



Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President of People & Culture
California State University, Stanislaus
Turlock, CA

THE SEARCH

Stanislaus State (Stan State) seeks a dynamic, strategic human resources executive to serve as its next Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President of People & Culture (“CHRO”). Serving as a member of the President’s Cabinet, the CHRO is the University’s senior leader responsible for advancing a comprehensive people and culture strategy that aligns talent, compliance, engagement, and organizational effectiveness with institutional mission and CSU systemwide priorities. The CHRO will lead cultural transformation, strengthen leadership capacity, ensure regulatory and labor compliance, and elevate human resources as a strategic enterprise function in support of student success and institutional excellence.

Stanislaus State, founded in 1957 as the 15th campus of the California State University system, has grown from its early classes at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds to a 228-acre main campus in Turlock and a second campus in Stockton established in 1974. Serving over 9,000 students with 662 faculty, the university offers 43 undergraduate majors, 16 master’s programs, 7 credentials, and a doctorate in education across four academic colleges. The Stockton Campus extends access to the only public four-year degree option in California’s fastest-growing urban county, broadening the university’s impact across the San Joaquin Valley.

The CHRO will be joining Stan State an exciting time with an inspiring [President](#) and a [new strategic plan](#) underway. The CHRO will have a tremendous opportunity to have a high-impact role in galvanizing the campus community and unlock the full potential of its members. The CHRO will serve as a transformational people-and-culture champion, dedicated to creating optimal working environments and strengthening the systems, policies, and relationships that support employees across a complex, unionized, shared-governance environment. The CHRO will be responsive to the evolving landscape of higher education and adept at cultivating a unified, engaged, and future-ready workforce.

Stanislaus State has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller, 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.

Stan 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 inclusion, 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.

Stan State plays an important role as an anchor institution in the Central Valley and beyond. With 73 percent of Stan State's students identifying as first-generation, it creates a lasting impact on individuals, their families, their chosen fields, and their communities. 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, Stan 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.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

President | Britt Rios-Ellis, Ph.D.

[Britt Rios-Ellis, Ph.D.](#), serves as the 13th president of California State University, Stanislaus, bringing more than 30 years of bilingual and bicultural leadership in education, community health, and higher education. Throughout her career, she has championed academic excellence, inclusive practices, and deep student-centered engagement.

Before joining Stan State in July 2024, she served as executive vice president of Academic Affairs and provost at Oakland University in Michigan, where she strengthened academic operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, secured major external funding, advanced interprofessional initiatives, and shepherded the purchase of a new building adjacent to a highly underserved community. Her efforts led Oakland University to earn the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Rios-Ellis previously held significant leadership roles at CSU Monterey Bay and CSU Long Beach, where she helped establish the first Master of Science physician assistant program at CSUMB and co-authored the foundational grants that designated CSULB as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. She also founded key centers focused on Latino community health and has generated more than \$55 million in health, wellness, and education funding across the institutions she has served.

Since arriving at Stan State, President Rios-Ellis has been actively collaborating with faculty, staff, alumni, community leaders, and industry partners to expand educational pipelines that strengthen the regional economy and meet the workforce needs of California's Central Valley. She is leading efforts to deepen community and corporate partnerships, enhance the university's impact throughout the region, and guide the development of a [new strategic plan](#) that will shape the institution's direction over the next five years.

Rios-Ellis holds bachelor's 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. She has completed notable leadership programs at Harvard University, Bryn Mawr, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and has served as a special government employee for multiple federal agencies, including HRSA, SAMHSA, the CDC, and the NIH.

Vice President for Business & Finance | Rose McAuliffe

Rose McAuliffe serves as the vice president for business and finance and chief financial officer at California State University, Stanislaus. She is a productive CSU senior leader with experience directing operations and leading financial programs. She has more than 25 years of experience across finance, higher education, investments, and government.

