



**Search for the Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Operations
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas**

THE SEARCH

Wichita State University (WSU), Kansas' only urban public research university, seeks an innovative, strategic, and collaborative leader to be the next Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Operations (SVP). Founded in 1895, WSU has a keen focus on student success, applied learning, and innovative faculty, focused on affordability and access, and a deep commitment to the Wichita community as a driver in talent development and economic prosperity. It is a growth-minded university on an impressive trajectory, where collaboration and creativity shape the future of education, with an entrepreneurial spirit embedded in its foundation.

With the University's accelerated growth, its focus on a broader research footprint, and increased presence in the Wichita community, the leadership has made the intentional decision to promote the position and title to Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Operations and make necessary and planful changes to the Division's reporting structure.

Wichita State University is one of the nation's fastest-growing public research universities with a defined strategic plan, new campus master plan, established key priorities that are well-engrained in the University's culture and conscience, and an attainable goal to reach R1 status in the next several years. WSU has gained significant attention to its affordability and is recognized as the number one transfer destination in Kansas. With trend-bucking growth, campus-wide excitement exists to maintain this momentum and find new and innovative ways to enhance students' experience, engage the Wichita community, and grow enrollment across disciplines. The establishment of a 130-acre Innovation Campus with 50 co-located companies, the recent partnership with the University of Kansas on a new \$300 million biomedical campus in downtown Wichita, and the establishment of the National Institute for Research and Digital Transformation are three examples of courageous and innovative thinking and leadership at the University.

This role has the opportunity to work in a highly collegial environment with strong support from the University's leadership to take an innovative approach to achieving the institution's strategic goals, positioning the University well for its anticipated continued growth. The SVP will lead the financial

operations of WSU entities, navigating the complexities and nuances of an urban-serving, public institution with priorities of education affordability and access, enhancing economic prosperity benefiting the region and state, and workforce development. With a particular focus on the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM, expanding research aspirations, and enrollment growth, the SVP will be an integral collaborator and strategic leader in all financial and operational matters of WSU.

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the next Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Operations. All confidential inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed in confidence, as noted at the end of this document.

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

The mission of WSU is to be an essential educational, cultural, and economic driver for Kansas and the public good. With the aspiration to be one of the nation's premier urban public research universities, known for providing impactful applied learning experiences and driving prosperity, WSU launched a university-wide [strategic plan](#) and [three key priorities](#):

- Helping families through access and affordability.
- Supporting Kansas businesses with a talent pipeline that meets employer needs.
- Increasing economic prosperity with higher education benefiting the Kansas economy.

Highly focused on core and distinctive values, the University has specifically committed to:

- *Student-Centeredness*: Promote holistic student success through a supportive learning environment in which all students, past, present, and future, continually thrive and grow.
- *Research and Scholarship*: Accelerate the discovery, creation, and transfer of new knowledge.
- *Campus Culture*: Empower students, faculty, staff, and the greater Wichita community to create a culture and experience that meets their ever-changing needs.
- *Inclusive Excellence*: Be a campus that reflects and promotes, in all community members, the evolving diversity of society.
- *Partnerships and Engagement*: Advance industry and community partnerships to provide quality educational opportunities and collaboration to satisfy rapidly evolving community and workforce needs.

The University recently announced its [10-year master plan](#) that will guide the general direction for the campus' future. It is a fluid process with changes expected over the years. The initial plan was crafted with input from the campus and the larger community through focus groups and meetings over the past year.

Wichita State is one of six state universities governed by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and is Kansas' only urban-based research university. A robust economic driver in the region and state, WSU's approximately 5,390 employees have a regional economic impact of \$1 billion. On a sprawling 330-acre

campus, WSU has over 900 faculty. WSU is the most racially and ethnically diverse campus in the state, with a deep commitment to inclusive excellence, and is actively working to become a Hispanic-serving institution.

As of the Fall 2023 semester, WSU has a total enrollment headcount of just over 17,500 students, with approximately 77 percent undergraduate and 23 percent graduate students. While WSU continues to experience success in its enrollment, the demographic cliff is a distinct reality, and it is prepared to address this challenge with a comprehensive [strategic enrollment management plan](#). This program is a university-wide commitment to improving student experience, retention, and access through outreach, collaboration, and innovative system and process design. Strategic goals include developing and advancing activities that foster a culture that promotes a positive experience, steady and sustained enrollment growth of new degree-bound students, increasing persistence rates of degree-seeking student populations, and increasing non-degree for-credit enrollment.

At an institution deeply committed to teaching and research, WSU proudly offers more than 130 degree programs across ten academic divisions and libraries: the [Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#), the [College of Applied Studies](#), the [College of Engineering](#), the [College of Fine Arts](#), the [W. Frank Barton School of Business](#), the [College of Health Professions](#), the [College of Innovation and Design](#), the [Dorothy and Bill Cohen Honors College](#), the [Graduate School](#), and the [University Libraries](#).

Leadership

[Dr. Richard \(Rick\) Muma](#) was named the 15th president of Wichita State University on May 6, 2021. Before becoming President, he was the provost and executive vice president. Dr. Muma has also served as senior associate vice president for Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrollment Management and chair and professor in the departments of Public Health Sciences and Physician Assistant.

