SEARCH PROFILE:

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE/CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Rust College is the oldest historically black college (HBCU) and the second oldest college in the state of Mississippi. Established in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, its founders were missionaries from the North who opened a school in Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, accepting adults of all ages, as well as children, for instruction in elementary subjects.

In 1870, the school was chartered as Shaw University, honoring the Reverend S.O. Shaw, who made a gift of $10,000 to the new institution. In 1892, the name was changed to Rust University to avoid confusion with another Shaw University. The name was a tribute to Richard S. Rust of Cincinnati, Ohio, Secretary of the Freedmen’s Aid Society. In 1915, the name was changed to the more realistic one, Rust College. As students progressed, high school and college courses were added to the curriculum, and in 1878 two students were graduated from the college department. As public schools for Negroes became more widespread the need for private schools decreased, and in 1930 the grade school was discontinued. The high school continued to function until 1953.

A significant change in the administration of the institution took place in 1920 when Dr. M.S. Davage became president, the first Negro to hold that position. Dr. L. M. McCoy (1924), his successor, was the first alumnus to serve his Alma Mater as president. He was followed in 1957 by Dr. Earnest A. Smith, an alumnus, class of 1937. In 1967, Dr. William A. McMillan, a non-alumnus, assumed the presidency. In 1993, Dr. David L. Beckley, an alumnus, class of 1967, became the eleventh president of Rust College. In June of 2020, Dr. Ivy R. Taylor became the 12th president and first woman to serve as president at Rust College.

Among the over 20,000 former students of Rust College are alumni who have gone on to become bishops of the United Methodist Church and other church denominations, public school teachers and administrators, college presidents, lawyers, physicians, businessmen, government leaders and ministers. The most nationally acclaimed, however, is Ida B. Wells. Ms. Wells was a journalist, civil rights leader, feminist, founder of the Association of Colored Women, and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
EXCERPTS FROM PRESIDENT TAYLOR’S FALL 2020 MESSAGE TO FACULTY AND STAFF

“This year can easily be described as a year of transition. The retirement of a long-term president, arrival of a new president combined with the COVID-19 pandemic create could generate anxiety, but instead I urge us all to embrace the T.R.A.N.S.I.T.I.O.N. Since we are a faith-based institution, I remind you that we have been encouraged in Philippians to “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

We must each display respect for each other and for our students. We must have a sense of accountability in relation to our work here at Rust College. In light of the quickly evolving public health and higher education landscape, it is critical that we remain nimble and ready to change course as needed to benefit our students. Our students are the reason we exist and so we must remember to be student-centered in our actions and in developing policies. Every faculty and staff member must demonstrate integrity in our interactions with each other and with students. The time has come for everyone at Rust College to embrace technology as central to how we operate and how we interact with students. Innovation is required to maximize the impact of our limited resources. Technology can help us to be innovative. Despite our challenging environment, an optimistic attitude will help us all to meet our challenges. Rust College is an environment where we look out for each other and our students and we must continue to embrace a nurturing attitude toward students, while recognizing that they are young adults who also must be accountable for their actions and decisions.

T.R.A.N.S.I.T.I.O.N
Teamwork; Respect; Accountability; Nimble; Student Centered; Integrity; Technology; Innovation; Optimistic; Nurturing

These words should serve as a reminder of how we must work together in order to propel Rust College forward.”
SETTING A NEW TONE FOR RUST COLLEGE (CONT.)

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS AND CHANGES UNDERWAY WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS

• Hired a new Executive Leadership Team
• 5% raise for all faculty and staff for 2021-2022
• Established a three-year strategic plan
• Used CARES ACT funds to assist students in paying off over $150,000 in student account balances.
• Established an official Human Resources department to assist with handling personnel issues, professional development training and all human resources related functions.
• Established a partnership with the Memphis Grizzlies and Pepsi for Rust College students to serve as interns as part of the “Stronger Together” Program

ACADEMICS
• Launched seven new academic programs.
• Reestablished music major
•Established partnership agreement with the University of the Incarnate Word for prospective health professions
• Executed 3+3 partnership with Cleveland State Marshall School of Law
• Developed 3+2 partnership with University of Mississippi College of Engineering for students to earn dual degrees in five years
• Revamped E.A. Smith Honors Program
• Developed plan and implemented transition from modular system to semesters at Rust College
• Updated student handbook and Student Government Association bylaws
• Revamped the First Year Experience Team to Student Success and Persistence with more focus on advising and student retention

ATHLETICS
• Upgraded the athletic facility and installed a new wood gym floor.
• Relaunched “Summers at Rust” youth programming and launched a successful Basketball and Sports Broadcast Camp
• Negotiated contract with Pepsi to upgrade vending and product selection on campus.
• Secured partnership with Eastbay and Nike.
• Girls basketball team won the 2021-22 Conference tournament.

