Dean

Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering

Lexington, Kentucky

THE SEARCH

The University of Kentucky (UK) Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering (Pigman College of Engineering) invites nominations, inquiries and applications for a strategic, innovative and collaborative leader to serve as the dean. As a land-grant institution located in the Bluegrass region of central Kentucky, UK is the Commonwealth's largest public research university, committed to advancing knowledge, fostering innovation and serving the people of Kentucky and beyond.

The Pigman College of Engineering has a long heritage of engineering education that stretches back over a century, reflecting the university's commitment to science, technology and innovation. In recognition of a transformative philanthropic commitment, the college was officially renamed the Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering after a generous $34.5 million gift by Stanley and Karen Pigman to support scholarships, endowed faculty positions, research and key strategic priorities. This gift represents one of the largest in UK's history and underscores the Pigmans' enduring commitment to engineering education and student success.

For more information about how the Pigman College of Engineering is committed to providing academic excellence, conducting pioneering research and leading change to solve distinctive challenges and ultimately improve the lives of those in the Commonwealth and beyond, please visit the college's website.

The dean's position offers the opportunity to lead one of the university's most significant academic units. The dean will provide strategic vision and overall administrative leadership for the college, advance its educational, research and service missions, steward financial and human resources, foster excellence among faculty, staff, and students and play a central role in fundraising and alumni engagement. As chief academic officer of the college, the dean reports directly to the provost.

UK is located in Lexington, Kentucky (Fayette County), in the heart of the Bluegrass region. The community has a population of more than 330,000 with a larger metro area of more than 535,000 and is home to numerous businesses in the computer industry, healthcare services, auto manufacturing, banking, financial management and investment services — and Lexington is also known as the horse capital of the world. Its historic downtown and horse farms, excellent countywide public school system, convenient airport and growing downtown cultural activities contribute to its appeal. It is approximately 70 miles from Cincinnati and Louisville.

UK seeks someone who is ready to help show the world just where the next great generation of engineering leaders and innovators will be educated — which will, in turn, continue to advance the Commonwealth.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The dean of the Pigman College of Engineering serves as the college's chief academic officer, chief administrative officer and primary spokesperson. The dean reports directly to the provost and provides visionary leadership and strategic direction for the college's academic departments, programs and initiatives within a complex fiscal environment. The dean is responsible for advancing the college's academic, research and community engagement missions, ensuring excellence across all areas and positioning the college to anticipate and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities in the evolving landscape of engineering disciplines.

With a demonstrated commitment to teaching excellence, research productivity, innovation and service, the dean will bring a record of distinction and national and international recognition and will be capable of enhancing the visibility, influence and prestige of the Pigman College of Engineering.

Responsibilities

- Provide visionary leadership to build and sustain critical partnerships within and beyond the university that advances the college's academic and research impact.
- Identify and establish fundraising priorities and provide leadership for alumni engagement and assist in the alumni activities of the college's departments, in conjunction with the UK Alumni Association and other university units.
- Strategically allocate college resources, including faculty, staff, financial resources, space and equipment.
- Lead the development and implementation of a strategy that substantially increases extramural funded research, interdisciplinary research and national research prominence, in conjunction with the vice president for research.
- Serve as a chief administrative officer for the college, reporting directly to the provost. Meet regularly with the provost, members of the Office of the Provost and with other deans for collaborative discussions.
- Appoint faculty and staff to appropriate committees in consultation with appropriate shared governance bodies.
- Consult on risk management issues (e.g., FERPA, sexual harassment, discrimination, etc.).

