



Position Announcement

**President and CEO
Museum of Life + Science**

Durham, NC

December 2020



Museum of Life + Science

Position Description: President and CEO

Applications will be accepted until January 25, 2021 or until position is filled

Salary range: \$200,000 - \$225,000 plus benefits

Executive Summary

The Museum of Life + Science (MLS) seeks an inspiring, visionary, and innovative President/CEO with a passion for science and experiential learning and the team leadership skills to elevate the Museum to its greatest potential and impact. Located in Durham, NC, the award-winning MLS attracts more than 561,000 visitors a year to explore 84 acres of open-ended science and nature experiences designed to spark imagination, creativity, and new ways of thinking about our world for guests of all ages. It has grown to be one of North Carolina's leading family and school trip destinations and a sought-after summer camp experience. The Museum's next leader will exemplify a spirit of wonder and excitement along with the drive, relationship skills and collaborative leadership style to meet ambitious strategic and revenue goals, including strengthening the Museum's community presence to broaden the understanding of its important role in the Triangle region, state and as a leader nationally among its peers.

About the Museum of Life + Science

In 1946 a group of dedicated volunteers founded The Children's Museum as a trailside nature museum with the beginnings of a collection of minerals and fossils. With support from Durham County, the State of North Carolina, foundation grants and the philanthropic support of the local community, the renamed Museum of Life + Science has grown significantly. Its first major capital expansion in the 1970s added outdoor exhibits for large animals, expanded Aerospace and Geology exhibits, and installed the Ellerbe Creek Railway. The comprehensive Master Plan in the mid-1980s resulted in the creation of an indoor Nature Center featuring live animals native to North Carolina, the Mercury Meeting Room, a gallery space, an expansion of the lobby and gift shop, an additional 6,000 square feet of exhibit space and the Science and Technology Wing. In 1998 the interactive science experience BioQuest was launched. Proclaimed a "national model" for science centers by the National Science Foundation, BioQuest included one of the largest butterfly houses in the Southeast, the *Bayer CropScience Insectarium*, *Explore the Wild*, *Catch the Wind*, and the return of the Museum's popular *Dinosaur Trail*. The 2011 Climbing Higher campaign led to the most recent innovative experiences: *Hideaway Woods*, a two-acre tree house area, and *Earth Moves*, which opened last year. Over its nearly 75-year history the Museum continues to live its mission "To create a place of lifelong learning where people, from young children to senior citizens, embrace science as a way of knowing about themselves, their community and their world."

The organization is governed by a 22-member Board of Directors representing a cross section of stakeholders critical to the Museum's long-term success. The President/CEO will supervise a five-member executive team and oversee a staff of 150. The FY20-21 Covid-impacted budget is forecasted to be \$7.8 million. While the pandemic closed the Museum for four months, it safely re-opened with increased Covid protections in place due to strong teamwork and dedication to serving the public.

The Museum of Life + Science has been called a museum with a soul and a community treasure where generations of families from all walks of life are given an opportunity to be amazed and engaged while interacting with science in a way that is fun and inspiring. The Museum is looking for a motivated and exceptional leader who is ready to build on the Museum's successes and lead it into an even greater future. The ideal candidate will be an innovative and inspiring leader who is ready and excited to address challenges and use them as an opportunity to strengthen the Museum and make it a place of wonder for generations to come.

The Opportunity

The President/CEO of MLS will lead and manage a complex organization to meet its mission with respect for its past achievements and an eye towards its future success. More specifically the President/CEO will:

Set a strategic direction. Together with the Board and staff, the President/CEO will be a lead player in determining the Museum's strategic plan for the future. The new leader will be responsible for implementing the plan and ensuring accountability for its goals and objectives and keeping all key stakeholders informed and engaged.

Lead and nurture an effective and accountable team environment. The new President/CEO will be joining a dedicated and talented team of professionals who take pride in their work and accomplishments. The Museum enjoys a work culture based on teamwork and collaboration. Building on these strengths, the President/CEO will work with the executive leadership to enhance organizational effectiveness by implementing a plan based on clear goals and accountability while continuing to foster creativity, innovation, and a commitment to excellence.

Increase brand, presence, and partnerships. The President/CEO will be the Museum's "chief branding officer" and lead networker. The ability of the next President/CEO to be present at key community events will impact attendance, membership, fundraising, and the organization's stature locally and beyond. Its location in the Research Triangle Park (RTP) area of central NC presents ripe opportunities for increasing the Museum's partnerships with leading research universities such as Duke, UNC, NC State and NC Central and science-, technology- and conservation-related nonprofits. Raleigh is ranked sixth nationally as a tech hub growth leader and Raleigh-Durham is ranked 7th for start-up ecosystems. Pre-Covid, Durham was becoming a travel and meeting destination. All of these have the potential to enhance the Museum's offerings, widen the participation base, and raise the community's awareness of this treasure in its midst.

Diversify and expand financial support. While MLS attracts visitors from across the nation and around the world, the Museum is fundamentally a membership organization drawn primarily from the Research Triangle Park region of central NC. The residents of Durham County are the prime beneficiaries of MLS and Durham County has been its most ardent financial supporter through annual allocations and bonds for capital improvements. Covid interruptions underscored how reliant the Museum is on membership and earned income. Working with the Vice President for External Relations and the Board, the President/CEO will expand the base of individual, corporate and foundation support, leveraging the Museum's proximity to the Research Triangle Park. Building on recent momentum, the President/CEO has the opportunity to create and foster a culture that embraces fundraising as a core competency of the Museum, on par with exhibits and education, as a mission-critical activity.

