

Position Specification

**President**  
**Pacifica Graduate Institute**



**PACIFICA**  
GRADUATE INSTITUTE

December 2025

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## The Opportunity



### Position

**President and Chief Executive Officer**

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### Location

**Santa Barbara, California**

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### Reporting Relationship

**Pacifica Graduate Institute - Board of Trustees**

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### Website:

**[www.pacifica.edu](http://www.pacifica.edu)**

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## Position Summary

Pacifica Graduate Institute seeks a visionary and mission-driven President/CEO to lead its accredited graduate school specializing in depth psychology and mythological studies. The President serves as Chief Executive Officer and ex officio member of the Board of Trustees, providing strategic, operational, and academic leadership to ensure institutional vitality, mission alignment, and long-term sustainability.

Key responsibilities include oversight of academic and administrative functions, financial stewardship, accreditation compliance, and external representation. Further, the President will be a critical leader ensuring the school's future success, as Pacifica Graduate Institute celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

The ideal candidate will hold a Ph.D. in a relevant field, possess significant teaching or administrative experience, and demonstrate deep knowledge of higher education operations. Success in this role will require a leader with integrity, strategic vision, emotional intelligence, and a collaborative spirit. The ability to inspire trust, foster inclusive dialogue, make data-informed decisions, and navigate complex organizational dynamics will be essential. A strong commitment to Pacifica's unique educational philosophy and the capacity to lead with both purpose and adaptability will distinguish the most successful candidate.

# Pacifica Graduate Institute



Pacifica Graduate Institute is a unique graduate school in Santa Barbara, California, offering master's and doctoral programs grounded in depth psychology and mythological studies. Guided by its mission *animae mundi colendae gratia* – for the sake of tending soul in and of the world, Pacifica fosters a diverse, imaginative, and academically rigorous community that values personal transformation, cultural insight, and soulful engagement with the challenges of our time.

Pacifica Graduate Institute was founded in 1976, emerging from a community mental health initiative supported by the University of California. Initially offering a Counseling Skills Certificate through the Human Relations Center, the Institute evolved into a formal graduate school with the launch of its Master's in Counseling Psychology program in 1982. By the late 1980s, Pacifica had embraced depth psychology as its central academic focus, acquired a permanent campus in Carpinteria, and officially adopted the name Pacifica Graduate Institute in 1989. The school expanded its offerings to include doctoral programs and a unique Mythological Studies curriculum, inspired in part by the donation of Joseph Campbell's archives.

In 1997, Pacifica achieved accreditation from the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), affirming its academic quality and enabling access to federal financial aid. Continued growth led to the acquisition of Ladera campus in 2005, allowing the Institute to broaden its reach and deepen its commitment to soul-centered education. Today, Pacifica offers ten graduate programs across two campuses, serving a global community of students and alumni dedicated to exploring the intersections of psychology, mythology, and the humanities. Enrollment is approximately 550-650 graduate students enrolled in instructional coursework, and between 200-300 students in dissertation phase.

Pacifica Graduate Institute's shared governance model is a collaborative framework that engages trustees, leadership, faculty, staff, and students in decision-making processes aligned with the Institute's mission and values. Rooted in principles such as academic excellence, open communication, integrity, and stewardship, this model fosters a collegial environment where responsibilities are shared, and decisions are made transparently to support institutional health and education.

Pacifica Graduate Institute's faculty is composed of distinguished scholars, practitioners, and educators who specialize in depth psychology, mythology, the humanities, and related fields. They bring a rich blend of academic expertise and clinical experience, fostering a learning environment that emphasizes

intellectual rigor, thought provoking inquiry, and interdisciplinary dialogue. Faculty members are deeply engaged in research, publication, and service, contributing to the advancement of psychological and mythological studies while mentoring students in both scholarly and professional development.

### **Mission**

Pacifica Graduate Institute is dedicated to fostering creative learning and research in psychology and mythological studies, rooted in the traditions of depth psychology. Guided by its motto *animae mundi colendae gratia*—“for the sake of tending soul in and of the world”—Pacifica cultivates an educational environment that values academic freedom, cultural diversity, and soulful inquiry. Drawing from ancient wisdom and modern psychological theory, the Institute emphasizes the integration of intellect, imagination, and community. Its core values—Logos, Eros, Consciousness, Integrity, Service, and Stewardship—reflect a commitment to personal transformation, social responsibility, and the care of the world.

### **Academics**

Pacifica Graduate Institute offers a distinctive array of graduate programs that integrate depth psychology, mythology, the humanities, and consciousness studies. Designed to foster personal transformation and academic excellence, students can pursue master's and doctoral degrees in Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology, Mythological Studies, Jungian & Archetypal Studies, and other interdisciplinary fields that explore the human experience through symbolic, cultural, and psychological lenses.

