2023 CIO/CISO of the Year & Rising Star Finalists

CIO Category: Government/Education/Non-Profit

Paul Allison
CIO
PennWest University

Paul Allison is the Chief Information Officer for PennWest University, a new entity recently formed when the state system combined California University of Pennsylvania, Clarion University, and Edinboro University.

As the founding CIO for PennWest and previously the CIO for California University of Pennsylvania, Allison is responsible for overseeing the merging of the technology departments, services, and strategies of the three institutions into one PennWest technology ecosystem. He is a critical part of the PennWest leadership team, responsible for providing overall leadership, vision, strategic planning, management, and accountability for all technology services and strategy including academic and administrative computing, network services, distance learning, user support, application development, cybersecurity, and telecommunications.

Allison's career achievements include 25+ years of technology leadership experience including four years as CIO at PennWest/California and three years as Director of Enterprise Applications at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh where he also earned his MBA.

Chuck Bartel
VP, IT & CIO
Duquesne University

Chuck Bartel is the Vice President for Information Technology & CIO for Duquesne University. He is responsible for the overall management and strategic planning for all university IT services including administrative computing, centralized infrastructure, and a variety of technology support services including enterprise reporting, telecommunication services, and information security. Chuck is a member of the President's Cabinet.

He joined Duquesne University as Assistant Vice President/Chief Information Officer in August 2014 and was promoted to VP in July 2018. Prior to joining Duquesne, he was Director of Global IT Services at Carnegie Mellon University and served as Computing Services' point person for the CMU's new global initiatives.

Bartel has been a volunteer with many Higher Ed associations including Internet2, C-CUE, AICUP,

KINBER, and EDUCAUSE. He holds a BS in Electrical Engineering Technology from Thomas A. Edison State University and a Master's Degree in Public Management from Carnegie Mellon University.

Kyle Fulton
AVP, Technology
GBU Financial Life

Kyle Fulton's experience spans 20 years in IT across multiple industries that include Telecommunications, Language Learning, Renewable Energy, and Financial Services.

Fulton has been with GBU Financial Life since mid-2020. During the last several years, his responsibilities have included leading the transformation of IT and digital services, driving technology solutions, and turning data into information. Kyle has continued his education both formally and informally, having recently earned an MS in Cybersecurity and earning several insurance industry certifications.

Dan Hoffer
CIO
The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Dan Hoffer is Chief Information Officer at The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust where he is responsible for all information technology logistics. He oversees logical and physical security technology, networking logistics, website and application development, and overall technology planning and strategy. Dan has oversight of the Pittsburgh Tessitura consortium, enabled by the enterprise Tessitura CRM platform for 10 Pittsburgh arts and culture organizations.

Hoffer is currently the President on the board for CIOArts, a non-profit organization comprised of nearly 100 organizations in the performing arts and museum sectors. He is also an active board member for Tessitura Network a not-for-profit software company powering over 750 arts and cultural institutions worldwide.

Hoffer holds a BS in Information Technology from Robert Morris University and a degree in multimedia and video production from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh.

Matt Hoffman
CIO
Pennsylvania Highlands Community College

Currently at Penn Highlands, Matt Hoffman leads a team of information technology professionals to enable and enhance the student experience with innovative technology solutions.

Some of his team's projects at Penn Highlands consisted of implementing a new learning management system, migrating all to Office 365 with Advanced Threat protection and MFA, new RingCentral phone systems, moving video conferencing to Zoom with Zoom Rooms, Student Information Systems to the cloud, enhancing classroom experience for faculty with various technologies, implementing many cyber security measures like Cisco Umbrella and KnowBe4, and several other initiatives.

Previously at CTC as a Senior Director, Advanced Technology Solutions, Hoffman lead the development of custom technology solutions, demos, and coordination of business development activities where IT technical solutions are needed to meet a client's needs. He also led the development of the Innovation Center that is still going strong today.

Heidi Norman
CIO & Director, Dept. of Innovation & Performance
City of Pittsburgh

Heidi Norman serves as the CIO & Director, Dept. of Innovation & Performance for the City of Pittsburgh, PA. I&P elevates the work of city government by designing modern technology solutions for their colleagues, collaborating with partners to test innovative ideas, and developing leaders' capabilities to achieve operational excellence. I&P has gained a reputation for being at the cutting-edge of open data and analytics, applying lean systems principles to improve government services, and utilizing a collaborative approach to innovation with internal and external partners.

