



VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Sonoma State University
Rohnert Park, California

THE SEARCH

Sonoma State University (SSU or Sonoma State), a comprehensive residential public institution in Rohnert Park, California, seeks a visionary and collaborative leader to serve as vice president for university advancement (vice president). This is an exciting opportunity to provide essential advancement leadership at one of California's most popular institutions, unique in its liberal arts and sciences mission and located less than an hour away from the economically booming San Francisco Bay Area amidst the natural beauty of Sonoma County. The vice president will work closely with SSU's dynamic president, Judy Sakaki, the president's cabinet, and other campus leaders.

Sonoma State has a longstanding tradition of promoting intellectual and personal growth, leadership opportunity, and technological proficiency. The arrival of President Judy Sakaki in 2016 brought tremendous excitement and energy to the campus, and she immediately set to work building upon this tradition and refocusing attention on student success and the academic mission of the university. The vice president for university advancement will play a pivotal role in this shift, overseeing fundraising and alumni relations that enables and supports the university's mission by setting a vision and direction for the advancement division. The university recently completed a strategic planning process that articulated priorities and set the course for SSU through 2025.

In support of the enduring legacy and mission of Sonoma State, the vice president will address key opportunities and challenges:

- *Build and coalesce a team of dedicated advancement professionals around shared goals and mutual understanding of best practices; establish a data- and metrics-driven environment, coaching and mentoring staff while fostering a culture of accountability.*

The incoming vice president for university advancement will have the opportunity to strategize and shape the advancement division toward a common purpose, building camaraderie and aligning team members to a shared vision, strengthened by a data-driven approach to performance and success.

- *Increase the productivity of fundraising activities for individual, corporate, and foundation gifts; strengthen the culture of philanthropy within the SSU community; partner with SSU leaders and board members to elevate the profile of SSU and secure philanthropic gifts.*

The vice president for university advancement will guide and support the president in her role as chief spokesperson and fundraiser, serving as co-strategist on cultivating and soliciting transformative gifts, and ensuring that the president is well briefed and that her time spent is highly productive. The vice president will similarly guide and support the Foundation board, senior staff, and other volunteers in development and alumni relations activities. This is a highly visible external position and the vice president will be expected to maintain an active role in the local community, building relationships and advocating for the university and its mission.

- *Create an atmosphere of trust; build collaborative relationships with campus leadership, faculty, staff, and students; and convey a commitment to shared governance.*

The next vice president will join a university that is more student-centric, academically focused, and forward-looking than ever before. It is a time of tremendous optimism, vision, and growth under the leadership of President Judy Sakaki, as well as one of change led by a new team in the cabinet. The vice president will play a key role in building a culture of trust in an environment of shared governance, developing collaborative and solution-oriented relationships with all campus constituents in support of SSU's academic mission and the vision of the president and provost. An important part of this effort will be establishing transparent communication and data-informed accountability in the advancement division.

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the vice president for university advancement can be found at the conclusion of this document.

Sonoma State University has retained Rachel Ellenport of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to conduct the search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

California State University

The California State University system spans the entire state of California and has an annual budget of more than \$5 billion; it is not only the largest four-year university system, but it is also one of the most diverse and affordable university systems in the nation. With 23 campuses¹, 484,000 students, and 52,000 faculty and staff, CSU is a leader in high-quality, accessible, student-focused higher education, and prepares the majority of California's leaders and policymakers; approximately 64 percent of Californians with master's degrees in public administration studied at the CSU, as well as 35 percent of those with bachelor's degrees. In addition, 49 percent of Californians with bachelor's degrees in city, urban, community, and regional planning studied at the CSU. The CSU System has produced tens of thousands of graduates who have had an immeasurable impact in fields such as education, health care,

¹ CSU Bakersfield, CSU Channel Islands, CSU Chico, CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU East Bay, CSU Fresno, CSU Fullerton, Humboldt State University, CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles, CSU Maritime Academy, CSU Monterey Bay, CSU Northridge, California State Polytechnic University Pomona, CSU Sacramento, CSU San Bernardino, San Diego State University, San Francisco State University, San José State University, California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, CSU San Marcos, Sonoma State University, and CSU Stanislaus.

agriculture, government, arts and entertainment, medicine, and nonprofit leadership. To learn more about the California State University system, see www.calstate.edu.

