

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Search for Chief Research Security Officer
The Texas A&M University System
College Station, Texas

THE SEARCH

The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) seeks an experienced and strategic leader to serve as its next Chief Research Security Officer (CRSO). The CRSO will provide strategic leadership for research security across an enterprise that spans 12 universities, a health science center, eight state agencies, and more than \$1.6 billion in annual research expenditures. Working closely with senior leaders across the System, the CRSO will help ensure that Texas A&M remains both a trusted steward of sensitive research and a leading partner in scientific and technological discovery.

Research security has become an increasingly important priority for research institutions, federal agencies, and policymakers. Texas A&M has played a leading role in the field's development, becoming the first university system in the nation to establish a Chief Research Security Officer position and build a nationally recognized research security program. Today, the System is recognized as a national leader in research security policy and practice, with deep engagement across government, industry, and higher education.

The next CRSO will build upon this foundation while helping Texas A&M anticipate and navigate an increasingly complex environment shaped by evolving state and federal requirements, geopolitical competition, technological innovation, and growing expectations surrounding research security. Serving as a strategic advisor, organizational leader, and external representative, the CRSO will play a central role in ensuring that Texas A&M continues to advance both research excellence and national security priorities while contributing to the evolution of research security practices across higher education.

TAMUS has retained the search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist with this recruitment. Instructions for applying, nomination, and inquiring about the position can be found at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

[The Texas A&M University System](#) (TAMUS) is one of the largest and most influential systems of higher education, research, and public service in the United States. Its roots trace back to 1876, when Texas A&M University and Prairie View A&M University were established as land-grant institutions under the Morrill Act. In 1948, the Texas Legislature formally created The Texas A&M University System to provide

coordinated leadership for a growing statewide network of educational, research, and service organizations. Today, TAMUS comprises 12 universities, a comprehensive health science center, eight state agencies, Texas A&M–Fort Worth, and the Texas A&M–RELLIS campus, serving more than 180,000 students and supporting nearly \$1.6 billion in annual research expenditures.

The System's impact extends well beyond the classroom. Through its statewide network of institutions and agencies, TAMUS advances discovery, economic development, workforce training, public health, transportation, agriculture, engineering, emergency management, and national security. The System also plays a direct role in the nation's security enterprise through its participation in the management and operation of Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Pantex Plant on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration. These unique responsibilities, combined with its extensive research portfolio and public-service mission, position TAMUS among the nation's most consequential public university systems.

As the System's flagship institution, Texas A&M University proudly holds the rare distinction of being a land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant university, reflecting its longstanding commitment to education, research, and service. A member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and a Carnegie R1 institution, Texas A&M has emerged as a national leader in teaching, discovery, and innovation. The university was recently ranked No. 12 among public universities nationally and No. 1 among public universities in Texas in *The Wall Street Journal* rankings, while also earning recognition among the nation's top public universities and best values in higher education. Its research strengths span engineering, agriculture, life sciences including veterinary medicine, energy, national security, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, and many other fields critical to the future of Texas and the nation.

TAMUS OFFICE OF RESEARCH

The Texas A&M University System Office of Research provides strategic leadership for one of the largest public research enterprises in the United States. Supporting a large and diverse system with more than \$1.6 billion in annual research expenditures, the office advances a mission centered on discovery, innovation, economic competitiveness, and public impact. Through its oversight of research administration, development, compliance, innovation, and security functions, the Office of Research serves as a critical catalyst for collaboration across the system's diverse research ecosystem.

Texas A&M's research enterprise is distinguished by its exceptional scale, breadth, and relevance to many of the nation's most pressing priorities. The System maintains extensive partnerships with federal agencies including the U.S. Department of War (DOW), Department of Energy (DOE), National Science Foundation (NSF), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in supporting groundbreaking work in national security, artificial intelligence, advanced computing, cybersecurity, semiconductors, energy, agriculture, engineering, and the life sciences. Researchers benefit from access to unique assets and nationally recognized centers, including the [Bush Combat Development Complex](#), the [RELLIS Technology & Innovation Campus](#), the [Texas](#)

[A&M Semiconductor Institute](#), and a broad network of laboratories, testing environments, and innovation centers that foster collaboration among academia, government, and industry. These capabilities have positioned Texas A&M as a trusted partner in advancing technologies and discoveries with significant scientific, economic, and societal impact.

TAMUS RESEARCH SECURITY OFFICE

The Research Security Office (RSO) is among the most established and widely recognized research security organizations in higher education. Texas A&M was the first university system in the nation to establish a Chief Research Security Officer role, building a comprehensive research security program that integrates export controls, classified research oversight, controlled unclassified information (CUI), cybersecurity, personnel security, international collaboration review, and federal compliance requirements across a complex research enterprise. The RSO supports principal investigators and research collaborators across the System, helping them navigate increasingly complex security and compliance requirements while enabling participation in critical federally funded research programs. Through its integrated approach to research security, stakeholder engagement, investigator support, and regulatory compliance, the office has become a model for institutions seeking to strengthen research security while preserving the openness and collaborative nature of academic research.

