

# SEARCH PROFILE:

## VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND PLANNING



**ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Illinois' first public university*

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## THE OPPORTUNITY

Illinois State University invites nominations and applications as it seeks an innovative, visionary, collaborative, and experienced professional to lead as the next Vice President for Finance and Planning. Reporting to [President Aondover Tarhule](#) and serving as a key member of the President's Cabinet, the Vice President for Finance and Planning (VPFP) has three broad primary responsibilities: chief financial officer, chief planning and budgeting officer, and head of the Finance and Planning Division.

The mission of the Division of Finance and Planning is to provide a broad range of administrative leadership and services to Illinois State University in the areas of budgeting, financial management, payroll processing, risk management, student accounts, procurement, facilities services, human resources, information technology and business intelligence, environmental health and safety, energy management, parking and transportation, strategic planning and institutional research, and policy analysis in the most effective and efficient manner possible so that the University can excel in its mission and achieve its vision as stated in [Excellence by Design](#), the strategic plan for 2024 – 2029.

The leader of this division with approximately 700 employees must be a person of integrity who shares the values of Illinois State University and can model the collaboration, transparency, and commitment to service that are at the heart of this division. In addition, the next VPFP is expected to be strategic in developing and implementing a 21st-century budget model. This is an outstanding opportunity for an analytical and experienced leader who can envision the big picture and work closely in a shared governance environment to inspire and lead those who will implement approaches to achieving the University's mission.

This search is expected to progress quickly through fall 2024 so that the new Vice President for Finance and Planning can begin work early in 2025.



## ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

**History.** Governor William Bissell signed a bill on February 18, 1857, to create a school and establish the Board of Education of the State of Illinois as its governing body. The bill stipulated that the permanent location would be the place that offered the most favorable inducements. Jesse W. Fell took up the campaign for Bloomington and obtained financial backing totaling \$141,000. Abraham Lincoln, acting as attorney for the board, drew up the bond guaranteeing that Bloomington citizens would fulfill their financial commitments. Consequently, Illinois State Normal University was founded as the first public institution of higher education in the state.

**Today.** Established as a teacher education institution, [Illinois State University](#) has developed into a multipurpose university with degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. In fall 2024, Illinois State welcomed its largest freshman class in the University's history and enrolled a total of 21,546 students. Illinois State's students appreciate the average 19:1 student-faculty ratio. Professors teach in the classroom, mentor, and partner with both undergraduates and graduates in research endeavors. Within the faculty, 98 percent hold a terminal degree in their field.

The University is one of 12 public universities in Illinois. Its academic departments offer more than 174 major/minor options in the Colleges of Applied Science and Technology, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering (first cohort expected Fall 2025), the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, and the Mennonite College of Nursing. The Graduate School coordinates 97 master's degree sequences, 17 doctoral programs, and 40 certificate programs.

The University's academic programs are supported by the services and collections of Milner Library, which contains more than three million holdings and special collections.

**Recognized excellence.** Illinois State was placed in the top 100 on the 2024 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Value Schools-National Universities rankings. The University's retention rate is among the highest in the nation at 81.3 percent. Graduation rates are more than 66 percent, which is well above the national average. Illinois State is also praised for providing an affordable education, with *Washington Monthly* honoring the University as one of the Best Bang for the Buck Colleges in the Midwest.

Illinois State is also ranked a top 10 Military Friendly School by VIQTORY for its support for veterans and those in the military. Illinois State's campuswide commitment to our core value of civic engagement has earned us recognition with the Elective Classification for Community Engagement, as an Excellence and Innovation Award for Civic Learning and Community Engagement recipient, and as a Voter Friendly Campus.

Illinois State recently raised more than \$35.4 million in private support, reaching its third highest private support total in University history. Through these donations, more than 4,474 scholarships were awarded in fiscal year 2024, and 85 new scholarships were created.

There are many other reasons that reveal Illinois State's competitive advantage as a premier undergraduate institution. Each explains the reason Illinois State University is "Redbird Proud."

## ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

**Location in Bloomington-Normal Illinois.** Illinois State University is located in the growing twin cities of Bloomington and Normal, with a metro population of approximately 172,000. The community is also home to Illinois Wesleyan University, Heartland Community College, St. Joseph Medical Center, Carle BroMenn Medical Center, COUNTRY Financial, State Farm Insurance's International Headquarters, Central Illinois Regional Airport, and electric truck manufacturer Rivian Motors. The [Bloomington-Normal community](#) has distinguished itself for its outstanding school systems, and its citizens' high level of educational attainment, as well as its parks and recreation, health care, vibrant fine arts scene, job growth, economic opportunity, historic sites, and low crime rates. Bloomington made Livability's top 100 Best Places to Live (2024) and ranked No. 3 on College Values Online's list of Best Small College Towns in America (2024). Bloomington-Normal is conveniently located about three hours from Indianapolis; two hours from both Chicago and St. Louis; and an hour from Peoria, Champaign-Urbana, Decatur, and Springfield. Many of these locations are accessible from Bloomington-Normal via Amtrak, which is located one block from Illinois State's campus.

**Inclusive environment.** Illinois State affirms and encourages community belonging and a respect for differences. The University fosters an inclusive environment characterized by cultural understanding and engagement, ethical behavior, and a commitment to social justice. The University supports a diverse faculty and staff who mentor a diverse student population. The institution endeavors to provide opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to participate productively in a global society.

Campus diversity at Illinois State increasingly reflects the nation's changing demographics. In the 2023–2024 academic year, 41 percent of the freshman class

### MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

#### Mission

Illinois State University prepares diverse, engaged, and informed members of society through collaborative teaching, scholarship, and service.

#### Vision

Illinois State University will be a national leader in student-focused education connecting teaching, research, innovation, and intercultural understanding.

#### Values

- Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
- Individualized Attention
- Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging
- Collaboration
- Community and Civic Engagement
- Respect
- Integrity

comes from traditionally underrepresented groups. Over the past five years, there has been a 14 percent increase in African American students and a 9 percent increase in Latinx students. Students are mentored by a faculty that includes numerous teacher-scholars recognized at national and international levels, all dedicated to superior teaching.

**Budget.** Budgeted operating revenues for the University totaled \$561.3 million in fiscal year 2024, with 45.4 percent from the University's Income Fund, 20.8 percent from Auxiliary Facilities, 13.9 percent in state appropriations, 12.2 percent from other local funds, and 7.7 percent in contracts and grants.





## UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The [Board of Trustees](#) of Illinois State University appointed [Dr. Aondover Tarhule](#) as the University's 21st President in March 2024. President Tarhule leads a [Cabinet](#) comprised of these senior leaders:

[Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost](#)  
[Vice President for Finance and Planning](#)  
[Vice President for Student Affairs](#)  
[Vice President for University Advancement](#)

Chief of Staff  
Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer  
General Counsel  
Director of [Intercollegiate Athletics](#)  
Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer

In addition to its senior leadership team, Illinois State University takes great pride in [shared governance](#). The University recognizes that for the institution to operate effectively the voices of administrators, faculty, staff, and students need to be heard and that optimal solutions often come from the results of these groups collaborating. University governing bodies—Board of Trustees, Academic Senate, Administrative/Professional Council, Civil Service Council, and Student Government Association—represent the constituencies of the University and form the formal structure for shared governance.

## UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN AND MASTER PLAN

**Strategic Plan.** The University's strategic plan, [Excellence by Design: 2024-2029](#), approved by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2024, is a shining example of the University's commitment to shared governance, with faculty, staff, students, and campus stakeholders playing an active role in contributing to the creation of the document. Guided by a strong foundational design and building on the institution's past strategic plan, Excellence by Design emphasizes Illinois State's commitment to excellence through continued improvement to shape an exciting future. While attention to and actions in support of all four strategic directions are critical for success, for the Vice President for Finance and Planning, the goals related to Strategic Direction II (Foster a Culture of Responsible Stewardship) will be especially important: "Illinois State University is dedicated to maintaining a quality environment for past, present, and future

Redbirds to enjoy in perpetuity, while simultaneously encouraging the pursuit of learning. By improving efficiencies on campus, advancing our strategic enrollment management methods, investing in campus infrastructure, and expanding our commitment to a culture of sustainability, Illinois State responsibly stewards our resources, talent, and learners for generations to come."

