



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

Vice President for Research

Leadership Profile

December 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Texas A&M University–San Antonio (A&M–SA) seeks an inaugural Vice President for Research (VPR) to lead the development of a robust research enterprise and position the University as a rising doctoral-granting institution on the path to R2 status. Reporting directly to the President, the VPR will oversee the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and serve as a strategic architect for research growth, compliance, and faculty development. This role represents a unique opportunity to shape the future of research at one of the fastest-growing universities in the Texas A&M System.

The VPR will advance three primary priorities: providing strategic leadership for research, building infrastructure to support growth and compliance, and engaging internal and external partners to expand research outcomes. With more than \$4.5 million in research expenditures in FY25 and emerging strengths in cybersecurity, education, genetics, public health, and the humanities, A&M–SA is poised for significant expansion. The VPR will collaborate closely with Academic Affairs and the College of Graduate Studies to grow doctoral programs and leverage resources across the Texas A&M System, including joint proposals and shared facilities.

As a young institution with an entrepreneurial spirit, A&M–SA requires a leader who can design and implement systems that support faculty research needs while ensuring compliance and mitigating risk. The VPR will strengthen the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by building a high-performing, service-oriented team, improving workflows, and fostering a culture of collaboration and accountability. This includes addressing operational challenges and establishing long-term practices that enable sustained institutional growth.

Externally, the VPR will cultivate partnerships with federal agencies, foundations, industry, and regional organizations such as Port San Antonio, healthcare providers, and military installations. Internally, the VPR will champion faculty development initiatives, including grant-writing workshops, mentoring networks, and interdisciplinary collaborations. The successful candidate will be a visionary and pragmatic builder with an earned doctorate, a proven record of research leadership, and the ability to navigate complex systems while advocating for faculty and fostering innovation.

Texas A&M University–San Antonio is a proud Hispanic-Serving and Military Embracing Institution with a mission to transform lives through accessible, inclusive education. Serving nearly 8,000 students, the University is rapidly expanding its nearly 700-acre campus and strengthening its role as a catalyst for social and economic impact. The inaugural VPR will play a pivotal role in advancing this mission by elevating A&M–SA's research profile and driving its trajectory toward national prominence.

For information regarding how to apply, submit nominations, or inquire about the role, please see the section "Procedure for Candidacy" at the end of this document.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The inaugural Vice President for Research (VPR) will oversee the [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#) and will be expected to advance the following leadership priorities, among others:

Provide strategic leadership and vision for A&M-SA's research enterprise.

Texas A&M University–San Antonio is striving to become an R2 institution, and the inaugural VPR will play a critical role in setting priorities and implementing strategies to help achieve that goal. The University reported more than \$4.5 million in research expenditures in FY25, leveraging strengths in areas such as cybersecurity, education (including special education), genetics, natural sciences, public health, and the humanities. The VPR will be expected to combine a broad view of the research landscape with an understanding of A&M–SA's existing strengths and future opportunities. This individual must demonstrate an ability to support research and scholarly excellence across a wide range of disciplines and foster interdisciplinary collaborations across academic units.

Growing doctoral programs will also be a key component of the University's pursuit of R2 status. The VPR will be expected to partner closely with Academic Affairs and the College of Graduate Studies to support the development of new doctoral programs in areas such as education, special education, genetics/genomics, and cybersecurity. In addition, the VPR will be expected to capitalize on the depth of expertise and resources available within the Texas A&M University System, including active collaboration with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, to align A&M–SA with systemwide initiatives and research priorities. This includes building strong relationships with Texas A&M System Agencies to enable joint proposals, shared facilities, and broader engagement opportunities for faculty and students.

Build research infrastructure that supports growth and ensures compliance.

As a young institution with an entrepreneurial spirit, A&M–SA is continually building structures, identifying resources, and implementing policies and practices to advance its evolution. The inaugural VPR must have an understanding of best practices related to research compliance and controls, along with a willingness to think creatively in an environment where processes and systems are still being refined. This individual must be able to work with faculty to understand their research needs and identify the resources required to advance scholarship across disciplines—including pre- and post-award support, facilities, equipment, and research databases. The VPR will also collaborate with the College of Graduate Studies and Academic Affairs to ensure that research infrastructure supports graduate education, thesis and dissertation research, and campuswide scholarly activity.

The VPR will have the opportunity to strengthen and expand the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by building a high-performing, service-oriented team that supports the University's research ambitions. This includes assessing existing structures, clarifying roles and responsibilities, improving workflows, and ensuring that staff are well-trained, appropriately supported, and aligned with institutional priorities. The University seeks a leader who can recruit, mentor, and retain talented professionals; develop clear procedures and expectations; and cultivate an office culture defined by collaboration, accountability, and responsiveness to faculty needs. As research infrastructure continues to grow, the VPR must operate at both the strategic and hands-on levels, addressing immediate operational challenges—such as delays in purchasing, grant routing, or financial processes—while establishing long-term systems and practices that support sustained institutional growth.

Engage partners to advance research outcomes.

