

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



SEARCH FOR THE

DIRECTOR OF THE CLIMATE ACTION ACCELERATOR SALATA INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

THE SEARCH

The Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability at Harvard University seeks a collaborative and dynamic leader to become the first Director of the Climate Action Accelerator. This is an exciting opportunity to join a growing institute charged with developing and promoting equitable solutions to some of the biggest climate challenges confronting humanity.

Launched in 2022, the [Salata Institute](#) was made possible by a \$200 million naming gift to Harvard University by Melanie and Jean Salata. The Institute aims to develop pathbreaking approaches to the climate crisis by harnessing the intellectual power of Harvard, leveraging expertise across the University, catalyzing new areas of research, and generating real world-solutions in conjunction with policy makers and decisionmakers around the world. Working across Harvard's 12 schools, the Institute is designed to build upon the University's impressive body of research in climate and climate-adjacent fields through the establishment of research clusters; creation of platforms for engaged dialogue on climate solutions; and development of new pathways for student education and participation in the creation and advancement of climate and sustainability solutions.

The [Climate Action Accelerator](#) will serve as a platform for driving these solutions forward through engagement with stakeholders in the private, nonprofit, and government sectors to establish relationships that foster deep connection with the work of the Institute. The Director will have primary responsibility for creating a platform to facilitate the translation of the intellectual resources of the University into tangible solutions to address the climate crisis. The Director will identify critical climate problems, build consensus for solving them, home in on promising solutions, and convene decision-makers who have the authority and the resources to act. The Accelerator will be nonpartisan, agile in dealing with emerging issues, and trusted by stakeholders to facilitate dialogue on high-stakes and sensitive climate topics.

The ideal candidate will have a deep understanding of climate change issues and a professional commitment to progress on climate change. The Director will have the ability to innovate, think strategically and conceptually, and collaborate across wide disciplines to influence and persuade others.

SALATA INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY

Led by Professor James Stock, Institute Director and Inaugural Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability, the Salata Institute draws from expertise across the University to pursue real-world solutions to address the climate crisis. The Institute is taking a unique approach in utilizing its research excellence to galvanize Harvard's network of climate-focused scholars, students, practitioners, and staff to work across disciplinary boundaries. The Institute's research will produce and propagate knowledge in all areas relevant to the climate crisis, including but not limited to engineering and technology; public policy, politics, law, and governance; health; culture; and the humanities. The Institute will go beyond creating novel structures to advance research and education, utilizing Harvard's significant convening power to ensure that this knowledge informs real and effective action globally.

The goals of the Salata Institute are:

- To stimulate **research** that informs useful, practical, and equitable solutions to the world's climate and related environmental problems.
- To provide a venue for transforming ideas and research into **actionable climate solutions** that significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help prepare society for the inevitable and worsening damages from climate change.
- To ensure that a **Harvard education prepares students for leadership** in confronting the climate and related environmental challenges of today and in the future.
- To **broaden Harvard's educational reach** in climate and the environment beyond traditional campus boundaries.

The Institute's faculty-led [Climate Research Clusters](#) are working to develop multidisciplinary collaborations that produce real-world potential for change. The clusters fill a critical gap between conventional academic research, which tends towards disciplinary advances, and the complexities of real-world applied impact. Research clusters span all major themes of the climate change initiative; current research topics include developing climate adaption strategies in the Gulf of Guinea; strengthening communities through equitable and efficient policymaking; advancing climate adaptation efforts in South Asia; reaching corporate net-zero targets; and reducing global methane emissions.

In addition to the ongoing Clusters program, the Institute will facilitate additional research projects by providing small grants through a Climate and Environment Seed Grant for researchers not yet working on climate who want to expand their focus to this area, as well as those currently working on climate who

want to explore new ideas. This will be delivered concurrently with the [Climate Change Solutions Fund](#), which has already awarded 59 grants to research teams since it launched in 2014. The research efforts of the Institute will be coupled with external engagement of climate leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to ensure Harvard's cutting-edge climate research is translated into climate action.

In conjunction with the office of the Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability, the Institute will build on its existing faculty strengths by recruiting and retaining additional faculty to ensure that Harvard has the breadth of expertise needed to address major challenges in climate and the environment.

CLIMATE ACTION ACCELERATOR

A key pillar of the Salata Institute, the Climate Action Accelerator (CAA) will sit at the heart of Harvard's efforts to increase its presence, visibility, and impact on climate challenges. The Accelerator will act as a platform that strategically aligns and amplifies the research conducted within the Institute and leverages Harvard's convening power and scale of expertise to be the preeminent leader advising on a range of climate-related issues.

The Accelerator is designed to maximize the real-world impact of climate-related work at Harvard through direct engagement and the creation of structures to support ongoing partnerships with key stakeholders in nongovernmental organizations, corporations, social activist groups, state and local government, civil society, and affected communities. The Accelerator will be a vehicle for bi-directional and authentic collaboration with these external interest groups to ensure their valuable perspectives inform and shape the research taking place at Harvard. As a result, research questions can be focused on the most pressing challenges in the field and create solutions that will drive faster progress towards reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

Acting as a non-partisan platform, the Accelerator will also prompt collaborations that extend beyond Institute-sponsored research programs, engaging other universities with emerging climate-related efforts on their own campuses to increase the visibility and efficacy of joint efforts. The Accelerator will also hold climate-related events for the public, including a high-profile annual climate symposium, to focus attention on critical climate issues and build consensus for action.

