

APRIL 2024

VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND INNOVATION

EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE

A photograph of two graduates in caps and gowns, smiling and embracing each other. The image is overlaid with a dark purple filter.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

The Opportunity

Kansas State University seeks a strategic, innovative and visionary leader to serve as its inaugural Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Innovation (VP-AAI).

Joining the dynamic leadership of [President Richard Linton](#) and newly appointed provost and executive vice president, [Jesse Perez Mendez](#), the VP-AAI will serve as a key member of the provost's team, providing transformational vision and strategic leadership for the future of K-State's academic enterprise in support of the [Next-Gen K-State Strategic Plan](#) as the university takes its position as the nation's leading next-generation land-grant university.

Reporting directly to the provost and as the leader of a new department, the VP-AAI will play a pivotal role in coordinating and advancing academic strategies and activities across the university while building a robust, integrated academic innovation function across the university. This position is responsible for ensuring the academic quality of all programs across the university, including programs for credit and noncredit in all modalities; providing direction and support for faculty programs, services, and policies and the university teaching and learning Center; and promoting and supporting the integration of academic innovation practices across the entire institution.

Leading the newly created office of academic affairs and innovation, the VP-AAI will have the following opportunities and expectations:

Frame a Strategy for Academic Innovation

Inherent in the dynamic and visionary Next-Gen K-State Strategic plan is the goal of [growing total enrollment to 30,000 learners](#) across all our campuses. To achieve this goal, the K-State academic enterprise will require innovation for curricular programming, pedagogy, learning and delivery modalities. The VP-AAI will provide innovative thought leadership around the nature and character of academic innovation in higher education broadly and at K-State specifically. They will determine what is included in academic innovation in collaboration with the provost and academic community and build the academic innovation strategy from there.

Provide Inspirational Leadership for Change

With an ambitious and forward-thinking strategic plan, the early years of a new presidency and the onboarding of K-State's next provost, the Wildcat community is eager and poised to embrace exciting and transformational changes. The VP-AAI will bring inspirational leadership that eases the community through bold changes, helping to not only define that change but also to contextualize change so that all stakeholders navigate and contribute to a positive future. They will have the ability to address uncertainty with confidence, to communicate clearly, to inspire trust and to provide an environment that fosters innovative ideas. They will have an understanding and proven success in navigating large-scale change while maintaining empathy for faculty and student concerns and needs in a university environment. They will be able to navigate a traditional university structure even as they drive K-State toward its necessary evolution for success.

Collaborate and Serve as a Central Connector

The VP-AAI will serve as a critical player collaborating with and connecting the various arms of the academic enterprise to accelerate academic innovation to meet the needs of students and lifelong learners. They will bring a strong understanding and competencies in each area, but specifically the ability to elevate the work of each area in concert with others. They will be able to create working relationships that build on each other's efforts and identify unique synergies that are more easily perceived from a university-wide lens.

For information on how to apply or to submit nominations, please refer to the Search Process section at the end of this document.



Duties and responsibilities

Leadership and Management of the Office of Academic Affairs and Innovation

- Provide leadership, management and oversight of the newly established office of academic affairs and innovation and its areas of responsibility, including faculty affairs, academic affairs, academic innovation and the university teaching and learning center.
- Plan, organize and manage the resources, people and activities of the new office to foster faculty growth and development, as well as the development of innovative learning practices and programs across the university aligned with market research and analysis to meet the evolving needs of students and learners today and in the future.
- Oversee allocation of resources to various programs in reflection of established university academic priorities involving academic affairs, faculty affairs, the university teaching and learning center, and academic innovation.
- Lead the development of annual budgets and plans for funding and resourcing of academic programs in alignment with university priorities.

University Leadership

- Serve as the main point of contact in the office of the provost in providing leadership, direction and evaluation for all matters involving academic administration, policy and planning.
- Represent the office of the provost in meetings or discussions and on internal and external committees involving university-wide academic and faculty policy and programs.
- Lead university discussions and build consensus on how to enhance learners' academic experiences at K-State.
- Align work in areas of responsibility with the priorities, goals and strategies of the university strategic plan and related institutional planning.
- Collaborate closely with the provost's senior staff members as part of the provost's leadership team and with university and college leadership on major university and academic initiatives.
- Serve as a provost's designee or representative on relevant university and Kansas Board of Regents committees.
- Anticipate future developments in higher education and recommend actions to capitalize on opportunities or avoid threats.
- Provide guidance for academic policy decisions, ensuring all decisions comply with governance and regulatory standards from the Kansas Board of Regents.

