



Vice President for Enrollment Leadership Profile

April 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Sam Houston State University, a public regional university in Texas, seeks a dedicated, experienced, and entrepreneurial professional to serve as Vice President for Enrollment (VPE) and capture the university's ethos of innovation and creativity in executing a bold vision for enrollment.

With a student population of more than 21,000, [Sam Houston State University](#) (SHSU) is located in Huntsville, Texas, with an off-site instructional location in The Woodlands, the College of Osteopathic Medicine in Conroe and a robust online presence through SHSU Online. Huntsville is located on the rapidly developing Interstate 45 corridor between Houston and Dallas. SHSU is 70 miles north of downtown Houston and 170 miles south of Dallas, ideally situated between the 4th and 9th largest cities in the country and two of the 10 fastest-growing cities in the U.S. This location presents many strategic opportunities for the future of Sam Houston State University.

For more than 145 years, SHSU has been preparing students for meaningful lives of achievement. SHSU continually strives to honor its historical roots through academic excellence and meeting the workforce needs of Texas, which is demonstrated by the launch of [SamPoly](#) – a cutting-edge Polytechnic College designed to immediately equip students with industry-driven skills and workforce-ready training. While embracing its legacy, SHSU also strives to meet the needs of contemporary students, both in person and online. SHSU offers more than 95 bachelor's degree programs, more than 60 master's degree programs, nine doctoral programs, one professional doctorate (DO), and over 50 fully online degrees. SHSU is classified as a Carnegie doctoral university with high research activity (R2). It is also a Community Engaged University certified by the Carnegie Foundation, and a proud AACSCU institution, demonstrating a commitment to education for the public good. SHSU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). SHSU is part of the [Texas State University System](#), the first university system established in Texas, composed of seven institutions.

The VPE is the Chief Enrollment Officer and is responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive enrollment strategy to attract, retain, and support a diverse student body across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The VPE provides direct visionary leadership and strategic direction to key enrollment units including undergraduate recruitment and admissions, undergraduate and graduate financial aid and scholarships, the registrar's office, student account services, enrollment technologies, veteran's benefits processing, testing center, undergraduate enrollment marketing and communications, medical school admissions, financial aid and registration, visitor services and campus tours, graduate admissions processing, and student money management. The role oversees a team of 150 staff and an annual operating budget of \$20 million.

The successful candidate will be a results-driven, creative, innovative leader with a proven track record in enrollment management and growth, or comparable skills from a related field, alongside expertise in strategic planning, data-informed decision-making, and a commitment to student success. The next leader will be a creative thinker who can expand enrollment through new markets, programs, and ways of working. The next VPE will also possess impeccable integrity; strong communication and interpersonal skills; an ability to effectively lead, develop, and mentor a complex team; and excellent strategic planning and thinking skills. While university experience is a plus, SHSU welcomes applications from non-traditional sources who will express how they might reimagine university enrollment practices. SHSU seeks an out-of-the-box thinker who can build relationships inside and outside campus and strategic partnerships to best position the university for future success.

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 Enrollment

The Vice President for Enrollment (VPE) oversees key areas within Sam Houston State University and is responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive enrollment strategy to attract, retain, and support a diverse student body—reflecting the region’s demographics— across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The VPE provides direct visionary leadership and strategic direction to key enrollment units, ensuring alignment with the university's mission, values, and goals. The role oversees a team of 150 staff and an annual operating budget of \$20 million.

The VPE direct reports include:

- AVP of Enrollment Services
- AVP of Enrollment Success
- AVP of Recruitment & Admissions
- Director of Enrollment Services for the College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Director of Undergraduate Enrollment Marketing & Communications
- Executive Assistant to the VPE

The division includes:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Registrar's Office
- Student Account Services
- Veteran's Benefits Processing
- Enrollment Technologies
- Testing Center
- Undergraduate Enrollment Marketing and Communications
- Medical School Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registration
- Visitor Services and Campus Tours
- Graduate Admissions Processing
- Student Money Management

Key Responsibilities:

- Establish and implement short- and long-range organizational goals, objectives, strategic plans, policies, and operating procedures to support university enrollment priorities.
- Articulate a student enrollment vision consistent with the university's mission and strategic initiatives, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

