Bentonville
Institute of Technology™

# Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing

## Leadership Profile

Fall 2026



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# Executive Summary

The Bentonville Institute of Technology seeks a creative, strategic, and collaborative founding Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing (VPSCM) to establish the institution's brand, build its reputation, and create an integrated strategic communications and marketing function from the ground up. As a founding executive, the VPSCM will serve as a key member of the leadership team and help shape the institution's trajectory during its formative years. Launching its first undergraduate cohort in Fall 2029, the Bentonville Institute of Technology (BIT), located in Bentonville, Arkansas, is a new private, nonprofit institution offering an intensive three-year, project-based STEM-focused degree across five eight-week terms per year, with concentrations in Mobility, Automation & Robotics, Health Systems, and Energy Systems.

This opportunity is grounded in an ambitious institutional vision to create a new model of post-secondary education — one that expands opportunity, strengthens the economy of Northwest Arkansas, and offers a nationally significant approach to 21st-century higher education. The Institute will combine rigorous STEM learning with business, entrepreneurship, design, communication, and human context to prepare students to become adaptable builders, innovators, and leaders.

The Institute's flexible, stackable academic model will include bachelor's degrees and certificate programs aligned with high-growth industries and emerging workforce needs. Students will learn by building — moving between classrooms, studios, laboratories, industry-sponsored projects, and a signature environment for prototyping, experimentation, and applied problem-solving. Strong partnerships with businesses, schools, healthcare organizations, entrepreneurs, and civic and philanthropic leaders will keep the curriculum relevant while creating meaningful pathways for experiential learning, employment, and lifelong education.

Reporting to Inaugural President David Mazyck, Ph.D., and serving as a member of the executive leadership team and as a trusted communications counselor to the President, the VPSCM will shape how BIT is understood by prospective students and families, philanthropic funders, higher-education peers, accreditors, and the Northwest Arkansas community. This role extends well beyond communications and campaign execution. As the institution's chief storyteller and steward of reputation, the VPSCM will translate BIT's distinctive educational model into a compelling institutional narrative, operationalize its brand identity, and build the visibility and credibility that support both the Fall 2029 launch and the institution's long-term success.

For the founding VPSCM, the mandate is both strategic and deeply consequential: to make the promise of a new institution tangible and persuasive before it has an established reputation or a graduating class. Central to this work is a dual-audience marketing strategy — inspiring prospective students and families to consider BIT while earning the confidence of the secondary school counselors and independent educational consultants whose recommendations influence their choices. In close partnership with the Vice President for Enrollment Management, this leader will align brand-building and marketing with recruitment priorities, with shared accountability for inquiry quality and funnel volume. The successful candidate will have the rare opportunity to shape how a new university earns trust, demonstrates value, and establishes itself as an additive presence within Northwest Arkansas's higher-education ecosystem.

The VPSCM will build an integrated communications and marketing function spanning institutional storytelling, student- and counselor-directed campaigns, executive and board communications, media relations, and the Institute's website and digital presence. In the early years, this means working with a small staff and personally developing messages, shaping content, launching campaigns, and directing specialized agency and freelance partners without losing narrative control. The VPSCM will also establish the practices and protocols needed to navigate sensitive announcements and reputational risk. Throughout BIT's pre-accreditation and pre–Title IV period, this leader must balance ambition with disciplined accuracy, ensuring that every public statement faithfully reflects the institution's milestones, enrollment status, and accreditation stage.


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BIT is an AI-native institution, with AI woven into how it teaches, operates, and serves students. The VPSCM will pioneer AI-enabled marketing, communications, and enrollment operations — applying it to content development, audience insight, campaign analysis, and engagement — and model fluent, responsible use in daily work. This leader will ensure that AI preserves BIT's authentic institutional voice and strengthens the trust it must earn. The successful candidate will be equally comfortable advising executive leadership on institutional strategy and rolling up their sleeves to execute it. During the Institute's formative years, this executive must thrive in an entrepreneurial environment where sound judgment, thoughtful experimentation, rapid iteration, and disciplined personal execution are essential.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

# Role of the Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing

The Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing will build and lead the institution's brand, narrative, and enrollment-marketing functions ahead of its first undergraduate cohort in Fall 2029. This role is the institution's chief storyteller and steward of reputation — responsible for how BIT is understood by prospective students and families, philanthropic funders, higher-education peers, accreditors, and the Northwest Arkansas community — and its primary enrollment marketing engine, developing and executing campaigns that reach prospective students directly and that build BIT's visibility and credibility within the secondary school counselor community whose recommendations shape where motivated students apply.