Norman holds a BA in Political Science from Northwestern University and an MS in Information Systems from Syracuse University, as well as executive education certificates from the Tepper School of Business and the CIO Institute at the Heinz School of Information Systems & Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University.

CIO Category: Megabyte

Binesh Dobhal
CIO
Creatotech

Binesh Dobhal is the CIO for Creatotech. He holds a Master's Degree in Computer Applications and he is an accomplished coder and programmer who enjoys using his skills to contribute to the exciting technological advances that happen every day at Creatotech. He is passionate about Web design and development and is also a certified Magento developer.

Mike Duddy
VP, Technology
Apex Health Solutions

As a founding executive of Apex Health Solutions, Duddy led the ground-up development of the Apex healthcare technology platform, ApexAscent™. ApexAscent is a cloud-based healthcare interoperability and analytics solution that delivers actionable insights and a portfolio of population health capabilities to power Apex clients' transformation to value-based healthcare models. In just three years, the platform has grown to support multiple use cases for three of the top twenty-five healthcare systems in the United States. Apex company growth has followed suit, expanding from its initial 10 employees in 2020 to over 200 in 2023, with office locations in Houston, Nashville, and Pittsburgh.

Duddy has held technical and leadership roles for over 20 years. He holds a BS in Computer Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University.

Brad Ryba
CTO
Rimsys

Brad Ryba is the Co-Founder and CTO of Rimsys Regulatory Management Software, a cloud-based solution to digitize, automate, and create regulatory order for MedTech. Ryba has 22+ years' experience in technology and software quality roles, including engineering, design control, manufacturing quality, software QA, and regulatory compliance. He has spent over half of his career working directly for

Medical Device manufactures of sleep therapy, respiratory care, PSG diagnostics, and dialysis treatment devices ranging from single-product startups to multinational Fortune 500 corporations. Ryba has experience developing and managing quality management systems within MedTech requirements, and he has been a featured speaker at the Medical Device Summit and ASQ Conference on Quality. He has held engineering level and senior leadership roles within other industries including SaaS, insurance, e-commerce, telecommunications, education, and healthcare technology. He holds a BS in Computer Engineering and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh Katz Graduate School of Business.

CIO Category: Gigabyte

Mario Cafaro
SVP
Management Science Associates (MSA)

Mario Cafaro has been with MSA for nearly 24 years, starting in 1999 as an Application Help Desk team member and progressing through the ranks to his current role as SVP, Information Technology Systems & Services (ITSS) division. Cafaro earned a BS in Accounting and a Master's Degree in Information Systems Management from Duquesne University.

MSA's corporate structure does not feature a C-suite but Mario's responsibilities are that of a CIO. The ITSS division provides the technology backbone for the other six divisions of MSA, including technologists in the fields of Data Analytics, Health Sciences, Metals & Advanced Manufacturing, Media, and Gaming.

Cafaro leads a team of 60 IT professionals including specialists in networking, software development, virtualization, public and private clouds, cyber security, SAN storage, hardware, data center infrastructure, and service desk.

He is a proud father of two, and lives with his lovely wife in an eastern suburb of Pittsburgh.

Adam Gunnett
Director, IT & Marketing
Busy Beaver Building Centers

Adam Gunnett joined the Busy Beaver Building Centers team in 2015 as an IT Specialist and swiftly rose to the role of Director of IT & Marketing, currently overseeing both departments for Busy Beaver. Gunnett's success has always revolved around forward thinking. Upon joining the Busy Beaver team, he started by partnering with trusted providers to help him, monitor, manage, and offload daily IT tasks so that he could direct his focus to implement technologies to better serve the company's needs. Gunnett has recently begun deploying new technologies such as Badger Technologies' Autonomous Robots and Pricer's Electronic Shelf Labels in our busiest stores. He prides himself in being able to lead the Busy Beaver team, and his peers, forward. As an essential part of a growing company, he knows that his role can positively impact the day-to-day lives of every associate.

Karl Herleman
Sr. VP, IT
American Textile Co.

After finishing a Penn State Computer Science degree in 1987, Karl Herleman moved to Florida as a software engineer. He stayed awake most nights tweaking code for companies like L3Harris and Seagate

while also studying at UCF in Orlando. As his responsibilities increased and the systems he worked on grew larger, he turned his focus toward managing processes and people. After 15 years, Herleman moved into enterprise architecture at Gartner and five years later he was the CIO for Miami Dade College. After finishing an MBA, he returned home to Pittsburgh in 2012 to work with manufacturing data and analytics at Management Science. Now, he's helping to drive digital transformation at American Textile Company, a leading provider of performance bedding products.

