Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Leadership Profile

Kent State University seeks an experienced and innovative leader to serve as its next Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. A member of the President’s Cabinet, the vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) reports to the president and serves as the senior officer providing overall executive leadership and management of the division of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Kent State University Overview
Consistently among Ohio’s top three largest public universities in terms of enrollment, Kent State University is ranked by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching among the nation’s 91 public higher-research universities. Kent State is the highest-ranking public university in Northern Ohio on the Top Public Schools and Best National Universities lists by U.S. News & World Report. For the second year in a row, Kent State University has the distinction of ranking among the top 20 companies nationwide in Forbes’ list of America’s Best Employers for Diversity and ranks No. 1 among Northern Ohio and No. 4 in the state of Ohio on the Forbes 2020 Best-In-State Employers. In 2020, Kent State was named as a finalist for the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Degree Completion Award.

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 and Florence, Kent State is one of Ohio’s leading public universities and a major educational, economic and cultural resource far beyond the Northeast Ohio region it has served since 1910.

Kent State University boasts a population of more than 37,000 students, 5,700 full-and part-time faculty and staff members and 257,000 alumni worldwide. The university comprises eight campuses:

- Kent Campus
- Kent State University at Ashtabula
- Kent State University at East Liverpool
- Kent State University at Geauga (in Burton) and the Twinsburg Academic Center
- Kent State University at Salem
Kent State is a powerful economic engine, directly contributing more than $1 billion annually to the Northeast Ohio region’s prosperity. When coupled with the earnings of the Kent State alumni, the university’s annual economic impact on the region soars to nearly $3.4 billion and more than $3.8 billion statewide, according to a 2018 external study.

The university’s Kent Campus, which has a student body of nearly 27,000 and a thriving residential population, is located on a beautiful 950-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. 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 10,000, 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.

Since 2015, Kent State has pursued an ambitious strategic plan, known as A Strategic Roadmap to a Distinctive Kent State. The university’s priorities are as follows:

- **Priority 1**: Students First. Provide an inclusive and engaged living-learning environment where all students thrive and graduate as informed citizens committed to a life of impact.

- **Priority 2**: A Distinctive Kent State. Drive innovation, idea generation, and national distinction through top-tier academic and research programs including the recruitment and support of talented faculty and staff.

- **Priority 3**: Global Competitiveness. Advance Kent State’s impact and reach as a leading international university.

- **Priority 4**: Regional Impact. Serve as the innovative engine and engaged partner to meet community needs and enhance quality of life in the region and state.
• **Priority 5: Organizational Stewardship.** Ensure a culture of continuous improvement and the efficient stewardship of university resources and infrastructure.

**Northeast Ohio: A Major Population and Economic Center**

Kent State is 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 five 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, three major sports teams, eclectic neighborhoods, and multicultural experiences in settings from urban to rural. KSU employees obtain their healthcare from several leading hospital systems, including the Cleveland Clinic, which is currently the second-ranked hospital in the United States.

**Our Community**

In recent years, the city of Kent has experienced dramatic revitalization as a result of 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 the city of Kent an excellent place to live, work, study, visit and play. The Kent community genuinely supports its hometown university sports teams and offers a welcoming, supportive, and engaged community for Kent State’s athletic programs, teams, coaches and student-athletes.
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 a variety of 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.

The city of Kent is just 20 minutes from Akron, home of more than 20,000 businesses, including the global headquarters of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Northeast Ohio is home to some of the world’s leading liquid crystal and polymer research programs and companies.

Kent is less than an hour from Cleveland, situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie, which is the second largest city in Ohio and the largest media market in the state. With 33,000 protected acres and 2.2 million visits each year, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park is located less than 30 minutes from campus and provides connectivity on the Towpath Trail all the way to Cleveland. Cleveland has professional sports teams in football, baseball, basketball and hockey. Cleveland is home to Playhouse Square Center, the second largest performing arts center in the U.S. behind New York’s Lincoln Center. Playhouse Square includes five theaters within what is known as the Cleveland Theater District, with resident companies such as Cleveland Playhouse, Opera Cleveland, and the Great Lakes Theater Festival. Cleveland is home to the Cleveland Orchestra, widely considered one of the finest orchestras in the world, and also boasts the I.M. Pei-designed Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Great Lakes Science Center, boating, fishing, swimming, and other waterfront recreation. The city’s University Circle is a 550-acre concentration of cultural, educational, and medical institutions, including the Cleveland Botanical Garden, Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and the Western Reserve Historical Society.
The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Kent State University was at the forefront of higher education when it created the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in 2009. Through the leadership of the University Diversity Action Council, committed individuals, and a growing understanding of the importance of inclusion, Kent State University made a stronger commitment to diversity through the establishment of the new Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The division was built to support diversity initiatives throughout the university and endeavored to infuse a value for equity and inclusion in all decision making. DEI continues to lead Kent State’s efforts to increase diverse representation, create and sustain equity of opportunity, and intentionally foster an inclusive environment.

Beginning in 2012, DEI led the creation and implementation of a five-year Equity Action Plan (EAP) that articulated goals and created institutionalized, sustainable efforts to ensure that Kent State was moving toward truly inclusive excellence. The university also completed an extensive Climate Study process that continued to guide the division’s work toward enhancing the climate that Kent State students, faculty and staff experience.

Vision
We envision a Kent State that empowers individuals, expands opportunities and meaningfully honors all voices.

