



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

Chief of Staff

The Opportunity:

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. As an alumnus of WMU's College of Aviation—ranked 6th in the world, President Kavalhuna is an Air Transport Captain—the highest civilian class, 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 on 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.

Chief of Staff

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The VPED will have the opportunity to lead to the completion of a \$1.25 billion comprehensive campaign, which just passed its halfway mark and 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.

Key Duties and 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.
- Oversight and management of 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 compliments 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 ten 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.

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 more than \$53 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. In a little more than a year, WMU has set new institutional records for first-year retention and six-year graduation rates, and opened a newly renovated Dunbar Hall—its most heavily used classroom building— and a vibrant new student center and dining facility. It set a new high watermark for total research awards at \$59.6 million and was the Mid-American Conference winner of the Learfield Directors' Cup, earning the distinction as the winningest athletic program in the conference. The University received the first shipment of its new fleet of 32 Cirrus Generation 7 training aircraft—the latest equipment available. It awarded new venture grants to 22 faculty to create new and innovative experience-driven learning opportunities. It's no wonder Western was recognized by TIME magazine as a top 100 Best College for Future Leaders based on the leadership positions of alumni—one of only three institutions in Michigan.

Looking to the future, the University is well on its way to creating a distinctive holistic, experience-driven education as it aims to be a top-tier university in Michigan for student success, aiming to rank no lower than third by 2032. Western will soon open a new parking facility to serve the new WMU Student Center and Arcadia Flats apartment complex, which opened in 2021. A new residence hall will open in 2026, and a new multiuse arena will become home of Bronco men's and women's basketball and hockey 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 that will enter its public phase under the leadership of the new president.

About President Kavalhuna:

Russ Kavalhuna began his appointment as WMU's 10th president on July 1, 2025, with a leadership vision rooted in access, purpose and impact, bringing with him a distinguished record of public service, higher education leadership and a results-driven approach to student success.

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, WMU President Kavalhuna served as executive director of flight operations at the Western Michigan University College of Aviation, ranked among the top six aviation programs in the world according to Study International.

President Kavalhuna takes the reins at Western in a pivotal period—for the University, for the higher education sector, and for the communities, colleges and universities served. Amid ongoing debates about the value of higher education, he is a clear and passionate advocate for its transformative power. As co-chair of the Growing Michigan Together Council's Higher Education Workgroup, appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, President Kavalhuna helped shape state strategies to expand educational attainment and retain Michigan talent.

Broadly recognized for his thought leadership, he is frequently sought out at both the state and national levels to contribute to policy efforts in higher education and workforce development. In addition to co-chairing Growing Michigan Together Council Workgroup, he has served governors of both major parties on boards focused on education, labor and aviation. He currently serves on the Michigan Workforce Development Board and the Michigan Aeronautics Commission.

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—a program that continues to this day—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.

Institutional Profile:

WMU was founded as a Normal School in 1903 with broad support from the community. Today it is a student-centered research university located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, with a total enrollment of just under 18,000 students, comprising 13,860 undergraduates and 3,745 graduate students. WMU is Michigan's fifth-largest university, attracting a diverse and culturally rich student body from across the United States and nearly 100 other countries. Approximately 35% of students identify among 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 setting with student support for approximately 2,000 talented undergraduates. The Graduate College supports more than 160 graduate and advanced academic programs, while WMUx offers professional development programs through its online and lifelong education units. Through formal affiliation, the University is home to the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine.

Western's Strategic Plan covers a span of 10 years and is framed around seven key priority areas: Academic Excellence; Community Building; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Internationalization; Research and Creative Scholarship; Sustainability and Well-being.

The University has the state's third-largest college-affiliated endowment, which totaled \$757 million in fiscal year 2024.

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.

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 over a lifetime. We are built to accompany students in their educational success, offering the skills employers seek most.

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 with “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 the student development of 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 \$59.6 million in total research awards in fiscal year 2024 alone, offering boundless opportunities for students to engage in scholarly pursuits.

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, which advances strategic initiatives around the well-being of students, faculty and staff members. It is our commitment to enable students' pursuit of 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 thrive on campus.

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 with a combination of 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 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, which assists students in transitioning 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 zombies. 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 six years. The University has opened a new, world-class building for the College of Aviation, which allowed the top-two program to double the number of students it serves. Less than a year ago, the University opened the newly renovated Dunbar Hall, which provides students and faculty with a flexible, accessible, welcoming and sustainable learning space 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 that 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, and can house a total of 341 residents. The building, split into two forms linked by a glass bridge, features a centralized lobby with fireplace and gathering spaces, a fitness room, laundry, and social and study spaces scattered throughout. An outdoor courtyard, designed to be a node on the main pedestrian walk through the Hilltop Village, encourages gathering outside as well.

The vibrant and distinctive new WMU Student Center opened in fall 2023. The facility is dubbed the “hub of belonging,” located in the heart of WMU’s Main Campus and 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:

As an NCAA Division 1 FBS program with 16 Division I Varsity programs, 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 prepared for a career, will make an experience-driven connection with the community, and will compete for a championship. Bronco competitions enjoyed one of the highest-growing attendance records in the nation in 2023-24. Western puts the student in student-athlete. Broncos are consistently recognized for their academic excellence in addition to their strength in competition. They were recently recognized as a top 3 program in Division I for service to the community and have ranked as the winningest athletic program in the MAC in the Learfield Directors’ Cup for two consecutive years, a first. Their recent success is highlighted by their 2025 National Championship in Men’s Ice Hockey.

