



**Vice President of Global Development, EARTH University  
and Executive Director, EARTH University Foundation**

## **THE SEARCH**

EARTH University seeks a dynamic and successful fundraising professional to serve as its next vice president of global development (Vice President) to chart the future of its philanthropic support. This will include leading the EARTH University Foundation, responsible for raising funds in the United States, as well as leading fundraising efforts in Latin America and Europe with the support of fundraising staff in Costa Rica. EARTH University is an innovative academic institution in Costa Rica that has been preparing young people from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and other regions to contribute to the sustainable development of their countries since 1990. With an ambitious strategic plan approved in late 2022, this is an exciting time for a successful fundraising professional to expand the reach and the scope of the University's current fundraising by strengthening ties with existing donors as well as engaging new donors who have an appreciation for EARTH University's mission. The next Vice President will also play a leading role in developing and launching the next large-scale fundraising campaign. The successful Vice President will be authentic, creative, and passionate in communicating and actualizing the institution's goals.

Reporting directly to the University's president, the Vice President will also work closely with the senior administration as part of the University's leadership team. In their role as executive director of the EARTH University Foundation, the position also reports to the EARTH University Foundation Board. They will bring enthusiasm, innovation, and an entrepreneurial spirit to enhancing and guiding a development enterprise and an ability to craft a compelling case for support that will inspire the next generation of donors to EARTH University. The position calls for a seasoned development professional with a proven track record of securing major gifts as well as experience in leading and mentoring a fundraising team.

Outstanding interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills are critical to the success of the Vice President as well as a reputation for integrity and the highest ethical standards. Proficiency in Spanish is desirable, and the ability to travel both domestically and internationally is required.

EARTH University has retained the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to conduct the search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **EARTH UNIVERSITY**

### **Background**

EARTH University was established by Costa Rican law in 1986 as a private, non-profit, international university. The visionary leaders who created EARTH, together with its original funders – USAID, the Government of Costa Rica, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation – believed that, given the opportunity and the right kind of education, promising young people from rural and often disadvantaged communities around the world could become not only successful professionals, but also ethical leaders with the capacity and commitment to guide their families, neighbors, and communities towards a more prosperous and just future.

In 1990, EARTH's first academic year, the University welcomed 60 students from Central America to its new campus located in Guácimo in the heart of Costa Rica's tropical rainforest. By the turn of the century, it had expanded to include students from the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, and in 2000 began to serve students from Africa as well. Today, EARTH's more than 400 students come from around 40 countries in Central and Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and elsewhere. The opportunity for truly intercultural interaction and learning is now part of the essence of the EARTH experience, helping students to fully develop as global citizens.

While EARTH offers its students a rigorous four-year undergraduate program in agricultural sciences and natural resources management, leadership formation is central to the EARTH education. Led by a prestigious, international faculty, the student-centric program emphasizes experiential learning while providing a world-class scientific and technological education that incorporates values, ethical entrepreneurship, and environmental and social commitment.

EARTH's Guácimo campus – the hub of most of the University's activities – stretches across more than 8,000 acres, encompassing classrooms, laboratories, academic farms, sports and recreational facilities, student and faculty residences, reforested areas and a forest reserve, and a commercial banana plantation. The campus is carbon neutral.

Since 2005, EARTH has had a second 3,700-acre campus, La Flor, located next to the international airport in Liberia, Guanacaste, which was donated to the University by the family of former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber Quirós. Unlike the lowland humid tropics of Guácimo, La Flor is in the dry tropics of Northwestern Costa Rica and therefore provides new opportunities for research and learning. Together, the ecosystems, crops, and livestock found at one campus or the other are similar to those of the tropical regions of the EARTH students' home communities. EARTH students visit La Flor to study the challenges and opportunities of the dry tropical regions of the world. Going forward, the University envisions La Flor

becoming a hub of learning, research, and continued innovation as well as an important center for new business ventures aligned with its core mission.

