



# WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

Dean

Atkinson Graduate School of Management  
Willamette University, Salem, Oregon

**W**ILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY, a private liberal arts university based in Salem, Oregon, with an MBA campus in the heart of Portland, Oregon, seeks a strategic and entrepreneurial leader to be Dean of the George H. Atkinson Graduate School of Management (AGSM). The Dean will lead the School at a critical time in its development, and develop and execute a strategy to strengthen its position in the market and ensure its long-term academic and financial success. The successful candidate will be an experienced, innovative leader with the intellectual and managerial skills to position this dynamic School as a destination that connects the most talented management students in the region with the best employers in the Northwest.

The new Dean of the Atkinson Graduate School of Management will take a fresh look at the School's strategy and opportunities, while simultaneously managing its stable program focused on rigorous academics, experiential and consequential learning, entrepreneurial thinking, and the intersection of for-profit, non-profit, and public management. Situated in a growing region of the country and having built a successful foundation over the past three decades, the Atkinson School offers a unique opportunity for a Dean interested in exploring new possibilities and cultivating the alumni and donor support needed to strike out on those new paths.

## MISSION OF THE ATKINSON SCHOOL

The Atkinson Graduate School of Management is committed to providing world class management education to U.S. and international students in all stages of their careers. We help our graduates acquire life-long learning skills and become outstanding leaders and managers in business, government, and nonprofit organizations worldwide by offering an intimate learning and practice environment; an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to management education; and dedication to quality teaching, instructional development, basic and applied research, and exceptional, customized career services.

## THE ROLE OF THE ATKINSON SCHOOL'S DEAN

The Dean reports to the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, provides academic and administrative leadership for the Atkinson School, and is responsible for improving and promoting the quality and effectiveness of its teaching, research, and service mission. The Dean directs and coordinates activities of the faculty in developing academic policy and programs for the School; oversees the personnel, budget, and curriculum for its faculty and academic programs; and advocates for the School among external constituents, including existing and potential business partners, prospective students, and alumni. In its current structure, reporting to the Dean are the School's faculty, a senior associate dean, managers of finance and accreditation and the Executive Development Center, an assistant dean and director of career management, a director of marketing communication and an executive assistant. A director of development also has a "dotted line" reporting relationship to the dean.

The Dean works closely with the President, the Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the rest of the president's senior administrative team, and serves on the Deans' Council, which helps to advance the University and to identify opportunities for interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial collaboration among the Atkinson Graduate School of Management, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA), and the College of Law.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

In addition to the broad responsibilities outlined above, the Dean of the Atkinson Graduate School of Management will address the following key opportunities and challenges that will help define success in the next phase of the School's development:

### Position the Atkinson School for Long-term Success

The Dean will ensure that the Atkinson School remains the preeminent school of management in the region. Accordingly, the Dean will help build a vision and strategy for the School that demonstrates commitment to a portfolio of programs relevant and responsive to changing demands and expectations in an increasingly competitive and dynamic environment. This effort will require engaging diverse constituents, both internal and external, and synthesizing their interests into a strategy that remains true to the School's mission and values. Considerable attention will be given to the development of a comprehensive approach to address the recent variability in enrollment, especially in the Early Career/Career Change and MBA for Professionals programs based in Salem. The strategy will also address the changing climate for international students. The Dean will take a leading role in University discussions related to expanding Willamette's presence in Portland. The Dean will also lead an effort to better define the role of the Executive Development Center in the overall Atkinson School strategy.

### Lead Atkinson's development efforts to ensure the continuing viability and success of the School

The Dean will play a critical role raising funds to augment AGSM's annual operating budget and to secure capital gifts in support of its faculty, programmatic initiatives, financial aid, and facility needs. The university is in the early stages of a comprehensive campaign, and the Dean will play a pivotal role in the identification and pursuit of new funding sources. The Dean will establish strong relationships with constituents while enhancing the Atkinson School's name recognition and visibility



to provide the foundation for cultivating donors, including individuals, foundations, and corporations. The Dean will be supported in these efforts by a development director whose time will be dedicated to Atkinson School fundraising activities.

### **Ensure that academic and operational resources are in place and optimally structured to support an ambitious agenda**

The Dean will assess the current organizational structure and capacities of AGSM to effectively support both the academic and operational needs of the School. This will include a comprehensive review of current human, physical, and financial resources to ensure that the School sustains the small, high-touch nature of the AGSM experience. This review will help evaluate facility needs in both Salem and Portland, the adequacy of academic and administrative staffing levels and operational policies. A plan for recruitment of faculty with a passion for teaching and a record of scholarship will be a priority.

