THE SEARCH

The New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) seeks a Vice President of Finance (VPF). This is an excellent opportunity for an individual with proven strategic leadership abilities and strong financial, managerial, technical, planning, and communication skills to participate in shaping the future of one of the leading American conservatories.

Founded in 1867, NEC is the oldest independent school of music in the U.S. and a cultural icon of national and international standing. In delivering a superlative educational experience to over 2,700 students across its College, Preparatory School, and School of Continuing Education, NEC draws on the deep reservoir of talent and experience of its 484 distinguished faculty (full and part-time), a group of internationally esteemed artist-teachers and scholars who work across the Conservatory’s three divisions. At all levels, an NEC education is at once rigorous and nurturing. Staff, faculty, and students alike attest to the power of the distinctively inclusive, encouraging, and supportive community one discovers upon arriving at NEC.

NEC’s curriculum covers an expansive range of styles and traditions. Student instrumentalists, singers, and composers are trained in a broad array of methods, including classical, jazz, opera, composition, world music and early music. Innovative programming and creativity abounds. The Conservatory boasts an unparalleled chamber music program and was the first conservatory in the nation to offer a degree in jazz. NEC also pioneered an innovative concentration in Contemporary Improvisation, and more recently has introduced entrepreneurship into its curricular offerings. Equipped with an extensive toolkit, NEC graduates step into the world as exceedingly adaptive musicians, going on to fill orchestra chairs, concert hall stages, jazz clubs, recording studios, arts management positions and a broad range of music leadership roles worldwide. NEC produces some of the world’s most prolific 21st century musicians.

This year the Conservatory experienced an exciting moment in its history with the convergence of two major milestones: the 150th anniversary of its founding and the unveiling of the new Student Life and Performance Center (SLPC). A perfect embodiment of NEC’s culture of collaboration, the SLPC offers a state-of-the-art setting for student-driven activity and inventiveness. Fused and juxtaposed within NEC’s original historic buildings, also in full and active use, the Center is a fitting metaphor for the nexus of the modern and the traditional, key
themes engaged day in and day out at this pre-eminent institution and drawn into sharper focus during the 150th anniversary year.

The next Vice President of Finance will serve as a thought partner to and work closely with the President, Board of Directors, and senior leadership, to increase efficiencies, optimize institutional technology and databases, implement best practices, and produce financial models and projections for NEC’s expanding program and events initiatives. As NEC’s chief financial leadership position, this role offers a unique opportunity for an accomplished senior financial management executive with deep expertise in both strategy and operations to play a central role in ensuring the long-term growth and prosperity of this renowned music institution. This individual will also oversee the development and implementation of a technology strategy that will lead the institution into a new era, using technology to support the ongoing effort to provide unparalleled learning opportunities in a mission-centered environment that nurtures, challenges, and inspires its students.

Candidates are expected to bring a deep appreciation of the New England Conservatory’s educational mission, core values, and community. The ideal candidate will bring significant experience overseeing budgeting and planning, financial forecasting and analysis, endowment management, legal and risk management, accounting, information technology, and business operations, gained through increasingly responsible roles in comparably complex settings. The individual must be an excellent communicator and natural collaborator committed to the highest ethical and professional standards, with demonstrated ability to work collegially in a diverse academic community. Significant experience in education, either at the secondary school level or in higher education, or nonprofit settings would be a distinct asset. A bachelor’s degree is required and an advanced degree in business, finance, management, or other relevant field is strongly preferred.

The national executive search firm of Isaacson, Miller has been retained to assist the New England Conservatory in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document. For further information about the Conservatory, please visit https://necmusic.edu.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

The mission of the New England Conservatory is to educate and train musicians of all ages from around the world. NEC is dedicated to inculcating the highest standards of excellence and nurturing individual artistic sensibility and creative growth. Understanding that music is one of the transcendent expressions of human civilization, NEC aspires to ensure it a central place in contemporary society.

The College

Today, NEC enrolls over 800 students across a variety of majors, including brass, chamber music, collaborative piano, composition, conducting, Contemporary Improvisation, jazz studies, music history and musicology, music theory, percussion, piano, strings, voice and opera, and woodwinds. Degree offerings include the Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts, as well as the Undergraduate Diploma, Graduate Diploma, and the prestigious and highly selective Artist Diploma.

