



Executive Director of Admissions and Student Transition Programs

Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



The Opportunity

The University of Utah (the U), the state's flagship institution of higher learning and a major teaching and research university, seeks an experienced, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as its next Executive Director of Admissions and Student Transition Programs (executive director).

Over the past several years, the University of Utah has experienced historic, record-breaking enrollment growth, reflecting both strong demand and ongoing institutional investment in student success. In Fall 2025, the university reached an all-time high total enrollment of 38,261 students, marking nearly a 31% increase since 2020 and continuing a six-year upward enrollment trajectory. This includes the largest incoming class in the institution's 175-year history, with 6,513 first-year students and 1,497 transfer students joining the university. During this period of expansion, the university has continued to enroll a student body that reflects Utah's vibrant communities.

Reporting to Paul Kohn, senior vice provost for strategic enrollment and student success, the executive director will serve as the day-to-day leader in helping to achieve the university's ambitious enrollment goals. The new executive director will be an internal leader and mentor for three critical offices within enrollment management (admissions, high school programs, and new student orientation and transition programs) and an enthusiastic external representative for the value of a University of Utah education. The person in this role will be a strategic thinker and a skilled relationship manager who develops connections with faculty, deans, administrative staff, university leadership, and current students. The executive director oversees an office consisting of over 100 staff and is responsible for a \$5.3 million budget for the office of admissions.



The successful candidate will be an accomplished leader with experience managing people and programs, demonstrating progressive leadership in admissions, high school programs, and orientation. A strong commitment to higher education, strategic planning, and effective resource allocation is essential. The university seeks a collaborative leader who engages and inspires staff, leads with transparency and inclusivity, makes data-informed decisions, and fosters partnerships across campus. A master's degree is required, with eight (8) or more years of progressive leadership experience in a university setting, as well as the ability to travel during peak times in the admissions cycle, including possible international travel.

The state's oldest institution of higher education, the University of Utah, is the Flagship University of the State. The university boasts 18 schools and colleges and offers more than 100 undergraduate and 90 graduate degree programs to more than 38,000 students. The university is noted for its high research profile, its diversity of ideas and people, its stunningly beautiful setting, and the warmth, friendliness, and collegiality of its faculty, staff, and students.

The U is strongly committed to delivering outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education that prepares students for leadership roles in Utah, the country, and the world. The university's partnership with the state is reflected in its deep commitment to providing education for Utah's residents and serving its local and regional communities. Additional information may be found at <http://www.utah.edu/>.

The national executive search firm WittKieffer has been retained to assist the University of Utah with this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated in the "Procedure for Candidacy" section at the end of this document.

Position Summary

Reporting to the senior vice provost for strategic enrollment and student success, the executive director of admissions and student transition programs is responsible for the leadership, oversight and management of the office of admissions, early college (high school university program and Utah Direct) and orientation.

The executive director partners closely with the senior vice provost, deans, faculty, and staff to determine and implement policies and strategies that will achieve the university's ambitious enrollment goals. The executive director serves as an effective and compelling representative of the university's mission by presenting an attractive vision to potential students; enhancing the admissions process for those candidates; and helping to assure a rewarding experience for students who enroll. As an integral leader across the university, the executive director works closely with the campus community to build effective relationships, communicate about, and garner support for the goals of the office of admissions, high school programs, and orientation and transition.

The executive director will play a vital role in cultivating a supportive and collaborative environment across the admissions and operations teams. This leader will ensure staff have the guidance, information, and resources they need to make informed decisions, execute tasks effectively, and align their work with the broader

enrollment vision. Regular engagement with team members at all levels will be essential to building trust, strengthening operational cohesion, and ensuring shared success.

