



Position Specification

Towson University

Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Towson University

Located on a 330-acre campus in Towson, Maryland, just ten miles from Baltimore's Inner Harbor and a short drive or train ride to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City, Towson University (TU) provides an environment for living and learning, close to many educational, cultural, and community resources. The University is the second largest unit of the nationally respected University System of Maryland. TU offers nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate programs, including over 100 major fields of study, in the liberal arts, business, sciences, education, arts, health professions, and other fields. A comprehensive public research university as committed to teaching and student success as it is to research, scholarship and the creative arts, TU provides students with extraordinary opportunities to work alongside faculty in addressing significant issues while also generating new knowledge to solve real-world, societal problems. TU's eight colleges include the College of Business & Economics, College of Education, College of Fine Arts & Communication, College of Graduate Studies, College of Health Professions, College of Liberal Arts, Jess and Mildred Fisher College of Science & Mathematics, and the Honors College.

Towson is home to nearly 17,000 undergraduate students, over 3,300 graduate students (including more than 300 doctoral students), nearly 1,700 faculty, and 1,500 staff. The University has been recognized as one of the region's best and most diverse public universities, offering world-class bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs while maintaining moderate tuition prices. TU was ranked the #1 public university in Maryland by both the *Wall Street Journal* (2026 and 2025) and *Washington Monthly* (2025) as well as the #3 best public university in the North by *U.S. News and World Report* (2026). Other noteworthy accolades include #2 for "Best Bang for the Buck" in Maryland by *Washington Monthly* (2025), #1 in North America for gender equality by *Times Higher Education* (2025), and #4 best colleges in the North for veterans by *U.S. News and World Report* (2026). Also in 2025, Towson was named one of the 2025 Great Colleges to Work For by *Great Colleges* and ModernThink, a strategic human capital consulting firm.

TU's current momentum and upward trajectory are hard to overstate. In recent years, the University has seen an increase in both applications for admission and research productivity. For the past five years, applications for admission have steadily risen each year; the University received the largest number of applications in its history for Fall 2025 enrollment. In FY24, TU had a 29% increase in research expenditures as reported to the National Science Foundation. In FY25, TU saw a 57% increase in the number of new external grants received. As of Q1, FY26, TU's grants office is managing a total of \$59.5 million in external grants. Towson expects to receive a Carnegie classification of Doctoral University with High Research Activity (R2) in 2027.

More than 60% of Towson students identify as members of a minority group, with nearly a quarter of undergraduate students being first-generation students. The University's longstanding commitment to creating a multicultural campus that embraces Maryland's emphasis on access, equity, and student success is advanced by policies and practices that promote the recruitment and retention of highly talented and diverse students, staff, and faculty. The University is among a small handful of universities nationwide with zero achievement gap: student performance and graduation data demonstrate that underrepresented student populations achieve the same academic success as the entirety of TU's student population.

TU is proud of its extensive student affairs and university life programs that offer students a wide range of clubs, student activities, and student support services. In addition, the University's athletic programs compete at the Division 1 level as a member of the Coastal Athletic Conference (CAA). The University further prides itself on its important role in community engagement in the metropolitan Baltimore area and in the state as a whole. As a Carnegie Community Engaged Campus and anchor institution, TU is committed to working alongside community partners to offer cultural programming, entrepreneurial outreach, and civic engagement opportunities that benefit the University and the community. Through the StarTUp at the Armory in downtown Towson, TU is creating new opportunities to connect campus with the greater Baltimore and Maryland regional business community to address entrepreneurship and workforce development. The StarTUp serves as TU's front door for startups, small businesses, and the region's largest corporations.

The state of Maryland has long been an extremely strong supporter of higher education. State appropriations make up one-third of the University's budget, and capital projects are fully funded by the state. In addition, both merit and cost-of-living salary increases have been funded by the state for the last five years. In recent years, significant capital improvements have been made on campus, including the opening of StarTUp in summer 2021, the New Science Complex in fall 2021, and the new College of Health Professions building in summer 2024. Smith Hall is currently undergoing an extensive renovation and addition; once complete, it will house TU's mass communication, communication studies, and electronic media and film departments.

Towson University's operating budget is approximately \$650 million. The University System of Maryland (of which Towson is a part) is rated Aa1 by Moody's, AA+ by Fitch, and AA+ by S&P.

For additional information, you are encouraged to review Towson's:

- [2020-2030 Strategic Plan](#)
- [Presidential Priorities](#)
- [2025 Annual Report](#)
- [FY2025 Internal Operating Budget and Plan](#)

Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Reporting directly to the President and serving as a key member of the Executive Leadership Team and President's Cabinet, the Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer (SVP/CFO) is responsible for the leadership, management, and strategic trajectory of the University's finance, budgeting, accounting, and capital planning functions as well as purchasing and contracts and the financial management of the University's auxiliary enterprises and service units. The incumbent will have a key role in advancing TU's Strategic Plan and the Presidential Priorities and for formulating financial strategies and plans to support institutional programming, financial sustainability, and the continued success of the University.