CAMPUS UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS
• Converted old MI Campus dormitories to suite style student apartment homes.
•Received board approval to complete renovations in WIFF Hall dormitory which is currently underway.
• Modernized the Cafeteria and food services offerings through partnership with Aramark.
• Relocated and modernized the campus gift shop. Now called “The Den” and will house new Rust College paraphernalia.
• Made several campus safety improvements to include new sidewalks, security gate and new security cameras.
• Made significant upgrades to the Doxey Auditorium to include new lighting and sound system to support campus productions.
• Completed campus assessments of all academic buildings, dormitories and faculty and staff housing.
• Landscaping upgrades throughout campus
SETTING A NEW TONE FOR RUST COLLEGE (CONT.)

COVID-19 RESPONSE
- Developed COVID-19 task force and operations manual
- Offered virtual class options for students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Resumed on-campus instruction Fall 2021 with new COVID-19 guidelines
- Launched a new virtual campus tour video for prospective students
- Installed hand sanitation stations throughout campus
- Installed Bipolar Ionization Air Purification machines to several of the academic buildings and dormitories to reduce the spread of COVID-19

DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT
- Established an Office of Development and Advancement to increase annual giving, donors, and alumni giving.
- Implemented new Donor perfect software to assist in fundraising and donor management
- Closed the 2021-22 academic school year ahead of 2020-2021 giving totals.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL AID
- Established three-year strategic enrollment management plan
- Hosted successful on campus Preview Days for prospective students
- Launched a new virtual tour video
- Formalized an alumni student recruiting programs and developed an alumni recruiting handbook.
- Increased multicultural recruiting outreach efforts and developed bilingual prospective student and family resources.
- Improved operational efficiencies and automations in financial aid to improve student experience.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- Rust College awarded $340,000 grant from the Southern Company for technology upgrades on campus
- New Smart boards installed in classrooms to support faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs
- Outsourced Information Technology to a vendor who brought in competent staff to re-envision our IT infrastructure
- Modernized our campus ERP system through collaboration with Ellucian Managed Services
- Rolled out Colleague training to enhance efficiency of all campus operations
- Launched student self-service portal.
- Began installation of a new hosted telephone system and a 10 Gbps dedicated internet circuit will be implemented at less than half the monthly cost of the legacy voice and 500 Mbps service.
- Purchased new state-of-the-art multifunction copiers placed strategically throughout campus to streamline printing and reduce printing costs.
- Upgraded our Blackboard learning management system for improved functionality with faculty, staff and students.
- Purchased laptop computers for all full-time students and faculty

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
- Led effort to revise and modernize Rust College Mission Statement
- Launched new Rust College Brand Guidelines
- Successfully launched the first State of the institution Address (Virtual)
- Increased social media presence and expanded social channels to include YOUTUBE and TikTok.
- Expanded internal communication efforts to include text message updates
- Established a new “Welcome Center” which serves as the Campus Communications headquarters
- New show, Bearcats Den with President Taylor, on RCTV2 featuring campus and community guests
- Positive media coverage in Memphis market (WREG TV news and WDIA AM1017 Bev Johnson radio show) and Mississippi newspapers
LOCATION
Rust College is located in the city of Holly Springs in the Northwestern part of Mississippi. Situated approximately 35 miles southeast of Memphis, Tennessee, the beautiful 126-acre campus is located near the major highways of U.S. Highway 178 and Mississippi Highway 7, to make the commute easy to this top tourist destination. While students explore Rust College, they are encouraged to take some time to also experience the surrounding areas of Holly Springs, Mississippi, and the close by major city of Memphis, Tennessee. Both cities are filled with unique music and event venues, a myriad of art galleries, historic landmarks, botanical gardens and greenways, professional sports and award-winning dining. There are numerous historical attractions in Holly Springs: The Ida B. Wells Barnett Museum, Kate Freeman Clark Art Gallery, Marshall County Historical Museum, Mississippi Blues Trail markers, and the Yellow Fever Martyrs Museum, to name a few. In addition, the University of Mississippi, the state’s flagship institution, is located in the nearby town of Oxford.

Holly Springs hosts several events throughout the year. Whether it’s the North Mississippi Hill Country Picnic, Ida B. Wells Barnett Birthday Celebration, Blues Alley Music Series, Hummingbird Festival, Annual Tour of Historic Homes, Christmas Tour of Homes, Audubon Native Plant Sale or just shopping around the town’s historic square, Holly Springs offers rich, engaging cultural attractions.