Scott Phelps
VP, Technology
Pittsburgh Steelers

Scott Phelps is in his 24th season with the Pittsburgh Steelers and currently serves as Vice President of Technology. In his role, Phelps leads a department that oversees all IT systems at UPMC Rooney Sports Complex and Acrisure Stadium. This includes network, storage and server architectures, communications systems, desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones, and all cloud-based storage and server architectures. He also oversees the IT Cyber Security tools and systems that help protect the organization's network(s). Additionally, Phelps oversees the Football Technology Systems both on and off the field as well as the video analysis systems utilized by coaching and football staff within the organization.

Phelps is a member of IUP's Eberly College of Business Advisory Counsel, IUP's Career and Professional Development Advisory Board, Seneca Valley School District's Seneca Valley Foundation Board of Trustees, and a member of the Governing Body of Pittsburgh's CIO Executive Summit.

CIO Category: Terabyte

Chris Carmody
SVP, Enterprise IT Infrastructure
UPMC Information Technology

Chris Carmody has been a healthcare technology leader within UPMC for over two decades in a variety of roles. As SVP, Enterprise IT Infrastructure with UPMC Information Technology, he leads more than 1,300 people on the IT infrastructure teams, including cloud, data centers, data, voice and video networks, cybersecurity, analytics, enterprise architecture, hospital-based technology support, and enterprise applications. He also serves as a member of the Board of ClinicalConnect Health Information Exchange, which he led as president for more than nine years. Carmody earned a Bachelor's Degree in accounting from Westminster College, where he currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees. He earned an MBA and Master of Information Systems Management from Robert Morris University and has taught as an adjunct professor at multiple universities, including Duquesne and Point Park.

Mike Keslar
Divisional CIO & President of BNY Mellon Pennsylvania
BNY Mellon

Mike Keslar serves as divisional CIO & President of BNY Mellon Pennsylvania. As CIO, Keslar provides technology leadership for three critical business lines, oversees international market technology, and drives the strategy for core IT services utilized across BNY Mellon. He also helps provide local leadership and cultivates technology relationships throughout the region. With a 30+ year history at BNY Mellon and commitment to continuous learning, he is a trusted IT partner for the executive team to drive our future strategy and growth.

Keslar is passionate about creating opportunities for the region. He currently sits on the Board of Directors for Vibrant Pittsburgh and Advisory Boards for the computer science programs at the University of Pittsburgh and Robert Morris University.

He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from Saint Vincent College and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh's Katz School of Business.

Kathleen Lovett
VP & CIO, Supply Chain
VSP Vision

As VP & CIO, Supply Chain at VSP Vision, Kathleen Lovett partners closely with presidents and executives across the enterprise to advance meaningful business outcomes. Prior to joining VSP, she held executive leadership roles at Thermo Fisher Scientific, where she led global distribution channel technology and eCommerce digital operations teams. She also worked at U.S. Steel for 20 years, including three years at their international division based in Slovakia, and two years at a joint venture start-up in California.

Lovett received a Digital Transformation certification through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a BS in Computer Information Systems from Westminster College, and a dual MBA/Master of Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh's Katz School of Business. Active in her community, Lovett supports several organizations dedicated to advancing DE&I.

Bhaskar Ramachandran
VP & CIO
PPG

Bhaskar Ramachandran currently serves as VP & CIO for PPG, a leading Pittsburgh-based paint, coatings, and specialty products company. He is responsible for enabling PPG's business strategy through IT and its cybersecurity program.

Ramachandran joined PPG from Jabil Inc. As VP and CIO of the largest division, he transformed the manufacturing IT from on-premises to a fully cloud-based connected ecosystem to make manufacturing more efficient and cost effective along with SAP S/4 upgrade and migration to the cloud.

Prior to joining Jabil, he held IT leadership roles of increasing responsibility at Textron, Inc., where he was accountable for the SAP COE. In 2013, he was appointed VP & CIO for Textron's defense and intelligence segment.

Ramachandran earned a BS in chemistry from Madras University in India and an MBA from The Fuqua School of Business at Duke University.

Tracci Schultz
SVP, IT, FedEx Ground and Operations Core Technologies
FedEx Services

As the SVP, IT, FedEx Ground and Operations Core Technologies for FedEx Services, Tracci Schultz plays an integral role in leading FedEx's enterprise-wide digital transformation while ensuring the business meets its goals.

