

DR. KARLA K. LEEPER

**Executive Vice President for Operations
Augusta University/Augusta University Health
System
(previously Georgia Regents University/Georgia Regents Health System)**

Augusta University
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Augusta, GA
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Kansas, Communication Studies,
M.B.A., Augusta University,
M.A., University of Kansas, Communication Studies,
School of Law, University of Texas at Austin,
Completed two years in good standing, but law school taught me that I wanted to
be a University professor. Changed my career path to pursue a PhD
B.A., University of Iowa, Speech Communication and Political Science,

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Department of Communication, Augusta University, Adjunct (2014-present)
The University System of Georgia does not allow administrators at the Vice
President level and above to hold an academic appointment.

Department of Communication Studies, Baylor University
Assistant Professor (1992-1999)
Associate Professor (1999-2009)
Professor (2010-2014)
Department Chair (2004-2006)

Department of Communication Studies, University of Kansas
Teaching Assistant (1987-1992)

College of Communication, University of Texas
Teaching Assistant (1986)

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Executive Vice President for Operations, Augusta University/Augusta University Health, September 2018-present

Executive leader for the Divisions of Marketing and Communication, Auxiliary Services, Facilities, and Human Resources for the Augusta University/AUHealth enterprise. I have 7 direct reports, oversight of a nearly \$80 million budget and 750 total employees.

AU is a highly matrixed organization and I have additional institutional leadership and governance roles

- President's Executive Cabinet
- External Relations Cabinet
- Provost's Cabinet
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion's Steering Committee
- Emergency Preparedness Committee
- AU and AUHealth capital and space committees
- Parking Leadership Committee
- Co-Chair with the Executive Vice President and Provost of the University Web Governance Committee

Key Accomplishments

- Strategically reorganized shared services units to leverage technology, improve efficiency, customer service, and to scale up to meet our institutional goal of 16,000 students by 2030.
- Redesigned and implemented campus-wide leadership training and development programs to enhance the resilience, engagement, and competence of our workforce.
- Designed and implemented a campus research facilities master planning process to support the institutional goal of being a top 50 research institution. Plan includes programming and initial design of a 20,000 sq ft School of Computer and Cyber Sciences and a new basic sciences research building.
- Created a CASE gold award winning comprehensive brand identity and marketing campaign across all conventional and digital marketing platforms. The university has sustained an annual rate of enrollment growth averaging 2.8%. The AU health system has seen a 17:1 return on investment in its marketing investment.
- Enhanced the campus climate for diversity by increasing service contracts awarded to women and minority owned businesses, revising recruiting and search committee training and leadership pipeline programs, as well as featuring the institution's rich and diverse faculty, staff, alumni and friends more prominently in our communication strategies.
- Led growth in the institution's physical footprint and reduced a \$100 million deferred maintenance deficit to approximately \$30 million in 3 years. Growth included completion of the \$125 million Georgia Cancer Center and the \$100

million Georgia Cyber Center buildings, construction \$75 million College of Science and Mathematics, planning for a 1350 space PPV parking structure and a PPP project to build a 375 bed residence hall.

- Developed messaging for the institution's first comprehensive fundraising campaign. This work included a redesigned suite of alumni communications, enhanced digital alumni outreach opportunities, launching an annual fundraising campaign and a collection of stewardship materials.
- Created a new digital platform to demonstrate the impact of the University to legislators and corporations in Georgia. This digital map connects the work done across campus with the state's legislative districts.
- Engaged our community in economic development initiatives such as master planning 15 acres near the campus and established an institutional presence in downtown Augusta by successfully negotiating and executing a lease to locate 300 FTE's in the heart of our city. I am also AU's representative in a number of community development efforts such as the CVB strategic planning project, the Richmond County TIA public advisory board, the CSRA 2050 transportation strategic planning advisory board. In addition I present regularly to local realtors, business organizations and community groups about the institution's plans, projects and initiatives.
- Successfully managed a number of high profile crisis communication situations such as one of the largest data breaches in health care, the COVID pandemic, and large scale weather events.

Executive Vice President for Strategic Communication and Chief Marketing Officer, Augusta University/Augusta University Health System, July 2015-September 2018

During consolidation our institution combined several functions into one unit. Post-consolidation this arrangement did not meet long-term strategic institutional needs. A new president created a stand-alone Division of Communication and Marketing, a stand-alone Division of Advancement, and retained Government Relations and Strategic Initiatives within the President's office. I was tasked to lead the new Division of Communication and Marketing. In this role I had oversight of a \$6.1 million budget and 50 employees.

Key Accomplishments

- Managed Presidential transition communication
- Led Enterprise-Wide Name Change from Georgia Regents University/GRHealth to Augusta University/AUHealth.
- Initiated an institutional Identity Management Business Intelligence plan

Executive Vice President for University Relations and Chief of Staff to the President and CEO, Georgia Regents University/Georgia Regents Health System, June 2014-July 2015

Operational Oversight of President/CEO's office with 8 employees and a budget of \$1 million

- Managed presidential transition (the President resigned in January of

2015)

- Responsible for all strategic communication for the President
- Coordinated President/CEO oversight of University Athletics, Enterprise Audit, Enterprise Compliance, and the Office of Legal Affairs

Enterprise-wide executive responsibility for three divisions:

- Marketing and Communication with a budget of \$2 million and 50 employees.
- University Advancement with a budget of \$1 million and 40 employees. This unit also included event services, alumni relations and relationship management of four independent foundations.
- Government Relations with a budget of \$500,000 and 7 employees. This unit included federal, state, community and system office relations. In addition it supervised a student internship program.
 - Student Internship program
 - Strategic Initiatives with a budget of \$750,000 and 8 employees. This unit is responsible for managing corporate affiliations with Cerner, Phillips and several smaller health care operations

Vice President of Board and Executive Affairs and Chief Compliance Officer, Baylor University, November 2013-June 2014

Created new office to serve the growing needs of the Baylor Board of Regents and to advise the Board on strategic direction for compliance following a review by two outside consultants. My position reported to the President and Chancellor, the Chair of the Board of Regents and the Chair of the Board's Audit and Compliance Committee.

This position provided executive leadership for Board Relations, Governmental Relations, University Event Services, Diversity Strategy and Enterprise Risk Management.

Vice President of Executive Affairs and Chief of Staff to the President, Baylor University, February 2013-November 2013

Maintained all Chief of Staff duties and added:

Governmental Relations with a budget of \$500,000 and 3 employees in addition to a federal consulting contract. .

- Developed and implemented legislative agenda at the state level
- Collaborated with Vice Provost for Research on state and federal grant opportunities
- Oversaw campus compliance with state and federal law relating to lobbying and political activity

University Events Services with a budget of \$600,000 and 12 employees.

Chief of Staff to the President, Baylor University, 2006-November 2013

Operational Oversight of a staff of 5 with 3 work study positions

Board Relations

- Principal liaison to the Board of Regents
- Responsible for construction of quarterly board meeting agenda in collaboration with the President, Executive Council and Board Chair
- Managed three presidential transitions

Communications

- Directed all communications from the President's Office
- Managed strategic campus events that were sponsored by the President's Office

Finance/Budgeting

- Responsible for the Office of the President and Board of Regents' budgets and represented the President on all campus budget committees.
- Convened working group to revise the University's grant management infrastructure. Result was a substantial investment in software and a revision in University's accounting procedures to enhance the competitiveness of our researchers in the grant application process.

Fundraising

- Managed the President's fundraising portfolio.
- Co-led, with the Provost, the Division of University Development during two separate interim leadership periods
- Member of 7 person team creating and implementing successful campaign to raise \$250 million for an on-campus football stadium.
Over

Diversity

- Designated Chief Diversity Officer in 2010
- Created first campus organizations outside of the Division of Student Life to focus on the improvement of a campus climate for diversity: President's Diversity Council, Diversity Advisory Committee, Bias Motivated Incident Support Team.
- Led a committee of faculty, staff, students and alumni to design and construct the NPHC garden in the Traditions Square area of campus.
- Initiated and created training program for Discerning Dialogues project.
- Led a group of faculty to develop a strategic plan to recruit and retain diverse faculty. This group assessed best practices, evaluated current practices in hiring, mentoring, tenure and evaluation. Recommendations sent to the Provost

Chair, Department of Communication Studies, 2004-2006

Responsible for operating a department of 40 faculty and staff and 600 majors. Departmental budget was approximately \$2 million. Curriculum included concentrations in rhetoric, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, film and digital media and broadcasting.

