

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

AVP for Talent Strategy and Engagement

Leadership Profile

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Organization Overview

Founded in 1863 as the nation's first operational land-grant university, Kansas State University has grown into a Tier 1 research university with nearly 20,000 students, 1,300 faculty members, 2,900 staff members and four campuses: the main campus in Manhattan; K-State Salina, home to aviation and technology programs; K-State Olathe, which serves the industry and workforce needs of Greater Kansas City; and K-State Online, which offers distance education programs to students around the world. K-State has nine colleges and a Graduate School 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.

With more than 200,000 living graduates, the K-State Alumni Association has been No.1 in the Big 12 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 \$900 million. The University and foundation recently completed a major fundraising campaign that raised \$1.6 billion.

Mission

The mission of Kansas State University is to foster excellent teaching, research and service that develop a highly skilled and educated citizenry necessary to advancing the well-being of Kansas, the nation and the international community. The University embraces diversity, encourages engagement and is committed to the discovery of knowledge, the education of undergraduate and graduate students, and improvement in the quality of life and standard of living of those we serve.

Values

We live by the purple rule: Family comes first. For K-Staters, that means a firmly held dedication to fostering an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere in which everyone feels supported and empowered to take intellectual risks. We've had plenty of practice — as the nation's first operational land-grant university, we've been putting service and compassion into action since 1863.

The past

Kansas State University was founded in 1858 as Bluemont Central College with 53 enrolled students. Five years later, the name changed to Kansas State Agricultural College and attained land-grant status. The University was only the second public institution of higher learning in the U.S. to admit women and men equally. As the years have gone by, we have remained committed to creating a level playing field where all can succeed and overcome any challenges in our path. Whether it be raging fires, devastating tornados or man-made obstacles, K-Staters have always remained composed, caring and ready to step in and get the job done.

The present

The numbers are in, and students love K-State. The Princeton Review recently ranked the University among the best in the nation for quality of life, happiest students, community relations and more. Additionally, Glassdoor named K-State as one of the nation's top universities for employment. All this love and recognition is due to K-State's focus on maintaining a positive community in which everyone feels safe and heard. From our [Principles of Community](#) and focus on [diversity and inclusion](#) to student-led philanthropies like [K-State Proud](#), we have a clear vision of our top priority — people.

The future

While it would be easy to bask in today's success, we know tomorrow will bring challenges at home and far away. Under the leadership of President [Richard Linton](#), K-State established a new and energized Strategic plan as a [Next-Gen land grant institution](#). This visionary plan lays out clear, measurable goals to ensure we build upon our successes and cast our aspirations for the future. Whether it be innovative research, top-notch facilities, or attracting and retaining expert faculty, we feel it is our obligation to do whatever is necessary to solve complex problems around the world and in our backyard.

Next-Gen Land Grant University

Overall scope

The University requires a strategic planning process that will inspire us to build upon the capacities, partnerships and accountability of [K-State 2025](#) and move us toward the “next-generation land-grant university”. It should be inclusive of all that K-State has to offer, including the ideas and interests of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, athletics, and external state/federal/international partners. As **the** land-grant university in Kansas, our efforts should be well aligned with the needs of Kansans and with the Kansas Board of Regents’ strategic plan, [“Building a Future.”](#)

Stats and Strengths

If the proof is in the numbers, our case is clear. From first-year freshmen to tenured professors to entire departments, K-Staters are known for aiming high, and then looking even higher. K-State is consistently ranked in the top 10 for many prominent Princeton Review rankings, we boast some of the highest numbers of national scholars in a public university, and our experts are called on to solve problems around the world.

It's safe to say that these accomplishments are just the tip of the purple iceberg, and we have no intention of slowing down.

At a Glance

More than 20,000
total students

1,367 full-time faculty

3,068 full-time staff

250+ academic undergraduate majors and programs

165+ graduate degrees and certificates

Prioritizing diversity and inclusion efforts

Kansas State University has been nationally recognized eight years in a row with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity, or HEED Award. *INSIGHT into Diversity Magazine, 2021*

The Silicon Valley for biodefense

The National Bio and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF), a state-of-the-art US Department of Agriculture complex adjacent to the Manhattan campus, opened in the spring of 2023.

