

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Senior Vice President, Zoological Operations and Conservation

GROUP/DEPARTMENT: Animal Care & Programs
Education & Community Engagement

JOB RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to: President/CEO
Supervises: Vice President, Animal Care & Programs (ACP)
Vice President, Education & Learning (ECE)

BASIC FUNCTION: This position contributes to the success of the Chicago Zoological Society by leading programs and driving innovations to advance animal care, conservation, education, research, and community outreach, as well as public-facing animal programming that supports the Society's mission to foster and lead conservation efforts regionally, nationally, and around the world. Serves as the Executive Leader for Animal Care & Programs (ACP) and Education & Community Engagement (ECE) Groups.

PRIMARY JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

1. * Serve as a member of the Executive Team and participate in organizational planning and decision-making. Assist in establishing institutional goals and long-term direction, assuring coordination, integration, alignment, and implementation of institutional decisions, communications, and appropriate allocation of resources. Participates in development of strategic and Master Planning efforts, contributing expertise on zoological collection planning and management, conservation programming, education, and community engagement.
2. * Develop and maintain positive and engaged teams through excellent leadership and management skills. Provide a visible, professional presence that encourages collaboration across departments. Create synergies amongst animal, education, and community teams to advance conservation goals. Encourage and guide the professional development of staff. Embrace and advance CZS values focused on people, results, innovations, diversity, and enthusiasm.
3. * Lead the Animal Care & Programs (ACP) Group. Work with the V.P., ACP, ACP Directors, and others to establish, implement, and maintain highest quality programs and standards for animal care. Oversee the zoological operations, including animal husbandry, habitat management, animal behavior monitoring, public-facing animal programs, animal training, and guest interactions. Provide leadership for animal collection planning and decisions on animal acquisition/disposition, breeding, and recordkeeping. Partner closely with the Senior V.P., Animal Health & Welfare (AHW) to assure departments are well integrated into activities related to welfare assessment, nutrition,

environmental monitoring, and veterinary care. Develop and maintain programs for in situ and ex situ species conservation. Ensure public and non-public facing animal facilities and programs represent the highest level of professional appearance. Responsible for compliance with all regulations and requirements related to animal management and care (USDA, AZA, AMMPA, American Humane). Ensure appropriate animal care records and compliance with population management programs.

4. * Lead the Education & Community Engagement (ECE) Group. Ensure the execution of a comprehensive and integrated department plan. Develop short and long-range plans to further CZS strategic objectives to develop conservation ethos and scientific knowledge in guests and program participants, including training and education initiatives in partnership with other institutions and agencies. Contribute to CZS diversity and inclusion goals by working to establish CZS as a national leader in access and inclusion under “A Zoo for All,” working in partnership with DEAI Steering Committee to meet institution-wide goals related to diversity, inclusion, and access. Oversee the development of nationally recognized learning strategies and program evaluation, ensuring CZS program quality and effectiveness through integration of evaluation standards and learning strategies that quantitatively and qualitatively measure impact. Lead a high-functioning team and oversee youth education programs, Zoo Camp, STEM programs, teacher training, advanced inquiry Master’s degree program, community programs, outreach programs, and interpretative programs, among others.
5. * Accountable for the development and administration of annual operating plans and budgets for assigned areas. Manage revenues and expenses against approved budget and take corrective action when necessary to meet CZS revenue goals and expense projections. Provide reforecast information and other data as requested by the Finance Department. Review and approve purchase orders and contracts for assigned area. Establish appropriate budget priorities to achieve goals. Set a tone of fiscal responsibility and prioritization of resources.
5. * Develop, implement, and lead CZS conservation initiatives, working closely with the Senior V.P. of Animal Health & Welfare. Ensure programs are aligned with the CZS mission and strategic goals. Cultivate enthusiasm amongst staff, Board members, and other stakeholders for key initiatives. Coordinate a CZS ‘green team’ to enhance the culture of conservation within the organization’s operations and messaging. Integrate CZS programs with ex situ conservation programs. Develop and support senior animal care staff participation in conservation programs. Work closely with the President/CEO to oversee the CZS Animal Care and Conservation Fund and grants from the Chicago Board of Trade Endangered Species Fund.
6. * Work closely with the President/CEO, CFAO, Senior V.P. of Development, and other leadership to establish priorities, strategies, goals, and budget. Seek and secure grant, philanthropic, and government funding for program activities and needs. Assist with donor cultivation and provide feedback. Regularly interact with appropriate staff to assure activities, communications, and messages are coordinated, integrated, and in accordance with goals, plans, and timeframes. Staff Board committees and organization functions as requested.
7. * Represent and promote CZS/Brookfield Zoo and its interests externally at all levels (community, local, national, and international) with public and professional audiences. Liaise with other zoos/aquariums, cultural institutions, conservation organizations, academic institutions, professional organizations, and government and non-government organizations. Represent CZS/Brookfield and actively engage in programming, committees, and leadership within the Association of Zoos and

Aquariums and other professional organizations. Serve as a public face for the organization with media as requested. Represent CZS/Brookfield Zoo's positions and interests in conservation, education, animal programs, and other matters in a well-informed, positive, and responsive manner.

