KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Chair, Mechanical Engineering

Leadership Profile

Summer 2026

WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Kansas (KU) School of Engineering is seeking an exceptional leader to serve as Chairperson and Professor of the Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME), with an anticipated start date of January, 2027. This is a unique opportunity to guide a dynamic and expanding department that is housed in newly renovated, state-of-the-art laboratory facilities.

The University of Kansas School of Engineering was founded in 1891 and is the oldest engineering school in the state. An ABET-accredited public engineering school, KU Engineering is located on the beautiful and historic Mt. Oread-Lawrence campus of the University of Kansas (KU), the state's flagship university, an R-1 institution and a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). The KU School of Engineering has long emphasized interdisciplinary research. Engineers and computer scientists from different disciplines work together to provide innovative solutions to global challenges. Numerous departments and programs are ranked among the best in the world.

The ME Department currently comprises 17 tenured/tenure-track faculty and four teaching professors, serving approximately 550 undergraduate and 50 graduate students. The department offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees and has a strong tradition of impactful research and student success. Located near the Kansas City metropolitan area—home to the fourth largest concentration of architectural, engineering, and construction firms in the country—the department enjoys rich opportunities for corporate engagement and partnerships.

Research strengths within the department include biomedical engineering, energy storage and transitions, and sustainable engineering. Faculty collaborate extensively across KU's Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Arts & Sciences, and contribute to an active innovation ecosystem in biomedical- and climate-tech, supporting spin-offs and startups.

As the chief academic and administrative officer of the department, the Chairperson will report to the Dean of Engineering and provide strategic leadership in teaching, research, and service. Responsibilities include advocating for faculty, staff, and students; overseeing academic programs and curriculum development; supporting high-impact research; mentoring faculty; managing budgets and resources; planning facilities and space; engaging with alumni, industry, and donors; and coordinating accreditation and continuous improvement efforts.

The appointment is for a five-year term and is renewable upon review. Compensation includes a base salary, an administrative supplement, and a partial summer salary.

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 Chair, Mechanical Engineering

Chairperson Responsibilities (60% Administrative Appointment)

The Chairperson serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the Mechanical Engineering Department, reporting directly to the Dean of Engineering. This leadership role encompasses strategic planning, academic oversight, and operational management. The Chair is expected to foster excellence in teaching, research, and service, while advocating for faculty, staff, and students. The Chair promotes a collaborative and inclusive departmental culture, supports high-impact research, and ensures effective communication among all stakeholders.

Key responsibilities include overseeing academic programs, managing departmental resources and facilities, and guiding faculty development and evaluation. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that financial resources are used efficiently to advance departmental priorities and will have a key role in securing additional resources through philanthropy and strategic partnerships. The Chair represents the department at various institutional and external levels, coordinates accreditation and assessment efforts, and cultivates relationships with alumni, industry, and donors. A strong emphasis is placed on student access and success, continuous improvement, and external engagement.

Tenured Faculty Responsibilities (40%)

In addition to administrative duties, the Chairperson maintains an active research program and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses within the department. This dual role ensures continued engagement with the academic mission and contributes to the department's scholarly output and instructional excellence. The precise distribution of effort is negotiable with a typical assignment of 15% teaching and 25% research.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

In addition, the Chair of Mechanical Engineering will be expected to:

Lead and unify the department around a cohesive vision for the future

As the visionary leader for the ME department, the Chair will engage faculty, staff, students, alumni, and industry partners in a collaborative dialogue and process, focusing on creating a clear vision, identifying areas for potential growth, and setting priorities to guide the department's future. That vision should align with both the School of Engineering and the broader institution's strategic plan and key priorities. The Chair must be committed to a vision of ME as a truly multidisciplinary enterprise with an emphasis on serving the department as a whole. They must understand where industry is going in the broadest sense as well as in the State of Kansas, and ensure the department is aligned with that future.

