Position and Candidate Specification

Vice President, People and Talent

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Assignment: 14556-003
We are at a unique time for the University, for Austin, and for Texas.

The University of Texas at Austin ("UT Austin") is the flagship university and the educational and research engine of the most dynamic city in the country’s most thriving state. We have countless strengths that make us special, including the ability to create impact at scale and with a breadth of excellence that few other universities can match. And we are powered by outstanding and diverse faculty, staff, students, and alumni who have incredible talent, passion for impact, and unparalleled potential. During the past century-and-a-half, we have grown from eight professors and 221 students into a dynamic and diverse community of more than half a million learners, scholars, leaders, and trailblazers. Today, we educate more than 50,000 students each year from all 50 states and 123 countries. In 2020, we proudly earned the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation from the U.S. Department of Education, adding to our existing Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) designations.

The University of Texas at Austin has recently published a bold 10-year strategic plan to become the world’s highest impact public research university. Our people are the foundation for all that we do at UT Austin and will be absolutely essential to delivering on our mission and aspiration. We are committed to transforming the way we operate to better attract, recruit, hire, retain, and develop the ~20,000 employees of the university. One of the first steps in this journey is the creation of a new role: Vice President of People and Talent. This role will serve as a trusted advisor to the University President to develop and implement a talent / HR strategy for the university and oversee the university’s central human resources (HR) organization.

THE POSITION

As the leader of the Human Resources organization, the VP will guide the strategy, vision, and operations for UT Austin’s HR function. They will provide comprehensive leadership in developing and implementing industry-leading practices across the university including a best-in-class employee experience, supported by top capabilities in talent acquisition, learning and development, talent management, performance management, total rewards, employee engagement, and HR technology. The VP will lead a team of nearly 70 HR professionals.

The VP will be a critical and visible member of the university’s leadership team reporting directly to the President, and interfacing regularly with other top university leaders. They will also foster close connections between UT Austin’s staff and academic HR leaders, as well as individual staff members across campus.

This leader will have the unique opportunity to transform the HR organization and shape the future of how HR operates at UT Austin. The VP will work with other university leaders to optimize the team, make ongoing people, process, and system improvements, and drive the strategic efforts that will enable UT Austin to achieve its aspiration of becoming the world’s highest impact public research institution. Importantly, the VP will advise on critical talent-focused efforts within the UT Austin Strategic Plan, including but not limited to:

- Recruiting outstanding staff
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Lead the transformation of the HR organization
The VP will be responsible for developing a cohesive long-term strategy for UT Austin’s HR organization that touches upon each of the major sub-functions. They will work to understand the current state, develop a strategy and vision for the future, recommend improvements, and lead change management to oversee transformation efforts. The VP will:

- Develop the future talent and HR function strategy for UT Austin: this will require building a deep understanding of internal performance and benchmarking against other institutions / best practices to identify pain points, challenges, and capabilities gaps. From this understanding, the VP will develop a vision for the future that improves key capabilities in line with UT Austin’s strategic and talent priorities and develop a transformation plan to drive change in the organization.

- Oversee transformation efforts and execute on the strategy: develop a transformation roadmap and bring together key stakeholders from the HR organization and across the university to contribute to the design and delivery of key initiatives. The VP will oversee, orchestrate, advise, and guide this process while maintaining accountability for progress and outcomes in building functional maturity for UT Austin’s HR and talent management function. Additionally, the VP will oversee change management efforts required to successfully deliver the talent and HR transformation. In collaboration with University Marketing and Communications, they will lead a change management and communication process that engages stakeholders across campus to build support for the development and delivery of a UT Austin talent and HR strategy.

Oversee delivery of core HR for UT Austin
The VP will provide inspirational leadership to UT Austin’s HR team and develop relationships with key university leadership to gain insights into HR customer requirements and enable strong partnership across campus. This leadership will enable and inform improvements across the following:

- Collaboration and Communication
  - Model strong, open, and proactive communication across the University and the school-based HR teams. Create strategies that disseminate information in a timely, consistent, and user-friendly manner that informs managers and staff about HR related policies, as well as educates the community about the role of HR in the University’s mission
  
  - Collaborate and work closely with the senior HR leaders of the schools to develop a university-wide integrated human resources function that focuses on strategic and operational integration
– Work proactively with the Provost’s Office and Faculty Affairs leadership in each of the schools in order to coordinate HR strategy and processes with respect to faculty and staff across the University

### Talent acquisition
– Manage and enhance talent pipelines, identifying and attracting candidates from a range of traditional and innovative sources to find and hire excellent and diverse talent, highlighting the dynamic ascent of Austin, as a destination of choice to live and work
– Foster a simple, rapid, and equitable talent acquisition process leveraging outstanding people, processes, and technology
– Maintain robust, standardized offers and onboarding processes to drive a transparent recruiting process; set employees up for success while increasing retention and reducing risk to the university

### Learning and development
– Foster UT Austin’s culture of commitment to long-term learning and development (L&D) to support employees in their individualized progression, considering diverse backgrounds and career goals
– Leverage UT Austin’s world-class higher education infrastructure to train and develop employees
– Support L&D programs with central tools, guidelines, and best practices

