Search for the Executive Director
University of Southern California, Information Sciences Institute
Marina Del Rey, California

THE SEARCH

The Information Sciences Institute at the University of Southern California (ISI) seeks an aspirational, collaborative, and strategic leader to serve as its next Executive Director. This is a unique opportunity to lead a highly regarded—and groundbreaking— Institute and help chart the course for its future. The Executive Director will develop the vision and guide the strategy to position ISI as a world leader in research and development of advanced artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, microelectronics, cybersecurity, networking, and quantum technologies. The Executive Director will lead over 220 ISI faculty, professional staff, and graduate students as they carry out extraordinary innovations across three distinct locations – Marina del Rey, California; Arlington, Virginia; and Waltham, Massachusetts.

Since its inception over five decades ago, ISI has been a pioneer in the research and development of computing technologies. A world-class institution, ISI offers a prestigious, intellectually vibrant environment, combining the best of major research universities and industry labs. Today, ISI stands as one of two research powerhouses, along with its spinoff institute, the Institute for Creative Technologies (ICT), within one of the nation's top-ranked engineering schools. The Executive Director will build on this momentum and develop, implement, and effectively communicate a vision to grow the impact of ISI in all existing areas and beyond. In doing so, the Executive Director will oversee initiatives and operations dedicated to catalyzing interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and innovation while implementing a sustainable revenue-generating funding model. The successful candidate will be an exceptional communicator with a demonstrated record of multidisciplinary team-building experience and will effectively manage across a variety of internal and external stakeholders, all in service to the ISI mission of imagining bold solutions to complex problems and transforming lives.

A list of desired qualifications and characteristics of the Executive Director can be found at the conclusion of this document. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to Isaacson, Miller at the contact address listed at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Located in one of the capital cities of the 21st century, USC is the oldest private research university in the Western United States. The University developed in stride with the dynamic city of Los Angeles, a global center for art, technology, culture, industry, and trade, and a vividly international city with one of the most diverse populations on the planet. Now the world's creative capital, Los Angeles has never lost its frontier edge and constantly re-invents its physical fabric, its economy, and its society. Los Angeles is constantly ranked at the top of the US technology hubs and science cities. USC is both in and of its city. USC was shaped by a succession of visionary people who invested their time, insight, and financial resources to build one of the world's great universities in the heart of a consequential global mega-region.

For more information about USC, visit: https://www.usc.edu/.

ABOUT USC VITERBI SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

USC Engineering began in 1905, with the first courses being offered in civil and electrical engineering, as part of the College of Liberal Arts. In 1928, the College of Engineering was established with five departments: chemical, civil, electrical, mechanical, and petroleum engineering. In 2004, Qualcomm co-founder, alumnus, and USC Trustee Andrew Viterbi and his wife Erna made the largest ever naming gift to an American engineering school – $52 million – to name the USC Andrew and Erna Viterbi School of Engineering.

Today, USC Viterbi is home to 8 academic departments, approximately 2,789 undergraduate and 6,307 graduate students. The School has nearly 213 full-time tenure-track faculty, over 131 full-time non-tenure-track faculty, and more than 160 adjunct faculty. USC Viterbi offers 15 BS programs, 21 active minors, 64 master's, and 13 doctoral programs. Via DEN@Viterbi, the School's online delivery method, USC Viterbi also offers 35 online master's programs and 4 graduate certificates. In 2024, V=C+2I was created by the Dean to capture Vertibri's breadth and depth as a leading engineering school with two research powerhouses, both the ISI and the Institute for Creative Technologies (ICT). USC's School of Advanced Computing, launched in 2024 within the engineering school, serves as a university-wide fabric for innovation in university priorities in sustainability, health, and the arts among others. In the *U.S. News & World Report* (*USNWR*) 2025 rankings of graduate programs in engineering, USC Viterbi was ranked #20 overall.

