

KANSAS STATE

UNIVERSITY

Vice Provost for Operations

Leadership Profile

August 2024



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Kansas State University (K-State) seeks an accomplished leader and collaborative problem solver who can move key institutional initiatives forward in a complex, higher-education environment with tact and diplomacy to serve as the Vice Provost for Operations (VPO).

Reporting to the new Executive Vice President and Provost, [Jesse Perez Mendez](#), the VPO serves as a senior leader in the Office of the Provost, responsible for leading, delegating, and assisting with complex and confidential institutional projects in support of the University's mission, the [Next-Gen K-State Strategic Plan](#), and the advancement of the University's academic enterprise. The VPO serves as one of the Provost's strategic liaisons with the University and the K-State community, cultivating and maintaining strong relationships across K-State campuses, colleges, departments, and units. They will serve as a key aide to the Provost in driving the effective communication and implementation of decisions and initiatives related to strategic functions, priorities, and programs involving the University's academic enterprise. The VPO oversees planning, operations, and communications for the Provost and Office of the Provost and supports the development and implementation of institutional policy and procedures, collaborating with university leaders, governance groups, and stakeholders across the University. This position also supports the Provost in strategically aligning the budget and staffing resources within the Office of the Provost units with institutional priorities. The VPO will supervise the Special Assistant for Project Management and a Communications Specialist, in addition to having joint supervision of the Associate Provost for Administration and Finance.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.



Opportunities and Expectations

Leadership and Management of Institutional Special Projects and Strategic Initiatives

The VPO will serve as a senior leader in the Office of the Provost and will be responsible for leading, managing, and coordinating a variety of complex strategic projects and initiatives, particularly those related to Next-Gen K-State strategic priorities. As the Office of the Provost transitions to a new organizational structure, the new leader will ensure alignment of the Office and related institutional projects with the University's mission, goals, and objectives. They will provide strategic guidance, counsel, and support to the units reporting to the Office of the Provost as well as other institutional priorities, particularly in the areas of strategic planning, Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM), human resources, organizational structures, and budget alignment.

Partner to the Provost

As a senior advisor to the Provost, the VPO will provide strategic thinking and issues management consultation, in-depth analysis, and research on policies, procedures, and matters related to the Office of the Provost. The Provost will rely on the VPO for their expertise in strategic planning and performance reporting, organizational analysis, policy analysis and development, project management, change management, and institutional communications and engagement. It will be imperative they quickly establish a strong rapport and productive working relationship with the Provost. The ideal VPO will work closely with the Provost and his staff to develop processes and systems that optimize the Provost's time and calendar and utilize the Provost's talents as productively as possible. They will also support planning and facilitation of meetings and retreats involving the Deans Council, Joint Cabinet and Deans Council meetings, Provost Executive Team, and other committees led or co-led by the Provost.

Executive-Level Communications

As K-State moves forward on its vision of leading the nation as a next-generation land-grant university, stellar communication to the University community and beyond is integral to success. The VPO will coordinate and assist with university communications, particularly those involving university academic units, programs, and functions. They will collaborate with the Vice President for the Division of Communications and Marketing, the President's Office leadership, and other university leaders and staff in developing communication strategies and content as well as institutional, presidential, and provostial communications related to key university initiatives.

Collaboration with Senior Leadership and Campus Constituents

K-State has a highly relationship-driven culture that places a strong emphasis on meaningful interactions and partnerships while operating within a shared governance environment. As a master collaborator and relationship builder, the VPO will establish excellent working relationships with key stakeholders including vice and associate provosts, deans, deans' officers, the President's Office, vice presidents, and other university and community leaders. The VPO will represent the Office of the Provost as needed to university and Faculty Senate leadership and the University community.

Requirements

The successful candidate will be a collaborative and accomplished leader with stellar interpersonal, communication, and execution skills and a commitment to moving K-State forward as a national leader of land-grant institutions.

Required Qualifications

Successful candidates for the Vice Provost for Operations will possess the following:

- An earned master's degree from an accredited institution.
- Record as a successful administrator with a minimum of 5 years of experience in a strategic and management role; 7-10 years preferred.
- Proven leadership, strategic planning, and project management skills with an exceptional ability to analyze, plan, coordinate, articulate, and execute complex projects and initiatives.
- Outstanding organizational, problem-solving, management, and decision-making skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills with a demonstrated ability to articulate matters of complexity and nuance to multiple and varied audiences in both planned and extemporaneous situations with empathy and diplomacy.
- Exceptional critical thinking, judgment, and decision-making skills, including the ability to weigh short and long-term costs/risks and benefits of a potential action.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively lead and motivate diverse, high-performing teams.
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of the principles, practices, methods, and techniques of planning, forecasting, budgeting, and critical thinking in the analysis/assessment of projects and initiatives.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise judgment, discretion, and sensitivity to confidentiality.
- Proven ability to initiate, lead, and facilitate transformational change and innovation initiatives, be adaptable with changing conditions, and comfortable with the ambiguity that accompanies a large public university.