- Direct the formulation, implementation, and enhancement of undergraduate recruiting strategies, including marketing plans for the recruitment and retention of students, enrollment policies, divisional operations, and services
- Advise the Senior Vice President and President on enrollment trends that impact regional, national, and international enrollment outcomes, providing data-informed insights to support decision-making.
- Develop and mentor leaders within the enrollment units, preparing them for future leadership roles within the university.
- Oversee the student search process to build admission funnels for undergraduate programs, ensuring a robust pipeline of prospective students.
- Collaborate with academic leadership to establish recruitment goals for colleges and programs, ensuring alignment with university-wide objectives.
- Ensure high standards of customer service across all enrollment units to enhance student satisfaction and streamline student experiences.
- Continuously improve processes to emphasize efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and personalization, creating a seamless experience from initial inquiry to graduation.
- Build a team-of-teams across the university to reinforce that everyone is responsible for the success of the enrollment mission.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

This role offers a unique opportunity for the Vice President for Enrollment to drive transformative change in enrollment management, balancing robust internal operations and processes with strategic external partnerships. The Vice President will be tasked with building on Sam Houston State University's rich history while optimizing its future, providing visionary leadership to enhance the university's brand and mission on regional, national, and international stages.

In addition, the Vice President for Enrollment will be expected to:

- **Develop and implement continuously assessed strategic enrollment plans.**

The VPE will play a crucial role in shaping and executing strategic enrollment plans that effectively communicate SHSU's unique story and strengths. With a history of innovative leadership and a commitment to student success, the VPE will leverage their expertise to navigate national and state demographic shifts and increased competition in higher education. The VPE will work closely with campus resources and individuals to create a proactive and strategic enrollment plan that embraces new technologies, data-driven decision-making, and creative recruitment strategies. By doing so, they will help elevate SHSU's reputation and position in the marketplace. The VPE will come in and partner with other units on campus to execute a strategic enrollment plan at an exciting time with the launch of the [Polytechnic College](#), which leverages industry partnerships and research to meet regional workforce needs.

Within a highly competitive enrollment landscape, SHSU seeks bold, innovative, entrepreneurial, and out of the box recruitment strategies to expand enrollment through new markets, programs, and ways of working. The VPE will work with the resources and individuals on campus to assemble a strategic and proactive multi-year recruitment plan that incorporates both standard and innovative tools including technology, financial aid modelling, streamlined processes and optimization, and market segmentation. By embracing new technologies, data-driven decision making, and entrepreneurial recruitment strategies, the VPE has a tremendous opportunity to help shape the university's and the state's future.

In addition, the VPE will continuously assess and refine enrollment strategies based on data insights and feedback, staying informed on trends in higher education and adapting strategies to meet the evolving needs of students and the competitive landscape. By effectively telling SHSU's story through compelling data and impactful messaging, the VPE will attract and retain a robust and talented student body, contributing to the university's mission of fostering academic excellence and personal growth. Critical to this effort is understanding and communicating the university's mission and brand; creating and deploying compelling messages that will resonate with this student profile; implementing innovative strategies to engage students and families; and enhancing the campus visit experience to highlight the breadth of academic offerings and opportunities including the Polytechnic College and the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

- **Build and nurture strong partnerships within SHSU.**

The VPE will be a strong, accessible, and visible voice in representing students and goals for the division while connecting these priorities to greater institutional imperatives. This role has a direct impact on the reputation, reach, and ultimate success of the university, and the VPE's influence will be felt by students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external constituencies. The new leader will earn the respect, confidence, and support of their colleagues by working up, down, and across areas of leadership and developing productive, collaborative relationships with the campus community and with other divisions. The VPE will increase awareness of opportunities, challenges, and tradeoffs, helping campus partners understand and navigate the current competitive and dynamic marketplace. They will communicate enrollment trends and statistics thoughtfully and transparently, fostering conversations with stakeholders.

The VPE will continue to build a culture of collective discussion and maintain strong and facilitative relationships with leadership across the university. Frequent and ongoing dialogue with senior administrators and campus partners will engender cooperation, trust, and confidence, and will be essential to the success of the enrollment functions. The VPE will convey the vision for enrollment and promote a tone in the SHSU community of open conversation and common goals to engage and galvanize students, staff, faculty, parents, and alumni in helping achieve the enrollment vision.

- **Advance student success.**

SHSU is a special place and its motto, “The measure of a Life is its Service,” resonates across the campus. The VPE will lead efforts in ensuring student success from pre-enrollment to graduation. With higher education changing, this leader will be a key leader in how SHSU enrolls, retains, and graduates future students and ensuring they have a positive experience. This leader will understand the diverse needs of students, including first-time college students and non-traditional students. This leader will anticipate, manage, and lead a complex portfolio of issues, policies, functions, initiatives, and offices to provide synergy, support, and coordination of enrollment management efforts to foster a seamless experience for students. The VPE will improve the student experience by making processes simpler and more effective, contributing to enrollment growth.

