



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Search for the Executive Director of the School of Computer and Data Sciences
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

The University of Oregon (UO), Oregon's flagship public research institution, seeks a creative, visionary, and highly collaborative leader and builder to serve as the first Executive Director of the new School of Computer and Data Sciences (SCDS). Combining the university's growing strength in computer science with its ongoing investment in data science, the new School of Computer and Data Sciences will open in fall 2023. Housed within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), SCDS will be an innovative hub in the Pacific Northwest for advancing education and research in computer and data sciences, engaging with the wider world to tackle interdisciplinary challenges, and building a training pipeline for a diverse group of practitioners and leaders.

The Executive Director will join the UO community at a pivotal time. Since 2017, data science has been identified as one of UO's [Presidential Initiatives](#) with a goal of national prominence. The university recently completed an impressive fundraising campaign of over \$3 billion that included a billion-dollar gift to launch the [Knight Campus](#), a new transformational science campus, and a \$425 million gift to establish the [Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health](#). Other key institutional priorities focus on the environment, innovation, diversity, and sports and wellness. Under the new leadership of [President John Karl Scholz](#), and with the support of [CAS Dean Chris Poulsen](#), the Executive Director of SCDS will play an instrumental role in bringing together diverse faculty, students, and staff across campus to promote and advance computer and data science, identify opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations, recruit exceptional faculty, and further enhance the university's commitment to student access and success.

Founded in 1876, the University of Oregon is a member of the 71-member Association of American Universities (AAU), the state's flagship institution, and an Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with over 15% Latinx student enrollment. It enrolls more than 19,000 undergraduate and 3,600 graduate students representing all 50 states and 94 countries. It is an integral economic driver for the state, with an estimated \$2.6 billion annual economic return to Oregon. Since 2014, UO has operated under an independent governing structure that supports its ability to chart new directions, improve entrepreneurial activity, and invent creative programming. The main campus of UO is located in Eugene, on Kalapuya Ilihi in the southern Willamette Valley, a picturesque region known for its mild four-season climate, excellent wines, abundant recreational opportunities, and progressive, collaborative culture.

The College of Arts & Sciences is the intellectual hub of UO, shaping its identity as a comprehensive research university rooted in liberal arts and sciences education. The new School of Computing and Data Sciences will play a critical role both within the college and through collaboration with other academic units in advancing this mission. Building upon the existing strength of the computer and data science

programs, SCDS already serves 1,750 students across campus and at inception (fall 2023) will be serving 160 data science, 650 computer science majors, and a new cybersecurity major, along with 26 masters and 48 PhD students, in fall 2023. In establishing and building SCDS, the successful Executive Director will address the following opportunities and challenges, outlined in detail beginning on page four of this document:

- Develop, communicate, and strengthen the strategic directions and interdisciplinary identity of the School as a distinctive leader in computer and data sciences
- Create an inclusive culture and expand student access, retention, and success
- Support the continued rapid growth of the data science major and facilitate similar growth for the other undergraduate majors
- Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse community of talented and highly collaborative faculty
- Build an inclusive environment for innovative research and education
- Forge ties with external partners to increase funds, resources, student opportunities, and industry collaborations

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the Executive Director can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

About The University of Oregon

UO brings together 23,202 undergraduate and graduate students from all 50 states and 94 countries, and 1,951 teaching and research faculty. It offers 315 degree and certificate programs through its nine academic units: College of Arts and Sciences, Charles H. Lundquist College of Business, College of Design, College of Education, Robert D. Clark Honors College, School of Journalism and Communication, School of Music and Dance, School of Law, and Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact.

One of the leading public research universities in the country, UO scholars and researchers were awarded \$180 million in grants, contracts, and competitive awards in FY2022. The university brings in \$10.3 million annually in licensing revenue, the highest licensing per research dollar among the AAU. UO is also an integral economic driver for the state, with an estimated \$2.6 billion annual economic return to Oregon.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) is the largest academic unit of UO, providing a core liberal arts curriculum to roughly two-thirds of all students at the University—including those who will go on to earn a degree in one of the professional schools such as journalism or business. The more than 10,000 undergraduate students in CAS degree programs are in 50 departments and programs within the divisions of humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. There are 750 faculty members and more than 1,200 graduate students enrolled in over 40 Master's programs or 26 Ph.D. programs. As part of its efforts to

advance equity and inclusion, CAS has created new offerings such as Black Studies and Latinx Studies minors, School of Global Studies and Languages, Center for Environmental Futures, and more.

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, to the University of Oregon, across the land we now refer to as Oregon, and around the world.

About the School of Computer and Data Sciences

The University of Oregon first explicitly prioritized data science as a key campus-wide initiative in 2017. Since then, it has hired more than two dozen faculty members, in a variety of disciplinary homes, with expertise in data science, launched a data science undergraduate degree program, and created significant new research grants and partnerships. On a parallel track, the College of Arts and Sciences is recommitted to recruiting strong faculty to strengthen the department and its degree programs.

