



Vice President of Information Technology, Chief Information Officer

Leadership Profile

August 2026



Executive Summary

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) seeks a dynamic leader to serve as its Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer (VP/CIO). This is an exciting opportunity to lead information technology for a university that has spent more than 145 years preparing students for meaningful lives of achievement and is now pursuing an ambitious aspiration: to be both the best value in higher education and the top regional public university in Texas. The VP/CIO will continue to transform and position IT as an institutional strategic partner, guiding SHSU in advancing its capabilities in key areas of focus including AI and data analytics.

With a student population of more than 21,000, [Sam Houston State University](#) is located in Huntsville, Texas, with an off-site instructional location in The Woodlands, the Russell and Glenda Gordy College of Osteopathic Medicine in Conroe and a robust online presence through SHSU Online. Huntsville is located on the rapidly developing Interstate 45 corridor between Houston and Dallas. SHSU is 70 miles north of downtown Houston and 170 miles south of Dallas, ideally situated between the 4th and 9th largest cities in the country and two of the 10 fastest-growing cities in the U.S. This location presents many strategic opportunities for the future of Sam Houston State University.

SHSU continually strives to honor its historical roots through academic excellence and meeting the workforce needs of Texas, which is demonstrated by the launch of [SamPoly](#) – a cutting-edge Polytechnic College designed to immediately equip students with industry-driven skills and workforce-ready training. While embracing its legacy, SHSU also strives to meet the needs of contemporary students, both in person and online. SHSU offers more than 95 bachelor's degree programs, more than 60 master's degree programs, 11 doctoral programs, one professional doctorate (DO), and over 50 fully online degrees. SHSU is classified as a Carnegie doctoral university with high research activity (R2). It is also a Community Engaged University certified by the Carnegie Foundation, and a proud AACSB institution, demonstrating a commitment to education for the public good. SHSU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). SHSU is part of the [Texas State University System](#), the first university system established in Texas, composed of seven institutions.

The VP/CIO reports to the Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment and Innovation and serves on the President's Extended Cabinet as a leader and collaborator in the university's strategic planning and decision-making. The role carries responsibility for the central information technology infrastructure and services supporting approximately 21,000 students and nearly 3,000 faculty and staff, spanning administrative systems and information management, networking, telecommunications, data centers, cybersecurity, IT customer service, and IT administration. Additionally, the VP/CIO provides broad direction for the Chief Technology Officer, the Chief Information Security Officer, and the Deputy Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President for Innovation, and works with the Extended Cabinet and University governance committees to set university-wide technology direction aligned with institutional strategies, policies, priorities, and resource allocations. The division's vision is to meet campus needs with relevant, accessible, sustainable, innovative, and cost-effective solutions that support and promote a culture of creativity and academic accomplishment.

The successful candidate will be a collaborative and visionary technology leader with a proven record of progressively responsible IT leadership, alongside expertise in strategic planning, project execution, and process transformation in a rapidly changing environment. The VP/CIO must be an innovative thinker who can extend the access, effectiveness, and efficiency of technology across campus while directly advancing student success through the teaching, learning, and research environments. The VP/CIO must possess the ability to convey complex technical concepts in accessible terms, demonstrate financial acumen, and lead, evolve, and inspire a complex IT organization. Finally, the VP/CIO must articulate how they can modernize administrative applications, strengthen cybersecurity and data governance, and build the structures and services that align with campus strategy.

Role of the Vice President of Information Technology, Chief Information Officer

The VP/CIO provides strategic vision and leadership for the campus in a rapidly changing information technology environment. They will lead the central information technology infrastructure and services, including administrative systems and information management, networking, telecommunications, data centers, cybersecurity, IT customer service and IT administration. Additionally, the VP/CIO will serve as a leader and collaborator in the University's strategic planning and decision-making.

The VP/CIO direct reports include:

- Chief Information Security Officer/Chief Technology Officer
- Associate Vice President for Innovation/Deputy CIO

Key Responsibilities:

The successful Vice President of Information Technology, Chief Information Officer candidate will:

