



Vice President & Executive Director, Electrochemical Safety Research Institute  
UL Research Institutes  
Maryland / Washington, DC

## THE SEARCH

[UL Research Institutes](#) (ULRI), the world's leading safety science research organization, is seeking nominations and applications for the Vice President & Executive Director (VP) of its [Electrochemical Safety Research Institute \(ESRI\)](#). This position will lead a highly regarded and prestigious institute in the evolution of its research program; the growth of its laboratory infrastructure; and the expansion of its education and outreach initiatives to achieve global impact.

ESRI's mission is to foster the design and deployment of safer energy storage and energy generation devices and the ecosystems that they power. Through in-house scientific research and collaborative work with leading academic and institutional research partners, ESRI delivers scientific insights that policymakers, manufacturers, standards development and testing organizations, and consumers depend upon to make informed technology decisions. Examples include defining safe conditions for deployment of different battery chemistries targeting various energy-storage use cases or innovating in the design of new materials, components, and assemblies designed to reduce inherent safety risks. With an expanding focus and available resources to support extraordinary infrastructure growth—including the planned construction of a significant new laboratory and abuse-testing facility—ESRI cultivates the success of a community of researchers that is positioned to grow and excel.

ULRI's work is supported in part by a multi-billion-dollar endowment, which provides stable, mission-aligned funding and meaningful flexibility to invest in world-class research and infrastructure, as well as rapid-response work on emerging safety challenges. ESRI will pair this internal investment with an expanded sponsored research portfolio, building partnerships across government, academia, and industry while maintaining the independence and objectivity that define ULRI's role.

This is an exciting time in the history of ESRI. The VP will have an opportunity to set a growth strategy and expand ESRI's mission and programs, deploying resources targeted to significantly grow beyond its current \$16M/year over the next 5 years, including both internal and sponsored funding. This will include identification of research opportunities to address emerging needs and the development of unbiased

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scientific knowledge that will advance the safer design and deployment of energy-storage and energy-generation devices and the ecosystems that they power. The VP will further develop an extensive network of relationships with government agencies (e.g., the U.S. Department of Energy and other global entities focused on energy-relevant topics) and academic institutions to drive meaningful partnerships and research advancements. The intent is that these efforts will further establish ESRI and ULRI as pre-eminent safety science research institutions.

UL Research Institutes has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the Vice President & Executive Director. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

## ABOUT ULRI

The ambitious growth expected for Electrochemical Safety will be mirrored by corresponding evolution of other ULRI mission units, including its [Fire Safety Research Institute](#) (which will share the new Maryland/Washington, D.C. campus with ESRI), [Chemical Insights Research Institute](#), [Digital Safety Research Institute](#), [Materials Discovery Research Institute](#), and [Institute for Research Experiences and Education](#). Between deployment of internal resources generated from its endowment and external resources generated from sponsored research awards, ULRI expects by 2030 to exceed \$150M per year in operational spending to advance its mission.

## The Larger UL Enterprise

In June 2022, the UL enterprise revealed new brands for its two nonprofit organizations, UL Research Institutes and UL Standards & Engagement, and the commercial business, UL Solutions. The brands reflect and clarify each organization's unique role in working for a safer world. While the logos for the organizations have been updated to reflect the new brands, the existing UL certification marks, which signal independent third-party safety, security, and sustainability certification, remain unchanged.

Each of the three organizations serves a distinct role in helping to advance safety. The UL enterprise confronts safety challenges head-on, turning questions and hypotheses into discoveries and innovation to ensure that scientific knowledge is applied. The three organizations' capacity to create change is amplified by a distinctive network of researchers, engineers, technologists, government regulators, technical experts, and business leaders to advance safety and sustainability.

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[UL Research Institutes \(ULRI\)](#), formerly known as Underwriters Laboratories, is a 501(c)(3) leading independent safety science research organization with global reach. ULRI researchers explore both the benefits and risks of today's technologies and pursue answers to socially relevant questions related to public safety. They take a multidisciplinary approach that engages the ingenuity of top minds across scientific disciplines to engineer a safer and more sustainable world — one in which every individual can thrive. ULRI is the sole member of ULSE.



[UL Standards & Engagement \(ULSE\)](#) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit standards development and advocacy organization that translates safety science into practical, action-oriented standards in multiple domains. The organization also serves as a vital resource for policymakers and shares knowledge, advances partnerships, and advocates for standards and policies to create a safer, more sustainable world. ULSE is the controlling shareholder of UL Solutions.



