



# CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PROFILE

SPRING 2025





**Fitchburg State University, a 130-year-old public institution located in North Central Massachusetts, is poised at a transformative moment in its history.**

Founded in 1894 with a mission to expand access to high-quality, affordable education, Fitchburg State has evolved into a comprehensive, regional university with a powerful commitment to equity, innovation, and student success. We serve more than 5,900 students across undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies, offering more than 50 academic programs and nationally recognized online offerings that meet the needs of today's learners and tomorrow's workforce.

As an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution, Fitchburg State reflects the diversity, aspirations, and resilience of the communities we serve. Our campus is home to students who are first-generation, multilingual, adult learners, and traditional undergraduates—students whose ambitions are matched by the university's dedication to transformation through public higher education.

With deep roots in civic engagement, teacher preparation, business, healthcare, and STEM fields, Fitchburg State is a university with a proud legacy and a bold future.

Under the visionary leadership of our 12th president, Dr. Donna Hodge—the first woman to serve in this role—the university has launched a

dynamic period of strategic realignment and reinvestment.

From the development of an admissions center embedded at Fitchburg High School, to the expansion of graduate and professional programs, to the downtown revitalization of the historic Theater Block and innovation through our ideaLab, Fitchburg State is reimagining what it means to serve as a public institution in the 21st century.

This is a university on the move—with momentum, mission, and a community ready to build something remarkable. We are not simply adapting to change; we are leading it—redefining what's possible for a regional public university.

We are seeking a Chief Financial Officer who brings more than financial expertise. The ideal candidate will be a strategic leader, creative problem-solver, and collaborative partner—someone energized by complexity, driven by values, and aligned with our vision to transform lives through education.

As a vital member of the President's Cabinet and a trusted advisor to the President, the CFO will play a critical role in shaping and executing the financial strategies that advance our mission and secure our future.

**This is a rare opportunity to lead with purpose and serve with passion at a university in the midst of a powerful renaissance.**

## OUR MISSION

Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.

## OUR VISION

Fitchburg State University will be nationally recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning in current and emergent fields, for its commitment to transforming lives through education, and for its dedication to public service.

### In order to achieve this, we will:

- Prepare students for a global society through curricular innovation and program development.
- Achieve academic excellence by investing in our faculty and librarians in their pursuit of knowledge, professional competency, and scholarship.
- Employ innovative uses of technology in the library and across our campus to maximize student learning.
- Create a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community.
- Build partnerships within our community to provide real-world opportunities for our students and collaborative solutions to community issues.

## OUR CORE VALUES

**ACCESSIBILITY.** Offering equitable access to high-quality programs and services to people of varying cultural backgrounds living within and beyond our diverse community of North Central Massachusetts

**AFFORDABILITY.** Providing opportunities for students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue an affordable, quality education

**COMMUNITY.** Forging partnerships with businesses and community organizations within the region to enhance quality of life

**ENRICHMENT.** Sustaining a supportive campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and alumni in which all members can grow and excel in their personal and professional lives

**EXCELLENCE.** Striving for excellence in academic programs and services through innovative teaching and professional practices



## POSITION SUMMARY

Fitchburg State University seeks a dynamic, innovative, and strategic financial leader to serve as its next Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO will serve as a key architect and steward of Fitchburg State's financial future, helping to shape a sustainable, responsive, and mission-aligned resource strategy that enables innovation and long-term institutional vitality.

This is a rare and compelling opportunity to work alongside a leadership team that models transparency, decisive action, and creative problem-solving, and to join a highly collaborative and purpose-driven campus dedicated to building a stronger, more inclusive future for public higher education.

As Fitchburg State advances a five-year strategic vision—including ambitious goals around enrollment growth, academic innovation, campus revitalization, and financial sustainability—the CFO will be an indispensable thought partner and operational leader.

The ideal candidate will bring a deep understanding of complex financial systems, a proven track record of aligning resources with institutional priorities, and a commitment to

inclusive leadership and transparent decision-making.

The CFO will oversee financial planning and analysis, budgeting, procurement, accounting, investments and real estate for a university with a \$120 million annual operating budget and a strong desire to expand both public and private revenue streams.