- Foster an environment of shared governance by building relationships with all campus communities while shepherding a culture of collaboration.
- Support the recruitment of faculty members in the academic schools and departments to ensure the continued excellence of instruction and scholarly effort in the Pigman College of Engineering.
- Support recruitment events for prospective students.
- Make recommendations on appointments, reappointments, terminal appointments, decisions not to reappoint, post-retirement appointments, promotions, granting of tenure, salaries and salary changes for members of the college or for ultimate action thereon when the president or provost has delegated such authority.
- Conduct periodic reviews of academic units relative to their missions, administration and finances and make recommendations for improving their performance as outlined in the Administrative Regulations. Support programmatic accreditation processes in conjunction with the academic units' leaders.
- Partner, participate in planning and develop public relations and marketing activities with the university central units and in ways that support and align with the institution's mission and strategic plan.
- Assume other duties and responsibilities as may be requested by the provost.

Goals and Objectives

The Pigman College of Engineering is part of a world-class teaching and research university, serving the Commonwealth as a Research I, land-grant institution. UK is also a comprehensive campus with all colleges, schools and libraries co-located.

The next dean of the Pigman College of Engineering will assume an exceptional leadership role, guiding one of the university's premier academic units. In this capacity, the dean will focus on advancing the college's strategic priorities, with particular attention given to the following leadership goals:

- Articulating and implementing a strategic plan to support the mission of the college and the university.
- In alignment with the university's strategic plan, engaging faculty, staff, students and partners to develop clear strategic priorities to move the college forward. This includes developing future leaders of the engineering workforce, advancing innovation and practice and serving as a connector with engineering partners across Kentucky, the nation and the world.
- Leveraging community engagement and team science to promote research growth.
- Further developing and maintaining essential partnerships.
- Representing the college and improving its visibility across all involved in advancement opportunities.
- As a key leader within the university, playing a key role in fundraising and advancement opportunities. The need to raise money will remain constant, requiring dedicated and strategic time from the dean. Fundraising efforts will include working with the university's Office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement in formulating and implementing a philanthropic and development strategy that supports the college's research, education, scholarship, capital and long-term needs.

- Ensuring integrity, effectiveness and compliance with the university and Pigman College of Engineering policies relating to student selection and admission, education programs and student support services and programs.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

The successful candidate will be an experienced, entrepreneurial and collaborative leader with a deep appreciation for both the scholarly and practical significance of the disciplines and professions represented within the Pigman College of Engineering. The dean will be dedicated to advancing and promoting the college as a premier gateway to engineering education. In partnership with the university's Office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement, the dean will develop and implement a comprehensive philanthropic and development strategy that supports the college's research, educational, scholarly, capital, and long-term priorities.

The dean will recruit, retain and inspire a dynamic community of students, faculty and staff, fostering excellence across all dimensions of the college's mission. The dean will cultivate strong professional and interpersonal relationships within the college and extend these connections externally to strengthen the college's network and influence. The dean will also lead initiatives to enhance the college's national and international visibility, reputation and impact.

REQUIRED CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- Ph.D. in an appropriate field of study.
- A deep understanding of both research and practice aspects of academic engineering.
- Nationally and internationally recognized achievements.
- Progressive and broad leadership experience demonstrated through senior-level academic administrative roles or through equivalent leadership experience in industry, research, clinical, governmental or professional environments, reflecting the ability to lead complex organizations and advance strategic goals.
- Evidence of innovation in teaching, learning and educational engagement, with demonstrated experience supporting undergraduate, professional, graduate and/or other learner populations, and a record of excellence of impact.
- Distinguished record of scholarship, innovation and impact, demonstrated through extramural funding, publications, program development, policy influence, translational work or other recognized contributions to the field.
- Ability to build partnerships and collaborate with external stakeholders, government agencies and engineering partners to support the tri-partite mission of teaching, research and service.

PREFERRED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- A successful leadership record demonstrating the capacity to manage and advance a college or comparable complex organization.
- An ability to develop and fulfill the college's land-grant mission by building a shared collaborative vision.

