Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

Kent State University seeks an accomplished and strategic leader and scholar to serve as its next Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs. Reporting to President Todd Diacon, the Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs serves as the university's senior officer providing overall executive leadership and management of the Division of Research and Sponsored Programs. The new vice president will assume the position at an exciting time, as Kent State University was awarded the esteemed R1 university status in 2022 by The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Kent State is one of only 146 universities in the country to be designated R1. The National Science Foundation Higher Education Research and Development Survey ranks Kent State in the top 200 in Higher Education Research and Development for research expenditures.

Kent State University researchers are highly focused and successful and internationally recognized as leaders in their areas of expertise. According to a study published by Stanford University Scholars, 29 faculty at Kent State University were named to the top 2% of researchers in the world, based on lifetime achievement. According to the same study, nine Kent State faculty members were named as having extraordinarily high productivity (top 2%) in a single year (2019).

Kent State University has been home to path-breaking discoveries since the 1960s, placing it on the map as a center of innovation. The very first liquid crystal display (LCD) technology was invented at Kent State and forms the basis of ubiquitous flat panel displays used in computer displays, televisions and cell phones. Today’s faculty, students and research staff are carrying forward that tradition of innovation in diverse fields as they fulfill Kent State’s commitments as an elite global research university. Their outstanding research, scholarship and creative activities include basic and applied work that spans multiple disciplines, engages institutions and organizations far beyond campus boundaries, and addresses a range of real-world issues, challenges, and opportunities.

Kent State has a comprehensive, renowned educational and research enterprise extending across 11 colleges and eight campuses throughout Northeast Ohio. Evidencing the far-reaching array of disciplines are its academic colleges:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Aeronautics and Engineering
- College of Architecture and Environmental Design
- College of the Arts
The Role of the Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

The Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs serves as an executive officer of Kent State University and is the senior administrative official responsible for the university’s research activities. The Vice President provides overall leadership for the Division of Research and Sponsored Programs, reports directly to the President, and serves as a member of the President’s Cabinet. The Vice President also serves as an administrative liaison to the Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee of the Kent State University Board of Trustees and works collaboratively with Cabinet officers on university-wide initiatives.

The Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs leads a divisional team of approximately 31 staff members and oversees an annual budget of $4.9 million. In 2021-22, Kent State received more than $36.4 million in extramural awards, which included $20.4 million for research projects. The most recent (FY 2021) NSF Higher Education Research and Development survey reported a 2% increase over the prior year and built on previous years’ gains for a 96.4% increase from FY 2014.

The Vice President is a key institutional leader and partner with federal and state agencies, policymakers, industry partners, and regional collaborators. The Vice President is a member of the Northeast Ohio Public University Research Alliance (NEO-PURA), comprised of the vice presidents for research of each of the five public universities in Northeast Ohio whose goal is to leverage the collaborative strengths of the individual institutions.

The Division of Research and Sponsored Programs

Kent State University’s Division of Research and Sponsored Programs (RASP) provides comprehensive service to faculty, staff, and students, ranging from finding grant opportunities,
proposal development and submission, and pre-and post-award administration, to safety training and compliance. The division consists of five primary units/functions:

**Office of Research Administration**

The Office of Research Administration was established in academic year 2020-21 and oversees divisional operational, budgeting, and financial functions, and aids in the continued development of Kent State’s research institutes and initiatives. The following multi-disciplinary research institutes and initiatives report directly to the Division of Research and Sponsored Programs:

- **Advanced Materials and Liquid Crystal Institute.** Building on the foundation of the Glenn H. Brown Liquid Crystal Institute’s 50-year legacy, the Advanced Materials and Liquid Crystal Institute embraces all materials research on campus with an initial emphasis on materials that respond to changes in their environment.

- **Anti-Racism and Equity Institute.** Kent State University has a strong history of activism that has led to increased social justice for the campus and beyond. Building on this rich tradition, the Anti-Racism and Equity Institute acts as a university-wide, interdisciplinary research collaborative that advances racial justice through rigorous and accessible scholarship and creative activity.

