

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Assistant Vice President of Research Technology
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

THE SEARCH

Kansas State University (“K-State”) seeks a collaborative and forward-thinking leader to serve as Assistant Vice President of Research Technology (“AVP”). This role represents a critical opportunity to advance the University’s research mission at a time of significant growth and ambition. As a senior member of the Division of Information Technology and a key partner to the Office of the Vice President for Research (“OVPR”), the AVP will provide institution-wide leadership for research technology strategy, operations, and innovation. Reporting to the Chief Information Officer, with dotted-line reporting to the Vice President for Research, this role will ensure that research technologies are secure, scalable, and aligned with K-State’s strategic priorities.

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 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 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.

The AVP will play a pivotal role in expanding and strengthening the University’s research enterprise at a time of great ambition at K-State with their [Next-Gen Strategic Plan](#). The Assistant Vice President of Research Technology will lead and mentor a team of IT professionals responsible for supporting the full spectrum of research technology services, including high-performance computing, secure research environments, data systems, departmental applications, and core laboratory technologies. The role requires a leader who can balance operational excellence with future-focused planning—overseeing maintenance, upgrades, and continuity of operations while building a team and also developing roadmaps that position K-State for emerging research needs. A strong emphasis will be placed on cybersecurity,

compliance, and alignment with university, state, and regulatory standards, ensuring that research systems are both resilient and trusted.

Collaboration sits at the heart of this position. The AVP will work closely with university leadership, faculty researchers, IT partners, and external vendors to ensure technology solutions effectively support the research lifecycle. This individual will serve as a bridge between technical teams and the research community, translating complex technology capabilities into practical, research-enabling outcomes. By conducting risk assessments, benchmarking peer institutions, and monitoring technology trends, the AVP will guide informed decision-making and foster the adoption of modern tools and best practices that enhance research productivity and competitiveness.

Through strategic planning, financial stewardship, and thoughtful project management, this leader will help ensure that research technology investments deliver measurable value and long-term impact. The ideal candidate will be a trusted advisor, consensus builder, and visionary leader who understands the unique demands of a complex academic research environment and is committed to enabling discovery, innovation, and collaboration across Kansas State University.

Kansas State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next AVP. Please direct all applications, inquiries, and nominations to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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.

In 2023, Kansas State University launched a bold new strategic plan, Next-Gen K-State, reflecting the institution's dynamic vision for the future of higher education. The plan outlines how K-State will serve new kinds of learners, address grand global challenges, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the state of Kansas. A major component of the plan is expanding the University's research enterprise, with a goal of reaching \$300 million in annual research expenditures by 2030.

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 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.

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 Technology.

Dr. Thomas Bunton was named 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. 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.

THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Kansas State University's Office of the Vice President for Research supports and advances the university's research mission by fostering a collaborative, innovative, and ethical research environment. The office provides leadership and strategic direction for research development, oversees sponsored projects administration and research compliance, and promotes interdisciplinary scholarship across the university. K-State is home to 90+ research centers, institutes, and major facilities, spanning agriculture, biosecurity, engineering, health, the sciences, and the humanities. Collectively, these research centers are supported and coordinated by the OVPR which provides strategic oversight, facilitates collaboration, and ensures compliance and research integrity.

In FY24, K-State received \$264.9 million in research and development expenditures. This is a 21.5 percent jump from the prior year, which was nearly three times the national average growth rate among research universities.

ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY

The AVP serves as a senior leader within the Division of Information Technology and as the primary IT leader for the Office of the Vice President for Research and affiliated units, developing and directing the implementation of enterprise-level research technology strategies that advance the university's research mission. The position manages a broad portfolio of IT services, serves on the CIO's and OVPR leadership teams, and directs all IT activities for units reporting to the Vice President for Research. The position leads and mentors IT staff, providing oversight of OVPR technical environments including research and administrative systems, data platforms, departmental applications, core laboratory technologies, and high-performance computing. The incumbent ensures that all technology operations are secure, reliable, and compliant with applicable state, university, and IT policies and standards.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

IT Leadership and Operations

The Associate Vice President of Research Technology will provide strategic leadership for the university's research technology environment, including secure research environments and high-performance computing. This role will guide the development and execution of both technology roadmaps, ensuring that systems are secure, resilient, and aligned with institutional research priorities. The AVP supports major institutional initiatives through a future-focused approach to technology planning and investment. This includes negotiating and managing vendor contracts, optimizing costs, establishing and leveraging service level agreements, and communicating regularly with senior leadership and end users to ensure transparency, alignment, and the delivery of high-quality, reliable research technology services.

