# PORTIA W. BENSON

Saint Louis, MO 63131

An accomplished finance and economics professional with over 25 years of expertise in financial management, economic analysis, teaching/training, and strategic planning. Proficient in organizational governance, financial oversight, and the development and implementation of business strategies. Dedicated to upholding high ethical standards and promoting engagement and collaboration.

**PRINCIPIA COLLEGE**, Elsah, IL

**Associate Professor of Economics, Interim Assistant Dean of Academic Services** **07/2025 -- Current**
**Assistant Professor of Economics and Business Administration** **07/2017 – 06/2025**

- Specialized in teaching courses in microeconomics, econometrics, finance, and accounting.
- Taught skills such as benefit-cost evaluation, econometric modeling using SPSS, financial modeling using Excel, and economic policy analysis.
- Voted Principia College Teacher of the Year by the student body for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Administrative and Shared Governance Roles:

- Served on Principia's 403(b) Investment Management Committee, which provides fiduciary oversight of the employee retirement fund.
- Served as an integral member of the College's Steering Committee and chair of the Budget Advisory Committee, providing leadership, data, communication, and guidance on issues related to budgets, programs, curriculum, and policy, in order to increase efficiencies on campus.
- Collaboratively researched, prepared, and wrote the 2021 Interim Report on enrollment, retention, and budget for the College's accrediting body.

**Department Chair for Economics and Business Administration** **07/2019 – 6/2022**

- Successfully led the Business Administration department through the external review process, including document creation, data analysis, and strategic plans to advance the department's objectives.
- Provided recommendations and implementation to department faculty consistent with best practices within the industry.
- Eliminated departmental budget deficit within two years.
- Presented rational solutions to problems affecting students and faculty within these departments.
- Provided support to departmental faculty to help them succeed in their roles.
- Consistently recognized by my supervisors and peers as providing excellence within my academic department and to the college community.

**THE LINK SCHOOL, INC.**, Buena Vista, CO

**Board Chair** **06/2020 – 12/2021**
**Board Member / Finance Committee Chair** **07/2017 – 06/2020**

- Collaborated with the Business Manager and Executive Director to analyze the yearly budget for a private, non-profit high school with an $800k operating budget.
- Collectively redefined the Link School Strategic Plan with the board and school directors.
- Led the finance committee in the creation of the school's first endowment fund.
- Partnered with a financial advisor to create and manage the Investment Policy Statement (IPS) and endowment policy.

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**THE LINK SCHOOL, INC.**, Buena Vista, CO

**Finance Manager / Math Teacher** **07/2013 – 6/2017**

- Led financial management and reporting for a private, non-profit high school, ensuring accurate payroll, tax filings, and financial compliance.
- Accurately closed books at the fiscal year-end, preparing and filing Form 990. Managed adjusting journal entries, providing accuracy and compliance in financial reporting.
- Managed compliance with employment laws, insurance regulations, OSHA, and FLSA standards.
- Effectively administered tuition assistance programs, managing grants and donor-restricted funds.
- Taught introductory and advanced math courses to high school students.
- Assisted in program trips with the students, including whitewater rafting, kayaking, backcountry hiking/camping, mountain climbing, and mountain biking.

**FOUNTAIN PEN PARTNERS, INC., Buena Vista, CO**

**President and Financial Consultant** **12/2007 – 07/2013**

- Provided business clients with financial management services such as financial modeling, budgeting, forecasting, cost accounting, and the creation of user-friendly financial reports.
- Conducted comprehensive financial reviews and informal audits for non-profit entities, such as community theaters and local churches, promoting financial transparency for board members and donors.
- Completed and defended a 501(c)(3) and tax exemption application for a not-for-profit client, resulting in the client obtaining IRS non-profit designation and state tax exemption.
- Designed and implemented the initial accounting system for the non-profit, ensuring accurate financial tracking and reporting.
- Co-wrote governing documents, such as the by-laws, operating procedures, and insurance applications, which facilitated the organization's development into a sustainable, board-run, non-profit entity.