In addition, the executive director of admissions and student transition programs will:

- Provide leadership in the planning, development, and administration of the office of admissions and high school programs in a manner that is consistent with the University of Utah’s mission;
- In collaboration with the senior vice provost, deans, faculty, and staff, develop, implement, and achieve a yearly undergraduate admissions plan that will achieve university enrollment goals;
- Strengthen and refine the university’s marketing, recruiting, and outreach to prospective undergraduate students, expanding the university’s ability to attract, select, and enroll an increasingly talented and diverse student body;
- Ensure that the university builds strong relationships with students, as well as school counselors, community-based organizations, and other key influencers to support a robust student pipeline;
- Coordinate with the University of Utah Asia Campus (UAC) staff to support admissions and enrollment operations, including:
 - **Admissions policy and application processing:** Establishing admissions standards, reviewing applications through shared systems, and ensuring consistent evaluation of international credentials.
 - **Recruitment strategy and enrollment planning:** Providing market analysis, enrollment modeling, and strategic recruitment support to grow the UAC student body while maintaining academic quality.
 - **Scholarship, financial, and compliance alignment:** Coordinating scholarship frameworks, tuition policies, and institutional financial practices affecting international students.
 - **Technology, data, and communications infrastructure:** Supporting CRM systems, application platforms, and coordinated student communications across the recruitment and enrollment funnel
- Lead the strategic planning, administration, and growth of the High School University Program, an Early College initiative that enables high school students to earn University of Utah credit, while also overseeing the integration and expansion of Utah Direct—the university’s guaranteed admission and college-access initiative that provides early outreach to students from participating Utah school districts and offers guaranteed admission to those meeting academic benchmarks;
- Coordinate the design and implementation of consistent communication through the enrollment funnel from inquiry through enrollment in collaboration with Enrollment Marketing & Communications;
- Stay current with issues and policies pertaining to the achievement of a robust student body and play a leadership role on campus in assisting the university in reaching its enrollment goals;

- Work collaboratively and strategically with all campus units—fostering strong cross-departmental partnerships that support shared enrollment goals—while building particularly close alignment with the Division of Enrollment Management and the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid; strengthen and enhance effective working relationships with both internal and external stakeholders;
- Administer academic policy and university regulations that govern the process of recruitment and enrollment of students;
- Lead a transparent and forward-looking budgeting process that aims high, projects clear outcomes for expenditures and evaluates achievements in the context of an environment in which strategic use of resources is important;
- Provide regular reports, data analyses, and evaluation tools to the senior vice provost, the colleges, the division, and other designated persons/units on campus;
- Further a data-informed culture to shape strategic directions and make appropriate adjustments to an integrated admissions plan, regularly reassess accuracy and effectiveness of recruitment activities and make appropriate adjustments so as to lead an effort that is proactive, strategic, and responsive to the changing needs of students.



Goals and Objectives

The new executive director of admissions and student transition programs will be asked to address the following critical leadership issues, among others:

Advance institutional initiatives to achieve the University of Utah’s strategic enrollment priorities: During the Fall 2025 admissions cycle, the University of Utah reached historic enrollment milestones, welcoming the largest incoming class in its 175-year history, including 6,513 first-year students and 1,497 transfer students, contributing to a total enrollment of 38,261 students—the highest on record. This represents a 3.48% year-over-year increase from 2024 and marks the sixth consecutive year of steady enrollment growth, totaling nearly 31% since 2020.



This momentum has been accompanied by continued strength in academic preparation and demographic diversification. The university’s enrollment growth reflects increasing interest from students across all 29 Utah counties and all 50 U.S. states, signaling both rising academic reputation and broadening geographic appeal.

The new executive director will assume leadership at a time when Utah’s population continues to grow, the university’s budget remains robust, and the institution’s profile is strong and ascending across key performance indicators. With record enrollment, expanding pathways such as Utah Direct, and sustained institutional investment in access, affordability, and student success, the opportunity to build on this trajectory is exceptional and increasingly rare in today’s higher education landscape. The next executive director will play a pivotal role in ensuring this momentum continues and accelerates.

The executive director will capitalize on recent success and admissions support to contribute to the university-wide conversation on strategies and priorities. This leader will help the institution achieve its growth objectives while assessing and responding to the ever-changing higher education landscape, embracing an inclusive strategy, and committing to programs that benefit the changing population. The executive director will develop and promote an annual enrollment plan designed to achieve the university's enrollment goals. While leading an ambitious admissions effort, the executive director will convey a coherent vision and promote a tone in the university community of open conversation and shared goals relating to admissions.

