



Search for the Director, Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment, & Sustainability
Duke University
Durham, NC

THE SEARCH

Duke University, one of the nation's leading research universities, seeks a dynamic and collaborative leader to serve as the Director of the Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment, & Sustainability (NIEES or "Nicholas Institute"). Reporting to Toddi Steelman, Vice President and Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability, and Edward J. Balleisen, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, the next Director will bring to Duke a strong commitment to advancing innovative research and policy solutions that address the climate challenge and other issues related to environmental sustainability, as well as a recognition of the need to weave experiential learning into the Institute's research and engagement efforts.

The next leader of the Nicholas Institute will serve at a critical and exciting juncture of Duke's history as the work associated with the university's 2022 Climate Commitment gathers steam, mobilizing every facet of the University to design and implement equitable and action-oriented strategies to foster a sustainable future. The Nicholas Institute, a recent incorporation of the former Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions and the Duke University Energy Initiative will serve as an essential partner in this endeavor. Its next director will activate the staff and faculty associated with the NIEES while also calling on the deep bench of scholars, center directors, and senior university leaders across Duke to facilitate interdisciplinary research focused on the most pressing environmental and climate challenges, deliver transformational educational experiences, and engage key decision makers at the global, national, state and local levels. Duke has earned an incredible reputation for making knowledge actionable, and the new NIEES Director will have the unparalleled opportunity to embrace that reputation and take it to new heights by catalyzing impactful change and innovation.

The Director will oversee the NIEES's programs and initiatives and lead its strategic efforts in alignment with the context of university priorities—most notably the Climate Commitment. The Director is expected to collaborate closely with Duke's schools and other interdisciplinary institutes to support their research, scholarship, and teaching and to connect Duke's work to broader energy, environment, and sustainability efforts.

The successful candidate will be an enthusiastic, collaborative, and strategic leader who will continue to develop the NIEES's interdisciplinary culture and help shape Duke as a university committed to far-reaching engagement throughout all levels of society. A true relationship builder, the Director will bring a track record of superb administrative leadership, a demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and success in attracting resources from a variety of sources.

Duke University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

DUKE UNIVERSITY

A member of the Association of American Universities, Duke University was created in 1924 with a gift from James Buchanan Duke to Trinity College. Since then, Duke has grown to include ten schools (Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, Fuqua School of Business, Divinity School, Pratt School of Engineering, Nicholas School of the Environment, Graduate School, School of Law, Sanford School of Public Policy, and the Schools of Medicine and Nursing). The University has over 6,500 undergraduate students, 10,600 graduate and professional students, 3,800 faculty, 45,500 employees, and 189,550 active alumni. Duke had total operating expenditures of \$7.7 billion in fiscal year 2022 and an endowment of \$11.6 billion.

Duke has a culture of innovation and collaboration rooted in an environment that promotes interdisciplinary research and education. In addition to its schools and departmental programs, ten university institutes and centers (UICs) focus on multidisciplinary research and education. In addition to NIEES, these units engage with global health; the social sciences; ethics; brain sciences; health policy; humanities; data science; science & society; and innovation & entrepreneurship. NIEES makes robust contributions to this vibrant interdisciplinary ecosystem. Faculty are encouraged to explore deeply basic issues in disciplinary research areas, to examine complex interdisciplinary research questions, and to address enduring and emerging intellectual and policy problems from multiple perspectives. They also enjoy excellent support in developing innovative, interdisciplinary modes of education, including avenues for project-based collaboration and experiential learning. The UICs are guided by priorities that promote good stewardship of University resources, emphasize the provision of public goods undersupplied by schools and departments, and nurture a community that is accessible, diverse, and committed to a culture of engagement.

Duke's shared values — respect, trust, inclusion, discovery, and excellence—are the foundation of the University's culture. They also guide and inform the institution's strategic direction as Duke seeks to adapt to and shape the course of a changing world.

Since its founding, Duke University has been dedicated to a liberal and broad-based education at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels and the ethical pursuit of knowledge that advances humankind. Duke offers a distinctive educational identity that integrates undergraduate teaching with a collaborative research culture, with fifteen associated Nobel Laureates and fifty Rhodes Scholars; it fosters a diverse, inclusive, and exceptionally talented campus community, boasting excellent professional schools, a vibrant arts community, and an internationally renowned athletics program. It is also home to a health system that serves as a vital hub for the region and is a leading center of innovation in research and healthcare delivery. The University is universally regarded as one of the leading American and global research universities and academic medical centers.

