



Search for the Chief Human Resources Officer
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
Boulder, Colorado

THE SEARCH

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) seeks a dynamic, strategic, and people-centered leader to serve as its next Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). UCAR is a nonprofit consortium of more than 120 North American colleges and universities focused on research and training in Earth systems science. The organization convenes the Earth systems science community to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and share their research learnings for the advancement of the field. Further, UCAR seeks to provide a clear voice for its members, in collaboration with the broader scientific community, to convey the values of their research, education, and partnerships to policymakers and national leaders. UCAR also manages the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) on behalf of the National Science Foundation, providing world-class facilities, supercomputing power, and other state-of-the-art resources for the scientific community. UCAR also provides management for UCAR Community Programs (UCP) which partners with the community to service and offer support for science and science-based activities.

Reporting to UCAR's Chief Operations Officer, this critical position will provide strategic leadership and conscientious management across UCAR, NCAR, and UCP on all human resource matters including, but not limited to, benefits, compensation, employee relations, organizational culture, recruiting, and training and learning. As a member of UCAR's senior executive team, they will act as a thought partner with leadership, working to assure compliance with applicable human resources laws and regulations, and playing a significant role in developing a dynamic and diverse workforce that values psychological safety, respect, and inclusion within a high-performing culture. The CHRO will lead a team of 25 HR professionals and serve as a role model who demonstrates UCAR's commitment to a culture of excellence, kindness, equity, and compassion in which all employees feel recognized and valued, contributing to UCAR's status as an employer of choice. This is an amazing opportunity to help lead an organization making critical contributions to ensure the future of our planet.

UCAR has retained Isaacson, Miller, an international executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY CORPORATION FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

In 1960, atmospheric scientists from 14 universities came together with a common vision: to create an organization where they could share resources and build collaborations to transform our understanding of weather, water, climate, and the sun. These visionaries recognized the need for community observational facilities and a world-class research staff, which together would allow the community to carry out complex, long-term scientific programs beyond the reach of individual universities. Today, the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research has grown to include over 120 universities and many strong partnerships with a broad range of funders, agencies, and groups. Alongside these partners, UCAR leads a collaborative community of over 1,400 researchers, educators, and staff members. dedicated to understanding the atmosphere -- the air around us -- and the complex processes that make up the Earth system, from the ocean floor to the sun's core to sustain it for the benefit of our collective future. UCAR's Community Programs (UCP), which include everything from training weather forecasters, firefighters, and emergency managers to supporting a constellation of atmosphere-observing satellites, extend and enhance the world-class research done at the national center.

UCAR manages the National Center for Atmospheric Research on behalf of the National Science Foundation and the university community. NCAR, the NSF's first federally funded research and development center, provides the atmospheric and related Earth system science community with state-of-the-art resources, including supercomputers, research aircraft, sophisticated computer models, and extensive data sets. NCAR's in-house staff of preeminent researchers and engineers works with community collaborators to ensure that these resources and facilities can meet the demands of today's greatest scientific challenges. Its scientists also delve into fundamental research questions, producing a wealth of scientific publications that help lead the way for the broader Earth system science community. The organization provides rich education and outreach opportunities, from fellowships for early career scientists to free public lectures to scientific workshops.

In 1992, UCAR launched the Office of Programs (UOP), later to become UCAR Community Programs (UCP), and charged it with the mission of providing service in support of science and science-based activities.

Overall, UCP programs are more service-oriented than research, with a focus on education, training, data delivery, scientist services, scientist exchange, and novel observational systems. UCP programs provide a suite of innovative resources, tools, and services to researchers, educators, and practitioners in the Earth System Science community.

Together UCAR, NCAR, and UCP work to promote and accelerate access to world-class resources needed to push the boundaries of Earth system science.

You can read more about the organization's strategic plan for 2019-2028 [here](#).

LEADERSHIP

Dr. Antonio Busalacchi, President

Dr. Antonio J. Busalacchi became president of UCAR in August 2016. An expert in Earth's climate system and ocean-atmosphere interactions, he helps guide NCAR's world-leading research into the Earth system sciences and its support of the research community through supercomputing, observing instruments, and community models. Under Busalacchi's leadership, in 2018 UCAR signed an agreement with the National Science Foundation to continue its management of NCAR. He also oversees UCAR Community Programs, which provides data, observations, and other services to researchers worldwide. His priorities include fostering a broad interdisciplinary approach to researching the Earth system, increasing diversity across the geosciences, and being the best possible steward of the taxpayer investment in NCAR and UCAR.

