



**Search for the Director of Employee and Labor Relations  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan**

**THE SEARCH**

Michigan State University (MSU), a leading global research university, seeks candidates for the position of Director of Employee and Labor Relations (Director). Reporting to the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, the Director is a key member of the Human Resources (HR) Executive Leadership Team and is responsible for spearheading the strategic progression of the University's employee and labor relations initiatives and ensuring its alignment with MSU's vision, mission, and core values.

MSU is unwavering in its commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that constantly improves workplace relations, and the Director will be instrumental in enriching the employee experience and fostering a positive workplace culture at MSU. This leader will introduce and oversee practices that fortify positive working relationships between the University and its workforce and offer expert advice to the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer on strategies related to employee and labor relations. The Director will be charged with addressing labor and employee-related concerns, queries, and grievances, and, as the chief negotiator for the University, will help to steer bargaining strategies that balance the institution's financial stability, its reputation for excellence, and its desire to be an employer of choice.

Ideal candidates will have a depth of experience in employee and labor relations management, including leading or participating in contract negotiations with labor unions, as well as advanced knowledge of applicable state and federal laws and regulatory compliance. The next Director will have exceptional interpersonal and relationship-building skills, and a facile, transparent communication style. A bachelor's degree is required, and an advanced degree is preferred.

Founded in 1855, MSU is a premiere land-grant university and an innovator in research, teaching, and application of knowledge. The University was established to make higher education broadly available for

the benefit of the public good and served as a model for the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862. Michigan State University has evolved into a world-class institution, offering a full spectrum of programs, and attracting gifted professors, staff, and students. The University is part of the Big Ten Conference and since 1964 has been one of 66 members of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU). As one of the top research universities in the world, Michigan State's trailblazing spirit and continued commitment to its core values of excellence, diversity, inclusion, and connectivity are stronger than ever. Michigan State University has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## THE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University is a top 100 global research university renowned in certain disciplines and well-positioned to lead in others. The University is a global leader in areas ranging from Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) to the social sciences and humanities, with nuclear physics; plant and animal sciences; K-20 education; supply chain and logistics; and communication and media receiving sustained exemplary recognition. African history, organizational psychology, criminal justice, veterinary medicine, biomedical research, and a suite of environmental sciences are among the areas of national and international prominence. Other areas, such as mobility, entrepreneurship, digital humanities, and African American and African Studies are rapidly emerging as new threads of excellence.

Michigan State is one of the nation's largest institutions, enrolling nearly 50,000 students, including 11,000 graduate and professional school students in 17 degree-granting colleges. There are over 510,000 living MSU alumni worldwide, with 286,000 living in the state of Michigan. Michigan State's students come from all 83 counties in Michigan, each of the 50 states, and more than 125 other countries. Students of color comprise 24.3 percent of the student body, and international students, 8.7 percent.

The University employs over 12,500 faculty and staff members and has an operating budget of \$3.2 billion and a \$3.58 billion endowment. It sits on more than 5,200 acres of land and occupies more than 564 buildings, including 107 academic facilities that comprise 24.5 million square feet of space. The University owns approximately 21,000 additional acres throughout Michigan to support teaching and learning, research, outreach, and engagement.

The 5,632 MSU faculty and academic staff members are the driving force behind the institution's growing reputation as a national leader in scientific research and development. MSU scholars have received national and international recognition through membership in the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Education, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, as well as through prestigious awards from foundations including Dreyfus, Guggenheim, MacArthur, and Sloan. The MSU research enterprise has experienced significant growth over the past decade and now exceeds \$759 million in annual expenditures for research in food safety and security, human and animal health, energy,

education, defense, international development, social and behavioral sciences, and digital humanities, among others.

