



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY®

Executive Director of Financial Aid

Leadership Profile

October 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Old Dominion University (ODU) is seeking in its next Executive Director of Financial Aid a professional with significant experience supporting a University's enrollment goals, assisting students, and managing financial aid resources. With recent reorganization within Enrollment Management and a thorough review of financial aid at ODU, the Executive Director will lead a talented office team, oversee its operation, and manage change and innovation.

ODU is a pre-eminent public Carnegie R1 research university located in Coastal Virginia. Their world-class faculty fosters dynamic on-campus and global online learning for undergraduate and graduate students that enriches their lives, promotes insightful and perceptive leadership, and motivates the pursuit of excellence in dedicated fields and professions.

Reporting to the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Optimization, the Executive Director provides transformational leadership and strategic oversight to all areas of the Office of Student Financial Aid, including data accuracy and integrity, operational efficiency, compliance with federal and state regulations, and the effective use of student financial aid systems such as Ellucian Banner. This position is responsible for comprehensive planning and execution of key initiatives, major projects, and leading the team that manages day-to-day administration of federal, state, and institutional aid. This role also facilitates coordination and communication across university departments to create a positive educational experience for students while ensuring compliance with all regulatory and institutional policies.

The successful Executive Director of Financial Aid candidate will:

- Provide leadership for the financial aid and scholarship operations, exercising significant independent authority to make decisions that support enrollment and retention.
- Collaborate with the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Optimization, other leaders in Strategic Enrollment, and campus partners, in order to ensure alignment with institutional strategies, enhance operational effectiveness, and cultivate staff leadership to advance the university's goals.
- Oversee all areas of the Office of Student Financial Aid, including data accuracy and integrity, operational efficiency, compliance with federal and state regulations, and the effective use of student financial aid system Ellucian Banner.
- Facilitate coordination and communication across university departments to create a positive educational experience for students while ensuring compliance with all regulatory and institutional policies.
- Promote a departmental culture that embraces individual and organizational learning and works with key student financial services teams in departmental planning, development, and training to improve individual, group, and organizational performance to ensure successful results.

The preferred candidate will possess a master's degree and five years of relevant experience including time spent in a leadership role in a financial aid office. Additionally, knowledge of federal, state, and institutional financial aid regulations and the ability to interpret and apply them to ensure compliance are required as well.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this leadership profile.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Executive Director will demonstrate a clear understanding of the current financial aid landscape, be adept at incorporating ongoing changes, and help the staff uncover new ways to serve students with excellence and efficiency. They will be skilled at leading teams through periods of transition, implementing new processes, and adapting to change in policy, best practices, and technology.

Beyond leadership of a diverse and talented financial aid team, the Executive Director will be asked to address the following strategic initiatives:

Champion a student-focused and progressive approach to student financial aid

The Executive Director will be expected to engage with multiple constituencies to advocate for positive student experiences within the necessary parameters of compliance and policy. The director will develop strategies, policies, and contemporary processes for student-focused financial support and communicate them to staff, faculty, and other leaders across campus. The person in this role will need to possess exceptional drive, energy, and intellectual curiosity to lead financial aid efforts in a dynamic and innovative environment. Strong relationship management skills will be essential.

Ensure a culture of consistent compliance and strong financial stewardship.

The Executive Director will ensure that the ODU's financial aid programs adhere to all legal requirements and professional best practices. They will maintain their own understanding of changing regulations, facilitate continuous education for the financial aid staff, and encourage a culture of doing the right things in the right way. The Executive Director will proactively explore complex situations to ensure that compliance is maintained and that students are served to the highest level allowed by university, state, and federal policy.

Leverage technology to better serve the community and adopt best practices

The Executive Director will endeavor to fully utilize current technology (especially ODU's Ellucian Banner Financial Aid system) in supporting service and compliance in an ever-changing environment. They will collaborate with the other leaders in the division and around campus to use technology to enable service and the best use of human and financial resources.

Cultivate and uphold a high-performing team of financial aid professionals.

The Executive Director will be responsible for developing and maintaining a robust team of financial aid professionals. They will focus on building and supporting a high-performing staff, ranging from those new to the profession to those with significant experience. They will create an environment that fosters growth, encourages professional development, promotes a sense of unity and collaboration—both within the office and across ODU.

Use data analysis to regularly assess financial aid and scholarship programs.

The Executive Director will analyze financial aid data, including retention rates, graduation rates, and student debt levels, to assess the effectiveness of aid programs. This ongoing analysis will identify recommendations to office and University leadership for improvement and to inform strategic decisions.

Leverage existing relationships and grow partnerships across the University.

