



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

**Vice President for University Advancement
and the Executive Director of the Foundation**

SEARCH PROSPECTUS

Western Michigan University (WMU) invites applications, nominations, and expressions of interest for the position of Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the WMU Foundation (VPED). WMU seeks a dynamic leader committed to further fostering a culture of philanthropy and engagement that fuels the University's ambition to deliver a differentiated and holistic experience-driven education at a top-tier public university in Michigan.

The VPED is the chief advancement officer for WMU and provides strategic leadership and oversight of the University's fundraising efforts, alumni connectivity, and the foundation enterprise. This critical post requires strong leadership, skillful diplomacy, and substantial financial acumen to successfully advance WMU's institutional priorities and steward the experience-focused ethos "so that all may learn."

The VPED will report directly to President Russ Kavalhuna, an energetic team-oriented leader. An alumnus of WMU's College of Aviation, ranked sixth in the world, President Kavalhuna is an airline transport pilot captain, the highest level of civilian pilot certification. He also served as a federal prosecutor and, before coming to Western, completed a distinguished tenure as president of Henry Ford College. He also has served as a federal prosecutor and most recently completed a distinguished presidency at Henry Ford College. He began his tenure at WMU on July 1, 2025, and is already considered WMU's Bronco Advocate-in-Chief. The VPED serves as a core member of the President's Cabinet and will seek to strengthen WMU's global profile, strengthen relationships with stakeholders, and align philanthropic engagement with University goals and priorities. Reporting directly to the president, this position is a tremendous opportunity for a proven executive to join a dedicated leadership team transforming student success, inspiring creative and scholarly discovery, and advancing the impactful reputation of WMU.

The VPED will have the opportunity to lead to completion a \$1.25 billion comprehensive campaign, which has not yet entered its public phase. The campaign will support a University-wide strategy to distinguish WMU in a highly competitive enrollment market by rooting experiential learning in a region rich with national and international companies, vital nonprofits, and government entities seeking to sustain southwest Michigan and the entire state as a thriving place to work, play, and live.

About University Advancement at Western Michigan University

The University Advancement Division consists of Principal, Major, Leadership and Planned Gifts, College Development Officers, Prospect Research, Annual Giving, Donor Relations, Advancement Communications, Advancement Services, Alumni Association and Events, and Foundation Administration and Gift Accounting (65 staff). The most recent fiscal year raised approximately \$77 million.

The Western Michigan University Foundation is governed by a board consisting of 23 directors. Committees include Audit, Committee on Directors, Development Committee, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Investment Committee and Real Estate Committee. The board and committees meet quarterly.

The Western Michigan University Alumni Association Board of Directors consists of 16 members and continuously works to strengthen the bond between WMU and its alumni, to support and enhance the student experience, and to help shape the future of WMU.





About Western Michigan University

There is an undeniable momentum at Western Michigan University. Fueled by the \$550 million Empowering Futures Gift, the University has just posted its two highest six-year graduation rates on record. WMU has posted record second-year retention each of the last three years. WMU recently opened a newly renovated Dunbar Hall—its most heavily used classroom building—and a vibrant new student center and dining facility, both served by a brand-new parking ramp and pedestrian bridge. It set a new high-water mark for total research awards at \$59.8 million last fiscal year and has won the Mid-American Conference Learfield Directors' Cup in each of the last two years, earning the distinction as the winningest athletic program in the conference. The University has received the first shipment of its new fleet of 32 Cirrus Generation 7 training aircraft—the latest equipment available. It awarded more than \$1 million in venture grants to 35 faculty members to create new, innovative, Experience-Driven Learning opportunities. It's no wonder Western was twice recognized by TIME magazine as one of the top 100 Best Colleges for Future Leaders, based on alumni leadership positions—one of only three institutions in Michigan.

WMU ranked as the top higher education and no. 16 overall employer in Michigan in Forbes' list of America's Best-In-State Employers 2025.