- A strong record of research and scholarly or professional accomplishment with national and international stature and ability to cultivate and extend the college's research agenda.
- A demonstrable commitment to leadership that advances all members of the college community, with skills in communicating, collaborating with and supporting all disciplines.
- A demonstrated commitment to excellence through research, instruction, advising and service to the institution and field.
- Possess an innovative and forward-thinking leadership approach to elevate the college's academic and research profile within the evolving fields of engineering.
- Experience cultivating and successfully garnering support from individual donors, foundations and corporations.
- Demonstrated success securing major gifts and building long-term relationships with philanthropic partners.
- Ability to foster external partnerships and develop collaborations with state legislators and other constituency groups.
- Commitment to ensuring effective student recruitment and successful activities to stimulate the college's enrollment growth.
- Experience in leading and organizing accreditation activities in support of academic units.
- Experience leading a broad range of academic units across multiple disciplines.
- Ability to plan strategically for the college's sustainable fiscal future, growth of research and graduate programs and continued capacity and quality of facilities.
- Demonstrated commitment to fostering institutional engagement and collaboration across faculty, staff and students.
- A commitment to working with staff and faculty to attract and retain promising early career and experienced individuals.
- Effective communication skills with a commitment to transparency, collaboration and shared decision-making.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPETENCIES

- Views the dean position as an opportunity to serve and inspire all Pigman College of Engineering stakeholders.
- Capacity to lead strategic decision-making processes and to organize the execution of plans while inspiring consensus, using good judgment, advancing students, faculty and staff and adjust to fresh thinking and situational shifts.
- Nurtures the professional growth and success of Pigman College of Engineering leadership, faculty, staff and students.
- Possesses an energetic, well-grounded and success-oriented personality driven by a desire to help others. Shows initiative and self-discipline, with confidence and charisma to lead, encourage and empower others.
- Promotes a process of engaged decision-making in which authority and accountability are delegated in alignment with a shared strategic direction. Seeks feedback and appropriately acknowledges the contributions of team members.
- Ability to build a collaborative culture with an open and accessible leadership and communication style.
- Successfully leads multiple competing priorities and divergent viewpoints.

- Executes complex decisions that align with university policies based on the university principle of shared governance.
- Models a strong moral compass with unquestionable integrity and high professional standards.
- Supports the well-being of college stakeholders through transparent leadership, accessibility and respectful workplace practices.
- Possesses excellent written and oral communication skills with the ability to communicate complex or technical information clearly to a range of audiences.
- Values collaborative engagement and actively seeks opportunities to connect with a broad range of institutional and external partners to support the college's mission.

ABOUT THE STANLEY AND KAREN PIGMAN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering is a leading engineering institution dedicated to preparing innovative, ethical and impactful engineers who tackle the world's most pressing challenges. As Kentucky's largest and highest-ranked engineering college, the Pigman College of Engineering combines rigorous academic programs, cutting-edge research and extensive industry partnerships to empower students for careers of significance and global impact.

Pigman College of Engineering Mission and Vision

The Pigman College of Engineering's mission is to educate and inspire a dynamic community of students to become leaders in engineering and technology. Through high-quality teaching, collaborative research and meaningful engagement with industry and community partners, the college advances knowledge and applies innovative solutions that benefit society, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the world. The college embraces a culture of creativity, cooperation and excellence that nurtures student success, lifelong learning and professional integrity.

Pigman College of Engineering by the numbers

For Fall 2026 (preliminary), the Pigman College of Engineering's scale and impact are reflected in key metrics including more than 3,300 enrolled undergraduate students and 450 enrolled graduate students, 14 undergraduate degree programs, 22 graduate degrees and an extensive roster of student organizations — all contributing to a vibrant educational experience. As of fiscal year (FY) 2026, the college is composed of 166 full-time faculty and 212 full-time staff members spread across multiple academic departments, research centers and administrative units.