- **Lead a continued, data-informed analysis and conversation around enrollment.**

The VPE will lead ongoing, data-informed analyses to identify enrollment trends, challenges, and opportunities. The VPE will determine new ways of working including leveraging technology, flexible learning options, and streamlined processes. They will use this data to inform strategic decisions and policies, presenting findings clearly to foster transparency and informed discussions. The VPE will actively engage with colleagues, faculty, staff, students, and external partners, building strong, collaborative relationships and inspiring trust in enrollment policies and priorities. They will communicate insights and emerging trends thoughtfully and proactively, ensuring clarity and transparency. Additionally, the VPE will facilitate sophisticated, nuanced discussions about enrollment goals and strategies, encouraging a collaborative approach to achieving shared objectives. By promoting a data-driven culture, the VPE will advocate for evidence-based practices, provide training to enhance data literacy, and foster an environment where data is valued for decision-making and continuous improvement.

- **Support and leverage a strong, high-functioning team.**

The enrollment team is highly capable and composed of experts in their fields who are conscientious about their work – they want to do their best for the university and its students. The strength of this team will enable the VPE to work at the strategic level and prioritize relationship development within the university community. The VPE will leverage, elevate, and extend the work of the team in enrollment. In this dynamic higher education environment, with evolving priorities, this person will provide leadership that allows the team to shift and adapt and will ensure their resources are effective.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Sam Houston State University seeks an enrollment management professional who is a results-driven and innovate leader with a proven track record in enrollment management and growth, strategic planning, data-informed decision-making, and a commitment to student success.

The successful candidate will have many of the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

Strategic vision: The ability to develop and communicate a clear vision for enrollment management that aligns with the university's mission and strategic initiatives while fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement; ability to establish and implement short- and long-range organizational goals, objectives, strategic plans, policies, and operating procedures to support university enrollment priorities.

Expertise in enrollment management concepts or comparable skills from a related field: Demonstrated ability to develop and implement successful enrollment strategies and manage a diverse portfolio of enrollment units, including admissions, financial aid, and registrar functions; significant professional experience managing the complex interplay of marketing and recruitment strategies; enrollment goals; yield, and financial aid; knowledge of the strategic use of financial aid; a strong understanding of enrollment trends and best practices in higher education with the future in mind.



Strong analytical capacity:

Demonstrated success in developing and implementing data-informed enrollment strategies, or comparable strategies from related fields, including a proficiency in using data to drive decisions, assess performance, and forecast trends.

Collaborative leadership: A collaborative leadership style that promotes partnerships across the university and garners trust amongst multiple constituencies; excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to build positive and effective relationships with colleagues, students, and the external community.

Expertise in market expansion: Expertise in identifying and expanding into new markets, including workforce development programs, continuing education, and stackable credential offerings, to meet evolving student and industry needs.

Personal qualities: Exceptional leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills with a commitment to enhancing the student experience; empathy; a genuine commitment to understanding and supporting the educational, family, and career goals of students, families, and staff; an entrepreneurial and competitive spirit; wisdom and sound judgment. The candidate must also be an outstanding teammate, fully committed to the success of all university-supported missions.

Academic credentials: The successful candidate will have progressively responsible leadership experience in enrollment management or comparable skills from a related field. A master's degree in higher education administration, business administration, or a related field.

About Enrollment at Sam Houston State University

The Division of Strategic Enrollment & Innovation thinks, works, and collaborates in creative ways for the success of SHSU with the goal of removing barriers to student enrollment, success, and access. The enrollment units in this division include:

- [Admissions and Recruitment](#)
- [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [Registrar's Office](#)
- [Student Account Services](#)
- [Testing Center](#)
- [Veterans Benefits Processing](#)
- [Enrollment Technologies](#)
- Undergraduate Enrollment Marketing and Communications
- [Medical School Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registration](#)
- [Visitor Services and Campus Tours](#)
- [Graduate Admissions Processing](#)
- [Student Money Management](#)

View the full Division of Strategic Enrollment and Innovation organizational chart [here](#).

Fall 2024 data

- Undergraduate students: 17,787
- Master's students: 2,123
- Doctoral: 963
- Total students: 21,039
- First generation students: 44%
- Female: 68%, Male: 32%
- Hispanic: 40%, White: 36%, Black: 17%, Two or more races: 3%, Asian: 2%, American Indian or Alaska Native: <1%, Unknown: <1%
- In Fall 2023, students from 58 countries attended Sam Houston State University. From within the United States, all 50 states and the District of Columbia were represented, including students from 211 counties in Texas

More enrollment data can be found [here](#).

