



Dean, College of Biosciences and Vice Provost for Research

Kansas City University

Kansas City and Joplin, Missouri

THE SEARCH

Kansas City University (KCU) invites applications for a visionary and collaborative leader to serve as Dean of the College of Biosciences (COB) and Vice Provost for Research (VPR). Reporting to the Provost, this dual-role position will drive strategic direction for the College's academic, financial, and operational initiatives while leading the advancement of KCU's university-wide research enterprise. As both the chief academic officer of the COB and the institution's senior research leader, the Dean and VPR will play a central role in elevating KCU's academic and scholarly impact. The University is actively pursuing the prestigious R2 Carnegie Classification, reflecting its commitment to growing research activity and doctoral education. The ideal candidate will be an inspiring strategist and skillful convener, poised to expand research capacity and academic programs through thoughtful investment and innovation.

Established in 1916 as a single college, KCU has evolved from one of the nation's first colleges of osteopathic medicine to one of the world's premiere health sciences universities, with 1,892 students currently enrolled. KCU's academic programs push the boundaries of osteopathic medicine, biomedical sciences, psychology, bioethics, bioinformatics, and dental medicine. In 2004, KCU expanded its academic offerings to include the College of Biosciences. In 2017, the University embarked upon the next 100 years of cutting-edge health sciences education with a second campus in Joplin, Missouri, and a new Doctor of Clinical Psychology (PsyD) program on the [Kansas City](#) campus. KCU-[Joplin](#) is the first medical school to open in Missouri in nearly 50 years and it's the only medical school in the Southwest region of the state. In 2021, KCU broke ground on the construction of a College of Dental Medicine in Joplin, which opened in 2023.

As osteopathic medicine institutions across the nation face enrollment challenges and increasing competition for students, the Dean and VPR will continue to differentiate the COB's curricular offerings—including the creation of a PhD program in biosciences—while broadly amplifying KCU's research portfolio. KCU is poised for growth and has plans to expand and update research spaces on both campuses. Successful candidates will harness KCU's considerable momentum and leverage the University's collegial, collaborative environment to attract and retain top-notch researchers and faculty.

As the COB's public face, the Dean and VPR will deepen relationships with alumni, potential funders and donors, and with the broader community.

Kansas City University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document and will be held in the strictest confidence.

KANSAS CITY UNIVERSITY

Kansas City University (KCU), founded in 1916, is a fully accredited, private not-for-profit health sciences university with Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, Biosciences, and Dental Medicine. KCU's College of Osteopathic Medicine is the largest medical school in the Midwest and the fourth-largest medical school in the nation. The University is a key educator of physicians, health professionals, and scientists for both Missouri and Kansas, and is identified as the 9th most impactful medical school in the US for primary care. Home to nearly 2,000 students, KCU offers multiple graduate degrees: a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine; a Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology; a Master of Arts in Bioethics; a Master of Science in the Biomedical Sciences; a Master of Business Administration in partnership with Rockhurst University; and a Master of Public Health in partnership with the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

The College of Biosciences

Founded in 2004, the COB offers two tracks: a one-year Master of Science of Biomedical Sciences, and a two-year research program. The master's program prepares students to pursue doctoral programs in health care fields such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, or other allied health training programs. Master's program coursework includes the following disciplines: anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology and epidemiology, cell biology, embryology, genetics, histology, physiology and molecular biology. The research program is ideal for aspiring research scientists and includes an additional emphasis on advanced courses, individualized tutorial classes, and opportunities to conduct original research projects.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine

The College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) is the fourth largest medical school in the U.S., the ninth most impactful for primary care in the nation, the eighth most affordable of private medical colleges, and the leading producer of physicians for the State of Missouri. The COM has two sites strategically located on the University's campuses in Kansas City and Joplin, Missouri, to address the growing needs of both urban and rural populations. In partnership with local organizations, KCU's Center for Population Health and Equity builds momentum around understanding and addressing the social factors that impact health—both within and outside of the traditional health care setting—to better prepare students to practice osteopathic medicine, clinical psychology, and dentistry.

The College of Dental Medicine

Founded in 2023 and based in Joplin, Missouri, KCU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM) addresses the significant and growing oral health needs of the four-state region of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. With only three dental schools in the entire area, training an adequate number of dentists to help meet these needs is a challenge. The CDM educates future dentists who have a passion for providing care in underserved communities and who wish to continue to practice in rural areas after graduation. The College's integrated basic and clinical sciences topics will be taught throughout the curriculum, in increasing levels of complexity and relevance based on what students are learning each semester. Students will have early clinical and community-based experiences beginning the summer after their first year and will have the unique opportunity to complete two 12-week rotations at community educational activity sites outside of KCU in order to best reach the underserved populations in the four-state region.

Center for Population Health and Equity

Located on KCU's Kansas City and Joplin campuses, the Center for Population Health and Equity (CPHE) actively works to reduce health disparities that affect underserved populations in these areas. Rooted in KCU's mission to enhance community well-being, the CPHE offers students experiential learning and volunteer opportunities aimed at transforming health care delivery and fostering systemic change within communities. KCU has received \$16M in federal congressional funding and support from the [Sunderland Foundation](#) for facilities, equipment, and programming to address the needs of Missourians in both the urban core and rural communities.

Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics

KCU recently received a generous \$300,000 gift from the William T. Kemper Foundation to help establish a Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics for Pediatric Cancer and Rare Diseases, in collaboration with [Children's Mercy Research Institute \(CMRI\)](#). This funding will support a groundbreaking bioinformatics project focused on identifying genetic drivers of rare pediatric cancers that currently have no diagnosis. Through this initiative, KCU students will gain hands-on experience in advanced bioinformatics research, contributing to discoveries that could revolutionize diagnosis and treatment for these complex conditions.

