SEARCH PROSPECTUS:

Dean of the College of Education
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The University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) is seeking a visionary leader to serve as the Dean of the College of Education. The Dean reports directly to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and leads a college comprised of five departments and two programs.

Founded in 1903, UNK is one of four distinct university campuses comprising the University of Nebraska system governed by the NU Board of Regents and President. Sister campuses include the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Omaha, and University of Nebraska Medical Center (Omaha). The system also includes the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture located in Curtis. The University of Nebraska at Kearney is a public, residential university committed to be one of the nation’s premier undergraduate institutions with excellent graduate education, scholarship, and public service.

The Dean will be an individual committed to shared governance with the experience and commitment to providing quality instructional programs, serving schools and communities and to promote the scholarly and creative activities and accomplishments of faculty and students as well as instructional excellence. At this pivotal moment for the University of Nebraska at Kearney, the Dean must be able to innovate in addressing challenges facing higher education and the University and to facilitate collaborative partnerships both inside and outside the University.

**ACADEMICS**

Originally founded as a normal school to provide education to aspiring teachers, today UNK offers 120 undergraduate majors, 22 pre-professional programs, and 27 masters/certificate programs. Under the leadership of Chancellor Douglas Kristensen, UNK’s residential campus mission is flourishing through high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs complemented by quality on-line programs. UNK has partnered with the NU Medical Campus to offer allied health programs and increase nursing enrollments on the Kearney campus—these and other programs are essential for meeting the health needs of central Nebraska and the region.

UNK takes pride in putting “students first,” the work ethic its students bring to the classroom and lab, its historical emphasis on teaching and learning, and educational access and affordability. It boasts a 14 to 1 student teacher ratio with 322 full-time and 127
part-time faculty. More than 75% of full-time faculty have completed the highest degrees in their fields. Students receive an incredible and unforgettable educational experience because of UNK’s welcoming and inclusive environment to all cultures, viewpoints, and ideas.

Each year, the UNK Honors Program admits approximately 10% of each entering freshman class based on a minimum 27 ACT score, top 25% class rank, letters of reference, extracurricular accomplishments, and essays. At present, there are 392 students in the Honors Program. Campus programs support students working one-on-one with professors to conduct original research and creative projects, and as part of our Strategic Plan, all academic programs and units are requiring completion of an extended and substantive faculty-guided experiential learning activity within the major field of study.

UNK’s undergraduate research program is a national model. UNK students participate in undergraduate research or creative activity under the direction of a faculty mentor in their discipline. The Office of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity provides funding and support for the Undergraduate Research Fellows Program and the Summer Student Research Program. UNK students also participate in NSF/Research Experiences for Undergraduates and INBRE research. Opportunities are provided for UNK students to present their projects at a campus-wide Student Research Day and at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, as well as at regional and national conferences in their disciplines, and exemplary work is published in a campus Undergraduate Research Journal. The variety of research and creative activity conducted by students has included studies of Macbeth and Communist policies, Peter the Great, police-assistance in recovery for drug addicts, and transgender inclusion on campuses, among others. Students are frequently co-authors in peer-reviewed articles published in scholarly journals.

UNK is the only campus in Nebraska to participate in the National Student Exchange Program that allows students to attend one of 175 other universities or colleges across the continent for a semester or a year, often at UNK tuition rates. UNK students travel the world each year in programs that range in length from several weeks to a full year.

CAMPUS LIFE
UNK’s student population is comprised of 4,429 undergraduate students and 1,850 graduate students. Students come to UNK from 92 of the 93 Nebraska counties, 48 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and over 50 countries.

UNK is a strong residential student-centered campus, with nearly 40% of the undergraduate population residing on campus. Residential life facilities include seven traditional-style residence halls, one suite-style residence hall, two Greek chapter house complexes, and one university apartment complex. Campus is comprised of 515 acres, including the new University Village (details below). UNK has more than 48 buildings including classrooms, labs, residence halls, and athletic venues. The location of the campus offers easy access to the city's vibrant and growing community including: cultural events, shopping centers, outdoor recreational facilities, affordable housing, award-winning restaurants, as well as hockey, musical shows, plays, and a variety of concerts, many within walking distance of the campus.
In March of 2016, construction began on the first phase of the University Village project, a shared vision of Chancellor Kristensen and the local community, structured as a public-private partnership. This 104-acre mixed-use development (academic, retail, office, residential, service and recreation) is a source of great pride and sign of the strength of town/gown relations between Kearney and UNK. University Village will be a community where university faculty, staff and students, retirees and others wanting to locate near the amenities offered can live and work adjacent to campus, in townhouses, apartments and single-family dwellings, and have walking access to neighborhood businesses.