Sonoma State University

Founded in 1960 as a teacher education center for the North Bay, Sonoma State College was approved by the state legislature in 1960; it opened in Fall 1961 with 274 students. Five years later, the nascent college moved to its current 269-acre campus, which at the time had two buildings. In its first years, Sonoma State was a small, liberal arts college in a rural area, and earned a reputation as “Granola U” and “Frisbee U.” SSU was relatively isolated from the local community, and served primarily as a commuter and re-entry student campus. The institution grew steadily, however, and in 1978, Sonoma State was officially moved from “college” to “university” status.

Sonoma State has evolved into a diversified university with six schools—Arts and Humanities, Business and Economics, Education, Extended & International Education, Science and Technology, and Social Sciences—that provide students with the intellectual framework and hands-on skills to thrive in a variety of professional careers. A major contributor to the North Bay workforce, Sonoma State offers degrees in 46 majors and 47 minors at the bachelor’s level and 15 at the master’s level, as well as nine credential programs and eight undergraduate and graduate certificate programs. The university also offers a joint master’s degree in mathematics with San Francisco State University. The university operates as part of the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system. Sonoma State is one of the smaller CSU institutions, and approximately 34 percent of students live on campus—one of the highest percentages in the CSU System—and roughly 80 percent of first-year students come from outside the North Bay region. Many classes have fewer than 40 students, enabling close interaction between students and faculty. SSU has been recognized nationally as a “Best Value,” “Most Connected,” and “Most Green” college by the *Princeton Review*.

Boasting a loyal and committed cadre of faculty and staff, the university has a long history of shared governance, with administration participating regularly in the Academic Senate and several of its standing committees. Faculty and staff have a commitment to community engagement and diversity and are passionately devoted to student success and protecting the most vulnerable students.

Since 1963, SSU has been fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Sonoma State is a member of the prestigious Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), whose primary mission is ensuring that a fine undergraduate liberal arts and sciences education is available to students in the public system of higher education.

Leadership at Sonoma State University

Dr. Judy Sakaki became Sonoma State University’s seventh president on July 1, 2016. She is the first Japanese-American woman in the nation to lead a four-year college or university.

President Sakaki’s career in higher education has been devoted to leading, developing, and implementing best practices in access, affordability, inclusion, and student success. Previously, she served as Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of California Office of the President; Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of California, Davis; and Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Fresno State.

Under President Sakaki's leadership, Sonoma State has: 1) Increased its four-year graduation rate for undergraduates by five percent to nearly 35 percent; 2) Increased its two-year graduation rate for transfer students by nearly seven percent to 62.2 percent. Sonoma State is now ranked No. 1 out of the 23 CSU campuses for the highest graduation rate for transfer students; and 3) Successfully completed "Building Our Future @ SSU Strategic Plan 2025." Strategic priorities include: student success, academic excellence and innovation, and leadership cultivation, all with an emphasis on making a transformative impact on the lives of those on campus and in the community.

Dr. Sakaki is the recipient of numerous community and leadership awards. She was recognized as President of the Year in 2017 by the California State Student Association representing the 430,000 students of the CSU. She also received the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Region VI President's Award in 2018. Dr. Sakaki is a former American Council on Education Fellow, an Executive Fellow of the California State University, a senior Fellow of the American Leadership Forum, and an American Association of State Colleges and Universities' Millennium Leader. She was a founding member of Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education and was selected by the North Bay Business Journal for the Women In Business award in 2017.

Dr. Sakaki grew up in Oakland, California and was a first-generation college student. She earned her B.A. in Human Development and her M.S. in Educational Psychology from CSU East Bay and her Ph.D. in Education from the University of California, Berkeley. She serves on numerous local and national boards and speaks about leadership and resilience having been a victim of the Tubbs Fire, which destroyed more than 5,000 homes, in Sonoma County in October 2017.

Sonoma State University Foundation Board of Directors

The Sonoma State University Foundation Board of Directors is composed of 20 long-serving and dedicated community leaders who are committed to serving the university and advancing its mission.

Philanthropy and Finances

Over the past ten years, SSU has secured more than \$100 million in commitments for gifts in support of the academic mission of the university. The market balance of the university's endowment was \$49.1 million, as of June 30, 2018.

