AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Confidential Position Specification

Assistant Vice President, Real Estate



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▲ The Opportunity

Position
Assistant Vice President, Real Estate

Location
Auburn, Alabama

Reporting Relationship
Senior Vice President for Business and Administration, Chief Financial Officer

Website Links
Auburn University

Position Summary

Auburn University invites nominations and applications for the position of Assistant Vice President, Real Estate (AVP). Reporting directly to the Senior Vice President for Business and Administration and Chief Financial Officer, the AVP serves as the university's senior real estate executive, responsible for setting and executing a comprehensive strategy for the acquisition, disposition, leasing, and stewardship of Auburn's real property portfolio in support of the university's mission of teaching, research, and service.

The AVP provides executive leadership over all corporate real estate activities, including the acquisition and disposition of real estate, all off-campus leasing as both landlord and tenant, the disposition of gift property received through estate or trust proceedings, and the university's portfolio of mineral interests. This includes oversight of due diligence, market analysis, real property tax matters, and the selection and management of outside brokers and appraisers who represent the university. A key priority for this role will be advancing Auburn's long-term real estate strategy, strengthening governance and reporting for the university's property portfolio, and serving as a trusted advisor to senior leadership on the role real estate plays in advancing institutional growth.

In close collaboration with the SVP for Business and Administration, university leadership, and external partners, the AVP will align real estate decisions with institutional priorities, elevate departmental operations, and ensure that real estate transactions are executed with sound financial, legal, and strategic judgment. Auburn seeks an experienced, collaborative real estate executive with a strong command of commercial real estate development, financial modeling, and public-sector real estate practice, who can build durable relationships across the university and represent Auburn's interests with outside brokers, developers, and government entities.

▲ The Candidate

Key Responsibilities and Desired Outcomes

Auburn University seeks a strategic and service-oriented Assistant Vice President to lead the university's corporate real estate program and elevate its long-term real estate strategy. The AVP will provide executive-level direction for real estate acquisition and disposition, off-campus leasing, gift property, mineral interests, and real property tax administration, while serving as a strategic partner and technical expert to university leadership, deans, and administrative units on real estate matters.

- Provide executive leadership and strategic direction for Auburn's corporate real estate activities, negotiating business terms for the acquisition or disposition of real estate and all off-campus leasing, both as landlord and tenant for the university.
- Lead or oversee the negotiation of business terms for the disposition of all gift property, including real estate received through estate or trust proceedings, ensuring outcomes that protect and advance the university's interests.
- Select, engage, and oversee real estate brokers and appraisers to represent the university in the acquisition or disposition of real estate, off-campus leasing, and disposition of gift property.
- Develop and implement policies, procedures, and short- and long-term strategic plans that elevate departmental operations, analyzing real estate market data to identify trends and inform executive decision-making.
- Oversee due diligence for the acquisition of real estate on behalf of the university, including environmental survey, physical survey, physical condition report, structural engineer report, and title review.
- Partner collaboratively across university entities on the acceptance, acquisition, and disposition of real property gifts, real estate, and off-campus leasing.
- Oversee administration of all off-campus leases, including lease payments, CPI adjustments, and landlord-tenant matters, as well as the university's portfolio of mineral interests.
- Oversee management of ownership documentation for all related assets and the preparation of a quarterly or semi-annual Real Estate Report to university leadership.
- Oversee all matters pertaining to the university's real property taxes, including tax exemption documentation and payment of real property taxes for university-owned property.
- Serve as the university's technical expert and trusted advisor on property sales, development, and management operations, programs, and projects, engaging with the SVP for Business and Administration and CFO and other senior leaders as needed.
- Develop and administer the department's budget and oversee the continuing development of the department's information processing systems, ensuring compatibility with university systems.

- Build and develop a high-performing real estate team, strengthening departmental capability, accountability, and service culture as the university's real estate portfolio and transaction volume grow.

Experience and Professional Qualifications

The ideal candidate will be an experienced real estate executive with a demonstrated ability to lead complex real estate operations within a large, decentralized organization, ideally in higher education, government, or a comparable public-sector or institutional setting.