Expand the university’s reach: The university seeks to continue expanding its presence in Utah and around the world. Working with the senior vice provost, the next executive director will seize this institutional moment to examine the university’s market position, external forces, and enrollment opportunities and consider the

intersection of academic quality, accessibility, enrollment growth, and student mix to determine the optimal path forward. Expanding the university's reach not only across Utah but also nationally and internationally—and identifying students who will thrive at the institution—will be a key priority.

The University of Utah has assumed its rightful place as the state's flagship, and it will be important for the executive director to help communicate this to prospective students in Utah and beyond. There is also a significant opportunity to promote further the university's advantages, such as a quality education at an affordable price; the experience of a research institution that values undergraduate education; and retention and graduation rates among the highest in the state. The new admissions leader will understand the distinct nature of this institution and shape an admissions outreach program that reaches the university's prospective students with the greatest impact. The executive director will help effectively deploy the university's distinctions in the recruitment of students, while constantly seeking new strategies, ideas, and tools to reach prospective students.

Deepen collaborative relationships across the university: The executive director will be an engaged, positive, and inspiring campus leader. It will be important to continue elevating the visibility of the office of admissions and the scope of its work, while building and maintaining strong, collaborative relationships across the campus.

An ability to communicate up, down, and across the office and university organizational structure will be a considerable strength. It will also be essential for the executive director to foster an open, transparent, and ongoing dialogue with faculty and senior administrators to engender cooperation, trust, and confidence.

The executive director will work closely with Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs to ensure a smooth transition from admission to matriculation, supporting students as they integrate into the University of Utah's academic community. Equally important is building strong relationships across colleges and academic departments—establishing credibility, aligning enrollment priorities, and demonstrating a clear commitment to supporting their needs. Through these partnerships, the executive director will serve as an effective advocate for the admissions team and strengthen the university's collective efforts to promote student success.

Leverage technology and AI to enhance experience and operational efficiency: As technology evolves rapidly, the next executive director will thoughtfully integrate current and emerging tools—including AI—to elevate the student recruitment and enrollment experience. They will identify and implement solutions that strengthen Utah's brand visibility, streamline workflows, and reduce administrative burden.

Inspire the team and align resources for growth: The new executive director will play a critical role in ensuring strong, coordinated teams across admissions, high school programs and orientation. As enrollment has grown, there has been an expected impact on staff and the resources required to execute their work. The executive director will conduct a review of organizational needs in order to align people and resources for maximum efficiency to enable additional enrollment growth. The continued professional development of staff is essential and requires high standards with an eye toward maintaining healthy working relationships, open channels of communication, and high morale.

Candidate Qualifications

The executive director will be a strategic, forward-thinking, collaborative, and skilled professional who will engage the University of Utah's campus constituents in the vision for admissions, high school programs and orientation, garnering support, trust, confidence, and collegiality. The ideal candidate will have progressive leadership experience in admissions and early college outreach, with an affinity for partnering with colleagues in financial aid and student affairs. Experience leading and collaborating with orientation offices is also desired.

The ideal candidate will have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

Vision and Leadership: A record of progressive leadership in admissions and early college programs; ability to shape and deliver Utah's future student body within the context of university goals; ability to inspire and motivate a team to find joy in their work; willingness to go the extra mile; affinity for developing complex recruitment strategies; and understanding of undergraduate education within a research-intensive university.

Strong Analytical Capacity: Ability to produce plans and budgets that link expenditures to outcomes; capacity to assess the effectiveness of how recruitment funds are employed; ability to produce regular and systematic comparative reports that detail progress toward admissions goals; experience employing information on national trends in higher education and on developments in competitor institutions effectively in planning; and the willingness to engage in continuous dialogue about issues surrounding admissions with senior leadership and faculty.

Demonstrated Ability in Creative Marketing: Proven success in innovative thinking; excellent execution of both complex and routine marketing strategies; record of taking programs to new levels of success; experience in building community/organization partnerships; and ability to think creatively and to leverage technology.

Superior Communication Skills: Dynamic speaker, strong writer, and active listener who will communicate effectively with all constituencies, including prospective students and their families, the admissions staff, administrative departments, faculty, alumni, trustees, and the public.

Personal Qualities: A sense of urgency and engagement; honesty, integrity, candor, authenticity, and a strong moral compass; a genuine interest in forming a team with staff and university leaders; a personal presence that is active and inclusive; ability to observe, listen, learn, and clarify needs while engendering trust quickly among various constituencies; and ability to travel during peak times in the admissions cycle, including possible international travel.