As a result of these continuous investments, and the growing demand by students, industries, and society for data and computer sciences expertise, a strategic planning committee was formed in spring 2022 to review the possibility of establishing a potential School of Computer and Data Sciences (SCDS). After several months' work in discussing the aspirations for a potential School among diverse stakeholders, the committee voted unanimously to recommend that UO move forward with the creation of SCDS. Following the approval by university leadership, the committee continued their work developing a set of strategies for the future of SCDS.

Building upon the existing strength of the computer and data science programs, SCDS will be open to all students at UO, with one initial goal to serve 2,000 students across undergraduate and graduate degrees in data science and computer science. In particular, the new data science major is a model for how the School will reach across the University; students choose a domain specialization that provides them with the interdisciplinary opportunity to apply core knowledge from the School to an area of interest. The mission of SCDS is to empower a diverse population of students and faculty working to advance knowledge in computer and data sciences, train the next generation of scholars, and engage with the wider world to tackle interdisciplinary challenges.

Currently, SCDS plans to offer multiple undergraduate majors – including Computer Science, Math and Computer Science, Cybersecurity, and Data Science; with concentrations such as – Accounting Analytics, Biology, Cultural Analytics, Earth Sciences, Economics, Geography, Linguistics, Marketing Analytics, Music Technology, Physics, Psychology, and Sociology; MS degrees in Computer Science and Data Science; and

PhD degrees in Computer Science. Rooted in the liberal arts and sciences education at CAS, SCDS will play an increasing role in promoting data literacy among all students at UO.

Reporting to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Executive Director will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the School and managing resource allocations across its units – including the Departments of Computer Science and Data Science. The Executive Director will oversee a school with 25 faculty with a 3-5 year plan to increase that number to 40, with growth beyond that to be correlated with enrollment increases. Direct reports will include heads of the Computer Science and Data Science Departments.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the New Executive Director

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a new school, and set strategic directions that will transform the entire campus, with the support of a high-caliber, research-active faculty from various units who have strong interests in the SCDS. In doing so, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to address the following opportunities and challenges:

Develop, communicate, and strengthen the strategic directions and interdisciplinary identity of the School as a distinctive leader in computer and data sciences

Facing a competitive landscape in computer science and data science programs in higher education, the SCDS Executive Director is tasked with the mission of creating a unique identity that will differentiate the School from its peers. Given its ties to the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest academic unit at UO, the School has the tremendous opportunity to articulate the importance of becoming data-literate and computationally competent for every UO student. Coupled with the emphasis on liberal arts and sciences, this is a meaningful task to reimagine the breadth of the educational experience encompassing computer and data sciences for all students. The Executive Director is also expected to leverage the existing and growing strengths across the university. In doing so, the Executive Director will work closely with faculty and staff to continue developing the strategic directions that will benefit multiple stakeholders at SCDS, CAS, UO, and beyond.

To be successful, the Executive Director will be knowledgeable and passionate about computer and data sciences, their interdisciplinary nature, and the many opportunities to transform and leverage interdisciplinary collaborations across UO to further engage faculty and industry for even greater impact. Working collaboratively and creatively with different campus constituents, the Executive Director will drive, communicate, and further strengthen the strategic visions and unique identity of the School through a set of ambitious yet realistic short-term and long-term goals that define and clarify the distinction of SCDS. The Executive Director will also act as the ambassador of the School, promoting its values to external stakeholders to inspire industry partnerships, philanthropy, career outcomes, and community connections in the near future.

Create an inclusive culture and expand student access, retention, and success

While neither computer science nor data science are new to the UO community, much work remains to be done to lower barriers to entry, especially for students whose experiences have not emphasized STEM. Such students will benefit from some training in quantitative and computational skills for workforce preparation or a wide variety of further academic pursuits. Program offerings must ensure a high degree of thoughtfulness, flexibility, and inclusiveness in order to meet the diverse needs of the different student populations including but not limited to mid-career and nontraditional students, students from historically marginalized communities, and students who enroll in online or hybrid modality, etc. The Executive Director will work with a team of faculty, staff, and students to provide comprehensive support services, peer mentoring, and other community-building activities in the integrated academic and career advising center located at the 64,000-square-foot state-of-the-art [Tykeson Hall](#). The goal will be to facilitate connections, support, and a sense of belonging for all. The Executive Director will create a team focused on improving career readiness and job outcomes for students, including preparation to succeed in experiential learning, internships, research, or job opportunities.

It is critical that the Executive Director promote and advance a welcoming and inclusive community in which populations with diverse experiences and perspectives feel empowered, respected, and motivated to work together toward common goals. To do so successfully, the Executive Director should have a strong intellectual understanding of the various needs of each academic unit, as well as the willingness to listen to, engage with, and facilitate conversations among diverse populations. The Executive Director will bring a demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion to the new School and will be ready to lead by example on day one.

