveraging opportunities of the region, including building relationships with local businesses
- Strong experience working with boards and strengthening institutional governance
- A high degree of comfort in a small, rural community





APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Finlandia University is being assisted by Academic Search. Prospective candidates may arrange a confidential discussion by contacting Jack Ohle at Jack.Ohle@academicsearch.org or Andrea Cowsert at Andrea.Cowsert@academicsearch.org. Applications and nominations should be submitted electronically to FinlandiaPresident@academicsearch.org. Applications must include a cover letter that addresses the responsibilities and requirements described in this position prospectus; a curriculum vitae; and a list of at least five professional references with contact information, including telephone and email, and a note indicating the candidate's working relationship with each. References will not be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate. This position is open until filled, but only applications received by **March 10, 2022**, can be assured full consideration. To learn more about Finlandia University, visit www.finlandia.edu.

Finlandia University is an equal opportunity educational institution/equal opportunity employer.

As a learning community Finlandia University recognizes and affirms the dignity and worth of all people and cultures. We will strive to provide an institutional climate that does not perpetuate or tolerate forms of discrimination. We are committed to recruiting, developing and retaining a qualified and diverse faculty, staff and student body.

Finlandia University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex/gender, age, disability, religion, veteran status, familial status, height, weight, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, genetic information, or any other category protected by applicable law in admissions, employment, athletics, programs, and activities.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Finlandia University in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute. For more information, visit www.academicsearch.org.



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