After receiving a PhD in oceanography from Florida State University, Dr. Busalacchi began his professional career at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Busalacchi has a distinguished career in the geosciences; extensive experience in the management of academic, laboratory, and government programs; and a broad knowledge of the research community. A nationally recognized expert on science policy, Dr. Busalacchi has advised policymakers and testified to Congress on the importance of continued federal support for Earth system science. He collaborates frequently with government officials, private sector leaders, and the academic community to advance research in ways that help save lives and property, strengthen the economy, and safeguard national security.

Alisha Swofford, Chief Operating Officer

Alisha Swofford became Chief Operations Officer (COO) in November 2023 after serving in an interim capacity since April 2023. Swofford first came to UCAR in 2019 as the deputy director of Facilities Management. During her time in that role, she focused on cultural initiatives and process improvements and helped lead the group through the COVID shutdown. Before stepping in as interim COO, she served as deputy director of Operations for two years. As interim, and now permanent, COO, she has provided support to NCAR during the stand down of the Research Aviation Facility, led the organization's transformative Space Planning Initiative, conducted UCAR Operations' first Operational Satisfaction Survey, and more.

Before joining UCAR, Swofford was assistant director of facilities management at the University of Colorado Boulder, area operations manager at Nike, and operations manager at FedEx. She has an MBA from Missouri State University.

DUTIES OF THE CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

Below is a summarized outline of key responsibilities for the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Strategic Leadership and Advisory

- Guide human resources activities in support of organizational goals and serve as a strategic advisor and partner to senior management as a member of UCAR senior leadership.
- Serve as management liaison to the UCAR Board of Trustees Personnel Committee, and advisor to the Board Chair.
- Execute human resource strategies and initiatives inclusive of organizational development, compensation, workforce management, and DEI Strategic Planning to meet the National Science Foundation's DEI expectations.
- Develop and maintain close partnerships with organizational entities, including the President's Council members as well as NCAR and UCP leaders.
- Serves as a member of the UCAR Operations Senior Executive Team and advisor to the UCAR Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Chief Information Officer.

HR Compliance

- Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to maintain compliance with applicable federal and state government laws and regulations, National Science Foundation requirements, and others as appropriate.
- Monitor compliance with established HR policies and implement measures to address compliance gaps.
- Oversee personnel-related investigations as necessary.

HR Programs

- Oversee HR staff in the program areas of recruiting and hiring, benefits and compensation (total rewards approach), performance management, leadership and talent development, employee relations, strategic partnerships, and flexible work.
- Develop and implement new programs that best serve UCAR's unique organizational structure, in consultation with organizational leaders and the HR staff.

HR Team Leadership and Management

- Create an inclusive and engaged HR team culture that supports employee retention and development.
- Develop a high-performing team culture that provides outstanding service to internal and external customers.

- Provide effective, psychologically safe leadership and manage all HR programs with an eye toward inclusion and equity.
- Manage the Human Resources budget and forecast future HR budgetary needs.
- Establish the monitoring and reporting of appropriate metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the HR department.
- Leverage technology to drive change, simplify processes, lower operating costs, and enhance operational efficiencies.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHRO

Build an HR function that supports UCAR's unique organizational structure and goals

UCAR's multidimensional mission and complex structure necessitate an HR function geared toward its future while respecting its long-held traditions. The CHRO will define and advance an HR department that is high-performing, innovative, and rigorous in communicating its vision, direction, and priorities to a diverse organization. The CHRO will communicate progress and wins as they develop. This leader will continue to professionalize and deepen the bench strength of the HR department by investing in training and professional development for the team. They will identify and uplift team strengths to ensure people are working to the top of their abilities and will work to build an internal culture of collaboration, psychological safety, and mutual respect. Further, the CHRO will focus on balancing both regular and ongoing workloads with time to work on innovative projects and initiatives in service to the wider organization.

Implement systems to track organizational data to address organizational concerns

The CHRO must be a big-picture thinker with the ability to anticipate and understand the details that are required to bring an idea to life from thought to implementation. To ensure that they can be a proactive rather than reactive leader, the CHRO will work to implement systems across the organization to track and aggregate important data like employee satisfaction and retention metrics as well as salary benchmarking, all while pipelining critical information to UCAR's major constituencies from senior leadership to staff. They will work to determine what metrics of success will be tracked over time, build strong systems to track that data and utilize it to guide organizational decision-making.

