



# UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Search for the Executive Director of the School of Computer and Data Sciences  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, Oregon

The University of Oregon (UO), Oregon's flagship public research institution, seeks a strategic, visionary, and highly collaborative leader and builder to serve as the Executive Director of the new School of Computer and Data Sciences (SCDS). Combining the university's growing strength in computer science with its ongoing investment in data science, the new School of Computer and Data Sciences opened in fall 2023. Housed within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), SCDS is an innovative hub in the Pacific Northwest for advancing education and research in computer and data sciences, engaging with the wider world to tackle interdisciplinary challenges, and building a training pipeline for a diverse group of practitioners and leaders.

The Executive Director will join the UO community at a pivotal time. Since 2017, data science has been identified as one of UO's [Presidential Initiatives](#) with a goal of national prominence. In recent years, the university completed an impressive fundraising campaign of over \$3 billion that included a billion-dollar gift to launch the [Knight Campus](#), a new transformational science campus, and a \$425 million gift to establish the [Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health](#). Other key institutional priorities focus on the environment, innovation, diversity, and sports and wellness. Under the leadership of [President John Karl Scholz](#), and with the support of [CAS Dean Chris Poulsen](#), the Executive Director of SCDS will play an instrumental role in bringing together diverse faculty, students, and staff across campus to promote and advance a cohesive vision for computer and data sciences, identify opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships, and further enhance the university's commitment to positive social impact through accessible public education and engagement for social good.

Founded in 1876, the University of Oregon is a member of the 71-member Association of American Universities (AAU), the state's flagship institution, and an Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with over 15% Latinx student enrollment. It enrolls more than 19,000 undergraduate and 3,600 graduate students representing all 50 states and 94 countries. It is an integral economic driver for the state, with an estimated \$2.6 billion annual economic return to Oregon. Since 2014, UO has operated under an independent governing structure that supports its ability to chart new directions, improve entrepreneurial activity, and invent creative programming. The main campus of UO is located in Eugene, on Kalapuya Ilihi in the southern Willamette Valley, a picturesque region known for its mild four-season climate, excellent wines, abundant recreational opportunities, and progressive, collaborative culture.

The College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual hub of UO, shaping its identity as a comprehensive research university rooted in liberal arts and sciences education. The School of Computing and Data Sciences plays a critical role both within the college and through collaboration with other academic units in advancing this mission. Building upon the existing strength of the computer and data science programs, SCDS already serves 1,750 students across campus, including 220 data science and 650 computer science majors, and a new cybersecurity major, along with 21 masters and 41 PhD students. In further establishing and building SCDS, the successful Executive Director will address the following opportunities and challenges, outlined in detail beginning on page four of this document:

- Develop, communicate, and strengthen the strategic directions and interdisciplinary identity of the School as a distinctive leader in computer and data sciences
- Build an inclusive environment for innovative research and education
- Forge ties with external partners to increase funds, resources, student opportunities, and industry collaborations
- Expand student success, access, and retention
- Support the continued rapid growth of the data science major and facilitate similar growth for the other undergraduate majors

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the Executive Director can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

### **About The University of Oregon**

UO brings together 22,600 undergraduate and graduate students from all 50 states and 94 countries, and 1,951 teaching and research faculty. It offers 315 degree and certificate programs through its nine academic units: College of Arts and Sciences, Charles H. Lundquist College of Business, College of Design, College of Education, Robert D. Clark Honors College, School of Journalism and Communication, School of Music and Dance, School of Law, and Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact.

One of the leading public research universities in the country, UO scholars and researchers were awarded \$180 million in grants, contracts, and competitive awards in FY2023. The university brings in \$10.3 million annually in licensing revenue, the highest licensing per research dollar among the AAU. UO is also an integral economic driver for the state, with an estimated \$2.6 billion annual economic return to Oregon.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) is the largest academic unit of UO, providing a core liberal arts curriculum to roughly two-thirds of all students at the University—including those who will go on to earn a degree in one of the professional schools such as journalism or business. The more than 10,000 undergraduate students in CAS degree programs are in 50 departments and programs within the divisions of humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. There are 750 faculty members and more than 1,200 graduate students enrolled in over 40 Master's programs or 26 Ph.D. programs. As part of its efforts to advance equity and inclusion, CAS has created new offerings such as Black Studies and Latinx Studies minors, School of Global Studies and Languages, Center for Environmental Futures, and more.

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, to the University of Oregon, across the land we now refer to as Oregon, and around the world.

