

Palo Alto University Chief Financial Officer

Palo Alto University is searching for a Chief Financial Officer who will bring strategic, entrepreneurial, and visionary leadership to its operations to support its mission of providing outstanding training to the next generation of mental health professionals.

[Palo Alto University](#) (PAU) is a private, non-profit university located in the heart of Northern California's Silicon Valley. As it approaches its 50th year of operations, PAU has an ambitious strategic plan built on a foundation of inclusive excellence. The pandemic has shone a bright light on the need for research, teaching, and clinical training to support the significant rise in mental health challenges in our communities. PAU's faculty conduct critically important research; its students serve people in PAU's clinics and in community practicum sites; and its alumni serve in leadership positions in their fields throughout the country and internationally.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) leads the Business Affairs division, a group of strong professionals who execute a diverse set of activities in support of the ongoing operation of the university. This position is responsible for the management of the Business Office, Facilities, HR, and Information Technology. In addition, the CFO will serve as a strategic financial and planning partner to the President, Board of Trustees, Cabinet, and the PAU community as the university builds on its solid financial foundation and works to leverage its position as a leader in mental health education and training.

As a critical member of PAU's Cabinet, the CFO is expected to **provide sound fiscal strategy, analysis, management, and planning support for the university's activities.**

Primary Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities and opportunities for the CFO include:

- Lead financial strategy, analysis, comprehensive risk management, and planning to create budgets that reflect institutional priorities and navigate the necessary trade-offs associated with financial discipline and investments in new priorities.
- Provide thoughtful and forward-looking counsel in leadership deliberations based on technical attention to detail and the capacity to think in creative and entrepreneurial ways to serve the institution.
- Provide exceptional leadership, coaching, and professional development opportunities to the division's leadership team.
- Develop and recommend financial strategies and policies to support the university's strategic plan and its commitment to inclusive excellence.
- Partner closely with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and other Cabinet officers on institutional planning and positioning, forging community partnerships, and in advancing PAU's presence in the region, state, and nation.
- Manage the university's finances, including the development of optimal debt strategies, and assist relevant Board committees in the development of endowment management, spending policies, and investment strategies for cash and short-term investments. Through strategic financial planning, the CFO will maximize the deployment of resources

to support strategic planning priorities and preserve financial health and strength over the long-term.

- Bring strategic vision to the division's plans for technology, facilities, space planning, and resource allocation for long-term capital renewal and replacement. Guide capital projects, including space planning, coordinating moves, interfacing with architects and engineers as well as partnering with the Director of Board and Presidential Operations to support the Board's Future Facilities Task Force to think strategically about PAU's future space needs.
- Support the Department of Human Resources in its work to bring best practices to the professional development of employees and assist in the design, implementation, and timely calculations of wages, incentives, and salaries.
- Serve as liaison to external auditors; the Finance & Risk Management, Investment, and Audit Committees of the Board of Trustees; and other accrediting and compliance agencies as required.
- Support and collaborate on development efforts by engaging with current and prospective donors to inspire confidence in the university's fiscal management.
- Present and communicate complex financial concepts clearly to a range of stakeholders. Create and maintain dashboards and reports to inform the community of financial opportunities and challenges.

Relevant Experience

Palo Alto University is searching for a senior finance administrator who has been effective in mission-driven organizations. An understanding of higher education finance and trends in higher education is desirable but not required. While no single candidate will possess all the following qualifications, a strong candidate will have a range of experience, characteristics, and qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in thinking strategically about and managing business operations, including payroll and student-facing financial offices; the IT infrastructure and operations; deployment of resources; and management and maintenance of facilities.
- Demonstrated experience as a strategic thought partner. Experience working collaboratively in an environment of shared governance. A demonstrated ability to forge mutually respectful relationships and strong partnerships across the university and the broader community.
- A track record of outstanding management of people, a commitment to professional development, and a growth mindset; a demonstrated ability to manage, empower, and support staff; effective delegation skills; an ability to define and implement effective management structures and systems, establish and uphold high performance standards, and sustain a culture defined by inclusive excellence.
- Experience in or knowledge of non-profit accounting, including contract and grant accounting and revenue recognition issues; knowledge, experience, and application of

GAAP; background in managing general accounting; budgeting and planning; procedures and controls; and analysis and reporting.