University Finances

As a tuition-dependent institution, resources are at a premium, and the next SVP will expertly and collaboratively determine strategic funding plans to meet the ever-growing needs of new programs while sustaining current activities that meet university goals and align with the University's strategic plan and priorities. WSU's annual budget is currently over \$750 million and employs an incremental budget model. The WSU Foundation and Alumni Engagement holds approximately \$380 million in total assets and secured \$44.2 million in donor support in 2023.

Research Funding and Aspirations

With yearly funding topping \$400 million and moving towards the goal of R1 recognition, research at Wichita State University ranges from bioscience, chemistry, and engineering to mathematics, physics, and ancient civilization. Among all U.S. universities, WSU ranks 13th in overall expenditures in engineering

R&D, fourth in overall aeronautical R&D, and first in industry funding aeronautical R&D. In the most recent year, WSU received 1,669 research awards, totaling more than \$398 million, an increase of 38 percent from last year's award dollars. As reported in 2023, WSU had over \$266 million in research expenditures. WSU's research portfolio has grown by nearly 30% in the last five years, and the next SVP will have the understanding and experience to help continue this trajectory from a financial perspective, coupled with the knowledge of applied and bench research areas.

Culture of Growth and Innovation

WSU leadership is focused on strengthening the educational opportunities provided to students, helping ensure student success, and providing a wide array of research and career opportunities. To foster these opportunities, the University has experienced [audacious growth](#) over the last ten years with new research centers, labs, classroom buildings, housing, dining, and athletic facilities.

WSU's award-winning [Innovation Campus](#) is an interconnected community of partnership buildings where organizations establish operations and reap the rewards of the University's vast resources and laboratories that give students access to real-world applications and the training needed to assimilate into the workforce effortlessly.

Wichita Biomedical CampusSM

Wichita State University, WSU Tech, and the University of Kansas recently announced plans to create the [Wichita Biomedical CampusSM](#), which includes an approximately 471,000-square-foot, \$300 million facility in the heart of downtown Wichita. The Wichita Biomedical CampusSM proposes the creation of a healthcare corridor, beginning with construction in downtown Wichita, where healthcare services, education, research, and technology can be established near existing private hospitals and healthcare providers. That proximity will strengthen collaboration and support interprofessional healthcare learning while forwarding opportunities for partnerships in new and emerging research fields. Initially, about 3,000 students and 200 faculty and staff will be housed at the center, providing opportunities for growth in existing and new programs. The Kansas Legislature has already committed to investing \$205 million in the project, allowing the first phase of the project to start in June 2024.

Applied Learning

WSU works continuously to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. Students in every major can gain the skills, connections, and confidence needed for career success before graduation with employers in virtually every industry through applied learning placements, co-ops, and internships. Around 96 percent of student co-op placements are paid (the national average is 47 percent). In FY23, over 9,000 students earned more than \$36M in wages working with over 700 employers. The Kansas Board of Regents indicates that WSU graduates are more likely to be employed in Kansas after

graduation and earn more than graduates from other traditional Kansas universities. Nearly 74 percent of WSU students are employed in Kansas within a year of graduation (the highest among state universities).

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND OPERATIONS

The Division of Administration, Finance, and Operations is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing the financial management plans and activities of the University and is to provide leadership and support to the University community in the planning and management of physical, fiscal, and human resources to enhance the learning environment. The Division fulfills its mission through the execution of its [goals](#).

The Division has 570 staff members responsible for providing a high-quality service environment that enables the campus to be increasingly effective in carrying out its institutional mission. The SVP will actively and strategically lead the team comprising the following departments: [Budget Office](#), Facilities Planning, [Financial Services](#), [Human Resources](#), [Information Security](#), [Information Technology Services](#), [Facilities Services](#), and the [WSU Police Department](#).

THE CITY OF WICHITA

Sitting in the center of the U.S. Great Plains, and as Kansas' largest metro area, with a growing population of nearly 700,000, Wichita is the state's commercial, financial, medical, cultural, and entertainment hub. Despite its growth, WSU has a large footprint across Wichita and is a leader in the active higher education community of the city, which includes multiple universities and community colleges. Wichita has maintained the friendly Midwestern feel and enjoys a mild climate for most of the year. Wichita has been nationally recognized for its low cost of living, growing economy, and excellent quality of life. Forbes recently [named Wichita](#) the No. 4 city to move to in 2024. Recent accolades and more information about the City of Wichita can be found [here](#).

THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND OPERATIONS

Reporting directly to the President, the Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Operations is a member of the [President's Executive Team](#) and serves as a strategic partner to the University Leadership and the Kansas Board of Regents to achieve the fiscal goals of the University. The SVP is the chief financial officer of the University and is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing the University's financial management plans and activities. Currently with eight direct reports, the SVP also provides leadership and support to the University community in the planning and managing of the budget office, facilities planning, physical plant, police, purchasing, financial operations and business technology, human resources, financial reporting and debt management, and auxiliary services.