Preferred Qualifications

- Deep understanding of and passion for the role of public higher education and of land-grant institutions.
- Collaborative and relationship building skills, with strong interpersonal skills and the ability to engage others and work with coalitions of faculty, staff, students, university leaders and others across a diverse university community to achieve results.
- Understanding of the complexities of university academic programming and operations across multiple campuses.
- Demonstrated emotional intelligence and the ability to use diplomacy and sensitivity in working with a diverse and broad range of constituents and relate effectively to individuals throughout all levels of an organization and its stakeholders.
- Experience at a land-grant institution of higher education in support of that mission.
- Proven record of leading and facilitating transformational change in higher education, building strong teams and talent development.

About Kansas State University

Overview

Founded in 1863 as the nation's first operational land-grant university, Kansas State University is a Tier 1 research university with more than 20,000 students, 1,300 faculty members, 2,900 staff members and three physical campuses: the main campus in Manhattan; the K-State Salina campus, home to aviation and technology programs; and K-State Olathe, which serves the industry and workforce needs of Greater Kansas City.

K-State has nine colleges, graduate school and global campus and offers more than 400 degrees and options, from bachelor's to doctoral degrees. K-State research and extension also serves the citizenry with a presence in every county throughout Kansas and supports research in more than 20 K-State departments. K-State has an annual budget of more than \$900 million. K-State is known for the passion and pride of its alumni. With more than 200,000 living graduates, the K-State Alumni Association has been No.1 in the Big 12 Conference for more than 25 years, based on the percentage of graduates who are members, and No.4 among Power Five conferences. Private giving to the University is around \$200 million per year, and the KSU Foundation has an investment pool and endowment of more than \$950 million.



The University and Foundation recently completed a major fundraising campaign that raised \$1.6 billion. The Princeton Review recognizes the University as one of the nation's best colleges. K-State also has been designated as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity University by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and is recognized as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution. Commonly referred to as K-State, the University is proud of its welcoming environment.

Mission

The mission of Kansas State University is to foster excellent teaching, research, and service that develop the highly skilled and educated citizenry necessary to advancing the well-being of Kansas, the nation, and the international community.

Vision

The vision of K-State is to lead the nation as a next generation land-grant university – setting the standard for inspiring learning, creativity, discovery, and engagement that positively impacts society and transforms lives in Kansas and around the world. The University's values and principles of community guide how the community lives out its mission at K-State.

Diversity and Inclusion

K-State has a long, storied history of embracing diversity and inclusion as a core component of its educational mission. As the nation's first operational land-grant university, K-State has always admitted students without regard to race, gender, or creed. Its commitment to meeting the needs and interests of a diverse student body and to preparing all constituents for meaningful engagement in an ever changing, diverse world is unwavering. The university believes that diversity adds value to the educational fabric of the institution, and students are

encouraged to capitalize on the learning opportunities that differences can create. For more information about diversity and inclusion at K-State, please visit [Diversity and Inclusion](#).

To learn more about Kansas State University, please review the [University Profile](#).

The Community

Situated in the heart of northeast Kansas' scenic Flint Hills, Manhattan's 56,000 citizens enjoy a dynamic community with shopping, dining, entertainment, and nightlife. Manhattan is affectionately known as the "Little Apple," a nod to its East Coast namesake, but has a vibrant culture all its own.

Here is just a sample of what residents look forward to year-round:

- Shopping, dining, and socializing in Aggieville, a local entertainment district with a fun, energetic vibe.
- A vibrant, revitalized downtown area with fine dining options and local boutiques.
- The Flint Hills Discovery Center, featuring exhibits highlighting the beautiful surrounding region.
- Beautiful outdoor life at Sunset Zoo and The Gardens at Kansas State University.
- Recreation opportunities at the Konza Prairie, Tuttle Creek State Park, Linear Park Trail, and more.
- The University's McCain Performance Series, which hosts acclaimed Broadway musicals, comedians, musicians, and other entertainers.
- Exciting Big 12 athletic events. (Faculty and staff are eligible for discounted tickets.)
- Colbert Hills Golf Course, ranked as the top public golf course in Kansas.
- Excellent K-12 education. Manhattan High School ranks among the top 5 percent of U.S. high schools, and the district is home to several Kansas Master Teachers.

Learn more about the Manhattan community at manhattan.org or madeformanhattan.org.





Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Kansas State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by October 9, 2024.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Sandra Chu, Corin Edwards, and Zach Smith, Ph.D.

K-StateVPO@wittkieffer.com

Kansas State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Kansas State University actively seeks diversity among its employees. All applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, disability or status as a protected veteran.