



**An Invitation to Apply for**

**Assistant Vice President and Controller  
Stony Brook University  
Stony Brook, New York**

## **THE SEARCH**

Stony Brook University, a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and one of the top research-intensive institutions in the United States, is seeking a new Assistant Vice President and Controller. The AVP and Controller (AVP/C) reports to the Vice President of Finance and is a member of the university's senior finance leadership team.

As the university's chief accounting officer, the AVP/C is responsible for all aspects of accounting and financial reporting, including: general, cost, grants, and capital projects accounting, financial reporting, internal controls, treasury operations, student accounts, policies, and financial compliance. They also oversee the Bursar/Director of Student Accounts and are responsible for improving and streamlining financial transactions and processes by upgrading technology solutions as necessary. The AVP/C supervises a team of 50 and is the liaison for all accounting issues in the absence of the Vice President for Finance (VPF) and substitutes for the VPF at key internal and external meetings.

The AVP and Controller will join the University at an exciting time. President McInnis, along with a new provost and senior vice president of finance and administration, will be embarking on a strategic planning process to create a roadmap for the university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The AVP/C will play a critical role in stewarding business collaborations and relationships across the institution to ensure the university has the resources to successfully implement this new plan. For this critical position, Stony Brook is seeking a candidate who has an accounting background and has developed expertise and leadership skills through progressively deeper responsibilities in complex settings. They will have strong people management skills, a transparent communications style, and a desire to find and improve business efficiency. Stony Brook has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important

search. Confidential inquiries, nominations and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY**

Founded in 1957, Stony Brook is a nationally and internationally respected research university. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Stony Brook in the top 100 national universities and top 40 public universities. Its mission is to: advance student learning by offering high-quality, academically rigorous programs of instruction; support an outstanding faculty in their teaching and scholarship; and to address local, regional and state needs and goals while providing public service to the citizens of New York State. For more information please go to: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/pres/vision/mission.php>

Today Stony Brook is a highly decentralized institution. Its reach extends from its 1,452-acre campus on Long Island's North Shore—encompassing the main academic areas, an 8,300-seat stadium and sports complex, and Stony Brook Medicine (which includes the Stony Brook University Hospital and Health Sciences Center)—to Stony Brook Manhattan, a Research and Development Park, four business incubators, and Stony Brook's Southampton campus on Long Island's East End. Internationally, Stony Brook has significant facilities or collaborations in South Korea, Kenya, and Madagascar. In fall 2022, the university enrolled 25,710 students— 17,509 undergraduate students and 8,201 graduate and professional students, including 4,436 international students from 103 countries.

Long Island's largest single-site employer, Stony Brook has over 15,000 full- and part-time employees, including more than 2,700 faculty. A recent analysis (June 2019) found that Stony Brook University's annual economic impact on Long Island totaled an impressive \$7.23 billion in increased output, \$2.39 billion in earnings, and 54,637 local jobs. In addition, the University's graduates increased aggregate economic output worldwide by \$15.3 billion, supporting an impressive 99,815 jobs.

## **THE ROLE**

The AVP/Controller is a critical member of Stony Brook's financial leadership team. Stony Brook is a highly decentralized institution, and the AVP/C is responsible for collaborating with individuals across the university at all levels and roles to ensure that financial policies, procedures, operations, and practices are effective and efficient. They will manage an annual budget of \$1.8 million and oversee a staff of 50 in all aspects of accounting and financial reporting for the campus and be responsible for improving and streamlining financial transactions and processes and automating services. As the chief accounting officer,

the AVP/C will lead university accounting analysis programs and will be a liaison for all accounting issues in the absence of the Vice President for Finance (VPF). The AVP/C also oversees the Bursar/Director of Student Accounts staff and substitutes for the VPF at key internal and external meetings.

As one of the four university centers in the SUNY system, and the Number 1 public university in New York State, the AVP/C will take a lead in collaborating with other SUNY institutions and the central system to coordinate activities with the SUNY Controller's Office and SUNY Construction Fund, to address financial activities, reporting requirements, capitalization of assets and funding requirements for all capital projects. They will also ensure the alignment of the University's financial master plan with the strategic initiatives of SUNY 2020, and will work closely with the VP, SUNY System, and the Budget Office to design and implement the annual business and financial planning processes.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

Building upon an already high functioning, customer service-oriented, lean department, the AVP/C will:

### **Provide strategic leadership of financial and accounting activities to support the university's educational and research mission**

As Stony Brook's principal accounting executive, the AVP/C will provide leadership and vision to ensure the office provides accurate and timely financial information for use in the university's complex internal financial reporting, planning and budgeting. This will ensure that Stony Brook's senior leaders have accurate and timely financial information to further the research and educational mission of the institution.

### **Ensure the highest level of financial accountability, compliance and financial reporting**

The AVP/C will be deeply engaged in critical aspects of Stony Brook's accounting and financial reporting systems. They will be responsible for envisioning a future state for the AVP/C's office that is more technology-enabled. They will balance this with the need to manage and communicate change effectively, maintaining existing service delivery and integration with other administrative systems initiatives, including those at the system level. The AVP/C will be a key leader in system processes and partner across campuses especially with regard to enterprise resource planning.