PRESIDENT VINCENT PRICE

An accomplished leader, collaborator, and global expert on public opinion, social influence, and political communication, Dr. Vincent Price became the 10th President of Duke University and the Walter Hines Page Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at the Sanford School of Public Policy and Trinity College of Arts and Sciences in 2017.

Since coming to Duke, Dr. Price has developed a strategic vision focused on five core principles: empowering people, transforming education, building community, forging partnerships, and engaging a global network. Guided by this framework, Price has introduced a series of major new initiatives at Duke — including a comprehensive commitment to racial equity, continued strategic advancement of the arts, implementing next-generation residential programs, investing in Duke science and technology, and broadening and deepening engagement with Durham and the surrounding region. Dr. Price holds a PhD and MA in Communication from Stanford University and BA magna cum laude in English from the University Honors Program at Santa Clara University.

THE DUKE CLIMATE COMMITMENT

Introduced in 2022, the Duke Climate Commitment began as a call to action by President Vincent Price and Former Provost Sally Kornbluth to mobilize the University and its resources in addressing the climate crisis.

The Climate Commitment is a university-wide, impact-oriented effort to mobilize the university's education, research, operations, and public service missions to advance climate solutions. Vice President and Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability, Toddi Steelman was appointed by President Price in July 2023 to form a new Office of Climate and Sustainability and lead university-wide efforts. The Climate Commitment consolidates and leverages Duke's longstanding foundational investments in climate-adjacent assets, including the Duke Forest, Duke Marine Lab, Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke Gardens, Duke Campus Farm, Sustainable Duke, NIEES, Duke in DC, Duke Kunshan University in China, Duke-National University in Singapore and the recently established New York Climate Exchange. NIEES is among five entities comprising the newly formed Office of Climate and Sustainability, along with Sustainable Duke, the Duke Forest, The Duke Campus Farm, and the the Duke Gardens. Among other goals, the Climate Commitment seeks to nurture a generation of climate-fluent students prepared to address climate issues and foster equitable solutions for the benefit of all. Within this commitment, four distinct focal points have been identified to guide the university's research efforts: energy transformation; climate and community resilience; environmental and climate justice; and data-driven climate solutions. The NIEES will continue to be an essential partner in this work as it moves forward.

Duke has woven these focal points into every aspect of the university by building upon its strategic framework of empowering the boldest thinkers, transforming teaching and learning, renewing the campus community, forging purposeful partnerships in Durham and the region, and engaging in an extraordinary global network. Duke has created innovative pathways for climate education by offering a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral-level certificates and degree programs focused on climate and the environment, including more than 100 courses across departments, schools, and degree programs. This pedagogical innovation has contributed to the University's vibrant culture of

interdisciplinarity, where faculty and researchers engage in dynamic climate research across ten schools. The university has also made key investments in developing its sustainable operations and will reach carbon neutrality in 2024. With the NIEES helping to facilitate these efforts, Duke has begun generating comprehensive societal impact by engaging key decision-makers across the state, federal, and international landscapes to drive collaboration and consensus towards effective climate policy solutions. The university continuously informs these and other efforts by engaging the local Durham community to challenge the paradigm around climate and foster dialogue around creating equitable climate policies and practices.

As an integral component of the Climate Commitment, NIEES, led by the Director, will assume a pivotal role in positioning Duke to be synonymous with climate impact. The Director will support this goal by advancing the University's climate research objectives through the innovative Climate Research Innovation Seed Program (CRISP). This initiative will serve as a catalyst for fostering collaboration among Duke's renowned faculty. The Director will also promote engagement and exchange by seamlessly bridging Duke's climate experts with influential partners from non-governmental organizations, the private sector, think tanks, and governmental agencies. A complementary Climate Leaders in Residence (CLIR) program brings mid-career change-makers to campus for a year to facilitate collaborations and appreciation for key developments in government, business, and the NGO world. NIEES will also continue to craft inquiry-based educational opportunities that support and contribute to Duke's goal for climate fluency for all students and alumni. This vision underscores Duke's commitment to a sustainable, climate-resilient future where knowledge and innovation converge to drive meaningful change.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AT DUKE

The Institute is housed in the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (OIS) led by the Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, Ed Balleisen. OIS serves as a vibrant hub of coordination and management for Duke's interdisciplinary units. The office is a critical partner to senior and faculty leadership in crafting and implementing policies and procedures that meet interdisciplinary groups' distinctive administrative, research, educational, and practice needs. The office also manages the University's Bass Connections program, which brings faculty and students together through 60-70-year-long interdisciplinary project teams and a growing set of interdisciplinary, project-based courses.