Sonoma State University's advancement division has units dedicated to fundraising, alumni relations, and advancement services.

In recent years, SSU has steadily grown its base of private donors and initiated partnerships with a wide range of public schools and regional businesses. Recent initiatives include Seawolf Scholars, a program supporting foster youth, and the Wine Industry Scholars Program, a pioneering initiative with a starting gift of \$100,000 over four years, including ten \$10,000 grants to children and family members of vineyard and winery workers to offset tuition and other educational expenses associated with attending SSU.

Role of the Vice President for University Advancement

Reporting to the president, the vice president for university advancement provides vision, inspiration, leadership, planning, and management for advancement in support of the institutional mission and priorities articulated in the university's strategic plan. The vice president has central responsibility for the university's advancement division, coordinating fundraising and alumni relations activities and initiatives with administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, community partners, and the Green Music Center to make successful and lasting contributions to institutional success. The vice president works collaboratively with the president's cabinet and takes a team approach across all divisions of the university. The vice president is expected to understand and operate effectively in an environment that is strongly focused on student success and that celebrates excellence, diversity, sustainability, collegiality, and shared governance.

The vice president's primary purpose is to obtain financial, community, alumni, and public support for the university and ensure strategies are effectively implemented for the benefit of the university as a whole. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to identifying, qualifying, cultivating, soliciting, organizing, and providing effective communication with donors and potential donors; stewarding patrons and other individual prospects, sponsors, and donors; coordinating gift processing; and recruiting, training, and motivating volunteers.

The vice president provides leadership for the university's advancement team, directing the activities of staff members in support of annual, major, planned giving, capital campaigns, and alumni relations to ensure accountability for these programs based on best practices for peer and aspirational institutions. The vice president engages and manages a personal portfolio of individual and institutional prospects, including personal cultivation, solicitation, gift closure, and stewardship.

The vice president is active in the community, which may include participating on the boards of community and other not-for-profit organizations to ensure long-term relationships between the university and donors are developed and maintained. The vice president actively partners with the president in her advancement activities, managing engagement of the highest level prospects to build volunteer philanthropic leadership for the institution, and supports board members and other leading volunteers in their choreographed fundraising activities. The vice president also collaborates with colleagues in the California State University system in support of local and system-wide advancement endeavors.

In addition, the vice president assures that alumni relations programs and activities foster deep and broad engagement with and pride in their alma mater, and in turn support and grow alumni donor participation. With the support of the university's marketing and communications team, the vice president ensures effective activity to enhance the university's image and visibility among direct stakeholders, as well as regional and national constituents, in such a way that motivates stakeholders to be highly engaged and contribute to the university.

As a member of the president's cabinet, the vice president participates in strategic planning, policy formulation, budgetary decisions, and problem solving, and offers advice and counsel on the implications of institutional decisions, while also working closely with the Foundation and alumni boards, deans, and faculty leaders. As chair and president of the SSU Foundation Board of Directors, which has oversight responsibility for the university's endowment, the vice president establishes mechanisms for receipt and stewardship of gifts to the university.

Major priorities:

- Strengthening annual fundraising efforts by managing and building relationships with current and prospective donors, corporations, and foundations to develop, execute, and evaluate a fundraising plan, which includes comprehensive and capital campaigns, major gifts, leadership annual giving, direct response annual giving, corporate and foundation giving, planned giving, and alumni relations. These efforts are supported by data management, research, and advancement services.
- Serving as a proactive and strategic fundraiser committed to the mission and vision of the university and collaborative partnership with the president.
- Engaging with and supporting members of the Foundation and Alumni Boards, the deans, and other university leaders to solicit gifts from established and prospective donors.
- Personally cultivating, soliciting, and closing gifts, and providing ongoing donor stewardship.
- Ensuring alumni relations activities effectively foster deep and broad engagement.
- Employing best practices and adherence to policy and standards in managing and leading the advancement team.