### **Collaborate with multiple partners across the university, and the SUNY system**

The AVP/C will join a dynamic, yet decentralized university amid an ambitious program of strategic growth and change. They will directly support this exciting effort by proactively partnering with finance and academic leaders across Stony Brook including, the Research Foundation, the Stony Brook Foundation, the Hospital and Medical School, as well as the System Finance office to ensure compliance with New York State and SUNY System regulations and devise ways for Stony Brook University and the SUNY system to better serve institutional priorities. The successful candidate will possess excellent interpersonal and critical problem-solving abilities to promote a strong sense of financial collaboration while providing sound fiscal analysis and advice. They must be able to listen and learn and be able to translate technical financial information into language that all stakeholders can grasp to better integrate financial knowledge into the University's future plans.

### **Retain and develop a team of high performing professional finance and accounting professionals**

The AVP/C will lead a high performing team of accounting staff and bursar/director of student accounts whose work is defined by quality, timeliness, and responsiveness to the needs of senior leaders. They will leverage the skills and expertise of the team and engage with leadership to provide staff opportunities for ongoing professional development with an eye toward building a bench for succession. The successful candidate must learn how to navigate the SUNY system's complex processes and procedures and help staff to do the same. They must be able to inspire the team and advocate for additional resources as needed.

### **Improve financial processes, systems, and data**

Stony Brook University will be implementing the Oracle ERP system beginning in the Spring of 2023. The AVP/Controller will serve a critical role in the leadership of this game changing implementation. The AVP Controller should be inspired by the challenges, opportunities and benefits of implementing a new ERP system. In addition, the successful candidate will be expected to leverage existing technologies to streamline transactions and increase efficiency for the accounting and student account offices, thereby allowing staff to engage in more critical thinking and decision support. They will have the opportunity to enhance and expand technology use particularly in the areas of reporting and multi-year planning through the current data warehouse and reporting tools, and by identifying and implementing new strategies. These will include devising ways to support the systems communications between Stony Brook University and the SUNY System office to increase automation and consistency between the two entities.

## THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

Stony Brook University seeks a strategic, collaborative individual with in-depth experience in a complex higher education environment. The incumbent will have leadership experience in a fast-paced, customer service-oriented setting.

### Day-to-day responsibilities include:

- Managing University Accounting, Financial Planning & Analytic Reporting including oversight of the University's accounting processes (expense reporting, appropriation accounting, special program accounting, cash management, Research Foundation, Income Fund Reimbursables, revenue accounting, capital budgets, affiliate billing, etc).
- Overseeing the Bursar/Director of Student Accounts and all areas that fall under the position, including but not limited to the Cashier, Check Disbursement, and Input and Control functions of the Bursar's Office; the Student Billing Office; the Parking Services Office; and, the Campus Card Office.
- Playing a visible role with university leadership and strategic management related to finance and accounting, coordinating activities with the SUNY Controller's Office and SUNY Construction Fund, addressing financial activities to comply with disbursement thresholds, reporting requirements, capitalization of assets and funding requirements for major and minor capital projects.
- Ensuring the alignment of the University's financial master plan with the strategic initiatives of the University and working closely with the VP, SUNY System, and the Budget Office to design and implement the annual business and financial planning processes.
- Developing initiatives that will improve the campus compliance with state, federal, and commercial banking requirements associated with credit card, refund check, and ACH processing, and privacy concerns. Ensuring current and future technology meet all compliance requirements.
- Ensuring the financial management and reporting systems in development are responsive and provide campus with necessary information in a timely manner.
- Overseeing the further development of the data warehouse and data warehouse reporting to ensure the data warehouse provides university users with key operational and strategic information to guide

their respective units.

- Overseeing new and ongoing financial special projects from the day of kick-off until the project ends and into the evaluation state.

**Professional Qualifications:**

- Progressively responsible financial management experience in higher education. If not from higher education, leadership experience in large, complex, regulated environments. Non-profit experience is an advantage.
- Demonstrated experience leading ERP maintenance and updates to related ERP systems for planning, accounting operations and financial reporting and analyses. Works closely with leadership to establish priorities for enhancing and improving financial systems and processes.
- Proven experience using data analytics to create and deliver dynamic reports for decision support.
- Proven ability to successfully lead projects of various size and scope.
- Proven financial acumen and the ability to translate technical concepts to diverse constituents.
- Demonstrated success working with technology systems, system analysis and system implementation.
- Skilled and inspirational manager of teams with attention to team mentoring, team development, and succession planning.
- Demonstrated track record promoting diversity and inclusion.

**Personal Attributes:**

- Commitment to student and research mission of SBU.
- Ability to interpret financial data and its short- and long-term impacts.
- Ability to think strategically and act tactically.

- Team player orientation.
- Active listener.
- Ability to multitask.
- Customer service orientation.
- Passionate, committed, hardworking.
- Ability to embrace challenges and find solutions.

**Essential Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and a minimum of seven (7) years full time directly related, progressively responsible experience in financial management, preferably within higher education.
- Managerial, project management, team building, and superior communication skills will be critical to his/her success as will excellent organizational and analytic abilities.
- Knowledge and understanding of system programming as it relates to financial processes will also be key.
- CPA required.
- Master's Degree preferred.

**TO APPLY**

Review of applications, nominations, and expressions of interest will begin immediately and continue on a confidential basis until an appointment is made. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and letters of interest responding to the position challenges and objectives outlined above) should be submitted via Isaacson, Miller's website to:

Dan Rodas, Partner  
Gail Gregory, Managing Associate  
Tim Lanigan, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
<http://www.imsearch.com/8755>

Stony Brook University/SUNY is an affirmative action, equal opportunity educator and employer. We are committed to the creation of a diverse and inclusive campus climate. We encourage protected veterans, individuals with disabilities, women, and minorities to apply.