Interdisciplinarity has been deeply ingrained in the fabric of Duke's schools and departments for over two decades. This is demonstrated, in part, through the projects and initiatives that take place across its ten university-wide institutes and centers. The UICs collectively manage approximately \$36 million annually in faculty grants, run certificate programs and working groups for PhD students, offer three master's degree programs, and provide undergraduates with one co-major and a diverse set of certificate programs. Through funding, methodological training, administrative support, and space for collaboration, the UICs also support numerous faculty-driven interdisciplinary projects and initiatives.

BASS CONNECTIONS

The Bass Connections program unites and supports scholars and students across Duke in finding solutions to the world's complex and multi-faceted societal issues. Through a spectrum of year-long, semester-long, and immersive summer programs, undergraduate and graduate students alike collaborate with faculty and scholars in innovative and cross-cutting research endeavors that connect them to opportunities for collaboration with community organizations, government agencies, school systems, and industry.

The Director will ensure that the Nicholas Institute serves as a vibrant, supportive home for the Bass Connections Energy & Environment theme, one of its six thematic areas, and will maintain the Institute's responsible stewardship of Bass Connections and its associated resources, in part through alignment with UIC priorities.

To learn more about the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies and the Bass Connections program, please visit: <https://sites.duke.edu/interdisciplinary/>

THE NICHOLAS INSTITUTE

The Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability is the result of a recent merger between two well-established entities: the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions (founded in 2005) and the Duke University Energy Initiative (founded in 2011). The resulting Institute is a distinctive entity in academia, combining the respective policy, research, and educational strengths of these units to engage with policymakers, businesses, and communities, with a twin focus of helping to craft solutions to big environmental problems and training future leaders to do the same. In part, NIEES acts as an externally focused policy think tank, leveraging its cadre of economists, scientists, lawyers, and policy experts to deliver timely and credible analysis to a wide variety of decision-makers in the public, private, non-profit and research sectors, often on relatively short timeframes needed to inform decisions. Working alongside both external partners and experts across Duke, the Institute has recently curated actionable research to inform decision-making on topics such as extreme heat, energy infrastructure, small-scale fisheries, ecosystem services, and water affordability. The NIEES also acts as a convener among key decision-makers, fostering consensus on the most critical environmental challenges of the 21st century.

The NIEES consists of over 50 staff members and core faculty, along with roughly 30 closely affiliated faculty who span the University's schools and departments. The Institute receives guidance from a 24-person Board of Advisors comprising the foremost environmental leaders across the public, non-profit, and private sectors. The NIEES also receives regular feedback and guidance from strategic, faculty, and student advisory committees.

The NIEES has served as a hub for issues identification and unification across the university, a place for information on the state of energy, environment, and sustainability problems, and a resource for solutions. The Institute's four primary focus areas include climate and energy, ecosystem services, ocean policy, and water policy. Faculty and researchers affiliated with the Institute seek to tackle various policy and regulatory issues in these broad programmatic areas through collaboration with key decision-makers in government and industry. Signature projects of the Institute include the Rogers Energy Access Project, the Energy Data Analytics Lab, Energy Pathways USA, and the Internet of Water Coalition. The Institute also invests in efforts to deepen direct engagement with the policy world through various projects, symposia, and events to bring these leaders together on Duke's campus to drive towards equitable and just solutions in climate.

Innovative educational opportunities abound at the Institute, with staff teaching courses at Duke and other institutions in over 40 subject areas. Students across the University take part in hands-on learning experiences through programs such as Climate+, a 10-week summer research experience that explores

data-driven approaches to climate change; DukeEngage, an immersive summer experience that connects students and faculty to local and global communities to address social issues; and the Duke Global Policy Program where students complete an energy or environment-related internship in Geneva. Students also lead initiatives and research in climate through projects funded by the Institute's Clean Energy Prize, a \$10,000 award for student-led development of energy technologies and products.