The vision and strategic plan for the department should also impact the culture and promote one that is cohesive, collegial, and focused on working collectively toward a set of common goals. The department's faculty, staff, and students value this culture and seek a department Chair who will cultivate it, taking an active interest in the lives of the members of the department community and setting a tone of support for each other's success, optimism about the future, and a desire to advance mutual goals for the benefit of faculty, staff, and students.

Inspire outstanding scholarship and research

The next department Chair will nurture a collegial environment that encourages and supports world-class scholarship. They will work to create an intellectual and collaborative environment that identifies and pursues emerging areas of scholarship that excite both faculty and students, promotes and fosters interdisciplinary pursuits, and supports and enhances standards of scholarly excellence. The next Chair will work with their colleagues within the department to advance research in core areas. This leader will also foster tighter links with other departments in the school and across campus and help connect scientists and engineers from different disciplines to encourage transformational research through collaborations.

Recruit, develop, and retain faculty and staff

The department is poised for growth, and as a result, the new department Chair must make the recruitment, development, and retention of outstanding faculty a high priority. The Chair must also ensure ample opportunities for mentorship and support as faculty prepare for tenure and navigate the early post-tenure years, as well as for non-tenure track faculty who have a promotion path. Support and investment in the department's mid-career faculty is critical. Indeed, support of all faculty throughout the course of their careers is a must.

The department also benefits from a dedicated team of eight staff members who support the needs of both faculty and students. The next department Chair should be a strong leader for the staff in the department, ensuring they also benefit from professional development opportunities and engagement within the department.

Advocate for the department to enhance its visibility and brand, increasing enrollment, and enhancing student success

The next Department Chair will be a confident and compelling advocate who will work to enhance the department's visibility internally and externally to drive enrollment and additional support for the department. They will articulate the department's distinctions and strengths and seek avenues to promote the quality and impact of the faculty, students, staff, and disciplines. They will also work with a dedicated Advisory Board and should leverage the expertise of the group to further enhance the mission of the department.

Working in close collaboration with School leadership, faculty, and staff, the Chair will ensure that the department is an environment where students can succeed and thrive. The new leader should ensure that student success, retention, and graduation efforts continue to be a key priority and focus within the department. They must be a student-centered leader who values the voices of both undergraduate and graduate students and who understands their unique and distinctive needs.

The successful candidate will be a strong supporter of student organizations, undergraduate research, and Capstone Senior Design projects.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The University of Kansas, School of Engineering, seeks a Chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering who has the leadership and managerial capacity to develop and implement a strategic vision for the department that fosters innovation and growth in both research and education. The successful candidate will bring the following background, skills, and qualities.

- A doctorate in Mechanical Engineering or a closely related discipline and a distinguished record of research, teaching, and service that merits appointment at the tenured professor level;
- Proven leadership and management skills; strong interpersonal and communication abilities; excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal skills.
- A commitment to innovation, entrepreneurship, and student success, and a dedication to fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment;
- Ability to serve as an academic leader and team builder, fostering research and educational collaborations among faculty, alumni, and affiliated units;
- Ability to create, communicate, and implement, in collaboration with department faculty, a vision for the department's future; the ability to inspire key constituencies in support of the department's priorities;
- Enthusiasm for forging new opportunities for industry partnerships, sponsored research, and alumni engagement and philanthropic support;
- A desire to engage and mentor faculty, staff, and students; and to work effectively across the school, campus, and with external groups; and
- Capacity to lead diverse teams and manage complex projects.

Department of Mechanical Engineering

History

The degree program in Mechanical Engineering was established in 1899, with the first "factory engineering" course taught the following year. Oil field engineering and oil transportation classes were first offered in 1924, with aeronautical engineering courses added in 1928. The 1960's saw two mergers of departments, the first being the combination of Mechanical Drawing and Mechanical Engineering in 1964, and the second being that of Metallurgy and Materials Engineering with Mechanical Engineering in 1968. The 1990's saw bioengineering as a growing focus of the Department.

The homes of the Department have been Marvin Hall (1910 - 1975) and Learned Hall (1975 - present). Jed R. Yale received the first B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1900. The first M.S. degree was awarded to Roy Porterfield in 1913, and the first Ph.D. degree was granted to James H. Turner in 1983.