Nationally, the RSO has earned an unparalleled reputation for excellence. The office has received multiple Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) Colonel James S. Cogswell Awards for Industrial Security Excellence and multiple Jack Donnelly Awards for Excellence in Counterintelligence, placing Texas A&M among the top fraction of a percent of more than 10,500 cleared defense contractors nationwide. The program's effectiveness has also drawn recognition from federal leaders, including public commendation from former FBI Director Christopher Wray before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee for Texas A&M's efforts to safeguard sensitive research and intellectual property. The System has participated in the National Industrial Security Program since 1974 and today maintains sophisticated capabilities spanning classified research administration, security clearance management, CUI protection, export control compliance, and operation of a Secure Computing Enclave that supports sensitive research activities.

Today, Texas A&M occupies a unique position within the evolving national research security landscape. As federal requirements under NSPM-33, the CHIPS and Science Act, and related initiatives continue to reshape expectations for research institutions, the System is helping define leading practices for the sector. Through initiatives such as the Research & Innovation Security & Competitiveness (RISC) Institute, the Academic Security and Counter Exploitation (ASCE) conference, leadership of the NSF-funded SECURE Center, and the development of advanced due diligence and risk assessment capabilities, the Texas A&M System is actively contributing to the future of research security policy and implementation. The System's leadership extends beyond its own institutions through partnerships with federal agencies, national laboratories, industry, and peer universities, as well as its prominent role in advancing research security collaboration across Texas. This combination of scale, expertise, and national visibility has positioned

Texas A&M as one of the country's most influential voices at the intersection of research excellence, innovation, national security, and global competitiveness.

LEADERSHIP

Joe Elabd, PhD, serves as Vice Chancellor for Research for The Texas A&M University System. He oversees a broad portfolio of research-focused offices and initiatives, including research administration, research development, research compliance, research security, innovation, the Bush Combat Development Complex, and the Texas A&M Semiconductor Institute. A nationally recognized researcher and academic leader, Dr. Elabd previously held several senior leadership roles at Texas A&M, including Associate Dean for Research, Interim Vice Chancellor and Dean of Engineering, and Interim Director of the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station.

Kevin Gamache has served as the Chief Research Security Officer since 2015, when he became the nation's first appointed Chief Research Security Officer in higher education. A retired U.S. Air Force officer with more than 20 years of military service, Gamache has played a foundational role in establishing research security as a distinct function within the academic research enterprise. During his tenure, he has built one of the country's most respected research security programs, helping position Texas A&M as a national leader in protecting research, intellectual property, and critical technologies while supporting a globally engaged and highly collaborative research environment.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH SECURITY OFFICER

The Chief Research Security Officer (CRSO) serves as the senior leader responsible for advancing and ensuring research security across The Texas A&M University System. Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Research, the CRSO provides strategic leadership for a complex research enterprise and develops policies, programs, and practices that safeguard sensitive research, critical technologies, intellectual property, and federally sponsored activities while supporting the System's research mission.

Leading the [Research Security Office](#) and chairing the [Texas Higher Education Research Security Council](#), the CRSO oversees a multidisciplinary team responsible for research security, export controls, classified research, secure research environments, and compliance with evolving federal requirements. The CRSO provides strategic direction for the office, supports researchers and institutional leaders across the System, and ensures that research security capabilities continue to advance in response to emerging opportunities and risks.

The CRSO serves as the System's primary liaison to federal agencies, national security partners, and other government stakeholders on matters related to research security, counterintelligence, industrial security, and foreign influence. As a senior advisor to institutional leadership and a visible representative of Texas A&M, the CRSO helps shape policy, strengthen strategic partnerships, anticipate emerging challenges, and advance leading practices that support both research excellence and national security priorities.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHIEF RESEARCH SECURITY OFFICER

The success of the next CRSO will be determined by how well they meet the following opportunities and challenges:

Shape the future direction of a pioneering research security enterprise

TAMUS occupies a distinctive position within higher education as a pioneer in research security. Having established the nation's first Chief Research Security Officer role, the System has helped shape many of the practices, partnerships, and policy conversations that define the field today. The next CRSO will have the opportunity to build upon this foundation while guiding the continued evolution of research security across one of the nation's largest and most complex research enterprises. The CRSO will balance continuity and innovation; sustain the strengths of a reputable and established program; and identify new approaches, capabilities, and partnerships that position Texas A&M to navigate emerging research security challenges and opportunities.

