



Director of Sponsored Programs

Leadership Profile

Fall 2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler) invites applications, nominations, and expressions of interest for the position of Director of Sponsored Programs. Reporting to the Chief Research Officer, the Director will provide strategic and operational leadership for sponsored programs administration at a pivotal moment of growth for the University's research enterprise.

UT Tyler is a public research university and member of The University of Texas System that serves students, patients, and communities across East Texas and beyond. Founded in 1971 and now a comprehensive doctoral institution, UT Tyler expanded significantly through the 2021 integration with the UT Tyler Health Science Center, creating a unified university that includes the first medical school in East Texas. With strong academic programs, a growing student body, and a Carnegie R2 designation, UT Tyler is positioned as a dynamic and increasingly prominent public research institution.

The Office of Research supports UT Tyler's expanding research mission through Sponsored Programs, Clinical Research, Research Integrity and Compliance, and Technology Management. The Office of Sponsored Programs serves as the central resource for externally funded research and sponsored activity, supporting proposal development and submission, award negotiation and acceptance, post-award administration, grant accounting oversight, contracts and agreements, sponsor reporting, and regulatory compliance. Together, these functions provide the infrastructure, expertise, and service orientation needed to advance faculty success and responsible stewardship of sponsored funds.

The next Director will have the opportunity to strengthen and reimagine the Sponsored Programs organization as UT Tyler's research portfolio becomes larger, more complex, and increasingly interdisciplinary. Key priorities include building a high-performing and service-oriented team, advancing excellence in post-award administration and financial stewardship, supporting interdisciplinary and health-related research growth, leveraging technology and data to improve service delivery, and helping position UT Tyler for continued research impact.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic, collaborative, and service-oriented research administration leader with substantial experience in sponsored programs, grants management, finance, compliance, and staff leadership. The successful candidate will bring strong judgment, operational expertise, financial acumen, communication skills, integrity, and a demonstrated ability to lead through change while building trusted relationships with faculty, administrators, research leaders, and external partners.

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 Director of Sponsored Programs

The University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler) seeks a strategic, collaborative, and forward-thinking leader to serve as its next Director of Sponsored Programs. Reporting to the Chief Research Officer, the Director will play a central role in supporting a rapidly growing research enterprise at a university that has expanded significantly following the 2021 integration of UT Tyler and the UT Tyler Health Science Center and the achievement of Carnegie R2 status.

The Director will provide leadership for the Office of Sponsored Programs and oversee support for the full lifecycle of externally sponsored activity, including notification for funding opportunities, proposal development, award management, contracts and agreements, grant accounting coordination, compliance, and sponsor reporting. Working closely with faculty, research leaders, academic administrators, and institutional partners, the Director will ensure that sponsored programs services are responsive, consistent, and aligned with UT Tyler's research ambitions.

This appointment comes at an important moment for the Office of Research. As UT Tyler's sponsored portfolio becomes larger, more complex, and increasingly interdisciplinary, the Director will have the opportunity to strengthen the systems, relationships, and service model needed to support continued growth. The successful candidate will bring operational expertise, strategic judgment, and a collaborative approach to building an effective research administration environment that advances faculty success and institutional impact.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Director of Sponsored Programs will be asked to support the following priorities, in no particular order:

Strengthen and Reimagine the Sponsored Programs Organization

The next Director will inherit an office undergoing significant transition and growth, including the integration of grant accounting and post-award operations. Most importantly, there is an opportunity to evaluate organizational structures, clarify roles and responsibilities, and build a high-performing, service-oriented team. Working closely with the Chief Research Officer, the Director will establish a sustainable operating model that promotes cross-training, succession planning, organizational resilience, and outstanding support for faculty and research staff. The successful candidate will bring a talent for leading through change while cultivating a collaborative and positive office culture.

Advance Excellence in Post-Award Administration and Financial Stewardship

As UT Tyler's sponsored research portfolio continues to expand, the Director will be expected to strengthen post-award management practices and ensure the highest levels of fiscal oversight and compliance. A significant priority will be optimizing the integration of grant accounting and post-award operations, developing workflows that enhance efficiency while building subject matter expertise across the team. The Director will provide leadership in award management, sponsor reporting, financial compliance, risk mitigation, and stewardship of external funding, ensuring that faculty and institutional leaders can confidently navigate increasingly complex funding environments.