Admissions

- Freshmen: SHSU automatically admits first year students who meet one of the following: unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher, are ranked in the top ten percent of their high school class, can meet a GPA/test score

combination, or are a dual credit student with a 2.5+GPA and at least 12 transferable hours. Students who do not meet one of those criteria can still apply and will have their application reviewed.

- Transfers students: Transfer students with less than 12 credit hours must meet freshmen requirements and have a minimum 2.5 GPA on transferable hours. Those with 12-17 credit hours must have a minimum 2.5 GPA on transferable hours while those with 18+ credit hours must have a minimum 2.0 GPA on transferable hours.
- International students: International students must complete the Apply Texas application, pay a non-refundable international application fee, provide English proficiency scores less than two years old and submit an evaluation of their international credentials.
- Graduate students: Graduate students must complete an application and pay a non-refundable application fee, upload unofficial transcripts, and submit any additional program specific materials.
- Medical students: Medical students must follow the College of Osteopathic Medicine admissions requirements and pre-requisites.
- Veterans: The Veterans Benefits Processing team is dedicated to providing personalized assistance to veterans as they navigate the process of utilizing their veteran and dependent education benefits.
- Polytechnic Students: SHSU has adopted open enrollment admissions standards for students entering the Polytechnic College.

Tuition & Financial Aid

The annual (fall/spring) cost of tuition and fees for full-time (12 SCH ea. term) **undergraduate** students for 25-26 is \$9,228.40 for residents and \$18,948.40 for non-residents. The annual (fall/spring) cost of tuition and fees for full-time (9 SCH) **graduate** students for 25-26 is \$8,953.30 for residents and \$16,243.30 for non-residents. Students can estimate their cost of attendance for one semester at SHSU by visiting [here](#).

About Sam Houston State University

For more than 145 years, Sam Houston State University has been preparing students for meaningful lives of achievement. Its motto, "The measure of a Life is its Service," resonates among its 21,000 students, nine colleges and well beyond its historical roots through research, creative endeavors, service learning, volunteering and more.

SHSU is a welcoming institution whose mission is to provide high quality education, scholarship, and service to students. With over 90 bachelor's degrees, 50 master's, and 11 doctoral programs—including the nation's first Ph.D. in forensic science, SHSU provides an exceptional college experience for every student: traditional or non-traditional; first generation; international; or online.

Service to self and others is paramount at SHSU and reflected in all university organizations and programs. In fact, the university was named to USA Today's Top 50 in the U.S. for "commitment to civic engagement and global awareness," in addition to being classified a "Community Engaged Campus" by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. This honor, bestowed to only 311 public institutions nationwide, acknowledges the university's significant commitment to service.

Sam Houston State University has a small town feel with large scale opportunities. Located in the Piney Woods region of East Texas, Huntsville provides area residents with a sense of community and belonging, although just an hour drive north of Houston.

Mission

Sam Houston State University is a student-centered, community engaged institution whose mission is to offer accessible, quality higher education. The university offers a variety of innovative and flexible degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels focused on career readiness, personal and professional development, and service. SHSU provides integrated academic and student success services designed to support traditional and non-traditional students from diverse backgrounds.

Vision

Sam Houston State University will provide a transformative environment that enables students from diverse backgrounds to become leaders who serve their families, communities, and professions. We aspire to make SHSU both the best value in higher education and the top regional public university in the state of Texas. SHSU will accomplish this through providing high quality, innovative, and flexible academic programs; a commitment to student success, scholarship and creative works; and engagement that solves the most critical challenges facing the world.

Values

- Student Success and Support
- Academic Excellence
- Service and Community Engagement
- Inclusive Excellence
- Collaborative Environment
- Honor
- Creativity and Innovation

Academics

The university offers an array of undergraduate and graduate degrees across nine dynamic colleges.

- [College of Arts and Media](#)
- [College of Business Administration](#)
- [College of Criminal Justice](#)
- [College of Education](#)
- [College of Health Sciences](#)
- [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- [College of Osteopathic Medicine](#)
- [College of Science & Engineering Technology](#)
- A ninth College, Polytechnic College will begin operations in Fall 2025



Strategic Plan

The SHSU Strategic Planning process was restarted in September 2021 by creating a cross-institutional Strategic Plan Steering Committee, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Their charge was to conduct an environmental scan, focus groups, and surveys to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis looking out ten years to 2031. This work was completed in January 2022 and submitted for Cabinet review in February 2022, resulting in the university's restated Strategic Framework proposal. The Texas State University System Board of Regents approved the restated framework (Mission, Values, Vision, and Strategic Priorities) in May 2022.