NEC enrolls an immensely talented student body. For the 2017-2018 academic year, the College admitted 32% of its applicants from a deep and competitive pool. About 40% of the student body is international, hailing from 39 countries. NEC also draws students from throughout the United States, with 46 states represented. Approximately 95% of the NEC student community receives some amount of financial aid or scholarship support from NEC. The College’s undergraduate graduation rate is 81%.
NEC’s faculty is best in class across a wide array of musical disciplines. The College is home to 234 artists who are pre- eminent in their fields, 40 of whom are members of the renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra, and numerous others who are distinguished composers, soloists, performers, and scholars in their own right. Students are drawn to NEC, first and foremost, because of the caliber of NEC’s faculty members and for the opportunity to study with artists who are masters of their craft. The faculty’s commitment to excellence and to student achievement is the foundational through-line for NEC’s esteemed legacy.

In addition to its core musical training and studio work, NEC places significant emphasis on liberal arts, music history and music theory, which it believes contribute importantly to the development of well-rounded musicians and arts leaders. Full-time NEC undergraduates have cross-registration opportunities at Northeastern University, Tufts University, and schools in the ProArts Consortium: Emerson College, MassArt, Berklee, and Boston Architectural College. Approximately 44 NEC undergraduates are enrolled in five-year joint degree programs with either Harvard College or Tufts University.

As part of its core mission to produce well-rounded musicians, active life-long learners, and responsible citizens, the College has long supported and encouraged cross-departmental collaborations. The music theory and liberal arts faculty have embraced the opportunity to partner, developing interdisciplinary and overlapping coursework for their students. Unsurprisingly, chamber music is at the heart of NEC’s approach to musical artistry: most NEC students participate in chamber music nearly every semester, learning the art of collaboration and collective musical decision-making alongside incredible faculty coaches.

NEC has long been a pioneer in musical education beyond the classical canon, as evidenced by the leading Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation programs. The formal jazz program was founded in 1969 under the leadership of President Gunther Schuller, making NEC the first major classical conservatory to offer a degree program in jazz studies. The Contemporary Improvisation program, founded by Schuller shortly thereafter, supports musicians who seek to move beyond traditional genre boundaries with an emphasis on ear training, technique, conceptual ideas, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a wide range of improvisational traditions. It is widely regarded as one of the most innovative programs of its kind in the nation. NEC maintains the highest standard of music-making, with deliberately permeable lines between genres, and supports a confluence of different types of musical study and performance.

As a meaningful complement to these interdisciplinary musical programs, NEC is also home to leading-edge work in Entrepreneurial Musicianship (EM). The EM program offers a range of courses, seminars, and visiting artist programs that help emerging artists articulate the impact they want to make as musicians and build the professional skills to do so. Faculty, staff, and alumni advisors work closely with students to help equip them with a more robust professional toolkit, tackling everything from writing resumes and grant proposals to brand-building and financial planning. EM’s grant program provides support for students seeking to work on innovative and impactful projects to further their independent professional growth.

The Preparatory School and the School of Continuing Education

The New England Conservatory Preparatory School (NEC Prep) offers open-enrollment educational opportunities for pre-college students across New England. It currently serves nearly 1,600 students in the region, including those enrolled in NEC through a partnership with Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Prep musicians attend individual lessons and classes, and participate in chamber music and 26 large ensembles, including orchestras, choruses, and wind ensembles. It is one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation.
In 1962, NEC Prep established one of the finest youth orchestras in the world: the highly selective Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (YPO), which tours internationally once every two years and has performed in some of the finest concert halls in the world. Prep is also home to the highly celebrated and selective NEC Youth Chorale, Youth Camerata, Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Ensemble.

The School of Continuing Education (SCE) opens the doors of NEC to the broader New England community of adult music lovers and learners, offering an expansive array of musical training from private instrument lessons to full certificate programs in a range of subjects. Workshops, masterclasses, ensembles, and summer institutes are all taught by the area’s most highly qualified musicians. Nearly 300 students are enrolled in SCE each year.

Both the Preparatory School and the School of Continuing Education help to deepen NEC’s ties to and reach within the wider Boston community and play an important role in supporting the Conservatory’s overall mission.

