



Search for the Vice President for University Advancement
California State University Stanislaus
Turlock, CA

THE SEARCH

[California State University, Stanislaus](#) (Stanislaus State) seeks an experienced, proactive, and aspirational vice president of university advancement (VP) to build a best-in-class advancement operation and expertly lead all fundraising and alumni engagement efforts. The vice president also serves as executive director of the California State University, Stanislaus Foundation. The VP will join Stanislaus State at a transformative moment in its history, reporting to and partnering with [President Britt Rios-Ellis](#), for whom elevating philanthropic success and community prosperity is paramount. This is an impactful opportunity to work alongside a committed and visionary president early in her tenure to inspire a more robust and inclusive culture of philanthropy that supports access to a nationally ranked and exceptional higher education experience, grounded in student success, community engagement, and economic partnerships and productivity throughout the region.

As an integral member of President Rios-Ellis' cabinet, the vice president serves as the university's chief development and engagement officer. The VP will be responsible for designing and executing a comprehensive, integrated advancement strategy and the necessary infrastructure to build a sustainable fundraising operation, including annual, major, planned and principal gifts, alumni engagement, corporate and foundation relations, and events. The VP will benefit from President Rios-Ellis' enthusiasm to participate in advancement-related activities, maintain and strengthen ties to existing donors, and launch systematic initiatives to identify, engage, and cultivate the next generation of loyal Stanislaus State supporters. With a new [Child Development Center](#) and a second campus in [Stockton](#), among other funding priorities, there is much potential to serve and nurture a community-engagement ecosystem at Stanislaus State and across its six-county service region in support of increased philanthropic investment in the university. To that end, the VP will play an essential role in enhancing the visibility and fundraising capabilities of the institution, effectively leveraging President Ellis-Rios in building connections with philanthropists, corporations, and local business leaders, including those serving diverse populations, who are not currently engaged, or could optimize their engagement, with the university.

The VP will lead and develop the advancement team to successfully navigate the challenges and meet the aspirations of the university. This individual will build upon the program's recent investments in alumni relations, annual giving, and faculty and staff giving campaigns, leading the advancement enterprise's evolution in a changing social, educational, and economic climate. The ideal candidate will be a culturally competent and collaborative team leader adept at maximizing, leveraging, and advocating for the Stanislaus State community and facilitating their success. The next VP will bring a strategic, thoughtful, and entrepreneurial approach to fostering lifelong relationships between Stanislaus State and its broad spectrum of constituents: faculty, staff, students, alumni, board members, volunteers, and senior administrators. The VP will be expected to help internal community members bridge partnerships with industry, community leaders, and unaffiliated donors to enhance the university's existing relationships in the region. The ideal candidate will have a successful track record of elevating the performance of fundraising programs, resulting in sustainable philanthropic growth for an institution.

The ideal candidate will possess at least five years of progressively responsible leadership experience in a comprehensive advancement operation as well as a track record of significant personal success in donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship at principal gift levels. Participation in a capital campaign is preferred. The ideal candidate must be a self-starter who can transform new ideas into executable and enduring programs and build strong relationships that link campus, community, and industry. The successful candidate must also possess a collaborative orientation, extraordinary communication skills, creativity, humility, integrity, and the ability to adapt to a complex environment where efficient resource management is critical. A bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree is preferred.

California State University, Stanislaus is partnering with Rachel Ellenport of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in conducting this important search. Inquiries, applications, and nominations for this position should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

Stanislaus State College was established in 1957 as the 15th campus of the California State University (CSU) system. Classes commenced in September 1960 in temporary quarters located at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock. The college moved to its permanent 228-acre site in Turlock in 1965. In 1974, Stanislaus State opened a second campus to establish a local presence in [Stockton](#), which has since expanded the university's service area to students in the greater San Joaquin Valley, offering the only public four-year degree option in the fastest growing urban county in California. Between the two campuses, the university offers 43 undergraduate majors, 16 master's programs, 7 post-graduate credentials, and a doctorate in education within four academic colleges: [College of Business Administration](#), [College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#), [College of Education, Kinesiology and Social Work](#), and [College of Science](#). The university enrolls over 9,000 students and is home to 662 faculty.

Stanislaus State's mission is to create a learning environment that encourages all members of the campus community to expand their intellectual, creative, and social horizons. Faculty, staff, and students are committed to challenging one another to capitalize on their skills, appreciating and contributing to the enrichment of a diverse community, and developing a passion for life-long learning. Since its creation, the university has proudly contributed to the betterment of the region, state, nation, and the world through a high-quality education, commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and service learning. Stanislaus State earned a Carnegie Foundation for Community Engagement designation in 2015 and has received several President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll awards.