To learn more about the Institute, please visit: <https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/>

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR

As chief administrative officer, the Director of the Nicholas Institute will be responsible for the development of a robust mission, in line with the Climate Commitment, that distinguishes NIEES as a campus leader in supporting the full range of interdisciplinary scholarship and education related to energy, environment, and sustainability, and advances the identity of Duke as a university committed to far-reaching engagement with the climate challenge. In overseeing these initiatives, the Director will guarantee that both the NIEES and Duke writ large actively engage in activities that have material impact on these issues. Moreover, the Director will strive to provide faculty and students with abundant opportunities to contribute meaningfully to these collective efforts.

The Director will have a dual report to the Vice President and Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability and Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies. They are expected to lead a dynamic, experienced team of program directors and staff to implement the NIEES mission while modeling accountability to overarching Duke priorities. The Director will be responsible for managing a budget of roughly \$9.85 million, derived from a blend of sources, of which 43% are grants, 22% are donations, and 35% come from the University.

Ongoing assessment within the NIEES is a vital aspect of the Director's role, informed by input from a faculty advisory group, to strike an appropriate balance among areas for research and engagement, including interactions with various levels of national and international policymaking.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The Director should demonstrate leadership skills based on the values of collaboration, transparency, and consensus building. To ensure the continued growth, impact, and distinction in an area of increasing competition, the Director will be expected to address several key opportunities and challenges:

Articulate and execute a shared vision for NIEES's leadership in addressing climate issues

The next Director will be charged with shaping a distinct and unified vision for the NIEES that duly acknowledges, honors, and harnesses the strengths of both the Energy Initiative and the Nicholas Institute's legacies. To achieve this, they will collaborate closely with faculty, researchers, and students across Duke to foster an interdisciplinary environment that promotes innovative research, education, and engagement. Central to this role is the commitment to elevate the Institute's visibility within the Duke community and beyond, ensuring that its contributions to energy, environment, and sustainability are widely recognized and serve as a magnet for further impact. Establishing clear structures and policies around program development and implementation will be a priority, providing a solid framework for the Institute's undertakings.

The Director will strategically leverage the existing strengths and areas of expertise in research, policy, and external engagement, amplifying the Institute's influence in these critical domains. This will include efforts to create pathways and additional opportunities for students of all levels to actively participate in research, policy initiatives, and experiential learning activities to ensure that the Institute's educational and research missions align seamlessly with broader university objectives. In research, the Director will create support mechanisms to encourage faculty innovation and the cultivation of partnerships, nurturing a culture of innovation and excellence. In doing so, the Director will help Duke not only further its climate goals but also chart a path for the Institute that is visionary yet firmly grounded in practicality, striving for impact that resonates within and beyond Duke.

Catalyze deep interdisciplinary collaborations across the Duke ecosystem

Collaboration with senior administration and school leadership is crucial to contributing to the university's identity as a proactive participant in addressing climate and sustainability challenges. This will be accomplished by aligning the NIEES with university priorities, fostering cohesion, and driving innovation in research and education through new partnerships and initiatives. This alignment involves forging relationships across all schools, particularly the Pratt School of Engineering, the Nicholas School of the Environment, the Sanford School of Public Policy, the School of Law, the Fuqua School of Business, the Schools of Medicine and Nursing, and the Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. The Director will assume a pivotal role in fostering connections among faculty across these schools and providing essential support for their research endeavors in a decentralized environment.

Providing direction to NIEES program directors is also essential to maintain staff-led research and engagement programs that connect faculty interests with emerging policy issues and engage students across all academic levels. Working with the NIEES team, the Director will build on these efforts by managing a portfolio of student-centered programs that complement and amplify school-based initiatives.

Foster a climate of external engagement with key policy- and decision-makers

NIEES, recognized for its commitment to nonpartisan policy outreach and innovation, has established itself as a trusted convener for stakeholder engagement around policy. The Director will build on the NIEES's outstanding reputation to leverage its expertise to build a community of NGOs, donors, corporations, and policy and decision-makers at both the national and international levels while maintaining its position as a trusted third party, providing a crucial platform for informed, unbiased policy dialogue. This engagement aims to provide timely and credible analysis and convenings that advance a shared understanding of energy, environmental, and sustainability issues at a time when polarization and politicization loom large.

The Director will also be tasked with convening an external advisory board that will engage on strategic priorities for external engagement and opportunities for philanthropic support. These and other efforts will lend themselves to the effective alignment of the Institute's strategic priorities with the broader goals and objectives of Duke's efforts in climate and sustainability.