Over the last decade, UNK has invested more than $100 million renovating or expanding every academic building and residence hall, the College of Education Building, the Nebraskan Student Union, Foster Field, and the Antelope/Nester complex of residence halls, which provide apartment style living and many new amenities for students. A major renovation and addition was completed to Bruner Hall of Science, including an all-new Planetarium, in fall 2009. A new Wellness Center addition to the Health and Sports Center/Cushing Coliseum opened in fall 2014. The new Health Science Education Complex, which houses the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Nursing Kearney division and UNK-based UNMC School of Allied Health Professions, opened in fall 2015. This unique partnership affords delivery of UNMC curriculums in the UNMC Colleges of Nursing and Allied Health Professions in a UNK facility.

State funding was received in 2016 to replace the aged Otto Olsen building, resulting in two significant projects in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS): The Fine Arts Building addition and renovation and the new STEM building. An addition of 5,500 square feet in Fine Arts will house the glassblowing lab, woodworking and metalworking studios, and new spaces for the drawing and painting studios. In May 2018, ground was broken on a new STEM building that will house physical science STEM programs in CAS and applied programs in the College of Business & Technology (CBT). In CAS, these include Mathematics and Statistics, Physics and Astronomy and the Engineering program. In the CBT, these include the programs in the Department of Industrial Technology, Aviation Systems Management, Construction Management, Industrial Distribution, and Interior and Product Design.

The University recently hosted the grand opening of the Lavonne Plambeck Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). The ECEC will serve children of UNK employees and also children of parents in the Kearney community. The ECEC will have a decidedly academic emphasis as it will be integrated with the Department of Teacher Education in the College of Education.

A Member of NCAA Division II, Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletic Association, Loper athletics include softball, football, volleyball, wrestling, women’s swimming and diving, women’s soccer, men’s and women’s cross country, men’s and women’s basketball, women’s tennis, women’s golf, and men’s and women’s track and field. UNK athletes are students first, boasting an average cumulative GPA for all 14 teams consistently above 3.0.

STUDENT SUCCESS
Many UNK programs have a job placement rate that is almost 100%, including Accounting, Athletic Training, Education (particularly those with endorsements in Biology, Chemistry, Language Arts, Math, Music, Physics, and Special Education), Computer Science and Information Technology, Graphic Design &
Media, Industrial Technology, School Psychology, and Speech-Language Pathology. As a result of its teaching excellence and high level of faculty/student interaction, UNK’s health sciences programs are growing (more than 800 students) and highly successful, with 84% of UNK graduates accepted to clinical programs and professional schools. Approximately 20% of all certified staff in schools and Educational Service Units across the state of Nebraska have at least one degree from UNK. Many UNK graduates become administrative leaders in both the public and private sectors of the state and the nation. Others go on to successfully apply to medical, law, and other professional and graduate schools across the country.

BUDGET AND FINANCE
The University of Nebraska at Kearney and NU system are financially sound as evidenced by successful annual compliance audits by the State Auditor’s Office. UNK and NU have not experienced state funding decreases as drastic as those in some other states, and NU bond ratings are strong. Operating on a biennial budget cycle, the system and campus are required to maintain balanced budgets. UNK is increasingly dependent on tuition revenue and continues to analyze strategies to enhance enrollment and retention to increase credit hour production while expanding access to UNK’s quality academic programs for traditional and non-traditional students. The public/private development of UNK’s University Village presents unprecedented opportunities to achieve these and other strategic goals.

KEARNEY COMMUNITY
UNK is in the middle of Kearney, Nebraska, a vibrant, attractive, progressive and growing community of more than 35,000 people. Kearney often makes national “top places to live” listings for numerous reasons, but it all comes down to this: Kearney offers a great quality of life. Kearney is small, yet continually growing; and modern, yet tenacious about preserving its distinctive traditions and pioneering heritage. Kearney’s citizens and members of the UNK community are known for their welcoming efforts to make immediate connections with newcomers.

Kearney’s bustling economy co-exists with the enviable quality of life that results from high-quality housing, excellent schools, medical care and other government services, a multitude of recreational and cultural opportunities for adults and children of all ages, and safe, welcoming neighborhoods. The unemployment rate in Kearney remains near the lowest in the nation. Kearney’s historic downtown features brick-paved streets and its bike trails, parks, golf courses, event center, and other entertainment and recreational opportunities bring people of all ages to events and activities every day.