- **Brain Health Research Institute.** Kent State’s Brain Health Research Institute is committed to improving our understanding of brain function in health, disease, and repair. The Institute’s mission includes the development of new approaches aimed at understanding an array of neurological disorders by identifying genetic, environmental, and behavioral influences that impact brain health across the lifespan.

- **Environmental Science and Design Research Institute.** The Environmental Science and Design Institute is dedicated to research and investigations within natural, human, and built systems, as we develop innovative knowledge, products, and solutions to address local, regional, and global issues.

- **Global Understanding Research Initiative.** The Global Understanding Research Initiative focuses on the impact of globalization, the ubiquity of communication technologies connecting diverse populations, and the growing movement of people across national borders.

- **Healthy Communities Research Institute.** The Healthy Communities Research Institute conducts basic and applied research leading to the discovery of processes and practices that enable all people to thrive free of preventable disease and injury while achieving well-being and health-related quality of life.
• **Human Performance Education, Research, and Outreach Initiative.** The Human Performance Education, Research, and Outreach Initiative is an interdisciplinary program committed to identifying and applying techniques and protocols that allow individuals to perform their best during competition and other high-stakes activities.

**Office of Research Compliance**
The Office of Research Compliance serves as the administrative hub for human and animal subject protection programs.

**Office of Sponsored Programs**
The Office of Sponsored Programs serves as a resource for all aspects of externally funded projects including preparing proposals, interpreting guidelines, developing budgets, and ensuring adherence to university policies and government regulations.

**Office of Student Research**
The Office of Student Research provides opportunities for undergraduates to participate in the high-impact practice of faculty-led research, a critical component of a comprehensive undergraduate education. Current initiatives include the Student Research Experience; Symposium of Research, Scholarship and Creative Endeavors; and Summer Undergraduate Research Experience.

**Office of Technology Commercialization**
The Office of Technology Commercialization assists Kent State’s research community by connecting inventors and corporate funders and protecting the university’s intellectual property through patents. The office works closely with regional economic development organizations to produce start-up companies to commercialize university inventions and create jobs for Ohioans.

**Opportunities and Challenges for the Vice President**
The successful candidate will:

- Sustain and accelerate Kent State University’s momentum and performance as a R1 university. The Vice President will position Kent State for continuous improvement on the criteria that comprise the R1 research designation and optimize our strategic investments in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Oversee and advance the six research institutes and three initiatives reporting to RASP. More than 350 faculty from virtually every college and department are involved in one or more of the institutes and/or initiatives that continue to collaboratively engage faculty and students. Institute-affiliated faculty were awarded more than $16.5 million in external funding last year.
• Provide thought leadership to Kent State’s broad research and innovation community; inspire, organize, and galvanize others around large-scale and interdisciplinary efforts.
• Work in partnership with the university’s internal ecosystem – academic leadership, institute and center directors, faculty, staff, and students – to enhance a strong collaborative culture for research, scholarship, and creative activities in alignment with the university’s Strategic Roadmap.
• Build new connections and strengthen existing relationships with federal and state agencies, policymakers, corporations, and other partners to make them aware of the university’s research endeavors and capacities, stay current on external funding priorities, and help faculty establish a personal rapport with program directors at funding agencies.
• Assist in the recruitment, support, and retention of research faculty.
• Grow opportunities for both graduate and undergraduate students to participate in research – making the research experience a core part of Kent State’s students-first mission.
• Enhance the postdoctoral program.
• Develop a stronger narrative about the university’s research identity and strengths.
• Review and enhance where necessary the alignment of resources, financial staff, and core facilities with institutional research priorities and strengths; stretch and move in ways we may have not done before to enhance faculty research performance and productivity.
• Eliminate process-related barriers in RASP and key service units; ensure structures and support for research and innovation are set up for success.

**Desired Qualifications and Characteristics**

A doctoral degree in a relevant field from an accredited institution; 10 years of progressively responsible experience in research, grant writing, and/or sponsored programs; and an academic record sufficient to qualify for faculty appointment at a senior rank are required.

