

SEARCH PROFILE:

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



**CLEARY
UNIVERSITY**

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THE OPPORTUNITY

Reporting directly to Cleary's new President, Dr. Alan Drimmer, the CFO is a trusted partner providing strategic financial leadership and executive-level guidance for all financial aspects of the university.

Most exciting is that the President is open to a customized hybrid work relationship that would not require a permanent move to their Howell campus unless that is preferred by appointee.

Cleary is a dynamic and growing, private, master's level teaching institution seeking an experienced finance leader to serve as Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Cleary University is undergoing exciting growth and has seen its population increase by 15%+ for the last 3 years. Continued growth to the institution is expected both organically and through partnerships with other entities.

The CFO is responsible for all University budgets, accounting and financial analysis and reporting functions within the University. The CFO ensures that the organization's financial statements adhere to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), working closely with our auditors. As a financial services executive, the CFO also oversees tax reporting activities and ensures that University actions and activities abide by all Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the State of Michigan requirements.

Additionally, the CFO is responsible for developing standards, policies and procedures relating to the financial operations of the University and ensuring proper legal and regulatory compliance.

Areas reporting to this position include Budget, Accounting, Student Business Office, Payroll, and Risk Management / Insurance.

THE INSTITUTION

Founded in 1883 in Ypsilanti, MI as The Cleary School of Penmanship, Cleary University has a long-standing tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship. Originally established to teach practical business skills, the University has evolved significantly to meet the ever-changing demands of the marketplace. Today, Cleary offers a diverse range of undergraduate and graduate programs, enrolling a dynamic mix of traditional college students, adult learners, and graduate students. Programs are offered both in-class and virtually, with a special focus on career-ready education tailored to meet industry needs.

The University's main campus is situated on 50 acres in Livingston County, Michigan, a vibrant area known for its small-town charm and proximity to major metropolitan regions. Cleary also has an education center in Detroit, which serves as a hub for both in-person and online learning experiences. Cleary's facilities include modern classrooms, collaborative spaces, and comprehensive student support services, all designed to create an inclusive, student-centered learning environment.

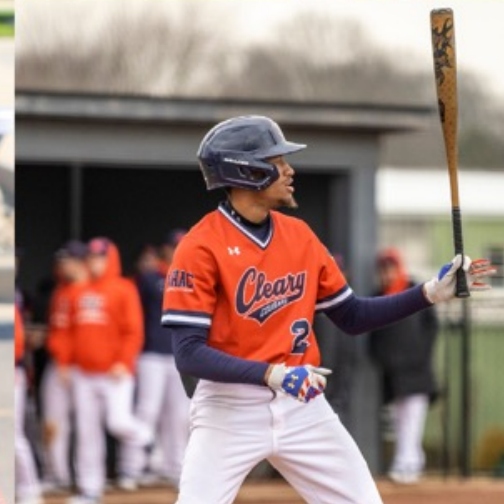
Recognized as one of Michigan's top private universities for return on investment, Cleary is committed to providing high-value education. This commitment is reflected in the University's recent enrollment growth, including welcoming its largest incoming class in decades. A distinctive degree-completion program for public safety professionals—serving police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and other public sector employees—further underscores Cleary's role in addressing the educational needs of working adults.

Cleary's innovative curriculum, known as *The Cleary Mind*, is the result of extensive strategic planning and market research. This approach ensures that every graduate is equipped with the skills needed to succeed in a complex, fast-changing world. The Cleary Mind focuses on eight key attributes highly valued by employers: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Ethics, Creative Thinking, Communication, Persuasion, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership.

The eight key attributes of The Cleary Mind are:

- **Critical Thinking:** the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement
- **Problem solving:** the process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues
- **Ethics:** moral principles that govern behavior or the conducting of an activity
- **Creative Thinking:** ways to look at and solve problems from different perspectives
- **Communication:** the imparting or exchanging of information, news, or knowledge
- **Persuasion:** the action of selling someone to do or believe something
- **Entrepreneurship:** the mindset of creative business generation and economic return at any point in the economy
- **Leadership:** the ability to lead people and organizations to a goal they would not have otherwise attained





ATHLETICS

Cleary University's athletic teams, known as the Cougars, are an integral part of university life. The University participates at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) level as member of the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference.

The University's teams include men's hockey; cross country; track and field; women's soccer; men's soccer; golf; softball; baseball; wrestling; bowling; women's basketball; men's basketball; and Esports.

ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Cleary has an entrepreneurial academic culture, and our next CFO will thrive in that environment. This year, the University is focused on three areas of innovation:

1. **Accelerated degree completion program:** The University has developed an accelerated degree completion program for police, fire, first responders and city employees. Cleary recognizes credit from prior academic experience, training, and education. The program has had significant success in Detroit and other parts of Southeast Michigan and continues to grow. ("Cleary Credit")
2. **Stackable credentials:** Cleary is developing a series of new majors aligned with fast growing labor markets, which also can serve as stackable credentials. ("Cleary Credentials")

3. **Career pathways:** The University is leveraging the work of Stanford University's Life Design Lab to develop a comprehensive approach to career development, layering some content into our credit-bearing curriculum. ("Cleary Compass")

The next CFO will help shape the future course, speed and direction of the University.

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

Candidates for CFO will be expected to:

- Develop and monitor financial models, analyses, and interpretation of statistical and accounting information in order to assess operating results.
- Oversee the University's system of accounts and records on all University transactions and assets.
- Coordinate and direct the preparation of the budget and financial forecasts.
- Establish major financial objectives and policies for the institution and prepare reports that outline the University's financial position in the areas of income, expenses and earnings based on past, present and future operations.
- Manage cash flow in the short and long term in partnership with other University teams to ensure smooth continuous operations.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

- Knowledge of university administration.
- Knowledge of the principles and practices of financial management.
- Skill in organizing resources and establishing priorities in order to execute many complex tasks simultaneously.
- Knowledge of automated accounting systems.
- Strong accuracy, analytical, and problem-solving abilities.
- Ability to collaborate and get along well with diverse personalities, establishing and maintaining effective working relations with University employees and students.
- Ability to exercise tact, establish credibility, and be decisive.
- Ability to balance business considerations and willingness to uphold recommended procedures in support of the University's core values and priorities.
- Skill in training, assigning and supervising the work of others.
- Ability to manage and advocate a team concept.
- Skill in effective written and verbal communication.
- Ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality.
- Skill in growing an organization through product or segment based initiatives, paying attention to both expected revenues and costs.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Minimum of a Bachelor's degree, preferably in Finance, Business Administration, or Accounting.
- MBA and/or CPA preferred.
- Five (5) years recent experience as a Chief Financial Officer or VP Finance of a higher education institution or a minimum of ten (10) years of experience that is directly related to the specified duties and responsibilities gained through increasingly responsible positions within planning and management of financial operations.





APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS

Academic Search is assisting Cleary University in this national search. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting senior consultant Jerry Israel (jerry.israel@academicsearch.org).

The position is available immediately, with applications being accepted until November 1, 2024. Applications can be submitted electronically, and in confidence, to: **ClearyCFO@academicsearch.org**. Applications should consist of:

- a detailed letter of interest
- a complete curriculum vitae (CV).

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Cleary 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.



Committed to IDENTIFYING
AND DEVELOPING LEADERS
by providing the highest
level of EXECUTIVE
SEARCH to our
higher education
partners.