[UL Solutions](#) is a global leader in applied safety science. UL Solutions transforms safety, security, and sustainability challenges into opportunities for customers in more than 100 countries. UL Solutions delivers testing, inspection, and certification services, together with software products and advisory offerings, that support customers' product innovation and business growth. The UL certification marks serve as a recognized symbol of trust in its customers' products and reflect an unwavering commitment to advancing safety. They help customers innovate, launch new products and services, navigate global markets and complex supply chains, and grow sustainably and responsibly into the future.

## ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Vice President & Executive Director will be an established technical expert and well-networked leader who brings a strategic and aspirational vision to the institute and is expected to enhance and diversify the current research portfolio of ESRI through both internal and external investments and collaborations. This leader will represent ESRI, its mission and research, in a variety of settings, both internal and external to ULRI. In addition, they will advance research results to (i) actionable safety recommendations and practices, (ii) technology innovations translated to prototypes, and (iii) public impact through strong communications and education strategies.

The Vice President & Executive Director will lead with a collaborative approach, capable of fostering innovation and growth, and inter-institute partnerships across ULRI while balancing strategic direction with research autonomy. Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to engage with diverse stakeholders will be critical. The successful candidate will bring a strong record of research, publications, scientific leadership, and external recognition within the broadly defined field of energy-focused materials science, chemistry, and physics. Key areas of current ESRI research include understanding thermal runaway and fire mitigation/suppression in Li- and Na-ion batteries (based on both experimental and computational modeling studies); the design of safer alternative chemistries and formats (e.g., solid-state and flow batteries) for various energy-storage use cases; safe and efficient recycling of commercial energy-storage devices; and safety considerations enabling the broader adoption of hydrogen as an energy-storage technology. The successful candidate will build on this platform, and expand into additional, complementary science, emphasizing innovative approaches and the translation of discoveries into impactful actions and products.

The Electrochemical Safety Research Institute presently occupies facilities in Houston, TX. Planning for construction of a new laboratory in the Maryland/Washington, D.C. area is well under way and ESRI will transition to that new facility in stages, leveraging temporary space in Maryland and legacy capabilities in Texas throughout the transition period. The Vice President & Executive Director will play a key role in assessing the alignment of human and facilities resources with mission priorities, addressing current space limitations and planning for future infrastructure needs.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

### **Provide Strategic and Visionary Leadership for the Institute.**

The Vice President & Executive Director will be expected to provide knowledgeable, experienced, and proven leadership to the Electrochemical Safety Research Institute, championing the distinctive role the institute plays to broad scientific, consumer, and policy-maker external stakeholders, as well as internally within ULRI. Requirements of the role include enhancing the institute's recognition and reach as a scientific leader in energy and resilience fields. The VP will oversee and lead these efforts through discovery research, peer-reviewed scholarly and more general publications (including those targeting the public), external presentations and participation in strategic national and global initiatives, and the translation of research into actionable tools and processes that advance public safety, including standards and policies. This leadership will require an entrepreneurial spirit and dedicated focus, with the ability to be nimble and responsive to emerging research opportunities and challenges, and an understanding of the challenges and adaptations associated with the greater ULRI organization.

### **Build Research Capacity.**

The Electrochemical Safety Research Institute is planning a substantial expansion of its in-house experimental and computational modeling capabilities. These efforts will be supported by state-of-the-art facilities that will be one of the key components of a new research campus in the

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Maryland/Washington, D.C. area that is currently in the late-planning stages. The Vice President & Executive Director, working with ULRI's Real Estate and Facilities team, will provide leadership in identifying and meeting facilities needs as they evolve throughout the construction process and thereafter. Managing the institute's overall transition from its current location in Texas to the Maryland/Washington, D.C. area, which will occur in stages as distinct Maryland/D.C. capabilities are brought online, will be a key priority. At the same time, the VP/Executive Director will ensure ESRI has the talent and organizational capacity to sustain research momentum throughout the move by strengthening and growing the team and deepening collaborative partnerships to extend ESRI's portfolio and impact.

### **Serve as a Unifying and Decisive Leader.**

The VP will ensure the ESRI's staff work as a highly effective team that embraces its collaborative partners and is tightly connected to the broader ULRI organization. The Vice President & Executive Director will be expected to work across ULRI and with relevant senior leadership to ensure that the institute's goals are aligned with those of the larger organization. This will require skillful delegation, consistent internal and external communication, decisive and transparent decision-making, and setting clear and consistent goals and expectations. While fostering a collaborative and empowering leadership style, the Vice President & Executive Director must also support autonomy and innovation among researchers while driving alignment with the organizational mission. With an emphasis on research excellence, recruiting, retaining, and developing the strongest possible research staff will be essential. With the strategic focus of ULRI on accelerating the transfer of knowledge for the public good, ESRI will be well-positioned to help realize the potential for this institute to inform the safety of the ongoing global energy transition.

