

KANSAS CITY SCHOLARS POSITION DESCRIPTION

DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

ABOUT KC SCHOLARS

Kansas City Scholars (KC Scholars; www.kcscholars.org) is a 501(c)(3) college scholarship, college planning and persistence support, and college success program designed to increase the college completion rate for low- and modest- income students and adult learners across the six-county, bi-state service region.

KC Scholars launched in September 2016 and, in less than three years, has experienced widespread community engagement and rapid scaling. We now have over 3,000 Scholars, with near 1,200 in college. KC Scholars is on the path to near 10,000 Scholars by 2022 and is projected to grow to near 20,000 by 2027.

The goals of KC Scholars are to:

- 1) Increase postsecondary educational attainment in the greater Kansas City area;
- 2) Increase economic independence for individuals in the program;
- 3) Connect Scholars to career preparation opportunities in the region and to the regional workforce pipeline so they are encouraged to live, work, and contribute here; and
- 4) Achieve a 75% degree or credit-bearing credential completion rate.

The program began as and remains a “community asset”. Program planning included participation by 70+ community stakeholders, lessons learned and best practices from regional and national scholarship programs, and empirical research about which supports increase likelihood of college enrollment and completion, particularly for populations historically underrepresented in higher education.

KC Scholars is governed by a community-based Board of Directors. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is the lead funder, with community funds also raised to increase the number of awards made annually.

In its first three years, KC Scholars has experienced rapid growth, achieved a high level of community engagement and exceeded goals for number of scholarships awarded and college enrollment and persistence rates. Early impact rates are significantly higher than for the region, state, and nation.

ABOUT THE POSITION

The Director of Workforce and Alumni Engagement will be responsible for innovating, developing, implementing, executing, and facilitating high-quality processes, programming, and initiatives to expand KC Scholars into new spaces to ensure that workforce goals are achieved. The Director will:

- 1) Connect Scholars to experiential learning opportunities and to the regional workforce – from point of entry into KC Scholars to college completion and through successful placement into the workforce. Scholars will be engaged in career and interest exploration, experiential learning opportunities, learn about regional workplace trends and opportunities, and be prepared to enter and succeed in the regional workforce.

2) Create a robust KC Scholars Alumni Network. Adult Learner Scholars are currently completing college and the first traditional awardees will graduate college in 2023, or sooner, and KC Scholars seeks for alumni to remain connected to KC Scholars, to one another, to the next generations of Scholars, and to the regional community.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Workforce and Alumni Engagement will be a proven efficient, high-functioning professional within a complex, multi-stakeholder organization. The Director will use creativity, innovation, and existing networks to create, grow, and nourish KC Scholars' work in the alumni and workforce engagement spaces. Creating a robust Alumni Network will provide the opportunity for Scholars to give back to the program and the community, while creating a support system for each subsequent generation of Scholars. Alumni and workforce engagement are instrumental to KC Scholars achieving its goals that Scholars make informed choices about potential careers, prepare for success in the regional job market, access experiential learning opportunities, and secure a living- or high-wage job/career. Leveraging knowledge, activities, and approaches of related regional initiatives will be a critical function of this role.

The Director will provide strategic leadership, alongside the Management Team and CEO, related to the overall effectiveness of the organization

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Organizational:

- Serve as an active member of the Management Team, contributing to strategic thinking and action by the organization.
- Ability to not only develop strategy but be able to demonstrate previous experience and ability to produce measurable results – driving desired impact.
- Prepare reports of alumni and workforce engagement activities and outcomes to share with the CEO, Board, and community.
- Represent KC Scholars and actively participate in current and emergent regional initiatives designed to fill the regional workforce pipeline with talented, prepared, and diverse workers.
- Assess effectiveness of alumni and workforce engagement strategies and initiatives on a continuing basis and then make and/or suggest calibration to 1) keep pace with the scaling of the program, 2) keep pace with future growth opportunities, and 3) ensure that supports provided can be linked to demonstrable results regarding connecting Scholars to the regional workforce.
- Identify and communicate process improvement efforts, when appropriate.
- Remain abreast of regional, statewide, and national alumni and workforce pipeline/career development initiatives that are successfully achieving their goals.
- Research, synthesize, analyze, and present information as requested.
- Attend meetings and events as appropriate.
- Other related activities and duties as assigned.

Workforce Engagement:

- Develop a comprehensive and innovative strategic plan for connecting Scholars to life and work in Kansas City, from time of program entry through job

placement, drawing upon lessons learned and effective practices regionally and nationally.

