



**Search for the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI**

THE SEARCH

Michigan State University (MSU), a leading global research university, seeks an experienced executive leader and strategic partner to serve as its first vice president and chief human resources officer (VP/CHRO). In this new role, the VP/CHRO will serve as the leader of Human Resources (HR) and will join MSU at a key inflection point in which the university prepares for transformational growth. Reporting to the executive vice president for administration and chief information officer, Melissa Woo, the VP/CHRO will help provide strategic direction and tactical support of institution-wide human capital management and will serve as a proactive partner to the president's cabinet on all matters related to HR. The VP/CHRO oversees the delivery of HR policies, programs, benefits, and services for approximately 12,000 full- and part-time faculty and staff. The VP/CHRO will work collaboratively across campus to integrate high-quality Human Resources services throughout all facets of the university. Success in this role requires an effective communicator and strategic thought partner with demonstrated experience within a similarly sized and complex environment.

Founded in 1855, MSU is a premiere land-grant university, and an innovator in research, teaching, and application of knowledge. The university was established to make higher education broadly available for the benefit of the public good and served as a model for the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862. Michigan State University has evolved into a world-class institution, offering a full spectrum of programs, and attracting gifted professors, staff members, and students. The university is part of the Big Ten Conference and since 1964 has been one of 66 members of the prestigious Association of American Universities. As one of the top research universities in the world, Michigan State's trailblazing spirit and continued commitment to its core values of excellence, diversity, inclusion, and connectivity are stronger than ever.

Michigan State has retained Isaacson Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University is a top 100 global research university renowned in certain disciplines and well positioned to lead in others. The university is a global leader in areas ranging from Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) to the social sciences and humanities, with nuclear physics, plant and animal sciences, K-20 education, supply chain and logistics, and communication and media receiving sustained exemplary recognition. African history, organizational psychology, criminal justice, veterinary medicine, biomedical research, and a suite of environmental sciences are among the areas of national and international prominence. Other areas, such as mobility, entrepreneurship, digital humanities, and African American and African Studies are rapidly emerging as new threads of excellence. These lists are by no means exhaustive but suggest the breadth of contributions of MSU researchers and scholars at the highest level.

The university offers an outstanding educational value that provides pathways to opportunity. *Washington Monthly's* 2021 ranking of national universities, based on contributions to social mobility, research and promoting public service, places MSU No. 21 in the nation among public universities. And for its “best bang for the buck” category, MSU ranks No. 21 among colleges and universities in the Midwest—public and private—for helping non-wealthy students earn a marketable degree at an affordable price. Placing another lens on return on investment, *U.S. News & World Report* notes MSU’s graduation rate is 9 percent higher than expected given students with similar test scores and economic background.

Michigan State enrolls nearly 50,000 students, including 11,000 graduate and professional school students; employs more than 12,000 faculty and staff members; and has a general fund operating budget of \$1.4 billion for fiscal year 2021. Michigan State’s students come from all eighty-three counties in Michigan, each of the 50 states, and more than 125 other countries. Students of color comprise 23.7 percent of the student body, and international students, 8.3 percent. Michigan State has over 510,000 living alumni worldwide.

The 5,632 MSU faculty and academic staff members are the driving force behind the university’s growing reputation as a national leader in scientific research and development. Our (or MSU) scholars have received national and international recognition through membership in the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Education, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, as well as through prestigious awards from foundations including Dreyfus, Guggenheim, MacArthur, and Sloan. The MSU research enterprise has experienced significant growth over the past decade and now exceeds \$720 in annual expenditures for research in food safety and security, human and animal health, energy, education, defense, international development, social and behavioral sciences, and digital humanities, among others.

Michigan State University’s East Lansing campus boasts 564 buildings, including 107 academic facilities, spread across 5,200 acres including 2,100 acres in existing or planned development. The university owns approximately 21,000 additional acres throughout Michigan for supporting teaching and learning, research, and outreach and engagement. Michigan State offers students some 400 programs of undergraduate, graduate, and professional study. The university has emerged as a leader in global education and ranks in the top ten for study abroad participation and international student enrollment. It

also ranked No. 25 among large schools on the Peace Corps 2019 Top Volunteer- Producing Colleges and Universities list.

Location

East Lansing is a safe, attractive, and affordable place to live and work. It has the vitality, diversity, and culture of a university town, mixed with affordable housing, strong public schools, and accessible amenities. East Lansing has nearly 50,000 residents and is adjacent to Michigan's capital in neighboring Lansing. The campus is approximately 90 minutes from Detroit. Michigan residents enjoy four distinct seasons, the country's longest freshwater coastline, and more than 11,000 inland lakes.

For more information about Michigan State University please visit www.msu.edu.

Leadership

President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D.

In May 2019 the Michigan State University Board of Trustees selected Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D., as its next university president. President Stanley began his term as Michigan State's 21st president on August 1, 2019.