### Talent management
– Develop programs and practices to identify succession and development opportunities for key roles and talent
– Utilize creative retention approaches through continued talent and professional development
– Take an equitable approach to identifying and nurturing high-potential talent

### Performance management
– Develop and manage standard performance management expectations, cadence, methods, and goals; manage tools to enable evaluation of employee performance

### Total rewards
– Ensure competitive compensation and benefits, with a total rewards strategy that addresses employee needs across the dimensions of physical, emotional, and financial well-being
– Administer benefits to staff, faculty, and temporary workers across UT Austin
– Continuously benchmark and refresh the university’s competitiveness as it relates to being employer of choice in a competitive domestic talent market, as well as across other peer institutions in regions/cities with rising popularity
– Increase communication around changes to compensation and benefits to ensure an equitable and transparent approach to pay
- **Employee engagement**
  - Set up and manage forums for internal employee communication (e.g., employee engagement and satisfaction surveys, town halls, etc.)

- **Employee enablement**
  - Lead HR service delivery that meets customer expectations in a timely manner, and enables stakeholders to action HR requests in an effective and efficient manner
  - Partner with key university stakeholder to support effective and efficient implementation of HR activities
  - Collaborate with campus leaders to maintain partnership between HR and key organizational customers

- **HR Technology**
  - Leverage Human Capital Management (HCM) systems and technology to deliver services to university stakeholders and create a foundation for standardized HR processes
Candidate Profile

The VP will be a values-driven, agile, and thoughtful leader with a strong track record of leading dynamic and complex organizations, ideally in a higher-education setting. This leader will exhibit strong leadership and communication skills, have the capacity to drive innovation and manage change, and be capable of collaborating with and influencing executive leaders from across the University. They will also bring an ability to leverage data-driven insights and overcome operational challenges to develop and implement modern HR strategies.

Additionally, the VP will bring comprehensive experience and understanding of human resources across each of the relevant functions including end-to-end talent management, engagement, and rewards to help UT Austin realize its potential for being a top destination for talent and the best place to work. This leader’s ability to simultaneously develop a vision and strategy, leverage UT Austin’s scale, and understand / maintain UT Austin’s culture will be critical to success.

**IDEAL EXPERIENCE**

- 15+ years of experience in HR within large, multi-faceted, decentralized and complex organizations
- Leadership experience developing and implementing objectives and strategies for large organizations and effecting organizational and cultural change. Experience effectively interfacing with executive and senior leaders
- Comprehensive knowledge of best practices and a track record of accomplishments and transformations across multiple of the following areas: total rewards, employee health and wellness, talent acquisition, talent management, performance management, succession planning, employee and labor relations, HR services delivery, and HR information technology
- Experience leading HR leaders and functional experts including Divisional / Business Unit / Regional / School HR managers and center of excellence leaders, such as learning and development, total rewards, talent acquisition and management, and external partners
- A demonstrated ability to navigate the complexities of an organization similar in nature to a large research university and a passion for advancing its research and teaching mission; prior experience in higher education is a plus
- Strong project and process management, analytical, creative problem solving, communication skills (written and verbal), and data and information synthesis skills
- Master's degree in HR, Business Administration, or other advanced degree in a relevant field strongly preferred
CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Thinking strategically
- Leverages acumen to formulate full potential ambition and articulate an inspiring vision for HR, as well as the university as a whole, working with the President and other university leaders
- Distills complex data to define the HR strategy; able to draw accurate conclusions about the future even with incomplete information
- Looks externally to assess industry and trends to identify priorities 3+ years ahead

Driving transformational change
- Develops and institutionalizes new approaches while fostering agility and adaptability
- Effectively balances the desire and need for change with an understanding of how much change the university is capable of handling; successfully creates realistic goals and execution plans that are achievable
- Champions change creating aligned and committed change leaders who will influence the change across the function and university system

Engaging, collaborating, and influencing
- Builds effective partnerships with key stakeholders across the university working effectively to define and initiate action, obtain commitments to goals, drive decisions, solve problems, and advance next steps
- Systematically identifies ways to collaborate across the university; builds processes to facilitate proactive collaboration with a bias towards action; serves as a trusted partner able to motivate peers and others to action without formal authority
- Communicates, influences, and aligns across all levels of the university; builds structures and processes to encourage and enable inclusive conversations and diverse viewpoints
By virtue of its public mission, culture of innovation, location, size and rich history, The University of Texas at Austin is one of the highest-impact universities in the world. As the top public university in Texas and the flagship of The University of Texas System, UT Austin is an influential catalyst for scientific, economic, and societal progress throughout the state.

Founded in 1883, the university’s main campus spans 431 acres and has a community of 51,000 students, 3,500 faculty members and more than 15,000 staff members. In addition to its main campus near downtown, UT Austin extends to the J.J. Pickle Research Campus in north Austin, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in south Austin, the McDonald Observatory in west Texas, the Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas, and several cultural and historic sites across the state.