Looking to the future, the University is well on its way to creating a distinctive, holistic, experience-driven education as it seeks to be a top-tier university in Michigan for student success, ranking no lower than third by 2032. A new residence hall will open in 2026, and a new multiuse arena will become home to the Bronco men's and women's basketball and men's hockey teams in downtown Kalamazoo in 2027.

The University's ambitions are being accelerated by the \$550 million Empowering Futures Gift, which remains the largest single gift for a public university in American history. This phenomenal generosity is the cornerstone of a \$1.25 billion comprehensive fundraising campaign, for which the University is currently planning its public phase.

WMU's momentum is accelerating under the energetic leadership of Russ Kavalhuna, who began as WMU's 10th president on July 1, 2025. Russ is a collaborative, mission-driven convener who unites people to solve complex problems, pairs aviation precision with legal rigor, empowers high-performing teams, and relentlessly focuses on student success and community impact.



Institutional profile

WMU was founded as a Normal School in 1903, with broad community support. Today, it is a student-centered research university located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, with a total enrollment of just under 18,000 students, comprising 13,714 undergraduates and 3,617 graduate students. WMU is Michigan's fifth-largest university, attracting a diverse, culturally rich student body from across the United States and from nearly 100 other countries. Approximately 33% of students identify as historically underrepresented populations or as international, and 26% of undergraduates are from outside Michigan.

The University offers more than 150 undergraduate majors in eight degree-granting colleges: Arts and Sciences, Aviation, Education and Human Development, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Fine Arts, Haworth College of Business, Health and Human Services and Merze Tate College. In addition, the Lee Honors College offers a small, student-centered setting for approximately 2,000 talented undergraduates. The Graduate College supports more than 160 graduate and advanced academic programs. Through formal affiliation, the University is home to Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine.

The University has the state's third-largest college-affiliated endowment, which totaled \$854 million in fiscal year 2025.

Mission

We are an access-oriented institution that provides an impactful and inclusive education that integrates discovery and fosters holistic growth and well-being so that all may learn.

Vision

We empower every person to grow, thrive and belong. We contribute to making the world a better place through creativity, research, innovation and compassion.



President Russ Kavalhuna

Russ Kavalhuna is the 10th president of Western Michigan University. He assumed the presidency of the nearly 18,000-student institution on July 1, 2025, bringing with him a distinguished record of public service, higher education leadership and a results-driven approach to student success.

President Kavalhuna's leadership vision is rooted in access, purpose and impact—values reflected in how Western empowers students to pursue a holistic, experience-driven education that prepares them for meaningful careers and fulfilled lives. WMU students gain critical intellectual skills in the classroom and develop real-world competencies through internships, research and professional partnerships across the state and nation.

Reflecting deep commitments to advocacy, accountability and collaboration, President Kavalhuna's career spans aviation, law and education. A former commercial airline captain, collegiate

aviation administrator and federal prosecutor, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to mission-driven leadership. In June 2025, he concluded a seven-year tenure as president of Henry Ford College, where he cultivated public and private partnerships, expanded college access and strengthened mentorship opportunities for students—efforts that underpin his educational leadership record.

Before leading Henry Ford College, President Kavalhuna served as executive director of flight operations at the Western Michigan University College of Aviation.

Amid ongoing debates about the value of higher education, he is a clear and passionate advocate for its transformative power. He is frequently sought out at both the state and national levels to contribute to policy. Appointed co-chair of the Growing Michigan Together Council's Higher Education Workgroup by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, President Kavalhuna helped shape state strategies to expand educational attainment and retain Michigan talent. He has served on boards focused on education, labor, and aviation for governors of both major parties.

President Kavalhuna's principled leadership in aviation, law and academia additionally earned him a selection in 2016 by U.S. Presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush into the second class of their Presidential Leadership Scholars program, enhancing his personal and professional leadership through interactions with former presidents, key administration officials, leading academics, and business and civic leaders.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Aviation Science from WMU and a Juris Doctor from Cooley Law School.





OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Key Responsibilities

- Provide leadership, strategy, and overall vision of advancement at WMU and the WMU Foundation through the development and implementation of comprehensive advancement and fundraising strategies that advance the strategic ambitions of WMU.
- Work closely with the president and the WMU Foundation to set and meet fundraising goals.
- Actively collaborate with cabinet teammates on decision-making and strategic planning to ensure advancement activities advance the strategic intent of the president and cabinet.
- Develop and further strengthen existing relationships with donors, alumni, community partners, and other key stakeholders who are committed to the continued success and growth of WMU.
- Oversee and manage all aspects of fundraising, including annual giving, planned giving, major gifts, and the comprehensive campaign.
- Lead a positive and success-driven work environment where staff achievement is valued and management practice complements operations.
- Lead alumni engagement activities, promoting collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to include students, trustees, foundation board, administrators, faculty, staff, and community members.
- Manage corporate, foundation and major gifts, planned giving, alumni relations, and annual giving.
- Serve as Executive Director of the Western Michigan University Foundation, and as liaison to other affiliated foundations, ensuring a positive partnership with WMU leadership.
- Work with academic deans and other University leaders to identify potential donors, develop a pipeline for cultivated affiliation, and partner with advisory boards and external groups.
- Embrace responsibility for expert stewardship, excellent recordkeeping standards, and philanthropic best practices.

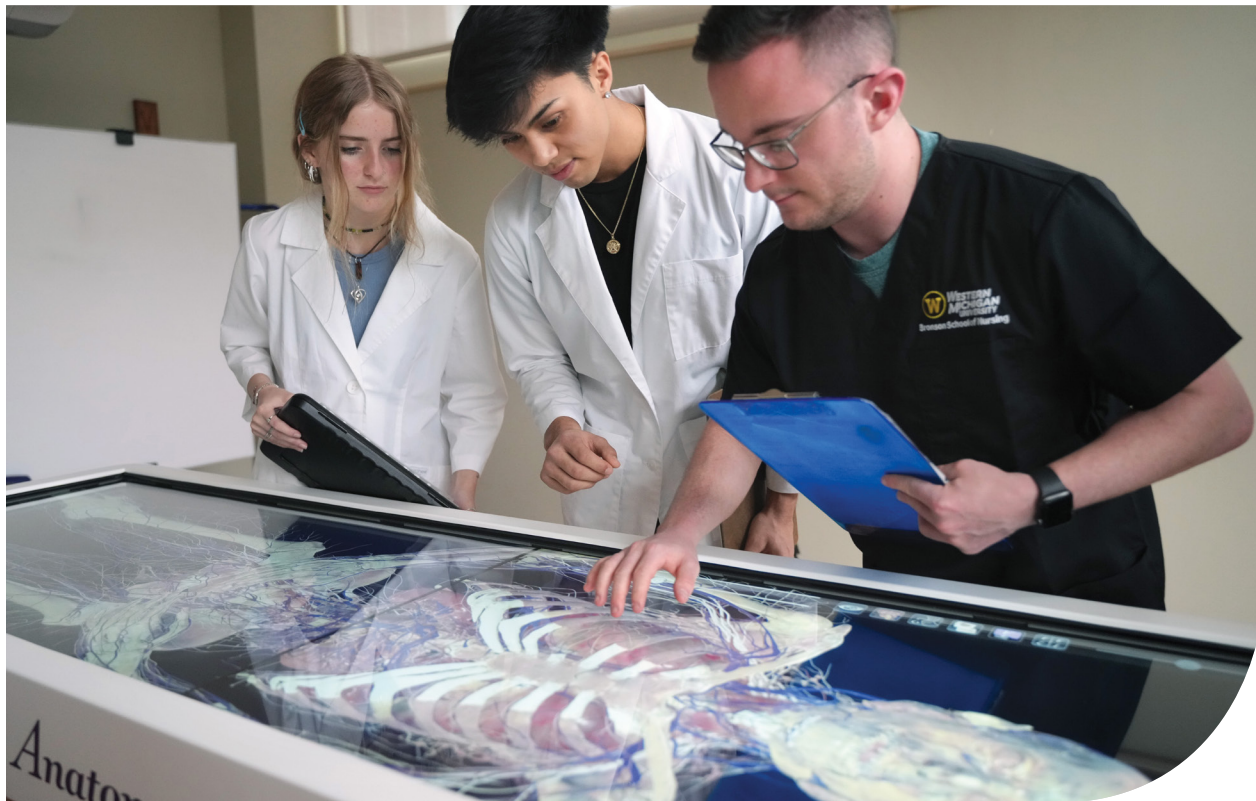
REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree.
- At least 10 years of progressively responsible and broad-based development experience.
- Quantifiable success as a senior-level fundraiser.
- Experience managing fiscal resources aligned with development and advancement endeavors.
- Record of success in comprehensive engagement and fundraising campaigns.
- Demonstrated dynamic communication skills, interpersonal connectivity, and successful leadership and collaboration acumen.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Master's degree.
- Proficiency working with a foundation.
- Proven record leading advancement at a higher education institution or large, complex organization.





