



Chief Innovation & Advancement Officer
Monell Chemical Senses Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

The Monell Chemical Senses Center (Monell) is the world's only independent, non-profit scientific institute dedicated to interdisciplinary research on taste, smell, and related senses. For more than half a century, Monell has been a global leader in sensory science and has advanced understanding of the chemical senses to improve health, safety, and well-being across people, animals, and the environment. Now, at a moment of significant momentum and opportunity, the center seeks an inaugural Chief Innovation & Advancement Officer (CIAO) to lead an integrated strategy that connects science to supporters, ideas to investment, and discovery to application.

Breakthroughs in biology, data science, and translational research are opening new pathways to impact, even as global challenges demand deeper collaboration among science, industry, philanthropy, and the public. Reporting directly to the Executive Director and President, Dr. Benjamin P.C. Smith, the CIAO will serve as a key member of Monell's executive leadership team and lead an integrated portfolio encompassing Philanthropy; Marketing & Communications; Intellectual Property (IP) & Innovation; and Monell Insiders, the center's corporate membership program. This is a rare opportunity for a strategic, entrepreneurial leader to partner with world-class scientists and visionary leadership to amplify the center's impact, secure its long-term sustainability, and translate discovery into real-world benefit.

In support of its ambitious strategic plan to ensure its primacy in chemosensory research, the center's founding benefactor, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, has committed a grant of up to \$26 million—the largest single donation in Monell's history—to expand and diversify its expertise by recruiting and nurturing its next generation of scientists and enhancing its physical infrastructure and research environment. The CIAO will play a pivotal role in shaping the next chapter of this work and in building the diversified, sustainable revenue base on which Monell's future depends.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, has been retained to assist with this recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications will be treated confidentially, and should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

MONELL CHEMICAL SENSES CENTER

Born out of a generous gift from The Ambrose Monell Foundation in 1967, [Monell](#) has grown significantly in its reach and reputation over more than five decades. Originally affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania, Monell became an independent nonprofit research institute in 1978, and the two institutions continue to maintain a close working relationship. Today, as a standalone center with close academic and industry partners, Monell is uniquely positioned to be nimble in determining its direction and goals.

Monell scientists are at the forefront of discovery, exploring the chemical senses from multiple perspectives. The center's exceptional researchers contribute to groundbreaking work that answers pressing questions about health, behavior, and the environment. To support this research, Monell maintains extensive academic, corporate, and industry partnerships, all playing a role in potential technology transfer and commercialization. The center disseminates this knowledge through scholarly publications, symposia, and conferences, and by engaging the next generation of scientists from secondary education through postdoctoral training.

Monell's 'product' is knowledge. Its cutting-edge research provides a framework for advances across many areas of human health and well-being, and its supportive environment facilitates a creative synergy that advances discovery in both chemosensory science and its faculty's own areas of expertise. The center's scientists have produced thousands of book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles appearing across a broad spectrum of high-impact and specialized research, biomedical, and clinical journals. Monell promotes a culture of scientific rigor and reproducibility and is a member of the Association of Research Integrity Officers.

Strategic Research Aims

A robust and inclusive strategic planning process produced an ambitious, goal-oriented course for the center's future. Monell's forward-looking research initiatives include:

- **Improve Nutritional Health:** Reduce overconsumption of salt, fat, and sugar by integrating sensory and nutrition science to reduce diet-related diseases and promote health.
- **Diagnose and Treat Diseases:** Advance new technologies to monitor volatile chemicals that signal disease and harness chemosensory cells to target innate immunity.
- **Address Loss of Smell and Taste:** Restore or prevent loss of human smell and taste throughout life through regenerative medicine and behavioral strategies.
- **Digitize Chemosensory Data:** Deliver digitized odors, tastes, and chemesthetic percepts anywhere, instantaneously, using new technology and devices.

Located at 3500 Market Street in the heart of Philadelphia—adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University—Monell occupies an advantageous position with abundant partnership opportunities. Dr. Benjamin P.C. Smith became the center's fourth Executive Director and President in

2023. He brings an extensive track record of building science programs and collaborations across academia, industry, and government.

THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF INNOVATION & ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

The Chief Innovation & Advancement Officer is a newly conceived executive role that brings together, under unified leadership, the functions most responsible for Monell's visibility, relationships, and revenue. Reporting to the executive director and president and serving on the executive leadership team, the CIAO will develop and implement an integrated innovation and advancement strategy aligned with Monell's scientific priorities and will advise the executive director and board on advancement trends, funding opportunities, innovation pathways, and strategic partnerships.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The CIAO leads an integrated portfolio spanning four domains—Philanthropy; Marketing & Communications; IP & Innovation; and Monell Insiders—and works closely with scientific leadership, the Board of Directors, advisory leaders, and a broad network of external partners. The successful candidate will connect Monell's science to the supporters, partners, and markets that can sustain and extend its impact.

Strategic Leadership & Advancement

- Contribute to institutional strategy, long-range planning, and organizational growth as a member of the executive leadership team.
- Advance Monell's scientific mission through a unified innovation and advancement strategy, providing strategic counsel on funding, partnerships, and growth opportunities.

Philanthropy & Fundraising

- Provide executive leadership for Monell's philanthropic program, including individual, major, planned, foundation, and corporate giving.
- Lead fundraising efforts generating approximately \$3–5 million annually, with an emphasis on diversified and sustainable revenue.
- Cultivate and steward relationships with impact donors and partners in collaboration with board and advisory leaders, ensuring strong stewardship, impact reporting, and alignment with scientific outcomes.

