



Search for the Assistant Vice President for Academic IT and Research Support  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

## THE SEARCH

Kansas State University ("K-State") seeks a highly collaborative, dynamic, and visionary leader to serve as the inaugural Assistant Vice President for Academic IT and Research Support ("AVP"). This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead within a distinguished institution and chart the course for the future of academic and research technologies at K-State. Reporting to the Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer ("CIO"), the AVP will play a pivotal role in advancing K-State's standing as a pioneer in the space of academic and research IT. Leading a high-performing team of IT Directors within an affinity based model spread across 11 campus units, the AVP will oversee all operational and future-state aspects of technologies used within the academic, classroom, and research environments of K-State's three campuses. A consensus builder with exemplary communication skills, the AVP will develop and strengthen relationships with the campus community, key stakeholders, and research faculty to ensure academic and research needs are met with a consistent level of service and standard of excellence.

In 2023, Kansas State University launched a bold new strategic plan, *Next-Gen K-State*. The plan serves as evidence of the University's dynamic approach to the future of higher education. The strategic plan outlines how K-State will serve new kinds of learners, solve grand global challenges, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the state. Major components of the plan include accelerating academic innovation and driving transformational research, areas in which the new AVP will have a significant impact. K-State aims to grow total enrollment to 30,000 learners and increase research expenditures to \$300 million and sponsored programs and awards to \$270 million. K-State aims to transform how they carry out their research mission through an integrated, interdisciplinary approach while building capacity in technology structures, policies, and resources. The AVP will have a direct hand in bringing these goals to fruition.

K-State is a land-grant, public research university with over 19,000 students, 1,300 faculty members, and 2,900 staff members spread across three campuses in Manhattan, Salina, and Olathe. The next AVP will be joining a proud and engaged community that is dedicated to K-State's historic mission of positively impacting society and transforming lives in Kansas and around the world. K-State is in a position to define the future of land-grant universities, building on their exemplary track record of serving, supporting, and growing traditional students and broadening their focus and programs to meet the needs of all types of

learners, including nontraditional and adult learners. This means K-State must also evolve the traditional student definition and build the technology structures to attract, serve, and grow new types of learners.

The successful candidate will have a proven ability to mobilize resources, foster innovation, and leverage core infrastructure services for research, teaching, and learning, while closely managing service quality expectations and adherence across the institution. They will possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills and bring a demonstrated track record of cross-campus collaboration. The AVP will work closely with staff and leadership to review and improve business practices; assess current systems and implement improvements as needed; provide action-oriented and expert support to academic units; and participate in the development of enhanced research policies and procedures. The individual must be a team builder with demonstrated success in developing and recruiting talented IT staff. The AVP will have political astuteness and critical problem-solving abilities to effectively balance the needs of faculty researchers, research administrators, and IT administrators in differing environments with varying levels of resources. The AVP will have experience successfully implementing new policies, procedures, business processes and systems and have comprehensive knowledge of working within a top tier research institution.

Kansas State University has retained the national search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in recruiting its new Assistant Vice President for Academic IT and Research Support. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

## **KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

Founded in 1863 as the nation's first operational land-grant university, 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 and encourages engagement that 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 they serve.

K-State has nine colleges, offering more than 400 degrees and options, from bachelor's to doctoral degrees. K-State's colleges and academic units includes the College of Agriculture, the College of Architecture, Planning, and Design, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration, the College of Education, the Carl R. Ice College of Engineering, the College of Health and Human Services, the College of Health and Human Sciences, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Graduate School. The Graduate School has 40 doctoral programs, 4 educational doctoral programs, 78 master's programs, and 53 graduate certificates. K-State also offers "K-State Online" which provides over 100 programs and boasts a 97 percent job placement rate.

K-State has an annual budget of more than \$900 million. 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.

In FY23, K-State received \$225 million in extramural funding for research, which is the highest ever total and represents a \$43.3M increase (23.8%) in actual external support relative to FY22 and a \$72.6 million increase (47.7%) relative to FY21. In FY23, K-State researchers obtained 1,097 awards. To stimulate such research, K-State is home to more than 90 research centers and institutes, including the 3,487-hectare [Konza Prairie Biological Station](#) and the [Biosecurity Research Institute](#), which focuses on infectious diseases, as well as plant and food-borne pathogens. The Office of Research Development promotes and facilitates the research, education, and outreach missions of the university by supporting and administering activities involving extramurally sponsored programs. Additionally, K-State Research and Extension is a division that works with scientists, educators and volunteers in each of the state's 105 counties, with the goal of making the University's research and scientific accomplishments accessible and relevant across Kansas.

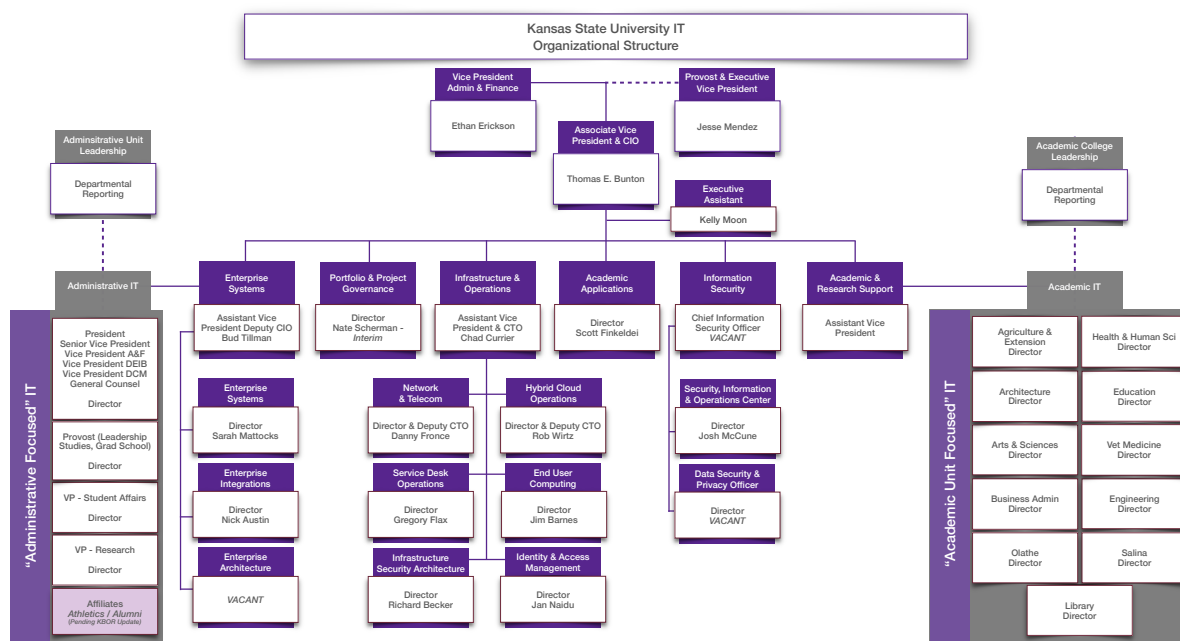
In 2025, Princeton Review ranked K-State No. 1 for "Friendliest Students." K-State prides itself on a welcoming environment and connected community of difference-makers, dream-chasers, and problem-solvers. With over 400 student organizations, on-campus housing options, Big 12 sports, and a vibrant arts scene, K-State provides a dynamic student experience. Further, K-State offers a wide array of opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research with support for students to find funding and connect with distinguished professors. 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 ranked No. 1 in the Big 12 Conference for more than 25 years, based on the percentage of graduates who are members.

K-State has a long, storied history of embracing diversity and inclusion as a core component of its educational land-grant mission. 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 Education](#).

## THE DIVISION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Kansas State University's Division of Information Technology, led by the Associate Vice President and CIO, Thomas Bunton, is committed to providing excellent IT services to the K-State community in support of the teaching, learning, research, and service missions. They offer a wide range of information technology and communications services. They provide leadership for developing and delivering computing and digital resources to K-State students, faculty and staff. In addition to the operation and management of IT Services, the Division comprises the administrative service functions of HR, finance, and communications. The Division coordinates and manages central IT business services including Enterprise Systems, Portfolio

& Project Governance, Infrastructure & Operations, Academic Applications, Information Security, and Academic IT and Research Support. The “Academic Unit Focused” IT team, consisting of 11 IT Directors, sits within the Office of IT and is overseen by the AVP of Academic IT and Research Support; however, this team also has a dotted line reporting structure to their individual college or unit leadership as well.



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Dr. Thomas Bunton was named Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer in 2023 and serves as the university’s senior information technology executive and leads the Division of Information Technology. He provides oversight for information technology across all campuses and supports the university-wide strategic use of information technology in support of K-State’s teaching, research, and service missions. Prior to K-State, Dr. Bunton served as the Associate Vice President and CIO at New Mexico State University. Dr. Bunton holds a doctorate in organizational communication from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a master's degree in computer and information technology from Purdue University, and bachelor’s degrees in pre-law and psychology from Purdue University.

## ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC IT AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

Reporting to the Associate Vice President and CIO, the AVP will lead the development and management of K-State’s academic IT and research support strategy, creating a roadmap for the adoption, enhancements, and rationalization of the university’s academic and research portfolio. The AVP will balance operations with flexibility in order to energize faculty and be partners in their research growth. They will oversee a high-performing team and work collaboratively across a large complex organization, managing a portfolio of services and applications while ensuring maintenance, patching, and upgrades,

with a focus on continuity across units. The AVP is part of a talented and engaged senior leadership team within the Office of IT and should lean into the strengths and knowledgebase of their colleagues to create more streamlined processes and move initiatives forward.

Further, a crucial task will be sustaining strong relationships with the deans of each college, the Associate Deans of Research, individual unit IT teams, and research faculty to ensure college and research needs are met and that services align with university needs and budgets. They will continue to promote a culture of quality service to researchers, administrators, and staff that will enhance their productivity, while guaranteeing adherence to relevant regulations. Conducting risk assessments and technology trend analysis to guide the digital roadmap for K-State is fundamental to this role. The AVP is a broad leader on campus who will contribute to conversations and strategy to consistently leverage modern technology and best practices. The AVP has 11 direct reports spread amongst eight schools, two satellite campuses, and the library.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE AVP**

### **Develop and implement a unifying strategic vision for Academic IT and Research Support**

The inaugural AVP will be tasked with developing, communicating, and executing a clear strategic vision for the future of academic IT and research support at K-State. They will be skilled in articulating that vision internally, having a diplomatic and politically astute approach. The ability to integrate a vision across many diverse units with unique concerns and needs is a most crucial aspect of the role. The AVP will create sustainable policies and procedures to improve efficiency and effectiveness, while also providing clarity and transparency to help all constituents understand how and why decisions are made. Resources across campus vary, so the AVP will have the task of creating equitable solutions to mitigate the resource differences so that each unit has a similar experience and standard of excellence. Considering K-State's ambitious strategic plan, the AVP will have a demonstrated competency in advising and supporting senior executive leadership with insights and expertise in academic technology and research strategies, also aiding in university-wide decision-making processes.

### **Collaborate and build trust with academic leadership and the research community**

It is essential that the AVP engage with the schools and campuses, building trusting partnerships with their academic, administrative, and IT leaders. To realize this role's full potential, the new AVP must prioritize building relationships with each of the academic entities, fostering cooperation and engaging in frequent and transparent messaging with the shared goal of improving research and educational programs university wide. The AVP will be skilled at establishing rapport, leading with influence, and facilitating cohesive communication across all levels of the organization. The AVP will rely on their team of IT Directors to disseminate information to their units. Relationship building with strong interpersonal skills is a key component to the success of this role. The AVP will be a keen listener, understanding the user experience from all angles. They will find ways to both standardize and customize academic IT and

research support services for the units they serve, understanding the importance of consistency, while also being open-minded and attentive to individual needs.

### **Evaluate and operationalize academic IT and research support across campus**

The AVP will possess a capacity to improve the operational efficiency and the effectiveness of complex technology environments, ensuring high resilience, risk mitigation, and cooperation across information systems and assets. As a leading technology executive, the AVP will engage in evaluating the current state of academic IT and research support. They will offer solutions for modernization to meet the needs of each unit while balancing the budget through prioritizing requests in a fair and systematic way. An understanding and focus on federal compliance and associated accreditation compliance is also essential. The AVP will stay informed on the capabilities of various enterprise platforms and tools, making strategic decisions regarding their selection and use. The AVP will help determine what technological enhancements will make the greatest positive impact on the research enterprise and then work with other appropriate individuals and departments to acquire and implement such technology. They will have the opportunity to lead system improvements that will eliminate redundancies, provide efficiencies, and enhance the integrity of the data. K-State seeks a leader who can create a culture of continuous improvement where constant reassessment and innovation are always front of mind.

### **Effectively lead, organize, and mentor the Academic IT team**

Exemplary leadership and management skills are critical for the next AVP as they lead a talented team to make an impact on K-State's academic and research goals. With direct reports spread out across three campuses and 11 different units, the AVP will empower their team, employing their strengths, and offering continued training and support to help them to be successful in their important roles. The AVP will understand the needs of each IT Director's constituents and assist in providing the tools, resources, and guidance to meet the interests of the people and departments they serve.

An adept recruiter, the AVP will continually seek leading-edge and innovative solutions to the recruitment of ambitious and talented IT professionals. The AVP will bring emotional intelligence, strong listening skills, organizational development skills, and proven accomplishments in managing and recruiting strong, vibrant teams. This is an opportunity for someone with an interest in mentorship, management, and visionary leadership.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate will have a bachelor's degree (master's or PhD preferred) in Computer Science, Information Systems, Business Administration, or a related field. They will also have many, if not all, of the following characteristics and qualifications:

- Extensive experience in developing and managing large complex technology and research environments;
- Strong leadership and team development skills, with a proven ability to build, manage, and mentor a multidisciplinary technology team;
- Proven ability to establish rapport, influence decision-making, and facilitate cohesive communication across all levels of the organization;
- Deep understanding of academic and research technology trends, best practices and regulatory requirements;
- Excellent project management skills, capable of leading complicated technology projects, including modernization, rationalization and policy development;
- Experience in vendor and stakeholder management, including service level agreement negotiation and partnership development to support campus initiatives;
- Demonstrated ability to lead with a strategic vision in the domain of academic technology and research support, executing critical strategies within areas of responsibility and leading by influence;
- Ability to inspire and propel the team toward achieving the goals of the continuous improvement;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, with an ability to convey complex issues to a non-technical audience;
- Strong analytical skills and the ability to solve complex problems related to enterprise applications and integrations;
- Ability to devise innovative solutions that advance the organization's mission.

## **LOCATION**

### **About Manhattan**

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. Manhattan residents enjoy a vibrant, revitalized downtown area with fine dining options and local boutiques. Manhattan is home to the Flint Hills Discover Center, the Sunset Zoo, and the Gardens of K-State. The city also offers several recreational opportunities such as the Kona Prairie, Tuttle Creek State Park, and Linear Park Trail. Further, the McCain Performance Series hosts acclaimed Broadway musicals, comedians, and musicians. Manhattan has excellent K-12 education with Manhattan High School ranking among the top five percent of U.S. High schools.

## **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/kansas-state-university/assistant-vice-president-academic-it-and-research-support>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Lindsay Gold, Dan Rodas, Kristen Andersen  
Isaacson, Miller

*Kansas State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. 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.*