President Stanley was the president of Stony Brook University from 2009 to 2019 and has nearly 15 years of higher education leadership experience. After earning his medical degree from Harvard Medical School, he completed his resident-physician training at Massachusetts General Hospital. He then went to Washington University in St. Louis for a fellowship in infectious diseases, eventually becoming a professor in the Departments of Medicine and Molecular Microbiology and one of the nation's highest recipients of NIH funding. He was appointed vice chancellor for research at Washington University in 2006, serving in that position until he was appointed president at Stony Brook.

Melissa Woo, PhD

Melissa Woo is the executive vice president for administration and chief information officer at Michigan State University. In her role as executive vice president, she provides leadership for Campus Sustainability, Human Resources, Information Technology, Infrastructure Planning and Facilities, University Procurement and Logistics, and Real Estate. Additionally, Melissa serves as president of the [MSU Foundation](#).

Melissa served as senior vice president for information technology and enterprise chief information officer for Stony Brook University. She has also held IT leadership roles at the University of Oregon, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign where she earned her Ph.D. in biophysics. Melissa received her bachelor's degree in biophysics from the University of California, Berkeley.

In 2019, Melissa won the inaugural EDUCAUSE DEI Leadership Award for her actions leading to improved diversity, equity, and inclusion in the higher education IT community. She also received the 2012 EDUCAUSE Rising Star Award, recognizing her as an emerging leader in higher education IT.

Throughout her career, she has been actively engaged with higher education professional organizations and passionate in her support of aspiring leaders from diverse backgrounds. She serves on a number of national committees, authors articles, and is a frequent conference presenter.

Strategic Direction

In January 2020, Michigan State began a comprehensive strategic planning process. The final plan, reflecting input and refinements from many facets of the Michigan State University community, was finalized and endorsed by the board of trustees in September 2021. Implementation of the strategic plan will focus investment in areas of excellence—established and emerging—that address global challenges; meet pressing needs expressed by communities in Michigan, across the nation and around the world; advance equity and ethics; and improve the human condition. Key pillars of the strategic plan include student success; staff and faculty success; innovation for global impact; sustainable health; stewardship and sustainability; and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

More information on the strategic plan may be found [here](#).

In addition to the strategic plan, the Office of the President charged the development of two additional interconnected initiatives which serve to help chart a course for MSU's future: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee Report and Plan, and the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Plan. Undertaken concurrently and with interconnected planning group membership, all 3 strategic initiatives are rooted in listening and are informed by extensive input and engagement with the broader Spartan community. They begin with the premise that a safe, inclusive, and respectful campus is our top priority and diversity, equity and inclusion is foundational to all we do. They affirm that a values-based, shared vision for the strategic direction of Michigan State University is paramount to our success. They represent our collective Spartans Will and commitment to building a better tomorrow together for each other and those we serve.

More information on these additional plans may be found [here](#).

THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

Michigan State University seeks a collaborative, strategic, and inspiring leader with a distinguished record of outstanding professional service and accomplishment in HR. In this new role, the VP/CHRO is responsible for the strategy, processes, policies, benefits, and services pertaining to HR in support of the university's mission and values.

Reporting to the executive vice president for administration and chief information officer, Melissa Woo, the VP/CHRO will lead MSU's human capital agenda including talent acquisition and retention; leadership and organizational development; compensation and classification; benefits; and employee and labor relations for staff and executive management. The VP/CHRO will have university-wide responsibilities and will serve as a proactive partner to the President's cabinet on all matters related to HR. The VP/CHRO will represent MSU's HR in local, state, and federal HR-related activities and professional organizations. The VP/CHRO oversees approximately 10 direct reports (this includes an executive assistant and the soon to be named director of benefits), leads a team of approximately 129 individuals and will provide strategic supervision and mentorship designed to encourage the team's highest levels of performance, efficiency, and integrity. The VP/CHRO partners with the associate provost and associate vice president for faculty

and academic staff affairs on matters pertaining to faculty and clinical health sciences staff. The individual will also partner with the vice president and chief diversity officer on affirmative action matters as well as recruitment and retention strategies to build diversity and enhance employee satisfaction on MSU's campus. Additionally, the new VP/CHRO will partner with general council, and must also effectively partner with and provide support to the HR business partners in various colleges, schools, and administrative units across the university.

Supporting the university's strategic plan, the VP/CHRO's goal is to reshape the HR function to deliver high quality programs and processes to meet the human capital needs of the university's faculty and staff while enhancing MSU's reputation as a top employer of choice by attracting and retaining the highest quality talent. The successful candidate will ensure transparency, efficiency, impact, and consistency in HR functions. The VP/CHRO will evaluate HR services for continuous improvement and advise executive and administrative management on recommended changes. The VP/CHRO will lead the university through a modernization of the outdated employee classification system. The VP/CHRO is responsible for ensuring that all programs and policies reflect sound business practices and are in compliance with all laws and regulations in the cities, states, and countries in which MSU employs faculty and staff.

