Academic Medicine and Health Sciences
Year in Review
For The Year Ended June 30, 2022
A message from our Practice Leader

Since 1969, WittKieffer has built a strong reputation as a trusted partner in executive talent acquisition, serving organizations operating exclusively at the intersection of healthcare, science, and education — the “Quality of Life Ecosystem.” We began our Academic Medicine and Health Sciences practice in 1998 and have placed thousands of university-based health system and independent academic medical center executives, including CEOs and other C-suite leaders, deans, chairs and division and section chiefs.

What differentiates us is our clear understanding of the disruptive forces that constantly create change within the health sciences and academic medicine. We leverage that understanding to provide unique insight into the strategic and operational dynamics of our clients and how those dynamics translate into leadership challenges and opportunities. We’re proud to build and enhance leadership teams that transform organizations and contribute to the fundamental wellbeing of people and communities.

Today, our firm is growing and investing faster than at any time in our history — investing in people, technology, process innovations and solutions to broaden our ability to Improve Quality of Life through Impactful Leadership. During the last year, we accelerated our multi-pronged investment in enabling clients to achieve maximum impact through building and developing exceptional leadership teams. These investments include the launch of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion services and the addition of an expanded and integrated suite of Leadership Advisory solutions. At the same time, we continue to invest in our existing services and capabilities within executive search and interim leadership, growing our team globally by more than 20% in the last twelve months, to nearly 300 exceptional professionals dedicated to our clients, candidates and each other.

As we grow, the excellence of our work remains second to none. We combine the agility and personalized service of a boutique consulting firm with global operational scale to deliver exceptional outcomes. We work as a unified team to ensure our clients are satisfied and successful. In serving them, we directly impact quality of life.

I am beyond proud, inspired and humbled by our accomplishments and growth. I invite you to review all that we’ve accomplished.

Kimberly Smith
Managing Partner and Practice Leader,
Academic Medicine and Health Sciences
Academic Medicine and Health Sciences

For more than 25 years, WittKieffer has set the standard for excellence in executive recruiting in academic medicine and the health sciences. The following statistics speak to our diverse and dynamic capabilities and our exceptional track record with our clients.

100% of Slates featured Diverse Candidates

14 Chair Searches

4 School of Pharmacy Dean Searches

45 School of Medicine and Health Sciences Center Searches

130+ Searches for Academic Medicine & Health Sciences

73% of Placements were Women or People of Color

9.3 Client Net Promoter Rating

9.5 Client Use Again Rating

Highlighted Searches

President, Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
Chief Executive Officer, Children’s Hospital of Michigan
Executive Vice President, Chief Clinical Officer and Sr. Associate Dean, Quality, Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin
Chair of Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Provost, MGH Institute of Health Professions
Chief Health Informatics Officer, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
Dean, Temple School of Medicine
Dean, UCSF School of Pharmacy
Dean, UF School of Pharmacy
EVP, Medical Affairs, and Dean, Biological Sciences Division, Pritzker School of Medicine, University of Chicago
Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, University of Kentucky College of Medicine
Executive Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (College of Nursing), University of Tennessee Health Science Center
Vice President of Research and Biotechnology, Western University of Health Sciences
Key Trends to Watch

- Academic medical centers no longer operate solely within the context of the parent university, rather they have become extra-university public enterprises, immersed in the business and regulatory world of healthcare. This change has been rapid and enormous, and is a continuing work in progress. Read more about the reorganization of AMCs.

- Formal partnerships between health care systems and higher education have emerged as an innovative mechanism to address workforce needs across the spectrum of health care providers. Educational programs specifically designed to address the immediate shortages of personnel and certificate programs for professional development are being developed and offered with these new collaborations.

- Skyrocketing labor costs in academic medicine including traveler expenses and continued leader and staff burnout are leading to an even greater shortage in subspecialists. This has cut into profit margins which will impact institutional growth.

- Accountable communities for health are expanding to address social determinants of health, such as food and housing insecurity, and ultimately improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

- Systems and providers are increasing focus and investment in digital transformation of clinical, business and consumer experiences with an emphasis on value-based care, while cybersecurity and data sharing remain operational priorities.

- Substantial gender inequities persist across the higher levels of academic medicine. These issues are not new, but highlight the need for adequate support for women to advance in their fields as well as in leadership.

Implications for Leadership

- AMC leaders and teams must demonstrate extraordinary resilience in an unrelenting “crisis-to-crisis” environment (from pandemic crisis management to cost crisis management) requiring increased self-awareness, self-management and empathy.

- The combination of ongoing crises and disruptive business models requires executives to simultaneously deliver positive outcomes for their patients while transforming the very institutions they lead. In turn, this requires a broader mindset, more varied skills and a more nuanced and effective use of executive teams to span the broad range of paradoxes to manage.

- Meanwhile, pressure on clinicians across the board continues, exacerbated by a significant number of early retirements and step-downs of tenured leaders. This results in a generational leadership gap that can be filled in the short-term through interim leadership and thoughtful execution of succession planning beyond the C-suite.

- Executive leaders must have the skills to create a system from disparate parts, which includes not only building common operating and management systems, but also achieving operating efficiencies, maintaining institutional identity and employee morale, updating system/network growth strategy and, importantly, creating the governance structure that the expanded system requires. In addition, it is critical that the centrality of the academic mission be maintained and protected and non-physician leaders with business-oriented backgrounds must be able to adapt and gain a full appreciation of the academic mission in order to succeed in their roles.

- New leadership roles are emerging: those that focus on the external community and partnerships with a lens toward improving health outcomes within the communities served; those that serve to improve clinical excellence and transform care; those that prioritize employee/clinician health and well-being; and those that focus on digital health.

- Increased hiring and promotions of individuals with less “traditional” experiences provides additional means by which to fill the leadership gap – and to diversify the gender and racial makeup of leadership. Those institutions nervous about doing so can mitigate risk and accelerate development through executive onboarding and mentoring.

- Improving the overall diversity of leadership in academic medicine ensures that executives better reflect and represent the individuals and communities they serve, leading to greater success and adherence to mission.
Academic Medicine and Health Sciences Team

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Managing Partner and Practice Leader

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