



President & Chief Executive Officer

Leadership Profile

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Executive Summary

The United States Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation (AAF), headquartered in Kings Point, New York, seeks an experienced, mission-driven executive to serve as its next President & CEO. The AAF is the independent philanthropic and advocacy partner to the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA), one of the nation's five federal service academies, and plays a vital role in advancing the Academy's academic, professional, and service mission in maritime transportation, national security, and global commerce. The Board of Directors of the AAF requires that this position be held by an alumna or alumnus of the Academy.

The AAF is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization with a long-tenured staff and a deeply committed core of Alumni, Donors, and volunteers. The AAF supports the Academy through philanthropy and donor stewardship, alumni engagement, advocacy and government relations, and strategic initiatives aligned with institutional priorities. While operating independently, the AAF maintains a close, mission-aligned relationship with the Academy and the U.S. Department of Transportation in a complex federal environment that requires clear roles, sound judgment, and disciplined governance.

Over the past several years, the AAF has strengthened its financial position, refined its operating model, and rebuilt trust with key constituencies. Today, the AAF is financially stable, well governed, and increasingly respected as a credible partner to Alumni, Donors, and policymakers. The AAF has expanded its national advocacy efforts and is now recognized as a trusted, nonpartisan resource to members of Congress and their staff on matters affecting the Academy.

This role presents a distinctive leadership opportunity for an alum who understands the Academy's unique culture, history, and federal context and can lead effectively within a small, complex, and highly relationship-centered organization. The President & CEO is responsible for sustaining long-term donor confidence, strengthening Alumni engagement across a diverse constituency, and advancing the AAF's philanthropic and advocacy impact at the national level. They will also provide hands-on operational leadership of the organization, ensuring effective execution of priorities, disciplined financial management, and overall organizational performance and accountability. Success in this role depends less on scale-driven growth and more on relationship strength, institutional credibility, and steady, values-driven leadership. The President & CEO serves as the primary partner to the Board of Directors, supporting effective governance, strengthening trustee engagement, and advancing the AAF's mission.

The ideal candidate will bring senior leadership experience in philanthropy, advancement, advocacy, nonprofit management, or a related field, along with strong financial acumen and exceptional relationship-building skills. The Board strongly prefers candidates who possess a deep understanding of the Academy's culture and Alumni community. Transferable leadership experience, particularly in fundraising, donor stewardship, nonprofit leadership, and external engagement, will be valued, provided candidates demonstrate strong alignment with the AAF & the Academy's mission and values.

The successful candidate will be a visible and trusted ambassador, comfortable engaging with alumni, donors, Academy leadership, external stakeholders, the Regimental Midshipmen, and the KP Community. This role requires a regular, visible presence at Kings Point and active engagement with alumni, Academy leadership, and external stakeholders.

This is a full-time, on-site leadership position based in Kings Point, New York, with regular travel to engage Alumni, Donors, and other key constituents. If you are interested in this role or would like to nominate a candidate, please see the "Procedure for Candidacy" section at the end of this profile.



Position Summary

The President & CEO provides overall leadership for the AAF, advancing its mission through disciplined financial stewardship, long-term donor relationships, alumni engagement, and effective advocacy. Working closely with the Board of Directors, Academy leadership, and key external stakeholders, the President & CEO ensures the AAF operates with integrity, transparency, and strategic focus to support the Academy and Midshipman.

While modest in organizational size, the role carries national visibility and influence through its engagement with federal policymakers, maritime leaders, and a highly engaged Alumni community.

Advocacy is a core responsibility of this role. The President & CEO serves as a visible and credible representative of the AAF, strengthening relationships with members of Congress, federal stakeholders, and maritime leaders, and positioning the organization as a trusted, nonpartisan resource on issues affecting the Academy.

Leading a small, experienced team, the President & CEO fosters a collaborative, accountable culture and provides hands-on leadership across operations, strategy, and organizational performance. Success in this role requires sound judgment, prioritization, and adaptability, recognizing that small organizations demand direct engagement rather than reliance on scale or extensive infrastructure.

Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the AAF Board of Directors, the President & CEO leads an experienced team of approximately 11 professionals. Direct reports include the Senior Vice President, Vice President of Business and Strategic Development, Vice President of Finance, Communications Director, and Director of Alumni Relations. For a full list of staff and organizational structure, please visit the [USMMA Alumni Association and Foundation website](#).