Prior to assuming her current position in November 2021, she served as the Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning, Engineering & Operational Solutions at FedEx Freight.

Schultz completed her executive MBA at the University of Memphis in 2010. She has been named a FedEx Services and FedEx Freight Five Star Award Winner, the highest award an individual at FedEx can receive from the company. In 2017, she was named to the 100 Corporate Women Leaders in STEM by STEMconnector and was honored as one of the 2018 Super Women by the Memphis Business Journal. Schultz served on the Women in Trucking Board of Directors from 2018 to 2022.

CISO Category: Megabyte

Brian Abercrombie
Information Security Privacy Officer
TeleTracking Technologies

Brian Abercrombie is TeleTracking's Information Security Privacy Officer. He has over 27 years' experience in IT and Information Security in both leadership and technical functions. He has held CTO, CISO, and individual contributor roles across various market segments. He earned an MBA from Duquesne University and executive certifications from Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College of Information Systems & Public Policy. In addition, Abercrombie holds several professional accreditations, including CISSP, CCSP, and CMMC-AB Registered Practitioner (RP) certifications.

Mike Conley
CISO
Industrial Scientific & Intelex

As CISO, Mike Conley is the senior IT leader for Industrial Scientific and Intelex Technologies, operating companies of Fortive Corporation. With 23 years' experience in the technology industry, he directs the 24/7 data protection and privacy operations for Industrial Scientific (HQ in Pittsburgh) and Intelex (HQ in Toronto) in addition to oversight for Global IT Operations. Conley contributes as a team member to numerous software and product development projects supporting cloud and connected-device platforms. Outside of the office, he co-coordinates the Greater Pittsburgh CISO Group and serves on a board of directors for FBI/InfraGard Pittsburgh Members Alliance. Prior to his time at Industrial Scientific, Conley was the Manager of Security Engineering and Architecture at U.S. Steel and was a software engineer for the first 10 years of his career. He holds a BS in Computer Science from the California University of PA.

Tony Krance
Executive Director, IT/ISO
Seton Hill University

Tony Krance has been at Seton Hill University for four years and currently serves as Executive Director, IT/ISO. He works in conjunction with all University departments to maintain a secure data environment. He incorporates Seton Hill students in the defense of cybercrime through work study and graduate assistant programs. His focus in cybersecurity has spanned over two decades, primarily working with non-profits and schools. Krance believes the best defense in this digital age is educating and engaging the people behind the screens.

Phil Woods
Sr. Director, Technology Operations & Solutions, CISO
FHLBank Pittsburgh

Phil Woods joined FHLBank Pittsburgh in January 2017 as CISO and, in 2020, was promoted to Sr. Director, Technology Operations & Solutions, CISO. He has established information security strategy and

direction for the enterprise with the added responsibility of IT infrastructure and operations, business continuity and disaster recovery, service management, workplace solutions, and cloud computing. Prior to joining FHLBank Pittsburgh, Woods held CISO positions at Sbarro Foods and Standard Register. He holds a BS in Applied Science from Miami University in Ohio. He is also a Certified Information Security Manager and holds a Six Sigma BlackBelt Certification and a Master's Certificate in Commercial Project Management.

CISO Category: Gigabyte

Erika Carrara
VP & CISO
Wabtec Corporation

Erika Carrara is a Native American, Army Veteran, and VP & CISO at Wabtec Corporation, a Fortune 300 company. Her expertise extends across multiple industries. In her role, she is tasked with leadership, direction, and delivery of global information security services and activities across more than 50 countries covering 300+ operating locations and over 28,000 employees. Carrara actively works across all areas of the business, from the frontline to Board level, supporting business outcomes and strategic objectives, where she is committed to making security "actionable and understandable" at all levels.

Carrara is a firm believer that people are the solution to solving technology and business problems. With people-centric approach and emphasis on fundamentals, she pays homage to the company's Pittsburgh roots by using a Steelers football fundamental approach to cybersecurity; it begins and ends with "blocking and tackling." Bringing big results to the global manufacturing giant.

Jason Rhykerd
CISO
Sheetz

Jason Rhykerd, CISSP, is a highly accomplished technology professional with over 20 years' experience in providing leadership and direction of technical systems, focusing on assessing and balancing cyber risk with business strategy.

He is a trusted business advisor and an excellent communicator who uses innovative thinking to solve security and risk-based challenges in unique business contexts.