Marketing & Communications

- Oversee marketing and communications to ensure Monell's brand, messaging, and storytelling reflect scientific excellence and institutional impact.
- Elevate Monell's visibility and thought leadership across local, national, and global audiences, and align external communications with advancement and engagement priorities.

Corporate Partnerships & Business Development

- Lead the Monell Insiders program and related efforts in corporate partnerships and business development.
- Refine and grow the center's corporate membership program—targeting 50% growth within the first two years with a focus on new sectors such as healthcare, and the elevation of at least three long-term members to leader level in the same period.
- Promote a culture shift toward more translational and applied science collaborations, develop core capabilities that support both basic research and service-based projects, assess industry trends, and cultivate mission-aligned relationships with industry.

IP & Innovation

- Advance innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration by building partnerships with academia, industry, government, foundations, and nonprofits.
- Support the translation of scientific discoveries into applied solutions, collaborations, and funding opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with scientific leadership and legal counsel to support responsible IP protection, commercialization, licensing, and research translation.

Team & Organizational Leadership

- Lead and mentor high-performing teams across Philanthropy, Marketing & Communications, IP & Innovation, and Monell Insiders, as well as external consultants, aligning the group's mission and goals with the center's goals and revenue strategy.
- Establish clear goals, metrics, and accountability for team members while fostering collaboration and operational excellence.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The CIAO will step into this leadership role at a moment of great momentum; interest in Monell's research has never been higher. The successful candidate will focus on the following opportunities and the challenges they present.

- **Build an integrated advancement enterprise from a strong foundation.** As the inaugural holder of this role, the CIAO has a rare opportunity to design and unify functions that have traditionally operated separately. The CIAO will bring coherence and shared purpose to philanthropy, communications, corporate partnerships, and innovation—establishing the strategy, structure, metrics, and culture of a modern advancement enterprise while honoring Monell's collaborative, science-first identity.

- **Diversify and grow revenue to secure long-term sustainability.** For Monell to continue producing great scientific discoveries well into the future, the center must ensure its financial sustainability. The CIAO will lead fundraising of approximately \$3–5 million annually and broaden the center’s revenue base across individual, major, planned, foundation, and corporate giving, while strengthening the Monell Insiders corporate membership program. The challenge is to build durable, diversified revenue in an increasingly competitive funding landscape.
- **Translate world-class science into compelling narrative and visibility.** Monell’s impact depends on its ability to communicate the relevance of the chemical senses to health, industry, and everyday life. The CIAO will ensure that the center’s brand, messaging, and storytelling reflect its scientific excellence, elevating Monell’s thought leadership and visibility among donors, partners, the public, and the broader scientific community.
- **Deepen corporate partnerships and accelerate translation.** Industry collaboration has long been fundamental to Monell’s success and its ability to translate basic science into solutions to everyday problems. The CIAO will grow the corporate membership program, cultivate mission-aligned industry relationships, and—working with scientific leadership and legal counsel—support responsible IP protection, licensing, and commercialization, while preserving Monell’s scientific integrity and independence.
- **Lead and develop a high-performing, collaborative team.** The CIAO will lead, mentor, and align teams across four distinct functions, setting clear goals and accountability while fostering the collaboration and operational excellence on which an integrated advancement strategy depends. The challenge is to knit specialized teams into a cohesive whole that advances shared institutional goals.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Monell seeks a strategic, entrepreneurial leader with the following qualifications and experience. While no single candidate will embody every quality, the ideal candidate will bring many of the following:

- A bachelor’s degree is required; an advanced degree in a relevant discipline is preferred.
- Experience in science or a science-adjacent field, with the ability to engage credibly with researchers.
- Senior leadership experience in relevant advancement areas such as philanthropy, innovation and business development, and/or marketing.
- Demonstrated success leading advancement efforts generating approximately \$3–5 million annually.
- Strong strategic planning, execution, and relationship-building skills.
- The ability to translate complex scientific work into compelling narratives.
- Experience leading cross-functional teams.

- High integrity, sound judgment, and professionalism.

Preferred qualifications additionally include:

- An advanced degree in a relevant discipline.
- Experience in a research institute, academic medical center, or science-based nonprofit.
- Familiarity with intellectual property strategy, technology transfer, and/or commercialization.
- Experience working with boards of directors, foundations, or advisory councils.
- Knowledge of federal, foundation, and corporate funding landscapes.
- Experience leading enterprise-level innovation or organizational growth initiatives.

COMPENSATION AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

This role is primarily on-site in Philadelphia, with flexibility for external engagement. Evening and occasional weekend commitments are expected for donor, board, and partner activities. Travel is required for fundraising, partnership development, and external representation.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The Monell Chemical Senses Center has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be submitted in confidence to the website: [Chief Innovation & Advancement Officer, Monell Chemical Senses Center](#)

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The Monell Chemical Senses Center shall abide by the requirements of 41 CFR §§ 60-1.4(a), 60-300.5(a) and 60-741.5(a). These regulations prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals based on their status as protected veterans or individuals with disabilities and prohibit discrimination against all individuals based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Moreover, these regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, protected veteran status or disability.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Monell Chemical Senses Center. 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 Monell Chemical Senses Center would supersede any conflicting information in this document.