ABOUT RUST
MISSION STATEMENT
Rust College equips and inspires students for excellence and service in their communities and throughout the world.

VISION
Our vision for the future reflects an institution of teaching and learning, internal and external to the classroom. Students will come to prepare for careers while living and studying in an environment that nurtures academic and personal development.

GOAL
To make Rust College the premier private liberal arts college in North Mississippi, serving young people from throughout the world.

WE ARE
A historically Black, liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church which was founded in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Aid Society.

- A student-centered college where everyone is committed to the success of all students.
- A college that recognizes the threefold functions of education as teaching, research, and community service, with its primary mission as teaching.
- A college with dynamic and excellent programs designed to support the cultural, moral, and spiritual development of our students.
- A college grounded in its legacy and commitment to social justice.

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE
In the early history of Rust College, its first president, the Reverend A.C. McDonald, stated the purpose of Rust College as follows:

“It is our aim to not do hot-house work, seeking to hurry students through a college curriculum, as do many mushroom schools in the South, sending them into the battle of life only to disgrace themselves and bring reproach upon the cause of education at large, but take the by far more difficult and tedious plan of trying to lay well a foundation for a broad, thorough, and practical education, such as shall fit our pupils for long lives of usefulness to themselves, their race, and the church.”

President McDonald gave the criterion for testing this purpose: “By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them,” which is the motto of Rust College, and a good criterion for its purpose. While the elements of the purpose as originally stated by President McDonald remain Rust’s essence, the scope and expression of the purpose have expanded and must be expressed in terms of demands of education in a more complex and sophisticated society.

ACCREDITATION
Rust College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Colleges to award Associate and Baccalaureate degrees.
Rust College offers the following degree programs:

- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Arts
- Associate of Science
- Bachelor of Social Work

Academic majors are grouped into the following divisions:

- Division of Business: Business Administration (Areas of Concentration: Accounting, Management, Computer Information Systems)
- Division of Education: Elementary Education; Secondary Education (Business, English, Biology, Mathematics, Social Science); Child Care Management; Early Childhood Education
- Division of Science and Mathematics: Biology; Computer Science; Chemistry; Mathematics
- Division of Social Sciences and Humanities: Criminal Justice; History; Political Science; Social Work; Sociology; English (Areas of Concentration: Literature, Writing); Mass Communication/Broadcast Journalism Mass Communication/Print Journalism

The student-faculty rate at Rust College is 20:1. Rust supports 49 full-time and 8 part-time faculty members. Sixty percent of the faculty hold Ph.D.’s.

Rust College’s Student Life activities build, engage, educate, and enhance the overall undergraduate experience through a variety of programs to include, but not limited to, the First Year Experience Program, Residential Life, Campus Safety, Student Health Center, Student Activities, Religious Life, Student Government Association, etc. These programs provide opportunities for students to meet and interact with their peers, develop life-long relationships, embrace diversity, and build communities.

Rust College provides students opportunities to build their leadership skills through its Residential Assistance Program, Peer Mentor Program, Greek Life, and a host of other clubs and organizations for which students serve in leadership roles such as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary. These opportunities allow students to engage, think critically, and exercise decision-making skills to harness their skills in leadership and to prepare them to compete in a global society.

To engage students and meet their social needs, Rust College is committed to hosting a variety of student activities in partnership with student clubs and organizations to enhance the quality of campus and social life. Rust is affiliated with the United Methodist Church and provides very engaging religious activities to help build faith, motivate, and encourage students while matriculating through their college experience. Additionally, the faculty and staff engage students through structured advising, lecturing, tutoring, etc. to enhance student morale and self-esteem and to prepare them students for the future. Because of Student Life, students feel that Rust College is a second home of family-oriented individuals guiding students with an opportunity to gain stability, experience, and most importantly academic enhancement.
ENROLLMENT

Fall 2020 the total number of students enrolled was 633. The Rust College 2021 - 2026 Enrollment Management Plan is taking a holistic approach to enrollment management through the adoption of goals that align with and support the institution’s strategic goals and priorities. Designed to increase prospective student engagement as they matriculate through the enrollment funnel, to achieve these broad goals, strategies and implementation tactics that the Enrollment Management Committee has developed will guide Rust College to increased enrollment number in the next 3 to five years. The ultimate goal is to enroll 1200 students annually.
THE OPPORTUNITY – VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE/CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

LEADERSHIP AGENDA
The Vice President for Finance/Chief Financial Officer (VP/CFO) reports directly to the President and serves as the College’s senior executive officer responsible for Rust College’s financial management and is an essential strategic partner to the president, working collaboratively with her, the board of trustees, the senior leadership team, faculty, staff and student leaders to assure a successful and stable financial future for the institution. The VP/CFO plays a key role in the management and operation of the institution and serves as the fiduciary face to both the board of trustees and the entire college community. The VP/CFO is responsible for all matters pertaining to the management and operation of accounting, accounts receivable, accounts payable, budget management and control, student aid disbursement, budget preparation, financial information systems, credit management, collections, fiscal planning, financial statement preparation, investing, and payroll. In addition, the CFO is the administrator of the following areas: plant management/facilities management, IT, construction, fleet management, and contracted dining services.