## **About the School of Computer and Data Sciences**

The University of Oregon first explicitly prioritized data science as a key campus-wide initiative in 2017. Since then, it has hired more than two dozen faculty members, in a variety of disciplinary homes, with expertise in data science, launched a data science undergraduate degree program, and created significant new research grants and partnerships.

As a result of these continuous investments, and the growing demand for data and computer sciences expertise by students, industries, and society, a strategic planning committee was formed in spring 2022 to review the possibility of establishing a School of Computer and Data Sciences. After several months' work in discussing the aspirations for a potential School among diverse stakeholders, the committee voted unanimously to recommend that UO move forward with the creation of SCDS. Following the approval by university leadership, the committee developed a strategic plan for the future of SCDS.

Building upon the existing strength of the computer and data science programs, SCDS is open to all students at UO, with an initial goal of serving 2,000 students across undergraduate and graduate degrees in data science and computer science. The data science major is a model for how the School will reach across the University; students choose a domain specialization that provides them with the interdisciplinary opportunity to apply core knowledge from the School to an area of interest. The mission of SCDS is to empower a diverse population of students and faculty working to advance knowledge in computer and data sciences, train the next generation of scholars, and engage with the wider world to tackle interdisciplinary challenges.

Currently, SCDS plans to offer multiple undergraduate majors – including Computer Science, Math and Computer Science, Cybersecurity, and Data Science; with concentrations such as – Accounting Analytics, Biology, Cultural Analytics, Earth Sciences, Economics, Geography, Linguistics, Marketing Analytics, Music Technology, Physics, Psychology, and Sociology; MS degrees in Computer Science and Data Science; and PhD degrees in Computer Science and Data Science. Rooted in the liberal arts and sciences education at CAS, SCDS will play a key role in expanding data literacy among all students at UO.

Reporting to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Executive Director will be responsible for working with the Computer and Data Science departments to set the strategic direction for the School, collaborating with external and internal partners, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the School. The Executive Director will oversee a school with 25 faculty with a 3-5 year plan to increase that number to 40, with growth beyond that to be correlated with enrollment increases. Direct reports will include heads of the Computer Science and Data Science Departments.

## **Key Opportunities and Challenges for the New Executive Director**

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a new school, and set strategic directions that will transform the entire campus, with the support of a high-caliber, research-active faculty from various units who have strong interests in the SCDS. In doing so, the Executive Director will address the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Develop, communicate, and strengthen the strategic directions and interdisciplinary identity of the School as a distinctive leader in computer and data sciences**

Facing a competitive landscape in computer science and data science programs in higher education, the SCDS Executive Director is tasked with the mission of creating a unique identity that will differentiate the School from its peers. Given its ties to the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest academic unit at UO, the School has the tremendous opportunity to articulate the importance of becoming data-literate and computationally competent for every UO student. Coupled with the emphasis on liberal arts and sciences, this is a meaningful task to reimagine the breadth of the educational experience encompassing computer and data sciences for all students. The Executive Director is also expected to leverage the existing and growing strengths across the university. In doing so, the Executive Director will work closely with heads, faculty, and staff to continue developing the strategic directions that will benefit multiple stakeholders at SCDS, CAS, UO, and beyond.

To be successful, the Executive Director will be knowledgeable and passionate about both computer and data sciences, their interdisciplinary nature, and the many opportunities to transform and leverage interdisciplinary collaborations across UO to further engage faculty and industry for even greater impact. Working collaboratively and creatively with different campus constituents, the Executive Director will drive, communicate, and further strengthen the strategic visions and unique identity of the School through a set of ambitious yet realistic short-term and long-term goals that define and clarify the distinction of SCDS. The Executive Director will also act as the ambassador of the School, promoting its values to external stakeholders to inspire industry partnerships, philanthropy, career outcomes, and community connections in the near future.

### **Build an inclusive environment for innovative research and education**

As a member of the AAU and a leading R1 research institution, UO is home to many leading scholars and researchers on campus, including a Nobel Prize winner and two National Medal of Science winners. In addition, the university takes pride in its longstanding tradition of cross-department collaboration within long-established and independent interdisciplinary [research institutes](#). SCDS will further catalyze and support research grants across the university that apply cutting-edge methods to transformative interdisciplinary applications. To be successful, the Executive Director will harness the breadth and depth of expertise among all faculty, and engage with faculty to navigate the priorities and perspectives in its research and education missions. It is crucial for the Executive Director to cultivate an innovative and entrepreneurial research environment and facilitate the process of identifying external grants, funding, collaboration and partnership opportunities to further elevate research across campus. As the departments of computer science and data science operate within SCDS, the Executive Director will work with the heads and faculty to coordinate the existing curricular and teaching efforts, including adopting inclusive pedagogies and expanding experiential learning opportunities, in computer science and data science-related courses across the campus, as well as provide a strategic lens to enrollment management. In doing so, the Executive Director will enhance the reputation and visibility of SCDS in its research and education missions.