The Bronco education

At Western, we celebrate the passions that drive students and the possibilities that inspire them. Here, a degree is a pursuit of purpose where students are empowered to learn and where an experience-driven education leads to a meaningful career. Broncos prosper. Nine out of 10 graduates are employed quickly, working in their field in jobs they like.* Western is the place where students become the best version of themselves.

A WMU education is designed to help students pursue a meaningful career throughout their lives. We are built to support students in their educational success, offering the skills employers most seek.



• **EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN LEARNING** is Western's approach to education that integrates hands-on, practical experiences with traditional instructional methods by applying classroom knowledge to career-relevant situations in real-world contexts. Through Experience-Driven Learning, students:

- Enhance learning by deepening content knowledge and developing critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration through application to "real-world" timelines, budgets, constituents, and constraints.
- Shape professional purpose by developing a compelling career narrative through resume-worthy and interview-relevant experiences with industry/sector partners, enabling students to build connections, networks and references.
- Become empowered with a growth mindset that utilizes reflection to continuously examine their experiences and consider areas where more learning may be needed to meet their future goals.
- WMU Essential Studies is the University's general education curriculum, which provides a foundation focused on developing change-ready knowledge and skills employers seek, such as complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and effective communication.



- **OUR RESEARCH UNIVERSITY ADVANTAGE** enables students to participate in undergraduate research as early as their first year. The University's faculty secured \$59.8 million in total research awards in fiscal year 2025 alone, offering boundless opportunities for students to engage in scholarly pursuits. Growing strength as we near R1 status has created boundless opportunities for undergraduate students, who filed 29 patents last year, doubling the previous year's record of 14.
- **A HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE:** Well-being is a way of life at WMU. The University was one of the first 25 colleges in the nation to adopt the Okanagan Charter, an international framework focused on health promotion that advances strategic initiatives in the well-being of students, faculty and staff. It is our commitment to enable students to pursue a thriving life in tandem with a meaningful career.
- **PAID INTERNSHIPS** are available starting the sophomore year through the Broncos Lead Internship Program.
- **THE NAVIGATOR NETWORK** provides one-on-one, proactive support. Regular check-ins ensure students are finding the resources they need to wwthrive on campus.



*WMU collected data for 3,124 graduates, of which 2,240 were employed full time, 67 were employed part time, 603 employed their degree to gain admittance to graduate school or were otherwise continuing their education, 18 were engaged in military service and 4 were volunteering full time. In addition, 872 of those working full time were satisfied with their job, based on 922 responses, and 1,645 of those working full time had a job related to their degree, based on 1,742 responses. 2024-25 Career Outcomes Report, wmich.edu/about/facts



Empowering Futures Gift

In June 2021, visionary Western Michigan University graduates donated \$550 million to the WMU Foundation, the largest gift for a public institution of higher education in U.S. history.