Kearney’s alignment along the Platte River provides a picturesque backdrop where annually the world watches the Sandhill crane migration. For six weeks, late February to early April, more than 80% of the world’s population of Sandhill cranes converges on Nebraska’s Platte River, making Kearney the Sandhill Crane Capital of the world. The city is located in the very center of America’s heartland, a 4 ½-hour drive to Denver to the west, 5-hour drive to Kansas City to the southeast and 2 ½ hours to Omaha to the east.
The College of Education provides programs to prepare educators as well as professionals in the speech pathology, community counseling, sports, fitness, recreation and tourism fields. Programs of study have been developed in consultation with advisory committees to meet state and national standards. The faculty is committed to providing quality instructional programs, serving schools and communities. Professional education programs leading to initial certification are designed to develop each student’s knowledge, skills and dispositions related to specific endorsement areas. All programs within the College of Education are committed to preparing morally responsible professionals for a social and political democracy. Our desired outcomes for graduates focus on knowledge, skills and dispositions and a commitment to the infusion of technology, diversity and democratic principles.

UNK offers undergraduate programs for the preparation of early childhood, elementary, middle level, secondary, special education and K-12 teachers. Master's degree programs are offered in curriculum and instruction, special education, instructional technology, elementary and secondary administration, speech-language pathology, school counseling, community counseling, and reading. Specialist programs in school psychology and educational administration are also offered.

The College prepares professionals in sports management, recreation, exercise science, athletic training, and travel and tourism.

There are five departments in the College: Communication Disorders, Counseling & School Psychology; Educational Administration; Kinesiology and Sport Sciences; and Teacher Education. The Educator Certification Office, a student support center for educators, is also part of the College of Education.
THE LEADERSHIP AGENDA AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT DEAN

The new dean will:

- Lead an inclusive College-wide process for the creation of a cohesive and comprehensive mission and vision that identifies and addresses new opportunity horizons in Nebraska, building on its traditional state leadership, reputation, and values for teacher education and professional programs;

- Reinvigorate the College’s identity to enhance its genuine vibrancy and recognition, both in Nebraska and surrounding states, as the preeminent College of Education that serves rural communities and first-generation populations in the mid-west; produces primary and secondary school teachers who benefit from integrated emphasis on faculty teaching as well as scholarly and creative activities; and provides strong professional programs that contribute to the College’s presence as a beacon for state of Nebraska and the Great Plains.

- Underscore the history and advance the future of the College as the pre-eminent producer of educational professionals in the region.

- Engage in discussions with faculty, students, and key external stakeholders to identify and prioritize mission-relevant unmet needs and creative ways to enhance effectiveness in the formation, explanation, and delivery of College programs, around which there will be strong consensus and enthusiastic ownership among all participants;

- Focus on the College’s current offerings in on-line education and establish a direction for instructional delivery that balances on-line and in-person classroom learning, addresses additional state needs, and designs offerings that reflect needs and best practices in relation to accreditation standards as well as an expanded horizon of regional and national enrollment;

- Develop innovative programmatic partnerships with sister NU System institutions to marry their strengths with UNK’s strengths to create mutually beneficial opportunities to meet state needs and enhance enrollments;

- Undertake a fresh assessment of the College’s use and efficacy of adjunct faculty;

- Identify and tap into new pipelines for transfer students.
THE LEADERSHIP AGENDA AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT DEAN (cont.)

The new dean will find:
• Fellow deans who consult, vet ideas, and collaborate with each other as their natural way of working, and as a team, take pride in student success that relies heavily on personal attention;
• An environment aligned with values centered on student success; genuine commitments to and love for teaching, research, and creative activity; collaboration and partnership; openness, transparency, and approachability; innovation and experimentation with creative solutions; honesty, integrity, fairness, and respectfulness;
• A community in which to live and work that is welcoming and considers itself to be “bigger than a small town but smaller than a large city” with an excellent quality of life.