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
- 74% of recent graduates working full-time are employed in Michigan
- 97% of graduates had instructors who made them excited about learning
- 89% 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 NCAA National Champion – Men’s Ice Hockey
- Ranked No. 1 in the Mid-American Conference two consecutive years – 20 conference wins and 15 NCAA appearances in 2 years —2023-24 and 2024-25 Learfield Directors’ Cup
- Top 100 in the nation for 6 grad programs —U.S. News & World Report
- 1 of 133 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 17th year —2024 Sales Education Foundation
- Top talent in consumer-packaged goods industry —2023 Consumer Goods Technology
- No. 2 ranked aviation college —FLYING Flight School Guide
- 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 \$516 million, which includes auxiliary units. The University's 2024-25 general fund budget amounts to \$414 million, with 7%, or \$2.5 million, allocated to student financial aid. This academic year's discount for first-year students is 33.5%. Western has the state's third-largest college-affiliated endowment, which totaled \$757 million in fiscal year 2024, with an annual spend of 4.5% of a trailing 60-month average. WMU achieved a record-breaking \$59.6 million in total research awards in fiscal year 2024.

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, Western Student Association and Graduate Student Association.

WMU employs just over 3,300 individuals, excluding student workers. 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.

Life in Kalamazoo:

The greater Kalamazoo area, with a population of just over 260,000, is renowned for its dedication to education, a natural environment that embodies "Pure Michigan" beauty and a globally recognized life sciences and medical sector.

The county seat and home to WMU, the city of Kalamazoo is a classic college town, rated a Top 100 Best Places to Live (Liveability.com, 2022) and the No. 3 Best Metro Area in America for new college grads (Smart Asset, 2023). It offers several theaters, museums and galleries, live music venues, eateries, brewpubs and cafes, including eclectic events and attractions like the Air Zoo, Gilmore Piano Festival and Growlers minor league baseball. For outdoor fun, the local area has 83 public lakes and 40 miles of trails for kayaking, biking and cross-country skiing. The stunning Lake Michigan shoreline and beaches are just 35 miles away.

The Kalamazoo community is also known for the Kalamazoo Promise, a scholarship program available to all Kalamazoo Public Schools' students, covering up to 100% of tuition and mandatory fees at any Michigan public (and many private) institutions of higher learning. This transformative program has inspired similar initiatives throughout the state and across the country.

Building on a legacy of educational innovation and a commitment to meeting community needs, WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine was formed 13 years ago and made possible by partnerships with two teaching hospitals, Beacon Health Systems and Bronson Healthcare. Today it is a flourishing medical school dedicated to educating the next generation of doctors, offering exemplary patient care and advancing medical research.

Along with a long history in the medical industry and life sciences, the Kalamazoo area has a diverse business community, from startups in the WMU Business Technology and Research Park (BTR) to long-established international enterprises. WMU plays a pivotal role in meeting the state's regional needs for higher education and career development, connecting with national corporate headquarters, major local businesses and organizations, including Stryker, Pfizer, Zoetis, Newell, Bosch, Charles River Laboratories, Denso, Eaton Corp., General Mills, Kellanova, MANN+HUMMEL, Graphic Packaging International, Parker Hannifin Corp., Whirlpool and the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency.

WMU continues to serve thousands of Michigan residents annually through its online and lifelong learning offerings, as well as its regional location in Grand Rapids. Moreover, the University has

established articulation agreements with a variety of higher education institutions, both within and outside the state, to streamline students' transfer to the University.

Among the University's many economic success stories is the BTR Park, established in 2000. This 265-acre parcel is home to several dozen businesses pursuing advances in life sciences, engineering, information technology and other fields. In the nearly 25 years since its inception, BTR has attracted more than \$150 million in investments, generated more than 1,400 jobs and, benefiting Western students, given rise to numerous internships, co-ops and other experiential-learning opportunities. Building on the success of the original BTR, the park was expanded by 55 acres in 2021 with the help of a \$2.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration; the expansion is known as BTR Park North.

Across the local community and beyond it, businesses, schools, governmental units and nonprofits collaborate with Western's faculty and scholars to generate new knowledge, address critical challenges, broaden our collective understanding, meet society's needs and develop tools to improve our world.

In education, a landmark \$29.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Education—one of the largest federal grants in University history—has been expanding opportunities for thousands of schoolchildren and their families in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This five-year project, conducted in partnership with local school districts and community organizations, is implementing evidence-based solutions to support student success.

In the realm of energy innovation, our researchers are at the forefront of groundbreaking battery technology. With a nearly \$9.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, our College of Engineering and Applied Sciences is advancing lithium-ion battery research to enhance energy efficiency and storage capabilities.

As part of empowering business development, Sleeping Giant Capital, a West Michigan-based investment and growth platform founded by two WMU Haworth College of Business faculty members, has successfully secured significant funding to expand its operations. The platform

empowers stakeholders throughout West Michigan, including WMU Haworth undergraduate students and advisors, investors, executives, and current and aspiring business owners.

Furthering our commitment to sustainability, WMU researchers have been awarded \$5 million from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management as part of a \$44.5 million effort to advance commercial-scale carbon capture, transport and storage across the United States. WMU's collaborators include businesses, nonprofits and other higher education institutions.

Compensation:

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Application and Nomination Process:

Greenwood Asher & Associates® is assisting Western Michigan University in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Inquires, nominations, and application materials should be directed to Jeremy Duff and/or Kyle Pybus-Jerome from Greenwood Asher & Associates at WMUVPAdvancement@greenwoodsearch.com. Application materials should include:

- A letter of interest that clearly states the applicant's qualifications for the position
- A current resume/curriculum vitae

We strongly encourage submitting application materials as PDF attachments. The search will be conducted with a commitment to confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and continue until an appointment is made. **To ensure full consideration, applications should be received by September 8, 2025.**

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