Responsibilities

The successful President & CEO candidate will:

Fundraising & Donor Development

- Lead major gift strategy and donor cultivation
- Expand corporate and maritime industry partnerships
- Strengthen Alumni participation and engagement
- Serve as a visible presence at fundraising events

External Relations & Advocacy

- Serve as the primary liaison to:
 - Academy Leadership
 - Midshipmen leadership across Regimental, Athletic, and Club Activities
 - Service Academy Alumni partners
 - Government and legislative stakeholders
 - Alumni and industry leaders
- Support and expand advocacy efforts, particularly related to infrastructure and funding priorities for the Academy

Strategic Leadership

- Set and execute organizational priorities in partnership with the Board
- Identify growth opportunities and expand AAF's impact
- Lead long-term initiatives supporting the Academy and alumni community

Board Relations & Governance

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors
- Provide clear, consistent reporting on performance and progress
- Execute Board-directed initiatives with accountability

Organizational and Operational Leadership (501(c)(3))

- Provide overall operational leadership and management of the organization, ensuring effective execution of its mission, priorities, and day-to-day operations
- Lead and align a small, experienced staff
- Partner closely with the Senior Vice President to ensure effective execution and operational performance across the organization
- Foster a culture of accountability, responsiveness, and professionalism
- Oversee annual Alumni and Academy events, including Homecoming, the Blue and Gray Golf Tournament, and regional and reunion programming
- Oversee the operations and strategic use of the Mariner Estate as a venue for Alumni engagement, fundraising, Academy-related activities, and external event rentals that support the organization's financial sustainability
- In addition, in partnership with the Finance and Investment Committee of the Board:
 - Oversee the organization's financial strategy, including budget development, investment oversight, financial performance monitoring, and financial reporting to inform decision-making and organizational performance
 - Oversee financial investments and insurance-related activities in support of organizational risk management and asset protection

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

This leadership opportunity calls for a visible, relationship-driven President & Chief Executive Officer who will steward the mission, credibility, and long-term vitality of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association & Foundation. The Board seeks a leader who will approach this role with maturity, judgment, and a deep appreciation for the Academy's culture, history, and Alumni community.

During the first several months, the President & CEO is expected to focus on **listening, learning, and building credibility and alignment** across the organization's key constituencies. Establishing strong working relationships with Alumni, Donors, Board Members, Academy leadership, maritime partners, and government stakeholders will be essential to long-term success. A consistent on-campus presence at Kings Point, combined with active engagement with Alumni, Donors, and other key constituents, will be critical to establishing credibility and driving early momentum.

The President & CEO will **serve as the primary external and strategic leader** of the AAF, representing the organization with credibility and confidence in philanthropic, advocacy, and public settings. Strengthening Alumni engagement and sustaining long-term donor relationships rooted in gratitude, service, and mission alignment are central opportunities for leadership. While not a campaign-driven role, this position requires comfort with fundraising, donor stewardship, and relationship-based philanthropy.

Advocacy is a core component of the leadership mandate. The President & CEO will continue to advance the AAF's role as a trusted, nonpartisan voice with federal and legislative stakeholders, working collaboratively to support the Academy's priorities and long-term interests. Success in this area depends on credibility, discretion, and the ability to navigate complex stakeholder dynamics thoughtfully.

Internally, the President & CEO is expected to **lead a small, experienced team** with clarity, collaboration, and accountability, ensuring strong financial management, stewardship, and operational effectiveness. Working closely with the Board of Directors, the President & CEO will support effective governance, maintain transparency, and reinforce the AAF's reputation as a responsible, well-managed organization.

Overall, this is an opportunity for a United States Merchant Marine Academy graduate to provide steady, values-driven leadership at a respected institution, preserving trust, strengthening relationships, and guiding USMMA AAF with continuity and care over time.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The next President & Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association & Foundation must be a graduate of the United States Merchant Marine Academy and bring senior-level leadership experience, sound judgment, and a deep commitment to the Academy's mission, culture, and alumni community. A bachelor's degree from USMMA is required.

The successful candidate will have held senior executive roles, such as President, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, or equivalent, within a mission-driven organization and will demonstrate a highly relationship-based leadership approach. This individual will engage Alumni, Donors, Board Members, and external stakeholders with credibility, clarity, integrity, and presence, and must be comfortable serving as a visible and trusted representative of the organization.