Desired qualifications and characteristics of the ideal candidate include the following:

• Successful record of research development and administration, partnership engagement, and data-informed decision-making in a complex organization.
• Proven results-oriented leader who can articulate a compelling vision that motivates others and sets clear, challenging, and measurable goals.
• Strong working knowledge of and experience within the research infrastructure required by R1 universities.
• Experience in research policy formation, compliance issues, and implementation.
• Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with various internal and external constituencies and work with a culturally diverse population.
• Record of success in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
• Demonstrated commitment to interdisciplinary research and experience in expanding interdisciplinary efforts.
• Effectiveness in navigating comprehensive, complex organizational structures, cultures, and dynamics.
• Demonstrated success as a fiscal manager who allocates resources strategically and in the best interest of the institution.
• Demonstrates a strategic mindset and a holistic university-wide view when evaluating options, making decisions, and taking action.
• Regularly scans the environment to seize opportunities and mitigate risk; uses data to make prudent decisions and evaluate results.
• Willingness to tackle challenging issues and engage in hard conversations; demonstrates a strong sense of urgency in responding to crises and problems.
• Demonstrated success as a unit leader who develops and engages others through coaching, feedback, exposure and stretch opportunities; recognizes employee accomplishments.
• Capacity to be an effective cheerleader for research, the RASP team, investigators/PI’s, and research faculty and staff; one who celebrates “wins” regardless of dollar amount and across all disciplines.
• Ability to connect with varied audiences and disciplines through an authentic communication style.
• Actively listens and considers the perspectives of others.
• Demonstrates honesty, patience, and a sense of humor; approachable.

Application Process

Candidates should apply through Kent State’s employment system and include a cover letter describing relevant experiences and interest in this position; curriculum vitae/resume; and names, titles and contact information for five references. To assure full consideration, application materials should be received by October 28, 2022. Documents submitted to Kent State University for employment opportunities are subject to disclosure under the Ohio Public Records law. Kent State University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.

Questions, requests for information, and nominations may be directed to the search coordinator, Dr. Charlene Reed, Vice President and University Secretary, creed2@kent.edu.

Kent State University Overview

Consistently among Ohio’s top three largest public universities in terms of enrollment, Kent State University is ranked among the nation’s elite R1 universities and top national public universities in the 2022 rankings by U.S. News and World Report. Kent State is included on the Best National Universities list in the coveted top tier, moving up four spots in 2022 to now place
at No. 213 among all national public and private institutions. The university’s graduate education programs have been recognized as the highest ranked at a public university in Northeast Ohio by U.S. News on its 2022 Best Online Graduate Education Programs list and has received top U.S. News rankings for best graduate schools in Public Affairs, Sociology, Political Science, History, Public Health, and English. Kent State’s Department of Psychological Sciences’ Ph.D. programs are ranked among the top 100 by the National Research Council, and the department’s Clinical Ph.D. program is ranked among the top 100 by U.S. News.

Kent State University is the only university in the country to receive the prestigious 2022 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization from NAFSA: Association of International Educators. The honor recognizes Kent State for overall excellence in integrating international education throughout all facets of the university and its campuses.

The university has the distinction of being the only Ohio public or private college or university that ranks among the top 500 companies nationwide in Forbes’ list of America’s Best Employers for Diversity 2022. Kent State also has the distinction of being recognized by Forbes on the Best Employers for Women 2022 list, ranking No. 81 in the nation overall and ninth among colleges and universities nationally.

Kent State continues to be highly ranked as a top employer. For the 10th time, Kent State was recognized as a “Great College to Work For” by the Chronicle of Higher Education and is one of only 15 four-year public universities in the nation – and the only Ohio public university – to receive the 2022 “Great College to Work For” designation.

Kent State is a national leader in providing award-winning student support services to undergraduates. The student body comprises nearly 35,000 students, including 1,370 international students from nearly 100 countries, and the worldwide alumni family exceeds 268,000. The addition of new learning environments from the sciences to the arts and the development of exciting new academic programs characterize Kent State’s focus on transformational educational experiences.