**ORPHEUM THEATRE, INC., Buena Vista, CO**

**Executive Director** **01/2008 – 01/2013**

- Increased the number of special and recurring events by 200%, significantly enhancing the theatre's visibility and promoting the arts within the community.
- Successfully negotiated artists' contracts and rental agreements while adhering to budget constraints.
- Completed research to identify program and performance trends and align theatre offerings with audience and community preferences.
- Effectively communicated with local newspapers, securing news coverage for theatre events.
- Created and managed the yearly operating budget, ensuring financial stability and strategic allocation of resources.
- Collaborated with the Board of Directors on the development of business plans and budgets.
- Supervised volunteer staff and managed operations, including facility management, ticket sales, and production.
- Planned and hosted successful fundraising events, generating funds to cover 50% of the operating budget.
- Cultivated and managed donor relationships to secure ongoing support for the theatre's future plans.

- Initiated and led meetings with the USDA, Colorado Historical Society, local building and fire inspectors, and architectural firms to discuss and plan the preservation and restoration of the historic theatre building.
- Demonstrated the ability to build and maintain productive relationships with community members and vendors, enhancing community support and collaboration.

**GEMSBOK CONSULTING, INC., Evergreen, CO**
**Financial Consultant** **03/2004 – 12/2007**

- Successfully managed financial operations for clients, including Fire Protection Districts, dental offices, community theaters, web developers, and franchise owners.
- Delivered comprehensive financial management services, including business modeling, budgeting, forecasting, cost accounting, and creating user-friendly financial reports for governmental and small business clients.
- Researched and wrote grant applications to governmental and private entities on behalf of clients. Presented and defended grant applications and administered grant funding according to grant stipulations.
- Secured a $100,000 grant for a client through a well-researched and defended grant application.
- Provided technical writing services, including the creation of job descriptions, new employee manuals, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manuals, and supervisor manuals to enhance operational efficiency and clarity.

**LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES / CSG SYSTEMS, INC.**, Denver, CO
**Senior Technical Training Consultant** **06/2000 – 12/2003**

- Travelled globally to teach classroom-based courses to software users on how to configure and manipulate telecom billing databases.
- Conducted needs assessments for clients by analyzing job tasks and collaborating with subject matter experts to deliver effective classroom training.
- Measured the effectiveness of the training programs through assessments, surveys, and other evaluation methods.
- Developed and modified courses in line with current best practices, as well as student/client feedback and assessment.
- Demonstrated strong communication, presentation, and facilitation skills to effectively convey technical information to international audiences with varying skill levels.
- Adapted training delivery to suit different cultural contexts.
- Taught virtual training sessions through Webex.
- Maintained aspects of the technical learning (staging) environment on Unix platforms running Sybase and Oracle database management systems.
- Skilled in managing multiple aspects of training projects, including technical setup, content creation, delivery, and evaluation.

**THE NORTH FACE, INC.,** Carbondale, CO
**09/1998 – 06/2000**
**Information Services Support Technician**

- Provided hardware, software, networking, and telecom support to 100+ on-site employees and 15 off-site sales representatives.
- Maintained and administered the telecommunications system and the Microsoft Exchange server.
- Performed daily server back-ups.

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**EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF READING,** Reading, UK
PhD – Economics

**WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY (AACSB)**, Canyon, TX
Master of Business Administration (MBA) – Focus on Finance and Economics

**PRINCIPIA COLLEGE**, Elsah, IL
Bachelor of Arts – Sociology/Anthropology

**CERTIFICATIONS**

- Certified Management Accountant (CMA) Certification: Institute of Management Accountants
- Notary Public for Illinois (2018-2021) and Colorado (2007-2017)

**PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

Benson, P. 2024. "Game Changer: Using Sports to Teach Gender Equality's Economic Impact" St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank Professor's Conference, St. Louis, MO, November 8, 2024.

Benson, P. 2023. "Active Learning by Scaffolding Assignments: The Trade-offs between Book Learning and Scaffolding" St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank Professor's Conference, St. Louis, MO, November 3, 2023.

**SKILLS**

- Financial Management and Oversight
- Risk Management and Internal Controls
- Budgeting and Forecasting
- Strategic Financial Planning
- Organizational Governance and Accountability
- Compliance and Regulatory Adherence
- Teaching and Training: Economics, Econometrics, Finance, Accounting, Business
- Multicultural Communication and Collaboration
- Research skills: scenario and vignette development, survey design and implementation, data collection, analysis, reporting, economic model building, and regression analysis using Stata, SPSS, and Excel.

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