Opportunities for the next dean:
• Provide comprehensive leadership for a progressive college housed in a state-of-the-art building with nationally accredited departments and programs and a strong reputation across the region;
• Foster collaborative programmatic innovation within the College; with other UNK deans; in the NU system; and with other appropriate state and local community partners to meet state needs;
• Serve and build a reputation as UNK’s “go to” ambassador, spokesperson and advocate for issues of importance to Nebraska’s elementary and secondary schools;
• Contribute to the larger partnership that will facilitate the evolution of a new business, program, and community outreach service model: a first class Early Childhood Education Center (laboratory school) for 180 local children;
• Encourage and reward pursuit of “friend raising”, grants, and fund-raising to build College resource capacity.
DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEXT DEAN

- Recognized as an authentic, collaborative leader, and network builder;
- A career that includes a successful classroom teaching experience and a record of scholarship or similar substantive creative activity;
- An overarching focus on both recruitment and retention of students, especially first-generation and nontraditional students, and students from Nebraska’s urban areas to the east and rural areas to the west;
- An understanding of enrollment trends for both undergraduate and graduate programs for colleges of education;
- An understanding of unique challenges facing public schools in both rural and urban areas of the state;
- Capacity to understand, manage and represent a broad array of departments and programs in a fair and flexible manner and enhance the cohesion of all faculty, staff and students of the College;
- Works collaboratively with faculty and staff and assures fairness in teaching, research, and service expectations;
- Thinks “outside the box”, welcomes new ideas from others, and is seen as a “trend setter”—as a means to rally others to support change;
- Brings a thoughtful leadership style that is highly personal, and that exhibits a positive energy and outlook;
- Has a notable record of inclusion and support for diversity among faculty, students, staff, and perspectives;
- Has demonstrated successes in building external relationships to generate good will, raise the institution’s profile, and acquire grants and gifts;
- Success in building and managing budgets and advocating/justifying resource requests;
- Ability to balance the needs and interests of the College while actively participating as part of the academic leadership team at UNK and across the NU System;
- Strong record of achievement in advancing cultural diversity and equity.
POSITION DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

The Dean is the chief administrative officer of the College, which includes the Departments of Communication Disorders, Counseling & School Psychology, Educational Administration, Kinesiology & Sport Sciences and Teacher Education. The Dean is expected to provide academic, professional and administrative leadership to faculty and students.

The Dean also will provide leadership for a progressive college housed in a state-of-the-art building with nationally accredited departments and programs; maintain a continuing analysis of current and future needs of the college; provide timely recommendations and decisions in response to defined needs of the college; represent the college in accreditation matters; maintain a professional liaison role with government agencies and professional associations; develop and maintain college organizational and policy-planning structures; maintain effective communication among faculty, students, and administrators within the college; maintain a continuing and effective budget process to include supervision of all funds allocated to the college; supervise the implementation of university faculty personnel policies including, but not limited to, recruitment, tenure, promotion and performance evaluations; develop and implement effective strategies and methods to obtain private and public financial resources to enhance the accomplishment of college and university missions; supervise the effective use of physical facilities allocated to the college; consult and coordinate closely with senior administrative officers of the university and other college deans in the discharge of administrative and academic duties.

Required Qualifications

• An earned doctorate in a field of education represented by one of the departments of the College;
• Be eligible to be tenured at the rank of Professor in a department of the College of Education and eligible to be admitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Nebraska;
• Administrative and teaching experience at an accredited post-secondary institution;
• Administrative experience at the departmental chair level or above including line management experience with significant budget management experience.
HOW TO APPLY

The University of Nebraska at Kearney is being assisted in this search by Academic Search, Inc. Nominations, applications, and inquiries may be sent in complete confidence. Full consideration will be given to all applications received by December 11, 2019. Application materials, to include (1) a letter of interest; (2) curriculum vitae; and (3) the contact information for five references (who will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission), must be submitted electronically to: unkcoedean@academicsearch.org.

Nominators and prospective candidates also may arrange a confidential conversation about this opportunity with Nancy D. Suttenfield or Bethany Zecher Sutton.

The University of Nebraska at Kearney is responsive to University issues which support a diverse work and academic environment. The University of Nebraska at Kearney does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. This policy is applicable to all University administered programs including educational programs, financial aid, admission policies and employment policies. UNK is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity employer. Veterans and persons with disabilities encouraged to apply. The University affirms a policy of equal educational and employment opportunities, affirmative action in employment and nondiscrimination in providing services to the public. University employees, students and others associated with the University who have not received the benefits of these policies, are encouraged to contact the Chief Compliance Officer/ADA Coordinator.
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search, Inc. is assisting University of Nebraska at Kearney in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services exclusively to institutions of higher education. Academic Search was founded on the principle of strengthening higher education leadership through professional search services. We are the only search firm in the nation with a formal relationship to a premier leadership development program. As the subsidiary of the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI), Academic Search provides substantial financial support to a number of leadership identification, development, and support programs across all sectors of public and private higher education. For more information, visit http://www.academicsearch.org/.

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