Required professional qualifications and leadership characteristics include:

- Senior executive leadership experience within a mission-driven organization
- Proven ability to build and sustain trusted relationships with alumni, donors, board members, and external partners
- Experience working closely with an engaged Board of Directors, including governance partnership and strategic alignment
- Strong financial acumen and the ability to oversee organizational performance and long-term stewardship in a small, complex, relationship-driven environment
- High integrity, discretion, and maturity in navigating sensitive organizational, governance, and interpersonal dynamics

Desired qualifications include:

- Demonstrated experience in 501(c)(3) fundraising, donor engagement, and nonprofit leadership
- Experience managing organizational operations, including budgets, strategic and financial planning, and resource allocation
- Ability to interpret financial statements and assess organizational performance to inform decision-making
- Experience with investment oversight and financial assets, including insurance-related considerations and risk management
- Experience with alumni-based, membership-driven, or academy-affiliated organizations
- Background in maritime, transportation, logistics, defense, advocacy, or government relations
- Comfort with serving as a visible external ambassador to philanthropic, industry, and federal audiences
- Advanced degree



About the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation

Overview

The United States Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc. was established in 2001 following the merger of the USMMA Alumni Association and the USMMA Foundation. The Alumni Association and Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to supporting the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York.

The Alumni Association and Foundation exists to serve, assist, and perpetuate the Academy, its Regiment of Midshipmen, faculty, staff, and Alumni. Through philanthropy, engagement, advocacy, and lifelong connection to Kings Point, the organization advances the Academy's mission and strengthens its ability to educate and graduate leaders prepared for service to the nation.

In addition to its fundraising role, the Alumni Association and Foundation coordinates a wide range of Alumni, Parent, and Midshipmen programs and provides services and benefits to graduates, families, organizations, and friends of the Academy. Its work is sustained by a deeply committed global Alumni community whose philanthropic support, volunteer leadership, and engagement reinforce a lifelong bond with USMMA.

The AAF supports the Academy through a comprehensive range of advancement, engagement, and external affairs initiatives, including:

- Fundraising and donor engagement
- Alumni relations and programming
- Advocacy and government relations
- Strategic initiatives that benefit Midshipmen and advance institutional priorities

The AAF operates in a highly relationship-driven environment, working closely with Academy leadership, alumni volunteers, federal stakeholders, and maritime industry partners to advance shared goals and strengthen the Academy's long-term success.



The **Mariner Estate**, located off campus in Great Neck, New York, is a historic property that serves as a central venue for Alumni engagement, fundraising events, institutional programming, and external events. Originally established in the 1930s as a community gathering place and restored and reopened in Fall 2021, the Estate is now operated by the Alumni Association and Foundation as a distinctive asset that supports relationship-building, event-based philanthropy, and external event rentals that contribute to the organization's financial sustainability. Rooted in a long-standing tradition of community and stewardship, the Estate continues to serve as a setting for meaningful connection and engagement for Alumni, partners, and supporters of the Academy.



Philanthropy, Advocacy, and Institutional Impact

The Alumni Association and Foundation raises, stewards, and distributes private support for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes, including funds maintained in endowment. The AAF raises approximately \$6–7 million annually and continues to expand its advocacy efforts and remains a central strategic partner to the United States Merchant Marine Academy while maintaining appropriate operational independence. It is an important philanthropic and Alumni engagement organization supporting the USMMA.



Operating independently from campus has strengthened the AAF's role as an effective external advocate and convener. This structure enables clear alignment with federal governance requirements while allowing the AAF to engage productively with Congress, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Maritime Administration, and other federal stakeholders without ambiguity regarding institutional authority.

Through coordinated advocacy, strategic communications, and relationship-building, the AAF raises awareness of the Academy's strategic importance to national security, maritime transportation, and economic resilience. Recent legislative momentum related to **campus modernization and infrastructure investment** has reflected close coordination among Alumni leadership, Congress, federal agencies, and Academy stakeholders, demonstrating the strength of this public-private partnership model.

Philanthropic and advocacy impact spans academic and training facilities, student life and leadership programs, athletics, preservation of Academy heritage, and long-term campus modernization. Across all areas, private support complements federal appropriations and reinforces the Academy's long-term sustainability.