MSU has nurtured a formidable athletic program. As a member of the Big Ten sports conference, it hosts 23 varsity squads: 11 intercollegiate sports for men and 12 intercollegiate sports for women. The Spartan athletic tradition is strong, having won many championships and accolades, including 25 straight NCAA appearances by the men's basketball team, (including ten Final Fours), the 2022 women's soccer Big Ten champions, and the 2022 women's cross country Big Ten champions. Among its finest accomplishments, MSU student-athletes enjoy a 92% graduation rate, nicely exceeding the average for the University.

For more information about Michigan State University please visit [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).

### **Strategic Direction**

The MSU 2030 Strategic Plan, Empowering Excellence, Advancing Equity and Expanding Impact, builds upon a decade of growth and success in providing world-class education, research, and outreach and engagement benefiting Michigan, the nation, and people around the globe. Six strategic themes are at the core of MSU's strategic plan: student success, staff and faculty success, innovation for global impact, sustainable health, stewardship and sustainability, and diversity equity, and inclusion.

In addition to the strategic plan, the Office of the President charged the development of two additional interconnected initiatives that serve to help chart a course for MSU's future: The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee Report and Plan, and the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Plan.

### **Location**

East Lansing is a safe, attractive, and affordable place to live and work. It has the vitality, diversity, and culture of a university town, mixed with affordable housing, strong public schools, and accessible amenities. East Lansing has nearly 50,000 residents and is adjacent to Michigan's capital in neighboring Lansing. The campus is approximately 90 minutes from Detroit and equidistant between Chicago and Cleveland. Michigan residents enjoy four distinct seasons, the country's longest freshwater coastline, and more than 11,000 inland lakes.

### **OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

The mission of MSU Human Resources is to support the University's strategic imperatives by anticipating and meeting the needs of a changing community through high-quality, innovative services designed to advance student success and cutting-edge research.

The Core Values of the organization are:

- Accountability – We hold ourselves and each other accountable to be committed to our mission/roles and to deliver exceptional performance results and professional behavior.
- Recognition – We consistently acknowledge each other for our work, accomplishments, and the demonstration of behaviors that align with our mission.
- Inclusion/Input – We involve and empower each other in problem-solving and decision-making; we treat people in a manner that they feel valued, respected, and appreciated; we share the common understanding that everyone's thoughts and ideas are welcomed.
- Service – We provide exceptional service by delivering responsive, high-quality, accessible, and innovative customer service with integrity, excellence, and compassion.
- Effective Communication – We share information openly by establishing two-way communication methods and by communicating respectfully and frequently with customers, peers, supervisors, and leaders.
- Ethical Practice - We will maintain the highest levels of personal and professional integrity and act as ethical agents who promote core values, integrity, and accountability throughout the organization.

For more information about human resources at Michigan State University, please visit [here](#).

## Leadership

*Christina Brogdon*

*Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer*

Christina Brogdon is the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, leading MSU's human capital agenda, including: talent acquisition and retention; leadership and organizational development; compensation and classification; benefits; and employee and labor relations for staff and executive management.

Christina has proven excellence in the oversight and delivery of human resources strategy. She is a visionary leader with expertise in the opportunities and challenges facing higher education human resources. Her utilization of core people skills, ability to collaborate with multiple stakeholders, and create a problem-solving approach have led to a career with demonstrated improvement, workforce leadership, and skill in change management.

Before joining MSU in 2022, Christina served as Vice Chancellor for Human Resources at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Prior to her role at North Carolina A&T, Christina served as Chief Human Resources Officer at West Georgia, Radford, and Bluefield State, in addition to having leadership roles at Virginia Tech. Christina earned her Bachelor of Science in Management at Virginia Tech and a Master of Business Administration from Averett University.

In addition to her MBA and B.S., Christina received a certificate in Strategic HR Leadership from the Industrial & Labor Relations School of Cornell University and has her Professional in Human Resources certification from the Human Resources Certification Institute (HRCI).