With eight campuses across Northeast Ohio, the College of Podiatric Medicine, Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative, Twinsburg Academic Center, and academic sites in major world cities including New York City, Geneva, and Florence, Kent State is a major educational, economic, and cultural resource far beyond the Northeast Ohio region it has served since 1910. Kent State comprises eight campuses that produce 10,000 career-ready graduates each year:

- Kent Campus
- Kent State University at Ashtabula
- Kent State University Columbiana County (campuses in East Liverpool and Salem)
- Kent State University at Geauga (in Burton) and the Twinsburg Academic Center
- Kent State University at Stark (in Canton)
- Kent State University at Trumbull (in Warren)
- Kent State University at Tuscarawas (in New Philadelphia)
The university’s Kent Campus, which has a student body of more than 25,000 and a thriving residential population, is located on a beautiful 953-acre campus in Kent, Ohio, a city of 30,000 within the greater Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area. The campus provides the intellectual, scientific, social, economic, and artistic resources of a major research university in a safe and serene campus setting. In 2018 Kent State was ranked the safest big college campus in Ohio and 25th safest in the country, according to the National Council for Home Safety and Security. Also in 2018, the Kent Campus launched a 10-year, $1-billion facilities master plan to better serve the needs of students and the entire Kent State community. The plan enhances the welcoming feeling of the university’s iconic Front Campus and genuine sense of place, elevates inclusive healthy living-learning environments, links a campus-wide series of spaces focused on innovation and expands the dynamic synergy with the city of Kent.

Kent State University’s seven regional campuses draw full- and part-time students, now totaling more than 9,000, primarily from their local communities across Northeast Ohio. Like the Kent Campus, each regional campus is thoroughly engaged in its surrounding community, making available the rich resources of a comprehensive and diverse university, significantly impacting that area’s economic well-being and quality of life. Each campus has the flexibility to meet wide-ranging local needs through associate and selected baccalaureate programs; continuing education and training; research/technology parks; and facilities for advanced technology, manufacturing, and the performing arts.

Following a full year of consultation and comprehensive review, Kent State recently launched its refreshed strategic plan, Flashes Together: Our Strategic Roadmap to a Distinctive Roadmap.

In the Strategic Roadmap, the university’s six priorities are as follows:
• **Priority 1: Students First.** Ensure Kent State is a university where students thrive, belong, graduate, become engaged alumni and lifelong learners committed to a life of impact.

• **Priority 2: A Diverse Kent State.** Create a diverse learning environment through the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.

• **Priority 3: A Nationally Distinctive Kent State.** Bolster idea generation, innovation, and national distinction through investment in top-tier teaching, research and creative activities, and co-curricular programs.

• **Priority 4: Community Impact.** Serve as an innovative and engaged partner to meet community needs and enhance quality of life in the region and state.

• **Priority 5: Global Presence.** Leverage, expand, and elevate Kent State’s global relationships, international engagement, and integration of global perspectives.

• **Priority 6: Organizational Sustainability.** Ensure a culture of continuous improvement and the careful and responsible management of university resources and infrastructure.
Kent State University’s campuses are located in a major population and economic center. Northeast Ohio is home to more than 4.5 million people and eight Fortune 500 firms and is one of the nation’s top industrial markets and a leader in new technology. The region is rich in natural and cultural amenities including the splendor of the Great Lakes, one of the country’s most-visited national parks, the nation’s second-largest theatre district, a world-class symphony orchestra, renowned museums, four professional sports teams, eclectic neighborhoods, and multicultural experiences in settings from urban to rural. KSU employees obtain healthcare from leading health systems including the Cleveland Clinic, which ranks #4 of all U.S. hospitals.

Our Community
In recent years, the city of Kent has experienced dramatic revitalization due to a $130-million public and private investment. Kent State University officials, city administrators, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA), and other partners have collaborated to make Kent an excellent place to live, work, study, visit and play. Cultural elements in Kent include various arts, environmental and entertainment events during the year as well as the Kent State University Museum, which focuses on the history of fashion design and decorative arts in the U.S. and around the world. The Kent Stage, located downtown, is an iconic venue for various arts performances in music and theater, including concerts, theatrical productions, film festivals and movie premieres. In addition, the City of Kent operates nearly 20 parks and preserves, the largest of which is the 56-acre Fred Fuller Park along the Cuyahoga River. Haymaker Farmers Market is held year-round in Kent and is one of many weekly markets in communities surrounding the university.