Athletics and the Academy's Developmental Pillars



Athletics represents one of the United States Merchant Marine Academy's four developmental pillars and is central to the Academy's holistic approach to leadership formation. Through athletics, Midshipmen develop discipline, resilience, teamwork, and accountability, qualities essential to success as officers in both military and commercial maritime service.

Athletics operates in concert with three additional developmental pillars that together define the USMMA experience. These include rigorous academics, which provide a strong technical and scientific foundation; regimental leadership, which serves as a structured, progressive leadership laboratory; and maritime training and Sea Year, which delivers extensive hands-on operational experience aboard commercial and military vessels worldwide. The integration of these four pillars prepares graduates to lead with competence, integrity, and confidence in complex operational environments.

Philanthropic investment through the Alumni Association and Foundation has strengthened athletic facilities and programs, reinforcing athletics as a core component of leadership development at the Academy.

Further Information on the Academy, Alumni Impact, and the Community is described in the following Appendix below.

Procedure for Candidacy



All applications, nominations, and inquiries are welcome. All nominations and expressions of interest will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Candidates should submit a resume or CV and a letter of interest as separate documents. Please do not include photos or references. Review of applications has begun and will continue until the position is filled.

Applications, nominations, and inquiries may be submitted through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal ([CLICK HERE](#)). New users should select “Register Here” to create an account, then navigate to “Open Positions” and search by the institution’s name. Applications, nominations, and inquiries may also be directed to WittKieffer consultants Greg Duyck, Senior Partner, and Ashley Buderus, Consultant, at abuderus@wittkieffer.com.

Compensation and Benefits: The anticipated starting compensation range for this position, including base salary and potential incentive compensation, is between \$250,000 and \$350,000. This range represents a good-faith estimate of the organization’s expected compensation for this role. Individual compensation will be determined based on a variety of factors, including relevant experience, expertise, and market considerations. The Alumni Association and Foundation recognizes that its team is its greatest asset and is committed to offering a competitive and comprehensive benefits package designed to support employees and their families.

The United States Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation 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, age, status as a protected veteran, or status as a qualified individual with a disability.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from the AAF documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.

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Appendix

The United States Merchant Marine Academy



Founded in 1943 and dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) is one of the nation's five federal service academies. Located on an 82-acre waterfront campus in Kings Point, New York, the Academy enrolls approximately 1,000 Midshipmen across four undergraduate class years and has graduated more than 15,000 Alumni since its inception.

Like West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy, and the Coast Guard Academy, USMMA is a federally governed institution that prepares leaders for national service, with a distinct focus on maritime transportation and global logistics, and marine engineering.

USMMA is an instrumentality of the United States government and operates under the authority of the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Maritime Administration (MARAD), which provides federal oversight, policy direction, and funding support. The Academy's day-to-day operations are led by the Superintendent, who serves in a role comparable to a university president and works alongside a senior leadership team responsible for academic, regimental, and operational functions.

Admission to the Academy is highly selective and requires a Congressional nomination, reflecting its national service mission and the caliber of its student body. Midshipmen attend tuition-free in exchange for a required service obligation upon graduation.

The Academy is widely recognized for its rigorous academic program, requiring more credit hours for a baccalaureate degree than any other federal service academy. This demanding academic experience is complemented by the Academy's signature Sea Year, during which Midshipmen spend more than 300 days at sea gaining hands-on operational experience aboard commercial and military vessels traveling to ports around the world.

Upon completion of this program, graduates earn a distinctive combination of credentials:

- A Bachelor of Science degree
- A United States Coast Guard license as a merchant marine officer
- A commission as an officer in the United States Armed Forces

This integrated preparation results in **near universal career placement**, with graduates entering leadership roles across the maritime industry, military, and related sectors immediately upon graduation.

Governance, Leadership, and Institutional Momentum

In 2026, the Academy entered a period of renewed national focus and leadership transition under the U.S. Department of Transportation, with Secretary Sean P. Duffy appointing [Rear Admiral Anthony J. "Tony" Ceraolo, USMS](#). This transition reflects a broader federal commitment to strengthening the Academy's academic programs, operational readiness, and long-term strategic positioning.