Director, Glenn R. Capp Debate Forum, 1992-2006

Responsible for coaching and travel for a squad of 15 to 20 teams involved in audience debates, Cross Examination Debate Association format debate, and National Debate Tournament format debate; recordkeeping, budgeting and administration; and the hosting of two tournaments each year

Project Director, Department of Education GEAR UP Grant (1999-2010)

Served as the project director for a portion of two \$6 million GEAR UP grants received by Baylor University. Project Democracy was designed to develop speech and debate activities in the six Waco middle schools. As project director I oversaw \$150,000 a year in funding. I served on the advisory board for the grant's project directors, as part of the advisory board for public relations, and as part of the advisory board for evaluation

American Forensics Association President 2000-2002

The American Forensics Association is the national organization within the National Communication Association that oversees all competitive intercollegiate speech and debate programs. The AFA creates professional development programs, ensures compliance with academic and ethical standards for competition, regulates tournament practice, operates the premier argumentation journal in our field, *Argumentation and Advocacy*, and coordinates the content and logistics for the national conference

SCHOLARSHIP

Representative publication and presentation

Administration and Leadership

Leeper, Karla. (2020, October). Communication and Diversity. Training for National Diversity Council Antiracism and Racial Justice Certificate Program.

Leeper, Karla (2020, June) Accountability in the Workplace. Training for Augusta University Office of Leadership Development

Leeper, Karla. (2018, March) The Role of Communication and Marketing in Institutional Consolidation. Presentation at the AASCU Conference for Senior Professionals, Washington, D.C.

Leeper, Karla. (2018, Jan./Feb.) How Augusta University Got Its 'A' Back. Currents.

Leeper, Karla. (2017, Sept.) Brand Management in Higher Education. Presentation at Elevate Georgia Strategic Communications Symposium in Athens, Georgia.

Forensic Pedagogy

Leeper, Karla. (2008, Nov.) The Importance of Mentoring: Increasing the Number of Women Directors of Forensics. Presentation to National Communication Association annual meeting in San Diego

Leeper, Karla and John Cleavelin. Learning Debate: An Interactive Educational DVD. 2006. Submitted to Department of Education as part of the GEAR UP Waco federal grant

Leeper, Karla. (2006, July 23) Engaging At Risk Students With Technology. Presented at the July NCCEP/GEAR UP Conference in Washington, D.C.

Leeper, Karla and Matt Williams. (2005, Spring). Howdy Partner! Sites of Resistance in University/Public School Grant Projects. Presented to GEAR UP Texas meeting at Texas A&M University

Leeper, Karla. (1997, July) Professional Requirements of the Debate Director in the 21st Century. Proceedings of the Tenth NCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation. Annandale, VA: National Communication Association

Rhetorical Studies

Leeper, Karla. (2004, March). The Presidency and Democratic Deliberation. Presented to the Texas A&M Conference on the Presidency. Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX

Leeper, Karla. (2002). The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Debate. Proceedings of the Twelfth NCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation. Annandale, VA: National Communication Association

Leeper, Karla and Jon Bruschke. (1995, December) The Prevalence of the Abuse Excuse: Media Hype or Cause for Concern? Communications and the Law, 17(4)

Fritch, John and Karla Leeper. (1993, Spring) Poetic Logic: The Metaphoric Form as a Foundation for a Theory of Tropological Argument. Argumentation and Advocacy, 29, (4) 186-194

Herbeck, Dale A., and Karla Leeper. (1985) In the Matter of Snyder: Do Attorneys Have First Amendment Rights? Free Speech Yearbook,

SERVICE

American Heart Association Board Member, 2020-2022

Council on the Advancement and Support of Education Circle of Excellence Awards Judge Coordinator, 2019 and 2020

Augusta CVB Destination Development Advisory Group Strategic Planning Task Force 2017-2020

Augusta CVB All In Augusta Campaign Leadership Council, 2018-2019

Board of Trustees, National Debate Tournament, 2017-2020

Chair, Board of Directors of the Augusta Players, 2015-2020

Chair, Board of Directors of the Augusta History Museum, 2016-2019

Columbia County Women on the Way mentoring program, 2015-2018

Rotary International, Scholarship Committee, 2012-2014

Brazos Valley Broadcast Foundation Board Member, 2006-2014

Waco Mammoth Foundation Board Member, 2007-2014

Waco Education Alliance Board Member, 2007-2014

Waco Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee, 2013-2014

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

Augusta University Employee Advisory Council Teamwork Award, 2017

Given by the Employee Advisory Council to the Division of Communication and Marketing to recognize a high performing team who models open communication, trust, cooperation and respect for differences by building effective and collaborative relationships to accomplish organizational goals

Russ Sullivan Leadership Award, 2014

Given by the Division of Government Relations to a person who exemplifies leadership in public advocacy on behalf of the institution

Campus Diversity Award, 2015

Given by the Baylor Diversity Committee for contributions to the campus climate for diversity

Baylor Student Advocate Award, 2008

Given by the Division of Student Life to a person outside that Division who has contributed significantly to the life of Baylor's students

George Ziegelmueller Award for Excellence in Directing Forensics, 2001

Second Place, National Debate Tournament, 1985