Christina champions diversity, equity, and inclusion and employs best practices that facilitate discourse to source, select, engage, develop, and retain a highly qualified, diverse workforce. She serves on the Pamplin College of Business Advisory Council at Virginia Tech and is a member of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM). She is also a member of the College & University Personnel Association (CUPA-HR) and has held leadership roles at the state, regional, and national levels, including the national board.

#### **DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYEE AND LABOR RELATIONS**

Reporting to the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, the Director of Employee and Labor Relations is a key member of the Human Resources (HR) Executive Leadership Team and will spearhead these employee and labor relations initiatives by introducing, executing, and overseeing practices that fortify positive working relationships between the University and its workforce. This role reports directly to the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, offering invaluable expertise in employee and labor relations to a wide spectrum of stakeholders across the organization. In keeping with the Office of Human Resources' staunch dedication to the University, this position mandates an unwavering commitment to championing diversity, equity, and inclusion across all job-related responsibilities.

MSU is home to 10 unions and 11 contracts covering a large percentage of the workforce ranging from graduate students to police officers to clerical and technical workers. The Director is expected to lead negotiations with these unions and maintain strong relationships with these entities while also balancing the overall needs of the University and all its employees. The Director will also partner with colleagues in other offices around highly sensitive and confidential employee relations matters, and therefore must be comfortable with matters related to discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

The Director leads a team of eight staff and will be expected to continue to develop this group and provide professional growth opportunities.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

- Advises, consults, and serves as a member of the Human Resources Executive Management team.
- Offers expert advice on employee and labor-related concerns, queries, and grievances.
- Serves as the University's chief negotiator and leads the administration of collective bargaining agreements.
- Represents MSU during negotiations and offers expert professional advisement.
- Ensures strict adherence to state and federal labor laws during all bargaining activities, liaising closely with the Office of General Counsel when needed.
- Liaises with various campus units to ensure fair and respectful treatment of employees in accordance with University policies.
- Reviews and refines HR policies in alignment with emerging trends and the University's vision and values.
- Oversees critical employee relations matters related to Behavioral Threat Assessment, ADA, and violations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, etc., collaborating with the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, Office of the ADA Coordinator, and the Office of Public Safety for compliance.
- Establishes and maintains long-term relationships across the University through active involvement and participation with units and constituents across the campus, including University Health and Wellbeing and Office of Worklife.

### **The Successful Candidate**

While no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, MSU seeks candidates with the following experience, abilities, and characteristics:

- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills and ability to interpret and communicate data to relevant stakeholders.
- Clear and transparent communication style.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and administering programs that measurably impact positive employee and labor relations, advanced conflict management, and resolution skills.

- A tactful and proven record of accomplishment of successful contract negotiations, with excellent interpersonal, management, and leadership skills, professional demeanor, flexibility, and the ability to effectively collaborate while maintaining diplomacy.
- Experience working in a unionized and/or shared governance environment, with experience in higher education preferred.
- Demonstrated commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals across the institution and cultivating a work environment that is equitable and inclusive of employees with diverse backgrounds and identities.
- Ability to use high-level discretion and maintain a high level of confidentiality in handling problems of a sensitive nature and security of confidential records.
- Expert knowledge of and experience with laws and regulations in higher education, including but not limited to FLSA, ADA, EEO, Title IV, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, VAWA, Clery Act, and FERPA.
- A bachelor's degree in human resources, Labor Relations, Business Administration, or related fields and certification in Labor Relations Management; Advanced degree preferred.

#### TO APPLY

Michigan State University has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All applications, nominations, referrals, and inquiries should be sent in confidence to:

Rebecca Kennedy, Partner (she/her)  
Afi Tettey-Fio, Senior Associate (she/her)  
Cortnee Bollard, Senior Search Coordinator (they/them)  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/michigan-state-university/director-employee-and-labor-relations>

*Michigan State University is committed to cultivating a safe and inclusive campus community characterized by caring and respect for others. Michigan State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.*

*We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize,*

*support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan's twelve federally recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.*