The M.E. Program was initially accredited in 1937 and is currently accredited by the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET). The undergraduate curriculum has both undergone considerable change and demonstrated remarkable resilience through the years. Required courses in 1899 included Scientific French, Scientific German, and Roofs & Bridges; courses that have long since disappeared from the curriculum. However, the 1899 curriculum included Differential Equations, Thermodynamics, Fluid Mechanics, and Strength of Materials; courses that form the underpinning of the practice of mechanical engineering today and will remain cornerstones of the curriculum for the foreseeable future.

Mission

The Department's mission is to provide students with a high-quality education, to generate and apply knowledge, and to serve both society and the engineering profession. The program educational objectives, in support of the mission, are that graduates will be:

Technically skilled in the application of the principles of mechanical engineering and demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively and in teams.

Successful in their chosen career paths, demonstrating the attitudes, abilities, and personal leadership to effectively adapt to our changing global society while maintaining and promoting the highest engineering, professional, and ethical standards

Actively engaged in continuous learning and professional growth throughout their careers while productively contributing to their organizations and communities.

Faculty and Staff Breakdown

- 10 Full professors
- 6 Associate professors
- 2 Assistant professors
- 3 Professors/associate professors of practice
- 1 teaching professor
- 1 Adjunct professors
- 8 Staff members

Degree Programs

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (BSME):

The Department of Mechanical Engineering strives to produce engineers knowledgeable in the latest advances of their field AND in the world around them.

Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering - Thesis

A minimum of 30 credit hours are required in total for the MS degree. To maintain Good Academic Standing, a GPA of 3.0 must be maintained at all times and progress must be made in research once a research advisor is chosen. The student, upon completion of the written thesis, takes a final oral examination that may cover both course work and the thesis topic.

Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering - Project

A minimum of 30 credit hours are required in total for the MS degree. To maintain Good Academic Standing, a GPA of 3.0 must be maintained at all times and progress must be made in research once a research advisor is chosen. The student, upon completion of coursework, presents the final project in an oral examination and written report.

Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering:

A minimum of three full academic years, or the equivalent, beyond the baccalaureate degree must be spent in graduate study at the University of Kansas to complete requirements for the Ph.D. degree. A dissertation is required of each doctoral candidate. The Ph.D. dissertation presents the results of the student's research investigation. It is expected to make an original contribution to technical knowledge of sufficient quality to merit publication(s) in refereed journals. A candidate for a doctoral degree must satisfy all Graduate School requirements for the degree and must submit to the major professor a paper or papers, based on the dissertation, suitable for publication in a refereed journal.

MBA and undergraduate engineering bridge program

The KU MBA and undergraduate engineering bridge program allows students to begin taking MBA courses in their senior year of the engineering undergraduate program. Bridge program students can earn a Bachelor of Science from the School of Engineering and an MBA from the School of Business in five years.

Research

Mechanical Engineering at KU is recognized for research in applied mechanics, advanced materials, biomaterials, biomechanics, emerging transportation technologies, control dynamics, fluid dynamics, heat transfer, and nano-materials. Faculty collaborate extensively across KU's Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Arts & Sciences, and contribute to an active innovation ecosystem in bio- and climate-tech, supporting spin-offs and startups.

Institute for Bioengineering Research (IBER)

The Institute for Bioengineering Research provides a research, teaching and scholarly environment that promotes creativity while catalyzing the collaborations that will solve problems impacting societal health and well-being. IBER blends team-oriented science with independent-investigator efforts to foster fundamental discoveries and technological developments that reach beyond the capacity of an individual researcher.

Hill Engineering Research & Development Center

The Hill Engineering Research & Development Center on KU's West Campus is home to cutting-edge interdisciplinary research focused on the challenges of a sustainable approach to automobiles and energy infrastructure. Students approach projects related to education, energy, environment, economics, and ethics with a lens for people, the planet, and prosperity.

