

University Corporation of Atmospheric Research
Leadership Profile
Director, UCAR Community Programs (UCP)

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action employer that strives to develop and maintain a diverse workforce. UCAR is committed to providing equal opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, creed, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or pregnancy. UCAR is committed to inclusivity and promoting an equitable environment that values and respects the uniqueness of all members of the organization.

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The Opportunity: Overview

The University Corporation of Atmospheric Research (UCAR) invites inquiries, nominations, and expressions of interest for the Director of UCAR Community Programs (UCP). For detailed information about the application process, please see the section at the end of this document titled "[Procedure for Candidacy](#)."

Headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, UCAR serves and participates in a collaborative community of researchers and educators who are dedicated to understanding the atmosphere — the air around us — and the complex processes that make up the Earth system, from the ocean floor to the Sun's core. UCAR operates the U.S. National Science Foundation National Center for Atmospheric Research (NSF NCAR) on behalf of NSF, as well as the suite of programs for the Earth system science community that comprise UCP.

UCAR Community Programs (UCP) Overview

UCP represents a comprehensive array of support and services aimed at advancing the global Earth system science (ESS) community. It consists of eight individual programs, three centers, approximately 310 staff, and a budget of approximately \$50 million.

Activities in UCP include everything from training weather forecasters, firefighters, and emergency managers to data delivery, scientist services, scientist exchanges, and novel observational systems. UCP develops internship programs and educational resources, fosters community engagement in science, provides real-time data and software analysis tools and manages projects and staffing for scientific programs across the country and around the world. Additionally, UCP works in collaboration with federal and international institutions on satellite design, management, and data utilization to refine water, weather, and climate models.

Community is at the core of UCP, and UCP brings value to the ESS community by addressing needs as they arise and evolve. The community trusts UCP as a neutral convener of science, and its individual programs have developed internationally recognized brands that attract funders from across the ESS enterprise. These programs work together to bring multidisciplinary solutions to the community.

UCP is an agile, community-focused organization that advances ESS to address grand societal challenges. UCP's flexibility allows it to work with a greater pool of sponsors and can be leveraged by NSF NCAR in research-to-operations activities to further extend NSF NCAR's activities. UCAR's 131 member institutions are strengthening the broader impacts of their projects through collaborations with UCP, demonstrating the value of UCP as a partner.

The community benefits from the sponsored programs administered by UCP because of the expertise and the UCAR infrastructure in place to provide support. Many of the programs focus on applied research and operational solutions. The benefits of these activities reach well beyond the sponsor agencies because of the capability UCP has for amplifying results. [Read more about UCP](#).

UCP Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

Vision

A Center of Excellence in research, education, and services that advance Earth system science for the benefit of society.

Mission

To conduct research and develop innovative data, tools, educational resources, and science services to empower the Earth system science community in addressing significant societal challenges.

Strategic Goals

- Lead critical areas of Earth system science by catalyzing new ideas and innovation, leveraging the capability and talents across UCP, and partnering with NSF NCAR, universities, and the Earth system science community
- Broaden participation in Earth system science by increasing opportunities with systematically marginalized communities and by building the capacity of academic institutions, including MSIs, community colleges, and non-research-intensive institutions
- Develop the next-generation workforce to support the Earth system science enterprise
- Advanced earth system predictability through research and the development of innovative Earth observing, modeling, and data assimilation capabilities
- Modernize governance, organizational structure, and operations in support of UCP's mission

The Role: Director, UCAR Community Programs

The UCP Director is a senior executive position at UCAR. The Director provides guidance for and oversight of, UCAR's organizational management functions, including establishing, articulating, and implementing UCAR and UCP's mission and strategic plans; and management oversight for the operational, programmatic, and policy aspects of all UCP programs and activities. The UCP Director serves on the UCAR President's Council, which is responsible for the overall organizational management of UCAR, representing and advocating for UCP's programmatic activities.

The UCP Director manages the strategic direction of UCP, ensuring that its programs and centers are aligned and working collaboratively to leverage UCP expertise for innovation and new funding opportunities that positively impact the Earth system science (ESS) community. The director partners closely with NSF NCAR leadership to extend the impact of NSF NCAR activities within the community.