Expand a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Museum staff and Board have a well-deserved reputation for ensuring access for all. Durham and the surrounding counties are beautifully diverse in terms of race, educational attainment, socio-economic status, religion, and gender identity. The Museum is a community asset to which everyone can and should have access. Ensuring that access and participation occur at satisfactory levels requires a plan, concerted effort, and outreach. The President/CEO will make certain that these values are reflective of the entire organization and can be seen, felt and experienced.

Inspire a love and appreciation for science and nature. The President/CEO will be an enthusiastic advocate for science and experiential education. The Museum's leader should enjoy what the museum offers as much as or more than anyone else and be able to inspire others through action and word.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following competencies:

- Inspirational and effective leader
- Experienced manager

- Visionary and strategic thinker
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Relationship and team builder
- Emotionally intelligent
- Brand builder and networker
- Collaborative
- Results and goal-oriented, with commitment to the highest quality
- Unassailable integrity

The President/CEO must be a recognized, experienced leader with vision, strong management experience, exceptional relationship-building skills, a keen appreciation of the financial and business aspects of the operations of a complex nonprofit, an understanding of budgetary responsibilities, a sense of urgency, and a track record for leading a team in delivering high quality results. The leader must be comfortable operating in a very public capacity, be adept at working with a board, have experience meeting or exceeding fundraising goals, have experience successfully operating in the public environment and be able to manage diverse and conflicting opinions and input. The President/CEO must also be an excellent public speaker and understand how to work with the media.

Specific competencies we seek include:

Setting strategy: Ability to create an innovative vision and develop buy-in and consensus. Demonstrated ability to provide strategic leadership and insight in an increasingly competitive area in terms of appeal during leisure time. Evidence of these abilities will be apparent from prior successes in nonprofits, industry, government, or academia, where the individual was responsible for leading an organization's strategy to capture and engage the public at an evolving facility.

Nonprofit leadership and management experience: A minimum of eight years of executive leadership experience in a nonprofit or related entity, preferably one serving a public-facing audience. Experience implementing best practices through sound policies and procedures. An understanding of the rules and regulations governing nonprofits, experience creating and managing a budget and state and federal reporting requirements. Track record of working effectively with a Board of Directors including staffing committees, reporting, recruitment and encouraging philanthropic support. Prior experience leading a science museum, zoo, aquarium, or similar organization is a plus but not required. A love and appreciation for science and the ability to interact with the science and technology community is critical.

Leading and building teams and creating a healthy work environment: The ideal candidate will have a history of inspiring high-performing teams by identifying, developing, and retaining top-tier talent, removing barriers to success, supporting individual and professional growth, and providing resources to accomplish agreed-upon organizational goals and objectives. The President/CEO will ensure that the Museum culture is built on respect, values diversity, equity and inclusion and that issues are dealt with fairly. Physical and mental health of team members is a high priority.

Fundraising experience: Substantial experience in, enthusiasm for, and success with fundraising at the highest levels as well as experience raising funds from individuals, government entities, corporations, and foundations. The ability to inspire staff and volunteers to participate in fundraising by developing a culture of philanthropy that supports and advances the organization.

Interpersonal skills: The successful candidate must have an executive presence coupled with the ability to drive change through influence. To be successful, the candidate will show an awareness of sources of conflict and an ability to constructively manage issues and stakeholders to arrive at mutually beneficial outcomes. Experience successfully overcoming cultural, historical, or political barriers in forging new relationships or teams, or a leadership role in aligning disparate stakeholders to establish innovative, collaborative partnerships is particularly valued. The successful candidate will have a personable,

inclusive style, high emotional intelligence with the ability to enthusiastically celebrate team and individual successes.

Communication skills: The candidate sought is a leader who has served in a publicly visible capacity and has demonstrated a comfort and an ability to work with and respond to the public. The ideal candidate will be highly skilled and competent in both the written and spoken word with the ability to communicate with diverse audiences in a manner appropriately tailored to each audience. The Museum's next leader must enjoy networking as well as be a strong advocate with the purpose of advancing the Museum's mission and impact. The President/CEO is the public face of the Museum and represents the Museum to the region's cultural, political, educational, business, and public communities.

Technology: The ideal candidate has experience using technology to improve organizational and individual performance and the growing role technology will play in a museum context as a method for both education and research.

Education: A bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university is required or substantial equivalent experience will be considered. An advanced degree, preferably in the sciences, is a plus.

Motivation: A demonstrated commitment to a best-in-class science museum; respect for science, conservation, and the natural world.

To apply: In one document please submit a cover letter (including how you learned about this opportunity) and resume and send via email to:

Mr. Jim Erlinger
Treasurer, Board of Directors and Chair, Search Committee
Museum of Life + Science
MLSSearch@mossandross.com

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Five references will be required of finalists. A short presentation and writing samples may also be required from finalists. Academic, credit and criminal checks will be conducted before a final offer is made.

The consulting firm of [moss+ross](#) has been retained to assist with the search.

Commitment to Non-discrimination and Diversity

The MLS is committed to non-discrimination. All candidates for the President/CEO position will be treated equally without regard to race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, or marital status.