Cooperative Educational Program

The KU School of Engineering Cooperative Education Program is a three-way partnership among students, employers, and the University. This is due to the fact that the primary function of the program is educational. Cooperative education provides practical experience that matches a student's KU studies. Students spend one or more separate time periods of approximately six months working for their employer while taking a break from formal ME Curriculum studies, taking one hour of Co-op (ENGR 300) per semester on break. This break is usually for a regular semester (fall or spring) plus a summer semester.

During the Co-op break from taking courses, the company provides industrial experience and professional pay consistent with the student's academic background; and a Co-op advisor at KU also supervises that experience. Should the company and student agree to continue employment arrangements, the job may extend into additional Co-op periods and/or permanent employment after graduation.

The Co-op program is very flexible and can be tailored to meet a student's needs, the industrial assignments and the student's goals. Due to Co-op programs occurring during fall and/or spring semesters, graduation is delayed at least a commensurate amount of time. Fall-only or spring-only course offerings in the ME Curriculum may cause longer delays.

Facilities

KU Mechanical Engineering is home to state-of-the-art educational and research facilities located in Learned Hall, as well as in two new engineering buildings (LEEP2 and West Campus) that were completed in 2012 and 2015. Educational facilities include multimedia classrooms (Learned and LEEP2), a dedicated computer laboratory (Learned), an instrumentation laboratory (LEEP2), and an extensive machine shop (Learned). Undergraduate student projects are conducted in new facilities on West Campus in the West Campus Student Projects Space and in the Hill Engineering Research and Development Center. Faculty members conduct research in laboratories that house a broad range of advanced instrumentation.

Learn more about facilities and take a tour of LEEP2 here.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board consists of individuals of stature from business, industry, government, and academia who provide guidance and assistance for the benefit of the Department. Several board members are graduates of KU-ME who are committed to the well-being of the Department, while others serve because of a strong interest in the continued success of the Department and our students. The Board convenes twice each year to review programs and initiatives, and to make recommendations that help the Department maintain the quality and relevance of our education and research activities.

The mission of the Mechanical Engineering Advisory Board is to:

- Provide an organized, consistent means for interaction between the Department and the professional, industrial, and business communities.
- Offer advice on issues important to the Department.
- Support and promote the Department through personal, corporate, and other means.
- Cultivate excellence in KU ME graduates at all levels, and provide employment for our graduates when feasible.

School of Engineering

The first engineering degree granted in the entire state of Kansas was a degree in civil engineering awarded in 1873 to KU student Murray Harris. Harris was one of four members of the first graduating class at KU. Although KU already had an engineering degree program, the School of Engineering wasn't established until 1891, when the Kansas Board of Regents said "aye" and KU became home to the first school of engineering in Kansas.

In 1995, the university's computer science degree programs were moved from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences into the School of Engineering. The change reflected the increasingly important link between programming development and hardware. The shift also strengthened the continually growing association between all engineering disciplines and computing. Newer programs in interdisciplinary computing allow students to harness the power of computers to advance discovery in a field of science, or in economics, geography, or journalism. In 2001, Architectural Engineering was moved from the School of Architecture and Urban Design to Civil and Environmental Engineering, to form the Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering department. These reorganizations have proven useful to students and strengthened research innovation in engineering.

Today, the emphasis in the KU School of Engineering is on interdisciplinary research. Engineers and computer scientists from different disciplines work together to provide innovative solutions to challenges around the world. KU's research centers focus on interdisciplinary efforts to find the best solutions for complex world challenges. These centers and many other laboratories provide KU engineering and computing students, faculty, and staff with outstanding opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Mission

The mission at the University of Kansas School of Engineering is to give the students a high-quality educational experience; to generate and apply knowledge through research, development, and scholarly activity; and to serve society, the state of Kansas, and the engineering and computer science professions.

The primary objective is to produce graduates with the technical competence to apply knowledge of mathematics, science and engineering; to identify, formulate and solve engineering problems; to design and conduct experiments, including the analysis and interpretation of data; to design a system, component or process to meet desired needs; and to use techniques, skills and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice.