**Master Plan.** The Illinois State University [Master Plan](#) presents a long-range blueprint for the physical development of Illinois State University — its future size, form, function, character, image, and environment. The plan, approved in 2011, presented a series of recommendations designed to further the University's physical transformation beyond what has been accomplished in recent years. These recommendations have been tailored to support and enhance the University's strategic plan.



## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND PLANNING

The Vice President for Finance and Planning has three broad primary responsibilities: chief financial officer, chief planning and budgeting officer, and head of the Finance and Planning Division.

**Chief Financial Officer.** As Illinois State University's chief financial officer, the Vice President for Finance and Planning takes a lead role in conceptualizing and implementing programs that ensures Illinois State University's long-term financial viability.

**Chief Planning and Budget Officer.** The VPFP works with other university leaders in developing and executing a broad vision and strategic plan for the university. The Vice President will also work closely with the University's Board of Trustees, State of Illinois officials, and representatives of other internal and external constituencies and represent the University in matters of strategic importance to Illinois State University. The Vice President brings a deep knowledge of best practices in finance and planning, creative and innovating thinking, an appreciation for shared governance and commitment to working collaboratively with all areas of the University.

**Head of the Division of Finance and Planning.** The division of [Finance and Planning](#) provides an extensive range of services and information to the campus community and external constituents. Under the leadership of the Vice President for Finance and Planning (VPFP), the division is responsible for ensuring the University's long-term financial viability, maintaining efficient use of resources, and providing information to internal and external stakeholders for informed decision-making. As this [organization chart](#) shows, the VPFP oversees these five administrative units, which include approximately 700 employees, the majority of whom are civil service:

**Budgeting and Planning:** the [University Budget Office](#) is the University's central administrator of budgets for the campus and liaison to state governing bodies for financial reporting; the office of [Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis](#) supports institutional research and University-wide strategic planning efforts.

**Office of the Comptroller:** responsible for the oversight of financial transactions, reporting, and compliance.

**Facilities Services:** responsible for a broad range of activities, including procurement and distribution of utilities; maintenance of University buildings and grounds, property control, central receiving and central stores; parking and transportation options; sustainability; facilitating the planning, design, and construction of University facilities. [Environmental Health and Safety](#), responsible for managing programs that minimize public health and environmental impacts of activities conducted at the University, is within this department.

**Human Resources:** centralized human resource services for the campus covering tenured-tenure track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, faculty associates, administrative professional staff, civil service staff, graduate assistants, and student employees.

**Technology Solutions:** responsible for IT project management and business analysis, implementing large-scale enterprise software systems, the oversight of enterprise data security, facilitating IT procurement, running the University's mission critical software such as the fiscal and student systems, maintaining and growing the network and other IT infrastructure, and for coordinating IT support across the institution.

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND PLANNING (CONT.)

**Other Specific Responsibilities.** In addition to the broad responsibilities for the Vice President for Finance and Planning, these are the specific responsibilities for this role:

- Providing leadership in conceptualizing and implementing programs that ensure the University's long-term financial viability;
- Developing progressive and enlightened partnerships with other public and private enterprises to enhance the quality of services provided and control costs;
- Developing programs/procedures to leverage resources from existing university assets (e.g., land, facilities);
- Creatively controlling and managing University debt;
- Working collaboratively with the other Vice Presidents in meaningful and comprehensive planning to achieve strategic results;
- Developing partnerships with local communities that can be replicated beyond individual projects;
- Working with the State of Illinois to look for opportunities to increase fiscal flexibility;
- Developing a plan and financial approach that fosters control and planned development of University properties and prevents piecemeal development;
- Coordinating financial planning for the University, budget development, and management and accountability reporting;
- Developing new ways of doing business that place emphasis on supporting and serving the University and that accommodate statutory and administrative requirements and restrictions;
- Balancing demands for new resources;
- Identifying resources for important new programs/initiatives;
- Finding creative ways to allocate resources to keep an aging physical plant functioning and to maintain and enhance administrative technologies;
- Keeping a balance between various fund sources and the programs they support;
- Participating in ongoing dialogue on information needs to support accountability reporting;
- Identifying ways to diversify revenue streams; and
- Other duties as assigned.