After two decades of leadership, Dean Yannis Yortsos announced he is stepping down and returning to a faculty position. Under his leadership, 28 Viterbi faculty members were elected to the National Academy of Engineering, and more than 85 received National Science Foundation Early Career Awards. Viterbi also gained two new research buildings and earned national recognition. Guarav Sukhatme, the Executive Vice Dean and Director of the USC School of Advanced Computing, will serve as the school's interim dean as a national search is conducted.

For more information about USC Viterbi, visit: https://viterbischool.usc.edu/.

ABOUT THE INFORMATION SCIENCES INSTITUTE

Established in 1972, ISI is a world leader in research and development of advanced information processing, computer and communications technologies. A unit of the Viterbi School of Engineering, it is one of the nation's largest, most successful university-affiliated computer science research institutes and attracts over $75 million annually for basic and applied research from federal agencies and the private sector. ISI has headquarters located off campus in Marina del Rey, California, and additional offices in Boston, Massachusetts, and Arlington, Virginia.

Since its founding, the Institute has grown from a small staff of three to over 200 engineers, research scientists, research faculty, graduate students, and staff across the Institute's three locations. ISI is an integral part of USC's research culture, with more than 30 researchers with faculty appointments and over 50 PhD students from a range of departments. Over half of ISI's researchers hold PhDs.

ISI is known world-wide for pioneering research on artificial intelligence, networking and cybersecurity, informatics, computational systems and technology, and advanced electronics. ISI headquarters host one of the coldest places on the planet, as it has been the only academic organization in the world to host a quantum computer since 2011. In its fifty years of existence, the Institute has received hundreds of awards from federal agencies and achieved exceptional depth and breadth of information sciences expertise in both software and hardware.

Established in 1981, MOSIS revolutionized the world of silicon-based semiconductor manufacturing. At the time, most high-performance chips were made in large-scale manufacturing efforts, but MOSIS provided critical access to semiconductor manufacturing resources to small-scale researchers. Today, MOSIS is embarking on its next phase: MOSIS 2.0, a pioneering initiative at the heart of California Dreams, the Defense Ready Electronics and Microdevices Superhub. California Dreams is one of eight regional innovation hubs established under the Microelectronics Commons program and led by USC/ ISI. In 2023, ISI was awarded $27M to get started on the project. The contract has now expanded to over $140M in the past three years. As the Institute grows, it will continue working to make contributions to advancing 21st-century technologies.

For more information about ISI, visit https://www.isi.edu/.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reporting to the Dean of Engineering, the Executive Director will foster the growing research enterprise at ISI; provide leadership and vision; promote external visibility of the institute; manage fiscal, operational, and physical resources; and encourage interdisciplinary collaborations within and outside USC. In addition, the Executive Director will effectively work with governmental agencies and private industry to expand the portfolio of ISI and garner financial support.

The Executive Director's direct reports include the Managing Director; Director of California DREAMS/ Director, Networking and Cybersecurity Division; Director, Computational Systems and Technology Division/ Director of ISI's Arlington, VA Office; Director for Major Strategic AI and Data Science Initiatives; Director of ISI's Boston, MA Office; Director of Informatics Systems Research Division; Director, Human Resources.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Define and articulate a unifying strategic vision for the future of ISI that continues to revolutionize the trajectory and impact of computing.

- Align ISI and the broader USC community around a clear vision centered on high-impact research and technological innovation.
- Understand and articulate the applied research and national security needs to ensure the vision is strategic and sustainable in addressing timely and relevant issues.
- Inspire PIs to pursue significant, mission-aligned awards to advance ISI's impact and relevance in the field.
- Elevate the existing research portfolio, ensuring investments align with ISI's strengths in bridging basic research to building deployable systems.
- Identify new strategic research areas while capitalizing on ISI's strengths.

Provide opportunities for financial growth and long-term sustainability by supporting the research enterprise and commercialization pathways.

- Lead ISI's federal and private industry research strategy while anticipating new federal priorities.
- Develop and enhance a fiscal policy for ISI that anticipates changes in the funding landscape and proactively addresses shortfalls against the institute's goals and objectives.
- Support the creation and launch of MOSIS 2.0 and similar technology platforms as discretionary revenue streams and ensure they become viable cost centers.
- Grow ISI's classified research portfolio with an emphasis on applied research opportunities.
- Support ISI in developing a financial buffer to soft-money resources in order to increase research stability.