The VPR will be a key relationship builder with a wide range of collaborators. The Texas A&M University System, which includes 12 institutions and a coordinated network of state agencies, provides extensive research capacity and strategic partnerships that A&M–SA can leverage as its research enterprise grows. The VPR will be expected to work closely with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to identify opportunities that align A&M–SA

with systemwide priorities, strengthen shared initiatives, and expand access to system resources. Building strong relationships across the System will support joint proposals, collaborative projects, and broader engagement opportunities for faculty and students.

Beyond the Texas A&M System, the San Antonio region offers significant opportunities for partnership, including Port San Antonio, K–12 districts, healthcare providers, organizations serving children with disabilities, arts and humanities institutions, cybersecurity and technology companies, and major military installations. The VPR must be effective in engaging with federal agencies, foundations, and industry partners to identify and secure funding opportunities. These efforts will require close collaboration with the President, Academic Affairs, the College of Graduate Studies, Advancement, and community partners.

The VPR will also play a central role in strengthening faculty development related to research. This includes designing or enhancing programs that support grant writing, research design, compliance readiness, and project management. The University seeks a leader who can foster mentoring networks, encourage collaborative scholarship, and develop opportunities for early-career faculty to build their research portfolios. The VPR will work closely with academic leadership to assess faculty development needs, build grant-writing capacity, and promote a culture of inquiry and innovation across disciplines.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The inaugural Vice President of Research must have a demonstrated record of successful leadership in research administration, experience overseeing research grants as a principal investigator, and an earned doctorate. The ideal candidate will be a pragmatic, visionary, and hands-on “builder” with a strong work ethic. This individual must be a strong advocate for faculty, a creative problem-solver, and a data-informed leader committed to the University’s mission, values, and growth. The successful candidate must also be able to navigate a complex system environment effectively, including working directly with Texas A&M System leadership, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, and Texas A&M System Agencies.

Additionally, the successful candidate should demonstrate the following qualities and qualifications:

- Extensive knowledge of current and future trends in research and an understanding of how those trends will shape A&M–SA’s strategic approach to advancing research.
- A leadership style that is strategic, entrepreneurial, and willing to engage in operational details as research infrastructure continues to develop.
- The ability to build a research enterprise that supports faculty and staff in advancing research and scholarship while ensuring effective compliance and mitigating institutional risk, including enhancing resources in areas such as pre- and post-award support, facilities, equipment, research databases, commercialization, technology transfer, and intellectual property.
- A proven record of research effectiveness as a faculty member, including meaningful publications, leadership of complex interdisciplinary research grants from a variety of funding sources, and experience managing compliance requirements (IRB, IBC, MTAs).
- Strong financial skills and attentiveness to data and detail with an understanding of the processes and controls necessary to oversee research funding and plan for institutional growth.

- A commitment to supporting research and scholarship across a wide range of disciplines and facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations.
- A collaborative approach to working with senior leadership, deans, faculty, and staff across the University, including knowledge of institutional processes such as hiring, budgeting, procurement, and compliance.
- Strong communication skills, a commitment to proactive and transparent engagement, and the ability to unite stakeholders around shared institutional goals.
- Demonstrated success in building and mentoring effective research administration teams, improving workflows, and fostering an office culture focused on service, collaboration, and accountability.
- Experience designing or supporting faculty development initiatives, including mentoring programs, grant-writing workshops, interdisciplinary proposal development, and efforts to cultivate a sustained culture of scholarly activity.
- An entrepreneurial, aspirational, and innovative mindset, with the willingness to pursue bold opportunities that elevate the institution's research profile.



About Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Overview

In May 2009, the Texas Legislature signed Senate Bill 629, which established A&M–SA as a standalone institution. Since its founding as the first upper-division institution of higher education in south San Antonio, A&M–SA has grown from its upper-division roots to its current role as a contemporary, comprehensive four-year public university that reflects the culturally diverse, heritage-rich community it serves. During this period, the University has impacted lives in south San Antonio and its surrounding communities, providing access to quality education while becoming a catalyst for regional growth, with countless stories of the students, graduates, faculty, and staff who are on a mission to discover, inspire, lead, and create.

Between May 2009 and fall 2017, A&M–SA's enrollment grew more than 340%. Designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution in 2017, the University currently serves nearly 8,000 students and has graduated almost 20,000 alumni. The undergraduate student population is 61% female, 58% Hispanic, and approximately 67% of students are the first in their family to attend college. Through the University's 39 undergraduate and 23 graduate degree programs, students can pursue a wide variety of in-demand fields, such as education, business, information technology and cyber security, criminology, and biology. A&M–SA prepares and empowers students with knowledge and marketable skills that prepare them for rewarding careers, responsible global citizenship, and lifelong learning. As one of the fastest-growing universities in the Texas A&M System and the only A&M institution of higher learning in a major metropolitan area, A&M–SA is quickly expanding to fill its nearly 700-acre campus. Due to the rapid growth, the University's footprint is transforming. This includes recent construction such as:

- Estrella Hall, the second residence hall, which opened in fall 2024;
- The Campus Recreation Center, which opened in fall 2024; and
- The College of Business and Library Hall, which opened in spring 2023.

