



# VICE PRESIDENT

## COMMUNICATIONS and MARKETING

**KANSAS STATE**  

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**UNIVERSITY**

## The opportunity

Kansas State University invites nominations and applications for the position of vice president for communications and marketing.

This is a pivotal and momentous time at Kansas State University. The vice president will have the opportunity to harness the energy of the recently launched strategic plan, [Next-Gen K-State](#), as the university strives to become the model next-generation land-grant university. The vice president will support the narration of all aspects of the university's plan ensuring that news of its success is far reaching and celebrated. This will also be a historic time for the university to refine its brand and messaging building upon the strong work of each planning committee during this last year.

This is an exceptional opportunity to join an inspiring R1 institution as its next chief communications and marketing officer to enhance the institution's communications, brand vision and public relations campaigns, both nationally and internationally. The position reports to Marshall Stewart, senior vice president for executive affairs, university engagement and partnerships, and chief of staff. The next vice president for communications and marketing, or VPCM, is an accomplished communications professional of unquestioned integrity, sound judgment and considerable energy. The VPCM has a commitment to collaborative work and empowerment, a passion for higher education, and the ability to embrace, support and communicate K-State's vision to lead the next generation of land-grant universities, internally and externally.

A member of the president's cabinet, the VPCM is responsible for the leadership, development, integration and implementation of institutional branding, marketing and public relations that communicate about and advance the strategic direction and positioning of the university and its leadership. The successful candidate brings strong and proven strategic leadership skills, experience with crisis management, the ability to lead organizational change in a complex environment and experience aligning talent and coordinating across the institution with non-centralized communicators. Highly developed writing and communication skills are essential tools in communicating with multiple constituent groups.

Leading the [Division of Communications and Marketing](#), the next VPCM serves as the chief communications officer for Kansas State University and leads a centralized strategic communications team that provides reputation management, crisis communications and proactive public relations efforts. Moreover, the VPCM will drive the internal communications at the institutional level while setting the overall strategy for institutional responses, representing university leadership through public communications and providing counsel to the university president, provost, cabinet and deans. Serving on the crisis management team, the VPCM will respond to crises that develop during the year.

For information on how to apply or to submit nominations, please refer to the search process section at the end of this document.



## **Duties and responsibilities:**

### **Institutional communications and marketing:**

- Leads marketing and communication efforts with a One K-State model in mind to ensure an integrated strategy that enhances the university's visibility and reputation in the market.
- Establishes priorities for all marketing, advertising, website, public relations, social media and communications initiatives and projects.
- Supports enrollment and admissions efforts by providing strategic communications services to assist recruiting efforts and grow enrollment.
- In partnership with the vice provost for enrollment management and others, executes in- state and national recruiting efforts for undergraduate and graduate students, consistent with university strategic enrollment plans.
- Oversees DCM services, including video, photography, design, media placements, marketing, news and communications, and virtual presence on websites and social media.
- Defines creative strategy at the university level and drives alignment with campuses, colleges, departments and other major units.
- Manages the institutional advertising and marketing budget.

### **Public relations, reputation management, and crisis communications:**

- Serves as the university's official spokesperson, leading a strategic communications team to provide proactive public relations efforts, reputation management and crisis communications.
- Oversees public relations efforts, including generation of content that compellingly tells the institutional story and mission. Enhances visibility of university efforts nationally and internationally.

- Develops and implements plans to strengthen ties to local, state and national media. Understands state and federal legislative initiatives, develops and executes communications strategy with local and state governments, and participates in outreach activities to foster relationships with local, state and federal stakeholders.
- Sets strategy for institutional responses, provides counsel to the university president, provost, cabinet and deans. Includes primary responsibility for internal communications at the institutional level to the university community.
- Serves on the crisis management team and develops and implements crisis communication plans as necessary.
- Effectively leverages technology, including social media, multimedia and video content to advance communication goals.
- Leads a team in building K-State's presence and brand in local, state and national media outlets.

### **University leadership, management and development:**

- Leads the Division of Communications and Marketing with overall responsibility for effective and efficient operations and services, budgetary planning and management, and personnel, engagement, management and development.
- Fosters a responsive and inclusive culture that welcomes change and innovation and values teamwork and collaboration.
- Sets priorities with finite resources, effectively planning and managing the financial resources and staffing of the division to meet current needs while allowing for attainment of strategic initiatives.