Harvard anticipates approximately \$25 million in Accelerator spending over its first seven years, with immediate support and flexibility to inaugurate key convenings in the first year of the Institute and to ramp up as the Accelerator, Institute-sponsored research, and related activities expand and grow.

THE ROLE

Reporting to the Institute Director, the Director of the Climate Action Accelerator plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the Institute's overall mission and will serve as a key member of the leadership team. The Director will be responsible for building and leading a small team of colleagues who will support the outreach and engagement efforts of the Accelerator by facilitating the promotion and utilization of

research, analysis, and tools developed at Harvard that aid stakeholders in implementing solutions; conferring with stakeholders and Harvard faculty on climate issues where the Accelerator's involvement would result in progress toward resolving them; organizing meetings and summits that helped to build consensus around climate solutions; sustaining relationship development with stakeholders; and cultivating a rich network of Institute partners. Success in the role requires a demonstrated record of leadership in the field, experience engaging partners in the climate community, the ability to interface and convene with diverse stakeholders, and a collaborative approach to working internally to meet strategic and operational objectives.

PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director will advance the work of the Climate Action Accelerator and the broader Salata Institute in the following ways:

- Establish the Climate Action Accelerator as a trusted source for evidence-based solutions to the climate change problem.
- Collaborate with Harvard faculty to identify opportunities to translate their research and scholarship into real-world action.
- Conduct outreach to stakeholders to understand their needs, interests, and positions around climate issues, and to build consensus for solving them.
- Work closely with the Institute's communications team to reach influential audiences.
- In collaboration with the Institute's events colleagues, regularly convene stakeholders and facilitate dialogue among them that yields results.
- With the Institute Director, lead the programming of an annual high visibility symposium that attracts top-level decision-makers, faculty, students, and climate practitioners, including Harvard alumni, and which gains a reputation as a forum where visionary leaders and organizations make public commitments and unveil plans for climate action.
- Build and supervise a strong and diverse team that performs the work of the Accelerator.
- Develop a set of performance measures for the Climate Action Accelerator and use them to report on its impact.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's or advanced degree preferred.
- A minimum of 10 years of relevant experience in climate change issues or a related field.
- A record of meaningful accomplishment in addressing the climate crisis.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting outreach to varied stakeholders (NGOs, government, business, citizens' groups, etc.) in ways that have yielded tangible results.

- A record of building and maintaining external relations in government, business, and civil society, and communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- Strong decision-making skills and the disposition of a natural collaborator, taking leadership of issues by engaging in dialogue.
- Exceptional administrative and organizational skills, including close attention to detail and excellent follow-through ability.
- Experience supervising and managing a team of staff across disciplines to accomplish a shared goal.
- Vibrant public presence and communication skills and a proven ability to work with and represent the Institute to external audiences.
- A professional and considerate demeanor, exceptional integrity and discretion, and sound judgment.
- Adaptable, thorough, and able to work with substantial independence, including leading meetings with senior faculty and staff, and representing the Institute to external audiences.
- Demonstrated experience and success building relationships in a complex and highly collaborative work environment.
- Exceptional writing, verbal, and interpersonal skills.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1636, Harvard University is the oldest institution of higher education in the United States and is a worldwide leader in education and research. It comprises twelve degree-granting schools (Harvard College, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard Business School, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Harvard Graduate School of Education, John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Law School, Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health), the Division of Continuing Education, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, as well as an array of museums, research centers, and the largest university library system in the world.

Harvard has a distinguished history of research in climate and climate-adjacent fields and has been extremely influential in raising awareness and developing recommendations to address the issue. Harvard faculty helped to build a fundamental understanding of the chemistry, physics, and biology of our planet's climate system. Their work has changed the way we think about interactions among the atmosphere, the land, and the ocean, and how these shape Earth's climate. That work continues, with ongoing discoveries in wide-ranging areas such as atmospheric chemistry climate dynamics, geophysics, solar geoengineering, and climate-related data science. In 1965, Harvard faculty led a report to President Lyndon Johnson on atmospheric carbon dioxide and pollution that advised about the risks of climate change. From the 1980s through the 1990s, Harvard faculty led studies on the impact of climate on societies and the economy and helped to create the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Harvard faculty designed a novel approach to establishing country emission targets, an approach adopted by China and India, and helped to develop President Barack Obama's agreement with the auto industry to double fuel efficiency

standards. Among numerous contributions, Harvard faculty also pioneered methods for reforming the federal fossil fuel leasing program, led efforts on the design and implementation of the \$100+ billion clean energy package in the 2009 Recovery Act, and played a role in designing and negotiating the Paris Climate Agreement.

The portfolio of climate and environmental programs spans every school at Harvard from arts and sciences, to engineering, to medicine and public health, to business, to design and is also deeply infused into the work of its museums, libraries, and scientific collections, including the [Arnold Arboretum](#), and the [Harvard Forest](#). Operationally, [Harvard's Office for Sustainability](#) ensures campus operations are in line with its values, significantly reducing Harvard's energy use and now, achieving the University's goal of being fossil-fuel neutral by 2026. The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health has major climate change initiatives and centers, such as the [Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment](#), that engage in both research and public education.

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications (including resumes and letters of interest) should be sent electronically to the following:

John Muckle, Partner
Damla Williams, Associate
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/harvard-university-salata-institute-climate-and-sustainability/director-climate>

Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

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