Support a Growing and Interdisciplinary Research Enterprise

UT Tyler's research enterprise has expanded considerably following the integration of the university and Health Science Center and now supports a growing portfolio of federally-funded, state-funded, clinical, and industry-sponsored projects. The Director will play an important role in supporting interdisciplinary research across the institution's colleges and schools, particularly at the intersection of health sciences, medicine, engineering,

pharmacy, nursing, and other emerging areas of collaboration. This leader will help ensure that administrative processes facilitate rather than hinder research growth, enabling faculty to pursue increasingly ambitious and collaborative funding opportunities.

Leverage Technology, Data, and Process Improvement to Enhance Service Delivery

As the Office of Research continues to implement and optimize new research administration technologies, including Cayuse, the Director will champion process improvement and operational modernization. The successful candidate will help develop meaningful data and reporting capabilities, improve transparency and accountability, establish performance metrics, and utilize technology solutions to enhance efficiency across the sponsored programs lifecycle. The Director will be expected to identify opportunities for continuous improvement while maintaining a strong customer-service orientation for faculty, staff, and institutional partners.

Help Position UT Tyler for Continued Research Growth and Impact

UT Tyler has emerged as one of the nation's fastest-growing public doctoral universities and has achieved Carnegie R2 status through significant growth in research activity and doctoral education. As research expenditures continue to increase and the institution advances its research ambitions, the Director will serve as a strategic partner in strengthening the infrastructure required to support future growth. By building strong relationships across campus, ensuring compliance and operational excellence, and aligning sponsored programs services with institutional priorities, the Director will contribute meaningfully to the University's continued ascent as a leading research institution in East Texas and beyond.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate will be a strategic, collaborative, and service-oriented leader with experience overseeing sponsored programs administration in a complex research environment. They will bring expertise in grant and contract administration, financial stewardship, regulatory compliance, and staff leadership, along with the ability to build strong relationships across academic, clinical, and administrative units. The successful candidate will be adept at balancing operational excellence with strategic thinking and will have a demonstrated commitment to supporting faculty research and institutional growth.

Qualifications

- **Experience:** Five or more years of progressively responsible experience in sponsored programs, research administration, grants management, finance, or a related field, including supervisory experience. Advanced knowledge of federal and state grants, award management, financial oversight, and compliance is required; higher education experience is preferred.
- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or a related field required. Master's degree in business or a related discipline preferred. Equivalent combinations of education and experience may be considered.
- **Credentials:** Certified Research Administrator (CRA) certification preferred. Candidates should possess or be willing to obtain the credential within the university's required timeframe.

Competencies

- **Research Administration Expertise:** Strong understanding of pre-award, post-award, contracts, grants management, sponsor regulations, and research compliance.
- **Financial and Operational Leadership:** Ability to oversee budgets, internal controls, financial reporting, and compliance while improving processes and operational effectiveness.

- **Leadership and Team Development:** Demonstrated success leading and developing professional staff, managing change, and fostering a collaborative, customer-focused culture.
- **Communication and Collaboration:** Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to build partnerships, negotiate effectively, and work across diverse stakeholder groups.
- **Integrity and Sound Judgment:** Commitment to ethical leadership, confidentiality, accountability, and the responsible stewardship of sponsored funds.

About The University of Texas at Tyler

The University of Texas at Tyler serves students, patients, and the East Texas region through academics, research, and advanced healthcare delivery. The university's approach yields outstanding results and, at the same time, is one of the most affordable UT System campuses, leading to a more significant return on investment.

UT Tyler supports East Texas through education and economic development, broadening its impact through intentional partnerships and collaborations.