MSU has a rich and proud history of labor unions that support faculty, staff, and students. There are currently 10 unions at MSU—The Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty represents approximately 525 members, the Spartan Skills Trade Union (SSTU) represents 304 "skilled trades" employees, the Local 1585, AFSCME unit represents approximately 725 service and maintenance employees, and the Local 274, IATSE consists of seven full-time stage managers as well as hundreds of on-call employees utilized for performances at the Wharton Center, Jack Breslin Student Events Center, Auditorium, Munn Ice Arena, and Jenison Fieldhouse. In addition the Local 324, International Union of Operating Engineers represents 38 people, the Clerical-Technical Union (CTU) represents 1,360 clerical and technical employees, the Graduate Employees Union (GEU) is comprised of 561 graduate assistants, the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) represents 60 sworn police officers, the Administrative Professional Association (AP) consists of 2,847 administrative and professional non-supervisory employees, and the Administrative Professional Supervisors Associate (APSA) represents 1,268 employees who are supervisors who provide professional and administrative support.

For more information about Michigan State University's Human Resources Management office, please [visit here](#).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The successful VP/CHRO will address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Guide the transformation of the HR function toward becoming a true strategic partner to executive and administrative leadership and the populations served by the HR team, focused on both driving a culture of greater accountability, as well as supporting efforts in promoting MSU as an employer-of-choice.
- Implement a collaborative strategy to successfully realign MSU's outdated employee classification system.

- Lead a service-oriented culture of innovation, accountability, and excellence. Develop and execute a robust talent management strategy which includes effective talent acquisition programs to ensure the appropriate recruitment and long-term retention of faculty, staff, and executive management employees.
- Drive leadership development, performance management, training, and succession planning programs, geared toward the increasing interest in MSU's progressive and forward-thinking strategic agenda.
- Craft a compensation and classification system and strategy to ensure market-based, equitable wage and salary programs, and competitive and cost-effective benefits programs for administration, faculty, and staff.
- Provide meaningful support to all levels regarding human resources issues. Assure the timely exchange of accurate information, reports, data, documents, trends, as appropriate to effectuate management and decision-making processes.
- Actively cultivate cooperative and productive relationships with key constituents across the university, while emphasizing transparency and effective communications with the community, and improving the constituent experience.
- Foster and provide leadership in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, ensuring MSU's workforce honors individuality and protects the rights and dignity of all.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will have high-level executive human resources leadership experience, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and the ability to lead and implement change in a consensus-driven and proactive manner. The candidate must possess significant experience as a senior executive in an organization of relevant size and complexity, with a deep and broad background in human resources, and a command of innovative practices in the field. The successful candidate will bring many of the following skills and qualities:

Desired Experience, Skills and Abilities:

- Proven experience designing and leading transformative change in large, complex, fast-paced, and growing organizations. MSU is committed to redefining expectations about the delivery of high-quality educational experiences; the university is equally determined to devise and create an enriched workplace experience that is competitive across industries in its support of technological expertise, mobility, diversity, equity and inclusion, and continuous learning and development for all its employees.
- Established practice leading and partnering with key constituents to implement a new employee classification system.
- Informed perspective on what is required to execute human resource operations on a global level, with relevant experience in the international domain.

- Familiarity with the following areas: HR systems; compensation and classification; benefits; talent management/acquisition; and employee/labor relations. While the selected candidate is not expected to be an expert in all areas, the ideal individual will have sufficient knowledge to understand each functional area in enough depth to leverage the appropriate resources to drive desired outcomes.
- Progressively responsible track record of demonstrated successes supporting a diverse workforce in planning, organizational effectiveness, problem solving, hiring, retention, facilitation, and decision-making skills and competencies.
- Demonstrated expertise with a record of achievement in evaluating proactive and competitive human resources practices and presenting recommended courses of action for development to executive and administrative leadership.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, as well as strong presentation and influencing skills.
- Ability to work effectively and productively in a collaborative team capacity with creative approaches to organizational development opportunities.
- Ability to create and implement effective communications strategies to broadly disseminate information regarding human resources strategies, objectives, and priorities.

Key Required Attributes:

- A proven track record of fostering change management, process improvement, and development and implementation of effective and efficient business processes.
- A proven track record of success as an executive HR leader in a higher education setting.
- Strong management skills with experience working with decentralized and highly autonomous operating units. Demonstrated knowledge of the laws, regulations, and executive orders relating to human resource and affirmative action/equal employment opportunity issues and concerns.
- Demonstrated expertise in budget management.
- Participative management style – advocates team collaboration with a strong ability to influence. Ability to collaborate with multiple and diverse constituencies with a strong commitment to service and providing an excellent constituent experience. A history of building and developing teams. Displays empathy.
- Demonstrated strong negotiation skills to successfully manage leadership and employee expectations.
- Previous success providing effective coaching to direct reports to optimize their capabilities by providing feedback, advice, and suggestions to ensure success.
- Ability to provide managerial support as needed, an approachable and compassionate listener.
- Unquestionable ethics in establishing a workplace environment that promotes the dignity of people and the diversity of talent, while enabling others to serve society.
- The successful candidate should ideally hold a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, with an advanced degree preferred.

TO APPLY

Michigan State University has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent in confidence to:

Rebecca Kennedy, Partner
Stephanie Simon, Associate
Isaacson, Miller
www.imsearch.com/8234

Michigan State University is committed to cultivating a safe and inclusive campus community characterized by caring and respect for others. Michigan State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.