- Demonstrated capacity to communicate effectively and convey complex information and concepts in accessible terms.
- Demonstrated success in improving operational efficiencies and utilizing metrics to evaluate performance and improvements over time.
- A master's degree or equivalent in business, finance, or a related field is preferred.

Personal Characteristics & Aptitude

- A strategic and creative solution-seeker with the ability to make difficult decisions, provide the rationale for their decisions, and facilitate alignment.
- A collaborative, consultative, and data-driven approach to decision-making.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including humility, unimpeachable integrity, a strong moral compass, and an openness to giving and receiving feedback.
- Ability to analyze and formulate disparate information into sound, well-organized plans.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues clearly and in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways to a range of diverse audiences.
- Emotionally mature with flexibility and sensitivity to work with diverse personalities and situations.

About Palo Alto University

Palo Alto University is a private, non-profit university in the Silicon Valley that is at the forefront of psychology and counseling. PAU was founded in 1975 as the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology (PGSP), an independent, professional school and was re-incorporated as a university in August 2009. PAU has been continuously accredited since 1986 by WASC. PAU's doctoral programs are accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA), and its master's in counseling programs are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). PAU offers an undergraduate degree and a master's in psychology for students who may go into the field of mental health or use their psychology foundation in business, in teaching, in technology, or other professions. PAU's operating budget is \$38M.

The PAU community is grounded in values of social justice and dedicated to addressing pressing and emerging issues in the fields of psychology and counseling that meet the needs of today's diverse society. PAU offers undergraduate and graduate programs with online, hybrid, and residential options. PAU's faculty make significant contributions to their fields and thrive as teachers and mentors who prepare practitioners, researchers, and leaders through rigorous educational programs, research, extensive hands-on clinical practice opportunities, and outstanding professional training for mental health professionals. When you put all of this together, PAU creates a legacy of confident, competent, and compassionate professionals who are at the forefront of psychology and counseling and make a difference every day in the lives

of others.

Since 2016, Palo Alto University has been led by its third President, Dr. Maureen O'Connor, a dynamic, collaborative leader who led the academic reorganization of PAU's programs and the organizational structure of the university; improved integration of the bachelor's completion program; delivered on the promise of greater equity between the disciplines; and ignited a spirit of innovation and evolution. With active engagement of the Board of Trustees, President, and Cabinet, and input from university constituents, PAU has a strategic plan grounded in an inclusive excellence framework and built on five pillars: Academic Excellence; Student Success; Operational Excellence; Awareness; and Financial Strength.

In 2021, the university hired its VP for Academic & Student Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Provost Erika Cameron, a strategic academic leader who understands the potential of PAU's location in Silicon Valley and its positioning at the forefront of training and practice in psychology and counseling. In 2018, the university acquired and integrated a professional training company that is led by the VP for Continuing and Professional Studies, Dr. Patricia Zapf, and supports graduate-level quality training for those in the mental health and allied professions.

In terms of impact, in 2021, PAU students provided over 80,000 hours of clinical service hours to the community in 169 unique sites in California and beyond. PAU's in-house training clinics saw over 400 clients in nearly 13,000 visits (this year, primarily via tele-therapy). Services were provided to those with a range of mental health challenges and include specialized services through the Clinica Latina (in Spanish), the Sexual and Gender Identity Clinic, and the E-Clinic which has been supporting youth in college-bridge programs for first-generation college students in their transition to college. In addition to its doctoral and master's programs, PAU serves a small but talented group of undergraduates completing their last two years of college, and enrolled over 6,000 mental health professionals in more than 43,000 hours of professional training through its Continuing and Professional Studies Division last year. PAU is designated both a Hispanic-serving and an Asian Pacific Islander-serving institution.

Palo Alto University has collaborative partnerships with community organizations and institutions, including Stanford Department of Psychiatry, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Community Health Awareness Council, LifeMoves, and other mental health care organizations. PAU's training clinics, The Clinics @ PAU, deliver low-cost mental health services to the local community while also providing valuable, supervised training to PAU graduate students. In addition, PAU sponsors several academic research centers devoted to trauma; child mental health; evidence-based care for LGBTQ clients; excellence in diversity and community care; and technology and mental health.

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