- Extend the access, effectiveness, efficiency, and innovative priorities of technology across campus, ensure the privacy and security of all digital information and systems, and oversee the effective management and planning of IT assets on the campus
- Support student success through effective implementation and use of technology supporting the teaching, learning, and research environments, while partnering with SHSU leaders to complete a roadmap of technology and processes for a more seamless experience for students
- Lead a strong IT leadership team and continue to evolve the structures, capabilities, and services to align with campus strategies. Maintain a focus on where staff feel valued and add value
- Collaborate with Academic, Student Affairs, and Finance and Operations to expand learning spaces and provide tools to support those departments
- Enhance research technology infrastructure and services to enable various research and scholarship for a global impact and support the continuous improvement, integration and modernization of SHSU's administrative applications
- Lead the efforts to ensure current technology is used to its fullest and new technology and platforms improve the experience and efficiencies of campus and assist efforts across the institution to improve data governance and organizational capacity to use data in decision-making
- Serve as the institution's senior executive accountable for information resources management, ensuring technology planning, reporting, acquisition, governance, compliance, and resource stewardship are aligned with Texas Government Code Chapter 2054, Texas Administrative Code requirements for Information Resources Managers (IRM), university policy, and institutional strategy.
- Ensure the university maintains appropriate executive-level oversight of information resources, including documented accountability, cooperation across institutional units, continuing education expectations, and clear alignment between IT leadership and executive management consistent with state IRM roles and responsibilities.
- Provide leadership for institution-wide information security, data protection, risk management, disaster recovery, continuity planning, accessibility, and technology compliance programs, working in coordination with designated information owners, custodians, users, and security officials to protect information resources and support effective public stewardship of technology investments.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Strengthen IT's Role as a Strategic Institutional Partner

- Foster trusted relationships across the university, establishing technology as a catalyst for institutional success through collaborative planning, transparent prioritization, effective governance, and a clear focus on measurable outcomes and stakeholder value.

Lead the Continued Transformation of the IT Organization

- Advance the division's evolution into a modern, service-oriented technology organization by strengthening governance, clarifying accountability, refining organizational structures, and fostering a culture that balances innovation, operational excellence, and employee development.
- Continue building an operating model that effectively bridges innovation and day-to-day operations, ensuring new capabilities can be delivered, supported, and scaled.

Establish Data and AI as Strategic Institutional Capabilities

- Build a sustainable framework for data, analytics, and artificial intelligence that translates technology investments into measurable outcomes, enabling data-informed decision making and advancing institutional priorities related to enrollment, student success, research, and operational effectiveness.
- Guide the institution's responsible adoption of AI while establishing appropriate governance, risk management, and accountability practices.

Drive Administrative Modernization and Process Simplification

- Partner with academic and administrative leaders to streamline complex workflows, reduce organizational friction, and implement technology-enabled process improvements that enhance efficiency, improve service delivery, and create capacity for future growth.

Advance Enrollment and Student Success Through Technology

- Lead the continued modernization of the university's enrollment, advising, and student support ecosystem, ensuring technology investments contribute directly to enrollment growth, retention, persistence, and an exceptional student experience.
- Strengthen partnerships with enrollment and student success leaders to align technology investments with institutional growth objectives.

Strengthen the Technology Ecosystem Supporting Teaching and Learning

- Ensure faculty, students, and staff have access to reliable, accessible, and innovative instructional technologies that support evolving pedagogical approaches while enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the learning environment.

Expand Research and Innovation Enablement

- Partner with academic and research leadership to develop technology capabilities that support sponsored research, advanced computing, data-intensive scholarship, and emerging areas of innovation, strengthening the institution's research profile and long-term competitiveness.
- Leverage technology investments to support the institution's research ambitions and enhance its ability to attract external funding and research talent.

Build a High-Performing and Scalable Operations Function

- Advance operational maturity through process standardization, automation, service management, and infrastructure modernization, creating a sustainable foundation capable of supporting institutional growth while improving reliability, efficiency, and risk management.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Required Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree is required, with seven (7) to ten (10) years of progressively responsible IT leadership experience, including senior-level responsibility across a broad technology portfolio and areas such as cybersecurity, risk management, compliance, business continuity, and IT governance.
- Senior leadership experience in a complex organization, with demonstrated involvement in areas such as strategic planning, organizational visioning, process transformation, cybersecurity, risk management, regulatory compliance, business continuity, and information technology governance. IT leaders from outside higher education are encouraged to apply.
- Proven record of leading complex, enterprise-wide technology initiatives involving multiple stakeholders, including areas such as system implementations, modernization, migrations, integrations, vendor-supported platforms, innovation, and organizational change.
- Demonstrated success partnering with varied stakeholder groups to set IT priorities, plan services, and develop policies, practices, and procedures.
- Demonstrated leadership in financial management, with disciplined stewardship of institutional resources and technology investments.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to convey complex technical information in accessible terms, advise senior leaders, support enterprise strategy, and lead cross-functional initiatives.
- Experience providing broad direction to a senior IT leadership team and evolving organizational structures, capabilities, and services to align with institutional strategy.

Preferred Qualifications

- A master's degree is preferred.
- Experience as a CIO preferred.
- Experience serving on a cabinet or equivalent executive body, contributing to institution-wide strategic planning and decision-making beyond the technology portfolio.
- Experience advancing data governance and building organizational capacity to use data in decision-making.
- Experience with research technology infrastructure and services supporting research and scholarship.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience across a broad range of information technologies, including areas such as cybersecurity, privacy, accessibility, risk management, business continuity, and regulatory compliance, with an understanding of technology trends and applications that support the academic and administrative missions of a university.

Personal Qualities

- Collaborative: Builds and strengthens partnerships across academic, student affairs, financial, operational, and administrative areas; values broad participation in planning and decision-making and advances IT as a trusted institutional partner.

- Strategically Innovative: Sees where technology can take the institution and translates that vision into focused priorities and action.
- Inspirational People Leader: Keeps staff functioning at their best and sustains an environment where people feel valued and add value.
- Skilled Communicator: Engages credibly with faculty, staff, students, and senior leadership, making complexity accessible without diminishing it.
- Receptive: Listens to staff ideas and concerns and demonstrably acts on what is heard.
- Trustworthy: Delivers focused change aligned with institutional strategy, earning confidence through consistency and reliability.
- Visible Advocate: Supports the IT staff to the campus in both words and actions, and leads with integrity while moving the institution toward new possibilities.
- Service-Oriented: Reflects the university's own measure of a life in service, with a commitment to the people and mission behind the technology.
- Discerning Institutional Leader: Leads through trust, partnership, and sound judgment; thoughtfully evaluates emerging technologies based on institutional needs, evidence, sustainability, and demonstrated value.



About Sam Houston State University

Overview

For more than 145 years, Sam Houston State University has been preparing students for meaningful lives of achievement. Its motto, "The measure of a Life is its Service," resonates among its 21,000 students, nine colleges and well beyond its historical roots through research, creative endeavors, service learning, volunteering and more.

SHSU is a welcoming institution whose mission is to provide high-quality education, scholarship, and service to students. With over 95 bachelor's degrees, over 60 master's, and 11 doctoral programs, one professional doctorate (DO), including the nation's first Ph.D. in forensic science, SHSU provides an exceptional college experience for every student: traditional or non-traditional; first generation; international; or online.



Service to self and others is paramount at SHSU and reflected in all university organizations and programs. In fact, the university was named to USA Today's Top 50 in the U.S. for "commitment to civic engagement and global awareness," in addition to being classified a "Community Engaged Campus" by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. This honor, bestowed to only 311 public institutions nationwide, acknowledges the university's significant commitment to service.

Sam Houston State University has a small town feel with large scale opportunities. Located in the Piney Woods region of East Texas, Huntsville provides area residents with a sense of community and belonging, although just an hour drive north of Houston.

Mission

Sam Houston State University is a student-centered, community engaged institution whose mission is to offer accessible, quality higher education. The university offers a variety of innovative and flexible degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels focused on career readiness, personal and professional development, and service. SHSU provides integrated academic and student success services designed to support traditional and non-traditional students from diverse backgrounds.

Vision

Sam Houston State University will provide a transformative environment that enables students from diverse backgrounds to become leaders who serve their families, communities, and professions. We aspire to make SHSU both the best value in higher education and the top regional public university in the state of Texas. SHSU will accomplish this through providing high quality, innovative, and flexible academic programs; a commitment to student success, scholarship and creative works; and engagement that solves the most critical challenges facing the world.

Values

- Student Success and Support
- Academic Excellence
- Service and Community Engagement
- Inclusive Excellence
- Collaborative Environment
- Honor
- Creativity and Innovation

Academics

The university offers an array of undergraduate and graduate degrees across nine dynamic colleges.

- [College of Arts and Media](#)
- [College of Business Administration](#)
- [College of Criminal Justice](#)
- [College of Education](#)
- [College of Health Sciences](#)
- [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- [Russell and Glenda Gordy College of Osteopathic Medicine](#)
- [College of Science & Engineering Technology](#)
- [Polytechnic College](#)



Strategic Plan

The SHSU Strategic Planning process was restarted in September 2021 by creating a cross-institutional Strategic Plan Steering Committee, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Their charge was to conduct an environmental scan, focus groups, and surveys to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis looking out ten years to 2031. This work was completed in January 2022 and submitted for Cabinet review in February 2022, resulting in the university's restated Strategic Framework proposal. The Texas State University System Board of Regents approved the restated framework (Mission, Values, Vision, and Strategic Priorities) in May 2022.