BIT receives professional-services support from Art + Wellness Enterprises (A+WE), which supports nonprofit organizations founded by Alice Walton in areas including campus management, communications, finance, human resources, information technology, and legal services. The VPSCM will collaborate with A+WE’s communications team while building BIT’s internal communications and marketing capabilities.

This is a strategy-first role with a defining dual-audience marketing mandate: building brand awareness and preference directly with prospective students through targeted campaigns, content, and digital channels — while simultaneously developing marketing programs that establish BIT's credibility with the high school college counselors who serve as institutional gatekeepers for that same student population. The successful candidate will serve as a trusted counselor to the President and leadership team on the institutional narrative and reputation, while directing specialized content creation, public and media relations, and digital and paid media execution through internal resources and/or agency and freelance partners.

# Key Responsibilities

## Institutional Narrative & Brand Stewardship

- Own BIT's master narrative and ensure it is told consistently and accurately across every audience and channel.
- Serve as trusted communications counsel to executive leadership, exercising sound judgment on what should be shared publicly at each stage of accreditation and enrollment.
- Steward the brand system and institutional identity that emerges from the initial naming and brand identity engagement, ensuring consistent application across all materials and partners.


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## Prospective Student Marketing

- Develop and execute student-directed enrollment marketing campaigns across digital, paid, social, and content channels — designed to build BIT's brand awareness and preference with prospective students at each stage of the enrollment decision journey.
- Build BIT's presence in the student-facing digital landscape through strategic content, social media, email, and CRM-driven communications, virtual events, and paid media.
- Partner with the VP for Enrollment Management to align marketing campaigns with recruitment strategy, pipeline priorities, and target market goals, with shared accountability for funnel volume and inquiry quality.
- Design and promote campus visit experiences, open houses, and virtual information sessions that attract high-intent prospective students and communicate BIT's academic model and culture.
- Develop student-facing marketing content — including digital experiences, video, and social storytelling — that makes a compelling case for a new institution to a skeptical audience encountering BIT for the first time.

## Secondary School & Counselor Marketing

- Develop and execute a counselor-directed marketing program, along with the VP for Enrollment Management, that builds BIT's visibility and credibility with high school college counselors, school counselors, and independent educational consultants (IECs) in target markets — positioning BIT as an institution counselors know, trust, and can confidently recommend.
- Design and produce counselor-facing marketing materials and communications — newsletters, counselor guides, institution profiles, and digital touchpoints — that give counselors the information they need to evaluate and refer BIT to appropriate students.
- Develop the marketing strategy and materials for counselor-oriented events and engagement opportunities (counselor fly-ins, webinars, counselor information sessions), in close partnership with the VP for Enrollment Management who leads relationship and outreach execution.
- Build and maintain BIT's counselor marketing database — tracking outreach coverage, communications cadence, and engagement by school, territory, and counselor type.
- Manage BIT's counselor-facing brand presence at relevant national and regional counselor conferences (e.g., NACAC, SACAC, IECA) — including conference materials, digital follow-up, and post-event counselor communications.

## Enrollment Marketing: Agency, CRM & Strategy Coordination

- Translate enrollment recruitment strategy — developed in partnership with the VP for Enrollment Management — into brand-aligned creative briefs, campaign plans, and content that serve both student-directed and counselor-directed marketing programs.
- Select, brief, and manage specialized enrollment marketing agency and freelance partners (creative, paid media, video, web) for campaign execution, ensuring consistent brand voice and institutional accuracy.
- Oversee CRM-driven enrollment communications from initial inquiry through enrollment — ensuring they reflect brand standards, compliance requirements, and recruitment priorities at each funnel stage.

