



Vice President for University Communications and Marketing Leadership Profile

Kent State University seeks a creative, experienced, strategic and high-energy communication leader to serve as its next Vice President for University Communications and Marketing. A member of the President's Cabinet, the Vice President for University Communications and Marketing reports to the president and serves as the senior officer providing overall executive leadership and management of the Division of University Communications and Marketing (UCM). This individual will advance Kent State's strategic vision and goals by strengthening awareness, engagement, and support among key constituencies through the development and execution of a comprehensive communications and marketing plan. The successful individual will believe in the mission of Kent State University; appreciate our commitment to access, completion and excellence; and demonstrate a keen understanding of the role communication plays in achieving those outcomes.

Kent State University Overview

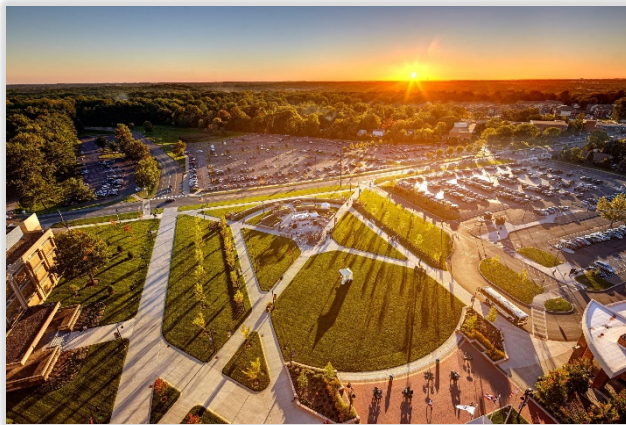
Consistently among Ohio's top three largest public universities in terms of enrollment, Kent State University is ranked by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching among the nation's 91 public higher-research universities. Kent State ranks among the top 100 national public universities and in the top tier of national universities in the 2021 rankings by U.S. News and World Report. The university has the distinction of being recognized by Forbes on the Best Employers for Women 2021 list, ranking No. 57 in the nation overall and eighth among colleges and universities nationally. Kent State continues to be highly ranked as a top employer. Forbes and Statista named Kent State No. 1 among employers in northern Ohio on the 2020 America's Best-in-State Employers list that highlights America's best employers, and a top educational institution on the Ohio list. Also in 2021, Kent State was recognized for the 10th time as a Great College to Work For by the Chronicle of Higher Education, making its coveted Honor Roll with recognition in seven categories: Compensation and Benefits; Confidence in Senior Leadership; Diversity, Equity and Belonging; Faculty Experience; Faculty and Staff Well-Being; Mission and Pride; and Shared Governance. Kent State was listed as one of the 2021 "Best of the Best" Colleges and Universities for LGBTQ+ Students by Campus Pride. For the 12th straight year, the university's Kent Campus received the Military Friendly School designation for 2021-2022.

With eight campuses across Northeast Ohio, the College of Podiatric Medicine, Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative, Twinsburg Academic Center and academic sites in major world cities including New York City and Florence, Kent State is one of Ohio's leading public universities and a major educational, economic and cultural resource far beyond the Northeast Ohio region it has served since 1910.

Kent State University boasts a population of nearly 35,000 students, 5,000 full-and part-time faculty and staff members and 262,000 alumni worldwide. The university comprises eight campuses that produce 10,000 career-ready graduates each year.

- [Kent Campus](#)
- [Kent State University at Ashtabula](#)
- [Kent State University Columbiana County \(campuses in East Liverpool and Salem\)](#)
- [Kent State University at Geauga \(in Burton\) and the Twinsburg Academic Center](#)
- [Kent State University at Stark \(in Canton\)](#)
- [Kent State University at Trumbull \(in Warren\)](#)
- [Kent State University at Tuscarawas \(in New Philadelphia\)](#)

Kent State is a powerful economic engine, directly contributing more than \$1 billion annually to the Northeast Ohio region's prosperity. When coupled with the earnings of the Kent State alumni, the university's annual economic impact on the region soars to nearly \$3.4 billion and more than \$3.8 billion statewide, according to a 2018 external study.



The university's Kent Campus, which has a student body of nearly 26,000 and a thriving residential population, is located on a beautiful 953-acre campus in Kent, Ohio, a city of 30,000 within the greater Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area. The campus provides the intellectual, scientific, social, economic, and artistic resources of a major research university in a safe and serene campus setting. In 2018 Kent State was ranked the safest big college campus in Ohio and 25th safest in the country, according to

the National Council for Home Safety and Security. Also in 2018 the Kent Campus launched a 10-year, \$1-billion facilities master plan to better serve the needs of students and the entire Kent State community. The plan enhances the welcoming feeling of the university's iconic Front Campus and genuine sense of place, elevates inclusive healthy living-learning environments, links a campus-wide series of spaces focused on innovation and expands the dynamic synergy with the city of Kent.