Major duties:

- **Functional Oversight/Management:** Oversees the effective management of all activities and programs relating to development, which includes fundraising and capital development, and alumni relations. Devises, proposes, and implements fundraising strategies. Provides strategic and consistent communications with existing donors and friends for the university, and creates a systematic approach to broadening the base of donors and friends for the university. Develops and implements best practices for university fundraising, particularly for alumni, major gifts, and planned giving programs.
- **Strategic Planning:** Recommends, creates, and implements long- and short-term strategic goals and operational plans for advancement. Ensures the department's goals align with and support the overall mission of the university. Motivates and encourages commitment to achievement of strategic plans and effectively communicates the strategic initiatives. Serves as a member of the president's executive team, and serves on university committees and task forces as appropriate.
- **University/Community Partnership:** As a member of the campus community, ensures a community-focused strategy to support the university's mission. Recognizes the importance of collective strength, knowledge, and information. Builds effective strategic alliances internally and externally to advance development initiatives. Initiates and develops strong working relationships with the community. Demonstrates commitment to diversity. Takes the necessary measures to solicit and influence internal and external support.

- Leadership/Management: Builds competence in others through effective coaching, performance management, and mentoring. Provides clear direction. Supports and moves new initiatives forward. Demonstrates commitment to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce. Understands the university's mission and vision and how the division's activities and goals support the mission. Identifies current and future challenges and proposes effective solutions. Determines, effectively allocates, and coordinates resources for the benefit of the university.

Qualifications and Characteristics

This position requires a strong and proactive leader who possesses exceptional judgment, superb communication skills, a sense of urgency, and the ability to work collaboratively with internal and external constituencies. The vice president will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- A thorough understanding of and commitment to SSU's mission, and demonstrated successful experience using fundraising best practices to advance an institution's mission and goals.
- Successful experience with community engagement and external fundraising; a commitment to building partnerships with community leaders; the energy and perseverance to maintain and nurture relationships.
- A broad background in fundraising, including demonstrated success and a solid record of accomplishments in personal solicitation of major gifts and planned gifts, planning and implementing fundraising programs, board development, campaign planning and management, annual giving, grants development, and individual, corporate, and foundation gifts; a demonstrated track record in meeting and exceeding measurable goals; a commitment to and experience with a strong alumni relations program.
- A background and understanding of the importance of strategic planning and a high level of energy and the capacity to partner effectively with the president and university leaders to advance university priorities.
- Experience building and managing an effective team dedicated to organizational goals and high performance; commitment to principles of transparency in decision-making and management; commitment to diversity and a demonstrated ability to work in a diverse environment.
- Strong organizational skills and the ability to manage multiple highly visible projects and competing priorities simultaneously; integrity and sound judgment; ability to supervise the work of staff and recommend appropriate personnel actions; strong problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Strong communication skills, both oral and written; patience and the ability to listen effectively to various constituents and interests; strong interpersonal skills and the ability to establish and maintain productive and effective inclusive working relationships, partnerships, and coalitions amongst diverse populations including staff, faculty, administration, students, alumni, donors, and other internal and external university and community stakeholders.

- The ability to provide leadership in the use of technology and information systems to support all related development activities, including donor research and administration. Familiarity with new technologies, electronic communication, social networking vehicles, and other technological innovations that can streamline and enhance the effectiveness of the advancement process. Intermediate proficiency with computers and Microsoft Office Suite required. Raiser's Edge and Reeher experience highly preferred.
- A bachelor's degree in related field, or equivalent combination of education and experience, plus ten years of progressively responsible professional work experience in the advancement field, including a minimum of five years leading and/or supervising the work of others. A master's degree in a related field and work experience in an academic setting, ideally within a public university, is strongly preferred.

This position is a "designated position" under the California State University's Conflict of Interest Code; thus, the successful candidate will be required to file Conflict of Interest forms subject to the regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with experience.

Sonoma State University is located in the city of Rohnert Park (pop. 41,500), in beautiful Sonoma County, a world-famous wine-growing region located north of the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to SSU, Rohnert Park is home to the Spreckels Performing Arts Center, and offers access to championship golf courses, parks, tennis courts, and boundless other amenities. The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department affords a variety of options for outdoor recreation, including hiking, cycling, and kayaking. Sonoma County has more than 400 wineries and affords easy access to the Pacific coastline. For more information, visit the website of the [Sonoma Wine Country Tourism Bureau](#).

TO APPLY

Rachel Ellenport is leading this search with Rachel Partin and Amelia Ariel. For more information, to submit a nomination, or to apply for this role, please visit www.imsearch.com/7161.

Sonoma State University is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer, and does not discriminate against employees or applicants because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or disability.