Rhykerd has worked across various industries, including the educational, medical, federal, and retail spaces. He has a proven ability to build robust and successful security and technology programs with extensive knowledge in threat management. He is committed to reducing risk, enhancing security, and ensuring resiliency.

Eris Symms
CISO
Arconic

Before becoming CISO in 2020, Eris Symms led the security efforts for Arconic's digital transformation initiatives, including the transition to cloud collaboration platforms and cloud security solutions.

He joined Arconic in 2011 as an infrastructure engineer and was later promoted to an incident response role within the information security team.

Symms has also held IT roles at U.S. Steel and a DOE contractor.

He holds a BS in Computer Science from Saint Vincent College and an MS in Information Systems Management from Robert Morris University. In 2021, Eris completed the CISO certification program at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College.

CISO Category: Terabyte

Susan Koski
CISO, Head of Enterprise Information Security
PNC Financial Services

Susan Koski is a role model and thought leader in cybersecurity, inspiring from the front as a woman in a largely male-dominated field, and helping to shape a security culture within PNC of collaboration and inclusion. She consistently delivers value and institutes high-impact initiatives. She converged cyber, physical, fraud, and insider monitoring into PNC's 24x7x365 Global Security Fusion Center and shared this model within the industry. Koski has also created and matured programs across identity (FIDO enabled), data protection, cryptography, application security, and insider threat. An inspiring, servant leader, her teams have consistently maintained impressive retention rates and she mentors other women in technology and security. She has had her thought leadership featured about building a security culture within the book, "Fight Fire with Fire: Proactive Cybersecurity Strategies for Today's Leaders" and is actively engaged with several industry organizations, including FS-ISAC, BPI/BITS, Evanta and the Greater Pittsburgh CISO Group.

Mike Noble
CISO
Alcoa

As CISO for Alcoa, Mike Noble is responsible for managing their global information security program. This incorporates all facets of information and cyber security, including strategy, policy, process and standards development, risk management, incident response, threat intelligence, IT Compliance, and privacy.

Noble came to Alcoa through its acquisition of RTI International Metals in 2015. Throughout his 20-year career at RTI, he served in numerous roles, including Director of IT Operations, Interim CIO, and CISO.

He is a United States Veteran and a 30-year IT professional. He proudly served in the United States Army as a communications engineer. Upon honorable discharge from the military, Noble studied Computer Science and Mathematics at Youngstown State University and is a graduate of the Carnegie Mellon University Chief Information Security Officer Program.

Category: Rising Star

Karen Fay
VP, Information Security Governance
Dollar Bank

Karen Fay is a proven leader in Information Technology, Data Governance, and Information Security with extensive experience in cyber security, data privacy, and data compliance. She has been acknowledged for exercising strong communication and focus on improving the perception and acceptance of

Information Security's value. Fay possesses a broad spectrum of experience and knowledge across numerous disciplines and industries such as higher education, financial services, professional associations, and consulting thus allowing for optimal flexibility in understanding the needs of different business units within a given organization and optimizing opportunities for process improvement.

Dusan Stefanovic
Sr. IT Manager
U.S. Steel

Dusan Stefanovic is an experienced IT Manager and thought leader. He currently holds the position of Sr. IT Manager at U.S. Steel, and he is proud to serve and lead a diverse team of IT professionals on a mission to delight their customers and drive innovation in support of business and IT strategy. During his career, he has progressed through technical and leadership roles while gaining valuable IT and business experience, including time as a Program Manager responsible for managing various large, multi-year projects. He also led the strategic planning and execution of the shift to Microsoft cloud-based services.

He serves on the Advisory Board of the Greater Pittsburgh IT Managers group and a graduate of Pittsburgh IT Leadership Development Program.

Stefanovic holds a BE in Computer Engineering from Youngstown State University and an MS in Engineering Management from Robert Morris University.

He lives in Mt. Lebanon with his wife and three children and enjoys tennis and snow skiing.

Kallie Winkler
Client Systems Manager
Schneider Downs

Kallie Winkler is the current Client Systems Manager for Schneider Downs' IT Department. She started her journey with Schneider Downs in June 2016 where she interned as a Help Desk Technician in the IT department. Fast forward to 2022, Winkler has worked her way through the department and was promoted to her current role, where she oversees all technology that Schneider Downs' professional staff utilize to serve their clients every day. She strives to find the software that will make their employees' day-to-day tasks more efficient with an all-around better process from start to finish.