This position partners with the UCAR President and senior leadership to secure new business opportunities and revenue streams for the organization's research, education tools, data distribution, and other applications for the community. The UCP Director also represents and advocates for UCP to sponsoring agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Specific Responsibilities Include:

UCP Responsibilities

- Provides leadership to UCAR Community Programs (UCP), ensuring that the support provided by the UCP Directorate meets the business and strategic needs of UCP programs and centers.
- Supervises UCP center directors and chairs the UCP Executive Committee to ensure the successful and effective execution of UCP activities.
- Collaborates with UCP leadership to advance the UCP Strategic Plan and explores new opportunities and business models, focusing on big-picture issues and emerging trends that could use and build upon UCP's expertise.
- Works with external agencies and other funding sources, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations, to advocate for and develop opportunities for UCP programs.
- Collaborates with NSF NCAR and member universities on research-to-operations that strengthen the broader impacts to the community.
- Leads UCP all-staff meetings and UCP communications to support two-way, transparent, and efficient communications across the organization.
- Advocates for internal support functions, including Finance, Administration, Facilities, Human Resources, Contracts, Information Technology, and others on behalf of UCP to ensure effective business and enterprise support of UCP programs.
- Supervises and mentors UCP Directorate staff.

UCAR Responsibilities

- Serves on the UCAR President's Council, which is responsible for the overall organizational management of UCAR. Represents and advocates for UCP's programmatic activities to the President's Council.
- Serves on committees that advance UCAR's mission, providing input into UCAR's strategic vision and ensuring its implementation.
- Authorizes personnel and financial actions as prescribed by policy and designated by the UCAR President.
- Provides advice to the UCAR President on a wide range of leadership, management, and administrative subjects.
- Serves as acting UCAR President on an as-needed basis.

Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The UCP Director will present a demonstrated ability to lead and inspire UCP staff and develop strong partnerships with internal organizational leaders and external partners. The Director will have sound Earth system science (ESS) experience and exhibit strong strategic leadership skills that advance the UCP and UCAR strategic direction. Specific qualities desired for this role include:

- Leadership and executive management experience, preferably while representing and supporting scientific or academic programs.

- Demonstrated management skills in the following areas: Project management, operations, finance, creating inclusive environments, and organizational development.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and sustaining relationships with a diverse internal team, as well as with external partners in academia, government, and the nonprofit and business sectors.
- Demonstrated experience with strategic planning implementation and the ability to lead organizational change.
- Skill in representing organizations and/or scientific concepts at the national and international levels in the public, private, and academic sectors.
- Previous experience in one or more of the following technical areas: Meteorology, oceanography, hydrology, remote sensing, geoscience, new learning technologies, and education services and planning.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, as well as presentation skills.
- Experience leading successful proposal efforts and teams.
- Excellent people skills.
- Proven ability to supervise and mentor employees in a wide range of positions.
- Ability and willingness to travel domestically and internationally.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next Director of UCAR Community Programs will be asked to address the following critical leadership issues, among others:

UCP Strategic Plan Implementation

In 2024, UCP embarked on the development of a comprehensive Strategic Plan that outlined collaborative and innovative goals for the future. The UCP Director will provide leadership on implementation of the UCP Strategic Plan over the next five years, ensuring key performance indicators (KPIs) are defined and goals are realized through the support of individual strategic actions.

Appointment Structure

UCAR is currently engaged in a multi-year project to modernize the appointment structure for scientific roles within the organization. The UCP Director will provide leadership insight on the Scientific Appointment Modernization (SAM) project to ensure successful analysis of the proposed direction, approvals, and implementation strategy on behalf of UCP.

External Advisory Committee

The [UCP External Advisory Committee](#), launched in May 2023, provides guidance, advice, direction, and regular feedback on UCP's activities and management of its centers and programs, consistent with UCP's vision, goals, and objectives. The next UCP Director will continue to leverage this critical advisory committee to ensure the UCP direction includes a broad view and deep understanding of the field of Earth system science (ESS), including how UCP programs and centers can contribute to the advancement of ESS, in close collaboration with the community.

University Corporation of Atmospheric Research: An Overview

A Brief History

In the late 1950s, atmospheric scientists from 14 universities came together with a common vision to create an organization where they could share resources and build collaborations to transform the understanding of weather, water, climate, and the Sun.

