



AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION OF

## President

Transylvania University  
Lexington, Kentucky

### THE SEARCH

Transylvania University seeks an experienced, collaborative, and strategic leader to serve as its 27th President. Building on a long institutional history, a reputation for academic excellence, and a strong sense of community on campus, the next President will lead Transylvania into a new era of success and distinction.

Transylvania University, located in the heart of downtown Lexington, Kentucky, is a private liberal arts college featuring a personalized approach to undergraduate education through 46 majors. Founded in 1780, it is the 16th oldest institution of higher learning in the country with approximately 1,000 students. Transylvania has a deep commitment to the liberal arts and has been on the move with new facilities, an increasingly diverse student body, and recognized distinction in student outcomes including notably high rates of acceptance to professional schools. The University is currently ranked 72nd among national liberal arts colleges in *U.S. News & World Report* — a ranking that has steadily increased 33 places in just 15 years.

The President will work with faculty, staff, students, 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 President is expected to be a visible and highly energetic leader on campus, who will ensure that Transylvania is able to enhance its academic distinction, meet its enrollment goals, diversify its ranks, and preserve the passion and strong sense of community that has fueled the University's evolution, while recruiting and retaining the most talented faculty and staff as partners in the enterprise. A strategic thinker, the President will possess the ability to build a shared vision for an innovative liberal arts curriculum relevant to the 21st century, mobilizing the campus and broader community, clearly and concisely communicating a path forward, and leading institutional advancement to develop the resources necessary to usher Transylvania into its next era of excellence. As the chief ambassador of Transylvania University, the President will champion the value of a residential liberal arts college in today's changing higher education

and employment landscape and will strengthen partnerships and relationships with local businesses, industry, alumni, other educational institutions, and civic organizations across Kentucky for the benefit of the institution. The ideal candidate will be a strong academic and administrative leader with experience in strategic planning, fundraising, and enrollment, who can provide clear fiscal and operational guidance as Transylvania approaches its 250th year.

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

## TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY

*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.*

*- Transylvania University Mission*

## 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 didn't last. The name, however, 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 in government, business, medicine, law, and education. 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 three dining areas, and a National Historic Landmark located on a 70-acre downtown campus 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.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

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.

The Transylvania educational experience begins with First Engagements, a program created to help students ease into the personal and academic transition to college and the demands of a liberal arts education. First-Year Seminar courses during the first two terms prepare students for the type of academic work expected of them, while First Engagements allow students to participate in a variety of cultural and intellectual activities and experiences. Students attend at least 10 events of their choice in their first year for credit, with options ranging from lectures and concerts to plays and art shows. The goal is to help them develop a lifelong habit of participating and engaging in a community of inquiry.

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 total 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 Program for Excellence in Teaching. The unique endowed program, established in 1987-88, 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. Currently, 68 percent of the faculty have Bingham Awards.

Transylvania's community includes 189 full-time and 17 part-time staff with a deep commitment to the University and its students. 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 almost 1,000 undergraduates hails from 32 states (78 percent are from Kentucky) and 10 different countries. Transylvania has had significant success in diversifying its student population in the last five years, and the two most recent incoming classes represent 22 percent students of color, while the overall student population is now 16.4 percent domestic students of color. For the incoming class that joined Transylvania in the fall of 2019, the University received 2,643 applications with a 62 percent acceptance rate. Middle 50 percent ACT scores for the class of 2023 were 24 to 30. On average, the first-year retention rate is 82 percent, and the four-year graduation rate is 69 percent.

More than 76 percent of students live on campus or in affiliated housing, and most of them 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.

More than 40 percent participate on one of 27 NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletic teams. The campus has a state-of-the-art sports and recreational center, 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.

Slated to open in fall 2020, a new 97,710-square-foot, \$30 million Campus Center is under construction. Serving as a physical connection between the academic and residential sides of campus, it will provide for the first time a dedicated, central space to house most student life functions. The new facility will include event spaces for the Transylvania community and outside groups, a fitness center, classrooms, common study spaces, and dining areas like the Great Hall, which will seat up to 450 and remain open 24/7 as a place for students to gather.

