



Senior Associate Vice President for Finance and Business Services

Leadership Profile

March 2026

Prepared by Ben Haden | Christy Pratt | Ethan Robles



Contents

Organization Overview	01
Position Summary	04
Candidate Qualifications	06
The Community	07
Procedure for Candidacy	08

Organization Overview



West Chester University of Pennsylvania (WCU) is one of the leading regional public universities in the United States, with institutional roots dating back to 1812 and evolving over two centuries into a comprehensive public institution with a strong commitment to teaching, research, and community service. WCU consistently ranks among the top regional universities and is known for excellence across disciplines, including teacher education, business, health sciences, natural and social sciences, music, and the arts.

As part of the **Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)**, WCU is the largest R2 research institution in the system, a designation indicating high research activity and a growing portfolio of scholarly output, sponsored projects, and experiential learning opportunities.

Its R2 categorization has supported expanding research opportunities and enhanced experiential learning initiatives that the university aims to provide to all students.

WCU serves more than 17,000 students, supported by nearly 1,000 faculty members, and offers over 200 academic programs across six colleges, two schools, and multiple academic support divisions. These include the College of Arts & Humanities, the College of Business & Public Management, the College of Education & Social Work, the College of Health Sciences, the School of Music, the College of the Sciences and Mathematics, and University College.

The university's broad academic structure positions it as a central hub for multidimensional learning, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and professional preparation.

WCU offers more than 180 undergraduate and graduate degree options, including a robust mix of doctoral programs, reflecting the institution's evolution from a historically teaching-focused school to a comprehensive, research-engaged university.

Student-Centered Mission & Institutional Strengths

A defining characteristic of West Chester University is its mission of access and affordability, anchored in public service. President Bernotsky, a first-generation college graduate herself, specifically highlights public higher education as “the great equalizer,” shaping the university’s long-standing commitment to opening doors for students from all backgrounds.

Through initiatives such as large-scale listening tours, strategic planning, and campus-wide engagement, WCU leadership has identified and addressed key student needs—most notably housing availability, student workload, financial pressures, and opportunities for experiential learning. To address housing demand, WCU is adding a floor to each of its 11 South Campus apartment buildings, increasing residential capacity by 220 beds without expanding onto new land.

The university also maintains strong resilience, innovation, and adaptability, qualities highlighted by leadership as critical strengths supporting student achievement and institutional sustainability.

Research Identity & Experiential Learning

WCU’s R2 research status reflects significant scholarly activity across fields and enhances the institution’s ability to attract faculty researchers, grants, and collaborative partnerships. The university pairs this research identity with an equally robust focus on experiential learning, ensuring that students across all majors—undergraduate and graduate—have access to applied opportunities such as internships, clinical placements, community-engaged projects, and faculty-led research.

Notably, WCU also hosts an active Center for Social and Economic Policy Research, founded during President Bernotsky’s earlier tenure at the university.

Governance and Institutional Structure

WCU operates within the governance framework of PASSHE and under the oversight of its own Council of Trustees, whose membership includes state legislators, alumni, community leaders, and student representatives. This council helps guide long-term planning, financial oversight, and institutional priorities.

The university also benefits from a connected Foundation Board of Trustees that supports fundraising and philanthropic initiatives, and an Alumni Association Board that helps maintain engagement across its large and active alumni network.

Institutional Culture & Community Engagement

The culture at WCU is characterized by:

- Inclusive leadership and shared governance
- A strong identity shaped by student success, resilience, and community empowerment
- Ongoing commitments to equitable access, research, and expanding student support systems

Programs like Moon Shot for Equity aim to identify and remove barriers to student success—especially for historically underserved populations—through data-informed practices and institutional change strategies.

WCU also partners closely with local communities in Chester County and the broader Philadelphia region, contributing both workforce talent and public service through applied learning initiatives, professional training programs, and community-based research.

University Leadership

President – Dr. R. Lorraine (Laurie) Bernotsky

Dr. Laurie Bernotsky became the 16th President of West Chester University on July 1, 2024, following a unanimous appointment by the PASSHE Board of Governors. She is a first-generation college graduate and a long-standing leader within PASSHE, having previously served as interim president of Pennsylvania Western University (PennWest) and as provost, executive vice president, associate provost, and dean of graduate studies at WCU.

Her leadership approach is described as collaborative, inclusive, and student-centered, focusing on institutional access, academic quality, research expansion, and addressing issues such as housing, financial sustainability, and experiential learning opportunities for all students.

Executive Vice President & Provost – Dr. Jeffery L. Osgood, Jr.