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) was incorporated as a nonprofit organization on March 16, 1959. Shortly after the incorporation, and in partnership with the National Science Foundation (NSF), UCAR established the U.S. National Science Foundation National Center for Atmospheric Research (NSF NCAR) as a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC). UCAR's founding mission was to operate NSF NCAR on behalf of NSF for the benefit of the atmospheric and related sciences community. [Read more on the UCAR website.](#)

UCAR Today

The understanding of weather, water, climate, and related aspects of the Earth and Sun has continued to be important for safeguarding lives, infrastructure, and economic well-being. UCAR's capacity to expand knowledge of these complex, interwoven systems has never held greater potential. The corporation serves a unique and fundamental role as a vibrant hub connecting the academic, public, and private sectors of this enterprise. As the primary nexus for problem-solving and collaboration within our broad community, UCAR is committed to building upon and expanding the reach and impact of its activities. This work is enhanced by a global network that sustains UCAR's vision and allows it to empower its partners.

UCAR manages a portfolio of primarily federally funded programs with a total staff of about 1,390 and annual expenditures exceeding \$200 million. The largest and most prominent of these programs is NSF NCAR, which is NSF's largest federally funded research and development center. UCAR has managed NSF NCAR continuously since 1960 on behalf of NSF. UCAR's other programs, collectively known as UCAR Community Programs (UCP), broaden the impacts of NSF NCAR's work and support the capabilities of the research, education, and professional communities.

UCAR facilitates technology transfer and brings research attention to societal needs and requirements. It leverages these activities through a consortium of 131 member colleges and universities and through an extended community network of partners in the public and private sectors. Another key activity is representing and amplifying the voice of this community, particularly in addressing the many societal benefits of the nation's investments in research and technology.

The aggregate impacts of weather and climate events on the changing planet, from routine to extreme, shape our society in ways that are not yet fully understood. Decision makers from all walks of life

increasingly depend on the knowledge developed through the power of UCAR — its consortium, its community programs, and the national center — to understand the atmosphere, Earth, and Sun that together sustain and shape our lives.

UCAR Vision, Mission, and Values

In 2019, UCAR published its current 10-year strategic plan. Input was gathered from employees, scientific and professional visitors, and members of the broader atmospheric and related sciences community. From that process emerged UCAR's vision, mission, and guiding values.



Vision: Earth system science for a better world.

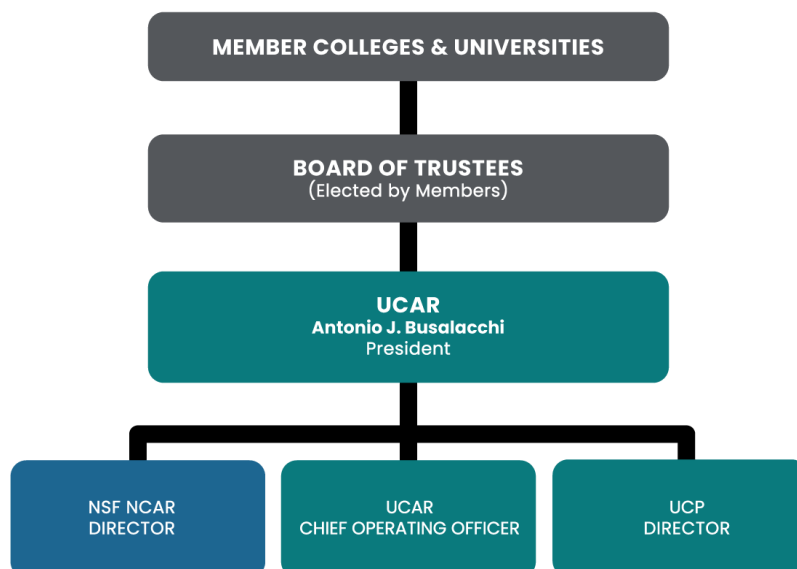
Mission: Leading world-class Earth system science through partnerships, innovation, and service.

Guiding Values: Community | Creativity | Excellence | Inclusivity | Integrity

[Read the UCAR Strategic Plan 2019-2028](#)

UCAR's Organizational Structure

UCAR is a consortium of member institutions. Each member college or university appoints two member representatives, one of whom casts the vote on behalf of the institution in UCAR elections. The members elect the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees hires the UCAR President. The UCAR Chief Operating Officer (COO), the UCP Director, the NSF NCAR Director, and other members of senior management staff in the President's Office report to the UCAR President.



Member Institutions

Today, the founding 14 member universities have grown to 131 member institutions focused on research and training in Earth system science (ESS). Collectively, the members strengthen and promote professional interactions, collaborations, and collegiality in the broader research and education community. This partnership is unique in science and engineering and has produced some of the best research and technology in the world.