The SVP is critical in analyzing and maximizing state support and other revenue-generating opportunities while informing decisions about tuition and fee rates and competing institutional needs. The SVP works collaboratively with academic and institutional leadership to adapt the budget model and ensure a streamlined, efficient, and effective budgeting and planning process considering competing institutional priorities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND OPERATIONS

- In close collaboration with the President's Executive Team, determine the most financially sound options to expand the University's footprint, with particular focus on the new Wichita Biomedical Campus and enrollment growth.
- Expertly meet the growing needs to have capital and cash balances sufficient to execute the University's strategic plan with stable credit ratings, lead short- and long-term financial forecasting, determine financial pathways to help the University catch up to its exponential growth, and carefully plan for sustainable and future development.
- Manage the financial and space aspects of the Wichita Biomedical CampusSM, including the newly created LLC. Effectively collaborate with counterparts from the University of Kansas, university presidents, and appointed committee members.
- Assist in determining the best investments to augment the campus's many attributes to continue to attract students locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Propel WSU forward on the path to R1 status through sound fiscal and operational stewardship, by directly supporting the expanding research goals and portfolio and demonstrating an understanding of academic and applied research.
- Recruit and hire a vice president for operations while cultivating a team of highly talented professionals by providing an overarching strategic vision and strategy for the Division and helping to ensure the resources they need to be successful in achieving clearly defined priorities.
- Partner with the Chief Information Officer to understand the requirements of the campus community and develop a sustainable technology funding model that meets the technology needs of the campus community and our growing teaching and research institution.
- Provide advice and counsel to the President and senior staff on matters related to financial systems, financial risk management, and information technology; ensure campus leadership has appropriate knowledge and background for decisions to develop and implement budgets and finances that facilitate academic, research, and operational goals to achieve the strategic plan of the University.
- Oversee the development and management of the university's annual budgets; develop and maintain reserves and associated policies.
- Advocate for the University's equitable share of appropriations from the state of Kansas.
- Lead with an approach that encourages communication and collaboration between academics, auxiliaries, administration, and employees. Understand and respect the differences between various parts of the University and serve as a trusted advisor.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful candidate will have ten years of professional fiscal, facilities, and/or operations experience overseeing a similarly diverse portfolio with at least five years at the executive level of chief financial officer, vice president, or associate vice president. A bachelor's degree is required for consideration; a master's degree is preferred.

The successful candidate leads by example and with integrity and will be expected to immediately develop a collaborative relationship with the President and the President's Executive Team to carry out the existing goals and priorities of the university and will also bring most, if not all, of the following professional qualifications, characteristics, skills, experiences, and personal qualities:

Key/Preferred Qualifications

- Significant experience in a public, research-intensive, urban institution of higher education or similarly complex organization;
- Experience working with boards and in collaboration with other chief financial officers in an educational or government system;
- Successful change management experience in a large, decentralized, complex organization;
- Experience in strategic, comprehensive, multi-year budget planning and implementation;
- Experience with shared governance.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Entrepreneurial, innovative, and collaborative leader who understands the complexities of a large, urban-serving, public research institution;
- Leadership skills and the ability to work effectively with colleagues, with evidence of strong and effective interpersonal, organizational, analytical, financial, and communication skills;
- Expert-level knowledge of credit ratings, fiscal planning, budgeting, data analysis, forecasting and reporting, financial laws and regulations, and best practices in higher education finance;
- Ability to maximize revenue-generating opportunities and support endeavors that engage the broader community while supporting academic and other university uses;
- Demonstrated success in aligning finance and administration functions and strategies with overall organizational goals and objectives;
- Superb relationship and bridge builder; able to establish rapport and understanding across multi-level stakeholders and to serve as an impactful, respected voice throughout the organization;
- Ability to represent the University's needs and interests strategically and effectively to internal and external stakeholders;
- A proven leader who will challenge the Division to embody an executive-level, service-oriented mindset reflective of the University's mission and goals;
- Proven commitment to embracing and enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion;

- A master communicator with the ability to cultivate and drive crucial conversations with internal and external stakeholders, leading to actionable, productive outcomes;
- Forward-thinking, enthusiastic, and entrepreneurial.

To Apply

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Operations search committee in its identification and review of candidates. Inquiries, referrals, and resumes accompanied by a cover letter should be submitted via [the search page](#) on the Isaacson, Miller website.

Rebecca Kennedy, Partner (she/her)
Jacqueline Mildner, Partner (she/her)
Robin Dougherty, Managing Associate (she/her)
Isaacson, Miller

Wichita State University (WSU) does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of age (40 years or older), ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a veteran. WSU also prohibits retaliation against any person making a complaint of discrimination or against any person involved or participating in the investigation of any such allegation. Sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination and are prohibited under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, other federal laws, and WSU policy. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding WSU's non-discrimination policies: the Institutional Equity and Compliance Director (Telephone: (316) 978-3205), Title IX Coordinator (Telephone: (316) 978-5177), or Equal Opportunity Coordinator (Telephone: (316) 978-3186), each located at Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260, Human Resources Building.