## Executive & Board Communications

- In conjunction with A+WE communications, draft and shape executive communications, the narrative layer of board materials, talking points, and public remarks for the President and senior leadership.
- Prepare leadership for high-stakes moments — accreditation milestones, announcements, founder events — with message discipline.


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### Media, Community & External Relations

- Working with A+WE communications leadership, serve as the institution's primary media contact and manage press relationships as the institution becomes more publicly visible.
- Build and maintain relationships with community, regional, and higher-education stakeholders, reinforcing BIT's positioning as additive to the Northwest Arkansas ecosystem.
- Transition and institutionalize the external relations function currently provided by outside counsel.

### Digital Presence & Agency Management

- Build, mentor, and scale a high-performing communications and marketing team as the institution grows.
- Own the institutional website, social channels, and digital brand presence.
- Select, brief, and manage specialized agency and freelance partners (creative, paid media, PR, video, web) to ensure BIT receives expert execution without losing narrative control.
- Establish brand governance standards so all partners and departments apply the identity consistently.

### AI-Enabled Marketing & Communications

- Use AI tools to accelerate content development, audience insight, and campaign performance analysis, in line with institutional AI guidelines.
- Model responsible AI use in an AI-native institution and help identify where AI can strengthen — never replace — authentic institutional voice.

### Crisis & Reputation Management

- Partner with A+WE communications leadership in the institution's response to reputational risk, sensitive announcements, and crisis communications.
- Develop crisis-communications protocols in advance of the first cohort's arrival on campus.

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

### Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred.
- 8+ years of progressively responsible marketing/communications leadership, including experience serving as strategic counsel to executives or a board.
- Demonstrated experience directing external agencies and specialized vendors to execute a coherent brand strategy.
- Strong, disciplined writing and message-development skills, with experience navigating regulatory- or accreditation-sensitive communications.
- Familiarity with current AI tools and demonstrated use in your own work, with sound judgment about responsible use.
- Experience developing and executing marketing programs targeted at prospective students, families, or school-based professional audiences — or equivalent experience marketing to both a primary consumer audience and an intermediary gatekeeper simultaneously.


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### Preferred Qualifications

- Higher-education marketing/communications experience, ideally at a new, founding, or academically rigorous institution.
- Experience building a brand and narrative from a blank page rather than maintaining an existing one.
- Crisis-communications or reputation-management experience.
- Experience partnering with philanthropic founders or a nonprofit board on institutional messaging.
- Experience developing counselor-directed or advisor-directed marketing communications programs — counselor newsletters, counselor guides, conference presence strategy, event marketing materials.
- Familiarity with the secondary school counselor ecosystem: how counselors discover and evaluate institutions, what earns a recommendation, and how to build institutional credibility with a professional gatekeeper audience.
- Experience with enrollment marketing CRM platforms (Slate, Element451, or similar) and understanding of how marketing communications integrate with admissions workflows.

### Competencies & Attributes

- Strategic narrative thinker, equally credible with a President, a founder, and a prospective student and family.
- Entrepreneurial; comfortable building from a blank page.
- Data-fluent and operationally disciplined.
- Persuasive, mission-driven communicator and relationship builder.
- Fluent, responsible user of AI tools; eager to pioneer AI-enabled practices.
- Candid, collaborative, and comfortable with ambiguity in a founding environment.
- Comfortable making decisions with incomplete information or in ambiguous situations.
- Ability to iterate rapidly.
- Ability to recruit exceptional people before systems exist.
- Willingness to personally execute when staffing is small.
- Rigorous about accuracy; comfortable saying "not yet" on milestones and holding that line under pressure.
- Confident directing outside creative and media partners without losing message control.
- Collaborative partner to Enrollment Management.
- Skilled dual-audience marketer; can develop distinct campaigns that resonate with prospective students while simultaneously building institutional credibility with the counselors who influence those same students' decisions — without losing brand coherence.
- Understands the secondary school counselor ecosystem as a marketing audience: what information counselors need, how they evaluate new institutions, and how to design marketing programs that earn their awareness and confidence over time.
- Enrollment marketing analytics mindset; comfortable evaluating campaign performance, channel mix effectiveness, and counselor outreach coverage to optimize spend and effort.