Collaboration with Academic Leadership and Research Community

The Associate Vice President of Research Technology will serve as a key partner to academic leadership, the Vice President for Research, the Division of IT, and the broader research community to advance the effective use of technology. The AVP will lead and mentor high-performing teams while collaborating across a large, complex organization to manage a diverse portfolio of services and applications. The role will strengthen relationships with faculty, researchers, IT leaders, campus stakeholders, and vendor partners to ensure research needs are met within budget constraints. This role will collaborate closely with stakeholders to assess risks, analyze emerging technology trends, and shape a vision that aligns with institutional research priorities and university technology strategies. By benchmarking and evaluating research IT infrastructure and systems, the AVP will provide data-driven recommendations to strengthen and scale research capabilities in partnership with central IT.

The AVP will also lead major strategic and operational planning initiatives for the Office of the Vice President for Research, aligning departmental projects, policies, and resources with university priorities while fostering innovation and continuous improvement. This includes partnering with faculty and administrators to define business and system requirements, leading the design and execution of major research technology projects, and researching potential technology solutions to support procurement decisions. Through proactive engagement, thoughtful resource allocation, and the adoption of modern technologies and best practices, the AVP will enhance collaboration across the academic and research community and ensure K-State's research environment remains robust, forward-looking, and responsive to evolving needs.

Strategy and Planning

The AVP will provide strategic leadership to shape and advance the university's research technology network by developing and executing a comprehensive plan for the adoption, enhancement, and rationalization of research technologies, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and the evolving needs of researchers. Through ongoing risk assessments and analysis of emerging technology trends, the AVP will define a strategy that strengthens research capabilities, including secure research infrastructure and high-performance computing, while positioning K-State for long-term innovation and competitiveness.

In addition, the AVP will guide strategic planning for cybersecurity across the research portfolio, proactively addressing risks to data, systems, and compliance. By leveraging modern technologies and best practices, the role will oversee enhancements that safeguard sensitive research environments, support responsible growth, and enable scalable, resilient research operations.

Project Management and IT Financial Management

The Associate Vice President of Research Technology will strengthen project management across the research technology portfolio by applying industry best practices to ensure initiatives are delivered on time, within scope, and in alignment with university objectives and regulatory requirements. This role will partner closely with faculty, researchers, and administrative stakeholders to define project scopes, establish clear milestones, and drive execution of strategic initiatives. The AVP will oversee all operational aspects of research technologies—such as maintenance, patching, upgrades, and disaster recovery—with a strong focus on continuity of operations, compliance with IT policies, and the adoption of appropriate enterprise platforms and tools.

In parallel, the AVP will provide leadership in IT financial management, overseeing budgeting, purchasing, and financial planning for research technology investments. Working in coordination with budget officers, the role will develop business cases and cost-benefit analyses to inform college-, unit-, and department-level IT spending decisions. The AVP will also negotiate and manage vendor, consultant, and outsourced service agreements for unit-specific technologies, ensuring fiscal responsibility, contract compliance, and maximum value from external partnerships.

Together, these efforts will ensure research technology investments are intentional, secure, and forward-looking, directly supporting the university's research mission.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many, if not all, of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred in a scientific or engineering discipline;
- Minimum of ten years of relevant experience in information research technology;
- Demonstrated experience in architecting and overseeing support for a complex technology ecosystem, including specialized research hardware, software, and data acquisition systems;
- Experience with HPC systems and their utilization for research;
- Proven experience with research computing and large-scale data storage systems common in research environments;
- Experience leading and mentoring a technical team responsible for supporting the unique IT needs of researchers, faculty, and laboratory staff;
- Experience evaluating and implementing emerging technologies and computational methods in scientific research;
- Track record of navigating the IT and data management landscape of higher education, including familiarity with grant proposal processes and data compliance requirements;
- Proven ability to enable advanced research analytics by providing access to and support for a robust ecosystem of data analysis and visualization tools;
- Experience consulting with research administration teams to support data analytics needs from quality control to complex modeling and interpretation;
- Strong record of strategic planning, including developing business cases for technology investments and managing operational and capital budgets;
- A history of fostering a collaborative environment that bridges the gap between technical staff and scientific researchers;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills as well as excellent interpersonal skills;
- Ability to present ideas in business-friendly and user-friendly language;
- Highly self-motivated and directed with a keen attention to detail;
- Proven analytical, evaluative, and problem-solving abilities;
- Ability to effectively prioritize and execute tasks in a high-pressure environment;
- Exceptional customer service orientation.

LOCATION

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.

COMPENSATION

The anticipated compensation range for this role is \$175,000 - \$195,000.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Applications (including CV/resume and cover letter), inquiries, and nominations should be submitted in confidence to:

Lindsay Gold, Kristen Andersen, Julia Hochner
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/kansas-state-university/assistant-vice-president-research-technology>

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

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