### Expanding talent resources:

- The vice president leads a talented team of 31 professionals who provide strategic marketing and communications expertise and support the advancement of the university's brand and reputation. The division has won 143 cumulative CASE awards since 2010.
- Builds and stewards talent for the division by promoting staff development, evaluation and accountability.
- The VPCM will explore and support creative strategies for attracting, retaining, and promoting staff within the organization. K-State supports remote work arrangements that are in the best interest of the university, especially those that enable operational efficiencies and enhance productivity. The vice president will engage and encourage managers to think about their current and future staffing plans to best position K-State as an employer of choice.

### Institutional branding:

- Leads collaborative efforts to create and manage a unified institutional brand strategy for the university.
- Convenes a **One Voice** team and maintains strategic relationships with external communications partners, including K-State Athletics, K-State Alumni Association, KSU Foundation and other key communicators to ensure alignment regarding brand identity, messaging and style.

- Recommends, develops and maintains university-wide policies and guidelines related to branding, advertising and marketing strategies.
- Serves as visionary brand steward and brand ambassador.

### Reaffirming K-State's Commitment to Inclusive Excellence:

- K-State was the nation's first operational land-grant university with full educational privileges (open enrollment) to all students regardless of gender, race or creed. The university is committed to a mission of empowering all members of its community and removing barriers throughout campus caused by social injustice and inequity to provide access to all.
- The vice president will collaborate with university leaders to foster an inclusive university environment that adheres to the university's policy prohibiting discrimination. The VPCM will collaborate with Human Resources and the **Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging** to enhance recruitment and retention of staff from all backgrounds.



**Requirements:**

The successful candidate will be an accomplished communications professional of unquestioned integrity, sound judgement and high energy, with a commitment to collaborative work and empowerment, a passion for higher education and the ability to support and inspire colleagues.

**Required competencies/qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
- 7-10 years of experience with some or all of the following: communications, marketing, public relations and brand building experience
- Proven record of success in an administrative position with responsibility for guiding strategy; fiscal planning and management; supervising, motivating and developing employees.
- Proven record of fostering diversity, belonging and teamwork to create collaborative working relationships across culturally diverse groups.
- Demonstrated success as a strategic and creative planner, master collaborator, and relationship builder with strong interpersonal skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills with a demonstrated ability to articulate matters of complexity and nuance to multiple and varied groups of stakeholders.
- Proven success developing and implementing branding and marketing strategies to enhance institutional reputation and/or grow enrollment for a large, culturally diverse organization.
- Excellent organizational, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- Knowledge of best practices, emerging issues, trends and opportunities in university higher education communications.
- Understanding of the scope and strategic impact of technology used in marketing and social media branding and promotion with experience strategically deploying marketing and communication tools to disseminate messages across different platforms and to diverse audiences.

**Preferred competencies/qualifications:**

- Master's or professional degree in marketing, communications, higher education, public relations, law or related discipline.
- Proven ability to initiate, lead and facilitate change, successfully engaging with others to achieve results.
- Proven ability to adapt and execute strategy in a complex and evolving space and be comfortable with the ambiguity that accompanies a large public university.
- Higher education administrative leadership experience with similar responsibilities to this position.
- Experience in crisis management and response to include reputation management.
- An understanding and respect for shared governance in higher education.
- A deep understanding of and passion for the role of public higher education and firm grasp of the opportunities and advantages of a land-grant university with R1 status.
- Private industry experience in news media, public relations, communications or marketing.

To learn more about Kansas State University, please review our [University Profile](#).



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## Search process

WittKieffer is assisting Kansas State University with this search. All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited.

Applications should include, as separate documents, a resume and letter of interest addressing the themes in the leadership profile.

For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2023. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to Melissa Fincher and Jenna Brumleve at [KStateVPCommMktg@wittkieffer.com](mailto:KStateVPCommMktg@wittkieffer.com).

*Applicants must be currently authorized to work in the United States at the time of employment.*

*Kansas State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran.*

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