

# Stanford University

**Assistant Vice President, Total Rewards**  
Stanford University

## THE SEARCH

Stanford University seeks a strategic leader to serve as its next Assistant Vice President, Total Rewards (AVP, Total Rewards). This is a unique opportunity to support the work of a world-class research university with a deep tradition of innovation, academic excellence, and community engagement. As Stanford enters a new era of leadership and institutional momentum, the AVP for Total Rewards will play a critical role in developing and implementing a thoughtful and robust compensation philosophy and architecture, and delivering a comprehensive benefits model. A successful candidate will join a forward-looking University Human Resources (UHR) team committed to advancing Stanford's mission and values, and will be expected to bring creativity, expertise, and a collaborative spirit to the evolving landscape of total rewards strategy in higher education.

Under the steady leadership of Vice President for Human Resources, Elizabeth Zacharias, the Assistant Vice President, Total Rewards will oversee the strategic direction and operational execution of Stanford's compensation and benefits, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and values. Success in this role will require a deep understanding of total rewards strategy, a commitment to equity and transparency, the ability to navigate complex organizational dynamics, and the skill to influence and negotiate with key stakeholders toward shared objectives. The AVP will be expected to provide thoughtful counsel on compensation and benefits matters, foster cross-functional collaboration, and lead a team of professionals in delivering high-impact programs across the institution. As Stanford continues to evolve, the AVP will play a critical role in modernizing systems, enhancing employee experience, and supporting the university's efforts to attract and retain top talent.

Stanford University has retained the services of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the parties at the end of this document.

## ABOUT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1885, Stanford is one of the world's premier institutions of higher education. From the beginning, Stanford stood apart from the broader higher education landscape: coeducational in a time when most private universities were all-male; nondenominational when most were associated with a

religious organization; and practical, producing cultured and useful citizens. The institution has been defined by its willingness to experiment beyond known limits and has thus achieved some of the most iconic advancements in technology, medicine, business, the arts, humanities, and the social sciences of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. With its close ties to Silicon Valley, the future is arguably invented at Stanford. As of Fall 2024, the university has over 17,000 students who come from all 50 states and 75 countries—representing a diverse, global, and dynamic student community—as well as over 2,300 faculty who are leaders in their fields.

Supporting this mission is a diverse and dedicated staff of nearly 19,000, driven to impact the future of our legacy. The institution's culture and unique perks empower staff with the freedom to grow, a caring culture, health benefits, and other enviable resources. This includes staff at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, a multi-program laboratory exploring frontier questions in photon science, astrophysics, particle physics, and accelerator research. SLAC provides world-class facilities for scientific discovery and supports Stanford's mission by fostering innovation and collaboration among scientists from around the globe.

#### STANFORD UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESOURCES

Stanford University Human Resources (UHR) is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, innovative, and high-performing workplace that supports the university's mission of education and research. UHR provides strategic leadership and operational support across a wide range of employment-related services, including compensation, benefits, talent management, employee and labor relations, and wellness programs. Working in partnership with school and unit HR teams, UHR ensures a consistent and exceptional employee experience, empowering faculty, staff, and student workers to thrive personally and professionally.

The Total Rewards team plays a vital role in shaping the employee experience through thoughtful benefits program design, staff compensation philosophy and architecture development, efficient systems, and strategic support. The Total Rewards team ensures that employees—from candidates to retirees—can access and navigate their options with clarity and confidence. The team also partners closely with HR business units and university leadership, offering expert guidance and leveraging data insights to develop solutions that support Stanford's workforce goals and institutional mission. For more information, please visit: <https://hr.stanford.edu/about-stanford-hr/university-human-resources>.

#### VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES, ELIZABETH ZACHARIAS

Elizabeth Zacharias serves as Stanford University's Vice President for Human Resources, bringing extensive experience in leading HR functions within large, complex organizations. Appointed in 2015, she oversees seven core areas, including compensation, benefits, staffing, learning and organization effectiveness, employee communications, employee and labor relations, and HR information systems. Prior to joining Stanford, Zacharias held senior HR leadership roles at Aerojet Rocketdyne, where she developed comprehensive leadership and development programs. She is recognized for her strategic

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vision, commitment to client service, and passion for advancing workplace excellence in support of the employee experience and well-being, all in service of Stanford's mission.

## ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, TOTAL REWARDS

Reporting to the Vice President for Human Resources, the Assistant Vice President, Total Rewards (AVP), oversees a team of specialists and consultants and leads strategy and operations for university-wide staff compensation, executive compensation, and benefits. The role is responsible for oversight, design, and implementation of new total rewards strategies, policies, and programs. Additionally, this position reviews existing offerings and provides recommendations for changes and upgrades aligned with university values and strategic goals to ensure Stanford remains a competitive employer within the higher education market.

As a trusted partner and expert resource for the Vice President of Human Resources, members of the Human Resources Leadership Team (HRLT), and leaders in Stanford's schools/units, the AVP will build and manage relationships, influence positive outcomes, and support effective communication with university leadership and key stakeholders.