### **Enhance the visibility of the Atkinson School across the University, in the region, and beyond**

The Dean will serve as a highly visible representative of the Atkinson School, circulating widely to develop strong and mutually beneficial relationships both on and off-campus. Internally, the Dean will be an active and engaged colleague — an advocate for the Atkinson School who works to engender trust and credibility and appreciates and values that AGSM is an integral component of the larger University. Externally, the Dean will build on well-established relationships and establish new ones with leaders in business, government, and non-profit organizations in Salem, Portland, and in the region, as well as with potential students and alumni, to generate a network of partners who will serve as Atkinson School champions. The Dean will take full advantage of every opportunity to be the face and voice of the Atkinson School, to articulate a clear and compelling message about what is distinctive about an AGSM education.

## **THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE**

Candidates for the position should possess a reputation for integrity and visionary leadership in a complex institution. The ideal candidate will be recognized as a credible leader among the most competitive ranks of business education. To be successful in this role, the selected candidate will demonstrate most of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and qualities:

- The academic and intellectual qualities to lead a distinguished school of management and commitment to excellence in teaching and scholarship.
- A commitment to fundraising and a passion to be successful in the pursuit of philanthropic support.
- A strong understanding of global business, government and nonprofit management,
- Success as an entrepreneur and innovator in an academic setting or in one of the sectors AGSM serves: business, government, and not-for-profit.
- The ability to create an environment that acknowledges, encourages and celebrates differences, including operating and communicating effectively and respectfully within the context of varying beliefs, behaviors, orientations, identities and cultural backgrounds.
- A discerning leader with the ability to promote research and instructional excellence in a variety of disciplines.
- An accessible leader and manager with outstanding interpersonal, oral and written communication skills; a leadership style built upon mutual respect, collaboration, and fairness.
- A consensus builder with the willingness to act decisively when that is required.
- The ability to communicate a compelling and inspired organizational vision and to engage with diverse audiences.
- A proven ability to forge strong professional partnerships with a variety of public and non-profit organizations regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Demonstrated success in budgetary and financial management.
- Experience developing successful marketing and branding strategies.
- A PhD is preferred, but not required.

## WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

Adjacent to the Willamette Valley's many vineyards and an hour's drive to the Pacific Coastline, Willamette University was founded in 1842 as the first university established in the western United States. Today, Willamette enrolls approximately 2,600 students in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA), College of Law, and AGSM. The University is recognized nationally for its emphasis on providing students with a challenging, exciting, and engaging classroom experience with a strong emphasis on sustainability and civic engagement; Willamette is ranked 72nd among liberal arts colleges in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. For additional information, please visit [willamette.edu](http://willamette.edu).

The Atkinson Graduate School of Management, established in 1975, enrolls approximately 260 students guided by 18 full-time faculty, who collaborate in a variety of academic programs, including professional and full-time MBAs, certificate programs, and the Executive Development Center (EDC). The mission of the Atkinson School is to identify and convey principles of management shared by successful business, government, and not-for-profit enterprises. It aims to establish a close community, provide diverse learning experiences to serve individual student objectives, strengthen learning through scholarship and discovery, and apply learning through service and leadership. For more information about the School, please visit [willamette.edu/mba](http://willamette.edu/mba).

Willamette University's mission is to provide rigorous education in the liberal arts and the professional fields of law and management. Teaching and learning, strengthened by scholarship and service, flourish in a vibrant campus community. A Willamette education prepares graduates to transform knowledge into action and lead lives of achievement, contribution and meaning, which stem from the university motto of "Non nobis solum nati sumus — Not unto ourselves alone are we born."

Willamette is distinguished by extraordinary opportunities for civic engagement made possible by historic connections and proximity to Oregon's seat of government, a faculty comparable to the standards of the nation's finest colleges, a global orientation

enhanced by co-location with Tokyo International University of America, a focus on sustainability enriched by the University's 305 acre Zena Forest, and dual-degree programs capitalizing on its unique combination of the finest in residential liberal arts and professional education. In recent years, a commitment to building an inclusive community has resulted in Willamette emerging as the pacesetter among the Northwest's leading institutions in enrolling students traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Among Willamette's alumni are a Nobel Prize-winning economist, a governor, two Oregon secretaries of state, three U.S. Senators, three members of Congress, Oregon and Washington Supreme Court Justices, members of the 2008 and 2012 U.S. Olympic Teams, 281 Peace Corps volunteers, and at least 126 winners of national awards, grants, fellowships and scholarships such as Hertz, Fulbright, Truman and Goldwater.