Contribute to an inclusive environment that supports a highly diverse employee population

The CHRO must be a human-centered leader, devoted to ensuring that UCAR's practices speak to and serve all members of its workforce in an inclusive and welcoming way. Critical to this goal is bridging and increasing the trust between front-line staff and leadership. The CHRO will also partner closely with the Chief Diversity Officer and their Office to actively support and prioritize initiatives across the organization around diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that UCAR's approaches and values are consonant with best practices nationally. Leading with curiosity and a sharp focus on psychological safety and workplace

well-being, the CHRO will also strengthen and grow programs that contribute to the recruitment, development, and retention of a talented, diverse workforce. This individual will also stay abreast of trends and changes in the workforce and what is needed to best foster a welcoming and engaged multi-generational community.

Effectively communicate HR plans, goals, and outcomes to a variety of stakeholders

The CHRO will be a visible and accessible presence and will be expected to connect with organizational units and other key stakeholders through clearly articulated priorities, advocacy on behalf of employees, and defined pathways for feedback across the organization's diverse constituencies. As such, they must possess a clear, concise, and compelling communication style that works to connect UCAR's mission with the lives and impact of each individual contributor to help them understand how their work impacts the organization. Furthermore, the CHRO must be a deep listener who is adept at balancing employee concerns and feedback with actionable improvements that resolve issues in a timely manner and strengthen communication at both the individual and organizational levels.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Research shows that women and people of color are less likely to apply for a position if they do not meet almost 100% of the desired skills and experience. **Please note that this is not necessary.** If you meet the minimum requirements and have a passion for the work, you are encouraged to apply. While no single candidate will have all the qualifications, UCAR seeks candidates with a well-rounded combination of the following abilities:

Required Qualifications:

- An outstanding record of progressive experience and accomplishment within the various program intersections of Human Resources and management, and organizational development.
- Five years of demonstrated successful leadership and providing forward-leaning solutions to help move the workforce forward.
- Human Resources experience within higher education, FFRDCs, or research organizations.
- Strong interpersonal skills, and ability to lift and motivate a team with diverse backgrounds and identities. A track record of successful team leadership, introducing change, and fostering a positive organizational culture. Strong track record of institutional change management in challenging environments.
- Ability to think strategically, and to manage and operate at both a strategic and a hands-on level as needed. Expert knowledge of HR best practices.
- Comprehensive knowledge of state and federal regulations governing employment, compensation, and benefits practices.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, strong facilitation skills, strong negotiation skills, and the ability to communicate effectively at all levels of the organization.

- Experience with, and track record of enacting current diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and practices. Demonstrated success in providing superior service to internal stakeholders.
- Track record of identifying, designing, and implementing business improvement processes to increase the quality of programs. Ability to complete multiple tasks within critical deadlines.
- Project management experience.

Desirable Qualifications:

- PHR/SPHR certification
- Experience with Workday (HCM system)

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This position offers a hiring salary range of \$227,342 - \$284,177. The final salary will be based on education, experience, skills relevant to the role, and internal equity. Relocation assistance is offered for this position. Information about UCAR's benefits can be found [here](#).

UCAR/NCAR will not sponsor a work visa (e.g., J-1, H1-B, etc.) for this position. U.S. Citizenship, Permanent Residency, or other protected status under 8 U.S.C. 1324b(a)(3) is required for this position.

UCAR's main office is located in Boulder, CO. This position is open to candidates seeking in-person and/or hybrid (combination virtual and on-site presence) positions. The duties of this position do not permit it to be fully remote.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process.

Interested candidates should provide the following materials to complete their application:

- A resume or CV that summarizes your background and experience as it relates to this position.
- A letter of introduction that summarizes your interest in the role and UCAR and addresses how you meet the responsibilities and requirements described in the position description, including specific examples.
- An Inclusion Statement that summarizes your approach to building and leading an inclusive and psychologically safe environment. In your statement, please share specific examples of actions you have taken to build diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments in previous roles as well as metrics you use for knowing if psychological safety is achieved.

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search [linked here](#). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rebecca Kennedy (she/her), Partner
Vijay Saraswat (he/him), Partner
Angelo Alexander (they/them), Senior Associate
Cortnee Bollard (they/them), Senior Search Coordinator

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action employer that strives to develop and maintain a diverse workforce. UCAR is committed to providing equal opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, creed, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or pregnancy.

Whatever your intersection of identities, you are welcome at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR). We are committed to inclusivity and promoting an equitable environment that values and respects the uniqueness of all members of our organization.