## About Bentonville Institute of Technology

Bentonville Institute of Technology is a new STEM-focused institution being built in Bentonville, Arkansas. The first class is expected to enroll in Fall 2029, launching a university intentionally designed to serve approximately 1,500 residential students in a highly immersive and collaborative learning environment. Students will pursue a three-year bachelor's degree consisting of approximately 120 credits, delivered through eight-week terms that provide both intensity and flexibility. At the heart of the academic experience is a substantial common core, currently comprising approximately 99 credits, which ensures that all students develop a shared foundation before completing a 21-credit concentration.


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The university's educational model departs significantly from traditional higher education structures. There are no conventional academic departments, and the institution does not operate under a traditional tenure model. Instead, faculty work across disciplinary boundaries, reflecting a curriculum organized around systems, projects, studios, competencies, and real-world challenges rather than isolated academic silos. Small class sizes, generally capped at approximately 35 students, foster close collaboration, individualized mentorship, and active engagement.

Learning is grounded in the principle of learning by building. Industry experts, entrepreneurs, designers, engineers, health leaders, and community partners are embedded throughout the student experience, ensuring that learning remains connected to contemporary opportunities and challenges. The institution is simultaneously business-infused, STEM-centered, and human-centered, preparing students to apply their knowledge in meaningful and practical ways.

Throughout the curriculum, students integrate technical knowledge with communication, business, entrepreneurship, systems thinking, design, artificial intelligence, ethics, and leadership. The goal is to graduate individuals who are ready to create value immediately upon entering the workforce and who possess the adaptability needed to thrive amid decades of technological, industrial, and societal change.

Underlying every aspect of the model is a commitment to continuous evolution. The curriculum is designed to remain flexible and continuously responsive to changes in technology, industry, and society, ensuring that graduates are prepared not only for the world as it exists today, but also for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

## Mission

We reimagine higher education as an innovation engine — students learn by building real solutions and graduate ready to create technologies, ventures, and systems that shape the future.

## Vision

To become the defining model of a new kind of university — composing and conducting the talent, ideas, and partnerships needed to shape the future.

## Guiding Principles

### We Reimagine Higher Education

The university is STEM-based, business-infused, experiential, human-centered, and organized around real-world problems. Students learn through building, testing, reflecting, iterating, and applying.

### We Graduate Builders of Systems

Graduates are prepared to repeatedly launch ventures, drive innovation, improve organizations, and build resilient technologies and systems. They possess strong communication skills, a continuous learning mindset, and the ability to translate ideas into action.

### We Design for Speed and Relevance

The institution uses eight-week semesters, a three-year degree pathway, stackable credentials, flexible studios, embedded industry, no departments, and no traditional tenure model. The curriculum is designed to evolve as technology and workforce needs change.


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### We Create a Culture Where Excellence Transforms People and Systems

The institution seeks world-class performance. Excellence is demonstrated through what students build, improve, launch, communicate, and deliver. The goal is transformation of individuals, organizations, communities, and industries.

### We Deliver an Accessible, Lifetime Model of Learning

Students and professionals can enter, exit, return, and stack credentials throughout their lives. The university is designed around affordability, flexibility, relevance, and lifelong access to education.

## Curriculum Structure

The three-year curriculum comprises approximately 120 credits delivered through multiple eight-week terms each year. A shared common core of approximately 99 credits builds broad, integrated capability, while a 21-credit concentration allows each student to develop deeper expertise in a chosen systems domain. The sequence moves deliberately from foundational knowledge and exploration to increasingly complex applications, projects, and systems.

- **Year 1:** Foundations and exploration.
- **Year 2:** Integration, application, and concentration development.
- **Year 3:** Advanced systems, deployment, leadership, and capstone work.