As a community dedicated to teaching and learning, Willamette seeks to model its closely-held values of diversity, sustainability, civic engagement and service to others. Willamette's faculty — the heart of the Willamette educational experience — are regularly recognized for excellence in teaching and research, with 11 recipients of Carnegie and CASE Oregon Professor of the Year awards since the program's inception in 1989 — twice as many as any other Oregon institution of higher education, public or private. Also, nationally recognized programs in the arts attract students, faculty and members of the Salem community to campus each year.

The College of Liberal Arts offers 49 undergraduate academic programs, and Willamette University offers the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Music (BM), Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD), Master of Law (LLM) in transnational law and dispute resolution and Master in Legal Studies (MLS), Master of Business Administration for Business, Government and Not-for-Profit Management (MBA), and Master of Business Administration (MBA).

Willamette is a proud member of the student-centered Colleges that Change Lives organization. U.S. News & World Report listed Willamette University as the highest ranked liberal arts college in Oregon and among the top nationally in its 2015's "Best Colleges."



Forbes ranked Willamette as the 25th best school in the West and the 103rd best private school in the nation in 2014. Bloomberg Businessweek, Forbes and CEO magazines ranked Willamette's MBA program highest in Oregon.

Willamette University's main 60-acre campus is located in historic downtown Salem, Oregon's capital and the state's third largest city. Willamette benefits from its location across the street from the Oregon Capitol and near other federal, state, county and city offices. In particular, this proximity provides students with exceptional opportunities for civic engagement in the form of internships and involvement with advocacy groups and student political organizations.

Salem is not only the hub of law, public policy-making and government for the state, it is also a vibrant and exciting place to live and visit, rich in historical, artistic and cultural experiences and learning opportunities, many of which are enhanced by the presence of Willamette University. As one of the area's major employers, Willamette is also an important player in the local economy and, as such, contributes leadership, support and resources to worthy community initiatives. Professionally, the Portland-Salem area is home to a multitude of businesses (including Nike, Intel, and Tektronix) and not-for-profit organizations, many dedicated to environmental stewardship.

Willamette's location exemplifies the beauty of the Pacific Northwest, with gorgeous forests, rivers, mountains and ocean beaches nearby. The surrounding area, known as the Mid-Willamette Valley, is renowned wine country and the source of spectacular local foods and fresh produce that are consumed world-wide. Outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, skiing, fishing and beachcombing are abundant in addition to a variety of arts, food, wine and music festivals and events throughout the area.

## THE ATKINSON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

For more than 40 years Willamette's Atkinson Graduate School of Management's *raison d'être* has been, and continues to be, to prepare individuals for leadership and management roles in the business, government, and not-for-profit sectors. In keeping with this commitment, the Atkinson School's approach to management education reflects the view that all organizations exist to serve and to satisfy customers, citizens or clients, and that there are essential management principles that transcend these sectors. These central overarching management principles, and the practices they imply, are the means by which value is added by the work of AGSM.

It is in this context that the Atkinson School's curriculum derives from the best practices of management applicable across every sector of the economy, and focuses on student-centered learning. AGSM's objective is to educate managers to understand how each function within an organization affects and interacts with every other function. The integrated curriculum builds on the understanding that the best in management theory and practice is applicable to organizations across sectors.

The Atkinson School provides a distinctive MBA education with academic programs designed to prepare students broadly for leadership in a range of settings. AGSM offers two versions of its MBA degree:

- The **Early Career/Career Change MBA**: a 21-month, full-time program offered in Salem, which includes 12 core courses completed during the first year of study followed by an elective curriculum during the second-year of study, with an emphasis on specific career interests. Students may also opt for an accelerated version of the program, a fast-track, waiver-based option that prepares students for career change or advancement. Focusing their studies in the elective and second year MBA curriculum, Accelerated students generally complete the MBA degree in 9 to 15 months of full-time study.
- The **MBA for Professionals**: a part-time program offered in both Salem and Portland, through which students complete an MBA in 24 months while

fully employed. Currently this program enrolls cohorts of students each year between its Salem and Portland locations.

Atkinson also offers two dual-degree options for completion of an MBA degree: the four-year MBA/JD Joint Degree program resulting in both the MBA and Doctor of Jurisprudence; and the five-year Willamette BA/MBA for a select group of students from Willamette's College of Liberal Arts. The current goal is for 20-25 percent of the full-time MBA program to be composed of Willamette CLA students. This year, and for the first time, a few highly-qualified students accepted to the College of Liberal Arts have also been offered acceptance into the combined BA/MBA program at the time of admission as freshmen.