As the leading voice on financial aid policy and practice at ODU, the Executive Director will be a champion who will speak on behalf of the University and lobby for policies that will promote student access and success. Regular communication among the many stakeholders at the University will ensure consistent and accountable financial aid delivery and further enhance the student experience.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Candidates for the Executive Director of Financial Aid must hold a master's degree and have at least five years of financial aid experience and at least three years of experience supervising professional staff.

In addition, candidates must be able to demonstrate these professional competencies:

- Knowledge of federal, state, and institutional financial aid regulations and the ability to interpret and apply them to ensure compliance and support student success.
- Experience with non-standard academic calendars in the context of administering federal, state, and other aid programs.
- Skill in leading and developing staff through coaching, mentorship, and fostering an inclusive, empowered team environment, in order to advance the goals of the University.
- Skill in strategic planning and operational management to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional goals.
- Ability to build and maintain trusting relationships with diverse stakeholders through effective communication and collaboration.
- Strengths in creating a culture of curiosity and inquisitiveness.
- Ability to think innovatively and implement creative solutions to operational and service challenges.
- Strong skills in both written and oral communications in a variety of professional settings.
- Notable experience in using advanced and complex financial aid administration systems, including the ability to prepare systems for annual cycle launches, to ensure that systems are effectively and accurately administering aid programs, and using technology to automate processes and self-service.
- Advanced working knowledge of Microsoft Excel, Word, and familiarity with other office productivity software.

Strong candidates will also exhibit these preferred qualifications:

- At least seven years of financial aid experience with five or more years as a supervisor of professional staff, at the level of senior associate director, director, or above.
- Knowledge of the direction of financial aid administration at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Advanced working knowledge of Ellucian Banner Financial Aid.
- Completion of several NASFAA Professional Credential examinations, FAAC Certification, or equivalent professional education.
- Strategic and applied understanding of the role of institutional scholarships and grants in optimizing new undergraduate student enrollment in the incoming first-year and transfer cohorts.
- Experience supporting the educational financing needs of, and financial aid programs for, online, part-time, and adult learners.
- A visible commitment to, and record of, supporting students of all backgrounds, capabilities, and circumstances.

Finally, the ideal Executive Director of Financial Aid will be a transformational leader who consistently demonstrates inclusivity, positivity, resilience, inspiration, listening and compassion, and collaboration and trust.



About Old Dominion University

Overview

Old Dominion University (ODU) began its tradition of excellence when it was founded in 1930 by the College of William and Mary, the second oldest university in the United States. Established as an extension of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia, ODU began educating teachers and engineers. The two-year school rapidly evolved into a four-year institution and was granted independence in 1962 as Old Dominion College. Proud of its past, ODU constantly looks to the future and prides itself on its continually expanding research and teaching programs. An ever-evolving university, ODU is an agent of change for its students, the region, and the nation it serves. Its waterfront campus in the coastal city of Norfolk, Virginia, home to Naval Station Norfolk, the world's largest U.S. Navy base, gives students internship and employment opportunities with some of the world's top companies and accessibility to great shopping and dining, as well as beautiful beaches and historic sites.

ODU is Virginia's entrepreneurial-minded public doctoral R1 university with approximately 24,000 students, rigorous academics, an energetic residential community, and robust initiatives that contribute \$2.6 billion annually to Virginia's economy. The diverse student body includes approximately 54% students of color, nearly 800 international students from 90 countries, and 25% military-affiliated students. ODU has also once again been recognized among the region's and nation's top universities. Students benefit from a 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio and are supported by 901 dedicated and nationally recognized faculty members. In *U.S. News & World Report's* 2026 "Best College" rankings, ODU is ranked 156 out of 1,700 public universities. The University is consistently ranked highly by *U.S. News* for its students' social mobility. ODU was also highlighted for having, among doctoral institutions, top undergraduate business and engineering programs. With more than 175,000 alumni across all 50 states and 67 countries, ODU pride is global.

ODU is also an excellent workplace for its faculty and staff. The University is the eighth largest employer in Virginia, America's Best In-State Employers 2024 by Forbes and Statista, and the only higher education institution ranked as one of 2024's Healthiest Employers in Virginia.

A [complete University organization chart](#) is available online.

Mission

ODU, located in Norfolk in the metropolitan Hampton Roads region of coastal Virginia, is a dynamic public research institution that serves its students and enriches the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world through rigorous academic programs, strategic partnerships, and active civic engagement.

Enrollment Management

Strategic Enrollment at ODU is part of the Division of Digital Transformation and Technology (DTT). The division supports the University's forward-focused progress through a seamless and innovative technology ecosystem. DTT's unwavering goal is to position ODU as a premier institution renowned for its innovative digital solutions and exceptional operational performance across research, academics, and administration. A commitment to support through a high-tech, high-touch approach empowers faculty, staff, and students with the necessary tools and resources to thrive.