Across all three years, interconnected learning strands reinforce the university's integrated model, combining quantitative and technical foundations with systems thinking, human-centered design, business and entrepreneurship, communication, ethics, leadership, prototyping, industry engagement, and concentration-specific study.

Within this framework, students progress from broad exploration and foundational skill building to deeper specialization, multidisciplinary projects, and industry collaboration, culminating in advanced concentration work, team leadership, deployed solutions, and a major capstone that demonstrates professional readiness. The eight-week term model extends this flexibility to lifelong learners, enabling students and working professionals to earn short credentials, build them toward larger awards, return as technologies evolve, and move between education and employment.

The university currently envisions four concentrations — Mobility Systems, Robotics and Autonomous Systems, Health Systems, and Energy Systems. Each is conceived as an interdisciplinary systems domain rather than a conventional academic major, enabling students to integrate technologies, human needs, organizations, infrastructure, and entrepreneurial thinking around complex real-world challenges.

## Key Aspects of a BIT Education

- **Integrated General Education.** General education is embedded throughout projects, studios, technical courses, community challenges, and systems analysis rather than taught as a separate component. Students strengthen their writing, communication, ethics, cultural and civic understanding, creativity, leadership, and ability to engage technical and nontechnical audiences.

- **Business and Entrepreneurship.** Students develop practical fluency in value creation, customer and market needs, financial literacy, operations, product development, intellectual property, venture formation, and organizational leadership. The aim is not to make every student a startup founder, but to ensure that every graduate understands how technical decisions create or destroy value.


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- **Experiential Learning.** Students learn by doing through studios, laboratories, makerspaces, fieldwork, internships, industry-sponsored projects, community challenges, client presentations, and the deployment of working systems. The approximately 125,000-square-foot Crucible will serve as the central environment for building, testing, fabrication, prototyping, collaboration, and reflection.

- **Industry Integration.** Industry engagement begins in the first year and deepens across the student experience through curriculum validation, course co-development, guest experts, mentorship, sponsored projects, applied research, internships, capstones, and employment pathways. Students progress from exposure and engagement to application, co-creation, deployment, and ultimately employment or venture launch.

## Artificial Intelligence

The Institute will be an AI-native institution, with artificial intelligence woven into how it teaches, operates, and serves students. Across the academic experience, AI will function as a tool for analysis, design, coding, simulation, research, communication, decision support, and productivity, as well as a core component of intelligent products and systems. Institute faculty, staff, and students will be expected to pioneer and model the fluent, responsible use of AI in daily work.

Students will learn not only to use and build with AI, but also to evaluate its outputs, integrate it thoughtfully into systems, and design effective human-AI workflows. Through prototypes developed with large language models and other AI tools, they will examine data quality, bias, cybersecurity, privacy, and broader ethical implications, while learning to disclose where AI was used and explain how its outputs were verified. In this way, AI will be treated both as a powerful partner in learning and innovation and as a technology that requires sound judgment, transparency, and accountability.

## Faculty Model

The university is intended to operate without traditional departments or a traditional tenure structure. Faculty will be organized around student outcomes, systems, studios, and institutional priorities; teach across disciplinary boundaries; collaboratively build courses; engage with industry; mentor projects; continuously revise the curriculum; and integrate technical learning with design, communication, entrepreneurship, and artificial intelligence.

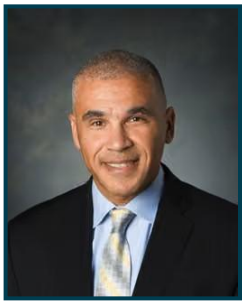
## Partnerships and Ecosystem

Strong, mutually beneficial partnerships will be essential to the Institute's success and to its goal of developing a robust ecosystem that connects learning, innovation, industry, and community impact. The university’s ecosystem could include potential partnerships and strategic alignment with Bentonville-area companies and entrepreneurs; the Alice Walton School of Medicine; the Heartland Whole Health Institute; the AWSOM Health Care Campus; K–12 schools, community colleges, and universities; healthcare systems; mobility, energy, robotics, automation, advanced manufacturing, logistics, and supply-chain organizations; philanthropic organizations and civic leaders; and startup and venture networks.