Experience

- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in commercial real estate, including legal contracting and drafting, commercial real estate development, and financial modeling.
- Demonstrated ability to work within state guidelines and institutional board policies governing real estate transactions.
- Experience with alternative delivery models such as public-private partnerships (P3s) and Industrial Development Boards.
- Familiarity with the construction process and construction pricing as they relate to real estate development and delivery.
- Sound understanding of which real estate activities require institutional or board-level approval, and the judgment to navigate governance processes accordingly.
- Proven negotiation skills across property acquisitions, dispositions, leases, and complex contracts, both as landlord and tenant.
- Strong financial acumen, including financial analysis, budgeting, and investment strategy as applied to real estate.
- Familiarity with real estate law, zoning regulations, and compliance requirements affecting institutional property portfolios.
- A track record of building and maintaining relationships with internal stakeholders and external partners, including brokers, developers, and government entities.
- Demonstrated project management proficiency, with the ability to manage real estate projects from inception to completion, including timelines and budgets.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present real estate strategy, transactions, and recommendations clearly to senior university leadership.

Education

- Bachelor's degree in a related field required.
- Master's degree in Real Estate Development or Juris Doctorate preferred.

▲ The University

Auburn University



Auburn University, founded in 1856 and located in Auburn, Alabama, is one of the South's largest and most respected public research institutions. Designated as Alabama's first land-grant university in 1872, Auburn has since grown into a comprehensive land-, sea-, and space-grant institution serving more than 33,000 students. Known for its unique blend of tradition and innovation, Auburn combines the academic strengths of a major research university with the spirit, values, and sense of community that define the “Auburn Experience.” With more than 150 academic programs across 12 colleges, a vibrant campus community of over 600 student organizations, and a powerful alumni network exceeding 327,000 graduates, Auburn continues to shape leaders, advance discovery, and serve society in Alabama and beyond.

VISION

To lead and shape the future of higher education.

MISSION

As a land-grant institution, Auburn University is dedicated to improving the lives of the people of Alabama, the nation, and the world through forward-thinking education, life-enhancing research and scholarship, and selfless service.

More about Auburn's vision and mission.

Strategic Plan

Auburn University Strategic Plan 2035: Grounded & Groundbreaking

Auburn's strategic plan is guided by the goal of amplifying its influence during a transformative period in society. Building upon nearly two centuries of excellence, the plan outlines Auburn's priorities for the next decade, with a focus on delivering exceptional education, conducting impactful research, and contributing to the welfare of Alabama, the region, and the world.

Approved by the Auburn University Board of Trustees in fall 2024 and updated in spring 2025, the plan emphasizes Auburn's distinct role as a land-, sea-, and space-grant institution, committed to educational innovation, research for the public good, and community engagement.

Fundamental Pillars

We will be known for creating the best student-centered experiences in the nation.

We will increase our research and creative scholarship and grow our extramural funding portfolio.

We will promote a culture of excellence and innovation by fostering a campus environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected, and engaged.

Strategic Goals

1) Exceptional Student Experience – Elevating student learning, success, and engagement.

2) Impactful Research and Creative Scholarship – Advancing knowledge, innovation, and discovery with global relevance.

3) Commitment to Excellence and Innovation – Strengthening institutional performance, infrastructure, and culture.

4) Catalytic Engagement – Deepening partnerships and outreach that drive societal and economic impact.

5) Distinctively Auburn – Leveraging Auburn's unique identity, traditions, and values to elevate its national and global profile.

Research

Research is an essential link in Auburn University's three-pronged mission of instruction, research, and outreach. Successes across its schools and colleges continue to bolster Auburn's reputation as one of the nation's top public universities. Auburn's role as a land-grant institution emphasizes strong research programs in agriculture, natural resources, the life sciences, engineering, and the physical sciences.

Strong and expanding research programs exist in agriculture; architecture, design and construction; business; education; engineering; forestry and wildlife sciences; human sciences; liberal arts; nursing; pharmacy; science and mathematics; and veterinary medicine. Whether in the laboratory, the field, or the classroom, Auburn's research endeavors are diverse and comprehensive—focused on developing solutions to major problems that confront humankind while expanding knowledge and technologies that improve quality of life.