Strategic Enrollment plays a vital role in attracting, enrolling, and retaining students. It includes campus-based offices for Undergraduate Admissions, Enrollment Marketing, Orientation and Outreach. The unit also serves ODUGlobal's online programs with Admissions and Advising, Continuing Education & Employer Solutions, Digital

Marketing & Creative, and Student Engagement. Finally, all learners—online and on-campus—are served by the Enrollment Optimization group, which includes Student Financial Aid as well as Academic/Community College Pathways, Credit for Prior Learning, Military Certification & Pathways, Transfer Evaluation Services, and the Enrollment Contact Center.

Student Enrollment

For the fall of 2024, ODU reported a total of 17,746 undergraduate students enrolled, of whom 13,574 were full-time degree-seeking undergraduates and 3,940 were part-time degree-seeking undergraduates. In that term, 27 percent of all undergraduates were classified as online students.

ODU received 15,100 applications for first-time, first-year undergraduates wanted to enter in fall 2024. Of these, 13,645 students were admitted and 2,721 enrolled. Transfer student admissions for that fall showed 3,046 applicants, 2,722 admitted, and 1,738 enrolled.

On the graduate side for fall 2024, ODU reported 5,997 graduate students enrolled, with 2,867 in full-time status and 3,130 in part-time status. In that term, 54 percent of graduate students were classified as online students..

For the 2023-2024 academic year, total scholarships and grants awarded to enrolled undergraduates comprised approximately \$106,099,738 in need-based aid and \$36,332,248 in non-need-based aid. Self-help aid (student loans) totaled about \$21,899,585 (need-based) and \$37,391,781 (non-need-based).

Historical data on ODU's student enrollment is available from the [University's Institutional Research office](#).

Academics

ODU offers 228 degree programs, including 130 programs and certificates through online learning at ODUGlobal. The University's schools and colleges confer 91 bachelor's degrees, 41 master's degrees, 22 doctoral degrees, and two educational specialist degrees.

The [integration of Eastern Virginia Medical School \(EVMS\) into ODU](#) in 2024 created the largest portfolio of health sciences degrees in Virginia and substantially increased the University's already formidable community impact. Students benefit from the combined expertise and resources with substantial support provided through new scholarship programs that emphasize need and merit and demonstrate a commitment to nurturing future healthcare professionals.

The newly named Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences is comprised of five colleges and schools—EVMS, EVMS School of Health Professions, Ellmer College of Health Sciences, Ellmer School of Nursing, and the Joint School of Public Health—and serves as the hub for all health sciences programming and operations in order to foster interdisciplinary learning, innovative research, and comprehensive clinical training.

Colleges

The [Batten College of Engineering & Technology](#) is ABET accredited and offers more than 30 undergraduate and graduate academic programs through its departments of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Computational Modeling & Simulation Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Engineering Management & Systems Engineering, Engineering Technology, and Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering.

The [Darden College of Education & Professional Studies](#) offers more than 100 academic programs with undergraduate and graduate programs and professional certificates supporting clinical and service careers, doctoral, education, and industry careers as well.

The [Strome College of Business](#) offers more than 15 AACSB-accredited undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral academic programs in business administration. All programs in the College are designed to promote professional competence; analytical skills; leadership abilities; an understanding of social, political, and economic forces; and a strong sense of business ethics and public purpose.

The [College of Arts & Letters](#) offers more than 60 undergraduate and graduate academic programs and is committed to the ideals of the liberal arts. Its curriculum is designed to introduce the full range of human experiences through the study of cultural heritage, forms of artistic and literary expressions, patterns of social and political behavior, and methods of critical inquiry. The College's Arts District includes the Barry Arts Museum, Goode Theater, and Gordon Art Galleries.

The [College of Sciences](#) offers more than 40 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs that focus on teaching and research. Majors also have the opportunity to pursue undergraduate research and participate in an internship in their field of study.

The [Graduate School](#), together with the colleges, offers more than 90 graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs and licenses. With a faculty recognized nationally and internationally for its research, publications, and creative activity, the School offers instruction through various delivery modes including on-campus, video streaming, and online. ODU enrolls nearly 6,000 graduate students, about half of whom are part-time.

The [Ellmer College of Health Sciences](#) and the [Ellmer School of Nursing](#) offers more than 25 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs preparing outstanding health professionals for workforce needs and conducting research for the advancement of health and wellness. Undergraduate and graduate programs are supported through the schools of Community & Environmental Health, Dental Hygiene, Medical Diagnostic & Translational Sciences, and Nursing and Rehabilitation Services.

The [Eastern Virginia Medical School \(EVMS\)](#) is a community-based academic health center committed to educating physicians and health professionals, advancing biomedical research, and improving healthcare in the Hampton Roads region. It has been educating future doctors in its MD program since 1973, when EVMS opened as the region's first medical school.