Facilities and Finances

Located in Boston on the Avenue of the Arts in the Fenway Cultural District, the NEC campus consists of four buildings that stretch along St. Botolph Street and Huntington Avenue in the heart of downtown Boston. The campus is bounded by commercial and residential buildings, Symphony Hall, the YMCA, and the Northeastern University campus.

NEC’s premier performance venue, the historic and acoustically superb Jordan Hall, is one of the world’s most admired concert halls. It provides an intimate and versatile setting for a wide variety of performances and recording sessions featuring NEC students and faculty, with seating for just over 1,000. On weekends, the hall is used by some of Boston’s top professional music organizations, including Boston Baroque, Boston Early Music Festival, Celebrity Series, and Handel and Haydn Society. In April 1994, NEC and Jordan Hall jointly earned National Historic Landmark status. (NEC was the first music school in the nation to receive this distinction.) And in 1995, Jordan Hall underwent a major renovation, and has received several more awards post-restoration. Additional performance spaces on campus include Brown Hall, Williams Hall, Keller Hall, Pierce Hall, the Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre, Burnes Hall and Eben Jordan Ensemble Room; NEC’s array of concert venues host 1000+ student performances each year.

The new Student Life and Performance Center (SLPC) was dedicated and formally opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony in September 2017. Designed to foster collaboration and spark creativity, the SLPC provides a central resource for NEC students with exceptional facilities for rehearsal, performances, and recording. In addition to the Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre and several rehearsal and recording rooms equipped with state-of-the-art acoustic design, the Speed Dining Commons provides a space for nourishment and student social gathering; the two-level Blumenthal Family Library consolidates print and audio resources alongside NEC’s rare collections; and seven stories of residential housing doubles the on-campus occupancy. Additionally, with the renovation of the campus’ former dormitory into a Welcome Center with over 80 practice rooms, NEC now boasts one of the lowest student-to-practice-room ratios of any conservatory.

To sustain the enterprise and its $44.1 million annual operating costs, NEC – like many other conservatories – relies heavily on tuition. The Conservatory draws roughly 76% of its revenue from tuition, room, and board ($33.8M), 13% from the endowment ($5.6M), and 11% from major gifts and annual fund support ($4.6M). As of June 2018, the Conservatory’s endowment totaled $124.3M, and the Conservatory raised just over $10M
through annual fundraising efforts in each of the last couple of years. In the most recent academic year, NEC provided $20.9M in aid to students; $14.2M was direct scholarship support.

**THE ROLE OF THE VP of FINANCE: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The Vice President of Finance provides the oversight and management responsibilities for NEC’s financial accounting, budgetary administration, database administration, information technology, and revenue and events planning. The VPF will be a member of the organization’s talented executive team, including the President, the Provost and Dean of the College, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, and Vice President of Administration.

The VPF will report to NEC’s newly named 17th President, Andrea Kalyn. Beginning her tenure in January 2019, Dr. Kalyn will be joining NEC from Oberlin College & Conservatory, where she served as the Dean of the Conservatory. The VPF directly supervises the Director of Finance and Controller, Senior Director of Technology & Information Management, and Director of Business Relations & Event Management. This individual will also work closely with the Board of Trustees, a select 41-member group of alumni and supporters (23 voting members and 18 lifetime trustees), who advocate for NEC’s cultural and educational mission, its standing in the community, and its overall institutional well-being. The VPF will provide strategic and operational financial leadership for the Conservatory and, specifically, will work to address the following opportunities and challenges:

*Serve as a strategic partner to the President, leadership team, and the Board of Trustees*

As a critical member of the executive team, and a strategic partner to the President and the Board of Trustees, the incoming VPF will bring a positive attitude towards information technology, budget management, financial planning, revenue generation, and a creative and solutions-oriented approach to modeling and projections. This individual will need both technical expertise and the ability to think innovatively in order to serve the institution as a whole. To be successful, the VPF must be able to allow for creativity in the pursuit of opportunities, while remaining grounded in sound financial fundamentals and supports NEC’s core mission. The VPF must also be able to monitor the details, but also must have the capacity to keep large objectives and institutional aspirations in mind. Data-informed decision-making will be key in this role.