Credentials: A master's degree is required. Experience in a large research-intensive university is preferred.

University of Utah: An Overview



The state's oldest and largest institution of higher education, the University of Utah, is the Flagship University of the State. A community of students, staff, and scholars, the University of Utah—affectionately called "the U"—is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through innovative research; the education of future citizens, professionals, and leaders; and scholarly and creative pursuits that preserve and enlarge our understanding of the human condition. This is accomplished in an open environment that invites active participation from and interaction across all voices in a tradition of civilized discourse.

The University of Utah is a complex institution that serves the people of Utah and beyond, while conducting fundamental research and scholarship of international import. As a premier research university, the U is committed to building world-class research programs and attracting and retaining the best faculty from across the nation and throughout the world. The university is strongly committed to delivering outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education that prepares students for leadership roles in Utah, the country, and the world. The university's partnership with the state is reflected in its deep commitment to providing education for Utah's residents and serving its local and regional communities.

The university is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). As one of the 65 distinguished research universities that comprise the AAU, the U is committed to building world-class research programs and attracting and retaining the best faculty from across the nation and throughout the world.

University of Utah Asia Campus (UAC)

The University of Utah Asia Campus (UAC), located in Incheon, South Korea, extends the mission of the University of Utah by providing access to a flagship U.S. research university education in Asia. Students enrolled at UAC complete the same curriculum and earn the same University of Utah degrees as students studying in Salt Lake City, with the opportunity to transition between campuses as part of their academic experience.



UAC serves as an important component of the university's global strategy—expanding international reach, strengthening the institution's global reputation, and creating new pathways for students from Asia and around the world to engage with the University of Utah community.

The For Utah Scholarship

Beginning with the class entering in the fall semester 2020, the U has created a new scholarship program that allows entering freshmen from Utah who are eligible for Pell Grants to enroll at no cost. This new scholarship initiative has the potential to change college access and enrollment trends across Utah.

Innovation Nation

The University of Utah is one of the best in the nation at creating startup companies based on student and faculty research. This is indicative of the innovative and industrious thinking found across campus and in classrooms.

For additional information, visit <https://innovation.utah.edu/>.

Campus is a Destination

Whether lectures, concerts, museums, gardens, or Broadway-quality theatre, the campus is chock full of exciting things to do nearly every day of the year. Attractions include the [Natural History Museum of Utah](#), [Kingsbury Hall](#), [Pioneer Theatre](#), [Red Butte Garden](#), and the [Utah Museum of Fine Arts](#).

For additional information, visit www.utah.edu/arts.

Big 12 Athletics

After building a national reputation as a football powerhouse and achieving success across multiple sports, Utah Athletics officially joined the Big 12 Conference in August 2024. This transition marks a new era of competition in one of the nation's premier athletic leagues, recognized for its strength in football, basketball, and Olympic sports. Utah's invitation was driven not only by athletic excellence but also by the university's strong academic profile and research achievements. With new rivalries and opportunities ahead, it is an exciting time to be part of the University of Utah!

Additional information about [The University of Utah](#) may be found via the following links:

- [Fast Facts](#)
- [Outstanding Alumni](#)
- [Rankings](#)



Leadership

Taylor R. Randall, University President



Taylor R. Randall was selected by the Utah Board of Higher Education as the 17th president of the University of Utah in August 2021. An award-winning educator, innovative leader, and champion of higher education, he brings more than two decades of experience at the U, serving as both dean of the David Eccles School of Business and an accounting professor. He is the first alumnus to serve as president since 1973. He graduated from the University of Utah in 1990 with honors in accounting. He earned an MBA and a doctorate in operations and information management from the Wharton School of Business at the University of

Pennsylvania.

Mitzi M. Montoya, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs



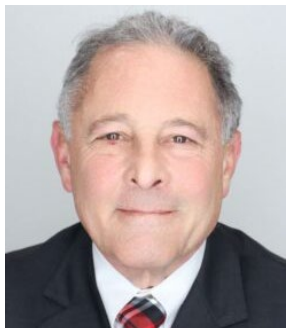
Mitzi M. Montoya, Ph.D., was appointed provost and senior vice president for academic affairs in January 2023. She joined the University of Utah with a vigor for solving problems, breaking barriers, and innovating change for the greater good.