The Atkinson School's innovative approach to the study of management employs a curriculum designed to provide experiences that compel students to integrate and apply what they learn via "learning by doing." For instance, throughout the first year of the Early Career/Career Change MBA Program students complete a Service Learning/Consulting course — labelled, PACE (Practical Applications for Careers and Enterprises) — in which teams work with not-for-profits, businesses, and government agencies to solve problems that affect their enterprises. The Atkinson School has augmented these experiential learning opportunities with efforts it calls "consequential" learning — learning in which students not only apply academic insights in real projects, but they also experience the consequences of the decisions they make in applying those insights (see [willamette.edu/mba/give/learning-programs](https://willamette.edu/mba/give/learning-programs)). For example, since 2008, students of the Atkinson School have allocated tens of thousands of dollars in promising start-ups and new ventures as a part of the Willamette University Angel Investment Fund — the nation's first, student-run angel investment fund. Also, through a generous donation from Robert and Doris O'Neill, the Atkinson School established the O'Neill Student investment fund in which students manage a portfolio of investments throughout the calendar year, thus gaining first-hand experience applying finance concepts in a high-stakes environment. The third fund, the Willamette University Atkinson School Grant Fund, established in 2016, is a joint

venture between the university and the Mountain West Investment Corporation to create a \$150,000 fund to focus on granting money to not-for-profits looking to make an impact in the immediate region. In this course, students face the challenge of identifying and vetting deserving recipients of substantial grants for community-benefitting activities. (<https://agsm.willamette.edu/agsmgrants/rfp.pdf>)

These consequential programs — along with the Atkinson School's philosophy on management education, face-to-face delivery of its curriculum, and its high-touch approach to career and student services, have distinguished the School among the growing number of business schools across the U.S. The Willamette MBA has been recognized by Forbes, Bloomberg Businessweek, the Princeton Review, CEO magazine and the Poets & Quants news website to be among the best MBA programs in the country. It is also consistently the highest ranked MBA program in Oregon, and one of the few ranked programs in the Northwest.

Its proximity to state government institutions based in Salem, as well as public authorities and federal agencies in Portland, has given the Atkinson School a tradition as a center for training in public administration; it offers one of only two MBA degree programs in the nation accredited for both business administration (AACSB International) and public administration (NASPAA — the global standard for public service education).

A decade ago, the Atkinson School established a presence in Portland and now runs a facility in the heart of the city's downtown Pearl District. Located in one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. for highly educated people between the ages of 25 and 34, this "Portland Center" offers the opportunity for working professionals in Portland to obtain a Willamette MBA through an evening class schedule. Since opening its doors in Portland, the Professional MBA (now known as the "MBA for Professionals") has secured the Atkinson School's position in an increasingly competitive environment, and now maintains 4 cohorts of approximately 25 students each year at this location, and another 2 cohorts of professionals in Salem. With the success of the Atkinson School's foray

into Portland, the School looks forward to expanding its profile there, and Willamette University leadership is beginning to explore additional areas in which to extend its Portland academic offerings.

The Atkinson School also runs an Executive Development Center (EDC) to provide customized educational programs for managers and executives — programs that can be tailored to any length or subject to suit companies' needs. The EDC's activities have included customized training, targeted programs (such as senior executive workshops); certificate programs; and more. Current EDC offerings include Utility Management and Public Management certificate programs, and a Leadership for Attorneys in Business program, which awards participants CLE credits in Oregon and Washington. EDC teams include faculty and adjunct professionals from the Atkinson School.

The Atkinson School's faculty comprises a highly talented, collaborative group of teacher/scholars who have strong research credentials and many also have years of management experience. Faculty members serve both as teachers and mentors to students and stress the practical application of management theory to real-world decisions. The student-faculty ratio at the Atkinson School is approximately 14:1; Atkinson's current full-time faculty of 18 teach in both the full-time and professional MBA programs, and their work is complemented by a strong cadre of adjunct (contributing) faculty who also bring both business and academic experience. The academic activities of the Atkinson School are supported by a group of highly capable and committed administrative professionals, who provide fiscal, IT, marketing communication, recruitment, admissions, enrollment, career and student services.