4 Feed the Future labs

The labs are funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

\$212.9 million

FY 2022 research expenditures.

Bachelor's degrees: 96% job placement rate

Percentage of bachelor's degree graduate survey respondents who were employed or enrolled in further education within six months of graduation.

Master's degrees: 97% job placement rate

The percentage of master's degree graduate survey respondents who were employed or enrolled in further education within six months of graduation.

Campuses

Kansas State University is a four-campus system that values each piece of the puzzle. Each campus has its own strengths and connections that fit perfectly within our university umbrella. Learn more about each of our unique campuses below.

Manhattan

K-State's main campus sits in "The Little Apple," and thrives in its vibrant college-town atmosphere.

- The Manhattan campus encompasses more than 2,320 acres, including agricultural and research facilities.
- Manhattan has a population of more than 55,000 and enjoys a great relationship with the K-State family.
- This campus is situated next door to Fort Riley, a large Army installation, and collaborates on many military-focused projects.

Olathe

Located within the Kansas Bioscience Park, the Olathe campus provides a direct portal linking the University's powerful research capabilities to the Greater Kansas City area and beyond.

- The newest K-State campus, Olathe opened its doors in 2011.
- K-State Olathe is focused on expanding the educational and economic growth of the region, particularly for professionals working in the metro area.
- This campus facilitates many partnerships between researchers and companies, developing technology for industry needs around the world.
- K-State Olathe also extends its expertise to K-12 leaders through educational programming in animal health, food safety and food security.



Salina

This professional learning environment is built on theory, research, and industry application, all within a small campus atmosphere located in Salina, Kansas.

- The Salina campus is particularly known for its world-class aviation program.
- A state-of-the-art Student Life Center opened in 2009 and includes a full-size basketball court and various running and fitness areas.
- This campus is one of the first and fewest universities in the nation to offer a bachelor's degree in unmanned aircraft systems and machine learning and autonomous systems.



- Salina, a city of nearly 48,000, offers access to more than 600 acres of park land and the annual Smokey Hill River Festival.

Global

K-State Global Campus delivers the educational opportunities of the University to students who want to study online or at a distance.

- The Global Campus is home to [K-State Online](#), which offers more than 150 online credit programs, including Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral, certificate and minor programs.
- Started in 1966, when faculty traveled across the state of Kansas to teach classes, K-State Online now reaches students in all 50 states and 41 countries.
- K-State Global Campus also offers noncredit training and programs both in person and online that result in certification, acknowledgment of completion or continuing education hours in a variety of fields.
- More than 1,800 learners completed noncredit programs online through the Global Campus in 2022.



History and Traditions

The memories we make today become the stories we tell tomorrow. At Kansas State University, these stories become traditions that last a lifetime. Since 1863, thousands upon thousands of students have chosen these Wildcat traditions and then added their own to the mix. There are never too many, and there is always room for more.

Rooted in service

The foundation of all K-State traditions is a solid commitment to putting others first. In 1858, Bluemont Central College, a private institution, opened in Manhattan, Kansas, and it was only a few short years later that Kansas was admitted to the Union. Nearly immediately, efforts began to establish a state university, and Bluemont Central College was converted to the Kansas State Agricultural College in 1863.

The institution that later became known as Kansas State University, or K-State, was the nation's first operational land-grant university, and the only in Kansas. This meant K-State was tasked with teaching agriculture, science, military science and engineering to any interested student, as well as seeking to better the lives of others through research and service. For more than 150 years, we have taken this obligation to heart. Whether it means making a stranger feel welcome on campus, cheering on a teammate or developing a vaccine that saves lives, we are committed to the Wildcat Way.

The Wildcat Way

The Wildcat Way is family. It's being confident that we have your back. It's the courage to take risks, recover from defeat and win with humility. We choose to be Wildcats, and we will always choose to be purple. That's a powerful K-State tradition.