Recognition as an overall best university, a champion for social mobility, and a leader in public impact underscores Stanislaus State's role as an anchor institution in the Central Valley and beyond. With 73 percent of Stanislaus State's students identifying as first-generation, Stanislaus State creates a lasting impact on individuals, their families, their chosen fields, and their communities. Stanislaus State is also a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI); nearly 65 percent of students identify as members of an underrepresented community. *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Stanislaus State 3rd in social mobility, 5th in top public schools, 8th for best colleges for veterans, and 10th for best regional universities in the Western United States. The *Wall Street Journal/College Pulse* national rankings placed Stanislaus State 2nd in social mobility, 9th best public university overall, 24th overall in the nation on its Best College list, and *Washington Monthly's* annual "College Guide and Rankings" placed the university as 4th for "Best Bang for the Buck" and 7th for Master's Programs rankings.

As an economic impact driver in the region, Stanislaus State has added \$770.5 million in income, equal to approximately 1 percent of the total regional product of Stanislaus State Six-County Service Region (Stanislaus, Calaveras, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, and Tuolumne Counties), supporting 9,068 jobs. One out of every 82 jobs in the Stanislaus State Six-County Service Region is supported by the activities of Stanislaus State and its students. Additionally, on average, students see a 30.3 percent annual return on investment at Stanislaus State.

Stanislaus State is a member of the NCAA Division II, with 14 men's and women's athletics teams in the California Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) and the Pacific West Conference. The university's teams consistently compete for conference and national championships while maintaining high academic standards for its student-athletes. Just this year, Stanislaus State's Women's Volleyball team won the CCAA regional championship.

Leadership

[Britt Rios-Ellis, M.S., Ph.D.](#) serves as the 13th president of California State University, Stanislaus. With more than 30 years of experience as an accomplished bilingual and bicultural educational and community health and higher education leader, Rios-Ellis has focused on academic and inclusive excellence coupled with a deep, unwavering commitment to student success, diversity, and community engagement.

Prior to joining Stanislaus State on July 1, 2024, Rios-Ellis most recently served as executive vice president of Academic Affairs and provost at Oakland University in Michigan, where she led the restructuring and strengthening of academic affairs during the COVID-19 pandemic. During her tenure, Rios-Ellis also raised significant funds, led integral programs, collaborated on innovative interprofessional initiatives, and shepherded the purchase of a new building adjacent to a highly underserved community. Rios-Ellis also led the effort that garnered Oakland the Carnegie classification as a community-engaged campus. Rios-Ellis' appointment at Stanislaus State marks her return to the California State University system, where she previously held leadership roles at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). At CSUMB, she co-founded the first Master of Science physician assistant program in partnership with local hospitals and clinic networks. At CSULB, she co-authored and led the first two grants that transformed Long Beach into a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and founded the CSULB Center for Latino Community Health, Evaluation, and Leadership Training and *Centro Salud es Cultura*. She is credited with bringing over \$55 million in health and wellness and higher education programming into her respective universities. Additionally, Rios-Ellis has worked to build an understanding of health disparities at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), HSIs, and Tribal Colleges and Universities through the National Conference on Health Disparities.

Since her arrival at Stanislaus State, Rios-Ellis has begun collaborating with alumni, faculty, staff, university leadership, community members, and industry partners to identify and develop essential pipeline programs to strengthen the economy and serve the needs of the Central Valley. Rios-Ellis envisions creating opportunities to enhance the university's contributions to its surrounding communities, forging community and corporate partnerships, and educating and preparing the much-needed workforce to serve the Central Valley. Under President Rios-Ellis' leadership, the university is currently engaging in a process to develop a new and exciting strategic plan to guide the university throughout the next five years.

Rios-Ellis holds Bachelors' degrees in Spanish and Political Science, a Master of Science in Health and Fitness Management, a certificate in Women's Studies, and a Doctorate in Community Health from the University of Oregon. Rios-Ellis completed Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education and the HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) Program for Women's Leadership in Higher Education at Bryn Mawr. She also completed the Provost, Student Success, Millennial Leadership, and New Presidents Academies of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Rios-Ellis has also served as a special government employee for the Health Resource Services Administration, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the CDC, and the NIH.

FINANCIAL AND FUNDRAISING OVERVIEW

All CSU campuses have two main funding sources: the State General Fund and student tuition and fees. State funding now covers slightly more than half of the CSU's operating costs, with tuition and fees making up for the remainder. Auxiliaries and philanthropic support generate additional revenue needed for essential services that supplement state-supported activities. Stanislaus State's operating budget is

\$166.7 million in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, divided as 66 percent from state support and 34 percent from gross tuition and fees. Stanislaus State's endowment is currently valued at over \$21 million, and the university raises an average of \$2.37 million in annual philanthropic contributions.