Academic Affairs

- Provide overall leadership and direction for university academic affairs planning policies and activities.
- Guide the general direction of the university's academic portfolio of programs for all students and modalities in alignment with student and workforce needs now and in the future.
- Work collaboratively with university administration, faculty, staff and students in overseeing matters involving university policy and academic and program design, utilizing shared governance where appropriate.
- Maintain the highest level of knowledge about academic affairs and operations of the higher- education environment in Kansas and the nation.
- Evaluate and actively communicate impacts of legal or regulatory changes involving academic practices, policies or programs to the university.
- Understand and encourage program assessment and provide guidance for the development of program evaluation processes; provide relevant assistance to program and institutional accreditation activities.
- Provide guidance for academic policy decisions, ensuring all decisions comply with governance and regulatory standards from the Kansas Board of Regents.
- Ensure all academic endeavors are in line with the university's strategic plan and monitor the academic quality of all departments, programs and offerings.

Academic Innovation

- Provide senior leadership for the university academic innovation function in new program development and revitalization for all modalities, including supporting faculty in developing new programs or enhancing existing programs and coordinating with other university leaders in aligning market research and demand with credit and noncredit program offerings.
- Articulate a clear vision for academic innovation and excellence focused on the university's overall academic enterprise and supporting the university's commitment to growing enrollment and serving a broader scope of learners.
- Foster an environment that encourages experimentation and innovation in curriculum design and instructional practices, including educational methodologies, digital tools and technologies to enhance teaching and learning.
- Drive change across the university and facilitate the identification, review, development and revision of institutional policies, practices and learning modalities affecting the student academic experience.
- Lead efforts to grow an integrated and high-quality professional and continuing education enterprise, including a focus on functions, systems and processes across the university.

Faculty Affairs

- Provide senior leadership for university faculty affairs.
- Provide leadership and support to the provost and executive vice president on faculty-related policies, issues and actions.
- Provide strategic direction to the university for faculty recruitment, retention, professional development, leadership development and faculty mentorship.
- Work with university leadership and faculty to advance educational excellence, teaching supports, innovative teaching practices and the enrichment of mentorship and professional development opportunities for faculty.

Requirements

At the minimum, the successful candidate will hold an earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution. They will have a strong record of distinguished academic achievement and excellence as a scholar and educator that satisfies the requirements for rank of tenured full professor in one of the university's academic departments. The successful candidate also will have strong higher- education experience, strategic leadership and operationalization skills, a commitment to the land-grant mission and exemplary relationship skills.

Required competencies/qualifications:

- Record as a successful administrator with relevant managerial and supervisory experience, including guiding strategy, financial planning and management, staffing and personnel management, policy formulation, and business and operational planning and oversight.
- Proven leadership skills with the ability to analyze, prioritize, plan, coordinate, articulate and execute strategic initiatives and engage others effectively in implementation.
- Proven success as a strategic and creative planner and outstanding collaborator and relationship builder with strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Outstanding organizational, problem-solving, management and decision-making skills.
- Proven ability to initiate, lead and facilitate transformational change and innovation initiatives, and be adaptable with changing conditions and comfortable with the ambiguity that accompanies a large public university.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise judgment, discretion and sensitivity to confidentiality.

Preferred competencies/qualifications:

- Proven success as an innovative, unifying and strategic leader with accomplishments in planning, developing, growing and assessing innovative and effective academic programs to meet the evolving needs of students and learners within a shared governance environment.
- Understanding of the importance of faculty development in a land-grant university with Research-1 status, including infusing academic innovation into their practices.
- Experience dealing with unexpected employment and personnel issues in a university setting.
- Deep understanding of and passion for the role of public higher-education institutions.
- An understanding and appreciation for the strategic directions of the university and an appreciation for the role innovation in academic programs and faculty development can play in advancing those directions.
- Record of success building strong working relationships and partnerships with leaders and stakeholders across a large, complex and diverse university.
- Deep understanding of the mission of a land-grant university, including the roles of teaching, research and extension and community engagement in fulfilling that mission.
- Knowledge about the types of stakeholders and stakeholder groups that comprise large public, land-grant, Research-1, higher-education institutions.
- University experience teaching online or hybrid courses, designing programs and curricula for multiple learning modalities or the oversight and management of either.
- Experience serving a full array of learner audiences.

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



Search process

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited and will be treated confidentially.

Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and letter of interest addressing how you meet the position qualifications and themes in this profile, including an example of an innovation you conceived and executed in higher education. The committee is particularly interested in hearing about how you achieved stakeholder support and how you assessed the innovation's success.

The priority application date for this opportunity is May 23, 2024.

WittKieffer is assisting Kansas State University in this search. Application materials, nominations and inquiries can be directed to Sandra Chu, Corin Edwards and Zach Smith, Ph.D., at K-StateVPAAl@wittkieffer.com.

Applicants must be currently authorized to work in the United States at the time of employment.

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.

About the institution

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.





University Mission, Vision and Values

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.

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. For more information about K-State, please visit the [university profile](#).



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](#).



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.





KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY