Inaugural Dean, College of Design, Media and the Arts

Leadership Profile

August 2026

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Executive Summary

Kent State University (Kent State) seeks an inspiring, forward-thinking and resourceful academic leader to serve as the inaugural Dean of the College of Design, Media and the Arts. This is a rare opportunity to shape the identity and future of a new College that brings together exceptional programs across art, music, theatre, design, media, fashion, journalism and emerging technology. The Dean will build upon the strengths of accomplished programs and an engaged academic community, creating a shared vision that expands opportunities for students and faculty and elevates the College's academic, creative and public impact.

Effective fall 2027, the College will bring together the programs of Kent State's College of the Arts and three schools from the College of Communication and Information. The new College will unite seven schools and the Kent State University Museum, serving more than 3,000 undergraduate and approximately 250 graduate students. It will encompass the School of Art, School of Emerging Media and Technology, School of Fashion, School of Media and Journalism, School of Music, School of Theatre and Dance, and School of Visual Communication Design. Together, these programs represent a remarkable breadth of scholarship, creative practice, performance, design, storytelling, research and professional preparation. Based at Kent State's flagship campus, the College will benefit from its location in Northeast Ohio, a region rich in cultural institutions, health care, industry, technology and creative enterprise.

Created through Kent State's *Transformation 2028* initiative, the College will be operationally established before the Dean arrives. The Dean's charge is not to manage the mechanics of integration, but to lead the College's next chapter by honoring the histories and strengths of the academic communities coming together, cultivating trust and shared purpose, building a distinctive identity and creating new possibilities across disciplines. The College will also participate in a shared academic hub with the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, building upon interdisciplinary programming, shared staffing and collaborative research and creative activity already underway.

Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean will serve as the College's Chief Academic and Administrative Officer and provide strategic leadership across its academic, creative, financial, organizational and external affairs. The Dean will champion faculty excellence, research, scholarship and creative practice; strengthen enrollment and student success; foster curricular and experiential innovation; and support collaboration across disciplinary boundaries. The College's public programs create numerous connections between Kent State and the broader community. The Dean will deepen relationships with alumni, donors, industry, cultural organizations and community partners while expanding philanthropic support and external partnerships. Kent State is one of Ohio's leading public universities and a Carnegie R1 research institution, serving more than 31,600 students across an eight-campus system and supported by more than 280,000 alumni worldwide. The University combines a longstanding commitment to access and student opportunity with strength in research, discovery and creative activity.

The successful candidate must possess a doctoral or terminal degree from an accredited institution in one of the disciplines represented in the College, or highly distinguished performance within one or more of the disciplines represented in the College. Candidates must also bring seven years of significant administrative experience in an academic setting, including experience as a faculty member and administrator at a level commensurate with a department chair or school director, and an academic record sufficient to qualify for faculty appointment at a senior rank. The strongest candidates will bring a deep appreciation for the College's breadth, strong financial and fundraising acumen and the ability to lead within a complex public research university. They will combine strategic imagination with relational intelligence, transparency, empathy and a servant leadership orientation. They will empower talented people, navigate change with patience and inspire the College community around a shared sense of possibility. To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see "Procedure for Candidacy" at the end of this document.

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Role of the Inaugural Dean of the College of Design, Media and the Arts

Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean serves as the Chief Academic and Administrative Officer of the College of Design, Media and the Arts. The Dean is responsible for the College's overall leadership, administration, and strategic direction and for advancing excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, professional practice, and service. The Dean provides leadership for academic planning, program development, curriculum, assessment and accreditation, ensuring the continued quality and effectiveness of the College's academic programs.

Working through the College's school directors, Museum director, and other academic and administrative leaders, the Dean oversees undergraduate and graduate enrollment, student retention and success, and the recruitment, development, and retention of faculty and staff. The Dean recruits, supports, and evaluates school and unit leaders; promotes an environment in which faculty, staff, and students can thrive; and maintains open and productive communication throughout the College. The Dean works effectively within Kent State's system of shared governance and collective bargaining environment, ensuring that personnel decisions and academic processes are conducted thoughtfully and consistently.

The Dean is responsible for the effective stewardship of the College's financial, human, technological and physical resources. This includes developing and administering budgets; establishing priorities for staffing, facilities, equipment and technology; allocating resources transparently; and ensuring compliance with University policies and applicable requirements. The Dean advocates for the investments necessary to sustain academic quality, address the differing needs of the College's programs and support long-term success.

The Dean represents the College within the University and to external constituencies, working collaboratively with University leadership, fellow deans and colleagues across Kent State's Kent and Regional campuses. In partnership with the Division of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement and other leaders, the Dean cultivates philanthropic support, stewards relationships with alumni and donors, and develops productive partnerships with industry, cultural organizations, community partners, and other institutions.

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Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The inaugural Dean of the College of Design, Media and the Arts will have a rare opportunity to turn institutional evolution into an enduring academic enterprise. The Dean will build upon the strengths of the College's programs and unite faculty, staff, students and partners around a shared vision. The role calls for a visionary builder, a trusted relationship builder, a student-centered academic leader, and a compelling advocate who can lead effectively within a complex public research university. The Dean's work will center on five closely connected priorities.

Building a Bold Vision and Shared Identity for a New College

The creation of the College is an opportunity to imagine what becomes possible when design, media, storytelling, performance, scholarship, technology and creative practice are brought into closer relationship. The inaugural Dean will engage the College community in translating that potential into a compelling vision, identity and culture. Kent State seeks a builder, innovator, and designer in the broadest sense: a leader who will listen deeply, recognize existing excellence, and engage the community in determining what comes next. The Dean will build trust and shared purpose, empower strong school and program leadership and ensure that every school, discipline and unit can see itself in the College's future. The Dean will also create new connections among faculty and programs across the Kent and Regional campuses. With a servant leadership orientation and human-centered approach, the Dean will be accessible, visible and engaged; cultivate relationships; communicate regularly; and create meaningful opportunities for dialogue. Building unity will require transparency, patience, trust and sustained leadership.

Reimagining the Student Experience for a Changing Creative Economy

Kent State is both an R1 research university and an institution deeply committed to access and student opportunity. The Dean will champion these mutually reinforcing identities while keeping students at the center of the College's decisions and aspirations. Changing student demographics and rapidly evolving professions make this an important moment to clarify the College's value proposition, elevate program visibility and strengthen undergraduate and graduate recruitment, retention and student success. The Dean will embrace Kent State's commitment to first-generation students and work across the Kent and Regional campuses to ensure students have the opportunities, support and sense of belonging they need to thrive. The College's breadth creates fertile ground for curricular and experiential innovation. Students can collaborate across disciplines, contribute to interdisciplinary projects and engage with industry and community partners. Shared technologies, production resources and public-facing platforms can connect learning with professional practice. Guided by human-centered problem solving, experimentation and collaboration, the College can design the educational experiences and programs students will need next.

Expanding Resources and Investing for Growth

Many of the College's programs require specialized resources to sustain their quality and impact. The formation of the College creates an opportunity to bring greater attention and support to fundraising across its programs. Excellence depends upon talented faculty and staff, technology, equipment, facilities, production infrastructure and creative spaces. The Dean must understand differing operating models and measures of success, make a persuasive case for strategic investment and support excellence across the College. Strong relationships already exist with alumni, donors, industry, cultural organizations and community partners. The Dean can expand this network and translate the College's public reach and creative energy into philanthropy, grants, sponsorships, strategic partnerships and other revenue opportunities. Success will require cultivating new relationships while thoughtfully stewarding those already invested in Kent State and its programs. Kent State's financial model creates an opportunity to connect vision, investment, philanthropy and resource allocation. The Dean must advance an ambitious agenda by collaborating, building coalitions and making credible cases for support. The goal is to align and expand the resources that enable excellent programs to flourish and promising ideas to grow.

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Crossing Boundaries to Spark Interdisciplinary Innovation

At the heart of Kent State's vision is the opportunity to cross boundaries within disciplines, among schools and across the University. Within the College, the Dean can advance this work by connecting people, facilitating collaboration and investing in promising ideas. Interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary ambition must be accompanied by respect for disciplinary distinction. The College encompasses different professional cultures, pedagogies, scholarly traditions, creative practices, resource needs and measures of excellence. The Dean will pursue collaboration where it adds meaningful value while preserving the depth, rigor and identity of participating fields. Humanities-oriented and research-focused disciplines must be valued alongside practice-based, design, performance and professionally oriented programs. Existing collaborations, technologies, facilities and creative spaces provide a strong foundation for this work. Building on collaboration within the College, possibilities extend across the University and into the broader community: Architecture, Environmental Design, health-related disciplines, the sciences and humanities, industry and the broader community. Kent State seeks a future-oriented leader who will encourage thoughtful experimentation and explore academic programs, research, and creative initiatives, institutes, centers and partnerships that cross traditional boundaries. The College should be an environment where promising ideas can be tested, refined and developed.

Elevating the College's Visibility and External Impact

The College's programs create numerous points of connection between Kent State and the public. Through performances, exhibitions, museums and collections, fashion, design, student media, cultural programming, research, creative practice and external partnerships, the College can expand the University's public engagement and strengthen its visibility as a center of creativity and innovation. The Dean will be a visible champion for this work on campus, throughout Northeast Ohio and beyond. The Dean will strengthen relationships with industry, cultural and community organizations; deepen connections with surrounding communities; and connect the College to opportunities across Kent State. The Dean must also tell the College's story, articulating the value of design, media, the arts, cultural production, scholarship, and creative practice to prospective students, donors, alumni, University leaders, industry partners, policymakers and the public. This requires advocating for individual programs while presenting a coherent and ambitious case for the College as a whole. The opportunity is to build upon the established strengths and visibility of the College's programs and advance their regional, national and international distinction. The inaugural Dean will help establish what the College stands for: disciplinary excellence strengthened by collaboration; access joined with research distinction; creative practice in conversation with scholarship; and a belief that design, media, storytelling and the arts contribute meaningfully to how people understand, communicate and shape the world.

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Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The successful candidate will bring academic and creative credibility, a deep commitment to students and faculty, strong financial and external acumen and the relational intelligence to inspire a diverse community around a shared future.

Minimum Qualifications

- A doctoral or terminal degree from an accredited institution in one of the disciplines represented in the College, or highly distinguished performance within one or more of the disciplines represented in the College.
- Seven years of significant administrative experience in an academic setting, including experience as a faculty member and administrator at a level commensurate with a department chair or school director.
- An academic record sufficient to qualify for faculty appointment at senior rank.

Academic, Creative and Strategic Leadership

- Significant and progressively responsible academic leadership experience within a complex college, university or comparable academic environment.
- Academic, creative, or professional credibility in design, media, the arts, or a related discipline, together with an appreciation for the breadth of fields represented within the College.
- A strong record of teaching and scholarship, creative activity or professional practice, with the judgment to evaluate faculty work across different disciplines and forms of excellence, including reappointment, tenure and promotion.
- A broad understanding of excellence in teaching, research, humanities, and social science scholarship, creative practice, performance, design research and professional activity.
- Experience advancing faculty productivity through grants, partnerships, infrastructure, professional development and institutional investment.
- The ability to develop a compelling vision, translate it into strategic priorities, and guide organizational change with agility, patience and purpose.
- A future-oriented, resourceful and collaborative approach grounded in design thinking, human-centered problem solving, thoughtful experimentation and continuous learning.

Collaborative and Organizational Leadership

- A record of fostering interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary collaboration across academic, creative, technological, professional and organizational boundaries.
- The ability to create productive connections while respecting the identities, cultures, practices, resource needs and measures of excellence of individual disciplines.
- An understanding of the curricular, structural, workload, resource and incentive-related factors that shape interdisciplinary work within a research university.
- A collaborative and nonterritorial approach that empowers school and unit leaders, faculty, staff and students while advocating fairly for the College's programs and disciplines.
- A record of recruiting, developing, mentoring and retaining accomplished faculty, staff and academic leaders, with attention to workload, compensation, professional development, staffing and resource needs.
- An appreciation for the specialized professional, technical, and operational expertise required to support studios, performances, exhibitions, museums, media operations, technology and production activities.
- Experience using shared technologies, facilities, production capabilities and institutional resources to advance teaching, research, creative activity, student success and public engagement.
- The ability to work effectively within shared governance and a collective bargaining environment, build consensus and make timely decisions.

Student Success and Academic Innovation

- A deep commitment to keeping students at the center of academic, strategic and resource decisions.

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- An understanding of Kent State's commitment to both R1 excellence and access, including its service to first-generation students.
- Experience strengthening undergraduate and graduate recruitment, enrollment, retention, degree completion and student success.
- A record of supporting curricular innovation and educational pathways responsive to emerging technologies, evolving disciplines, student interests and professional needs.
- A commitment to experiential and applied learning through internships, industry and community engagement, interdisciplinary projects, global experiences and other career-connected opportunities.
- The ability to engage faculty, students and programs across both the Kent and Regional campuses.

Financial Leadership, Fundraising and Resource Development

- Strong financial acumen and experience with budgeting, financial planning, strategic resource allocation and stewardship within a complex academic enterprise.
- The ability to make thoughtful investment decisions across programs with different operating models, resource requirements and specialized needs.
- Experience establishing transparent resource-allocation processes, communicating financial decisions clearly and ensuring accountability.
- Success in fundraising and donor engagement, including major gifts, grants, endowments, sponsorships and other forms of philanthropic support.
- A resourceful and collaborative approach to revenue development through philanthropy, grants, corporate partnerships, continuing education, microcredentials and other opportunities aligned with the College's mission.

External Engagement and Institutional Acumen

- Experience developing relationships with alumni, cultural organizations, businesses, creative industries, health-related enterprises, foundations, agencies and community partners.
- The capacity to serve as a visible and persuasive advocate for design, media, the arts, scholarship and creative practice.
- An understanding of emerging developments across media, design, technology, the creative economy and related industries.
- A sophisticated understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing public higher education, particularly research universities navigating demographic, financial, political and policy change.
- The judgment and diplomacy to balance College priorities with broader institutional goals and build productive relationships with University leaders, faculty, trustees, policymakers and external stakeholders.
- The ability to advance academic integrity, scholarly inquiry, creative expression and student success within complex regulatory, legislative and governance environments.

Personal Qualities and Leadership Style

- A relational and servant-minded leader who approaches others with empathy, accessibility, respect and adaptability.
- An attentive listener and transparent communicator who provides clarity around priorities, decisions, institutional direction and difficult choices.
- A visible and approachable presence with genuine enthusiasm for the College's people, programs and disciplines.
- A collaborative leader who values expertise, delegates appropriately and maintains clear expectations and accountability.
- A skilled relationship builder who creates an environment in which faculty and staff feel heard, respected, supported and connected to shared purpose.
- A confident and diplomatic decision-maker with the ability to navigate conflict, explain difficult decisions and maintain productive relationships.

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About Kent State University

Founded in 1910, Kent State University is one of Ohio's leading public universities and a major educational, economic, and cultural resource for Northeast Ohio and beyond. The University serves more than 31,600 students across an eight-campus system, including more than 25,000 students at the Kent Campus. Approximately one in three Kent State students is the first in their family to attend college. The University also has a significant global presence, including academic sites around the world, and a worldwide alumni community of more than 285,000. Guided by a mission to transform lives through access and opportunity, inclusive communities, discovery, learning, and creative expression, Kent State combines a longstanding commitment to student success with growing national distinction.

Kent State offers more than 370 programs of study spanning the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, health sciences, nursing, architecture and design, communication and media, sciences, technology, and other professional and academic fields. More than 150 academic programs hold specialized professional accreditation. Across its academic portfolio, Kent State emphasizes engaged teaching, hands-on learning, research, creative activity, and professional preparation, graduating more than 8,000 students annually from campuses throughout Northeast Ohio.

Kent State holds the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education's prestigious R1 designation, placing it among the nation's most research-active universities. Research, scholarship, discovery, and creative activity are integral to the University's academic mission and extend across disciplines ranging from science and technology to health, design, communication, and the arts. Kent State also has a longstanding commitment to global education and engagement and received the 2022 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization for excellence in integrating international education throughout the University and its campuses.

Kent State is guided by *Flashes Together: Our Strategic Roadmap to a Distinctive Kent State*. The roadmap centers on six institutional priorities: Students First; An Inclusive Kent State; A Nationally Distinctive Kent State; Community Impact; Global Presence; and Organizational Sustainability. Together, these priorities advance student achievement, teaching and research excellence, innovation, community and global engagement, and responsible stewardship of University resources. Kent State is also implementing Transformation 2028, a major Academic Affairs initiative designed to strengthen collaboration, align academic structures and resources, and position the University to respond to the changing landscape of higher education.

Kent State has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1915. Institutional accreditation encompasses the University as a whole, including its academic programs and degree levels, governance and administration, mission, finances, resources, and both onsite and online educational delivery.

Kent State's academic core is located on more than 1,400 acres in Kent, Ohio, where approximately 130 buildings are complemented by landscaped gardens, public art, open green spaces, and an extensive network of walking and biking trails. Kent is a contemporary college town with a vibrant mix of restaurants, shops and galleries, surrounded by the natural beauty of the Cuyahoga Valley. The city was recently named Ohio's Best College Town by *MoneyLion*. There's much to discover in Kent, and visitors quickly understand why so many students fall in love with the community's welcoming atmosphere and ideal size. Kent State is also conveniently located near Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Youngstown, Columbus, and Pittsburgh, placing professional sports teams, Fortune 500 companies, theaters, museums, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the region's county park systems within a two-hour drive of campus.

To learn more about Kent State University, visit www.kent.edu.

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About the College of Design, Media and the Arts

The College of Design, Media and the Arts will launch in fall 2027, bringing together Kent State University's College of the Arts and three schools from the College of Communication and Information. The new College will unite seven nationally accredited schools: Art; Emerging Media and Technology; Fashion; Media and Journalism; Music; Theatre and Dance; and Visual Communication Design. It will also include the Kent State University Museum. Serving more than 3,000 undergraduate and approximately 250 graduate students, the College will create a distinctive interdisciplinary environment in which technology, storytelling, design, scholarship, artistic expression and professional practice increasingly intersect.

The programs entering the College routinely achieve among Kent State's highest retention and graduation outcomes and offer extensive opportunities for experiential and professional learning. Students learn in studios, newsrooms, laboratories, rehearsal and performance spaces, galleries, museums, production environments, internships and industry settings, translating classroom learning into professional experience. All students in the schools of Emerging Media and Technology, Media and Journalism, and Visual Communication Design complete internships prior to graduation. *IdeaBase* directly supports student professional development by connecting classes with external community partners and project-based learning opportunities across these three schools. TeleProductions, the University's full-service audio and video production operation, offers students paid positions working on ESPN+ and other live University broadcasts. Students also gain professional experience through nationally award-winning Kent State Student Media and its 12 independent media partners across television, radio, print, digital and social platforms, including the century-old *Kent Stater*.

Fashion students complete both an internship and an approved study-away experience before graduation. Kent State operates dedicated Fashion programs in New York City and Florence and offers additional opportunities in major international and domestic fashion markets. More than 90 percent of Fashion graduates report employment in a related field within a year, and more than 5,000 alumni work throughout the global fashion industry. Students in the visual and performing arts develop their craft through exhibitions, productions, concerts, recitals, guest artist engagements and professional training opportunities. Kent State's longstanding Kent Blossom partnership connects students with professional artists and The Cleveland Orchestra, while Porthouse Theatre provides professional theatre experience alongside working actors, directors, designers and technicians.

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The intellectual and creative strength of the College resides in faculty whose work spans traditional scholarship, design research, artistic practice, performance, technology, media studies, professional practice and interdisciplinary inquiry. Existing collaborations connect the arts with health and science through work addressing such areas as dance and Parkinson's disease, music and autism, and accessible design. Fashion faculty pursue research related to sustainability, circular supply chains, technology, materials, consumer behavior and the future of the global fashion industry. Research across media, design and emerging technology includes human-computer interaction, user experience, media and society, data and computational approaches, visual communication and digital technologies. The new College will create opportunities to deepen these connections and develop new collaborations across Kent State's broader R1 research enterprise.

The College's programs already maintain extensive connections throughout Northeast Ohio and beyond. Approximately 400 visual and performing arts events each year create regular points of engagement between Kent State and the region, while student media, client-based projects, professional productions, internships and study-away programs connect students directly with professional practice. The Kent State University Museum adds another significant dimension of teaching, research and public engagement. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Museum holds more than 30,000 objects spanning the mid-1700s to the present and uses its collection for exhibitions, classroom teaching, scholarship and public programming.

Faculty and students work across an extensive portfolio of specialized academic, creative, performance, production and exhibition spaces. These include the Center for the Visual Arts; Rockwell Hall, home to Fashion and the Kent State University Museum; the Center for the Performing Arts; the Band Educational Facility, which opened in spring 2025; and Franklin and Taylor halls, which support media, design, technology, student media and production activities. Faculty and students also engage with the University's Design Innovation Hub, an environment designed to support collaborative problem solving, prototyping and creative work.

The College's breadth is central to its promise. Its programs encompass makers, performers, designers, technologists, journalists, scholars, researchers, educators and creative professionals. The new structure will create greater opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate across these areas while preserving the disciplinary depth and professional standards that distinguish the individual schools. The College will also participate in a shared academic hub with the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, extending opportunities for interdisciplinary programs, research, creative activity, shared resources and innovation across design-related fields.

Academic Offerings

The schools that will comprise the College currently offer a broad portfolio of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs spanning the visual and performing arts, design, fashion, media, technology, scholarship, education and professional practice.

Several existing programs already demonstrate the interdisciplinary connections the new College is designed to foster. Fashion Media is shared by the schools of Fashion and Media and Journalism, while User Experience Design is shared by the schools of Visual Communication Design and Emerging Media and Technology. The Broadcast Engineering Technology minor is offered in partnership with the College of Aeronautics and Engineering.

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Undergraduate Degrees

School of Art

- Art Education, B.F.A.
- Art History, B.A.
- Studio Art, B.A.
- Studio Art, B.F.A.
- Minors in Accessories, Art History, Ceramics, Drawing, Game Design, Glass, Jewelry, Metals and Enameling, Modeling and Animation, Painting, Print Media and Photography, Sculpture and Expanded Media, and Textiles

School of Emerging Media and Technology

- Emerging Media and Technology, B.S.
- User Experience Design, B.S.
- Animation Game Design - B.S.
- Minors in Web Design and Development, Broadcast Engineering Technology and User Experience Design

School of Fashion

- Fashion Design, B.A.
- Fashion Design, B.F.A.
- Fashion Merchandising, B.S.
- Minor in Fashion Media

School of Media and Journalism

- Digital Media Production, B.S.
- Journalism, B.S.
- Public Relations, B.S.
- Minors in Digital Media Production, Fashion Media, Journalism, and Photojournalism

School of Music

- Music, B.M.
- Music Education, B.M.
- Music Technology, B.S.
- Minors in Jazz Studies, Music, Music Technology and World Music

School of Theatre and Dance

- Musical Theatre, B.F.A.
- Theatre Design, Technology and Production, B.F.A.
- Theatre Studies, B.A.
- Minor in Dance

School of Visual Communication Design

- Photography, B.F.A.
- User Experience Design, B.S.
- Visual Communication Design, B.A.

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- Visual Communication Design, B.F.A.

Graduate Degrees

Graduate study spans the creative arts, design, media, technology, scholarship and professional practice. Degree offerings include:

School of Art

- Art Education, M.A.
- Art History, M.A.
- Studio Art, M.A.
- Studio Art, M.F.A.

School of Emerging Media and Technology

- Emerging Media and Technology, M.S.

School of Fashion

- Fashion Industry Studies, M.F.I.S.

School of Media and Journalism

- Journalism Education, M.A.

School of Music

- Music Education, M.M.
- Music Education, Ph.D.
- Performance, M.M.

School of Theatre and Dance

- Acting, M.F.A.
- Theatre Design and Technology, M.F.A.

School of Visual Communication Design

- Visual Communication Design, M.A.
- Visual Communication Design, M.F.A.

The new College also offers an opportunity to strengthen graduate education, research and creative activity across its disciplines.

To learn more about the new College and its academic programs, visit www.kent.edu.

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Leadership

Melody Tankersley, Ph.D., Executive Vice President and Provost, Kent State University

Dr. Melody Tankersley serves as Executive Vice President and Provost of Kent State University, where she provides strategic leadership for the institution's academic mission and is the university's chief academic officer. In this role, she is responsible for advancing the university's academic vision, establishing and implementing academic priorities, and allocating resources to support student success, innovation, and institutional excellence. She oversees all academic programs across Kent State's ten colleges, one independent school, and eight-campus system. Prior to her appointment as Executive Vice President and Provost, Dr. Tankersley served as Dean of Graduate Studies and has held a faculty appointment as Professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services. A respected scholar in the field of child and adolescent social and behavioral development, her research focuses on helping parents and educators respond effectively to the emotional and developmental needs of children and youth. Throughout her career, she has secured more than $5 million in external funding and authored more than 100 books, book chapters, and scholarly articles. Dr. Tankersley's contributions to research and practice have earned national and international recognition, including the prestigious James M. Kauffman Publication Award, which honors scholarly work that advances knowledge and promotes exemplary practice. She earned her doctoral degree from the University of Virginia and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Kansas. Since joining Kent State University, she has served in a variety of faculty and administrative leadership roles, helping shape the institution's academic growth and success.

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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.

WittKieffer is assisting Kent State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **October 30, 2026.**

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's **candidate portal**.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Bree Liddell, Melody Rose, Ph.D., Bronwen Bares Pelaez, Ph.D., at KentStateDesignMediaArts@wittkieffer.com.

Statement of Commitment

As required by Ohio Revised Code section 3345.016, Kent State University will: educate students by means of free, open and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth; equip students with the opportunity to develop the intellectual skills they need to reach their own informed conclusions; not require, favor, disfavor or prohibit speech or lawful assembly; create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the autonomy of each member, supports individual capacities for growth and tolerates differences in opinion; and treat all faculty, staff and students as individuals, hold them to equal standards and provide them equality of opportunity with regard to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

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