California State University, Stanislaus Foundation

The [California State University, Stanislaus Foundation](#) (Stanislaus State Foundation) is a 501(c)(3) auxiliary organization established in 1960 to supplement the services and funding provided by the state to students, staff, and faculty by securing private support on behalf of the university. The foundation receives, invests, and administers funds to benefit the university while honoring the philanthropic intent of its generous donors. The foundation is governed by a Board of Directors whose 20 members include top business, civic, and community leaders from the region.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Reporting to President Rios-Ellis, the vice president for university advancement is responsible for designing and executing the overall strategy for advancement with the goal of maximizing personal engagement and increasing levels of sustainable support for the university. The VP will bring a depth of fundraising expertise to the leadership of the advancement division and implement the necessary infrastructure to support a comprehensive program that strengthens a culture of philanthropy across the institution and in the community.

As a key member of the president's cabinet, the VP participates in strategic planning, policy formulation, budgetary decisions, and problem-solving and offers advice and counsel on the implications of institutional decisions, while also working closely with the alumni advisory board, deans, faculty, and university-wide staff. The VP will also engage university leadership in identifying key strategic funding priorities. This individual serves as the executive director of the Stanislaus State Foundation, which has oversight responsibility for the university's endowment, receipting, and stewardship of gifts to the university.

To this end, the VP will oversee 15 staff across the [advancement division](#), which encompasses development (including annual, major, planned, and principal giving and corporate and foundation relations), alumni engagement, events, philanthropic services, and administrative staff.

In addition, the vice president will be a visible ambassador of the university, engaging internal and external constituents to increase philanthropic investment in Stanislaus State and strengthen partnerships within and beyond the Central Valley. This individual will also collaborate with colleagues in the CSU system to support local and system-wide advancement endeavors.

Following are the key responsibilities and duties of this role:

Leadership Support and Engagement

- In conjunction with the president and the president's cabinet, develop clear, consistent, cohesive, and compelling messaging that leverages the uniqueness, strengths, and aspirations of Stanislaus State and its leadership in a way that reflects the excitement for the university's future direction and results in philanthropic support for funding priorities.
- Guide, support, and leverage the president in her role as the lead spokesperson and fundraiser, serving as an advisor and co-strategist in cultivating prospective donors, soliciting transformative gifts, and operationalizing bold new ideas that will lead Stanislaus State to even greater levels of distinction.
- Similarly guide and support senior leaders, deans, faculty, volunteers, and other key constituents in development-related activities, ensuring that their time spent is productive, meaningful, and personally rewarding; work closely with the president and provost to strategically engage deans, faculty, staff, and alumni in development activities.
- Cultivate strong working relationships with academic and administrative leaders across the university; ensure that advancement is seen as a collaborative, accessible, responsive, and trustworthy partner capable of professionally addressing opportunities, concerns, and new ideas.
- Partner with the Stanislaus State Foundation Board of Directors; supervise, direct, and carry out the Foundation's initiatives in accordance with, and subject to, advancement-related activities to further philanthropic potential. Assist with the identification, recruitment, and cultivation of new Foundation board members on a national basis; identify key leaders with an affinity for the mission of Stanislaus State; build a volunteer structure that fosters a culture of philanthropy that promotes values of diversity and inclusion; and contribute to university committees and task forces as appropriate.
- Participate in institution-wide strategic planning efforts and contribute to discussions that guide strategies and policies shaping Stanislaus State's future.

Programmatic Elevation & Fundraising

- Assess the fundraising potential of Stanislaus State; craft a sophisticated multi-year strategy that leverages the strengths and assets of the university to reinforce a culture of philanthropy and sustainably increase philanthropic support for all purposes in keeping with the mission and core values of the university.
- Serve as architect and leader of a strategic, integrated, and systematic advancement program to broaden fundraising and outreach, and increase philanthropic revenue year-over-year. Prepare the university for future fundraising endeavors, such as a capital campaign, ensuring an optimally

deployed staff and an effective, efficient infrastructure that can support those campaigns.

- Strengthen Stanislaus State's Alumni Association and build alumni relations programs and activities that foster deep and broad engagement with and pride in their alma mater and, in turn, support and grow alumni donor participation across its 64,000 alumni. Draw upon the skills and talent of a dynamic alumni base and convey to volunteers that their service is valued, and their support is appreciated.
- Personally cultivate, solicit, secure, and steward a select portfolio of major and principal gift prospects and donors. Lead the frontline fundraising team by example, demonstrating success and ensuring that timely steps are taken toward solicitation.
- Develop and implement new and innovative plans to strategically identify and acquire prospective individual and institutional donors, increase donor retention, and renew and upgrade existing donors.
- Develop efficient and effective programs designed to amplify the annual fund as a pipeline for major and planned giving prospects; ensure that accurate and timely alumni data is captured in Raiser's Edge NXT.
- Elevate the importance of stewarding all gifts and programs, strengthening donors' interests in, satisfaction with, and commitment to the university, and convey to donors the impact their contributions have on the betterment of the institution. Ensure donors receive comprehensive, timely, and innovative acknowledgment of their gifts.
- Partner closely with the Office for Strategic Communications and Marketing to deploy strategic and consistent communications with alumni, existing donors, and friends of the university and create a tactical approach to broadening this base of supporters.
- Facilitate programs and initiatives designed to engage university alumni supporters and the external community. Such programs and initiatives should focus on engaging widely, offering diverse programming and engagement opportunities for Stanislaus State's alumni, students, and friends that both enhance and support the university's visibility, vision, and ambitions.