LEADERSHIP

President

Dr. Marc B. Hahn became the 14th president and chief executive officer of Kansas City University (KCU) in 2013, after briefly serving as KCU's executive vice president for academic and medical affairs and dean, and subsequently as provost. Dr. Hahn has built a team that is responsible for the expansion of KCU on two campuses strategically located in Kansas City and Joplin, Missouri, to address the growing needs of

both urban and rural underserved populations; it includes two medical school sites, a growing graduate school, and a new dental school. Dr. Hahn came to KCU from the University of New England where he served as senior vice president for health affairs and dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine from 2009-2012. In 2022, the [RWJHPF program recognized Dr. Hahn with their Lifetime Achievement Award.](#)

Provost

Edward R. O'Connor, PhD, MBA, FACHE, joined Kansas City University in 2017 and serves as provost and executive vice president for academic and research affairs. In these roles, Dr. O'Connor provides leadership, vision, direction, and advocacy to best support students in meeting their academic and career objectives. He is also responsible for advancing KCU's goals for research through continued collaboration with key partners. Dr. O'Connor came to KCU from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, where he served as provost and chief academic officer, and professor in both the College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Medicine.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN AND VICE PROVOST

The Dean of the College of Biosciences and Vice Provost for Research will be pivotal in shaping the University's academic and research missions. The role requires a dynamic leader who can drive innovation, inspire faculty, and foster a thriving academic and research environment. The Dean and VPR role also involves promoting institutional goals to professional and community stakeholders and securing external funding to achieve strategic objectives.

The successful Dean and VPR will bring a comprehensive, data-driven, and collaboratively-informed vision for the College of Biosciences and KCU's ambitious research mission, and will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Chart the course of the COB through the development and implementation of a strategic plan

The College of Biosciences has been on a rapid ascent, growing from a class of 17 master's students in 2006 to about 100 students across the master's and research track programs in recent years. The incoming Dean and VPR will craft the next iteration of the College's strategic plan, keeping their finger on the pulse of the needs of incoming students and Kansas City's rich ecosystem of medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions. A bold, enterprising leader, the Dean and VPR will examine the COB's current programmatic offerings and will collaborate across KCU's Kansas City and Joplin campuses and with external partners to raise the profile of the College.

Invest in the creation of novel programmatic offerings to further differentiate the COB

KCU is conveniently located in the heart of Kansas City's robust medical ecosystem. In response to the needs of regional employers, the COB has set its sights on the creation of a PhD program in Biosciences. The incoming Dean and VPR will lead the charge in the creation, accreditation, and implementation of this

program. Working in close partnership with the Vice Provost of Student and Enrollment Services, the Deans of the College of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Dean of the College of Dental Medicine, the Dean and VPR will facilitate the creation of novel, interdisciplinary programming that serves the broader KCU community.

Design and implement an ambitious strategic vision for KCU's research enterprise

As KCU endeavors to join the prestigious R2, High Research Spending and Doctorate Production ranks, the incoming Dean and VPR will leverage their considerable knowledge of research administration and grant funding to create a comprehensive strategic plan for the University. The Dean and VPR will audit existing areas of research strength and direct investments into the research administration process, scaling these initiatives to match the needs of research scholars. They will also identify opportunities to strengthen and leverage existing regional partnerships—such as KCU's collaboration with [BioNexusKC](#)—to accelerate the University's research mission across the life sciences. Aiming to position KCU on the cutting edge of innovations in osteopathic, biosciences, and dental medicine, the Dean and VPR will also be tasked with the recruitment and retention of top-notch researchers, and expanding rural health disparities research in Joplin.

Strengthen relationships with external partners to support KCU's academic mission

KCU maintains agreements with the University of Missouri at St. Louis, Regis University, the University of Missouri Kansas City, and Children's Mercy Kansas City to accept students across their competitive optometry, pharmacy, and clinical research programs. The Dean and VPR will continue to cultivate existing partnerships and develop novel relationships with key educational, medical, and research institutions to ensure pathways to employment and further education for students. A savvy communicator, the Dean and VPR will thoughtfully share KCU's ambitious narrative of research growth, seeking strategic philanthropic support.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no single candidate will have all of the following qualifications and characteristics, the ideal candidate should possess many of the following:

- Doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in biomedical sciences, biosciences, or a related field, or a terminal medical degree (M.D. or D.O.)
- Minimum 10 years of experience in academia and/or biomedical sciences research.
- Experience in leadership roles such as dean, associate dean, department chair, or research center director.
- Proven track record of research funding and grant acquisition.
- Exceptional leadership and strategic planning skills, with high integrity and vision.
- Expertise in research administration, grant writing, and scientific mentoring.
- Proven ability to lead diverse teams and foster an inclusive, collaborative environment.

- Strong communication, interpersonal, and public-speaking skills.
- Proficiency in managing budgets, personnel, and complex organizational structures.
- Demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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/kansas-city-university-college-biosciences-and-vice-provost-research/dean>

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Jay Torio, Partner
Afi Tettey-Fio, Senior Associate
Rachel Banderob, Senior Search Coordinator

KCU is committed to promoting an equal employment opportunity workplace. Equal opportunity is and shall be provided for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, genetic information (GINA), physical or mental disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, ancestry, military and/or veteran status, and/or any other status protected by applicable Federal, state or local law.