The AVP leads a team of about 20 individuals across Compensation and Benefits.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The AVP will be expected to address a set of key opportunities and challenges that will shape the future of the university's total rewards strategy.

### ***Provide Strategic Leadership of Stanford's Total Rewards Programs***

In order to remain an employer of choice in Silicon Valley, Stanford must continue to offer best-in-class benefits and reasonably competitive salaries. The AVP will develop and execute, in concert with internal and external partners, a robust and nimble compensation strategy that aligns with the university's mission and focus, as well as ensures that benefits offerings are comprehensive, affordable, and accessible.

### ***Foster a Cohesive and Collaborative Environment across Stanford's Schools and Units***

The AVP has the opportunity to develop strong collaborations and supportive partnerships with leaders across Stanford's many schools and units. Stanford is a large, decentralized, and highly matrixed organization, and as such, developing partnerships and collaborative relationships in a thoughtful and intentional manner will be key to the AVP's success moving forward. Through developing and then leveraging these collaborative partnerships, the AVP and their team can be more responsive to concerns and needs that emerge across the university and be proactive in developing comprehensive compensation strategies and practices to meet differing institutional needs.

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***Build and Develop a Strong Total Rewards Team***

The AVP will be charged with building out a team of compensation analysts and practitioners and supporting an existing team of benefits analysts and practitioners. The AVP will hire, develop, lead, and mentor team members to maximize their skills and give them opportunities for growth in their roles while meeting the needs of the university employee community. They will engage, inspire, and empower the team by providing a clear vision and direction, and offering continuous guidance and support to help them achieve their goals.

***Drive Operational Efficiency and Continuous Improvement of Total Rewards at Stanford***

The AVP will join Stanford at an exciting and pivotal moment in time with the rollout of Sequoia, Stanford's new Oracle HCM platform. Through thoughtful and strategic use of Sequoia, the AVP and the Total Rewards team will be able to create efficiencies for end users to access timely information to drive decisions, from managers determining employee compensation changes to employees reviewing their benefits information. The AVP and their team will have better access to data and reporting to support strategic decision-making across schools and units.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The following qualifications represent the broad set of skills and personal qualities deemed important for success as the Assistant Vice President, Total Rewards. While no candidate will embody every quality, ideal candidates will bring many of the following professional qualities and attributes:

- **Education & Experience:**
  - Master's degree or Bachelor's degree, and at least 10 years of relevant experience
  - At least one of the following certifications preferred: CEBS, ISCEBS, PHR/SPHR; CCP/CBP, or equivalent certification.
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**
  - Strong relationship-building acumen in a highly matrixed environment with multiple constituencies (HR, finance, legal, unions, leadership); ability to navigate and influence change and recommend flexible solutions.
  - Prior experience setting and articulating a total rewards vision aligned with institutional values and operational service expectations.
  - Proven experience managing a team of compensation and benefit specialists and establishing and reinforcing standards for exceptional customer service.
  - Prior experience developing and managing large-scale budgets for compensation and benefits programs and the ability to assess ROI on total rewards investments.
  - Subject matter knowledge of best practices in higher education compensation and benefits philosophy, theory, market-based pay structures, FLSA, pay equity, market pricing methodologies, and higher education governance.

- Knowledge of federal, state, and local regulations governing compensation and benefits (FLSA, ACA, ERISA, HIPAA, FMLA, IRS, etc.) and expertise in pay transparency laws and regulations.
- Human Resources experience in a complex matrixed environment.
- Knowledge of the unique compensation and benefits issues and needs applicable to academic and non-academic staff populations, including job evaluation, career frameworks, salary bands, and pay equity audits.
- Strong understanding and experience deploying market-based pay strategies and best practices.
- Ability to work through ambiguous situations.
- High emotional intelligence.
- Background implementing HRIS compensation modules.
- Experience working in a complex, highly decentralized environment.
- Excellent and effective written and verbal communication skills.
- Proven planning and organizational skills and effective time management abilities.
- Ability to exercise discretion with confidential information.
- Proficiency with Google Workplace applications (Google Docs, Google Slides, etc.) or MS Office Suite, including advanced Excel and data visualization.
- Demonstrated excellence leveraging Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS).
- Willingness to be present on our Redwood City, CA, campus. This is a hybrid position requiring an on-site presence of two or more days per week; however, a remote arrangement may be considered.

## COMPENSATION

The expected pay range for this position is \$296,213 to \$350,134 per annum. Stanford University provides pay ranges representing its good-faith estimate of what the university reasonably expects to pay for a position. The pay offered to a selected candidate will be determined based on factors such as (but not limited to) the scope and responsibilities of the position, the qualifications of the selected candidate, departmental budget availability, internal equity, geographic location, and external market pay for comparable jobs.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Applications, inquiries, nominations, and referrals should be directed to the Isaacson, Miller web page for the search:

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner  
Katheryne Martínez, Associate  
Cortnee Bollard, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/stanford-university/assistant-vice-president-total-rewards>

Stanford is an equal employment opportunity and affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Stanford University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Stanford University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*