The university is a leader in the fields of energy, computer science, entrepreneurship, and national security, and its graduate programs in accounting, petroleum engineering, geology, Latin American history, and sociology of population rank No. 1 in the United States. UT Austin is among the top producers of doctoral degrees in the nation, and its alumni and faculty include Nobel laureates.

UT Austin offers more than 150 undergraduate degree programs and more than 230 graduate programs across its 18 colleges and schools in the sciences, arts, humanities, and professions:

- Cockrell School of Engineering
- College of Education
- College of Fine Arts
- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Natural Sciences
- College of Pharmacy
- Dell Medical School
- Graduate School
- Jackson School of Geosciences
- LBJ School of Public Affairs
- McCombs School of Business
- Moody College of Communication
- School of Architecture
- School of Information
- School of Law
- School of Nursing
- School of Undergraduate Studies
- Steve Hicks School of Social Work
Each year, UT Austin researchers publish work that focuses on fighting and treating diseases, devising solutions to global problems, addressing critically important social issues and improving the human condition. As just one example, the lab of Jason McLellan, a faculty member in the Department of Molecular Biosciences, was critical to the development of COVID-19 vaccines.

A member of the Association of American Universities since 1929, UT Austin attracts nearly $800 million annually for research. Through a succession of large grants from the National Science Foundation, UT Austin has built a collection of the fastest supercomputers for open research in the world. The Department of Defense has designated UT Austin’s Applied Research Laboratories as one of five University Affiliated Research Centers for the Navy, and the university is a major collaborator with the Army Futures Command.

UT Austin has many academic programs ranked in the top 25 nationally, and the number continues to rise every year. At the graduate level, 55 programs rank among the top 10, representing 12 of the university’s colleges and schools. Almost 40 other programs rank in the top 25. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2022 lists the university as the 47th best university in the world, while U.S. News & World Report ranks it 10th among American public universities.

The university’s holdings comprise more than 170 million objects including a Gutenberg Bible and other rare books, manuscripts, photographs, artworks and artifacts from natural history to pop culture in eight museums and 17 libraries. The Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library was the first presidential library to be located on a college campus.

Over the past 10 years, the campus has undergone a significant modernization and expansion of its research, academic and community spaces. Recent new buildings — like the Gates Computer Science Complex and Dell Computer Science Hall, the G.B. Dealey Center for New Media, the Health Discovery and Health Transformation Buildings, Robert B. Rowling Hall and the Engineering Education and Research Center — have added new state-of-the-art facilities, high-tech labs and dynamic collaboration spaces that are transforming the student and faculty experience.

The university’s large and diverse student body, storied history, strong and supportive community, and richness of tradition have given rise to a proud alumni base of more than 500,000. These “Texas Exes” include founders or co-founders of Dell Computers, American Airlines, Dreamworks, 7-Eleven, National Instruments, Carmax, and Clear Channel Communications. Among UT Austin’s many well-known alumni are Matthew McConaughey, Kevin Durant, Michael Dell, Laura Bush, Jenna Bush Hager, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Wes Anderson, Robert Rodriguez, Renee Zellweger, Owen Wilson, Marcia Gay Harden, Sanya Richards Ross, Sam Rayburn, James Baker, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Brené Brown, Jim Allison, Rex Tillerson, Bill Moyers, and Walter Cronkite, as well as current Texas Governor Greg Abbott.

FACTS & FIGURES

National & International Rankings

- #10 Top Public Schools, National Universities, U.S. News & World Report 2022
- #7 U.S. Public Colleges, Business First 2020
- #8 Best-Value Public Colleges, Kiplinger 2019
THE CITY OF AUSTIN

Located beside the picturesque Hill Country of Central Texas, Austin is the state capital and the 4th largest city in Texas, which is among the top-five most diverse states in the nation. As the 11th-largest city in the United States, Austin is a vibrant and rapidly growing economic hub, widely regarded as a friendly, active and innovative community. It is consistently regarded as a national creative center that attracts talented people from across the world.

Austin serves as the corporate headquarters for Fortune 500 companies such as Oracle, Dell, Whole Foods, Tesla and many successful tech startups. Austin also hosts research and development offices for major technology-oriented companies such as Amazon, AMD, Apple, and Google, which have established their operations in Austin in large part to draw from the highly skilled talent the University produces. U.S. News and World Report consistently ranks Austin among its Best Places to Live in America, and Expedia recently ranked it No. 1 in its 21 Super-Cool U.S. Cities list.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

Spencer Stuart, a global executive search and leadership advisory firm, has been retained by the University of Texas at Austin to help identify and recruit the new Vice President of People And Talent (and Chief Human Resources Officer). All inquiries, nominations, and applications (CVs and letters of interest) should be sent electronically and in confidence to: UTAVPPT@spencerstuart.com.

The University of Texas at Austin is committed to providing an inclusive educational environment in which all students, faculty, and staff can learn, research, create, work and thrive free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, and misconduct. As an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, UT Austin complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.