## **Leadership**

Dr. Arturo Condo, global leader, economist, and educator became EARTH University's second president in 2017. Prior to arriving at EARTH, Dr. Condo served as president of INCAE Business School between 2007 and 2015, and for two decades he served in several positions, including dean of the MBA, dean of innovation and development, and professor in strategy, competitiveness, and sustainable development. Dr. Condo has had an impactful tenure at EARTH, notably, leading the creation of EARTH Futures and launching the EARTH Ventures program. Dr. Condo holds a doctorate in business administration from Harvard University, with an MBA in the same discipline from INCAE.

## **Governance**

The University and the Foundation are governed by separate boards, with some members serving on both boards. Alan Kelso and Mark Brouse serve as chairs of the boards, respectively. The boards are comprised of a dedicated and engaged group of leaders across business, policy, education, and environmental fields.

## **Academics and Programs**

EARTH's students, around 70% of whom are from rural communities, are recruited based on their academic and leadership potential, vocation, values, and social and environmental commitment, regardless of their ability to pay. More than 80% of these students receive partial or full scholarship support. The admissions process is intensive and highly personalized, with EARTH professors and staff conducting interviews in the students' home countries. The process is designed to reach promising young people who otherwise might not have a chance at a college education.

The University's academic model and curriculum are based on four formative areas: technical and scientific knowledge; personal development, attitudes, and values; ethical entrepreneurship; and social and environmental awareness and commitment. EARTH's academic program is demanding and one of a kind. Classes, almost all of which are in Spanish, are held eleven months per year, six days per week, usually beginning at 6:30 a.m. Much of the students' time is spent in the field and surrounding communities, where they have the opportunity to test and apply the theoretical concepts learned in the classroom and lab. The four-year graduation rate at EARTH is significantly higher than that of most universities worldwide.

EARTH's faculty hails from three continents and provides a dynamic and participatory learning environment for the University's students based on two key principles: student-centered learning and experiential learning. Professors encourage their students to explore real-world challenges and to become active participants in generating knowledge. Students learn through experiences designed to heighten the educational process, and they are given opportunities to build knowledge and develop abilities that they

can put into practice through their coursework. Through EARTH's three-year entrepreneurial projects program, one of the most valuable components of the innovative curriculum, every student is required to plan, operate, and share in the profits of a real business venture, all while maintaining the highest standard of ethical best practices.

Research is an integral part of EARTH's commitment to generating solutions to the agricultural and environmental problems facing the tropics. Through their research, faculty and students aim to address and strengthen the sustainable management of natural resources and to benefit the work of farmers and communities in Costa Rica and around the world.

The University proudly supports a growing network of more than 2,700 alumni with a remarkable and inspiring record of impact since graduating from EARTH. They are promoting sustainable development and contributing to positive change in countries around the globe, with over 70% living in their country of origin. Nearly two-thirds of EARTH graduates report contributing to sustainable agricultural production, conserving natural resources, and/or protecting the environment. Nearly half report improving climate change adaptation or mitigation and improving the quality of life of smallholder farmers and people in rural areas. Over 60% of graduates report having an impact with youth, as well as nearly 50% with women or girls, and 27% with Indigenous populations. Many graduates have gone on to create their own sustainable businesses where they are providing jobs and opportunities for others. They and their families invariably describe their EARTH education as transformative, and today they serve as exemplars of the EARTH mission. The achievements of EARTH's alumni reflect the University's core commitment to community development and engagement, both locally and across the globe.

In 2018, the University created [EARTH Futures](#) as a vehicle to grow EARTH University's direct impact in support of its mission of building more prosperous and just societies and toward the transformation of our global food systems. Over its first five years, EARTH Futures consolidated a successful model with on-the-ground impact initiatives in Latin America and Africa. The University has raised \$11.4 million to support and sustain this work and EARTH Futures has a strong and diverse team of over 20 staff (40% EARTH graduates). Thousands of people have been supported directly through EARTH Futures programs and over a hundred thousand directly and indirectly.