- 3,790 total students (Fall 2026 preliminary)
  - Bachelor's degree students — 3,287
  - Graduate students — 150
  - Doctoral degree students — 300
  - Non-degree students — 31
  - Post-Doctoral students — 22
- 166 Full-time faculty (FY2026)
- 212 Full-time staff (FY2026)

- 14 undergraduate degree programs
- 8 undergraduate certificate programs
- 22 graduate/professional degree programs
- 7 graduate certificate programs
- 9 residency/postdoctoral programs

The FY2027 annual budget of $71.5 million supports college functions and initiatives.

Academic Programs and Departments

The Pigman College of Engineering offers a comprehensive array of undergraduate and graduate degree programs through its nine academic departments, encompassing the full breadth of engineering disciplines. The college's programs are designed to provide strong foundations in mathematics, science and engineering fundamentals, while also incorporating hands-on learning, design projects and research experiences.

Academic programs include:

- Biomedical Engineering — addressing human health challenges through engineering design and innovation.
- Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering — integrating engineering principles with biological and environmental systems in collaboration with the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.
- Chemical and Materials Engineering — focusing on materials design, process engineering and sustainable solutions.
- Civil Engineering — preparing engineers to design resilient infrastructure and sustainable communities.
- Computer Science — concentrating on computational systems, software and emerging technologies and offering a new Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence.
- Electrical and Computer Engineering — addressing computing, communications, power systems and technology development.
- Engineering Technology — providing applied engineering education in areas such as lean systems and computer engineering technology.
- Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering — broad engineering fundamentals with specialization in design, thermal sciences and dynamics and the only undergraduate aerospace program in Kentucky.
- Mining Engineering — training engineers to address challenges in resource extraction, safety and environmental stewardship.

These programs are supported by experienced faculty members whose scholarly work is recognized nationally and internationally, many ranking among the world's most cited researchers. Undergraduate and graduate students alike can engage in research alongside faculty, gaining valuable experience in areas ranging from energy systems and advanced materials to robotics and biomedical devices.

Extended Campus and Regional Impact

In addition to its main campus in Lexington, the college extends its mission in engineering education through the Pigman College of Engineering Paducah Campus in Western Kentucky. For over 25 years, the Paducah campus has served the region by offering bachelor's degrees in mechanical engineering, chemical engineering and, more recently, computer engineering technology in partnership with West Kentucky Community and Technical College. This initiative supports local economic development by preparing engineers who often remain in the region following graduation.

Student Experience and Community

The Pigman College of Engineering fosters a supportive and collaborative community that encourages students to explore, innovate and excel. The college's Engineering Living Learning Program (ELLP) provides a residential environment where engineering students live and learn together, integrating academic success with professional development and community engagement.

With a thriving network of more than 60 student organizations, students have opportunities to participate in design teams, competitions, outreach programs and professional societies that deepen their engineering experience and build leadership skills. Service and outreach initiatives support STEM education in local schools within the broader community.

Career Development and Industry Engagement

Career readiness is a major focus at the Pigman College of Engineering. The Engineering Career and Co-Op Center connects students with employers, facilitates internships and cooperative education (co-op) opportunities and provides tailored services such as resume reviews, interview preparation and professional workshops. On-campus recruiting events draw hundreds of employers each year, giving students direct access to internships and full-time positions across industries.

Most students gain practical experience through co-ops or internships before graduation, positioning them for success in a competitive job market. The strong relationships between the college and industry partners reflect mutual commitment to innovative experiential learning and workforce development.

Research and Scholarship

Research is a cornerstone of the Pigman College of Engineering's mission, driving discovery and technological advancement that impact industry, government and society. The college averages tens of millions of dollars in active research awards, supporting faculty and students in cutting-edge projects spanning energy systems, computational modeling, materials science, biomedical devices, infrastructure resilience and more.

The Pigman College of Engineering's research ecosystem encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and offers undergraduate students opportunities to contribute to meaningful research endeavors. These

experiences cultivate deeper problem-solving skills and often lead to co-authored publications, conference presentations and competitive fellowships. The Pigman College of Engineering is home to several centers, labs and institutes of research excellence that provide a platform for our students, faculty and staff to collaborate on addressing complex problems and pressing unmet engineering needs in the Commonwealth.