Additionally, construction of a number of additional facilities is underway, including:

- An Educare facility;
- A softball and track & field complex; and
- The Public Health & Education Building.

In December 2022, A&M–SA held a signing ceremony to [announce a new partnership with Texas A&M University Health Science Center](#) (Texas A&M Health) and [University Health](#). The affiliation agreement brings three nationally recognized entities together to co-create and expand education pathways and research opportunities in the high-demand health sciences eco-system for historically underserved communities. The affiliation agreement provides a guiding framework for collaborations among University Health's existing and future community hospitals and public health facilities and focuses on educational and research opportunities that impact Bexar County, adjoining counties, and south Texas, as well as supporting the military and veteran community. The new University Health public health facility and hospital development, which will be located at the west entry to A&M–SA's campus, will enhance accessibility to medical services and health education. In 2021, University Health acquired 68 acres to develop a 256-bed hospital by 2027. In July 2022, Bexar County appropriated \$30 million for a public health division facility, which is slated for completion in 2026. The nearly \$500 million investment in the hospital and newly formed University Health Institute of Public Health will enhance service to individuals and families in south Bexar County and the 22 neighboring counties in south Texas. In addition, The Texas A&M

System Board of Regents approved funding to build a \$45 million College of Education and Public Health facility at A&M-SA.

San Antonio has been coined as "Military City U.S.A.," and approximately 15% of A&M-SA students identify as military-connected. In addition, A&M-SA is the only Purple Heart University in San Antonio – a designation granted by the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) in recognition of A&M-SA's commitment to honor the sacrifices made by Purple Heart Medal recipients and show gratitude to all veterans for their contributions to defending the freedom of the United States. In addition, the University has been recognized for the establishment of military cultural competence training. This professional development program for faculty and staff introduces the need for increased cultural awareness and understanding of the transition military members face when returning to civilian life. Patriots' Casa, a nationally recognized facility on the main campus, is A&M-SA's Academic Home for the Brave, a unique venue that sets the University apart, not only as a military-friendly university, but also a university that is wholeheartedly Military Embracing™.

Mission

As a proud Hispanic-Serving and Military Embracing™ Institution with a predominately first-generation student population, Texas A&M University–San Antonio transforms lives and its community by delivering a quality higher education experience that is accessible and inclusive and by empowering students for academic success, rewarding careers, and engaged global citizenship.

Vision

Texas A&M University–San Antonio will be a rising doctoral-granting university with a robust research portfolio, a national reputation fostering equitable learning experiences and outcomes, and increasing influence as a catalyst for social, cultural, and economic impact.



Leadership

Dr. Salvador Hector Ochoa, President

Dr. Ochoa is the third President of Texas A&M University–San Antonio. He is a highly esteemed scholar and academic leader who is a passionate advocate for student achievement and success. Prior to his appointment as President, he served as the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at San Diego State University.

Ochoa earned his Ph.D. in School Psychology from Texas A&M University in 1989, a testament to his strong ties with the Texas A&M University System. In recognition of his outstanding achievements and contributions to the field of education, he was honored in 2013 with the prestigious Texas A&M University College of Education and Human Development Outstanding Alumni Award.

Ochoa has held significant leadership roles at various universities. He previously served as the Dean of the College of Education at the University of New Mexico and The University of Texas–Pan American, further demonstrating his commitment to fostering academic excellence and growth in diverse educational settings.

As President of Texas A&M University–San Antonio, Ochoa brings extensive experience in fiscal management and oversight, accreditation, assessment, and faculty development. He also has a successful track record of enrollment management and student retention. Throughout his career, Ochoa's research has focused on bilingual psychoeducational assessment and educational programming for Hispanic students.

With his strong background in academic leadership and research, he is poised to lead the University to greater heights, fostering a nurturing and progressive learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. Under his guidance, the University is expected to continue its trajectory as the fastest-growing campus in the Texas A&M System, leaving a legacy of excellence and impact on higher education.



San Antonio, Texas

As the seventh largest city in America and the second largest in Texas, San Antonio offers a unique blend of metropolitan energy and small-town charm, and its residents benefit from no state income tax. San Antonio is home to the San Antonio International Airport as well as nationally known Fortune 500 companies such as USAA, iHeartMedia, and Valero Energy. San Antonio is renowned for its culture, blending southern charm with international flair, big-city opportunities and excitement, and small-town familiarity. The area's Spanish founding, its Mexican American upbringing, its Texas pride, and its German influences are all combined in this unique city. Much of this history is preserved through the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and the only UNESCO World Heritage Site in the State of Texas. The A&M-SA community enjoys entertainment and cultural offerings. The San Antonio region offers easy access to a variety of attractions and activities for all ages, including three professional sports teams.



Procedure for Candidacy

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

WittKieffer is assisting Texas A&M University–San Antonio in this search. For full consideration, candidate materials should be received by **February 3, 2026**.

Application materials, nominations, and inquiries can be directed to:

Ryan Crawford, Natalie Song, and Bronwen Bares Pelaez, Ph.D.

TAMUSA-VPR@wittkieffer.com