We write to ask for your assistance with a continuation of the search for a new Director of the Biodiversity Institute & Natural History Museum at the University of Kansas (KU), an R-1 AAU university that enrolls 28,500 students and employs nearly 2,900 faculty members. The Biodiversity Institute (BI), which includes the KU Natural History Museum, studies past and present life on Earth to educate, engage and inspire. An internationally recognized center for research, graduate education and public outreach in systematics, evolutionary biology, paleontology and archaeology, the institute accomplishes this mission through the acquisition, curation and study of collections of plants, animals, fossil material and cultural artifacts for undergraduate, graduate and public education, as well as research and public and professional service. More information can be found at: https://biodiversity.ku.edu/about.

The Director reports to KU’s Vice Chancellor for Research, sets the strategic direction for the Institute, oversees budgets totaling more than $15M, including $10M in grant funding, and manages a team of over 40 curators, scientists, professionals and administrative staff, as well as a number of postdoctoral researchers and 35 graduate students.

KU continues its search for a visionary, transformative leader who can guide the faculty, staff and students of this designated research center and public museum to its next phase of achievement. The committee will consider candidates with distinguished backgrounds that can garner the respect of the scientific, academic and museum communities, the university and the state of Kansas. Significant administrative experience, a record of inclusive leadership, commitment to the values of diversity, equity, accessibility and belonging, enthusiasm for fundraising, and outstanding relationship building skills are required. A doctorate degree from an accredited college or university and eligibility for tenured appointment at the rank of full professor in a related academic department is preferred but not required.

We welcome your ideas or suggestions of outstanding individuals who would relish the opportunity to lead one of KU's most valued and respected assets. We would also be happy to speak with you directly if you have questions or need more information. A full leadership profile may be found at Wittkieffer.com.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Lucy Leske and Jenna Brumleve