The goals of the faculty, staff, and administration are to:

- Serve KU Engineering students through a balanced undergraduate and graduate education program and strive to help each of them achieve their full potential.
- Serve the state, region, and nation through research conducted by individuals and groups of faculty researchers. Group efforts are particularly encouraged.
- Serve the state, region, and nation through professional activities, short courses, and other contributions.
- Produce engineers and computer scientists who meet the current and future needs of industry.

Faculty and Staff

The total faculty of the School is 120, composed of tenure and tenure-track faculty, teaching and research faculty. The average undergraduate student to faculty ratio is 20:1. There are 48 full-time staff associated with academic program administration and another 33 research staff, including post-doctoral scholars.

Academic Programs

The School of Engineering offers 11 undergraduate degrees, two undergraduate certificates, 10 graduate certificates, 17 master's degrees, and 10 doctoral degrees in the following departments and programs:

- Aerospace Engineering
- Bioengineering
- Chemical & Petroleum Engineering
- Civil, Environmental & Architectural Engineering
- Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Engineering Physics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Professional Education

The University also offers undergraduate and graduate degrees for working professionals on the KU Edwards Campus in the Kansas City Metro, as well as opportunities for online degrees and continuing education and professional development through Jayhawk Global. All undergraduate programs are accredited by ABET, and the School of Engineering faculty actively participate in programs to improve student engagement and learning and implement innovative pedagogy through KU's Center for Teaching Excellence.

Research

KU Engineering continues to build its legacy with world-class research. The School of Engineering focuses on integrating research and innovation to address key challenges on a global scale. Research at KU Engineering stretches across traditional boundaries, bridging multiple disciplines and building partnerships across the public and private sectors to find global solutions to grand challenges. KU is one of 71 institutions that are members of the prestigious Association of American Universities.

Through strategic investments, support from the State of Kansas and the federal government, as well as donor support, the School of Engineering has been able to develop and maintain a wide variety of cutting-edge research centers and laboratories. Many structures that are part of the engineering complex are relatively new additions and include modern, flexible research facilities. The involvement of students in research activities, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, is a critical component of KU's research innovation. Many students are hired by faculty who direct research laboratories or work in corporations at KU Innovation Park.

The School's research expenditures have more than doubled in the past five years and for FY25 exceeded $36M; 79% federal/national, 9% industry, 6% State, and 6% private non-profit. The faculty in the School of Engineering are distinguished by their inclusion in the following societies: National Academy of Engineering, National Academy of Inventors, Turkish National Academy of Sciences, and European Academy of Science, with many others designated as fellows of international societies.

In 2024, KU Engineering was awarded an NSF Engineering Research Center: Environmentally Applied Refrigerant Technology Hub (EARTH). This $26M project was founded on four ERC pillars: convergent research, impact and belonging, engineering workforce development, and innovation ecosystem, which will impact the engineering and scientific communities, the HVACR industry, and society. More information is available at: erc-earth.ku.edu/.

Students

In Fall 2024, there were 2,836 students pursuing undergraduate degrees and 608 students pursuing advanced degrees, including PhDs, in the School of Engineering. Two-thirds of the School's undergraduates are Kansas residents with the balance coming from out-of-state. These students come to the School with outstanding high-school preparation and have an average incoming ACT score of between 29 and 30. The School is home to the Self-Engineering Leadership Fellows (SELF) Program, a prestigious leadership program exclusively for undergraduate engineering and computing science students. The University also hosts the distinctive Madison A. and Lila Self Graduate Fellowship for doctoral students in business, science, technology, engineering, and biomedical fields. The program provides generous funding and leadership development for top minds in key disciplines, including doctoral programs in the School of Engineering.

KU engineering and computing students have robust access to a wide variety of co-curricular activities through both the University, such as undergraduate research experiences and service learning, and the School through more than 50 student organizations.