By building on the NIEES's well-established reputation as a policy powerhouse and promoting its value for neutral policy exchange, the Director will effectively align the Institute's strategic priorities with the broader goals and objectives of Duke's Climate Commitment.

Strengthen NIEES's shared culture and nurture organizational and programmatic growth

The NIEES serves both as a professional and academic unit comprised of a wide array of faculty and staff and, as such, requires a leader with strong administrative and management acumen and exceptional organizational foresight. The Director will be responsible for imbuing a sense of shared culture and priorities within the broader research complex of the Institute in addition to being a consummate manager of its resources. The Director will continue to foster the Institute's identity as a unified center of excellence, strategically fortifying its infrastructure and resources through partnerships across campus to support the varied needs of its diverse set of personnel.

The recent merger has the opportunity to strengthen the NIEES's momentum for impact. As such, the Director will harness this power to thoughtfully cultivate additional programmatic opportunities that draw from its faculty and staff's pre-existing bench strength and interest areas while identifying opportunities to elevate the Institute and Duke's reach and credibility on a broader scale. The Director will work with the NIEES team to continue building a shared culture and increasing interaction between the two formerly separate Institutes, building upon the progress of the last year.

Fundraise and deftly manage resources for a large and complex academic enterprise

With a multimillion-dollar budget, a substantial research and programmatic portfolio, and interaction with over a thousand students and personnel across Duke, the Director of NIEES oversees a consequential academic enterprise at the University. This next leader must astutely steward and deploy NIEES's existing resources while thinking strategically and proactively about additional revenue sources. The Institute has an annual allocation of roughly \$3.45 million from its endowment and the University. Still, it will require additional funds if it hopes to move beyond its scope of individual project-based philanthropy and portfolio of foundation grants. A new Director must compellingly advocate for the Institute's mission and be a public ambassador and promoter for energy, environmental, and climate policy and solutions, making the case to philanthropic donors for the value of the work and its complementarity with key activities within Duke's schools. New revenues are essential to the ambitions of the NIEES.

Ensure a diverse and welcoming culture

NIEES is a welcoming and supportive hub, fostering engagement in research, education, and community involvement for faculty, staff, and students alike. The Director will champion inclusive, interdisciplinary initiatives, actively supporting the Institute's commitments to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and strategic planning efforts. They will also identify opportunities for recognition and acknowledgment of the dedicated efforts of faculty and staff to propel the Institute's ongoing progress in these areas.

EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Acknowledging that no one person will embody them all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and personal qualities:

- PhD or terminal degree in a qualifying field related to energy, environment, and/or sustainability,
- A portfolio of excellent scholarship and/or professional leadership consistent with a senior faculty appointment,
- At least five years' experience as a director in a similar senior role or equivalent experience with an orientation to understanding how to lead and administer in complex organizational environments. This may include previous executive or managerial positions in similar organizations, research institutions, government agencies, or corporate entities involved in the energy and sustainability sectors,
- Demonstrated ability to develop and articulate a strategic vision for a complex organization and effectively lead its implementation, including goal setting, formulation of guiding strategies, and oversight of overall operations and programs,
- Demonstrated success in hiring, managing, and mentoring professional and administrative staff,
- Experience in fundraising and grant writing, and securing financial resources from a variety of sources,
- Demonstrated strong financial management skills to ensure responsible budgeting and resource allocation,
- Demonstrated appreciation for the power of experiential learning and collaborative inquiry in fostering climate fluency among students,
- Outstanding verbal, written, and spoken communication skills, with the capacity to convey the institute's research findings, policy recommendations, and initiatives to various audiences,
- The ability to be an effective spokesperson and advocate for the Institute, representing its interests within Duke as well as in public forums, conferences, and media engagements,
- Demonstrated experience as a collaborative leader who maintains constructive working relationships with various stakeholders, including government agencies, industry leaders, nonprofit organizations, research institutions, and the community,
- Track record that demonstrates a dedication to fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment, building cohesive teams, managing a diverse staff, fostering innovation, and promoting interdisciplinary research,
- Ability to work with and attract a diverse group of highly experienced External Advisory Board members.

TO APPLY

Duke University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search.
All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Jacqueline Mildner, Partner
Damla Williams, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/duke-university/director-NIEES>

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