Member institutions appoint member representatives who serve as important links between the community and UCAR and its programs. Member representatives serve on governance and scientific advisory committees that help shape the course of UCAR, its science, and its service to the academic community. At the UCAR Annual Members Meeting each October, the representatives elect trustees and members of UCAR governance and advisory committees, participate in scientific planning sessions, and discuss matters affecting the scientific enterprise as a whole. Sponsoring agencies often use the meeting as a vehicle for communicating goals and directions and for seeking advice.

The member representatives keep university colleagues informed about UCAR activities and opportunities and, in turn, bring university perspectives to the President's Advisory Committee on University Relations (PACUR) and the Board of Trustees. Many member representatives play a key role in education activities for policy decision-makers that help sustain federal support of ESS.

Board of Trustees

The UCAR Board of Trustees is elected by members at the UCAR Annual Members Meeting. Drawn from academia, research institutions, and the private sector, the 18 trustees determine the overall direction of the corporation. They discharge their fiduciary responsibilities at their regularly scheduled meetings (February, June, and October), and through a set of committees that recommend actions regarding UCAR scientific appointments, financial management, and audit matters.

[Read more about the UCAR Board of Trustees](#)

UCAR President Antonio J. Busalacchi, Ph.D.

Dr. Antonio J. Busalacchi, President of UCAR since August 2016, has a distinguished career in the geosciences; extensive experience in the management of academic, laboratory, and government programs; and a broad knowledge of the geoscience research and education community. Prior to his appointment at UCAR, he served as Director of the University of Maryland's Earth System Science Interdisciplinary Center (ESSIC) and as a professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science.

[Read Dr. Busalacchi's Full Bio](#)

UCAR Operations

The UCAR Operations offices provide business support that helps ensure the scientific and educational work done at NSF NCAR and UCP can thrive. UCAR Operations include Enterprise Information Technology; Enterprise Risk Management; the Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Facilities Management; Health, Environment, and Safety Services; the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer; and Internal Audit.

NSF NCAR

In 1960, NSF NCAR began operations in Boulder, Colorado, as a program of NSF managed by UCAR.

NSF NCAR provides the university research and teaching community with tools — such as aircraft and portable ground-based systems — to observe the atmosphere. The center also provides the technology and assistance to interpret and use these observations, including supercomputer access and user support. NSF NCAR is the leader in community-developed Earth system models. NSF NCAR and university scientists collaborate on research topics in weather, water, climate, atmospheric chemistry, interactions between the Sun and Earth, and more.

[Read more about NSF NCAR](#)

Boulder, Colorado



Boulder sits at the foot of the Rocky Mountains in northern Colorado, about 30 minutes from Denver. Denver International Airport, among the busiest in the United States, connects the region to destinations around the world.

The City of Boulder describes itself this way on its visit Boulder website:

Tucked into a picturesque valley below the iconic Flatirons, Boulder hosts thriving tech and natural foods industries, supports a renowned entrepreneurial community, has some of the region's best restaurants, and is home to many federal research labs and a world-class university. No wonder this Rocky Mountain town of approximately 107,000 people is a world-class destination...Boulder has preserved more than 45,000 acres of open space, much of which surrounds the city and helps maintain its geographical boundaries. More than 150 miles of trails abound for nature lovers. The University of Colorado sits in the heart of Boulder and educates more than 30,000 students each year. For all of these reasons, Boulder is able to attract and sustain a vibrant cultural calendar, including concerts, performances, and exhibitions in every genre, featuring nationally and internationally known talent. Summer festivals include the Colorado Music Festival and Colorado Shakespeare Festival, as well as numerous family-friendly activities along Boulder Creek, which runs through the heart of downtown.

Read more about Boulder on the city's website and in the Boulder visitor's guide Read about the Boulder Valley School District.

Procedure for Candidacy

[Isaacson, Miller](#) is assisting UCAR in this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. For fullest consideration, applicant materials should be submitted using the Isaacson, Miller candidate portal. Candidates should provide a curriculum vitae and a letter of application that addresses the responsibilities and requirements described in this Leadership Profile.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to the Isaacson, Miller consultants supporting this search via the [job link](#).

This position offers a hiring salary range of \$240,016-\$300,020. The final salary will be based on education, experience (entrepreneurial, leadership, management, and scientific), skills relevant to the role, and internal equity. [Read more about UCAR's comprehensive benefits package](#).