

SEARCH PROFILE:

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC
AFFAIRS AND DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY



TRANSYLVANIA
UNIVERSITY

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Transylvania University seeks an accomplished and dynamic academic leader to serve as its next Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University (EVPAA/Dean). The EVPAA/Dean will play a key role in leading the faculty and community in concert with the University's new strategic plan, as well as providing vision and direction for enhancing student success, academic programs, and curricular innovation.

TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY

Transylvania University is a top-tier, independent, residential liberal arts college in Lexington, Kentucky – the state's second largest city with a population of over 320,000 and the regional hub for entertainment, sports, the arts, and many other attractions. Founded in 1780, Transylvania University enjoys a long and distinguished history and is ranked in the top 15 percent of the nation's four-year colleges by *The Princeton Review*. The University awards the Bachelor of Arts degree in 49 majors, the enrollment is approximately 1,000, the student/faculty ratio is 11 to 1, and 97 percent of the faculty hold a Ph.D. or terminal degree. The University's overall endowment is \$292 million.

Transylvania University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the Bachelor of Arts degree. The university is also a charter member of the American Association of Colleges and Universities and a member of the American Council on Education, the Association of American Colleges, the Council of Independent Colleges, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Southern University Conference, and the Annapolis Group.

MISSION AND VALUES

Through an engagement with the liberal arts, Transylvania University prepares its students for a humane and fulfilling personal and public life by cultivating independent thinking, open-mindedness, creative expression, and commitment to lifelong learning and social responsibility in a diverse world.

VISION

Transylvania, Kentucky's first university, will be the first choice for the 21st-century student by providing personalized and relevant curricular and cocurricular experiences that prepare students for the opportunities of today and tomorrow.

At the intersection of tradition and innovation, Transylvania will continue to serve as a pioneer in higher education through customized engagements with:

- Interdisciplinary liberal arts infused with technology and focused on human and digital literacy.
- Intentional experiential development through paid internships, research, campus activities, career preparation, and study abroad.
- Exceptional faculty supported by the \$142 million Bingham Fund for Teaching Excellence.

TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

HISTORY

Thomas Jefferson was governor of Virginia when that state's legislature chartered Transylvania in 1780 as the first college west of the Allegheny Mountains. By the time Kentucky became a state in 1792, Transylvania had already earned the reputation of offering a first-class education. In its early years, Transylvania included a medical school, a law school, a seminary and a college of arts and sciences that educated thousands of the young nation's leaders in government, business, medicine, law, and education.

Famed statesman Henry Clay was a law professor and a member of Transylvania's Board of Trustees. Transylvania alumni include distinguished public figures such as founder and hero of Texas Stephen F. Austin, abolitionist Cassius M. Clay, U.S. vice presidents John C. Breckinridge and Richard M. Johnson and Supreme Court justices John Marshall Harlan and Samuel Freeman Miller. Fifty U.S. senators, 101 U.S. representatives, 36 governors, and 34 ambassadors are numbered among Transylvania graduates.

Now in its third century, Transylvania continues to draw inspiration from its history while embracing the present and future as one of the nation's top liberal arts colleges.

AFFILIATION

Transylvania is committed to cultivating a campus environment of mutual respect and impassioned conviction and developing leaders who will succeed in a diverse and connected world. The community embraces individuals of all faiths and spiritual practices and strives to create an atmosphere of honest inquiry where everyone feels welcome.

Transylvania established an affiliation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1865. The history of the Disciples reveals a focus on unity in faith, higher education as a path to understanding, and tolerance when faced with differences. Transylvania is proud to embrace these same values.

PRESIDENT BRIEN LEWIS

Brien Lewis became Transylvania University's 28th president on July 1, 2020. Lewis came to Transylvania after serving eight years as president of Catawba College, a private liberal arts institution in Salisbury, North Carolina.

A native of Toronto, Canada, Lewis holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a Morehead Scholar and student body president. He earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Toronto. After a career as an attorney and mediator, he moved into higher education as executive assistant to the president and business administration professor at Winthrop University in South Carolina. He became the founding dean of Winthrop's University College and then the university's vice president for university development and alumni relations before assuming the presidency at Catawba.