The VP/CFO supports the board of trustees’ finance committee and has primary responsibility for the development and implementation of the college’s annual operating budget of approximately $18 million along with management of an endowment of over $50 million and the institution’s assets. Rust College has been strategic and disciplined in building a strong financial foundation, and the CFO will lead the efforts to continue in that vein.

The VP/CFO is expected to be innovative and entrepreneurial in the pursuit and development of strategies that fully optimize resources and further the college’s overall academic, administrative, and strategic initiatives. The new VP/CFO will assist the president and the senior leadership team in the on-going implementation of Rust College 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. The VP/CFO assures that the financial and services infrastructure of the institution is appropriate to its goals; employs an understanding of systems and the technology tools available to facilitate institutional effectiveness; focuses appropriately on the ever-increasing need to proactively improve the financial control environment; and provides clear communication that enables the entire college to function optimally.

To be effective, the VP/CFO must be a confident, high-energy leader, a superb communicator, and an innovative thinker. In addition, the administrator must understand and respect an environment that encourages teamwork, inclusive decision-making, and a sense of community across the college with the goal of ensuring student success.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
• Advanced degree related to accounting, business, or finance, from an accredited institution (CPA preferred)
• 5-10 years of relevant experience

DESIRED QUALITIES AND CAPABILITIES
• Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills and business acumen, demonstrated through previous work experience and accomplishments
• Experience working with a policy making board
• Accounting knowledge and experience in higher education
• Experience working in financial leadership, preferably within public higher education
• Strong understanding of financial practices, policies, and structures within a public university
• Knowledge and understanding of IT – particularly technology resources used for finance in higher education
THE OPPORTUNITY – VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE/CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CONT.)

- Understands accounting and finance and the relationship between the two
- Visionary who can forecast budget and institutional needs and bring new and innovative financial opportunities to Rust College
- Ability to implement ideas and new processes to move institution forward in efficiency and achievements
- Understands investments, particularly policies and bond industry within public higher education
- Thorough knowledge (ability to quickly acquire knowledge) of State of Mississippi HUB policies
- Strong leadership skills
- Able to calmly work in fast paced environment with competing priorities
- Knowledge of HBCU culture
- Detail oriented
- Fearless and diplomatic
- Highest standards of integrity, ethics, and performance
- Excellent oral and written communication skills; listening skills; and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to succession planning to ensure proper staffing levels, able to develop personnel building upon current levels of knowledge
- Ability to lead/execute institutional financial plans with agility and entrust decision making to direct reports
- Familiarity with Title III and other sponsored programs
- Ability to lead the total transition to electronic processes
- Prepared to provide stewardship of university funds with the flexibility needed to support institutional projects, research, and investments.
- Agility in balancing needs of the institution and current processes to meet speed of business of Rust and the President’s goals
- Accountable and transparent
- Ability to communicate well with the college community regarding financial matters - can translate data, provide analysis, and communicate a strategic vision to board members and individuals across the organization
- Ability to represent the College across a wide range of stakeholders including donors and supporters

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

The search is being assisted by Academic Search. Dr. Shirley Robinson Pippins is the Senior Consultant for the search. Confidential discussions with the Senior Consultant may be arranged by contacting Associate Consultant, Dr. Christy Scott at christy.scott@academicsearch.org. The position is open until filled, and applications received by August 13, 2022, are assured full consideration.

To apply, a candidate should prepare a thoughtful letter of interest addressing the leadership agenda and the required and desired qualifications. Include also a current, long-form resume or curriculum vita (showing relevant administrative responsibilities and accomplishments) and the names, phone numbers, and addresses of at least five professional references, with an indication of the candidate’s relationship to each reference. References will not be contacted until a later stage in the search, and only with the candidate’s foreknowledge. Nominations and application materials should be sent to RustCFO@academicsearch.org.

RUST COLLEGE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

The College is committed to creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive academic community in which all members are equally and equitably respected and valued. We define diversity broadly to include, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, (dis)ability veteran status, political affiliation, or age.
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Rust College 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. For more information, visit www.academicsearch.org.