Dr. Osgood serves as WCU's Executive Vice President and Provost (Interim), functioning as the university's chief operating officer and primary partner to the President in advancing institutional strategy and student success. He oversees the university budget, labor relations, IT operations, and all of Academic Affairs across WCU's colleges and schools. He leads more than 200 academic programs, nearly 1,000 faculty, and over 17,000 students.

Acting Provost – Dr. Josh R. Auld

While Dr. Osgood is on a limited appointment elsewhere, Dr. Josh Auld serves as Acting Provost, leading day-to-day academic operations, supervising deans and academic leaders, and representing WCU across statewide academic committees. He also serves as Interim Dean of the Honors College.

Chief of Staff and Vice President for University Affairs – Andy Lehman

As the Chief of Staff and Vice President, Andy Lehman provides advice and counsel to the President and serves as the liaison between the Office of the President and the Pennsylvania State System Office.

Vice President for Finance and Administration - Todd E. Murphy

As the head of the Finance and Administration Division at West Chester University, Vice President Todd E. Murphy provides financial leadership and support for the entire university community.

Vice President for University Advancement and External Affairs – Dr. Zebulun Davenport

Dr. Davenport collaborates with internal and external constituents to advance institutional and student success.

Vice President for Student Affairs – Dr. Jasmine Buxton

Dr. Jasmine "Dr. Jazz" Buxton leads Student Affairs, promoting holistic student development and engagement. With significant leadership experience across multiple institutions, she is known for cultivating vibrant student learning environments.

Vice President for the Division for Access, Compliance and Engagement – Dr. Tracey Robinson

Dr. Robinson provides leadership to ensure that the university's policies and practices enable everyone to succeed and ensure equitable access and opportunities.

Vice President for Enrollment Management (Interim) – Dr. Sarah Freed

Dr. Freed provides data-informed strategy to manage undergraduate and graduate admissions, financial aid, new student programs, and institutional research and effectiveness.

The university also operates within the governance of the WCU Council of Trustees and PASSHE's Board of Governors.

Position Summary

Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the Vice President for Finance and Administration, direct reports include the Director of Business Services, the Director of Business Systems, the Assistant Vice President of Student Financial Services and Bursar, and the Controller.

General Responsibilities

The successful Senior Associate Vice President for Finance and Business Services provides strategic leadership for the University's long-range financial planning, accounting, and payroll operations, and related business services and systems. Included in this responsibility are:

- Management and stewardship of financial accounting, payroll, Bursar, accounts payable, mail room, purchasing, contracting operations, construction procurement, and business systems.
- Proper allocation, spending, and reporting of financial resources.
- Billing and collection (including approximately \$200 million in tuition and fees), contracting, banking, accounting, and treasury functions.
- Compliance with University, PASSHE, federal, and state rules for procuring, spending, and accounting for both capital and operating goods and services.
- Compliance with the reporting requirements of the above entities.
- Leadership of a diverse team of professionals, including establishing appropriate expectations, enforcing standards of accountability, and fostering staff development.
- Development of cooperative and collaborative relationships with other departments within the Administration & Finance Division and with campus constituents, including vice presidents, senior associate vice presidents, deans, and directors.
- Collaboration with Senior Management and Budget Office for long-range financial planning and reporting.
- Liaison for PASSHE financial accounting and technical initiatives.

Description of Duties

- Implement, communicate, and maintain accounting and financial policies institution-wide, including establishing appropriate internal controls.
- Interpret rules and regulations of state, PASSHE, federal, and other external authorities and apply those rules to institutional business processes; ensure compliance with external reporting requirements.
- Provide effective fiscal leadership, including communicating appropriate fiscal policies to the campus.
- Constituents and resolving problems related to service delivery and customer service.
- Oversee the University's payroll operations, including reporting, communicating, and training on payroll issues.
- Direct procurement, contracting, and general business services.

- Review operations on a continual basis to develop process improvements and increased efficiencies.
- Provide accurate and timely financial reporting.
- Oversee the student accounting function, including the billing and collection of all tuition and fees.
- Serve as liaison with external auditors.
- Ensure that a highly qualified, diverse staff is recruited, developed, and retained.
- Oversee management of cash and endowment funds.
- Review external contracts and grants.

Role Complexity & Impact Overview

- Safeguarding the University's cash and other assets, ensuring all financial transactions are properly recorded, accounted for, and reported under generally accepted accounting practices required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.
- Ensuring financial viability and organizational continuity by establishing and maintaining strong internal control systems over institutional financial resources.
- Preventing improper use of financial resources, loss of assets, and inaccurate or unreliable financial reports that could result in qualified or adverse audit opinions.
- Mitigating risks associated with potential consequences such as loss of public trust and loss of external funding from state, federal, local, and private entities.
- Preventing and correcting errors through the establishment and maintenance of strong internal controls, policies, and procedures, including proper review and approval of revenue and expenditure transactions.