His 26-year career in higher education has been marked by a commitment to the personal development of students and careful stewardship of the institutions he's served. At Catawba, Lewis oversaw an increase in undergraduate enrollment and improved first-year student retention; led two ambitious and successful fundraising campaigns, while increasing the college's endowment by 87%; and created new academic and athletic programs and improved the campus infrastructure to support them.



TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

Lewis and his wife, Laura, have invested in their local communities while raising two children. Lewis has served on the boards of the United Way, the Crosby Scholars, the UNC Nutrition Research Institute, and the National Sports Media Association among other organizations. In Toronto and throughout his career, he has also acted in a number of student and community theater productions.

STUDENTS AND CAMPUS LIFE

Transylvania University's 70-acre campus is nestled in beautiful downtown Lexington. The intimate campus, paired with the excitement of a thriving urban center, opens a world of opportunities inside and outside the University's borders. Transylvania is concerned not only with students' intellectual growth, but also with their development as individuals. Participation in campus activities is an intrinsic aspect of student life. Students may choose to participate in music ensembles, theater productions, publications, political organizations and student government, as well as in social, recreational and athletic activities. Students are active in more than 50 clubs and organizations, and 90 percent are involved in some form of community engagement. The campus is also home to a range of leadership development opportunities and intramural sports for students. Transylvania possesses a robust campus life. Almost 90 percent of first-year students live on campus and over 70 percent of the total student population resides in one of the University's residence halls, apartments, or suite-style residences.

Transylvania's new Campus Center – which opened in fall 2020 – is a core element of student life. It's where many of the University's student organizations gather, and it has offices for a range of comprehensive student wellbeing services, including an on-campus clinic and counseling and nutrition services. The Campus Center also houses the Great Hall, which is the University's main dining facility and offers delicious, nutritious and responsibly sourced meals.

Within six months of earning their degrees, 95% of Transylvania alumni are employed or in graduate school. Transylvania alumni work for employers as diverse as NASA, ESPN, Bank of America, The Washington Post, and the Smithsonian.

ATHLETICS

Intercollegiate athletics have been an important part of the Transylvania campus and student life for over 120 years since Transylvania participated in the first organized football game in the South in 1879. Today, Transylvania's 27 intercollegiate athletic teams compete in the NCAA Division III Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference, which is an eight-team league consisting of outstanding independent academic institutions that also feature highly competitive athletics programs. Transylvania's affiliation with Division III reflects the philosophy that athletics play an important role in the overall liberal arts educational experience. With more than 400 student-athletes, student trainers, sports information assistants, cheerleaders, and dancers, nearly half of the student population is involved in athletics. Transylvania's faculty and coaches alike embrace the true scholar-athlete ideal, valuing the importance of competition while balancing it with the pursuit of excellence in the classroom.



TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

STRATEGIC PLAN

As Transylvania approaches its milestone 250th anniversary in 2030, the University seeks to continually be true to its mission and values in new ways. The [Strategic Plan 2030](#) will set the stage for Transylvania's next quarter millennium of service.

A rapidly evolving society and the diverse population of students the University educates are key factors in shaping Transylvania's future. Transylvania's rich history has provided a remarkable foundation. The University community focuses on the future and the amazing potential that lies ahead.

Goal 1: Holistic Education

Innovating strategically while building on existing strengths to deliver a holistic education incorporating:

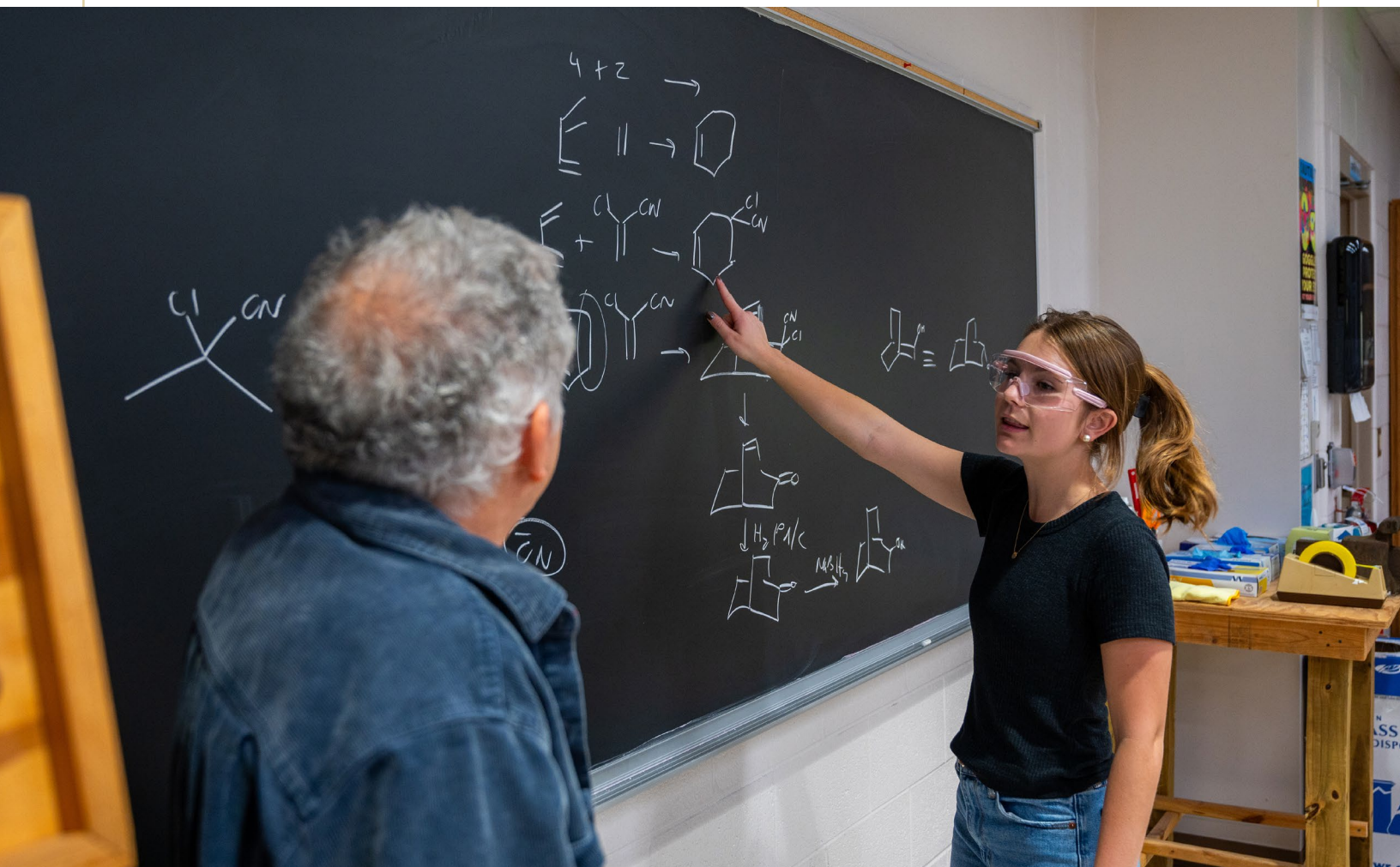
- The University's traditional commitment to excellence in teaching and deep engagement with the liberal arts.
- Guaranteed experiential opportunities via internships, research, and study abroad.
- Customized personal and career development preparation via academic and extracurricular engagement.

Goal 2: Enrollment Growth

Increasing full-time enrollment to a minimum of 1,200 total students (including traditional undergraduate and graduate students).

Goal 3: Resource Development

Implementing a sustainable budget and increasing the university endowment investment balance by \$50 million.





LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Transylvania is one of only nine U.S. liberal arts institutions located in an urban area, so being in the heart of [Lexington, Ky.](#) – a thriving city of 320,000 people – sets Transylvania apart from most other liberal arts colleges. It's a distinction that defines both the quality of life and the future for students, alumni, faculty, and staff. The University's position and relationship with Lexington grants access to internships and jobs, community service, arts and culture, interaction with a diverse population, and numerous other opportunities that prepare students for careers and graduate school. Lexington offers an exceptional range of cultural and recreational activities, which students and faculty take full advantage of and regard as a valuable extension of campus life.