## LEADERSHIP AGENDA FOR THE NEXT VICE PRESIDENT

In the next few years, the Vice President for Finance and Planning is expected to be a collaborative member of President Tarhule's Cabinet and to lead teams within and beyond the Division of Finance and Planning. The leadership agenda for the VFPF includes several priorities:

- **Developing and implementing a 21<sup>st</sup>-century budget model** that links revenues, expenditures, and institutional effectiveness data.

- **Addressing issues of deferred maintenance and facilities operations** in the context of strategic physical plant development.
- **Developing new approaches to business operations**, with an emphasis on innovation and accountability.

## EXPECTATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS

### EXPECTED QUALITIES

To be successful as a member of the collaborative senior leadership team at Illinois State University, the Vice President for Finance and Planning is expected to have these professional and personal qualities:

- A deep commitment to students and their success;
- A strong orientation to team and to collective success;
- Superior oral and written communications skills, especially the ability to listen carefully and effectively;
- Ability to encourage forward thinking and innovation in the changing higher education landscape;
- Ability to effectively develop and lead diverse teams of professionals;
- Outstanding problem-solving skills;
- Strong collaborative interpersonal skills and the ability to build positive and effective relationships across campus with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and external constituents; and
- Understanding of the interrelationships and dependencies between academic and administrative units at a university.

### REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants for the Vice President for Finance and Planning position shall demonstrate all of these *required qualifications*:

- An earned advanced degree (beyond bachelor's);
- A minimum of 5 years of progressive experience in senior administrative leadership in financial and planning operations at a university, including supervision of cross-divisional teams;
- A record of successful experience in financial, capital, and budget planning and management;

- Demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion; and
- Experience in and commitment to working within a shared governance environment.

### PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants for the Vice President for Finance and Planning position may also demonstrate *some of these preferred qualifications*:

- Experience managing the kinds of departments overseen by the VFPF at Illinois State University;
- An understanding of and commitment to the teaching, research, and service missions of a university;
- In-depth knowledge of the full range of issues addressed by an administration and finance executive in a public university setting; and
- An understanding of the culture of a large, residential, research-oriented university.





## NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Academic Search is partnering with Illinois State University for this search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. To submit a nomination, please send an email to [IllinoisVPFP@academicsearch.org](mailto:IllinoisVPFP@academicsearch.org); be sure to include the nominee's full name, title, position, and email address.

Those who are considering applying are encouraged to request a confidential conversation with either Senior Consultant: Dr. Ginny Horvath ([ginny.horvath@academicsearch.org](mailto:ginny.horvath@academicsearch.org)) or Dr. Carlos Medina ([carlos.medina@academicsearch.org](mailto:carlos.medina@academicsearch.org)). Initial review of applications will begin on **November 1, 2024**, and continue until the position is filled.

Applications should be sent electronically to [IllinoisVPFP@academicsearch.org](mailto:IllinoisVPFP@academicsearch.org). Each application should include these three separate PDF documents:

- A detailed **cover letter** expressing your interest in this opportunity at Illinois State University and explaining the ways you meet the qualifications and expectations of the position;
- A current, full **curriculum vita** that includes relevant responsibilities and accomplishments;
- A list of **five professional references** (including their names, titles, email addresses, and professional connection to you).

References will be contacted only with the applicant's permission and only if their candidacy advances to the finalist round. Those selected to advance as semifinalists will be asked to submit their applications to Illinois State University's application portal as well.

*Illinois State University, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding affirmative action, nondiscrimination, and anti-harassment. Illinois State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, order of protection, gender identity and expression, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, unfavorable military discharge, or status as a veteran in employment, educational programs and activities, or admissions.*

# ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Illinois State University in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations.

Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute.