*Collaborate and communicate clearly and frequently with both internal and external groups*

The VPF must have the ability to clearly and effectively communicate complex financial information, policies, and operational strategies to a wide range of individuals across the NEC community. The VPF will provide transparency and clarity on budget fundamentals, sources of funding, and the feasibility of new opportunities, outcomes, and decisions. This includes the preparation, presentation, and explanation of material to faculty, leadership, administration, and the Board of Trustees. In order to develop productive and positive relationships across NEC, this individual must communicate to all constituents in a way that develops a culture of trust, transparency, and common understanding.

*Provide clear leadership, direction, and support to the finance and business office*

The VPF will oversee talented, dedicated teams in the finance and business relations department. The members of these teams are skilled in their respective areas of expertise. The VPF will be expected to motivate and lead their team well, committing to professional development, setting clear expectations, delegating appropriately, advocating for them and their work, and serving as a model of professionalism, customer service, and innovative
thinking. This individual will foster a culture of transparency, mutual respect, integrity, service, and accountability, and will motivate and develop strong teams.

**Advocate for and support a dynamic, institution-wide information technology vision**

The VPF will take a significant role in helping shape the strategic direction for information technology for the Conservatory. This individual will provide counsel and vision to NEC on strategic investments in information technology, evaluating trends and making recommendations that help NEC actualize its mission. To this end, the VPF must have an understanding of educational computing technology as well as knowledge and experience with information technology as it relates to the management and delivery of services to Conservatory’s constituencies. This person must balance the competing priorities of the campus, and develop coordinating mechanisms and structures to respond efficiently and effectively to various units.

**QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE**

The ideal candidate will be an enterprising, creative leader with extensive financial experience, keen organizational skills, a deep commitment to accountability and fiscal stability, and preferably, an advanced degree in business or finance. In addition, this individual must have a strong ability to synthesize and communicate quantitative information to a larger audience, an understanding of and appreciation for professional systems and procedures, a commitment to best practices, and broad leadership and management experience.

The search committee seeks candidates with the following experiences, characteristics, and abilities, understanding that no single candidate will have all of the ideal qualifications:

- A minimum of ten years of progressively responsible financial management experience at an institution of similar complexity;
- Executive problem-solving and leadership skills and the ability to organize and manage complex functions;
- Deep respect for the culture and community of New England Conservatory; an appreciation for the spirit of partnership among faculty, students, and staff, and the ability and inclination to protect and cultivate it;
- Outstanding financial expertise, strong technical knowledge, and skills in a range of finance disciplines, a deep understanding of financial operations, and proven talent for the development and execution of a long-term financial strategy;
- Experience in information technology, encompassing strategic planning, complex organizational structures, project planning, budgeting and management, vendor relations, risk management, and process transformation;
- Proven ability to think strategically about complex operational practices in a thoughtful manner and the skill to implement change, when necessary, and establish best practices tailored to the Academy’s unique needs, while building consensus among peers, subordinates, and others throughout the organization;
- Experience in assessing and overseeing enterprise risks and ensuring a strong financial compliance culture;
- Provide transparent financial reporting and planning that builds trust among administrators, faculty and staff, students and alumni, parents, and trustees.
• Demonstrated capacity to communicate, both verbally and in writing, broadly across an institution, and the ability to convey technically complex information and concepts in accessible terms to a broad array of stakeholders;
• An understanding of the spectrum of IT activities at a comprehensive institution, including technology infrastructure, administrative systems, and academic computing;
• Demonstrated experience leveraging technology to achieve the most effective and efficient solutions to support teaching, student learning and business processes.
• Demonstrated capacity to develop the talents and expertise of staff so that they are able to assume expanded responsibilities; proven ability to recruit and retain well-qualified, high-performing professionals and empower them to succeed;
• Proven experience with effective change management;
• Experience overseeing the implementation of new ERP system is highly beneficial;
• Demonstrated experience in working in a position that requires a high degree of customer service skills and a proven commitment to promoting and maintaining a service-oriented culture;
• Proven commitment to and appreciation for the benefits of a diverse workplace and the ability to create an inclusive and welcoming culture;
• A bachelor's degree is required. A graduate degree in finance, accounting, business or other related field strongly preferred; and Emotional intelligence, including warmth, approachability, and empathy.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent electronically to the following:

Rebecca Kennedy or Talik N. Watson
Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, Floor 7
Boston, MA 02210
www.imsearch.com/6868

New England Conservatory of Music does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, genetic make-up, or veteran status in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, or other Conservatory-sponsored activities.