For the entering class of 2016, the average age of the Atkinson School's full-time MBA students was 25 years old and represented in the group were students from 14 countries and 10 states; 41 percent of students were women; students had an average entering GPA of 3.48 and GMAT score of 545; prior to enrolling, they had worked for 13 months on average. Tuition for the 2017 entering class in the full-time MBA is \$40,470; approximately 98 percent of students receive scholarship aid, and the current discount rate is 35 percent.

The Atkinson School's operating budget is approximately \$10 million most of which comes from tuition. In the most recent AACSB International site visit (2015), the review team offered many accolades for the School's programs and faculty. The reviewers noted that the highest priority for AGSM should be to pursue additional funding sources and stressed the importance of building an Atkinson School endowment to ensure long-term viability in an increasingly competitive environment.

Atkinson School students participate in a variety of professional and social/recreational activities, including barbecues, community service projects, food drives, holiday celebrations, alumni activities, Thursday Night Out gatherings, the annual International Community Dinner, and the School's time-honored Brownwater Regatta, a celebration of spring in which students and faculty alike float down a long-dormant mill race that runs through the center of campus. Student organizations and clubs include the Atkinson Accounting Association, Consulting Association, Finance Association, Golf Association, Marketing Association, Management Today (an Online Business Journal), Outdoor Club, Project Management Association, Public Administration Association, Student Association, International Graduate Students Association, Joint Degree Association, National Association for Women MBAs, Net Impact, Society for Human Resource Management, and the Beta Gamma Sigma and Pi Alpha Alpha honor societies.

With approximately 37 percent of students coming from outside of the U.S., the Atkinson School is truly a global community. Atkinson School alumni work in diverse settings around the world, including sole proprietorships, mid-market companies, Fortune 500 companies, government entities, and not-for-profit firms. Still, whether by design or as a result of exposure, Atkinson graduates traditionally seek and maintain employment in the Northwest; well over half of Atkinson alumni work in Oregon or Washington.



## CURRENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In accord with the University's strategic plan ([willamette.edu/about/leadership/president/strategic-plan/](http://willamette.edu/about/leadership/president/strategic-plan/)), the Atkinson Graduate School of Management pursued the following strategic priorities in 2016-17:

- **Deliver the highest-quality student experiences**  
The Atkinson School is committed to ensuring that its graduates leave with a management education that prepares them well for jobs of today and into the future. Expanding opportunities for consequential learning; maximizing the use of technology to reflect real-world practices without diminishing the School's student-centered learning; and utilizing the feedback from employers to inform academic and administrative decisions are key.
- **Cultivate an authentic engagement with place**  
The Atkinson School has been and will continue to be deeply connected with Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, significantly influencing its ethos and values. Ensuring that these elements are an integral part of the AGSM student experience, and affording opportunities for Willamette CLA students to gain an understanding of their importance through interdisciplinary minors are core goals. The School also prioritizes expanding relationships in the public sector and partnerships with companies in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest doing business in Pacific Rim countries.
- **Expand access for bright, talented students who will contribute to a diverse Willamette community**  
The Atkinson School, like the entire University, is committed to ensuring access to its programs for qualified students who demonstrate the ambition and enthusiasm to be successful and whose participation will enrich the Willamette community. Having the capacity to provide the financial support for students with need is of growing importance. Increased efforts to identify and cultivate potential donors to provide scholarship assistance and pursuing relationships with both businesses and individuals to underwrite tuition in part or whole will be a benefit to all.

- **Demonstrate life-long value of a Willamette MBA**

The Atkinson School distinguishes itself with its high-touch, human scale, holistic management programs that prepare its graduates well for positions in private, public, or not-for profit sectors. Implementing a comprehensive, integrated marketing communication plan to advance its brand to prospective students, employers, and thought leaders in Oregon, the Pacific Northwest, and the Pacific Rim will be critical to its long-term success. Fine tuning existing programs and identifying potential new audiences, such as healthcare leaders and school superintendents; optimizing the EDC as a pipeline for potential employer-sponsored degree-seekers; and keeping alumni engaged through the Virtual Book Club and the MBA for Life program will also enhance the School's visibility and stature.

## TO APPLY

Willamette University has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with the search.

Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and application materials (including CV and letter of interest) in confidence to:

Gale Merseth and Sarah Herman  
Isaacson, Miller  
263 Summer Street, 7th Floor  
Boston, MA 02210  
[www.imsearch.com/6233](http://www.imsearch.com/6233)

Electronic submissions are strongly encouraged.

*Willamette University is a diverse community that provides equal opportunity in employment, activities, and its academic programs. The University shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, veteran status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or status with regard to pregnancy, disability or age.*