With the support of a comprehensive career services team embedded within the School of Engineering, students enjoy a rich variety of employment opportunities. The majority of students complete internships and the placement rate of graduates has consistently exceeded 95 percent.

Alumni Engagement

The School of Engineering maintains contact with alumni through advisory boards, awards, and events. The School and departments maintain advisory boards composed of recent and more established alumni, and industry experts. These boards assist faculty in keeping current in industry and academic research and programming. Members of these boards also facilitate philanthropy aligned with School of Engineering needs and vision.

About The University of Kansas

Overview

The University of Kansas is the state's flagship university, an R-1 institution and a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). KU consistently earns high rankings for academics and recognition as a premier research university.

KU pushes the boundaries of knowledge, transforms the academic experience, and creates solutions through innovative research and discovery. The Jayhawk community extends around the globe, united by more than 150 years of tradition and by a commitment to creating a better world. The University offers teaching and research that draw upon and contribute to the most advanced developments in the world.

KU has nine graduate programs in the top 10 and 51 programs in the top 50 among public universities in the 2024 rankings from U.S. News & World Report. KU offers 5,000 course sections, 400 degree and certificate programs, and more than 200 fields of study.

Enrollment at KU Lawrence-Edwards was 26,887 students in fall 2024, with an additional 3,883 students enrolled at the KU Medical Center for a university total enrollment of 30,770 students, an all-time high for KU. KU students are from all 50 states and 112 countries. The University had 1,877 international students, comprising 7.2% of the student body at KU Lawrence-Edwards and 4.5% of students at KU Medical Center. In fall 2022, the University had 2,786 faculty members and 10,689 employees across all campuses. The student-to-faculty ratio is 17 to 1. KU's FY2024 operating budget for KU Lawrence-Edwards was $735 million. As of June 30, 2024, KU's Endowment stood at $2.8 billion.

The University provides more than $72 million in scholarships and grants to students each year. KU students have won more Rhodes Scholarships, and more federally sponsored research is conducted at KU than at all other Kansas universities, combined.

In addition to KU's research-residential campus located on beautiful Mount Oread in Lawrence, the University has eight other locations across Kansas: Medical Center campus in Kansas City; Edwards Campus in Overland Park; Wichita Campus (School of Medicine and School of Pharmacy); Salina Campus (School of Medicine); Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center near Hutchinson; Juniper Gardens Children's Project in Kansas City; Life Span Institute in Parsons and a collaborative location with the Army Command General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth.

Strategic Plan

Jayhawks Rising is the KU Lawrence and Edwards strategic plan, the result of a highly engaging, multi-year planning process involving many groups and individuals.

Jayhawks Rising is organized around three institutional priorities, five campus goals, and sixteen supporting objectives that are designed to create a clear and ambitious direction to fulfill our mission as a university.

The three mission-based institutional priorities for Jayhawks Rising are

- Research & Discovery
- Healthy & Vibrant Communities
- Student Success

Education

The University of Kansas is committed to offering the highest quality undergraduate, professional, and advanced graduate programs comparable to the best available in the nation. KU fulfills its mission through faculty, academic, and research programs of international distinction; outstanding libraries; research labs; and engaging museums. These resources enrich the undergraduate experience and are essential for graduate-level education and world-class research.

Research

KU attains high levels of research productivity and engages in more than $400 million of externally funded research annually. KU recognizes that faculty are part of a network of scholars who shape and teach a discipline. Research and instruction, as practiced at KU, are mutually reinforcing, with scholarly inquiry underlying and informing the educational experience at undergraduate, professional, and graduate levels.

Service

The University serves Kansas, the nation, and the world through research and discovery, education, and the preservation and dissemination of knowledge. KU provides service to the state of Kansas through its state and federally funded research centers, academic programs, workforce development, arts facilities, and public programs that provide cultural enrichment opportunities. KU Lawernce also is home to KU Innovation Park, a public-private partnership to grow opportunities in technology and bioscience and bring them to market by leveraging KU talent and innovation.