The Auburn Research and Technology Foundation (ARTF) and the Auburn Research Park were established to strengthen connections between research and the business community,

complementing the university's economic development initiatives. In addition to facilitating the commercialization of university technologies and fostering industry partnerships, the research park provides valuable employment opportunities for Auburn students and graduates.

Academics

The Provost's Office is dedicated to advancing initiatives that strengthen student retention and graduation, promote active and engaged learning, and support both faculty and student success. In alignment with the university's Strategic Plan, the Provost's Office partners across campus to enhance academic excellence and ensure Auburn's reputation as a leader in higher education.

For 23 consecutive years, Auburn has been ranked among the best of both public and private universities. Its outstanding academic programs, faculty, and student support services prepare graduates to excel in their chosen careers and to make meaningful contributions to society. Auburn's enrollment reflects both its size and continued momentum, with more than 33,000 students enrolled in 2023–24. Full-time enrollment grew by over 950 students between 2024 and 2025, including increases across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, demonstrating strong and sustained demand for an Auburn education.

Colleges and Schools

- College of Agriculture
- College of Architecture, Design & Construction
- Raymond J. Harbert College of Business
- College of Education
- Samuel Ginn College of Engineering
- College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment
- Graduate School
- College of Human Sciences
- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Nursing
- Harrison College of Pharmacy
- College of Sciences and Mathematics
- College of Veterinary Medicine

Auburn offers more than 150 undergraduate majors housed across 12 colleges, providing students with a diverse range of academic pathways. The Graduate School oversees a wide portfolio of master's, doctoral, and professional programs, along with an accelerated bachelor's/master's program designed for high-achieving students.

The Core Curriculum ensures that all undergraduates receive a broad-based education in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies, preparing them for both specialized study and lifelong learning. Detailed information on majors, courses, and degree programs is available in the AU Bulletin.

Athletics

The Auburn Tigers compete at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics as a charter member of the Southeastern Conference. Auburn fields 21 varsity teams with approximately 500 student-athletes supported by more than 200 full-time staff on the campus of Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama.

College sports fans would be hard-pressed to find a program more steeped in tradition than Auburn. Since the University first fielded a football team in 1892, the legends associated with the Tigers have passed down through generations of fans. The Auburn Family throughout Alabama, across the nation and around the world rallies to the battle cry “War Eagle!”

▲ The Location

Auburn, Alabama



Auburn, Alabama, is a small, friendly university town located in the rolling hills of east central Alabama. With a population of approximately 60,000, Auburn offers the charm of a close-knit community combined with the vibrancy of a major university. The city is conveniently situated along Interstate 85—less than 60 miles northeast of Montgomery, about 30 miles northwest of Columbus, Georgia, and 100 miles southwest of Atlanta. The Gulf Shores of Alabama are within a four-hour drive, offering additional recreational access.

The City of Auburn and Auburn University share a special relationship, partnering on projects such as the Yarbrough Tennis Center and the Auburn Research Park. The iconic Toomer's Corner, where town and campus meet, is a central gathering spot where both communities come together to celebrate Auburn traditions. Auburn consistently earns recognition as an excellent place to live, work, and raise a family. Forbes has ranked Auburn among the Best Places to Retire and Best Small Places for Business and Careers, while Auburn City Schools

are nationally recognized as one of the top-performing public school systems in Alabama and the region.

The Auburn area also boasts a vibrant arts and culture scene. The Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center hosts plays, ballets, and studio art programs, while Auburn University's Telfair Peet Theater stages student and professional productions throughout the year. The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University engages audiences across the university, the state of Alabama and beyond with curated arts experiences that inspire, enlighten and unite. The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Art, a 29,000-square-foot facility, houses Auburn's art collection and features works by Georgia O'Keeffe, Jacob Lawrence, John James Audubon, and other renowned artists. Local organizations such as the Auburn Arts Association and Auburn Area Community Theatre further enrich the cultural landscape.

About JM Search

JM Search has been retained to represent Auburn University in the selection and qualification of candidates for this position.

With 45 years of experience, our partners and principals are immersed in your search every step of the way, supported by a passionate, cohesive team of recruiting experts. With deep sector and functional-specific expertise, our partners and principals have built expansive professional networks from decades of firsthand experience to ensure the best possible outcomes for our clients and their businesses.

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