Each program is rooted in Pacifica's mission, and reflects the Institute's commitment to academic rigor, cultural diversity, and holistic education. Whether studying the unconscious through Jungian theory, engaging with mythic narratives, or exploring the intersections of psychology and ecology, students are encouraged to connect scholarship with service and imagination with action.

Pacifica's low-residency model combines brief, intensive on-campus sessions in Santa Barbara with ongoing remote or synchronous classes, coursework, research, and supervision. Students periodically gather for in-person seminars and community engagement while completing most studies online. This hybrid format enables Pacifica to serve a global student body while preserving its hallmark in-depth, experiential learning.



Pacifica's academic offerings are supported by a faculty of scholar-practitioners, a rich library of psychological and mythological resources, and a campus nestled between the Pacific Ocean and coastal foothills near Santa Barbara. The Institute's programs are accredited and designed to prepare graduates for licensure, professional practice, teaching, writing, and leadership in a variety of fields. Through its integrative approach, Pacifica continues to shape a global community of learners committed to healing, creativity, and depth-informed engagement with the world.

## **Degree Programs**

- **Clinical Psychology (M.A. / Ph.D.)**

A licensure-track program designed for students pursuing careers as psychologists in multiple states (CA, OR). It emphasizes psychodiagnostics, neuropsychology, psychotherapy, and research, delivered in a low-residency format over 5–6 years.

- **Counseling Psychology (M.A.)**

Prepares students for LMFT or LPCC licensure in multiple states (CA, OR). The program blends depth-oriented counseling theory with multicultural perspectives and a clinical practicum, completed in 2.5 years through monthly low-residency sessions.

- **Counseling Psychology (Psy.D.)**

A clinical doctorate for students seeking licensure as psychologists. It focuses on psychotherapy, ethics, clinical assessment, and multicultural psychology, offered in a low-residency format over 4–5 years.

- **Mythological Studies (M.A. / Ph.D.)**

Explores global mythologies, storytelling, and symbolic traditions. Ideal for careers in education, writing, and cultural analysis, this program integrates depth psychology with mythic imagination.

- **Depth Psychology & Creativity (M.A.)**

Combines depth psychology with creative expression in the arts and humanities. Designed for artists, educators, and cultural workers seeking to explore imagination and transformation.

- **Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies (M.A. / Ph.D.)**

A doctoral program combining psychological insight with somatic, holistic, and integrative healing methods. Suitable for wellness practitioners, therapists, and those in the healing arts

- **Integrative Therapy and Healing Practices (Ph.D.)**

Investigates the relationship between psychology, spirituality, and religious traditions. Ideal for those interested in consciousness studies, spiritual care, and integrative approaches to healing.

- **Jungian & Archetypal Studies (M.A. / Ph.D.)**

Investigates the relationship between psychology, spirituality, and religious traditions. Ideal for those interested in consciousness studies, spiritual care, and integrative approaches to healing.

- **Psychology, Religion, and Consciousness (M.A. / Ph.D.)**

An interdisciplinary program exploring religious consciousness through psychology, spirituality, and global issues to inspire holistic understanding and personal growth.



## **Research**

Pacifica Graduate Institute fosters a vibrant research culture rooted in depth psychology, mythology, and the humanities. Research at Pacifica is deeply integrated into its academic programs, encouraging students and faculty to explore the symbolic, archetypal, and cultural dimensions of human experience. Dissertation work is central to graduate study, often combining scholarly rigor with creative inquiry and centered reflection.

Faculty members are active researchers and published authors, contributing to fields such as Jungian psychology, ecopsychology, mythological studies, integrative healing, and consciousness studies. Pacifica also supports research through its Extension programs, which host conferences, workshops, and public lectures featuring global thought leaders. These events often explore emerging topics in psychology, spirituality, and cultural transformation, offering students and alumni opportunities to engage with cutting-edge ideas.

The Institute's commitment to research is further reflected in its partnerships with archives like the OPUS Archives and Research Center and New York Public Library, which house the collections of Marija Gimbutas and Joseph Campbell, respectively. These resources provide rich material for scholarly exploration and creative inspiration, reinforcing Pacifica's mission to tend the soul of the world through education, inquiry, and service.

# The Candidate

## Key Responsibilities

The President serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Pacifica Graduate Institute and as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. Under the direction of the Board, the President provides strategic, operational, and visionary leadership to ensure the continued vitality, mission alignment, and academic excellence of the institution.

The President is responsible for internal oversight of academic, administrative, and financial functions while championing Pacifica's distinct mission rooted in depth psychology, the humanities, and transformative education. This includes guiding institutional priorities, fostering a collaborative and inclusive campus culture, and ensuring long-term sustainability and innovation.

Externally, the President represents Pacifica in local, national, and international arenas—building relationships with professional associations, accrediting bodies, government agencies, and community partners.