Staff Management

- Lead, support, and mentor Stanislaus State's advancement staff of 15 (four direct reports), promoting a culture of excellence, collaboration, and professional growth. Further develop a diverse and high-caliber staff that is well-prepared to meet the ongoing challenges and opportunities of a first-rate advancement program. Oversee advancement personnel activities, including the hiring, training, defining of job descriptions, and performance review process for each staff member.
- Plan and carefully manage the UA budget of \$1.7 million, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently and effectively in support of fundraising and alumni engagement goals and objectives;

utilize contemporary analytics to project, measure, and report on progress relative to goals. Identify current and future challenges and propose effective solutions.

- Exercise a leadership style that constructively supports, mentors, and optimally organizes the UA team and operation, setting clear direction and priorities for staff. Model a culture of open and transparent communication, respect, inclusion, high achievement, and overall professionalism that translates to both internal and external community members.
- Promote excellence through well-defined goals and implementation of best practices and accountability measures. Provide opportunities for professional learning and growth; inspire, uplift, and motivate staff through active, transparent communication, and delegation.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful vice president will be a community-focused, dedicated, and innovative leader with a record of leading advancement programs to greater levels of productivity and impact. The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- A deep appreciation and passion for the mission and aspirations of Stanislaus State, as well as the ability to articulate its uniqueness, importance, and relevance to all constituencies.
- A minimum of five years of progressively responsible fundraising and managerial experience across all areas of a comprehensive advancement program, preferably within higher education.
- Demonstrated success in personally cultivating, soliciting, securing, and stewarding principal and transformational gifts from a diverse group of individuals, foundations, corporations, and local businesses.
- Superior strategist with a holistic understanding of all aspects of advancement, alumni engagement vehicles, volunteer/board management, campaign management, and philanthropic partner relations.
- Comprehensive financial background with technical skills in budgetary management and financial and strategic planning.
- Proven success in building or expanding a comprehensive, sustainable fundraising enterprise and fostering a collaborative, high-performance division. Commitment to working in a team environment with shared goals.
- Sound judgment and integrity; willingness to try new approaches and take appropriate risks; and a high level of energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to the mission and objectives of the institution.
- Demonstrated ability to work well with people at all levels of an organization, across a diverse range of educational, cultural, and social backgrounds; respect and appreciation for each individual. Some knowledge of Spanish and/or other regionally relevant language or experience working with diverse constituents is desired.
- The intellectual depth, maturity, and confidence to establish credibility and garner the trust of volunteers, philanthropic partners, senior leaders, academic partners, colleagues, and staff.

- Excellent listener; clear, crisp, and compelling written and verbal communication; effective, engaging, and inspiring in public presentations.
- Eager and able to travel and work evenings and weekends, as needed, to meet philanthropic partners or otherwise represent the university.
- Commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability; strong personal integrity and work ethic coupled with humility, resilience, humor, and perspective.
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Stanislaus State is located in Turlock, California in the heart of the Central Valley. It is within a short distance from the San Francisco Bay Area, Monterey, Big Sur, Yosemite National Park, the Sierra Nevada, and the governmental hub of Sacramento.

The anticipated compensation range for this role is **\$225,000 to \$250,000**. In addition to the salary range listed herein, Stanislaus State offers a wealth of benefits that make working at the university even more rewarding. These benefits may include comprehensive health insurance, sick and vacation time, pension and retirement savings plan, and access to several perks. Please refer to the link listed [here](#) to learn more about the compensation practices and benefits. Salary offers are determined based on final candidate qualifications and experience; the budget for the position; and in support of fair, equitable, and consistent pay practices at California State University, Stanislaus.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/california-state-university-stanislaus/vice-president-university-advancement>.

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rachel Ellenport, Partner
Christina Garrison, Senior Associate
Maureen Perry, Associate
Rebecca Lyons, Search Coordinator

California State University, Stanislaus is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, religion, color, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, medical condition, national origin, sex, sexual

orientation, covered veteran status, or any other protected status. All qualified individuals are encouraged to apply.