### **Build upon the Electrochemical Safety Research Institute's Strong Reputation.**

Communications and public engagement are core missions that are critical to the success of the Electrochemical Safety Research Institute. While ESRI is made highly visible through publications in prominent research journals and dissemination of research findings in other strategic venues, the institute has the potential to become more widely recognized as one of the finest energy research programs in the world. The VP will be tasked with expanding ESRI's impact by developing actionable educational materials for professional associations, conducting public awareness campaigns to translate research findings into tools and knowledge that benefit society, and building upon an already highly respected convening authority for international workshops that focus on critical topics related to energy-storage safety.

Through a combination of cutting-edge research, a specialized scientific laboratory, stakeholder-tested communication tools, and strong engagement with academia, government, and standards development organizations worldwide, the institute is well-positioned to extend its reach to ever wider and more diverse audiences. As a key spokesperson for ESRI, the Vice President & Executive Director should effectively engage multiple constituencies, ranging from other research professionals to policymakers and the public at large.

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## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate must bring a strong track record of leadership within the broadly interpreted area of Electrochemical Energy and Energy Materials, Devices, and Systems. An advanced professional degree plus extended subsequent experience in relevant fields is required that may include chemistry, electrical engineering, safety engineering, materials science, physics, or an affiliated field. Extensive experience in scientific research with a distinguished scientific publication history and demonstration of external engagement and recognition from third-party stakeholders is required. While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- Exceptional strategic thinking ability and demonstrated success in innovation, scientific-organization planning, and implementation.
- A record of providing visionary science leadership and a proven track record of discovery research, publication, third-party stakeholder engagement, and attracting externally sponsored research funding.
- Passion for and commitment to addressing the risks of energy storage and energy generation systems, both with respect to the environment as well as to human exposure.
- A positive and constructive leadership style to manage a growing team of leading researchers as well as staff supporting internal and external communications and administrative work.
- Knowledge of and contributions to standards development efforts designed to improve product or process safety.
- A network of strong relationships with national and international leaders in science research and policy communities.
- Managing an organization through transition and growth.
- Organizational management skills including experience with financial, legal, business operations, and human resources.
- Experience with new and innovative models of collaboration and outreach.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.

Strong ethical values with a commitment to transparency so that worldwide stakeholders have the necessary confidence that ULRI's research is accurate and objective.

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## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

### Location

The Electrochemical Safety Research Institute presently occupies facilities in Houston, TX, and is well along in the planning process for a new research campus in the Maryland/Washington, D.C. area. In order to oversee construction and the ultimate transition of all personnel to the new campus, the Vice President & Executive Director will be based in the Maryland/ Washington, D.C. area and will play a key role in assessing how best to align human and facilities resources with mission priorities both throughout the transition and thereafter.

### Compensation

Compensation will be both competitive and commensurate with the successful candidate's experience.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller website](#).

Andy Lee, Managing Partner  
Ibaad Nazeer, Senior Associate  
Madeline Fitzpatrick, Managing Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*UL Research Institutes is committed to hiring and retaining a qualified diverse workforce. UL Research Institutes is proud to be an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer, making decisions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, or any other protected class.*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by ULRI. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by ULRI would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*

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## APPENDIX 1: ABOUT UL RESEARCH INSTITUTES

UL Research Institutes is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance public safety through the discovery and application of scientific knowledge. It conducts rigorous independent research and analyzes safety data, convenes experts worldwide to address safety risks, shares knowledge through safety education and public outreach initiatives, and contributes to the development of standards to guide safe and sustainable commercialization of evolving technologies. The organization employs collaborative and scientific approaches with partners and stakeholders to drive innovation and progress toward improving safety, security, and sustainability, ultimately enhancing societal well-being.

## APPENDIX 2: The Future of UL Research Institutes and Electrochemical Safety Research Institute

Building on its legacy and 132-year history of success, UL Research Institutes has embraced a new strategic plan committed to science, innovation, and discovery in areas of global societal importance. The organization continues a major expansion of its research activities, including significant growth in its research staff, aimed at enabling new breakthroughs in safety-science research initiatives across program areas. This includes, inter alia, energy storage, chemical safety, fire safety, digital safety, eco-remediation, and prospective fields driven by rapidly evolving technologies.