Mission
The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will lead Kent State community’s efforts to increase diverse representation, create and sustain equality of opportunity and intentionally foster an inclusive and equitable environment.

Purpose
To cultivate a safe, diverse community and harness its power for change.

Strategic Priorities
• Enhance Climate – to ensure a climate where all students, faculty and staff can thrive, survive and flourish.

• Cultivate Equity – Cultivate attitudes, systems and structures that promote equitable decisions and practices.

• Promote Inclusion – Engage all members in building an inclusive community where everyone knows that they are valued.
Current Initiatives

• The division is leading a university-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan process that began in Spring 2021. Units from across the university system will submit strategic plans that highlight excellence in equity, diversity and inclusion and detail specific efforts as Kent State works toward making our campuses more diverse, equitable and inclusive. DEI will review and approve these plans and provide support through workshops, training opportunities and individual meetings.

• In collaboration with the Office of the Provost and the Division of Student Affairs, DEI oversees the Anti-Racism Task Force. Efforts of this university-wide taskforce will help to create a framework for additional diversity work throughout the Kent State system in areas including campus life, curriculum and regional campuses.

• The division is hosting a series of virtual town halls that provide students, staff and faculty with learning opportunities for diverse experiences. Topics have included native representation, the Black American experience, the Asian American experience, how to be an ally, and others designed to foster inclusivity.

• The Diversity and Education Training Lab housed within DEI aims to foster and develop diversity and cultural competency through awareness, knowledge and skills. The lab’s team combines diverse expertise to help address issues ranging from unintentional biases to recruitment, promotion and cultural competency skills. Currently the DEI Training Lab partners with DEI faculty affiliates and Kent State faculty to offer training for the university community on bias, anti-racism and white allyship.

• The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion leads the Kent State University Diversity Advisory Board, an advisory council composed of current staff, Kent State alumni and community members invested in the advancement of equity and inclusion at Kent State. The advisory board supports the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion through advising, recommending strategies, examining ways to enhance findings and generate funds to aid in the persistence through graduation of marginalized and underserved students at Kent State.

Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Kent State University

Kent State University is pursuing a dynamic leader with deep experience in the academy to serve as the university’s next chief diversity officer. As an executive officer, the vice president will provide overall leadership of Kent State’s Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), lead strategic diversity planning for the university, and measure and communicate progress in improving institutional performance in areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.
The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will report directly to the President and be a contributing member of the President’s Cabinet. The Vice President will be a valued strategic partner and thought leader to the university’s colleges, schools and departments, divisions, and campuses. This individual will have a keen ability to help synthesize and integrate the wide-ranging diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across Kent State into a proactive, visible and innovative system-wide strategy that aligns with the university’s core values. Our vision is that every unit, campus, division and person at Kent State will be engaged in this crucial work.

The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will develop positive relationships with students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and the public, and work to develop and ensure a climate/culture that welcomes, values, supports and affirms each member of the community. It is critical that the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion be empathetic, and an excellent listener and communicator. The Vice President must be approachable and accessible, help others see differing viewpoints, and foster an environment that encourages all voices to be heard, which requires trust and leadership. As part of their efforts focused on fostering a more welcoming environment, the Vice President will work collaboratively with administration, faculty and staff to expand cultural competencies, and oversee development and execution of diversity training programs.

The Vice President will lead the university community’s commitment to address threats to diversity, equity and inclusion on our campuses. The individual will work with appropriate governance, administrative and union bodies to facilitate the review, revision, elimination or establishment of policies, procedures, practices, curricula and budgets that foster and uphold an anti-racist community.

The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will work to address the concerns and needs of three primary and overlapping constituents: students, faculty and staff, and Northeast Ohio community members.

**Students**
The Vice President will work closely with the divisions of Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs to contribute to the recruitment, retention and success of students. This individual will serve as an advocate for students, embodying the idea that Flashes Take Care of Flashes, working with relevant divisions to foster and ensure a safe, positive and inclusive living and learning environment for all students. This individual will understand the intersectionality among underrepresented and marginalized groups based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, LGBTQ+, gender identity, veteran status, and other distinctions.

**Faculty and Staff**
The Vice President will work with the divisions of Academic Affairs and Human Resources to help
identify and provide input on policies, practices and resources that support the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff, and work to foster and ensure an inclusive environment that supports faculty, administrator and staff development. This work will support Kent State as a great place to work.

Community
The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will hold the perspective that our campuses and their associated hometowns are one community and will work with other members of the university’s leadership team to strengthen community dialogue surrounding issues of race and equity and create more vibrant, inclusive and supportive environments. The Vice President will work actively with local leaders, residents, businesses and other organizations to encourage greater diversity in our local communities, including supporting initiatives that would foster a more diverse set of business/service providers.

Advancing Our Understanding of Racism and Equity
The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion should be a forward-thinking leader who can contribute to developing national recognition for Kent State’s research and best practices on diversity, equity and inclusion. This individual will support the community of scholars at Kent State who are involved in race and equity research, education and outreach. The Vice President will be on the leadership team working to implement the proposed Anti-Racism and Equity Institute. The institute will be considered by the university’s Board of Trustees in March and will launch immediately upon that approval.

Additional information on the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is available at https://www.kent.edu/diversity.

Requirements and Application Process
A doctoral or other terminal degree from an accredited institution, an academic record sufficient to qualify for faculty appointment at full professor level, and at least five years of progressively responsible experience in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are required. Compensation is competitive and will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. 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 March 19, 2021. 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.