## ALUMNI

Transylvania's alumni, nearly 15,000 strong, continue to distinguish themselves. Ninety-five percent of students are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation. More than a third pursue graduate study, and 100 percent of students recommended for law school and more than 90 percent recommended for medical school are accepted. Notable Transylvania alumni include distinguished public figures such as founder and hero of Texas Stephen F. Austin, abolitionist Cassius M. Clay, U.S. vice presidents John C. Breckinridge and Richard M. Johnson, and Supreme Court justices John Marshall Harlan and Samuel Freeman Miller. Famed statesman Henry Clay was a law professor and a member of Transylvania's Board of Trustees.

Transylvania alumni are deeply committed to their alma mater. Typically, more than 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.

## FINANCES

The University's operating budget for the 2019 fiscal year is \$39.9 million, with 56.5 percent allocated to personnel and 39.9 percent allocated to instruction. The budget is supported by total endowments of \$191.1 million. The University's base endowments have grown steadily since they were started in the late 1970s. The college typically receives total annual donations of approximately \$5 million. The University has a stable S&P bond rating. Tuition, room and board, and fees (currently \$50,680) represent 67 percent of gross revenue. Transylvania was the first institution of higher education in Kentucky to offer merit scholarships. Today it awards more than \$19.3 million in scholarship money for merit and financial need each year, and 98 percent of students receive some form of financial aid. The discount rate is 51.2 percent, which is notably lower than other small private colleges in Kentucky.

## LOCATION

While it is rare to find an urban liberal arts institution, Transylvania's beautiful, red-brick, 70-acre campus is fortunate to be located in the heart of downtown Lexington, Kentucky, a thriving community of 300,000 people — including almost 30,000 higher education students — in the heart of the Bluegrass region. Lexington is a college town with high-quality elementary and secondary school systems and a broad range of cultural offerings, and it 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. All of these attributes make Lexington a great place to live and a great place for college students preparing to launch a career. In fact, in 2018, *OnlineDegrees* ranked Lexington the #2 best mid-sized city for new grads. Transylvania students regard Lexington, with its rich range of cultural and recreational activities, as an extension of campus life and take advantage of its proximity just blocks away from the University of Kentucky, which provides additional educational and cultural opportunities to a highly educated community. 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.

## THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the University, setting a vision to lead the institution forward, enhancing academic excellence, supervising and managing all institutional affairs, developing and maintaining relationships with a wide array of constituents in the University community and beyond, and representing the institution externally — all in support of Transylvania's mission. Across the country, the role of college president has become all-consuming and more complex. The President must be the chief ambassador and fundraiser, externally positioned, and at the same time an accessible, visible, reliable, inspiring champion and moral compass to the campus community.

The President's Cabinet is comprised of nine senior leaders across the institution: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, Vice President for Student Life, Vice President for Information Technology, Vice President for Enrollment, Vice President for Finance and Business, Vice President for Marketing and Communications, and Vice President for Athletics.

The President reports to a self-perpetuating, independent Board of Trustees consisting of a maximum of 40 people from both the region and across the country. The work of the Board is done mainly within its several committees, many of which also include students and faculty, and its 11-person executive committee.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The successful Transylvania President will address the following opportunities and challenges:

*In partnership with the Transylvania community, develop and implement a strategic vision for the future of the University*

The next President will work with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the Board to articulate and craft a vision for advancing Transylvania University into the future. The strategic vision must be responsive to the changing higher education landscape while still remaining faithful

to Transylvania's liberal arts tradition and values. To enhance the distinction and academic stature of the University, the President, in close collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University and others, must take a holistic view of education and the student, examining both curricular offerings as well as the co-curricular experience in light of ever-changing student and workforce needs and expectations. A central part of the strategic vision will include innovation in the curriculum, with the aim of improving academic quality and growing student enrollment by reimagining what liberal arts for the 21st century looks like at Transylvania. Some ideas include ways to better integrate experiential learning, technology, and civic engagement, as well as new program development and the repackaging and marketing of existing programs. The President will lead these conversations and motivate the campus community to work toward a set of ambitious yet achievable goals.