Kent State University's seven regional campuses draw full- and part-time students, now totaling more than 9,000, primarily from their local communities across Northeast Ohio. Like the Kent Campus, each regional campus is thoroughly engaged in its surrounding community, making available the rich resources of a comprehensive and diverse university, significantly impacting that area's economic well-being and quality of life. Each campus has the flexibility to meet wide-ranging local needs through associate and selected baccalaureate programs; continuing

education and training; research/technology parks; and facilities for advanced technology, manufacturing and the performing arts.

Kent State is a member of the Mid-American Conference and participates in 11 women's sports and eight men's sports including football in the Division I Bowl Subdivision level. The university is consistently recognized as one of the top performing programs in the conference academically and athletically; for example, most recently winning the 2021 Jacoby Trophy as the MAC's top women's athletic program and the 2021 MAC Institutional Academic Achievement Award.

Since 2015, Kent State has pursued an ambitious strategic plan, known as [*A Strategic Roadmap to a Distinctive Kent State*](#). The university's priorities are as follows:

- **Priority 1:** Students First. Provide an inclusive and engaged living-learning environment where all students thrive and graduate as informed citizens committed to a life of impact.
- **Priority 2:** A Distinctive Kent State. Drive innovation, idea generation, and national distinction through top-tier academic and research programs including the recruitment and support of talented faculty and staff.
- **Priority 3:** Global Competitiveness. Advance Kent State's impact and reach as a leading international university.
- **Priority 4:** Regional Impact. Serve as the innovative engine and engaged partner to meet community needs and enhance quality of life in the region and state.
- **Priority 5:** Organizational Stewardship. Ensure a culture of continuous improvement and the efficient stewardship of university resources and infrastructure.



Northeast Ohio: A Major Population and Economic Center



Kent State is located in a major population and economic center. Northeast Ohio is home to more than 4.5 million people and seven Fortune 500 firms and is one of the nation's top five industrial markets and a leader in new technology. The region is rich in natural and cultural amenities, including the splendor of the Great Lakes, one of the country's most-visited national parks, the nation's second-largest theatre district, a world-class symphony orchestra, renowned museums, three major sports teams, eclectic neighborhoods and multicultural experiences in settings from urban to rural. KSU employees obtain their healthcare from several leading hospital systems, including the Cleveland Clinic, which is currently the second-ranked hospital in the United States.

Our Community

In recent years, the city of Kent has experienced dramatic revitalization as a result of a \$130-million public and private investment. Kent State University officials, city administrators, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA), and other partners have collaborated to make Kent an excellent place to live, work, study, visit and play. The Kent community genuinely supports its hometown university sports teams and offers a welcoming, supportive, and engaged community for Kent State's athletic programs, teams, coaches and student-athletes.



Cultural elements in Kent include various arts, environmental and entertainment events during the year as well as the Kent State University Museum, which focuses on the history of fashion design and decorative arts in the U.S. and around the world. The Kent Stage, located downtown, is an iconic venue for a variety of arts performances in music and theater, including concerts, theatrical productions, film festivals and movie premieres. In addition, the City of Kent operates nearly 20 parks and preserves, the largest of which is the 56-acre Fred Fuller Park along the Cuyahoga River. Haymaker Farmers Market is held year-round in Kent and is one of many weekly markets in communities surrounding the university.

The city of Kent is just 20 minutes from Akron, home of more than 20,000 businesses, including the global headquarters of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Northeast Ohio is home to some of the world's leading liquid crystal and polymer research programs and companies.

Kent is less than an hour from Cleveland, situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie, which is the second largest city in Ohio and the largest media market in the state. With 33,000 protected acres and 2.7 million visits each year, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park is located less than 30 minutes from campus and provides connectivity on the Towpath Trail all the way to Cleveland. Cleveland has professional sports teams in football, baseball, basketball and hockey. Cleveland is home to Playhouse Square Center, the second largest performing arts center in the U.S. behind New York's Lincoln Center. Playhouse Square includes five theaters within what is known as the Cleveland Theater District, with resident companies such as Cleveland Playhouse, Cleveland Ballet and Cleveland International Film Festival. Cleveland is home to the Cleveland Orchestra, widely considered one of the finest orchestras in the world and boasts the I.M. Pei-designed Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Great Lakes Science Center, boating, fishing, swimming and other waterfront recreation. The city's University Circle is a 550-acre concentration of cultural, educational and medical institutions, including the Cleveland Botanical Garden, Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

The Division of University Communications and Marketing

The Division of University Communications and Marketing (UCM) provides instrumental leadership in advancing Kent State University's competitive position with the higher education marketplace. UCM identifies and strengthens the university's position, reputation and image through coordination of a university-wide marketing plan. Designed to influence key constituencies with carefully framed strategies, key components of the marketing plan include advertising, internal communications, media relations, public relations, social media and the university's web presence. The division's efforts focus on promoting the Kent State brand and marketing Kent State as an award-winning, student-ready university dedicated to access and completion for all.



UCM provides professional consultation and resources designed to assist the communications and marketing efforts housed in programs, departments, colleges and other units throughout Kent State's eight-campus system.