For more information about UT Tyler and the UT Tyler Health Science Center, visit: [The University of Texas at Tyler](#), [The University of Texas at Tyler Health Science Center](#), and [ut-tyler-profile.pdf](#)

About the Office of Research

The University of Texas at Tyler's Office of Research supports a growing and increasingly sophisticated research enterprise dedicated to advancing discovery, innovation, and improved outcomes across East Texas and beyond. Following the 2021 integration of UT Tyler and the UT Tyler Health Science Center, the University has expanded its research capacity across disciplines and achieved the Carnegie R2 designation, reflecting its status as a doctoral university with high research activity. Research at UT Tyler spans the sciences, engineering, health professions, nursing, pharmacy, medicine, education, business, and the arts and sciences, with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and community impact.

The Office of Research provides comprehensive support for the University's research mission through four primary functional areas: Sponsored Programs, Clinical Research, Research Integrity and Compliance, and Technology Management. Together, these units help faculty and staff secure external funding, manage sponsored projects, uphold the highest standards of research integrity, advance clinical and translational research, and translate discoveries into practical applications that benefit society.

Office of Sponsored Programs

The Office of Sponsored Programs serves as the central resource for the administration of externally funded research and sponsored activities across UT Tyler and the Health Science Center. The office supports the full lifecycle of sponsored projects, including notification for funding opportunities, proposal development and submission, award negotiation and acceptance, post-award administration, grant accounting oversight, contracts and agreements, sponsor reporting, and regulatory compliance. Working closely with faculty, administrators, and external partners, the office helps ensure the responsible stewardship of sponsored funds while fostering an environment that supports research growth and success.

A Growing Research Enterprise

UT Tyler has emerged as one of the nation's fastest-growing public doctoral universities and continues to expand its research activity, doctoral education, and sponsored funding portfolio. The University's research enterprise generates approximately \$40-\$50 million in annual research expenditures and benefits from strong collaborations among its colleges and schools, particularly across medicine, nursing, pharmacy, health professions, engineering, and the sciences. Clinical and health-related research represent significant strengths, supported by the University's unique integration with the UT Tyler Health Science Center and UT Health East Texas.

Research Administration Systems and Infrastructure

UT Tyler continues to invest in research administration infrastructure and technology to support future growth. The University utilizes PeopleSoft and is expanding its implementation of Cayuse to streamline proposal development, award management, and research administration processes. These efforts reflect a broader commitment to enhancing efficiency, improving service delivery, and providing faculty and staff with the tools needed to navigate an increasingly complex research environment.

Research That Improves Lives

Research at UT Tyler is driven by a commitment to addressing critical challenges in healthcare, education, engineering, technology, and community well-being. Through partnerships with healthcare providers, industry, government agencies, and regional organizations, UT Tyler researchers are advancing discoveries that improve lives locally, across Texas, and beyond. The Office of Research plays a central role in supporting these efforts by providing the infrastructure, expertise, and resources necessary for research excellence.

Leadership

Amir Mirmiran, Ph.D., Chief Research Officer and Dean of the Graduate School, The University of Texas at Tyler

Amir Mirmiran, Civil Engineering Ph.D. (University of Maryland), is the Chief Research Officer and Dean of The Graduate School at The University of Texas at Tyler. He is a Professor of Civil Engineering, and his research interests include hybrid construction, accelerated bridge construction systems and techniques, and education. More about Dr. Mirmiran's research and work can be found in this [document](#).

About Tyler and East Texas

Renowned as the Rose Capital of the United States, Tyler is a growing mid-size city located less than 100 miles east of Dallas. As a regional focal point for entertainment, retail, healthcare, dining, arts, and outdoor recreation, Tyler offers small-town affordability with the comforts of a big city. Whether you want to take an afternoon to hike through Tyler State Park, shop at the Village at Cumberland Park, or eat your way through all the local Tex-Mex joints, Tyler is a vibrant place to live and work. Plus, it was named the No. 1 city in Texas to move to by USA Today. So, beat the crowd and discover Tyler for yourself.

For more information about UT Tyler and East Texas, visit: [About | The University of Texas at Tyler](#) and [ut-tyler-profile.pdf](#)



Procedure for Candidacy

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

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Texas at Tyler in this search. Application review will begin immediately. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **September 21, 2026**.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Lauren Bruce-Stets and Toni Davis

UTT-SponsoredPrograms@wittkieffer.com

The University of Texas at Tyler is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.