The role requires a forward-thinking and mission-centered leader who can honor Pacifica's legacy while advancing a vision that meets the evolving needs of graduate education. Pacifica will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026, a significant milestone as part of its institutional success. The President will be instrumental in helping shape PGI's continued legacy into the future.

## Academic Responsibilities

As a graduate institution committed to transformational education, Pacifica upholds rigorous academic standards that support not only intellectual development but also individuation, psychological depth, and holistic integration. The President ensures that academic excellence remains central to the institution's mission and is responsible for aligning programs and practices with this unique educational philosophy.

The President oversees all academic and non-academic departments, evaluating and evolving organizational structures and program offerings in response to institutional priorities, student needs, and emerging opportunities. This includes the authority to launch new initiatives or phase out underperforming academic programs and administrative units to ensure mission alignment, operational effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

The President plays a key role in maintaining institutional accreditation and compliance, ensuring adherence to standards set by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), field-specific accrediting agencies, and the U.S. Department of Education, as well as all applicable state and federal regulations.

To uphold academic quality and support shared governance, the President works in close partnership with the Provost to ensure alignment between faculty leadership and institutional priorities, fostering transparent communication and collaborative decision-making. A record of recruiting and empowering strong leadership teams, with an inspiring and transparent management style that builds organizational strength and talent.



# Operational Leadership and Financial Stewardship

The President provides strategic oversight of Pacifica's financial health and operational infrastructure, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources in alignment with the institution's mission and long-term vision. This includes active engagement with financial stakeholders.

The President is also responsible for continuing the Board-approved Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) as a key component of Pacifica's strategic growth, institutional sustainability, and commitment to shared prosperity.

In addition to long-range financial and capital planning, the President chairs the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), which provides leadership and coordination for the day-to-day academic and administrative functions of the Institute. All Pacifica employees ultimately report to the President through the appropriate leadership channels. The President also works closely with General Counsel on legal matters related to the governance, compliance, and operational management of the Institute.

## Candidate Qualifications

The ideal candidate will possess a doctoral degree in a relevant discipline, a minimum of seven years of teaching or administrative experience, and demonstrated expertise in academic or business administration, including comprehensive knowledge of higher education operations, financial management, and accreditation processes.

### Educational Background & Experience:

- Possesses a Ph.D. or equivalent in one of the following fields:
  - Psychology
  - Mythological Studies
  - Humanities
  - Other relevant academic disciplines
- Has at least 7 years of teaching or administrative experience

### Administrative Credentials & Experience:

- Demonstrated experience in business or academic administration
- Skilled in:
  - Business administration
  - Budget management
  - Personnel supervision

### Knowledge of Higher Education Practices:

- Familiar with best practices in higher education
- Understanding of:
  - Administrative operations
  - Financial processes
  - Legal procedures
  - Accreditation processes

## Equal Opportunity

Pacifica Graduate Institute is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, marital status, disability, pregnancy, medical condition, or covered veteran status.

## Procedure for Candidacy

Pacifica Graduate Institute has retained the services of the executive search firm Korn Ferry. Every effort will be made to preserve the confidentiality of information received. Applicants should submit the following two documents (in two separate PDFs):

- 1) An up-to-date and detailed *curriculum vitae* or resume.
- 2) 2–3-page letter of interest addressed to the Search Committee describing why you are interested in the President role and highlighting personal vision and relevant professional leadership experience aligned to the themes in this profile document.

To ensure full consideration, please submit application materials electronically by **Sunday January 4, 2026**. It is anticipated that the President will take up the position as soon as possible in 2026. The two PDF documents should be sent directly to Jenny Seaver at [jenny.seaver@kornferry.com](mailto:jenny.seaver@kornferry.com). General expressions of interest, nominations, and inquiries may also be submitted in confidence.

# Life in Santa Barbara



Santa Barbara is a coastal city celebrated for its natural beauty, mild Mediterranean climate, and distinctive architectural charm. Framed by the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Ynez Mountains, it offers a picturesque setting that encourages both relaxation and outdoor activity, from hiking and sailing to enjoying its renowned beaches.

The city also boasts a vibrant cultural scene, with world-class dining, art galleries, music festivals, and historic landmarks that reflect its rich Spanish heritage. Its economy is diverse, supported by industries such as technology, tourism, and healthcare, and it maintains a strong commitment to sustainability and community well-being.

Santa Barbara's walkable downtown, thriving local businesses, and emphasis on wellness contribute to a lifestyle that balances sophistication with simplicity. Residents enjoy access to high-quality schools, healthcare, and public services, all within a community that values environmental stewardship and civic engagement. Whether drawn by its scenic tranquility or its cultural vitality, Santa Barbara offers a uniquely enriching place to live and work.

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