***Build, develop, and empower a strong senior leadership team***

As the leader of the administration, the President must recognize and encourage the accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff, and create a workplace environment characterized by trust, empowerment, and lifelong learning. Notably, three Cabinet positions are currently filled by interims (Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University, Vice President for Enrollment, and Vice President for Student Life), and several others are still relatively new in their roles. An immediate priority for the incoming President must be to build out their Cabinet with an eye toward attracting top talent to Transylvania, mentoring and coalescing a new team of institutional leaders, and diversifying senior leadership.

***Communicate Transylvania's value proposition, competitive advantage, and story to differentiate the University in the market and bolster enrollment***

There is an ongoing need to educate, prove, and reinforce Transylvania's value proposition as a small liberal arts college to prospective and current families. As a tuition-dependent institution, Transylvania has goals to increase enrollment to roughly 1,500 students. The President will work to identify the essential attributes and outcomes of a Transylvania education and articulate a cohesive brand to market the University and to improve its visibility, reach, and impact. The President should bring a nuanced understanding of enrollment trends, marketing and communications, and how to build effective pipelines and partnerships, as well as a willingness to engage directly with prospective students in the high-touch admissions process.

***Judiciously steward and increase Transylvania's resource base to ensure financial sustainability***

The President will be tasked with managing current financial resources effectively and providing leadership in the face of competing financial priorities. The President will collaborate with the Board of Trustees, Vice President for Finance and Business, and the advancement team to ensure that Transylvania is effectively resourced into the future, ensuring both near-term and long-term fiscal health. The President will secure and

strengthen current and future sources of revenue, match strategic goals with donor interests, and cultivate a culture of philanthropy within the Transylvania community to grow both annual giving and the endowment.

Although Transylvania is a private institution, it has close ties to the community. The University is a source of pride for the city of Lexington, and many community members, some of whom graduated from other institutions, have been generous in their support of the University through donations of funds as well as engagement through student internship and service-learning opportunities.

### *Foster a diverse and inclusive campus community*

The next President must provide leadership for the University's commitment to a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion in its intellectual and community life and across its curriculum. Transylvania has experienced recent dramatic growth in the diversity of its student population, and the President will need to support the current and future diversity on campus and ensure all members of the Transylvania community feel a sense of belonging. The President will serve as an institutional leader in both word and action by promoting the values of equity and inclusion in all institutional areas and will welcome difficult conversations that examine University practices, policies, and culture.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate for President should possess many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experiences, and personal qualities:

- A deep commitment to the liberal arts and Transylvania's mission;
- Demonstrated ability to provide visionary and forward-thinking leadership;
- Commitment to high academic quality, rigor, and excellence;
- Knowledge of current and emerging issues, trends, and strategies in higher education; a keen understanding of enrollment; experience developing strategies to address demographic shifts and local competition, including internal and external marketing and communications;
- Successful experience as a strategic, inclusive, transparent, and visible leader; the ability to build strong management teams to delegate responsibility and authority and to execute plans with fiscal responsibility;
- An ability to bring campus constituencies to actionable consensus and the ability to energize and inspire students, faculty, staff, alumni, Board members, and external stakeholders around a collective vision;
- Personal warmth, charisma, and energy; a natural preference for collaboration and comfort with people of different backgrounds;
- The skills and personality to fundraise successfully and an ability to connect with potential donors individually and in a group;

- A clear understanding of financial accounting, including budgeting, and measurement of operating performance for small, independent institutions of higher education;
- Experience building and sustaining relationships with government, business, community partners, and other educational leaders;
- A personal commitment to and professional record of success in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Unquestioned integrity, trustworthiness, sound judgment, and ethics; and
- Distinguished intellectual credentials, including a track record of teaching and scholarly achievement; a terminal degree or equivalent is required.

## TO APPLY

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

Kate Barry, Partner  
Elizabeth Dorr, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
Boston, Massachusetts  
(617) 262-6500  
[www.imsearch.com/S7-198](http://www.imsearch.com/S7-198)

*Transylvania University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to enhancing the diversity of the University community. In support of this goal, we seek qualified candidates with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. We embrace diversity and encourage all who are interested to apply.*