In this role, the CFO will play a pivotal part in the university's efforts to strengthen fiscal resilience, improve operational efficiency, support infrastructure renewal, and advance a compelling value proposition for students and stakeholders.

Fitchburg State is a university on the rise—driven by mission, energized by momentum, and committed to redefining what's possible for a regional public institution. The next CFO will help ensure that vision is financially and strategically realized.

Reporting directly to the President, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the strategic oversight and management of the university's financial operations.

The CFO ensures the institution's fiscal integrity, aligning financial planning with the university's strategic goals.





## CORE PRIORITIES

### **FUTURE THINKING STRATEGY**

Serve as a principal advisor to the President and Executive Leadership Team, providing visionary financial counsel that informs institutional priorities and drives long-term strategic goals. Champion a forward-looking financial strategy that supports academic innovation, enrollment growth, and student success.

### **TRANSFORMATIONAL TEAM LEADERSHIP**

Lead, mentor, and inspire a committed finance and operations team by fostering a culture of accountability, service excellence, and continuous improvement. Promote collaboration and shared ownership of outcomes while modeling integrity, transparency, and mission alignment.

### **INNOVATIVE AND ADAPTIVE SOLUTIONS**

Design and implement creative, data-informed financial strategies that address the challenges and opportunities facing regional public higher education. Leverage technology, enterprise thinking, and cross-sector partnerships to enhance institutional resilience and maximize impact.

### **TRANSPARENCY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Advance a culture of aggressive transparency in budgeting, capital planning, and financial reporting. Clearly communicate complex financial information to diverse stakeholders, fostering trust and reinforcing shared stewardship of university resources.

### **MISSION-DRIVEN FISCAL STEWARDSHIP**

Align financial planning with Fitchburg State's strategic priorities and commitment to student access, equity, and academic excellence. Navigate state policy and regulatory frameworks with agility; pursue external funding opportunities—including grants, state appropriations, and donor support—to expand institutional capacity and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

## THE OPPORTUNITIES

- **Budgeting and forecasting**
- **Accounting and financial reporting**
- **Procurement and contract management including capital projects financing and fiscal oversight**
- **Accounts payable and receivable**
- **Student accounts and billing**
- **Cash flow management**
- **Debt restructuring and investment portfolios**
- **Real estate strategy and portfolio management**



# QUALIFICATIONS

The Chief Financial Officer at Fitchburg State University will be a strategic and innovative leader, bringing proven expertise in higher education financial management and a demonstrated commitment to fiscal integrity, accessibility, and transparency. The ideal candidate will be an accomplished financial steward, adept at developing and implementing strategic budgets and forecasts, managing investment portfolios, and overseeing complex capital projects and facilities finance. The CFO will be skilled at leading and developing high-performing teams across finance, procurement, and auxiliary operations and possess experience working closely with university foundations, affiliated support organizations, and auxiliary enterprises. The successful candidate will combine exceptional analytical and decision-making skills with the ability to collaborate effectively across the university community and beyond, ensuring the institution's long-term sustainability and success.

## Required Qualifications

- Master's degree in finance, accounting, business administration, or a related field.
- Minimum of 5 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in financial management, including oversight of multimillion-dollar operating and capital budgets.

## Preferred Qualifications

- Proven experience with state financial systems and compliance, including navigating state audit processes, regulatory reporting, and legislative budget procedures.
- Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) certification.
- Executive-level experience in higher education finance, preferably at a public university or state system.
- Proficiency with enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, such as Ellucian Banner, Workday, or Oracle, and familiarity with data visualization tools (e.g., Tableau, Power BI).
- Demonstrated success in enhancing revenue streams, including grant management, auxiliary revenue, and private fundraising collaboration.
- Experience with long-range financial planning, including debt strategy, endowment growth, and capital campaign planning.
- A deep understanding of the role finance plays in advancing institutional access, student success, and inclusive excellence, with experience supporting mission-driven initiatives that serve a broad and diverse campus community.





## ABOUT FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1894 as the State Normal School in Fitchburg, Fitchburg State University has proudly evolved from its origins as a two-year teacher-training institution for women into a comprehensive public university serving a diverse population of learners. The school's first home was a temporary facility in an old high school building on Academy Street, staffed by Principal John G. Thompson and three faculty members. Even in its inaugural year, with 46 pioneering students, the institution quickly proved its value—and outgrew its modest beginnings.