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## Leadership

### David Mazyck, Ph.D.



As the founding president of the Bentonville Institute of Technology™, Dr. Mazyck guides the development of this new organization founded by members of the Walton family and created to prepare students to succeed in an era shaped by AI and rapid technological change.

Dr. Mazyck holds multiple degrees from Penn State, culminating in a doctorate in Environmental Engineering. His career spans more than two decades across leading public research universities, entrepreneurial ventures, and large-scale institutional initiatives, following his service in the United States Army.

At Penn State, Dr. Mazyck led one of the nation's largest industry-sponsored experiential learning programs, engaging thousands of students annually. He also provided executive leadership and oversight for engineering programs across Penn State's statewide campus network. He served as a Special Advisor to the University on strategic planning, capital fundraising, budget reform, and research commercialization. In 2026, he was honored with the Penn State Fox Graduate School Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing alumni who have achieved exceptional professional success and demonstrated an enduring commitment to the University and the Penn State Alumni Association.

Previously, Dr. Mazyck served as a Professor of Environmental Engineering Sciences at the University of Florida, where he held numerous academic and administrative leadership positions during a distinguished 22-year tenure. As Director of Electronic Delivery of Gator Engineering (EDGE), he launched and expanded online master's and professional education programs, including innovative micro-credential initiatives focused on artificial intelligence and workforce upskilling. His leadership helped establish nationally recognized models for flexible, industry-aligned STEM education.

In addition to his academic leadership, Dr. Mazyck is an accomplished entrepreneur who has founded and led multiple technology and manufacturing enterprises. Frequently serving as a founding CEO, he guided companies from inception through growth into sustainable operations, while mentoring students into executive and leadership roles. His ventures have included pioneering manufacturing facilities designed to reduce carbon footprints while delivering advanced air and water purification solutions.


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# Bentonville, Arkansas

Bentonville is integral to the vision for BIT. Located in the heart of the Ozarks, the city and the wider Northwest Arkansas region bring together entrepreneurship, technology, retail, logistics, supply chain, mobility, health innovation, and advanced business systems in an unusually concentrated and dynamic environment. Home to Walmart's global headquarters and near other industry leaders such as Tyson Foods and J.B. Hunt, the region offers direct access to companies, founders, healthcare organizations, designers, educators, and civic leaders who can help connect learning to consequential real-world challenges. Northwest Arkansas National Airport offers over 50 flights daily to over 20 cities across the country.

Northwest Arkansas is among the fastest-growing regions in the country. With nearly 650k residents, the region is expected to grow to over 1 million residents by 2050.

The region's strong corporate, philanthropic, educational, and community assets make Bentonville an ideal setting for building a new institution without legacy academic constraints. Students will be able to engage directly with a growing startup culture and with organizations across BIT's areas of focus. At the same time, the Institute contributes talent, ideas, and innovation to Arkansas and beyond. Bentonville and Arkansas are not simply the location for BIT; they are strategic partners and beneficiaries in its ambition to graduate builders of intelligent systems for Arkansas and the world.



For the new VPSCM, Bentonville also offers an appealing quality of life. The rapidly growing city combines small-town accessibility with big-city amenities, including highly regarded public and private schools, a vibrant dining scene, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and a wide range of cultural and recreational opportunities. With the Ozark Mountains nearby and more than 500 miles of biking trails across Northwest Arkansas, the region provides an exceptional setting in which to live, build community, and help shape a nationally significant institution from its earliest days.


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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 Bentonville Institute of Technology in this search. Credential review will begin immediately, and the position will remain open until an appointment is made.

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

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Ashlee Musser, Natalie Song, and Suzanne Teer

**BIT-VPComms@WittKieffer.com**

*Bentonville Institute of Technology is an equal opportunity employer committed to building and maintaining a workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment of any kind. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, veteran status, or any other status protected by the laws or regulations in the locations where we operate.*

*All offers of employment are contingent on successful completion (where permitted by state law) of a confidentiality agreement and background check. In addition, the employee must provide proper identification verifying eligibility to work in the United States.*


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