CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

Position Description

This position is responsible for leading the sustainability strategy, planning, programs, and initiatives of the University of Minnesota. This position works collaboratively across the University system, building partnerships between academic and operations units in support of the University’s sustainability goals and strategic priorities. The Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) works with other leaders at the University to implement a sustainability governance structure and drive an impactful approach to long and short-term sustainability initiatives. The CSO reports to the Vice President for University Services with dotted line relationships with the Systemwide Sustainability Committee Chairs (the Vice President for Research and the Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations).

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Sustainability Planning, Coordination, and Impact
- Lead, coordinate, and optimize the University’s comprehensive sustainability planning efforts. Drive the development, prioritization, and implementation of a comprehensive, long-term plan to prioritize and guide sustainability initiatives across the University utilizing a systemic approach in accordance with the University Systemwide Strategic Plan – MPayt 2025.
- Develop, implement, and manage the University’s systemwide sustainability governance structure; advise senior leaders on sustainability issues.
- Advance University efforts to integrate sustainability goals and programs into campus, college, and departmental strategic and work plans.
- Ensure the integration of sustainability principles and practices into policies, procedures, operations, services, and actions that produce the greatest long-term benefit to the University.
- Lead the development and implementation of strategies which contribute to the global sustainability leadership by the University of Minnesota.
- Lead sustainability communication and engagement initiatives.

Initiatives and Programs
- Identify and ensure the implementation of programs, initiatives, and opportunities that advance the objectives and goals of Board of Regents Policy: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency, the Systemwide Strategic Plan, and other institutional sustainability priorities.
- Foster a culture of sustainability and advance sustainability as a strategic priority.
- Work with internal and external stakeholders to develop, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives.
- Collaborate with academic stakeholders to prioritize, develop, and coordinate sustainability programs which contribute to both sustainable operations and to the University’s teaching, research, and outreach mission.
- Lead and manage strategic, complex, organizationally cross-cutting sustainability programs that involve multiple stakeholders and significant impact.
- Lead the development, selection, and integration of sustainability measurement systems and metrics.
- Ensure reporting of selected metrics to external and internal audiences.

Communications and Partnerships
- Lead systemwide sustainability communication and engagement initiatives that promote and publicize sustainability initiatives and accomplishments of the University; work with University Relations offices to increase understanding, awareness, and commitment to sustainability.
- Build partnerships with internal and external parties that will further the University’s objectives relating to sustainability and campus operations.
Represent the University in the community, state, and national organizations working on sustainability issues.

**Supervision, Staffing, and Budget**
- Develop and lead a cross-disciplinary University sustainability team.
- Supervise and manage University Services sustainability program staff.
- Dotted line authority for University staff focused on operational sustainability efforts.
- Manage campus support and climate action budgets; collaborate with the Institute on the Environment to administer the Sustainability Innovation Fund.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**
- A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; a masters or doctoral degree from an accredited institution is preferred.
- Minimum of twelve years of experience in increasingly responsible professional related work.
- Minimum of two years supervising others.
- Experience developing, planning, and implementing strategic initiatives in a large, decentralized, complex organization; experience in higher education, governmental agency, or other complex organization with decentralized authority and influence is preferred.
- Advanced knowledge of current sustainability concepts, issues, trends, and best practices, particularly as they relate to higher education.
- Experience creating and managing projects, initiatives, and program budgets.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:**
- Extensive knowledge of sustainability concepts and best practices.
- Self-directed and the ability to make progress toward goals independently.
- Ability to create and manage benchmarking processes.
- Ability to support executive-level decision-making.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to listen well and work effectively with individuals at all levels of the organization.
- Ability to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders and partners.
- Ability to lead and facilitate change within a large, dynamic organization.
- Ability to energize people around a cause or initiative.
- Ability to work effectively on both high-level, strategic issues and tactical deliverables.
- In-depth understanding of all dimensions of sustainability (i.e. environment, economic, equity) and related concepts.
- Commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Ability to lead effective cross-functional teams and build consensus.
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis skills including the ability to collect, interpret, and critically analyze information.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**
- Leads strategically; lives the organization’s values of excellence, integrity, accountability, stewardship, and respect; delivers results; understands self; models maturity and professionalism; works collaboratively; inspires commitment; innovates.

**QUALITIES:**
- Commitment, energy, enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, honest, inclusive, and candid.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT:**
The work is performed in a hybrid work environment (mix of remote and in-person) on the Twin Cities campus, with occasional travel to other campuses in the University of Minnesota system.

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