- Map out and implement a robust plan for marketing Scholars to the regional workforce. Position and brand KC Scholars as a critical (potentially the largest) supplier of the workforce pipeline by creating regional recognition of the thousands of talented, qualified, and diverse potential employees, especially those in high-demand sectors.
- Research and consider the possibility of combining select efforts with the already-established Kauffman Scholars career engagement activities, particularly the Young Professional of Color KC initiative.
- Create, through a community-engaged process, the structure for and launch a career professionals mentor program.
- Partner with the corporate sector to plan and execute an annual KC Scholars Day in corporate Kansas City when Scholars can be on site and engage with employers in their field of interest.
- Partner with existing and emergent initiatives to plan and facilitate sector-specific convenings, specifically in high-demand sectors identified by civic leadership, to connect Scholars to corporate leaders and career professionals in their field of interest (potentially in alignment with the emergent Real World Learning Initiative).
- Create an approach to ensure Scholars' awareness and access to exploration, engagement, and immersion of job shadowing, experiential learning, and internship opportunities, in collaboration with existing and emergent regional initiatives (Activate KC, Social Innovation Center, AstrumU).
- Manage KC Scholars' relationship with and use of the AstrumU platform by KC Scholars and campuses in the Postsecondary Network.
- With the program team, design and deliver career exploration activities that Scholars engage in recursively from program entry through job placement (Agile Work Profiler).
- Partner with existing and emergent initiatives and with the KC Scholars' program team to deliver a menu of educational opportunities that enhance Scholars' preparedness to enter and succeed in the regional workforce: goal setting, resume building and cover letter writing, effective interviewing, convincingly articulating the market value of non-academic experiences, building social capital, thriving in your first job, professional etiquette, public speaking. Engage community stakeholders in delivery of opportunities and utilize a badging/certificate program to recognize and validate participation.
- Formulate and facilitate a *select* career fair for employers to interact with Scholars.
- Utilize existing relationships and/or build a network in the regional Talent Management community, participating in meetings and seeking ways to connect Scholars to the workforce.
- Establish a healthy working relationship with career services at the 17 campuses in the KC Scholars' Postsecondary Network, identifying ways to escalate the KC Scholars affiliation.

Alumni Engagement:

- Develop a comprehensive and innovative strategic plan for alumni engagement, drawing upon lessons learned and effective practices regionally and nationally.

- Facilitate development and establishment of goals, a membership structure, a leadership structure, and engagement processes for a multi-level alumni organization: before Scholars enter college, while Scholars are in college, and after Scholars complete college and are engaged in the workforce. This is intended to develop an affinity and identity within each Scholar from awarding through life.
- Research and consider the possibility of combining select efforts with the already-established Kauffman Scholars and Project Choice Alumni Network.
- Create ongoing communication venues between KC Scholars and alumni and among Scholar alumni themselves (Alumni database).
- Plan and host events and programming for Scholar alumni and that bring generations of Scholars together and with community stakeholders.
- Create processes and programs that facilitate Scholars giving back to KC Scholars and to the regional community.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- An undergraduate degree is required, while an advanced degree is preferred.
- A minimum of 3+ years of relevant experience in a talent management/HR-related and/or alumni engagement role, preferably in the corporate sector or working closely with the corporate sector.
- Knowledge of and existing strong relationships within the Kansas City corporate sector talent management/HR community is preferred.
- Knowledge of the regional workforce opportunities, high-demand sectors, and job market.
- Project planning and management and event planning experience.
- Demonstrated social networking experience.
- Ability to work under competing deadlines/demands.
- Strong organization skills, attention to detail, ability to multi-task, and a strong desire and ability to “do things right the first time”.
- Ability to be proactive, thoughtful, and consider the bigger picture.
- Excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent active listening and learning skills.
- Exceptional judgment that augments an ability to be solutions-oriented and then act appropriately to solve problems.
- Experience working in a fast-paced, goal-oriented, start-up environment.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, Power Point, and Excel).

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Commitment to and complete belief in the mission of KC Scholars.
- Quick learner with the ability to develop a solid understanding of the content, processes, deliverables and overall program goals and desired outcomes.
- Personal values system that encompasses the highest standards of honesty, confidentiality, integrity, loyalty, and professional ethics.
- Passion for increasing college completion and workforce preparedness among students who are first-generation to college, low-income, or historically underrepresented in higher education and the regional workforce.
- Desire for feedback and ability to use it to drive quality.
- Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and ability to multi-task and meet multiple deadlines.

- Keen sense of responsibility, high level of poise, ability to think independently, ability to maintain confidentiality, and a customer service orientation.
- Tactful and diplomatic with good listening skills and an approachable personality.
- Ability to be self-directed, take initiative, anticipate demands, and problem solve.
- Ability to hold oneself and others accountable for enacting and following processes to ensure that work is accurate, complete, and “completed correctly the first time.”
- Ability to develop and demonstrate a commanding external presence.
- Ability to maintain a calm and competent demeanor in uncomfortable and demanding situations.
- Cultural competency.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.

COMPENSATION

A competitive non-profit compensation package as defined by the nonprofit agency’s compensation guidelines, including base salary and benefits that correspond to the experience level, credentials, and personal characteristics of the candidate.

TRAVEL

Occasional regional and national travel.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Kansas City Scholars firmly supports the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other protected category pursuant to applicable federal, state or local law.

REPORTING

Reports to the President and CEO and is on the Management Team with the CEO, Director of Programs, Director of Finance and Business Operations, and Director of Development.

TO APPLY

To apply for the Director of Workforce and Alumni Engagement position, submit the following items to kcollins@kcscholars.org. On the email, input the following on the Subject Line: Director of Workforce and Alumni Engagement position.

- Cover letter summarizing your experiences and skills that align with the scope of this position
- Resume
- Names and contact information for three professional references

The position will remain open until filled.

All the statements in this position description are intended to describe the general nature of the work being performed and are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required. This document describes the position currently available. The organization reserves the right to modify job duties or job descriptions at any time.