Dr. Montoya is a thought leader in higher education. Throughout her career, she has supported student and faculty success, enhanced entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems, and led collaborative initiatives to find solutions for social, technical, and political challenges.

Before joining the U, Dr. Montoya was the dean of the Anderson School of Management at the University of New Mexico and the Sara Hart Kimball dean of the College of Business at Oregon State University. At Arizona State University (ASU), she was dean of the College of Technology & Innovation, vice provost of the ASU Polytechnic campus, and the inaugural vice president and university dean of entrepreneurship and innovation. Prior to ASU, Dr. Montoya spent 15 years at North Carolina State University, where she held the Zelnak Chair in Marketing & Innovation in the Poole College of Management. She received her doctorate in Marketing and Statistics and a BS in Applied Engineering Science from Michigan State University.

Dr. Montoya's entrepreneurial approach to problem-solving is driven by her research on innovation processes and strategies and influenced by her experiences as a former American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow. As provost, Dr. Montoya works to inspire students, faculty, and staff; lead innovation efforts; and help the U become a top 10 public university with unsurpassed societal impact.

Paul Kohn, Senior Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success



Dr. Paul Kohn serves as the Senior Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success at the University of Utah, where he oversees enrollment management, undergraduate studies, global engagement, University Connected Learning, and regional campuses.

He brings more than two decades of experience in higher education leadership, previously serving as Vice Provost for Enrollment Management at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he led major gains in applications, enrollment growth, student diversity, and student success initiatives. Prior to Georgia Tech, he held several senior roles at the University of Arizona, including Dean of Admissions and Vice President for Enrollment Management.

A first-generation college graduate from Brooklyn, Dr. Kohn earned his BS from Cornell University, followed by a Master's in Educational Administration and a PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Arizona.



Salt Lake City, Utah

Salt Lake City is consistently ranked among the best places to live in the United States, recognized for its strong economy, abundant outdoor recreation, and high overall quality of life. It ranks as the 29th best city nationally, supported by robust job growth, housing affordability, and a healthy business climate. Set at roughly 4,300 feet on the east bench of the Salt Lake Valley, the University of Utah enjoys expansive views of the valley below and immediate access to the Wasatch Mountains—central to the region’s celebrated lifestyle and year-round recreation. The city is also highly accessible: the international airport is only minutes from downtown, and the TRAX light-rail system connects the airport, the university, and major destinations across the valley.

Salt Lake City’s global visibility continues to rise, especially as the region prepares to host the **2034 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games**, marking the return of the Games to Utah for the first time since 2002 and affirming the state’s reputation as a premier winter sports destination. Beyond its natural beauty and recreational appeal, the metro area offers a vibrant and rapidly evolving urban environment. The city blends a lively downtown—with restaurants, performing arts, professional sports, and cultural institutions—with distinct neighborhoods and a thriving tech and innovation corridor known as Silicon Slopes. Residents enjoy more than 300 days of sunshine each year, easy access to national parks, and a community known for strong civic engagement and a welcoming spirit. As investments in transportation, public spaces, and Olympic-related infrastructure continue, Salt Lake City stands out as one of the most dynamic and livable metropolitan regions in the West.



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 Utah in this search, which will remain open until an appointment is made.

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

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Consultant Christy Pratt and Senior Associate Bree Liddell
ExecDirAdmissionUtah@wittkieffer.com

The University of Utah values candidates who have experience working in settings with students from diverse backgrounds and possess a strong commitment to improving access to higher education for historically underrepresented students.

Individuals from historically underrepresented groups, such as minorities, women, qualified persons with disabilities and protected veterans are encouraged to apply. Veterans' preference is extended to qualified applicants, upon request and consistent with University policy and Utah state law. Upon request, reasonable accommodations in the application process will be provided to individuals with disabilities.

The University of Utah is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and does not discriminate based upon race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, genetic information, or protected veteran's status. The University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and 34 CFR part 106. The requirement not to discriminate in education programs or activities extends to admission and employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, or both.

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