Putting Students First

At Kansas State University, we take student success personally — and that is evident in our commitment to foster an outstanding, well-rounded student experience from the start. Our students enjoy:

- An environment focused on student success
- A commitment to career development
- Class sizes that support high-quality education
- Award-winning faculty teaching introductory courses
- Innovative technologies for better learning

- A commitment to leadership development
- A priority to keep education affordable

President Richard Linton



Dr. Richard H. Linton serves as the 15th president of Kansas State University. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology, a master's degree in food science and a doctorate in food science, all from Virginia Tech University. He participated in the Food Systems Leadership Institute from 2009-2011 and completed the Harvard Graduate School's Institutional Educational Management Program in 2018.

Before coming to K-State in February 2022, Linton served as dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University from 2012-2022, as department chair of food science and technology at The Ohio State University from 2011-2012, and as a faculty member of the department of food science at Purdue University from 1994-2011. While at Purdue, Linton also served as the founder and director of the Center for Food Safety Engineering and as the associate director of agricultural research programs.

As dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, or CALS, at NC State, Linton led a college of over 300 faculty, with more than 3,000 undergraduate students and 1,000 graduate students. Under his direction, the college developed a new strategic plan focused on building people, programs and partnerships. Collaboration with industry and government were critical to the mission of the college, and Linton's dedication was demonstrated through the NC Plant Sciences Initiative and the NC Food Processing and Manufacturing Initiative, two endeavors that have the potential to create jobs, find solutions to global challenges in agriculture and foster support for local growers. During his tenure at NC State, competitive research for CALS reached \$100 million a year and his college raised \$482 million for the NC State Capital Campaign.

Linton held many important leadership roles in addition to serving as dean. He continues to serve as a member of the Food and Drug Administration's Science Advisory Board, as well as the chair for the Binational — Israel/U.S. — Ag Research and Development Fund, a role to which he was appointed in 2018 by the U.S. secretary of agriculture. He also previously chaired the North Carolina Governor's Task Force on Food Manufacturing and the APLU-Healthy Food Systems, Healthy People Steering Committee.

President Linton and his wife, Sally, an ADHD/executive function life coach, have two children: a daughter, Lily, and a son, Chris.

For more information, please visit <https://www.k-state.edu/>.

Position Summary

The AVP for Talent Strategy and Engagement (AVP) at Kansas State University will work alongside the CHRO to develop and carry out a strategic vision for Human Resources (HR) at K-State. The AVP will lead functional teams in the areas of talent, learning and development, compensation, organizational effectiveness and employee relations and engagement. Additionally, the AVP will oversee compliance with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and University guidelines with regard to HR activities at the institution. This key leader will also be tasked with managing and developing institutional policy in support of overall goals. The incumbent will regularly collaborate with stakeholders and is one of two leaders who may represent HR in the absence of the CHRO.

Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the Chief Human Resources Officer, direct reports include:

- Director of Employee Relations & Engagement
- Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness Manager
- Talent Acquisition Manager
- Learning and Development Manager

Responsibilities

The successful AVP for Talent Strategy and Engagement candidate will:

HR Strategy Leadership

- Function as a senior leader reporting to and collaborating with the CHRO in driving, leading, and executing key HR strategic initiatives that are broad-based with University-wide impact and implement HR strategic initiatives that promote organizational capacity and organizational competency.
- In the absence of the CHRO, serve as the senior HR leader, with the authority to make decisions for HR. Represents HR to key stakeholder groups including President's cabinet, Dean's Council, executive committees, USS Senate, faculty senate, other K-State employee groups and community groups.
- Assist the CHRO in developing and executing key HR strategic planning initiatives that align with the University's strategic plan and elevate HR services to achieve operational excellence.
- Lead HR units to develop, design, implement and manage initiatives that support the HR and university mission, vision, and strategic plan.
- Develop and update HR policies to accurately reflect practices that meet federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and University practices.
- Serve as a collaborative contributor to HR leadership.

Leadership of HR Functional Teams

- Lead, mentor, and develop talented quality staff, evaluate job performance, develop performance measures, and ensure continued professional development.
- Develop and manage assigned unit budgets, ensuring fiscal responsibility and efficient use of resources. Advocate for resources that are necessary for units to thrive and provide excellent service to the University.

