POSITION POSTING

Title: Director of Entrepreneurial Knowledge Creation & Research

Department: Entrepreneurship

Report To: Vice President of Entrepreneurship

Date: March 2017

BACKGROUND

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation was established in the mid-1960s by the late entrepreneur and philanthropist Ewing Marion Kauffman. Based in Kansas City, Missouri, the Kauffman Foundation is among the largest foundations in the United States with an asset base of approximately $2 billion.

The Foundation’s vision is to foster “a society of economically independent individuals who are engaged citizens, contributing to the improvement of their communities.” In service of this vision, we focus our grant making and operations on two areas—education and entrepreneurship—which our founder, Ewing Kauffman, saw as two ends of a continuum. A quality education is the foundation for self-sufficiency, preparing young people for success in college and in life. Many young adults will work in businesses started by entrepreneurs. Some will become entrepreneurs themselves, providing jobs and wealth for society.

Our mission:
To help individuals attain economic independence by advancing educational achievement and entrepreneurial success, consistent with the aspirations of our founder, Ewing Marion Kauffman.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director will lead the design and implementation of the Foundation’s research-based thought leadership strategy in entrepreneurship. This person is charged with identifying knowledge gaps – across the entire field – that must be closed in order to advance entrepreneurship. This position embodies strategic and visionary leadership by anticipating trends, and identifying patterns in data and evidence to shape the Foundation’s entrepreneurship strategy. It’s important that the Director places special emphasis on actionable and practical research - research that can stimulate, guide, and inform programmatic strategies in entrepreneurship, both
within the Foundation and the field as a whole. The Director partners with the Vice President of Entrepreneurship to position the Foundation as the country’s central resource and authority on current, high quality knowledge and research that leads the way in contributing to the future success of entrepreneurship in America.

**Specific Responsibilities include:**

- Create and oversee a highly actionable vision for the Foundation’s research agenda. This will be an iterative process – informed by trends and emerging ideas in adjacent fields as well as the practical experience of entrepreneurs.

- Advance and oversee a bold research strategy that seeks to answer why rates of entrepreneurship are in a long-term decline, and what the most effective ways are to increase starts and successes of entrepreneurs, including by removing barriers to entrepreneurship.

- Advance the Foundation’s thought leadership as demonstrated by cultivating a diverse network of thought partners, generating new knowledge creation, convening various stakeholder groups (academics and practitioners) across disciplines and sectors.

- Manage a portfolio of research initiatives that advance the Foundation’s entrepreneurship agenda. Measures of success will include their ability to improve our understanding of barriers to entrepreneurship, identify relevant and informative data sources, and cultivate a field of experts that can push the boundaries of knowledge forward. The person in this role is charged with ensuring tight alignment between research, policy and practice – maintaining a robust feedback loop for research to stimulate, guide, inform, and support programmatic initiatives and grantmaking, both within the Foundation and across the broader field.

- Ensure that the Foundation’s funding is focused on initiating and supporting scholarship by highly respected scholars and researchers in a wide range of related fields. Topics of study may include: founders’ education, peer learning, accelerators and incubators, and how factors like capital, culture, geographic and demographic factors, and entrepreneurial ecosystems contribute to, or hinder rates of entrepreneurship. In addition, topics of study should be shaped by adjacent fields – such as complex systems, psychology, anthropology, design thinking, engineering, finance, business and others – to ensure concepts and trends in other fields are applied to and shape our understanding of entrepreneurship. Again, it is critical that resulting evidence-based thought leadership data is actionable, practical and informs/advances the Foundation’s programmatic agenda.

- Establish projects that yield valuable, credible data and conclusions that will encourage and promote successful entrepreneurship.
• Collaborate with the Director of Evaluation to develop metrics and track progress on key impact metrics to measure results of the Foundation’s research-based thought leadership strategy.

• Play a role in supporting and hosting convenings hosted by the Foundation – including conferences and symposia that bring together disparate authorities on an array of issues that influence the health and welfare of entrepreneurship in the United States.

• Work closely with the Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications to effectively disseminate the findings of Foundation sponsored research to further the success of entrepreneurship in America.

• Lead, manage and develop a team; develop and manage a budget, and work collaboratively with other departments (finance, grants administration, and evaluation) to support successful grantmaking.

• Cultivate and nurture a range of external relationships and partnerships as well as publicly represent the Foundation’s thought leadership agenda in a number of venues.

• Develop written documents and conference presentations to engage policy makers and other key audiences.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Education: Bachelor’s degree required (Master’s or PhD preferred or equivalent experiences as demonstrated by a track record in the field) in research, economics, public policy, business, or related field.

Work Experience: Minimum of 10 years of relevant experience.

Travel: This position will require up to 50% regional and national business travel. Candidate will be expected to live in Kansas City.

A successful candidate profile:

Qualified candidates for this position must be highly motivated, capable of self-direction, detail oriented and able to work collaboratively in a teamwork capacity. Candidates must exhibit a keen sense of responsibility and enjoy working with multiple demands, shifting priorities and constant change. They may come from academia, where they have developed a demonstrable interest in and knowledge of entrepreneurship and the fundamental issues that influence its success, but alternatively, they may be a business economist, business executive or venture capitalist with substantial, broad based experience in the field of entrepreneurship and possesses outstanding academic experience and credentials.
• Known in the field of entrepreneurship as a creative and strategic leader and a bona fide authority in entrepreneurship, economics, business or a related field.
• Ambitious and highly entrepreneurial.
• At least ten years’ experience working with research and research tools with at least three years’ recent experience working with top-notch academic investigators.
• Experience and preference for working in a collaborative environment at a rapidly evolving organization.
• Has wide-ranging multidisciplinary knowledge of research and insight about the programs, policies, and economic, societal, psychological and cultural influences that impact entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. Experience working in a policy, consultancy, or research organization, desirable.
• Strong interest in education and the development and sharing of research results.
• Possess the ability to be a strong leader and manager.
• Keen understanding of the role entrepreneurial enterprise plays in the growth of the nation’s post-industrial era economy.
• Sound knowledge of the existing data in the field of entrepreneurship, as well as an understanding of important potential research areas that have not been adequately investigated.
• Proven leadership skills and is strategic, innovative, creative, flexible, highly energetic, and has an entrepreneurial style. The successful candidate is a strong motivator, who can attract and work with top-notch researchers and academics and drives to implement good ideas from a variety of sources.
• Demonstrated consensus-building skills with experience forging strong working relationships with people at all levels inside and outside the organization.

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package, including base salary and an outstanding benefits package will correspond to the experience level, credentials, and personal characteristics of the candidate.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Kauffman Foundation 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.

TO APPLY

Send your resume, along with a cover letter directly to our search firm:

administrator@criterionsg.com