The [EVMS School of Health Professions](#) offers a wide range of research and clinical graduate and professional programs, including Biomedical Sciences, Laboratory Animal Science, Nutrition, Physician Assistant, and Surgical Assisting

[Joint School of Public Health](#) is a collaborative partnership between ODU and Norfolk State University that created Virginia's first joint public-health school. It brings together the resources and expertise of both universities, including Eastern Virginia Medical School, to deliver undergraduate and graduate programs. The school emphasizes experiential learning, hands-on field work, and community engagement in the Hampton Roads region and beyond.

The [Patricia & Douglas Perry Honors College](#) offers an undergraduate academic research program that includes honors courses, experiential learning, undergraduate research, and a capstone experience.

Finally, the [ODU Interdisciplinary Schools](#) prepare students for global success through the Schools of Cybersecurity, Data Science, and Supply Chain, Logistics, and Maritime Operations

For more information on the various academic programs, please visit www.odu.edu/academics.

ODUGlobal

Old Dominion University continues to be a pioneer in distance learning. Rooted in tradition but looking to the horizon, [ODUGlobal](#) has strong partnerships, accomplished faculty, and expert advising and coaching prepare

students for their next steps. Graduates join a Monarch tradition of excellence, whether they start at a community college partner, attend all their classes online, or transfer to ODU's campus in Norfolk, Virginia.

Student Life and Athletics

With nearly 24,000 students, ODU is one of the largest and most diverse universities in Virginia. Experience at ODU spans borders, languages, and time. Cultures converge and viewpoints are respected.

On one of the most diverse campuses in Virginia, student life can overflow with sport, music, art, culture, and activity. ODU fosters student success through campus engagement and experiential learning. Students can choose from more than 200 student organizations and 28 fraternities and sororities.

Residential students are offered a variety of living options and amenities with 14 housing options and 17 dining locations to meet every student's dietary needs. For more information on student life, visit www.odu.edu/life.

In support of the ODU mission, the Department of Athletics recruits and develops a diverse population of highly skilled student-athletes who compete at 18 varsity sports, including 16 at NCAA Division I level. ODU's commitment is to enable student athletes to reach their full potential academically, athletically, and as citizens. Athletics enriches the campus experience and serves as a gateway to the University by enhancing its visibility and reputation. For more information on athletics, visit www.odusports.com.



Leadership

Dr. Brian O. Hemphill, President



Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., Old Dominion University's ninth president, is an unwavering champion for access and opportunity as well as innovation and research, with a deep commitment to forward-focused leadership. President Hemphill is proud to lead ODU with a steadfast dedication to excellence, a firm commitment to accountability and transparency, and—most importantly—a strong focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as student success. President Hemphill looks forward to expanding existing partnerships and creating new opportunities to advance the institution, the region, and the Commonwealth of Virginia through entrepreneurial and innovative approaches.

A devoted public servant and steward of ODU and the Commonwealth, President Hemphill proudly serves on a variety of boards and commissions. He faithfully represents ODU on the national scale with active involvement in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), including the Board of Directors, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association Presidential Forum. President Hemphill is equally dedicated to state and regional engagement through active membership on various councils and committees.

President Hemphill earned a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration and Policy Studies from the University of Iowa, a Master of Science degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Communication from Saint Augustine's College.



Norfolk, Virginia

Old Dominion University's waterfront campus is in the heart of vibrant Coastal Virginia—a prime place to learn, work, and play. Approximately 1.75 million people live in the region, which is home to the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. Each city has its own unique attractions, events, and activities.

Norfolk, a metropolitan city, is home to the world's largest naval base and the North American headquarters for NATO. From internship opportunities with some of the world's top companies to great shopping and dining, to beautiful beaches, there is always something new to discover. Norfolk is also close to Colonial Williamsburg and NASA Langley, the birthplace of the U.S. space program.

Airlines serving the [Norfolk International Airport](#) provide convenient non-stop service to over three dozen destinations, including most major U.S. hub airports and several leisure destinations. Amtrak's Northeast Regional trains offer daily access from the region to Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. The ODU campus is served by [Hampton Roads Transit](#), which provides local and regional service by bus and light rail.

For more information on Coastal Virginia, please visit www.odu.edu/about/visitors/coastal-virginia.





Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Old Dominion University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by December 5, 2026.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Robert Springall and Ethan Robles

ODUFinancialAid@wittkieffer.com

Old Dominion University employees are eligible for a comprehensive suite of benefits. Visit ODU's [Talent Management and Culture website](#) for details.

It is the policy of Old Dominion University to provide equal employment, educational and social opportunities for all persons, without regard to race (or traits historically associated with race including hair texture, hair type, and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists), color, religion, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), national origin, gender identity or expression, age, veteran status, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation or genetic information. Minorities, women, veterans and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.