Forward-thinking in design, scope, and size, this historic philanthropic contribution is known as the Empowering Futures Gift. The donors, alumni who have chosen not to be named, committed \$200 million for WMU, \$300 million for the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine and \$50 million for Bronco Athletics. The gift is designed to fund scholarships, advance medical education and research, support faculty expertise, increase athletic competitiveness and make possible numerous student-centered initiatives that enhance student success.

Student-centered, transformational and responsive to the needs of students today, the \$200 million committed to WMU will be focused on four key areas:

- **EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION:**

A significant expansion of need-based financial assistance with tuition, housing and food, and degree-completion support.



- **PURPOSE AND PASSION:** Paid experiential learning for students who rely on jobs to fund their education, as well as new support staff to guide students in their pursuit of a meaningful career.
- **WELL-BEING:** New professional and technical support to improve mental health and help students develop healthy lifestyles.
- **TRANSFORMATIONAL EXCELLENCE:** Develop signature experience-driven academic experiences that enhance learning, shape professional purpose and empower students.



Student life

The Western Michigan University campus comprises a variety of housing and dining options. Each living area has distinctive features, including residence halls, apartments, dining facilities, academic services, and cultural resources. Approximately 90% of first-year students live in the residence halls, and about a third of residents live in a Living Learning Community. WMU offers a variety of housing options, including six residence halls and three apartment complexes. Students find a variety of cuisines in two dining centers and 28 eateries across campus.

The Office of Student Engagement exists to engage the campus, empower students, and develop leaders. Its vision is to be recognized as an expert provider of intentional engagement and leadership development opportunities that are integral components of the WMU student experience.

Bronco Bash is WMU's annual welcome-back festival that helps students transition back to campus life each fall. An estimated 20,000 students and community members attend annually. Over 500 student and community groups participate to share information, market services and sign up volunteers.





The Campus Activities Board (CAB) is one of the largest student organizations on campus. CAB works to bring entertainment to campus and typically hosts an event per week during the semester. Events typically include large concerts, comedians, movies, magicians, special events and more.

More than 300 Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) at WMU focus on a variety of interest areas from academics to service to sailing. As a Western Michigan University Bronco, students have every opportunity to get involved in an extraordinarily rich range of student clubs and activities that connect them with what they are learning in the classroom and beyond. They can travel the country to volunteer, program events for a campus of nearly 18,000 students, play a club sport, give back to the Kalamazoo community or go Greek. Western Michigan University has had a long and rich history with its collegiate fraternities and sororities, with 32 chapters representing four councils. WMU has nearly 30 club sports that are housed within University Recreation. A club may be competitive, recreational, social or any combination of these.





STUDENT-FOCUSED FACILITIES

The face of Western Michigan University has been reimagined and reshaped over the last eight years. The University has opened a new, world-class building for the College of Aviation, enabling the program to double the number of students it serves. The University recently opened Dunbar Hall, a newly renovated space that provides students and faculty with a flexible, accessible, welcoming, and sustainable learning environment that honors WMU's academic heritage while embracing cutting-edge technology and supporting Experience-Driven Learning.

Over the same period, the entire southern portion of Main Campus has seen the removal of multiple buildings beyond their planned life, which were replaced with new student housing, a state-of-the-art

student center and dining facility, a new parking facility, and new landscaping.

Arcadia Flats was the first new building to open in this campus area in January 2021, featuring five different apartment-style units, including a studio loft. It can house a total of 341 residents. The building, split into two forms linked by a glass bridge, features a centralized lobby with a fireplace and gathering spaces, a fitness room, laundry, and social and study spaces scattered throughout. An outdoor courtyard, designed as a node on the main pedestrian walk through the Hilltop Village, encourages outdoor gathering as well.