Relationships (Internal Working Relationships)

Vice Presidents, Senior Associate Vice Presidents, Deans & Directors

- Purpose: Resolve issues and provide guidance by interpreting and clarifying applicable policies and procedures.
- Frequency: Daily

Senior Associate Vice President for Budget and Financial Planning

- Purpose: Investigate and resolve a range of financial issues and collaborate on financial planning and reporting activities.
- Frequency: Weekly

Senior Executive Director for Budget and Financial Planning - Finance and Administration

- Purpose: Assist in resolving capital funding issues and interpret financial reporting requirements.
- Frequency: Weekly

Senior Associate Vice President for Enrollment Systems & Services and Banner AR AES Team

- Purpose: Collaborate to identify, troubleshoot, and resolve Banner Student Accounts Receivable issues and functional needs.
- Frequency: Weekly (Banner AR AES Team); Monthly (Senior Associate Vice President).

Candidate Qualifications

Education/Certification

- Bachelor's degree in accounting or a related degree. Master's degree in business strongly preferred.
- CPA license strongly preferred.

Minimum Previous Work Experience

- At least eight (8) years of related professional experience in strategic leadership within finance, budgeting, or a closely related field, ideally within a complex organization such as a college or university.
- Strategic leadership responsibility in finance, budget, or related areas at a complex organization, preferably a college or university.
- Significant supervisory experience, including hiring, establishing and enforcing appropriate accountability standards, and developing personnel into an effective team.

The Community

West Chester, Pennsylvania

West Chester, Pennsylvania, is a growing and highly desirable borough in Chester County, serving as its county seat. Its blend of historic charm, walkability, vibrant culture, and safe, engaged neighborhoods makes it one of the most appealing places to live in the Philadelphia region.

A Welcoming, Walkable Community

West Chester is known for its lively, pedestrian-friendly downtown filled with restaurants, cafés, boutiques, and cultural destinations. The borough features over 65 restaurants, offering a diverse dining scene and a lively atmosphere that attracts residents and visitors alike.

Its historic architecture, tree-lined streets, and charming town center create a warm, inviting environment.

Safe, Engaged, and Community-Focused

The borough consistently ranks among the safest communities in Pennsylvania, supported by responsive local policing and strong civic engagement.

Community events, local organizations, and an active citizenry contribute to the town's strong sense of belonging.

High Quality of Life

Residents of West Chester enjoy a balance of cultural amenities and small-town comfort. The area offers galleries, theaters, live music venues, and seasonal events, fostering a vibrant arts and entertainment scene. A youthful, energetic population—reflected in a median age of 25.3 years—contributes to the community's dynamic feel.

Attractive Housing & Desirable Neighborhoods

West Chester offers a variety of housing options—from historic homes to modern apartments and townhouses. Median home values reflect steady demand and the borough's strong appeal as a residential destination. Neighborhoods are known for being clean, walkable, and community-oriented.

Convenient Access & Transportation

Residents benefit from easy access to the greater Philadelphia area via major routes such as Route 202 and I-95, as well as SEPTA Regional Rail, making commuting straightforward.

In Summary

West Chester is a safe, vibrant, and culturally rich community with a charming historic core, excellent dining and entertainment, strong community identity, and convenient regional access. Its walkability, lively atmosphere, and quality of life make it one of the most desirable places to live in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are welcome. Applicants should submit, as separate documents, a CV or résumé and a letter of interest that addresses the themes outlined in this profile. WittKieffer is assisting West Chester University in this search. Review of applications is underway and will continue until the position is filled.

Please submit all applications, nominations, and inquiries to the search team through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by [clicking here](#). New users should select “Register Here” to create an account before proceeding. After logging in, navigate to “Open Positions,” then locate the role by entering the institution’s name and clicking the search wheel.

Nominations and inquiries can also be directed to:

Ben Haden
Senior Partner
bhaden@wittkieffer.com

Christy Pratt
Consultant
cpratt@wittkieffer.com

Ethan Robles
Associate
erobles@wittkieffer.com



West Chester University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other status protected by law.

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 West Chester University 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.

All images and logos used in this leadership profile were attained from West Chester University and/or are owned by WittKieffer Inc. via Getty Images



WittKieffer is the premier executive search and advisory firm developing inclusive, impactful leadership teams for organizations that improve quality of life. For more than 50 years, we have operated exclusively at the intersection of not-for-profit and for-profit healthcare delivery, science, and education – the Quality of Life Ecosystem. Through our expert executive search services as well as our Professional Search, Interim Leadership, and Leadership Advisory solutions, we strengthen organizations that make the world better.

Visit [WittKieffer.com](https://www.WittKieffer.com) to learn more.

WittKieffer