Shared Governance

KU has a shared governance system with branches representing faculty, staff, and students. Representation from each senate forms the University Senate that focuses on rules, regulations, and policies that impact these groups.

International Engagement

KU is dedicated to preparing students for lives of learning and the challenges citizens will encounter in a diverse and increasingly complex global community. The University excels in global engagement, teaching more than 40 languages. KU faculty and students have access to more than 150 programs of international study and cooperative research in more than 50 countries. About 29% of undergraduate students study abroad during their KU careers.

Jayhawk Global

Jayhawk Global was launched in 2022 as the umbrella for all KU's online course offerings, ranging from traditional semester-long online classes to shorter, non-credit-bearing and workforce development programs for professionals. The University is expected to grow Jayhawk Global significantly as an element of its overarching strategy to increase enrollment and impact.

Jayhawk Spirit

At KU, scholarship and discovery nourish minds while athletics and co-curricular activities uplift spirits. Basketball may have been born in Springfield, Massachusetts, but the game came of age in Lawrence. KU's first basketball coach was none other than the game's inventor James Naismith, and his 13 Original Rules of "Basket Ball" are enshrined on the campus. Jayhawks athletics' most recent national achievement was winning the 2022 NCAA Division I men's basketball championship.

A strategic area of the Lawrence campus is currently being reimagined as the Gateway District. A bold new vision of the David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium includes a new fan experience, conference center, hotel, retail space, and apartments.

While six national championship banners hang in Allen Fieldhouse, the KU Debate program showcases six national championship trophies across campus in Bailey Hall. In basketball, debate, volleyball, track, soccer, music, arts, and more, Jayhawks set high standards and perform at elite levels.

Leadership

Mary Rezac, Ph.D.

Dean Rezac joined KU as Dean of Engineering in March 2024 after seven years as dean of Washington State University's Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture.

Rezac earned a doctorate and master's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Kansas State. She has held tenured faculty positions at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Kansas State University, Washington State University, and the University of Kansas. Prior to her academic appointments, she worked for the Phillips Petroleum Company as a Research Engineering developing technology for light-end upgrading.

Rezac measures her success by the accomplishments of her mentees. She has supervised and mentored individuals who now serve in C-suite positions in industry and as Deans, Vice Presidents for Research, and Provosts at academic institutions throughout the US.

Lawrence, Kansas

KU's research-residential campus is in the center of Lawrence, KS, a vibrant and culturally rich community — a quintessential college town. Visitors, students, and new employees from outside the area enjoy discovering the many wonders of Lawrence, including a thriving downtown, diverse local and regional events, area lakes, vibrant arts and music scenes, and an indelible history.

From tree-lined historic neighborhoods to no-maintenance communities, modern downtown lofts, and rolling acreage outside of city limits, Lawrence offers a wide variety of home options.

Lawrence has long been known for its active music scene, hosting many up-and-coming artists before they were big names. Several venues offer live music to suit almost any taste. A summer family favorite is the free Lawrence City Band outdoor concert series at the South Park Gazebo, where Lawrence residents of all ages bring blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy the music.

Home to nearly 100,000 people, Lawrence is located 45 minutes west of Kansas City and 30 minutes east of Topeka, the state capital. Along with the music, arts, culture, and sports experiences offered at KU and in Lawrence, the short drive to Kansas City provides quick access to historic jazz clubs, museums, world-class music and theatre venues, and professional sports teams. Lawrence has also been named as 'American's Fastest Growing' Tech hub.

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 the University of Kansas in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **July 17, 2026 and may be submitted through the WittKieffer candidate portal**.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to: Jessica Herrington at jherrington@wittkieffer.com and Corin Edwards cedwards@wittkieffer.com

The University of Kansas prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, gender identity, gender expression, and genetic information in the university's programs and activities. Retaliation is also prohibited by university policy. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies and is the Title IX coordinator for all KU and KUMC campuses: Associate Vice Chancellor for the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, civilrights@ku.edu, Room 1082, Dole Human Development Center, 1000 Sunnyside Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66045, 785-864-6414, 711 TTY.