In 1896, the campus moved to its permanent home atop a rural hill with the construction of what is now Thompson Hall, still in use today. This early milestone marked the beginning of more than a century of growth, innovation, and dedication to public higher education.

True to its mission of adapting to the evolving needs of students and society, Fitchburg State was an early leader in experiential education. Edgerly Hall, opened in 1901, was created as a model school where aspiring educators could gain real-world experience. It became one of the nation's first junior high schools in 1910 and introduced the first practical arts teacher-training program for men in 1911, cementing Fitchburg's reputation for educational innovation.

Throughout the 20th century, the institution expanded both academically and physically. Student life flourished in the 1920s, with the formation of literary societies, debate councils, performing arts groups, and a growing athletics program. As enrollment and interests broadened, the campus acquired additional land to accommodate new academic programs and facilities.

Significant academic milestones followed. In 1930, the school was authorized to award bachelor's degrees in practical arts, and by 1932—when it became the State Teachers College at Fitchburg—it began offering four-year degrees across all areas of education. Graduate-level programming was introduced by 1935 and evening courses began in 1954, further enhancing access for non-traditional and working students.

In 1960, the institution expanded its academic mission beyond teacher preparation, evolving into the State College at Fitchburg, and later, in 1965, Fitchburg State College. Over the following decades, it matured into a dynamic institution offering a wide array of undergraduate and graduate programs. By the early 21st century, it provided 49 undergraduate majors, 20 master's programs, five advanced graduate study certificates, and several graduate certificates, all designed to meet the needs of a changing workforce and society.

In 2010, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established a formal state university system, and the institution adopted its current name: Fitchburg State University. Today, the university enrolls approximately 6,000 students across undergraduate, graduate, online, and professional studies programs. The 60-acre campus includes 42 buildings and serves as a cultural, intellectual, and economic anchor for the Montachusett region and beyond.

Now in its second century, Fitchburg State continues to evolve while remaining true to its founding values: providing accessible, high-quality public higher education; empowering first-generation and underrepresented students; and fueling regional opportunity through innovation, equity, and academic excellence. With its commitment to strategic transformation and its pursuit of emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution status, Fitchburg State is shaping the future while honoring its historic mission.



# LIFE IN FITCHBURG AND NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Nestled in the heart of New England, Fitchburg and the broader North Central Massachusetts region offer an exceptional quality of life that blends natural beauty, cultural vibrancy, and economic opportunity. Recognized by Explore.com as one of New England's most underrated college towns, Fitchburg is an ideal setting for professionals, families, and students alike.

The city boasts a dynamic and growing arts scene, anchored by the renowned Fitchburg Art Museum and supported by a network of local galleries, theaters, and public art initiatives. The downtown area is undergoing revitalization, with exciting developments like the Theater Block project and Fitchburg State's own ideaLab, which are helping to transform the city into a hub for creative enterprise, innovation, and community engagement.

Nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts are drawn to the region's wealth of recreational options. From the slopes of Wachusett Mountain and the trails of Leominster State Forest to the scenic Nashua River Rail Trail and numerous state parks, the area offers year-round opportunities for hiking, biking, skiing, and exploring the natural landscape.

North Central Massachusetts is also known for its affordability—offering a range of housing options at price points well below those in Greater Boston. The region features diverse culinary experiences, a mix of locally owned shops and national retailers, and a strong network of public schools and community services.

Strategically located just one hour from Boston and 30 minutes from Worcester, Fitchburg offers the perfect balance of small-city charm and big-city access. With a growing regional economy, strong civic leadership, and a commitment to cultural and educational advancement, North Central Massachusetts is not just a great place to work—**it's a great place to call home.**







## SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- The university was established in 1894 by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature. Opened as the State Normal School in Fitchburg, it first operated in temporary quarters in the city's former high school building. The modern campus took shape with the building of Thompson Hall in 1896.
- Edgerly Hall, originally home of the School of Observation and Practice, opened in 1901, and in 1910 became one of the first junior high schools in the country.
- In 1932, the Normal School was renamed the State Teachers College at Fitchburg.
- Graduate programs were established in 1935. The nursing program began in 1943 through a cooperative effort with Burbank Hospital.
- The campus footprint expanded beyond the main quadrangle in 1956, with construction of a residence hall (Herlihy) on North Street.
- The State Teachers College at Fitchburg was renamed the State College at Fitchburg in 1960. The science building, named for former President George Condikey, opened in 1963.
- In 1965, the institutional name changed to Fitchburg State College.
- A special education program was established in 1971, the same year the McKay Campus School opened. McKay houses a pre-school to eighth grade public school as well as university classrooms. Fitchburg State is the only university in the public system with a working school on campus.
- The university celebrated its centennial in 1994 with a variety of special events and completion of a capital campaign.
- Institution is renamed Fitchburg State University in 2010, reflecting the comprehensive scope of undergraduate and graduate programs. The Undergraduate Conference for Research and Creative Practice is held for the first time.
- The renovated Hammond Hall reopens in 2012, creating a "front door" bridging the campus and wider community.
- The Robert V. and Jeanne S. Antonucci Science Complex was dedicated in 2013, named for the President Emeritus (2003 to 2015) and his wife.
- A groundbreaking police program is launched in 2015, whose graduates complete two degrees in five years along with certification to work in municipal police departments across Massachusetts and neighboring states.
- The university's ties to Main Street are furthered with the purchase in 2016 of a long-vacant theater building, renovated into a game design studio and ideaLAB. Renovation of the block itself is in the design stage.
- The Carmelita Landry Arena at Wallace Civic Center is re-dedicated in 2018 as a year-round sports conditioning facility for varsity athletes and students in Exercise and Sports Science program. First class of police program graduates.
- New majors in environmental public health and educational studies launch in 2019, the same year Fitchburg State celebrates 125 years of changing lives.



## APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS

Academic Search is assisting Fitchburg State University in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in strict confidence. To learn more about this opportunity and discuss your qualifications and interest, potential applicants are encouraged to schedule a confidential conversation with the Senior Consultant for this search, **Dr. Nancy Crimmin** ([nancy.crimmin@academicsearch.org](mailto:nancy.crimmin@academicsearch.org)).

**To apply, please attach the following documentation in PDF format and send to [FitchburgCFO@academicsearch.org](mailto:FitchburgCFO@academicsearch.org):**

- A detailed cover letter expressing your interest in this position and addressing how you meet the qualifications and expectations outlined in this profile.
- A current full resume or curriculum vitae that includes relevant responsibilities and accomplishments.
- A list of five professional references, including names, titles, organizations, phone numbers, and email addresses, noting your relationship with each reference.

References will not be contacted until later in the search process and only with the candidate's permission. A complete background check (including identity, degree verification, criminal records check, credit check, and sexual misconduct check) must be completed satisfactorily before any candidate can be offered this position.

Nominations are not required to be considered for this position; leaders who know of outstanding candidates are welcome to submit confidential nominations by sending an email to **[FitchburgCFO@academicsearch.org](mailto:FitchburgCFO@academicsearch.org)**. Be sure to include the nominee's full name, position, institution/organization, and email address. Academic Search will notify individuals of their nomination, provide details about the position, and encourage them to apply.





## APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS (CONT.)

Although the search remains open until the position is filled, for full consideration by the Search Committee, candidates should submit application materials by **July 21, 2025**. Finalists for the position will participate in campus interviews that may include a public presentation.

**This is a full-time, benefited, exempt, professional non-union position. Salary is \$190,000-\$210,000 commensurate with education and experience.**

**Fitchburg State University offers a competitive benefits package that includes:**

- Nine different pre-taxed, health insurance plan options.
- Pension or 401(a) defined contribution plan, and supplemental plan retirement options.
- Life insurance up to 8x the annual salary.
- Long-term disability coverage.
- Dental insurance.
- Twenty vacation days accrued per year.
- Fifteen sick days accrued per year.
- Five personal days per year.
- Paid holidays.
- Tuition remission for self, spouse, and dependent children.

**All applications will be treated confidentially. Fitchburg State is an equal opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Members of traditionally underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.**

## Fitchburg State University CFO Search Committee

### CHAIR

**DR. PATRICIA MARSHALL**  
Provost & Executive Vice President

**STACEY LUSTER**  
VP of Personnel Services and General Counsel

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