Guide TAMUS through a rapidly evolving external environment

Operating at the intersection of higher education, national security, federal research policy, and state government requirements, the next CRSO will play a critical role in helping Texas A&M anticipate and respond to an increasingly complex environment. As requirements continue to evolve through NSPM-33, state legislation, export control regulations, foreign influence requirements, controlled unclassified information (CUI) standards, and other emerging mandates, the CRSO will translate complex and often ambiguous requirements into practical, scalable, and process-driven approaches for the System. Success will require sound judgment, political acumen, and the ability to build credibility with diverse stakeholders while enabling the collaboration and innovation that are central to the research mission.

Cultivate strategic partnerships across a diverse network of stakeholders

Research security touches nearly every aspect of the Texas A&M research enterprise. The CRSO will work closely with academic leaders, research administrators, compliance professionals, legal counsel, and technology leaders across the System's universities and agencies to align research security objectives with broader institutional priorities.

The role also requires extensive engagement beyond the institution. The CRSO will represent Texas A&M with federal sponsors, national security partners, industry collaborators, national laboratories, peer institutions, and policymakers at all levels of government. Building productive, trust-based relationships across these communities and leveraging those partnerships to support research excellence, address emerging challenges, and advance the System's strategic priorities are essential.

Lead and develop a high-performing organization and team

The Research Security Office brings together a talented team of professionals with expertise spanning export controls, foreign influence, classified research, security operations, information technology, and regulatory compliance. The next CRSO will inherit a strong organizational foundation and a team with deep subject matter expertise, creating an opportunity to strengthen existing capabilities while positioning the office for future growth.

As the field of research security continues to evolve, the CRSO will provide visible and engaged leadership to a multidisciplinary organization operating in a dynamic environment. The next leader will foster collaboration across functional areas, develop future leaders, and ensure that resources, structures, and processes remain aligned with strategic priorities. The CRSO will foster a culture characterized by teamwork, accountability, continuous improvement, and service while positioning the office to meet the growing demands of the research enterprise.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will have most, if not all, the of following qualifications and experience:

- Required qualifications:
 - This is a security-sensitive position and is restricted to U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents only.
 - Ability to secure DoD Top Secret and DoE Q security clearances with SCI Accesses.
 - A master's degree with research security related experience at the programmatic level is preferred, which can include:
 - Supporting a Cleared Defense Contractor working in academia and/or governments environments as an FSO/CSSO/Security Officer (10 years' experience)
 - Experience with DOW Special Access Program Management for security protocols
 - Managing the construction and operation of Special Access Program Facilities (SAPFs) and Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities (SCIFs)
 - Interpreting D0254s, Security Classification Guides, and other areas of security-related contract management, including flow-down security guidance for subcontractors.
 - Conducting internal audits of research security operations.
 - Participating in government vulnerability assessments, investigating and mitigating areas of risk or non-compliance, pre-employment employee vetting, and security-related RFP review and proposal writing.
 - Experience as an ISSM or an 1S5O or in the managements of an ISSM.
 - Developing and delivering research security training.
 - Supervisory experience, including supervising employees at local and offsite locations (5 years' experience).

- Ability to effectively communicate and present compelling verbal and written communications to internal and external customers.
 - Ability to offer experienced guidance to executive staff and subcontractors.
 - Ability to multi-task and work cooperatively with others.
 - Ability to participate in response activities to US government-accredited secure facilities outside of normal office hours.
 - Executive presence and a proven ability to effectively communicate and interact with those who operate at the highest levels of academic, business, and government leadership.
 - A creative thinker with a proven ability to be adaptable, flexible in thought, and innovative in approach.
 - Demonstrated experience managing expectations between and among competing units and resolving issues.
 - Experience developing and mentoring staff at all levels and building an internal capacity to deliver high-quality service and services.
 - Excellent presentation skills and ability to adapt to varying audiences.
 - Willingness and ability to handle confidential matters with the utmost discretion.
 - Servant leader and pleasant collaborator who works in the best interest of all.
- Familiarity with and knowledge of:
 - 32 Code of Federal Regulation Pan 117, NISPOM, and other DoD compliance regulations and security certifications (i.e., Network+, Security+, and/or CISSP).
 - Industrial security administration, contracts, and government databases that include, but are not limited to: Defense Information System of Security (DISS), Electronic Questionnaire for Investigators (e-QIP), National Industrial Security System (NISS).
 - Department of Energy Security Programs.
 - NSPM-33, Chips in Science Act, and other relevant federal research security requirements.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

All interested candidates should submit an updated CV/resume and statement of interest via the Isaacson, Miller [website](#).

All nominations and inquiries regarding the position should be submitted via the same site. The position will remain open until it is successfully filled. All correspondence can be addressed to the Isaacson, Miller representatives noted below.

Andrew Lee, Managing Partner
 Courtney Cabansag, Associate
 Madeline Fitzpatrick, Managing Search Coordinator
 Isaacson, Miller

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, or protected veteran status.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the Texas A&M University System. 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 the Texas A&M University System would supersede any conflicting information in this document.