8. * Responsible for overall staffing and performance for assigned Groups. Oversee staff selection; training and development; counseling; performance feedback and evaluation; employee recognition; and employment actions (e.g., hiring, training, promotions, salary actions, discipline, separations, etc.). Represent the Group with respect to personnel and employment issues as appropriate.
9. * Assume other duties and responsibilities to assure successful achievement of CZS goals and objectives.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Bachelors' Degree or equivalent. This requirement can be satisfied by 10 years' of relevant experience in a senior/executive management position.
- Minimum 10 years directly relevant, comparable senior-level or executive leadership experience, including experience managing multiple departments, staff, budgets, and functions. Must possess relevant experience in animal care, conservation, and education.
- Strong communication, verbal, written, and listening skills. Strong presentation and platform skills. Strong interpersonal skills; able to establish and maintain strong, positive relationships. Ability to work collaboratively as a contributing member of multidisciplinary teams. Ability to inspire staff and lead with an engaging and positive attitude.
- Successful track record of generating revenue and program support through grants and other means. Experience developing revenue models to evaluate program viability and effectiveness.
- Proactive, persistent, helpful, and strategic in orientation.
- Results-oriented, confident, and possess strong organizational skills.
- Ability to work with opposing constituencies, operate as a facilitator, and a reconciler of interests.
- Effective leader, manager, coach, and facilitator with strong commitment to developing human capital.
- Strong character and ethics; fair, objective, and able to withstand criticism and overcome adversity and challenges.
- Must be passionate about his/her work and have a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. Must possess a tremendous work ethic and be self-motivated, passionate, and dedicated to continual self-growth.
- Ability to handle multiple projects and priorities simultaneously and work within a fast-paced and evolving environment. Ability to multi-task at a very high level, prioritizing multiple demands for time, attention, and focus.
- Ability to maintain the confidentiality of privileged information.
- Cultural competency: experience and/or ability to work and interact effectively with a diverse, multicultural audience.
- Computer proficiency, including use of Microsoft Office, Microsoft 365, and ZIMS.
- English fluency – ability to read, write, speak, and comprehend at an advanced level required.
- A valid driver's license is required on the date of hire. If an Illinois resident, must possess a valid Illinois driver's license at the time of hire or must obtain one within 90 days of hire. A valid out-of-state driver's license is required at time of hire for out-of-state residents.

DESIRABLE/PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Advanced degree (M.S., Ph.D., D.V.M., and/or M.B.A.) in a field related to zoological management, animal care, animal health or welfare, animal behavior, education, communication, and/or conservation science, or other directly relevant field or equivalent combination of training and/or experience required.
- Relevant executive experience in a zoo, aquarium, conservation-focused non-profit, cultural, and/or academic institution strongly preferred.
- Experience creating or leading international ex situ conservation programs.
- Experience with habitat and animal facility design, including exhibit development, guest experience, theming, and educational messaging.
- Multilingual ability, Spanish fluency a plus.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This position description summarizes the primary duties and functions of this position but should not be considered a complete listing of every duty the incumbent may ever be called upon to perform. This is a senior executive position that requires an experienced, dedicated career professional who is committed to the continual development of comprehensive, balanced programs in animal care, animal programs, conservation, education, and external affairs for a world-class institution. Incumbent will be required to gain an intimate understanding of the organization, its mission, vision, values, and operating philosophies, and how the Group's activities impact the institution, the zoo, other Groups and Departments, and its programs, offerings, and success. Requires an individual who is visionary, highly professional, both in appearance and demeanor, and who can effectively represent the organization and its interests to various audiences and constituencies. Evenings and weekends are sometimes required. Individual will be expected to be present and visible at many events sponsored by the institution. Must be able to travel as needed to meet job requirements, extend and expand the Society's reach, and promote the Society's interests. Thus, individual must be prepared to make a significant commitment to the organization.

TO APPLY:

CZS has retained Canopy Strategic Partners to manage this search. To be considered for this excellent opportunity, please forward a single PDF document that includes your detailed resume and a cover letter to Lauren David at ldavid@canopysp.com