The vibrant and distinctive new WMU Student Center opened in fall 2023. The facility, dubbed the "hub of belonging," is located in the

heart of WMU's Main Campus and is surrounded by student housing, academic buildings, and pedestrian walkways. Inside, it features a brand-new Admissions Welcome Center, meeting spaces from ballrooms to small study spaces, the WMU Bookstore, a state-of-the-art gaming room, FedEx, PNC Bank and multiple eateries, including a Starbucks and several self-branded concepts. The facility is intentionally focused on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that nurtures belonging. Support for student organizations is front and center while lounges, indoor hammocks and soft seating encourage social engagement and co-curricular activities.



Athletics

WMU Athletics is an NCAA Division 1 FBS program, and Bronco student-athletes compete in the Mid-American Conference (MAC) in 14 sports. Hockey competes in the National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC), and men's soccer competes in the Missouri Valley Conference. Bronco Athletics takes a holistic view of students, with the goal that every student will graduate holistically prepared to pursue their career passions, make a high quality connection with the community, and compete for championships.

In 2025, the hockey team won the NCAA National Championship. And this past season, WMU football won both the MAC Championship game and the Myrtle Beach Bowl. In doing so, WMU Athletics became only the third program in Division I history to win a hockey national championship and an FBS football conference championship in the same calendar year. Bronco competitions are a large part of the overall student experience, with a nationally recognized student section in the Lawson Lunatics. The Broncos have one of the highest-growing attendance records in the nation since 2022. Western also puts the student in student-athlete. Broncos are consistently recognized for their academic excellence and service to the local community in addition to their strength in competition. The athletics program earned the MAC Learfield Directors' Cup each of the last three years, a rare honor that ranks it as the winningest program in the conference.



Points of pride

9 of 10 Broncos are employed quickly, working in their field in jobs they like

94% of graduates are working or continuing their education

93% of graduates participated in experience-driven education

73% of recent graduates working full time are employed in Michigan

98% of graduates had instructors who made them excited about learning

93% of graduates felt their faculty cared about them

Best College for Future Leaders, Top 3 in Michigan and top 100 in U.S.

—TIME and Statista (2024, 2025)

Ranked No. 1 Athletic Program in the MAC

—2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 Learfield Directors' Cup

Top 100 in the nation for occupational therapy and social work

—U.S. News & World Report 2026

1 of 139 public institutions classified as a high research university

—Carnegie Foundation

First Michigan institution to join the Campus Community Network

for viewpoint diversity, open inquiry and constructive disagreement

—Heterodox Academy

WMU Public Safety has a rare accreditation for top police agencies in Michigan

—Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission, est. 2021

1 of only 3 aerospace engineering programs in Michigan

Top 6% of business schools worldwide accredited at both the undergraduate and graduate levels

—AACSB

Top program for sales and business marketing for 18th year

—2025 Sales Education Foundation

Top talent in consumer-packaged goods industry

—2023 Consumer Goods Technology

Top 6 in-the-world ranked aviation program

—Study International

Best for Vets ranking each survey year since 2010

—Military Times

No. 22 supply chain management program in North America

—2024 Gartner



Finances

Western operates with a total budget of \$526 million, which includes auxiliary units. The University's 2025-26 general fund budget amounts to \$425 million, with 15% allocated to student financial aid. The discount rates for Fall 2024 and Fall 2025 were 34.4% and 32%, respectively, and the University has set a Fall 2026 target of 28%.

Western has the state's third-largest college-affiliated endowment, which totaled \$854 million in fiscal year 2025, with an annual spend of 4.5% of a trailing 60-month average. WMU achieved a record-breaking \$59.8 million in total research awards in fiscal year 2025.