- Working with the Director of Employee Engagement and Relations, develop strategy that empowers employees and equips them with skills and tools to effectively manage work relationships and issues. Support performance management initiatives to include implementation and roll out of systems and processes that allow for a consistent and equitable evaluation of employee performance.
- Provide oversight and contribute to University labor relations negotiations and agreements.
- Working closely with the Manager for Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness (COE), ensure fair, equitable compensation practices that contribute to employee retention and are aligned with the institution's compensation philosophy. Collaborate with COE to support organizational effectiveness initiatives across the institution.
- Collaborating with the talent acquisition manager, develop strategies and champion initiatives that attract a high performing, diverse workforce that supports and fulfills the University's personnel needs.
- With the learning and development manager, develop strategy that supports and expands the University learning and development function with a focus on continuous employee learning. Ensure programming meets the needs of the University community at all levels and supports employee growth.
- Ensure collaboration between units supervised by this position, with other HR units and with institutional HR stakeholders to achieve efficiency and excellence of operations and eliminate duplication and resource waste.

University and Stakeholder Engagement

- Proactively serve as a cultural architect that implements change management and continuous improvement initiatives. Address current and anticipated future human resource needs of the University, ensuring alignment with the University's strategic vision, mission, and goals.
- Serve as a consultative advisor to department heads, deans, campus leaders, and university administrators to promote an engaged HR culture with campus constituents related to university-wide HR strategic initiatives.

Candidate Qualifications

Minimum Requirements

- Requires a bachelor's degree and eight years of relevant experience.

Preferred Requirements

- Experience providing strategic vision for HR that aligns with institutional plans.
- A demonstrated commitment to customer service.
- Success as a collaborator, relationship builder, and change agent, demonstrating strong interpersonal skills and ability to build coalitions and collaborative working relationships with a broad range of diverse individuals and groups, including senior executives, to achieve results.
- At least eight years of progressive HR leadership in human resources, including experience in key areas such as compensation, workforce development, recruitment and succession planning, performance management, employee engagement.
- A proven record of success in developing and implementing strategy, budget planning and financial management, staffing and personnel management, policy formulation, business planning and operations, continuous service improvement, and risk management.
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills, including the ability to communicate effectively to diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Ability to make timely decisions using sound judgment and including others in decision-making processes as appropriate.
- Success in fostering a workplace free from discrimination and bias.
- Thorough knowledge of federal and state employment-related laws and regulations.
- Knowledge of and experience with human resources information systems.
- Experience working with collective bargaining units within a higher education environment.
- Demonstrated strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation expertise and large-scale program implementation experience.
- Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) or SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) certification.

The Community

Manhattan, America's Classic College Town



Situated in the heart of northeast Kansas' scenic Flint Hills, Manhattan's ~55,000 citizens enjoy a dynamic region with shopping, dining, entertainment, and nightlife. Manhattan is also conveniently located for quick access to major urban centers. In addition to being less than two hours from Kansas City, the Manhattan Regional Airport offers multiple jet flights daily to DFW and Chicago.

Additionally, the city of Manhattan has been a valuable partner to Kansas State University in facilitating growth of the institution. That's why the Princeton Review routinely recognizes Manhattan and Kansas State in the Top 5 community Town & Gown Relations. Manhattan has also been ranked No. 2 Best Place to Live in America by Livability.com.

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 sampling of what residents look forward to year-round:

- A vibrant health care community, including a 150-bed acute care facility and an independent state-of-the-art surgical center. Other nationally ranked facilities are within an easy drive.
- A cost-of-living index of 89% of the U.S. average, according to the Council for Community and Economic Research.
- 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 about 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 Lake and State Park, Linear Trail and more.
- The University's McCain Performance Series, which hosts acclaimed Broadway musicals, comedians, musicians, and other entertainers.
- Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of art celebrates regional art and brings art and artists from around the world to the heart of Kansas. The museums' collection continues to focus on the art of Kansas and the region.
- Exciting Big 12 athletic events from a Power 5 conference.
- Colbert Hills Golf Course, ranked as the top public golf course in Kansas.
- Excellent K-12 education. The local high school ranks among the top 5% of U.S. high schools, and the district is home to several Kansas Master Teachers.