Lead philanthropic initiatives to expand the impact of ISI.

- Expand unrestricted funding to support ISI's operations and elevate research impact.
- Build successful external partnerships across individual donors, foundations, and corporations.
- Serve as the public face of ISI, sharing its history and impact with external audiences.
- Elevate the visibility of ISI, ensuring continued growth and fundraising success.

Retain, integrate, and develop ISI staff while building the internal culture of ISI.

- Recruit, retain, and develop ISI staff by cultivating talent pipelines, supporting strategic proposal development, and strengthening retention strategies.
- Foster a culture of transparency and trust among staff by strengthening internal communication and aligning priorities.
- Support the workplace environment by prioritizing operations, facilities, and administrative opportunities, as well as advancing its core infrastructure.
- Provide inspirational leadership across all ISI staff functions.

Create, promote, and champion a culture of collaboration across ISI, Viterbi, and the broader university.

- Partner with Viterbi leadership to ensure the operations of ISI are integrated in Viterbi by embracing a culture of shared governance.
- Build transparency and communication as a key member of Viterbi leadership through promoting collaboration, creating new efficiencies, and leveraging university and school processes and shared resources
- Serve as an advocate and champion of ISI to the broader campus community, including the President and Provost, and represent ISI effectively to external constituencies.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications, experiences, and characteristics:

- A Ph.D. or terminal degree and a record of nationally recognized research and scholarship that earns the title of Research Professor at USC;
- Knowledge and experience commensurate with leading a premier institute that facilitates cutting edge research;
- Interest in promoting the expansion of research in advanced computing and communication technologies;
- A record that demonstrates vision for the future of research;
- Ability to be strategic, work across disciplinary boundaries, and engage external partners, including government entities and private industry;
- A deep understanding of the research enterprise in a university setting;
- Awareness of current and coming changes in the funding and research landscape and the proven ability to fundraise from individuals, corporations, and government entities;
- Administrative experience and business acumen;
- Ability to qualify for top-level security clearance;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;

- Excellent interpersonal skills across all stakeholder groups; an ability to represent Viterbi to a variety of stakeholders.

COMPENSATION

The anticipated salary range for this position is $375,000-$425,000 annually, commensurate with the successful candidate's experience. USC provides a competitive compensation package that recognizes experience, credentials, and education alongside a robust benefits package to meet candidate needs.

ABOUT MARINA DEL REY

Marina del Rey is a seaside community of 9,000 in Los Angeles County, California. Located approximately four miles from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), four miles from Santa Monica, and 15 miles from downtown Los Angeles. It is a major boating and water recreation destination in the greater Los Angeles area and a popular tourism destination. Its port is North America's largest man-made small-craft harbor and home to approximately 5,000 boats. Marina del Rey includes various attractions and points of interest, including Ballona Wetlands, Fisherman's Village, UCLA Marina Aquatic Center, and Burton Chace Park.

ISI headquarters overlook the coastal harbor of Marina del Rey and a 13-mile bike path to other residential coastal cities from Santa Monica to Redondo Beach. ISI's building sits at the end of a freeway that quickly connects it to a number of major universities, cultural activities, water and mountain sports, world-known resorts and vacation spots, and entertainment districts.

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: https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-southern-california-andrew-and-erna-viterbi-school-engineering-information.

Courtney Wilk-Mandel, Luciano Zuniga, and Cara Meyers
Isaacson, Miller

USC is an equal-opportunity educator and employer, proudly pluralistic and firmly committed to providing equal opportunity for outstanding persons of every race, gender, creed, and background. The university particularly encourages members of underrepresented groups, veterans, and individuals with disabilities to apply. USC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Further information is available by contacting uschr@usc.edu.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by University of Southern California, Information Sciences Institute. 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 University of Southern California, Information Sciences Institute would supersede any conflicting information in this document.