Towson's financial health is among the strongest within the University System of Maryland, and the next SVP/CFO will inherit an organization that is running very well, with relatively few issues that require fixing. The University seeks a leader who likes to build and who will provide highly strategic oversight of the financial area, launching Towson into its next phase.

The SVP/CFO will lead an organization of 146 FTEs, with the following direct reports: Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance; Associate Vice President of Financial Affairs; Director of Management Advisory and Compliance Services; and Executive Administrative Assistant. The SVP/CFO will:

- Serve as the senior advisor to the President on all issues related to university finances, budgeting, accounting, and capital planning.
- Lead a team of financial management professionals charged with the ethical management and stewardship of the University's fiscal resources.
- Guide the university-wide planning efforts to optimize and modernize the use of human, physical, and financial resources while overseeing and developing systems, controls, policies, and procedures that effectively steward the day-to-day management of the University's financial resources.
- Implement and ensure the goal-oriented and performance-based allocation of university resources to drive progress on the University's strategic objectives and Presidential Priorities and initiatives.
- Participate in an inclusive decision-making environment, providing subject-matter expertise that supports and furthers collaborative planning, formulation, and implementation of university-wide policies and procedures including regular reporting of financial data to support institution decision-making.
- Represent TU on a variety of external groups including the University System of Maryland, the Maryland Board of Regents and its Finance Committee, the Maryland Board of Public Works, and the Maryland Legislature as well as TU internal groups including serving as lead staff with respect to financial matters with TU's shared

governance units and principal liaison to the Resource Planning and Advisory Committee (RPAC), which serves as the Academic Senate's representative voice into Towson's annual resource planning process.

Key Priorities:

Executive Leadership

- Provide bold and visionary financial leadership to advance the University.
- Recruit and mentor top talent, facilitate their professional development, and ensure effective succession planning.
- Work closely with the President's Cabinet to align their respective departments and functions with the financial priorities of the University.
- Lead collaboratively with respect for others and for team-focused decision-making.

Budget & Financial Health

- Establish the budget model of the future, modifying the current centralized model to give deans greater autonomy and to further incentivize them to be more entrepreneurial.
- Transition from a short-term to a longer-term longitudinal budgeting cycle.

Strategic Planning & Capital Management

- Participate actively in the ongoing assessment and facilitation of the University's strategic plan.
- Participate actively in the development of the next campus facilities master plan.
- Collaborate with the Senior Vice President for Campus Operations on the financial management of current and planned facilities and associated capital projects.
- Collaborate with the Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations in the planning of the next capital campaign, now in the formative phase.

Organizational Effectiveness

- Streamline financial operations and processes (e.g., payroll, procurement, etc.) for optimal efficiency.
- Drive modernization of finance systems, aligning with state-led technology upgrades.
- Explore the viability of a shared services model, both internal within the University and in collaboration with other units of the University System of Maryland.

External Engagement

- In collaboration with the President and other members of the President's Cabinet, advocate for Towson with state government officials as well as with the University System of Maryland.
- Collaborate and interface actively with the TU Foundation.

Candidate Profile

Strategic Thinker: Has a significant level of business acumen and strategic financial planning skills. Is able to make practical, realistic, and data-driven decisions. Knows how to establish strategic administrative priorities and align the organization with them.

Collaborative Leader: Able to work effectively with a range of constituencies both internal and external to an organization. Recognizes the role of the SVP/CFO as supporting and enabling the success of the University's academic goals and its educational and research missions. Understands how to engage staff and hold them accountable for excellence. Shows compassion in making difficult decisions and demonstrates caring for peers and subordinates. Displays excellent interpersonal skills.

Skilled Communicator: Understands how to communicate effectively and transparently in a very large and diverse organization. Has strong oral and written communication skills, including expertise presenting and negotiating. Able to articulate to non-financial constituencies.

Results-Oriented: Understands and interprets complex problems and is able to find solutions and effectively

implement them. Has a sophisticated understanding of how to employ metrics to inform decisions, improve business processes, and drive performance and quality.

Innovative Builder: Able to think creatively and come up with out-of-the-box solutions. Has a growth mindset and a tolerance for risk.

In terms of the professional and personal competencies desired, we would highlight the following:

- Bachelor's degree required. An advanced degree in business, finance, accounting, or a related field is strongly preferred.
- A current CPA certification is preferred but not required.
- Minimum of ten years relevant experience with at least five years in a senior position related to budgeting, fiscal planning, capital planning, procurement, and financial support services.
- Unassailable personal and professional integrity and the highest of ethical standards.
- Experience with software and contemporary technologies pertinent to fiscal management and financial reporting as well as experience with financial technology implementations.
- Experience working in higher education, ideally within a public university, is a plus but not required. However, respect for the academic mission of a university is critical, including deep appreciation for faculty, staff, and students and a commitment to the process of shared governance.
- Experience working with local, state, and government funding sources is preferred.

Nomination and Application Procedure

Towson University invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer. Interested candidates should confidentially submit a curriculum vitae and letter of interest (Adobe PDF files preferred) to Towson.SVPCFO@russellreynolds.com.

For fullest consideration, materials should be received as soon as possible and preferably by January 5, 2026.

Towson University is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, or protected veteran status.

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