Learn more about the Manhattan community at www.manhattan.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, which will remain open until an appointment is made. Applications should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

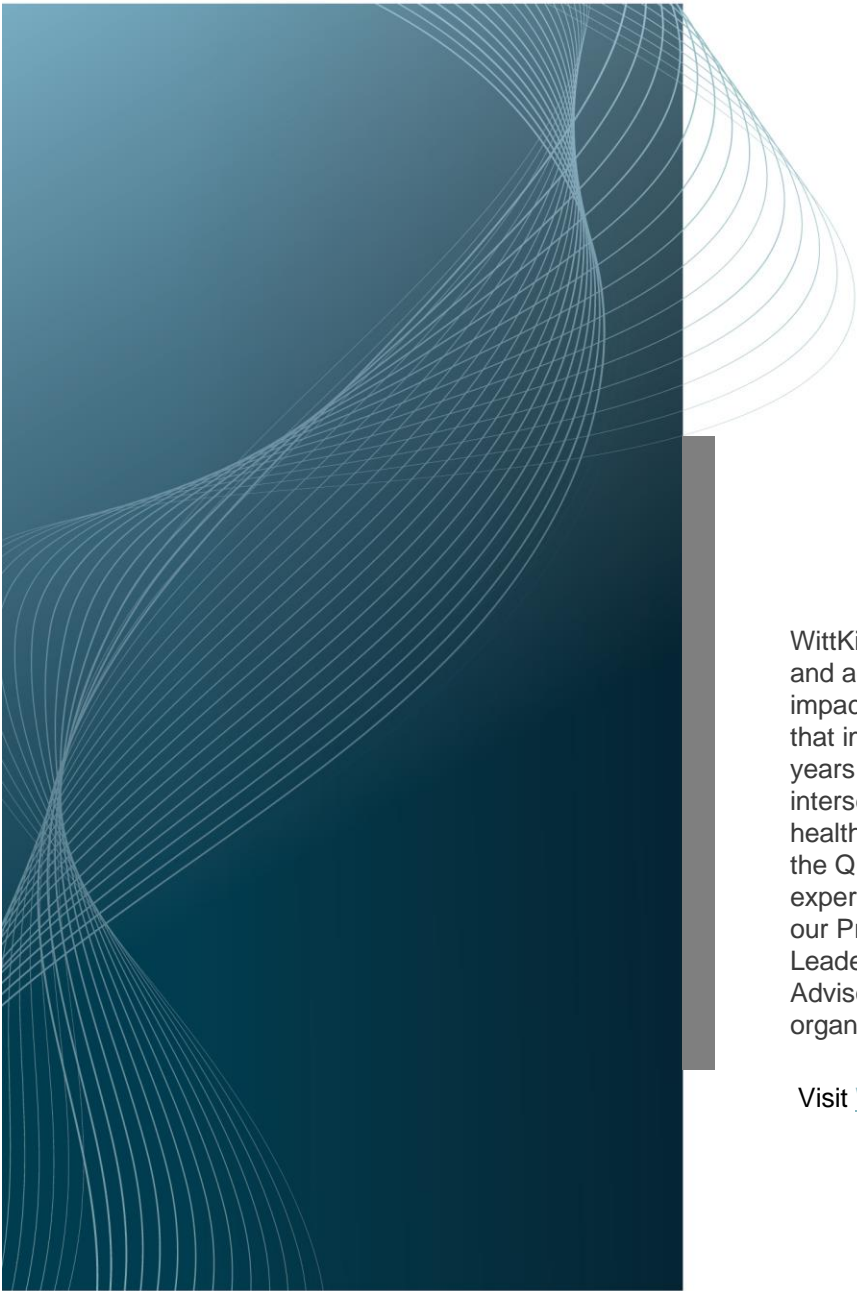
Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Anissa Conner | Ben Haden | Courtney MacKinnon
K-StateAVPHRSearches@wittkieffer.com

Kansas State University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.

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