## **2050 EARTHShot and 2027 Strategic Plan**

EARTH believes that our current global food systems are failing both humanity and the planet. Our global society is facing interlocking, complex challenges including food insecurity, extreme poverty, unhealthy diets and malnutrition, and climate change. By 2050, we must figure out how to ensure access to healthy diets for a population of ten billion in ways that both reverse food production's negative impact on climate and enhance human livelihoods.

In order to meet these challenges and transform our food systems, EARTH believes the world needs a massively greater number of effective change agents who can facilitate the transition toward sustainable

production methods, increased livelihoods, and access to healthier diets for the world's 570 million small farmers and 60 million artisanal fishers and fish farmers, who together produce nearly half of our global food.

The University is deeply committed to this urgent task. Over the last 30 years, EARTH has refined a highly effective and transformative educational model that equips young leaders with the mindset, skills, values, and solutions to effect positive change. The University feels compelled to find ways to dramatically scale the impact of this proven model to reach significantly more leaders who can effect change on the ground. By 2050, EARTH's commitment is to have empowered and prepared a global movement of leaders to achieve nature-positive food production that improves producer livelihoods in developing regions, together with many partners. This is the University's EARTHShot.

EARTH's 2027 Strategic Plan will develop the essential building blocks to advance this EARTHShot. There are five core components to this strategy:

- 1) An evolved undergraduate program that helps young people be more effective in building the food systems we need;
- 2) An expanded portfolio of degree and non-degree programs that prepares significantly more leaders from across society as food systems change agents;
- 3) Strengthened support to a global network of food systems change agents to grow their leadership and impact;
- 4) Systemic, integrated solutions to food systems challenges in the hands of leaders who can deploy them;
- 5) New models and plans to extend the impact of the EARTH model much more broadly in the world.

EARTH seeks to exponentially grow the University's contributions to creating resilient, nature-positive food systems that provide dignified livelihoods and healthy food for all.

## **EARTH UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION**

The EARTH University Foundation, a registered 501(c)(3) based in Atlanta, Georgia, was founded in 1997 to provide the resources necessary to support EARTH. The Foundation is responsible for all development activity in North America and currently provides more than two-thirds of the fundraising income for the University, the balance provided by the campus-based development staff, under the leadership of the Vice President for Global Development, whose focus is chiefly Latin America. The Foundation defines itself principally as a major gifts enterprise, engaging in the prospect work and global positioning that will help to ensure financial equilibrium. The Foundation has a 17-member board of trustees that is eager to be engaged in prospect identification and solicitation.

## **THE ROLE**

The vice president for global development and executive director of the EARTH University Foundation reports directly to the president of EARTH University and participates as a member of the president's senior leadership team. In their role as executive director of the EARTH University Foundation, the position also reports to the EARTH University Foundation Board. The Vice President is responsible for planning and implementing an aggressive worldwide fundraising program. As the principal fundraiser for EARTH, the Vice President will be tasked with an average annual fundraising goal of approximately \$10 million. The position holds direct supervisory responsibility over 10-12 team members. The Vice President will manage a \$2 million budget which provides for the University's development function. They will carefully monitor the costs associated with fundraising and ensure that internal resources are appropriately utilized.

The Vice President will set the strategic direction for development efforts and engage key stakeholders, including board members, in fundraising efforts, while ensuring development team members are on target to meet their objectives. EARTH University is at an important moment of exceptional growth and momentum requiring a visionary and passionate leader who can build upon the university's rich history and success while supporting its growing reputation and ambitious plans for the future as a world leader in sustainable development and ethical entrepreneurship.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The next vice president of global development and executive director of the EARTH University Foundation will be energized and inspired by the following opportunities and challenges:

### ***Provide leadership and vision in working towards the aspirations of the EARTHShot and the 2027 Strategic Plan***

The Vice President will serve as leader and builder of a strategic, cohesive, and systematic development program to broaden fundraising, outreach, and engagement activities, and increase philanthropic revenue. They will assess EARTH's fundraising potential and craft a sophisticated multi-year fundraising and engagement strategy, with a focus on major gifts, that will result in sustainable long-term growth. They will develop these initiatives in alignment with the university's EARTHShot and 2027 Strategic Plan, serving a pivotal role in creating and launching a large-scale fundraising campaign in conjunction with these goals. In order to achieve these goals, the Vice President must execute programming and pipeline building to increase the visibility and recognition of EARTH University. They will serve as a passionate and informed representative of EARTH, being a spokesperson and advocate with a presence in the Foundation, on campus, and within the philanthropic community. They will share a compelling, clear, and authentic story of EARTH's mission to attract and retain donors.