The strategic plan includes four strategic priorities:

- Prioritize student success and student access
- Embody a culture of excellence
- Elevate the reputation and visibility of SHSU
- Expand and elevate our service to the State and beyond

Learn more about the strategic plan [here](#).

Texas State University System

The Texas State University System, founded in 1911, is the first higher education system established in Texas. Created to consolidate the support and management of state teacher colleges, the System has evolved into a network of higher education institutions stretching from the Texas–Louisiana border to the Big Bend region of west Texas.

Today, seven member institutions offer a broad range of academic and career opportunities. Throughout the System, faculty and staff are preparing students to work in and contribute to our global society.

The Texas State University System is governed by a nine-member Board of Regents appointed by the governor. In addition, a nonvoting student regent is appointed annually to the board. The administration, which is headed by a board-appointed chancellor, is based in Austin, where it provides support to the System member institutions and state government.

Leadership

Alisa White, President



Dr. Alisa White is president and professor of mass communication at Sam Houston State University, located in Huntsville, TX. Ranked among the top colleges/universities for social mobility, Sam Houston State offers its more than 21,000 students a transformative educational experience. Sam Houston State operates three campuses in Huntsville, Conroe, and The Woodlands, Texas, and has the only College of Osteopathic Medicine in East Texas.

White has taught at universities in five states and has served as department chair, dean, provost, and president. She serves as chair on the Board of Directors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), teaches in AASCU's New President's Academy, is past president of the Tennessee College Association, served as a director for the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, has twice served on the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA)

Division I Presidential Forum, and serves as chair of Conference USA. She has been honored as a Trailblazer by the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce.

White's leadership is characterized by her commitment to building strong teams, empowering leaders, and forging positive relationships with internal and external communities.

Prior to joining Sam Houston State in 2020, White served as president of Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. Under Dr. White's direction, Austin Peay set record enrollments and served as a partner and catalyst in downtown development and revitalization.

Heather Thielemann, Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment and Innovation and Chief Information Officer



Heather Thielemann currently serves Sam Houston State University as the Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment and Innovation and the CIO where she leads a team of 300+ in the areas of enrollment, information technology, and data analytics/decision support. Thielemann strongly advocates for the university to accept and enroll a highly qualified student population, to which all divisions must work together in executing a cohesive plan for overall student success and matriculation. Thielemann directs her team to focus on populating Texas with a qualified workforce of SHSU graduates to lead Texas into a prosperous future.

Thielemann's career in higher education first began in 1996 at Blinn College where she served as the Coordinator of Recruitment and Admission. She was promoted several times to becoming the Director (2001) and later Dean of Enrollment Management (2003).

While serving at Blinn College, Thielemann earned her doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at Sam Houston State University, and as she completed her degree, SHSU established the new position of Vice President for Enrollment Management, to which she was nominated to apply. In September 2004, Thielemann became the first Vice President for Enrollment Management, and in June 2021, Senior Vice President of Enrollment and Innovation at Sam Houston State University.

With higher education experience in Texas for over 30 years, she focuses on aligning enrollment strategy with the campus strategy, improving student success, and technology integration, as well as marketing and recruitment efforts that exceeded state growth rates. A champion of data-informed decision-making and workforce-aligned education, she is deeply engaged in community service and committed to servant leadership in higher education.

Huntsville, Texas

Sam Houston State University is located in Huntsville, which served as the residence of Sam Houston, the first and third president of the Republic of Texas and later, a Texas senator. Huntsville is a charming, historic Texas city with lively arts, culture, museums, a quaint downtown, and plenty of restaurants and coffee shops. It is located in a prime area of the Interstate 45 corridor. The anticipated growth from the Houston and Dallas metropolises offers many opportunities for businesses and industries. Huntsville sits within the Texas Triangle, the area of Texas outlined by the metropolitan areas of San Antonio- Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston. This location provides convenient access to the largest cities in the state all while maintaining a charming sense of community for citizens.

Learn more about things to do both on and off campus [here](#).

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 Sam Houston State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by June 2, 2025.

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

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Ashlee Winters Musser, Amy Crutchfield, Corin Edwards

SHSU-Enrollment@wittkieffer.com

SHSU is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Smoke/Drug-Free Workplace. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran status, disability status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or gender identity or expression. Sam Houston State University is an "at will" employer. Employees with a contract will have additional terms and conditions. Security sensitive positions at SHSU require background checks in accordance with Education Code § 51.215. SHSU is committed to promoting a campus culture that embraces diversity and inclusion. The University acknowledges and values our responsibility to cultivate an equitable and inclusive environment where students, faculty, staff, and community recognize the benefits of collaboration and mutual respect through diverse identities and experiences.