She previously served as the associate vice president for budget, planning, and administration and chief budget officer at California State University, Sacramento. Prior to Sacramento State, McAuliffe was the chief of financial planning, policy, and budgeting at CalPERS, where she managed the system's multi-billion-dollar budget and financial operations. Some of her achievements include leading her CalPERS

budget team to the GFOA Distinguished Budget Award for three consecutive years. She also leveraged technology to streamline operations and establish reporting capabilities while at the California Housing Finance Agency, the affordable housing bank for the State of California. At Sacramento State, she increased transparency in the budgetary and financial processes and revamped their Annual Report on Budget, Expenditures, and Financial Information. She implemented a new position management process for the campus and introduced a position management policy.

Rose earned her bachelor's degree in international relations and Spanish from the University of California, Davis. She also holds a master's in business administration from Keller Graduate School of Management, in addition to her master's in accounting.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER AND ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT

The CHRO is a key member of the President's Cabinet and will provide the enterprise-wide leadership and administrative direction for all human resource functions and serve as the University's chief advisor on workforce strategy, labor relations, and organizational health. The CHRO reports directly to the Vice President for Business and Finance and oversees talent acquisition, payroll, employee and labor relations, classification and compensation, benefits, HRIS, and training and development, and is responsible for advancing a comprehensive people strategy that aligns talent, culture, and organizational effectiveness with the institution's mission and strategic priorities. Direct reports to the CHRO include the Interim Director of Human Resources, Workforce Strategy; the Interim Executive Director of Equity and Compliance; and the Director of Organizational Development and HR Systems.

The CHRO partners closely with senior leaders to implement cross-functional goals, shape an inclusive and high-performing workplace, and guide organizational policies and practices. Beyond traditional HR administration, the CHRO champions employee engagement, leadership development, workforce innovation, and inclusive culture-building while ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations, collective bargaining agreements, and CSU Executive Orders.

The CHRO also provides oversight and serves as a strategic partner to the Director of Equity Programs & Compliance, supporting high-quality service delivery across Title IX, DHR, Public Records Act responses, and the University's broader Equal Opportunity and Compliance programs.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next CHRO will be energized and inspired by the following opportunities and challenges:

Champion a forward-thinking People & Culture vision and culture

As a senior strategic advisor to the President and the executive leadership team, the CHRO will provide visionary leadership to shape the University's overall people strategy and organizational culture. They will design and implement a comprehensive People & Culture strategy aligned with campus priorities and CSU systemwide goals, spearheading enterprise-wide initiatives that strengthen employee engagement,

well-being, inclusion, institutional pride, and facilitates a culture of kindness and appreciation. The CHRO will oversee leadership development, succession planning, and executive coaching programs that build organizational capacity, while leveraging workforce analytics and campus climate data to guide strategic decision-making. They will bring a visible and transformative leadership presence, engaging authentically with employees at all levels and building exceptional working partnerships across the campus to align priorities and evolve together. Through forward-thinking leadership and a deep commitment to organizational health, the CHRO will play a pivotal role in cultivating a thriving, high-performing, and future-ready university community.

A visible and approachable leader, the CHRO fosters strong campus partnerships, models integrity and collaborative decision-making, and resolves issues with fairness and sound judgment, promoting co-created solutions that strengthen organizational effectiveness. They will demonstrate integrity, discretion, political savvy, and a strong commitment to ethical leadership, service excellence, and the responsible use of data and technology, including emerging AI tools, to support people-centered work.

Drive institutional effectiveness through strategic organizational development

To strengthen the University's organizational capacity and ensure sustained excellence, the CHRO will lead large-scale organizational development and change management initiatives. They will position themselves as a trusted advisor across the university by providing strategic guidance on organizational design, team performance, and operational optimization, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and service excellence across all divisions. The CHRO will play a critical role in advancing collaborative governance by partnering closely with shared-governance bodies to support transparent decision-making, strengthen institutional trust, and ensure alignment with the University's strategic priorities. To be successful, they will demonstrate creativity, flexibility, and resourcefulness in close collaboration with campus constituents to thrive within the University's culture.

Lead operational excellence across all HR functions

The CHRO will promote forward thinking within the office and university-wide, developing a modern, trusted, and financially sound HR infrastructure. They will support and mentor the HR team centrally, ensuring that leaders and staff have the necessary skills and training to lead within their subject areas and build a more connected and strategic HR office grounded in customer service, trust, and HR best practices. The CHRO will ensure seamless coordination and alignment across the division and the appropriate budget planning and resource allocation to support effective program delivery and strategic priorities. Through this work, the CHRO will ensure a responsive, efficient, and customer-centered HR experience that meets the evolving needs of the University community.