These centers and institutes complement and synergize with many of UK's institutional-level centers and institutes under the organizational structure of the Office of the Vice President for Research.

- Center for Aluminum Technology
- Center for Nanoscale Science and Engineering
- Electron Microscopy and Materials Characterization Core
- Institute for Decarbonization and Energy Advancement
- Institute for Sustainable Manufacturing
- Institute of Research for Technology Development
- Kentucky Transportation Center
- True Lean Systems Program
- Power and Energy Institute of Kentucky (PEIK)
- Vibro-Acoustics Consortium
- NASA Kentucky

Affiliated Research Centers

- Advanced Science and Technology Commercialization Center (ASTeCC)
- Center for Applied Energy Research
- Center of Membrane Sciences
- Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute
- Center for Computational Sciences
- Institute for Biomedical Informatics

Recent research highlights from the Pigman College of Engineering include work supporting NASA's Artemis II mission and advances in digital heritage science. UK researchers contributed expertise in heat-shield material testing and computational modeling to help NASA evaluate how Orion's protective system would perform under the extreme heat of a lunar-return reentry. Through UK's EduceLab, researchers partnered with an international team to use advanced imaging and artificial intelligence-assisted virtual unwrapping to recover text from carbonized Herculaneum scrolls, presenting the breakthrough in Naples, Italy, in June 2026, including the full virtual unwrapping of the surviving portion of PHerc. 1667.

Research by the Numbers

Over the past 10 years, the college has seen an impressive number of project grants and awards:

- Number of awards: 1,149

- Number of sponsors: 253
- Number of PIs: 183
- Total awards in dollars: $387.3M
- Total awards in dollars (college-level collaboration): $263.1M

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

The University of Kentucky (UK) is a leading land-grant and public research university located in Lexington, Kentucky. Its enduring mission — more than 160 years strong — is to advance Kentucky through outstanding education, research, service and care.

Counted among the highest level of Carnegie Research institutions, the UK continues to build its national and global research profile through continued investment in discovery, innovation and deep collaboration. The Pigman College of Engineering is expected to be central to that progress, expanding its stature and impact across the university's mission to advance the state it was created to serve.

UK is one of only eight institutions in the country with liberal arts, engineering, professional, agricultural and health-related colleges (Dentistry, Health Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Social Work) on a single, contiguous campus. Located alongside one of the country's leading academic medical systems, this depth and breadth of disciplines on one campus positions UK to offer interprofessional healthcare education and opportunities for collaborative, integrated research.

Across 16 academic and professional degree-granting colleges, students can choose from more than 200 majors and degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The student body represents more than 100 countries, every state in the nation and all 120 Kentucky counties. UK students compete successfully for prestigious scholarships, fellowships and awards, including the Rhodes Scholarship, Fulbright U.S. Student Program, Astronaut Scholarship, Harry S. Truman Scholarship, Goldwater Scholarship, Marshall Scholarship, Udall Undergraduate Scholarship and Gates Cambridge Scholarship. Graduate students earn highly competitive grants and awards to support their research, including NIH National Research Service Predoctoral awards and National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants, as well as grants and fellowships from foundations and professional disciplinary societies.

Together, UK's breadth, research strength and enduring commitment to the Commonwealth nurture a distinctive environment for interdisciplinary discovery and impact. Serving as dean of the Pigman College of Engineering is an opportunity to build on these advantages and strengthen connections across the university and beyond, positioning the college as an even more influential partner in advancing Kentucky and addressing challenges with national and global significance.

