

University of Southern California

Chief Sustainability Officer

Position Specification

2021



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Position Specifications

Role Specifics	
Position	Chief Sustainability Officer
Organization	University of Southern California (USC)
Location	Los Angeles, CA
Reporting Relationship	Senior Vice President for Administration
Website	USC Sustainability

Position Summary

The University of Southern California is seeking an experienced and leading Chief Sustainability Officer for Operations with a commitment to excellence and progression. As the largest private employer in the City of Los Angeles, USC is responsible for \$8 billion in economic activity annually. We offer the opportunity to work in a dynamic and diverse environment, in careers that span a broad spectrum of talents and skills across a variety of academic and professional schools and administrative units. With more than 47,500 students, USC is a leading private research university in Los Angeles – a global center for arts, technology, and international business. Come join us and work as a trusted partner in shaping an environment on innovation and excellence.

The Chief Sustainability Officer is a new executive staff position that reports directly to the Senior Vice President for Administration. The inaugural Chief Sustainability Officer for Operations (CSO) will develop and lead all sustainability efforts in university operations of strategic planning, implementation, and progress tracking to advance the university's sustainability goals as reflected in the University's Sustainability Plan(s). The CSO will partner with stakeholders across the university to develop and integrate sustainability values and practices into planning processes, resource management, and facilities planning and design. This leader will foster a culture of sustainability among internal and external university stakeholders, and will facilitate sustainability ideation, innovation, and experiential learning.

The Institution

The University of Southern California is one of the world's leading private research universities. An anchor institution in Los Angeles, a global center for arts, technology and international business, USC's diverse curricular offerings provide extensive opportunities for interdisciplinary study and collaboration with leading researchers in highly advanced learning environments.

In a comprehensive 2020 ranking, The Wall Street Journal and Times Higher Education ranked USC 18th among more than 1,000 public and private universities. Among all California institutions — public and private — only USC, Caltech and Stanford University ranked within the top 20. Of the 150 universities surveyed in the western U.S., USC ranks No. 3. Among the top 25 schools, USC ranked No. 2 in engagement and No. 5 in environment, a measure of diversity and inclusion.



University of Southern California Mission Statement About the USC President - Carol L. Folt

Sustainability is a paramount priority of the senior leadership team and the University community and is anchored as one of the institution's four strategic pillars. USC will demonstrate leadership over the next decade in:

- Expanding affordability, reducing the burden of student debt for college graduates;
- Furthering sustainability, taking effective and extensive actions to lower the carbon, water and waste footprints of the USC campuses and the L.A. region;
- Embracing the urban future, solving problems faced by major world cities and leveraging the power of USC's schools in new ways and in partnerships with USC's neighbors;
- Emphasizing areas where USC has a distinct advantage – in creative, entrepreneurial, and technological arenas as well as medical research and treatment in areas including cancer, personalized medicine, and Alzheimer's disease.

Key Responsibilities

The Chief Sustainability Officer role is a unique and transformative opportunity for a sustainability leader to both set the mark and map future institutional success within an historic and world-renowned university. The USC community looks for a pragmatic and administratively and operationally experienced executive. There is an articulated need for a sustainability leader who can advocate for climate policy, conceptualize, and build out sustainability infrastructure in a complex setting, incorporate regional and national best practices, leverage their personal and professional networks, and work fluidly across multiple functional lines and offices.

Among these chief responsibilities and strategic duties, the primary accountabilities will include:

- Lead, develop and maintain university sustainability programs, projects, and initiatives that increase efficiency in facilities operations, energy and water consumption reduction, smart technology integration, transportation services, waste product supply chain management, and waste reduction and diversion;
- Develop and support a governance/organizational structure to reach university operations sustainability goals;
- Develop and implement strategies to integrate sustainability and practices into the university's operational long-term strategic planning process, the management of its resources and operations, facilities planning and design, and the university's cultural and co-curricular experience;
- Collaborate with university leaders to prioritize campus sustainability efforts and achieve success;
- Support and promote a culture of sustainability among students, faculty, and staff;
- Analyze and make improvement recommendations for university operations sustainability performance by identifying, tracking, and reporting on key sustainability performance indicators;



- Plan and execute communications and marketing strategies that increase awareness and support of operations' sustainability objectives, assessments and/or rating systems and practices;
- Identify and pursue external funding opportunities for sustainability efforts;
- Partner with key agency and industry stakeholders to launch sustainability initiatives with policy and legislative impacts;
- Develop and support sustainability projects in communities local to USC;
- Align operational sustainability efforts with academic and research strategies, initiatives, institutes, and faculty interests and aspirations, leveraging the knowledge and research capacity of the university to help solve sustainability issues;
- Develop and support a learning and testing environment (i.e., "Living Sustainability Laboratory") to facilitate sustainability ideation, innovation, teaching, and testing for campus stakeholders;
- Provide an immersive sustainability co-curricular learning experience through the development and implementation of initiatives in university operations;
- Responsibility for the development and provision of sustainability career development resources;
- Promote an environment that fosters inclusive relationships and creates unbiased opportunities for contributions through ideas, words, and actions that uphold the principles of the USC Code of Ethics.

Professional Qualifications

Central to the success of the university sustainability endeavors will be a leader who can drive and communicate the university vision, identify, and build partnerships and collaborations, thrive in connectivity on and beyond campus, and is committed to the vision of today's and tomorrow's sustainability practices.

The CSO must be a dynamic and agile executive with demonstrated comfort working at the highest level of an organization and within ambiguity and complexity required of building out major initiatives. This leader will bring exemplary communication skills and a record of building and sustaining relationships within highly complex environments.

Other desired qualifications and leadership characteristics include:

- At least 8 - 12 years of professional experience in a similar environment;
- Experience working with diverse local, regional, and national environmental, sustainability and energy stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and industry and media;
- Experience working in a university setting or other large multi-dimensional organization (including hospitals/medical enterprise);
- Extensive knowledge of climate, water, and waste policies and methods in operations to help decarbonize builds and infrastructure, reduce water consumption, and divert waste;
- Experience working with sustainability reporting/rating/ranking systems (e.g., AASHE STARS);
- Demonstrated experience managing cross-functional projects and complex budgets;
- Strong verbal and written communications skills with the ability to interact with a diverse community of colleagues and stakeholders;
- Ability to work collaboratively and effectively across multiple departments and develop positive working relationships;
- Results driven; demonstrated record of maturity, sound judgment, integrity, and



- ethical standards;
- Strong capability to develop, nurture and maintain effective relationships at senior leadership levels both internally and externally;
 - Decisiveness with keen operational, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that support and enable sound decision-making;
 - Strong organizational and critical thinking skills and the ability to meet and prioritize changing demands;
 - Proven experience fostering environments of trust, transparency, and accountability;
 - Ability to think strategically, ask provoking questions, identify emerging issues and trends, analyze potential impacts critically and translate ideas and insights into viable recommendations for action.

Education

Master's Degree in Engineering, Environmental Science, or other sustainability-related required. Doctorate in similar fields of study preferred. Combined experience/education as a substitute for minimum education.

Compensation

Compensation and benefits will be competitive and commensurate with experience.

Application Process

Candidate nominations and interested and qualified candidates are welcome to submit a resume and cover letter to:

USCChiefSustainabilityOfficer@kornferry.com



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