Governance

Western Michigan University is governed by the WMU Board of Trustees, consisting of eight members appointed by the state's governor for eight-year terms. The board has authorized roles of shared governance with the WMU Faculty Senate, Western Student Association and Graduate Student Association.

WMU employs nearly 4,000 faculty and staff members, making it one of the largest employers in Kalamazoo. The University has three faculty labor organizations: the American Association of University Professors, the Professional Instructors Organization and the Teaching Assistants Union. In addition, WMU collaborates with four other bargaining units: the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the Michigan State Employees Association and the Police Officers Association. The University also employs professional and support staff who are not part of collective bargaining organizations.

WMU has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1915. The University will undergo its next complete review during the 2030-31 academic year.





About Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo, Michigan, is a mid-sized metro with just over 260,000 residents that blends big-city energy with a highly livable, human-scale community. Its people enjoy an unusually strong mix of education-focused culture, natural beauty, and a dynamic life sciences and advanced manufacturing economy.

A PLACE THAT INVESTS IN PEOPLE

Kalamazoo offers an appealing mix of opportunity, affordability, and quality of life. The Kalamazoo-Portage metro is one of the lowest-cost-of-living metros in the nation, with professional lifestyles costing 25% below the U.S. average. The community's signature initiative, the Kalamazoo Promise, provides up to 100% tuition for every eligible graduate of Kalamazoo Public Schools to attend postsecondary institutions across Michigan, signaling a deep, long-term commitment to educational access and talent development.

CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND CONNECTION

Kalamazoo's cultural life far exceeds its size. A vibrant arts scene supports multiple theaters, galleries, live music venues, and year-round festivals. The internationally acclaimed Gilmore Piano Festival brings world-class classical and jazz artists to local stages. At the same time, a robust calendar of performances, public art, and community events creates a lively, walkable downtown experience. Families and enthusiasts are drawn to the Air Zoo, an award-winning aviation museum and indoor aerospace experience, and summer evenings at Kalamazoo Growlers baseball games in a classic neighborhood ballpark.

NATURE AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Outdoor recreation is woven into everyday life here. The region is laced with multi-use trails such as the Kal-Haven and Kalamazoo River Valley trails, offering more than 60 miles of connected paths for biking, running, and cross-country skiing, along with scenic stretches of river for paddling. Dozens of inland lakes and nearby state recreation areas make it easy to fish, boat, or unwind by the water after work. Within a short drive, the Lake Michigan shoreline delivers expansive sand beaches, coastal dunes, and charming lakeshore towns that feel like a vacation without requiring a flight.

AN INNOVATION-DRIVEN REGIONAL ECONOMY

Professionals in the Kalamazoo area benefit from a diverse, innovation-oriented regional economy anchored by globally recognized companies in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, advanced manufacturing, food and consumer goods. Through partnerships with businesses such as Stryker, Pfizer, Zoetis, Denso, Eaton, General Mills and Whirlpool, WMU plays a pivotal role in meeting the region's higher education and workforce development needs.

Nominations and application process

Individuals who wish to be considered as candidates should provide a copy of their resume or curriculum vitae along with a bullet-point summary of key accomplishments in each leadership role held. A letter of interest is welcomed but not required.

Western Michigan University has retained DHR Global to assist with this search. Confidential inquiries, nominations and applications should be sent via email to:

Glenn T. Sugiyama
Managing Partner and Global Practice Leader
DHR Global
wmu.advancement@dhrglobal.com

All applications, inquiries, discussions and nominations will be considered strictly confidential.



Western Michigan University, an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, complies with applicable federal and state laws and University policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment. Western Michigan University prohibits discrimination or harassment that violates the law or that limits opportunities of admission, employment or education based on the protected classes of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, protected disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, height, weight, or marital status. Retaliation against any person or group who makes a good faith complaint or participates in a grievance, investigation or related processes is prohibited by law and policy. Related policies and information on how to report can be found at <https://wmich.edu/equity/nondiscriminationnotice>.



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