ABOUT LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

The city of Lexington is a vibrant place to live, work and study. Situated in the heart of Kentucky's Bluegrass region, Lexington combines the amenities of a metropolitan area with the character, accessibility and

sense of community often associated with smaller cities. In 2026, Lexington was ranked among Livability's Top 100 Best Places to Live in the United States. The city also was recognized by Southern Living as one of the "South's Best Cities" in 2025 and as the South's best city for raising children. Condé Nast Traveler has twice named Lexington among the "Top 5 Best Small Cities in the United States", reflecting Lexington's distinctive blend of rich culture, hospitality and quality of life.

With a population of roughly 330,000, anchoring a metropolitan area of more than 535,000 people, Lexington serves as a regional hub for healthcare, education, manufacturing, technology and entrepreneurship. Major employers in the region include Toyota, Lexmark, Lockheed Martin, Amazon, IBM and UPS. Lexington's economy is further strengthened by Kentucky's nationally significant aerospace sector, with the Commonwealth ranking second among the nation's leading exporters of aerospace products. The region has also earned national recognition for its aerospace and defense industry presence, reflecting a strong environment for innovation, research and advanced manufacturing. Strategically located between Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio, Lexington offers convenient access to major population centers while maintaining its distinctive character and quality of life. Blue Grass Airport provides convenient access to destinations across the country.

Lexington is home to rich sporting traditions, including horse racing and Kentucky Wildcat athletics. Keeneland Race Course hosts world-class thoroughbred racing each spring and fall and has welcomed the Breeders' Cup World Championships, including in 2022 and 2026. Nearby Louisville is home to the Kentucky Derby, among the world's premier horse racing events. Residents also enjoy easy access to outdoor destinations, including Red River Gorge and Mammoth Cave National Park, home to the world's longest known cave system.

The city offers a dynamic culinary scene that blends Kentucky traditions with contemporary culinary innovation. In the heart of Bourbon Country, one of Lexington's most exciting hotspots, the Distillery District, offers creative cuisine, craft beers, local bourbons and entertainment venues on a revitalized 25-acre historic property. Lexington's food culture reflects the region's agricultural heritage while embracing new influences and entrepreneurial creativity.

Lexington also boasts a vibrant arts and cultural community, with offerings in music, dance, theater and visual and literary arts. The Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra provides more than 100 concerts, educational events and community programs each year. The historic Lexington Opera House is a premier cultural destination in downtown Lexington, presenting Broadway productions, concerts, family programming, comedy and other performing arts events throughout the year.

The city is enriched by a rich cultural tapestry. The international population grew 300% in the last decade, and more than 150 languages are spoken in Lexington. International investment, students, academics and visitors from around the world contribute to the city's global perspective and economic vitality.

The true charm of Lexington is that it has all the amenities of a big city while maintaining that special small-town feel. In mere minutes, drivers can see spectacular horse farms, go through downtown and

return to the expansive, rolling countryside. While many cities insist on saying it, Lexington truly offers something for everyone.

For more information about Lexington, see VisitLEX.

NOMINATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Compensation

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

How to apply

Isaacson, Miller is assisting the University of Kentucky in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Inquiries, nominations and application materials should be directed to Melissa DePretto-Behan from Isaacson, Miller. Application materials should include:

- A letter of interest that clearly addresses how the applicant meets the required and, where appropriate, preferred qualifications for the position
- A current résumé/curriculum vitae

We strongly encourage submitting application materials as PDF attachments. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. For best consideration, applications and nominations should be provided by Jan. 15, 2027.

Please direct inquiries, nominations and application materials to:

Melissa DePretto-Behan, Senior Associate

E-mail: mdeprettobehan@imsearch.com

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/university-kentucky-stanley-and-karen-pigman-college-engineering/dean

Greg Esposito, Partner
Melissa DePretto-Behan, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

The University follows both the federal and state Constitutions as well as all applicable federal and state laws on nondiscrimination. The University provides equal opportunities for qualified persons in all aspects of institutional operations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, creed, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, uniformed service, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information or social or economic status.

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