Federal leadership has emphasized the exceptional caliber, discipline, and service orientation of USMMA Midshipmen, highlighting their readiness to assume significant responsibility in support of the nation's maritime workforce and defense capabilities. This renewed focus reinforces the Academy's importance in developing the next generation of leaders essential to national security and global commerce.

Campus Modernization and Federal Investment

The Academy is currently undertaking a comprehensive **campus modernization initiative** in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The plan includes more than **40 capital projects implemented over a multi-year period**, encompassing new and renovated academic buildings, Midshipmen barracks, athletic facilities, waterfront infrastructure, and campus-wide utility systems.

Designed to modernize an aging physical plant and ensure the Academy remains competitive with peer service academies, this initiative represents a significant federal investment in infrastructure, technology, and student experience. The modernization effort is expected to enhance training capabilities, improve the quality of life for Midshipmen, and strengthen the Academy's ability to fulfill its mission in the decades ahead.

Together, renewed federal leadership, infrastructure investment, and increasing national focus on maritime supply chains position the Academy at a pivotal moment in its evolution, presenting a meaningful opportunity for alignment among federal leadership, Academy administration, and the Alumni Association and Foundation.

To learn more about the Campus Modernization Plan, visit <https://www.usmma.edu/about/facilities/campus-modernization>.



Alumni Impact and Career Pathways



Graduates of the United States Merchant Marine Academy assume roles that are critical to both the nation's economy and its defense. As licensed officers, many lead operations aboard commercial vessels that power global trade, while also serving as commissioned officers across the United States Armed Forces and reserve components.

USMMA graduates are entrusted with significant operational and leadership responsibilities early in their careers, often managing complex systems, personnel, and logistics in real-world environments at a young age. This level of responsibility, combined with rigorous training and technical expertise, distinguishes Academy graduates and contributes to their strong reputation across sectors.

Beyond sea-going service, Alumni advance into leadership roles across maritime transportation, logistics, port operations, engineering, energy, infrastructure, and global supply chain management. Their work has a direct and immediate impact at a global scale, supporting the movement of goods, the stability of supply chains, and the operational readiness of U.S. forces worldwide.

In times of war or national emergency, the United States Merchant Marine serves as the nation's **"fourth arm of defense,"** responsible for transporting military personnel, equipment, and supplies. USMMA graduates are central to this mission, reinforcing the Academy's enduring contribution to national security.

Guided by its motto, **Acta Non Verba, "Deeds Not Words,"** the United States Merchant Marine Academy continues to produce leaders defined by integrity, discipline, and a commitment to service above self, ensuring the nation is equipped with the talent necessary to meet both present and future global challenges.

The Community

Kings Point, New York



The United States Merchant Marine Academy is located in Kings Point, New York, on the North Shore of Long Island, approximately 20 miles east of Manhattan. The campus overlooks the Long Island Sound and is situated within a residential community known for its natural beauty, historic neighborhoods, and proximity to cultural and professional opportunities throughout the New York metropolitan area.

The President & CEO will work near campus and is expected to maintain a regular presence at Kings Point, while also traveling to engage Alumni, Donors, and other key constituents across the country. Many individuals in senior leadership roles affiliated with the Academy and the AAF live in nearby North Shore communities, including Great Neck, Manhasset, Port Washington, Roslyn, Glen Cove, and Oyster Bay, which offer a range of living options from suburban neighborhoods to coastal settings. Others may reside in New York City, with convenient access to Kings Point via rail and car.

The area provides access to strong schools, healthcare, dining, and cultural amenities, as well as proximity to major transportation hubs, including LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy International Airports. The location offers a compelling balance of professional engagement, quality of life, and access to one of the nation's most dynamic metropolitan regions.

Learn More About the Region

Candidates interested in learning more about the United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, and the surrounding North Shore communities may find the following resources helpful. While many candidates will be familiar with the Academy and the region from their time as Midshipmen, these resources may be helpful for candidates and their families as they consider returning to the area in a new professional and personal context:

- United States Merchant Marine Academy – <https://www.usmma.edu>
- We Are the USMMA – <https://wearetheusmma.com>
- Kings Point, New York – <https://www.longislandguide.com/visit/kings-point/>
- Great Neck Peninsula – <https://www.longislandguide.com/visit/great-neck/>
- Port Washington – <https://www.longislandguide.com/visit/port-washington/>