The division is made up of approximately 40 professionals who bring extensive experience

from the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, agencies, broadcast media and publishing houses. The strong and varied backgrounds of staff members allow the department to build teams to assist Kent State units in strategizing and meeting communications needs and marketing goals while integrating the overall marketing plan of the university. Services offered include creative services, media relations, internal communications, photography, videography, publications, social media services, advertising, marketing and communications planning and web services.

Vice President for University Communications and Marketing

Roles and Responsibilities for the Vice President for University Communications and Marketing

The Vice President for University Communications and Marketing serves as an executive officer of Kent State University and provides overall leadership for the Division of University Communications and Marketing. The position reports directly to President Todd Diacon and serves as a member of the President's Cabinet. The Vice President also serves as a principal liaison to the External Relations and Philanthropy Committee of the Kent State University Board of Trustees and works collaboratively with Cabinet officers on university-wide initiatives.

The Vice President for University Communications and Marketing leads a divisional team of approximately 40 staff members and oversees more than \$7 million in funding annually. Kent State uses a hybrid centralized/decentralized model for communications and marketing. The vice president provides overall leadership and directs the central communications team as well as works collegially with leadership, faculty and communications and marketing staff housed in regional campuses, colleges and other units. The new vice president will find opportunities and interest across the university system in building to a more unified approach, greater collaboration and synergies.

The successful candidate will:

- Set the vision and lead the execution of a core messaging, branding and marketing strategy that advances Kent State University's strategic vision, mission and goals across Ohio, regionally, nationally and globally;
- Develop and implement a proactive, comprehensive communications and marketing plan in support of that strategy;
- Increase the national and international visibility of the accomplishments, advances in knowledge, and impact achieved by members of the university faculty, staff, students, alumni and programs;
- Establish and maintain the Kent State University narrative, image and brand and communicate it effectively and authentically across all platforms and campuses while reaching multiple internal and external audiences including students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, donors, policy makers, the public and media;
- Plan and conduct integrated marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Kent State as a student-ready college and promote student enrollment, access, affordability and completion across the university system;
- Ensure marketing efforts speak to diverse audiences using tone, imagery and approaches that resonate with various constituencies;
- Anticipate and manage communications for sensitive campus issues, emergencies and crises that could impact Kent State's operations, resources and reputation;
- Work collaboratively to create communications, public relations and marketing opportunities that advance institutional fundraising goals including the successful completion of Kent State's newly announced \$350-million comprehensive campaign;
- Provide overall guidance and support for decentralized communication and marketing staff in schools, departments, colleges and regional campuses to meet their specific needs, ensure consistency of branding and messaging, and leverage resources effectively and efficiently;
- Lead, mentor and motivate the division's employees to excel in the pursuit of Kent State's strategic vision and goals;
- Lead divisional planning, resource development and allocation, technical support, research and assessment; and

- Serve as the university's primary liaison overseeing the transition of WKSU-FM, the nationally award-winning public radio news for Northeast Ohio, to a public service operating agreement with Ideastream Public Media during the 2021-2022 year.

Qualifications and Qualities

A bachelor's degree in a relevant field, or the equivalent combination of education and experience, and a minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in the leadership and management of a communications and marketing organization and/or strategy are required. Experience in higher education is preferred.

Qualifications and qualities of the ideal candidate include:

- Ability to be a persuasive advocate for higher education and for the stories, ideas, images and approaches that best promote and enhance Kent State's reputation for excellence, its mission, vision, core values and strategic agenda;
- A strong record as an innovative, approachable and engaging leader with exceptional judgment and high standards for personal and professional excellence, honesty, and integrity;
- Excellent interpersonal, organizational and communications skills;
- Successful experience providing strategic communications and marketing counsel to executive leadership;
- Commitment to enhancing diversity, equity and a sense of belonging, and a track record of success in reflecting these aims and images in the work of the division;
- Proven effectiveness and expertise in developing and implementing branding and strategic marketing plans, in both traditional and new media, that achieve targeted goals;
- An open, collegial leadership style that promotes collaboration, builds trust, and unifies diverse audiences around a common vision;
- Proven track record of successful crisis communications management with internal and external constituencies;
- Success in building an effective structure and cohesive marketing team and identity across a large complex institution;
- Responsiveness and flexibility, with the ability to gracefully juggle numerous competing priorities, interests and projects and to deliver outcomes as promised and on time;
- Proven capacity to recruit, retain, empower and mentor staff to achieve optimal results;
- Experience with strategic and operational planning and budgeting;
- Competency in using data, analytics and best practices in research and assessment for decision making and continuous improvement; and

- Understanding of current and projected changes in the medium of communication, the media landscape and developing technologies, particularly those used and preferred by current and next-generation students.

Compensation

Compensation will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications.

Application Process

Candidates should apply through [Kent State's employment system](#) and include a cover letter describing relevant experiences and interest in this position; curriculum vitae/resume; and names, titles and contact information for five references. To assure full consideration, application materials should be received by **November 5, 2021**. Documents submitted to Kent State University for employment opportunities are subject to disclosure under the Ohio Public Records law.

Questions, requests for information, and nominations may be directed to the search coordinator, Dr. Charlene Reed, Vice President and University Secretary, creed2@kent.edu.

Kent State University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.