As an active member of the university's senior leadership team, the Vice President will participate in organization-wide planning efforts and contribute to discussions that guide policies and objectives shaping EARTH's future. The Vice President will prepare EARTH for fundraising endeavors by ensuring an optimally deployed staff and an effective, efficient infrastructure that will support success.

***Manage the identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of annual and major gifts.***

The next Vice President will launch efforts to identify individuals and expand the prospect pipeline, including non-affiliated individuals who may be interested in the university's programs, priorities, and broader mission. They will personally cultivate and solicit high-level gifts from a portfolio of current and prospective donors. Additionally, they will provide comprehensive, timely, and innovative stewardship in ways that strengthen donor interest in, satisfaction with, and commitment to EARTH University.

The Vice President will work closely with EARTH's development and communications teams to articulate the case for each of EARTH University's funding priorities and will then use creative and strategic best practices to meet the University's fundraising goals.

***Collaborate with and engage the president, senior staff, and board members to support EARTH University's development efforts.***

The Vice President will collaborate closely with the University president, the senior leadership team, EARTH University and EARTH University Foundation boards to plan and execute all phases of a comprehensive fundraising strategy to cultivate and solicit major gifts that will result in sustainable long-term growth. As the board members are passionate and eager to engage in development efforts, the Vice President will provide a high level of support to board members in ways that will inspire their fundraising commitment to EARTH.

***Develop, lead, and mentor fundraising staff to meet organizational development goals through broadening and diversifying philanthropic support.***

The next Vice President will lead a staff of 10-12 team members currently distributed in offices in the United States and Latin America, but potentially in other regions as well, and will ensure their effectiveness as spokespeople and fundraisers for EARTH University. The Vice President will mentor and coach team members to be well prepared to meet the ongoing challenges and aspirations of the University and the development operation. The Vice President will set clear priorities and expectations for staff members, establish well-defined and measurable goals, and ensure that staff members are maintaining a high activity level and are on target to meet objectives set forth each year. They will celebrate current achievements and set clear expectations for future success.

The Vice President will lead by example, emphasizing professionalism, mutual respect, and collaboration. They will cultivate an environment in which team members can be their authentic and best selves, assess

strengths and areas for growth, and provide resources and opportunities for professional development. The ideal candidate will maintain a leadership style that is fluid and open, empowering staff through active communication and delegation, and promoting teamwork.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A commitment to the mission and ideals of EARTH University and the ability to articulate its vision and programs in a compelling manner;
- A strong record of achievement as a major gifts fundraiser, including the identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major donors;
- Experience supervising and mentoring other development professionals and volunteers;
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, and presentation skills, both written and oral;
- Ability and desire to work effectively with people of diverse backgrounds and to promote a positive working environment, a spirit of cooperation, and the necessary flexibility to manage change;
- Knowledge of planning, finance, budgeting, and development information systems;
- Experience working with Raiser's Edge (preferred) or other donor management software;
- Willingness to travel domestically and internationally, at least 40% of time, including regular trips to EARTH University in Costa Rica;
- Multi-cultural experiences and an appreciation for a global society;
- Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred;
- Proficiency in Spanish is desirable;
- High emotional intelligence, and sense of humor.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

EARTH University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Interested candidates must submit a letter of interest and a current resume to be considered for the position. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and application materials should be directed to:

Phillip Petree, Partner

Kristen Andersen, Senior Associate

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/earth-university/vice-president-global-development-and-executive-director-earth>

*EARTH University shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.*