Support the continued rapid growth of the data science major and facilitate similar growth for the other undergraduate majors

In concert with the work described above to maintain and increase inclusivity, there is an opportunity to work with Enrollment Management to build on the growth of the data science major (which has potential appeal to a broader group than a typical quantitative major), to increase the footprint of the computer science major on campus, which is small compared to most of our peers, in spite of a high quality faculty, and to recruit for a new cybersecurity major, which has almost unlimited workforce potential.

Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse community of talented and highly collaborative faculty

The School is currently engaged in an exciting phase of growth, one which will require the recruitment of new faculty. The Executive Director will partner closely with SCDS and CAS leaders to recruit world-class faculty to expand the knowledge and breadth of the School. As a critical part of this effort, the Executive Director will seek opportunities to recruit and retain faculty from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. The Executive Director will support all faculty members in their pursuit of excellence in research, teaching, and service, and will ensure adequate resources and infrastructure to support faculty

development. At the same time, the Executive Director will engage with interested faculty across campus to build a bench of faculty more loosely affiliated with the school. The Executive Director will leverage the expertise of faculty, encourage new ideas, and engage in thoughtful conversations on an ongoing basis to ensure faculty feel valued, respected, and supported. Faculty at SCDS should be inspired and encouraged under the leadership of the Executive Director to further pursue cross-campus collaborations with a spirit of entrepreneurialism and innovation.

Build an inclusive environment for innovative research and education

As a member of the AAU and a leading R1 research institution, UO is home to many leading scholars and researchers on campus, including a Nobel Prize winner and two National Medal of Science winners. In addition, the university takes pride in its longstanding tradition of collaborating across different interdisciplinary [research institutes](#). SCDS will further catalyze and support new and larger research grants across the university that integrate cutting-edge methods and best practices leading to better outcomes and faster results. To be successful, the Executive Director will harness the breadth and depth of expertise among all faculty, and engage with faculty to navigate the priorities and perspectives in its research and education missions. It is crucial for the Executive Director to cultivate an innovative and entrepreneurial research environment and facilitate the process of identifying external grants, funding, collaboration and partnership opportunities to further elevate research across campus. As the departments of computer science and data science are now under the umbrella of SCDS, the Executive Director will examine and unify the existing curricular and teaching efforts, including adopting inclusive pedagogies, in computer science and data science-related courses across the campus, as well as provide a strategic lens to enrollment management. In doing so, the Executive Director will enhance the reputation and visibility of SCDS in its research and education missions.

Forge ties with external partners to increase funds, resources, student opportunities, and industry collaborations

The future success of the new School will depend on the Executive Director's ability to forge ties with industry, government, community and philanthropic partners to generate sustainable funding resources and increase partnerships that will bolster better outcomes for student success, career outcomes, and research and education activities. To be successful, the Executive Director will be a strategic thinker and relationship builder, partnering closely with the CAS Dean's office, University Advancement, Office of Research, and other campus units to attract philanthropic investment and impactful external relationships. The Executive Director will be an engaging storyteller who is able to provide a compelling vision for donors and community leaders to continue their engagement with the university, as well as present the value of the School's remarkable innovation and life-changing impact on the many domains beyond computer and data sciences that SCDS will work on.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate will have credentials appropriate for a tenured appointment as a full professor with a strong record of scholarship directly related to one or more of the disciplines within the School of Computer and Data Sciences. They should also demonstrate a record of leadership and administrative experiences supporting and strengthening intersections of research and teaching.

The successful candidate will possess most of the following experiences, qualifications, and/or characteristics:

- An earned doctorate degree and a strong record of scholarship, teaching, and professional service appropriate for the appointment at the rank of a tenured full professor;
- Experience leading and managing a team of faculty and/or researchers;
- Demonstrated success in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Experience in leading or developing curricular and instructional innovation;
- Capacity to cultivate external relations to support fundraising, development, industry and community engagement;
- Excellent communication, relationship-building, and interpersonal skills including the ability to work collaboratively in a team environment.

Location

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people, in the Willamette Valley, a picturesque region known for its excellent wines, abundant recreational opportunities, and outdoor activities, and marked by a progressive, collaborative culture. It sits on 295-acres and features state-of-the-art facilities in an arboretum-like setting. Eugene is a vibrant and growing metropolitan area of over 200,000 people located two hours from Portland, and five hours from Seattle with varied cultural and culinary offerings, a pleasant climate, and a community engaged in environmental and social concerns. It hosts several world-class museums and cultural centers, including the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History, and the Many Nations Longhouse. Eugene is also a prime location for outdoor enthusiasts; skiing, hiking, fishing, rafting, cycling, and running are all popular pastimes in the area.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For best consideration, please apply by September 1, 2023. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-oregon/executive-director-school-computer-and-data-sciences>. Electronic submission of materials is required.

Cati Mitchell-Crossley, Silvia Cheng, and Cara Meyers
Isaacson, Miller
1000 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94111
www.imsearch.com

The University of Oregon is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.