### **Forge ties with external partners to increase funds, resources, student opportunities, and industry collaborations**

The future success of the School will depend on the Executive Director's ability to forge ties with industry, government, community, and philanthropic partners to generate sustainable funding resources and increase partnerships that will bolster better outcomes for student success, career outcomes, and research and education activities. To be successful, the Executive Director will be a strategic thinker and relationship builder, partnering closely with the CAS Dean's office, University Advancement, Office of Research, and other campus units to attract philanthropic investment and impactful external relationships. The Executive Director will be an engaging storyteller who is able to provide a compelling vision for donors and community leaders to continue their engagement with the university, as well as present the value of the School's impact on domains beyond computer and data sciences.

### **Expand student success, access, and retention**

While neither computer science nor data science are new to the UO community, much work remains to be done to lower barriers to entry, especially for students whose experiences have not emphasized STEM and/or have been excluded from STEM. All students can benefit from training in quantitative and computational skills for workforce preparation and/or further academic pursuits. To be inclusive, program offerings and pedagogy must be thoughtfully crafted in order to include and empower all students, including those from historically marginalized communities, mid-career, and nontraditional students. The Executive Director will work with partners across campus to strategically guide expansion of inclusive computer and data science curriculum. The Executive Director will also work with a team of faculty, staff, and students to provide comprehensive support services, peer mentoring, and other community-building activities in the integrated academic and career advising center located at the 64,000-square-foot state-of-the-art [Tykeson Hall](#). The goal will be to facilitate connections, support, and a sense of belonging for all. The Executive Director will create a team focused on improving career readiness and job outcomes for students, including preparation to succeed in experiential learning, internships, research, or job opportunities.

It is critical that the Executive Director promote and advance a welcoming and inclusive community in which individuals with diverse experiences and perspectives feel empowered, respected, and motivated to work together toward common goals. To do so successfully, the Executive Director should have a strong intellectual understanding of the various needs of each academic unit, as well as experience listening to, engaging with, and facilitating conversations among diverse groups. The Executive Director will bring a demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion to the new School and will be ready to lead by example on day one.

### **Support the continued rapid growth of the data science major and facilitate similar growth for the other undergraduate majors**

In concert with the work described above to maintain and increase inclusivity, there is an opportunity to work with enrollment management to build on the growth of the data science major (which has potential appeal to a broader group than a typical quantitative major), to increase the footprint of the computer science major on campus, which is small compared to many peers despite the high quality of the faculty, and to recruit for a new cybersecurity major, which has substantial and growing workforce potential.

## Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate will have credentials appropriate for a tenured appointment as a full professor with a strong record of scholarship directly related to one or more of the disciplines within the School of Computer and Data Sciences. They should also demonstrate a record of leadership and administrative experiences supporting and strengthening intersections of research and teaching.

The successful candidate will possess most of the following experiences, qualifications, and/or characteristics:

- An earned doctorate degree and a strong record of scholarship, teaching, and professional service appropriate for the appointment at the rank of a tenured full professor;
- Experience leading and collaborating with faculty and/or researchers across disciplines;
- Demonstrated success in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Capacity to cultivate external relations to support fundraising, development, industry, and community engagement;
- Experience in securing grants from funding agencies;
- Experience in leading or developing curricular and instructional innovation;
- Excellent communication, relationship-building, and interpersonal skills including the ability to work collaboratively in a team environment.

## Location

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people, in the Willamette Valley, a picturesque region known for its excellent wines, abundant recreational opportunities, and outdoor activities, and marked by a progressive, collaborative culture. It sits on 295-acres and features state-of-the-art facilities in an arboretum-like setting. Eugene is a vibrant and growing metropolitan area of over 200,000 people located two hours from Portland, and five hours from Seattle with varied cultural and culinary offerings, a pleasant climate, and a community engaged in environmental and social concerns. It hosts several world-class museums and cultural centers, including the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History, and the Many Nations Longhouse. Eugene is also a prime location for outdoor enthusiasts; skiing, hiking, fishing, rafting, cycling, and running are all popular pastimes in the area.

## Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For best consideration, please apply by September 15, 2024. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-oregon/executive-director-school-computer-and-data-sciences>. Electronic submission of materials is required.

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