Lexington offers 131 public parks, 24 miles of shared-use trails designed for running and biking, and the third-highest number of performing arts, sports, and related event centers (per 100,000 people) in the country. Lexington was ranked the #2 Best-Run City in America by Wallethub in 2024, among the Top 25 U.S. Cities With the Best Quality of Life by *Forbes* in 2024, and #15 of the Best Places to live in the U.S. in 2024-2025 by *U.S. News and World Report*, in addition to recent recognition for its food and music scenes and the opportunities available there to recent college graduates and young professionals.



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Transylvania is firmly committed to the concept of liberal education, and students are expected to gain a strong grounding in liberal education throughout their academic career at the University. Transylvania offers [47 majors as well as the option of designing an individual major](#). Small classes and close student-faculty relationships are among Transylvania's most distinctive assets. Although many faculty members are recognized for their research and writing, their primary concerns are teaching and advising. Students repeatedly cite their personal relationships with the faculty as being among the most valuable aspects of their Transylvania experience. The University employs 84 full-time faculty.

In addition to the low student-faculty ratio, an advising and counseling program provide students with personal attention and guidance so that each may benefit fully from the opportunities available. To help students achieve their goals, the University emphasizes career planning and offers advising, practical experience, and resources. Many academic support services, facilities, and organizations extend education beyond the classroom into the lives of students. Transylvania maintains [partnerships with Bellarmine University, the University of Kentucky, and Marshall University](#) to provide alumni with additional opportunities and advantages in pursuing graduate degrees.

Since 1987, the [Bingham Fund for Excellence in Teaching](#) has invested nearly \$30 million to develop, identify, promote, and reward excellent classroom teaching at Transylvania. The fund and its restricted, nearly \$142 million endowment are administered by a separate Bingham Board of Trust. The fund supports faculty awards and provides financial support to develop teaching initiatives, ongoing faculty development, endowed chairs, and faculty and student research through the David and Betty Jones Faculty Development Fund. Additionally, the fund supports the [Bingham Center for Teaching Excellence](#), which serves as a central location for faculty mentoring and pedagogical advancement while fostering a culture of evidence-based excellence in teaching and learning. The center and its staff champion innovative teaching methods well suited to a liberal arts education with the primary goal of enhancing student learning.



THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY

The EVPAA/Dean reports to the President, is a member of the executive cabinet, holds an appointment of a tenured full professor in his or her academic field, and is responsible for enriching and expanding the academic programs while engaging with the faculty and stakeholders to foster an integrative learning environment. The EVPAA/Dean oversees the University's four academic divisions (fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, and social sciences), library, writing center, career development, registrar, academic development, first-year experience, and study abroad. The successful candidate will be an accomplished scholar, educator, and administrator, with a terminal degree, and qualifications commensurate with a tenured professor at Transylvania University. The successful candidate will manifest strong commitments

to liberal arts education and innovation. Candidates should also possess: a commitment to shared governance and collegial problem solving; excellent leadership, management, and communication skills; a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively and creatively with faculty to promote the goals of the university; a proven record of appointing, developing, and mentoring faculty; an ability to be an articulate and persuasive interpreter of the University's mission and curriculum to its varied constituencies; prior successful experience in strategic planning, budgeting, and assessment; an ability to collaborate effectively with other university leaders, especially cabinet members; an understanding of resource development and partnership with the advancement office; an ability to craft creative, pragmatic solutions that will advance the institution.



HOW TO APPLY

Applications should consist of a substantial letter of interest, a CV, and a list of five professional references with full contact information with annotation indicating the nature of your working relationship with each. No references will be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate and only after initial interviews when only a few candidates move forward. Please address the cover letter to the Members of the Search Committee. Applications, nominations, and expressions of interest can be submitted electronically, and in confidence, to:

TransylvaniaEVPAA@academicsearch.org

The position is open until filled but only applications received by Tuesday, September 9, 2025, can be assured full consideration. The University is being assisted by Academic Search. The appointment start

date will be contingent upon the selected candidate's availability, preferably on January 1, 2026, but no later than July 1, 2026. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting consultants Chris Butler at Chris.Butler@academicsearch.org and Ann Hasselmo at Ann.Hasselmo@academicsearch.org. Further information about Transylvania University and its rich, 245-year history is available at www.transy.edu/

Transylvania University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to enhancing the diversity of the university community. In support of this goal, we seek qualified candidates with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. We encourage all who are interested to apply.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Transylvania 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.