Provide proactive labor and employee relations

The next CHRO will assume a vital leadership role in nurturing constructive labor-management relationships across multiple bargaining units and ensuring that employment practices are fair, consistent, and grounded in respect for the dignity of every employee. By modeling clarity, empathy, and principled

leadership, the next CHRO will strengthen the university's capacity to navigate complex issues, including conflict resolution, grievances, and performance management. Their work will reinforce a climate of accountability, equity, and mutual respect, which are essential foundations for a thriving academic community.

Elevate talent recruitment, development, and retention efforts

With a focus on building a thriving, future-ready workforce, the CHRO will play a pivotal role in shaping the University's long-term success by attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and exceptional community of employees. They will guide the University in implementing innovative hiring practices, robust onboarding, leadership development, and meaningful career pathways that reflect the evolving needs of higher education. In close partnership with Academic Affairs and other campus divisions, the CHRO will lead coordinated workforce planning and talent sustainability efforts to ensure the University is prepared to meet emerging challenges and opportunities. The next CHRO will inspire a holistic approach to employee success, one that supports well-being, recognizes excellence, and builds a sense of purpose and possibility that encourages talented individuals to build their careers at Stan State in a competitive market.

Guide the University's compensation strategy and total rewards programs

Recognizing that competitive compensation and benefits are essential to attracting and retaining talent, the CHRO will guide the University's classification, compensation, and total rewards strategy, ensuring alignment with CSU guidelines and advancing transparent and competitive pay practices that involve a thoughtful approach to progression. They will lead comprehensive compensation planning efforts, including salary reviews and workforce analytics, to support informed decision-making and strengthen organizational effectiveness. The CHRO will also ensure the efficient administration of employee benefits in coordination with CSU and State of California programs, delivering a consistent and high-quality experience that supports the well-being and financial security of the University's workforce.

Ensure institutional compliance and HR policy alignment

The CHRO will ensure full compliance with federal and state employment laws as well as CSU Executive Orders, establishing a strong foundation of legal and regulatory integrity across the institution. They will oversee critical compliance functions, including investigations, audits, mandated reporting, and risk-mitigation strategies, to safeguard the University and promote a culture of accountability. The CHRO will also develop and implement HR policies that align with systemwide directives and campus needs, ensuring consistency, clarity, and proactive adherence to evolving regulatory requirements.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring a demonstrated track record of operational success in leading various HR functions and a demonstrated ability to lead cultural transformation within complex public organizations.

For full consideration, candidates must have the following **required** qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- At least 10 years of progressively responsible senior-level HR or People and Culture leadership experience.
- Demonstrated experience leading teams within a complex, unionized organization.
- A strong record of advising executive leadership on providing forward-looking workforce strategy and on effective organizational matters.

While no candidate will embody every quality, successful candidates will possess many of the following **preferred** qualifications:

- Master's degree in Human Resources, Public Administration, Business Administration, Organizational Development, or a related field.
- Professional HR certifications (SHRM-SCP, SPHR, PIHRA, etc.).
- Demonstrated experience consulting and advising senior-level executives in broad areas of human resources; must demonstrate a commitment to an inclusive and collaborative leadership style and have strong interpersonal and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated success leading enterprise-wide culture, engagement, or transformation initiatives.
- Experience in public higher education.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The compensation for this role is expected to be \$190-240K. The demands of this role require a commitment to maintaining a consistent physical presence on campus.

Located in the heart of California's Central Valley, Stan State offers an ideal setting in Turlock. The campus is just two hours from Yosemite National Park, less than two hours from San Francisco, and 90 minutes from Sacramento, blending small-city charm with easy access to outdoor recreation and major metropolitan hubs and airports.

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:

Lindsay Gold, Partner
Lehman Robinson, Senior Associate
Julia Hochner, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/california-state-university-stanislaus/chief-human-resources-officer-and-associate>

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.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Stanislaus State. 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 Stanislaus State would supersede any conflicting information in this document.