The strategic plan includes four strategic priorities:

- Prioritize student success and student access
- Embody a culture of excellence
- Elevate the reputation and visibility of SHSU
- Expand and elevate our service to the State and beyond

Learn more about the strategic plan [here](#).

Texas State University System

The Texas State University System, founded in 1911, is the first higher education system established in Texas. Created to consolidate the support and management of state teacher colleges, the System has evolved into a network of higher education institutions stretching from the Texas–Louisiana border to the Big Bend region of west Texas.

Today, seven member institutions offer a broad range of academic and career opportunities. Throughout the System, faculty and staff are preparing students to work in and contribute to our global society.

The Texas State University System is governed by a nine-member Board of Regents appointed by the governor. In addition, a nonvoting student regent is appointed annually to the board. The administration, which is headed by a board-appointed chancellor, is based in Austin, where it provides support to the System member institutions and state government.

Leadership

Alisa White, President



Dr. Alisa White is president and professor of mass communication at Sam Houston State University, located in Huntsville, TX. Ranked among the top colleges/universities for social mobility, Sam Houston State offers its more than 21,000 students a transformative educational experience. Sam Houston State operates three campuses in Huntsville, Conroe, and The Woodlands, Texas, and has the only College of Osteopathic Medicine in East Texas.

White has taught at universities in five states and has served as department chair, dean, provost, and president. She serves as chair on the Board of Directors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), teaches in AASCU's New President's Academy, is past president of the Tennessee College Association, served as a director for the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, has twice served on the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division I Presidential Forum, and serves as chair of Conference USA. She has been honored as a Trailblazer by the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce.

White's leadership is characterized by her commitment to building strong teams, empowering leaders, and forging positive relationships with internal and external communities.

Prior to joining Sam Houston State in 2020, White served as president of Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. Under Dr. White's direction, Austin Peay set record enrollments and served as a partner and catalyst in downtown development and revitalization.

Heather Thielemann, Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment & Innovation and Chief Information Officer



Heather Thielemann currently serves Sam Houston State University as the Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment and Innovation and the CIO where she leads a team of 300+ in the areas of enrollment, information technology, and data analytics/decision support. Thielemann strongly advocates for the university to accept and enroll a highly qualified student population, to which all divisions must work together in executing a cohesive plan for overall student success and matriculation. Thielemann directs her team to focus on populating Texas with a qualified workforce of SHSU graduates to lead Texas into a prosperous future.

Thielemann's career in higher education first began in 1996 at Blinn College where she served as the Coordinator of Recruitment and Admission. She was promoted several times to becoming the Director (2001) and later Dean of Enrollment Management (2003).

While serving at Blinn College, Thielemann earned her doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at Sam Houston State University, and as she completed her degree, SHSU established the new position of Vice President for Enrollment Management, to which she was nominated to apply. In September 2004, Thielemann became the first Vice President for Enrollment Management, and in June 2021, Senior Vice President of Enrollment and Innovation at Sam Houston State University.

With higher education experience in Texas for over 30 years, she focuses on aligning enrollment strategy with the campus strategy, improving student success, and technology integration, as well as marketing and recruitment efforts that exceeded state growth rates. A champion of data-informed decision-making and workforce-aligned education, she is deeply engaged in community service and committed to servant leadership in higher education.

Huntsville, Texas

Sam Houston State University is located in Huntsville, which served as the residence of Sam Houston, the first and third president of the Republic of Texas and later, a Texas senator. Huntsville is a charming, historic Texas city with lively arts, culture, museums, a quaint downtown, and plenty of restaurants and coffee shops. It is located in a prime area of the Interstate 45 corridor. The anticipated growth from the Houston and Dallas metropolises offers many opportunities for businesses and industries. Huntsville sits within the Texas Triangle, the area of Texas outlined by the metropolitan areas of San Antonio- Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston. This location provides convenient access to the largest cities in the state all while maintaining a charming sense of community for citizens.

Learn more about things to do both on and off campus [here](#).

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

Please direct all nominations and applications to Nick Giannas and Ethan Robles via the [WittKieffer Candidate Portal](#). Inquiries may also be directed to the consultants through the portal or erobles@wittkieffer.com

SHSU is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Smoke/Drug-Free Workplace. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran status, disability status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or gender identity or expression. Sam Houston State University is an "at will" employer. Employees with a contract will have additional terms and conditions. Security sensitive positions at SHSU require background checks in accordance with Education Code § 51.215.

