

Director of Research Operations – Center for Synthetic Biology

Job Summary

Northwestern University's Center for Synthetic Biology (CSB) is Northwestern University's thought leader in engineering biological systems to address global problems. Comprised of 16 affiliated faculty and more than 200 graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and research and administrative staff, CSB delivers research excellence that spans disciplines on key synthetic biology topics ranging from cell-free systems, mammalian systems, enabling technologies, and ethics and education. Core to CSB's mission is the wide dissemination of these findings—to students, scholars, policymakers, and the public—to maximize the impact of our research and maintain the highest standard of excellence.

CSB is hiring its first Director of Operations and Outreach (DOO), who will lead the Center's strategic management and tactical operation. The DOO will help build the capacity of the Center, capitalizing on its current strengths and providing strategic direction for new endeavors and partnerships, continually enhancing the Center's programs and plans to ensure excellence at all levels. Proactively interfacing with the Center's faculty, the DOO manages current initiatives and research and long-term planning in support of the Center's education, research, and outreach missions. The DOO fosters the collaborative spirit of the Center's with alliances both internal and external to the University.

Strategic Vision Development and Implementation

- Collaborate with the faculty director to develop and execute the Center's vision, mission, and strategic plan for research and programming activities, including research briefings and the seminar series.
- In consultation with the faculty director, senior university leaders, the Office of Alumni Relations and Development (OARD) and the Office for Research, formulate and execute development strategies that will ensure consistency throughout the organization and enhance revenue from major donors, foundations, government agencies, and corporations.
- Support the Director in balancing obligations to achieve critical professional goals and rapid progress in fundraising, scientific, and outreach strategies for the CSB, including serving as a spokesperson for the CSB in engaging strategic partners such as potential donors and policymakers.
- Independently researches and provides recommendations for new CSB research initiatives and alliances, by continually scanning the discipline horizon to position the CSB at the forefront and sustain Northwestern's competitive advantage.
- Oversee the financial condition of the organization including developing long- and short-range financial plans; develop budgets (sponsored, core facility and institutional funding) with faculty director and staff that sets financial priorities to ensure the organization is operating in a manner that supports the strategy and mission of the CSB.
- Proactively collaborate in development efforts both internal and external to the University, to further the CSB agenda at Northwestern.
- Cultivate a strong and transparent working relationship with the Office for Research and ensure open communication about financial, programmatic, and impact against stated goals.
- Establish and maintain strong links with Northwestern's other centers/institutes/organizations, including student organizations on the Northwestern campus as well as the Technology Transfer Office/INVO, to develop joint projects.
- Facilitate cross-center communication and integration by initiating and nurturing regular, productive communication with CSB faculty, students, and staff.

Research Development and Engagement

- Collaborate with CSB faculty to set and provide scientific management of research and scientific priorities so that they align with the CSB's mission and goals.
- Lead the envisioning, development, and management of grant or contract opportunities for external research funding between CSB researchers and researchers from corporate, academic, and government labs, including the

development of successful new cross-center grant proposals (e.g., managing collaboration, writing, compiling, and editing).

-Oversee support for proposal development and post-award administration, including the management of teams of researchers to ensure reports are comprehensive, technically perfect, and on time.

-Mentor and regularly meet with graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and research staff across CSB laboratories to ensure progress towards scientific goals as well as development of scientifically rigorous publications and compelling research presentations.

-Identify, track, and communicate performance relative to key impact measures (e.g., publications, citations, funding) to support dissemination of research insights and communications with research sponsors and the University.

Minimum Qualifications

-Bachelor's degree in synthetic biology or other field related to the work of the CSB.

-7+ years' work experience with progressively larger responsibilities, or equivalent of education and experience (e.g. Ph.D. and 2 years of experience). Experience should include 3+ years of management experience.

-Proven track record of successful proposal development and funding.

Minimum Competencies

-Proven communication, interpersonal, and analytic skills.

-Strategic thinker.

-Adept at project management. Ability to work under pressure, prioritize, and meet deadlines.

-Demonstrated leadership ability and excellence in organizational management with the proven ability to coach staff, manage, and develop high-performance teams.

-Ability to work independently and yet is a skillful team player.

-Capability to manage day-to-day tasks and competing priorities independently are requisite.

-Proactive, energetic, innovative.

-Ability to interact with a wide variety of stakeholders including, faculty, university administrators, staff, students, and research partners.

-Ability to maintain confidentiality, act diplomatically, and handle difficult situations.

-Proactive, energetic, innovative.

-Extremely organized, self-driven, mature, flexible, and committed to excellence.

Preferred Qualifications

-Ph.D. in synthetic biology or other field related to the work of the CSB.

-Prior knowledge/experience in synthetic biology research.

-Proven track record of successful proposal development and funding.

-Previous management experience in an academic/research institution is an asset. Excellent project/program management skills.

-Within the University setting, experience within University research centers, knowledge of extramural funding mechanisms, and experience in University-level interactions are valued.

-Proven track record of producing high-quality academic publications.

-Strong interest in research and development.

Preferred Competencies

-Exceptional written and verbal communication, and collaboration skills, with a flair for communicating and promoting the value of an organization's research to faculty, other researchers, practitioners, students, and potential research sponsors.

-Communicates well one-to-one, in small groups and in public speaking contexts; writes precise, well-organized emails, letters and proposals.

- A persuasive and passionate communicator with excellent interpersonal skills.
- Excellent analytical and abstract reasoning skills.
- Action-oriented—willing or likely to take practical action to deal with a problem or situation.
- Coachability—receptive to feedback, willing to learn, embraces continuous improvement.
- Collegial—helpful, respectful, approachable; builds strong working relationships and a positive work environment.
- Initiative—exhibits energy and desire to achieve; sets ambitious goals and acts decisively; takes initiative to improve or enhance job results and avoid problems. Identifies opportunities to innovate, create, and explore alternative strategies to improve procedures and practices; shows imagination.
- Multi-tasking—demonstrates ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously.
- Organized—plans, organizes, and schedules in an efficient, productive manner; anticipates contingencies and pays attention to detail.
- Strategic—can help develop, communicate, and implement strategic vision for organization and staff development.
- Experience managing federally funded sponsored programs.
- Team player with strong interpersonal skills and ability to work in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to the Center for Synthetic Biology Office at synbio-ofc@northwestern.edu