



POSITION SPECIFICATION

PRESIDENT AND CEO

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium



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REPORTING TO: Board of Directors

DIRECT REPORTS: CFO, COO, SVP of Animal Care, SVP of Human Resources

LOCATION: Columbus, OH

COMPANY DESCRIPTION

THE COLUMBUS ZOO AND AQUARIUM

The Columbus Zoological Park Association, a nonprofit corporation also known as Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, is home to nearly 10,000 animals representing over 600 species from around the globe. The Zoo complex spans 588 acres, more than 200 of which have been developed as animal habitats and public spaces. The Zoo habitats are organized into seven geographic regions: Adventure Cove, Asia Quest, Australia and the Islands, Congo Expedition, Heart of Africa, North America and Polar Frontier, and Shores. Heart of Africa, which debuted in 2014, is designed as a mixed species savanna spanning 23 acres. The Zoo complex is a recreational and educational destination that includes the 22-acre Zoombezi Bay water park and the 18-hole Safari Golf Club. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium also owns and manages The Wilds, a 10,000-acre conservation center and safari park located in southeastern Ohio.

The organization's total annual budget is approximately \$100 million; it is supported through an annual contribution from the voters of Franklin County of \$20 million, gate and per capita spending, memberships, golf and water park admissions and fees, grants, contributions, and a return from a \$30 million endowment. There are approximately 275 full-time employees, 25 part-time employees, and 2,000 seasonal employees.

The Zoo serves as one of Central Ohio's most popular family attractions and hosts more than two million guests annually. Over the last five years, the Zoo has welcomed over 12 million guests.

The Zoo finds itself at the end of an era closely associated with one of the most famous zoo leaders in America; its challenge is to create a new identity based on modern zoo practices, enhanced animal care, guest-focused attention, and transparency and openness.

More information may be found at www.columbuszoo.org

SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The President and CEO reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the overall management of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, the Zoombezi Bay water park, Safari Golf Club, and The Wilds. The President and CEO will provide visionary, innovative leadership in pursuing the Zoo's mission while projecting an even more ambitious future for what is already a world-class enterprise. This winning candidate will promote the highest quality and integrity in animal care, conservation, and best practices in management and governance. The President and CEO will manage the Zoo's personnel, fiscal, and capital resources, including the recruitment, professional development, and on-going evaluation of a talented staff; maximizing earned income while carefully overseeing expenses; and ensuring that the extensive capital investments are maintained and improved. In addition, the President and CEO is the primary spokesperson for the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and its related

entities and communicates with external stakeholders on all matters concerning animal care and conservation, operations, and finance.

Specifically, the next President and CEO will take responsibility for the following:

Specific Responsibilities:

- Maintain and enhance the Zoo's position as a leader in animal care and conservation;
- Ensure that the Zoo remains accredited by the AZA;
- Together with the board and staff, develop a new long-range strategic plan and a review and expansion of the physical master plan;
- Bring leadership and innovation to the effort to engage the already supportive Franklin County and City of Columbus government and their citizens and the philanthropic community in the region, connect with existing and new donors, and encourage the public to further support the zoo and its plans;
- Take steps to ensure the long term, ongoing sustainability of the enterprise by maximizing the income from the water park and golf course while ensuring that the zoo and The Wilds remain accessible and welcoming to the general population;
- Evaluate and make recommendations regarding the per cap income, admission, and membership pricing;
- With the Board and Chairperson's Advisory Committee, continue to develop best practices in governance, board recruitment, and committee and volunteer involvement;
- Facilitate, support, and maintain an organization-wide culture of diversity and inclusion;
- Develop and promote employee engagement and employee empowerment in the decision-making framework;
- Develop a succession plan for the senior management team and further support HR in efforts to provide training, resources, and development opportunities to the staff;
- Ensure that the AZA reaccreditation process receives the attention and resources required;
- Represent the Zoo in the local and regional media, with the City, County, and State governmental entities, at the national level with the state representatives and senators, and with community and government leaders throughout the region;
- Position the Zoo in its rightful place as one of the major cultural and tourist attractions in Central Ohio;
- Actively engage the local community with a focus on providing outreach to underserved communities;
- Further develop relationships and partnerships with the other accredited zoos and conservation organizations.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and its related entities encompass thousands of acres, multiple sites, and an annual budget approaching \$100 million. The enterprise touches millions of visitors, includes various activities, and enjoys a vested interest in operations from loyal taxpayers and supportive local government officials, all during a time of intense public scrutiny over animal care and zoo practices in general. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is a large enterprise requiring an executive with the proven range and scope of experiences to successfully lead the business.

The ideal candidate will possess some of the following:

- Extensive experience in the leadership and management of a mid-size or large accredited zoological park or aquarium, botanical garden, or museum;
- Extensive experience in leadership and management at a major nonprofit organization;
- A demonstrated track record in fundraising from a broad range of constituencies as well as extensive donor development experience;
- Executive leadership of a commercial visitor venue or entertainment complex.

In addition, the ideal candidate will have the following experience/skills:

- A commitment to best practices in animal care and conservation;
- Prior experience working with a Board of Directors, volunteers, civic and community leaders, the news media, government, and professional associations;
- A proven ability to guide, support, manage and motivate a large, professional staff of dedicated scientists, conservationists, business professionals and volunteers;
- A proven ability to create a strong organizational culture;
- Proven experience in strategic, operational, and financial risk assessment; development of mitigation plans; and ongoing monitoring of such;
- Proven experience in the preparation and fiscal management of operational and capital budgets as well as strategic and master plans;
- Political acuity and the ability to listen and engage government officials and voters, staff, donors, volunteers, and visitors;
- Proven experience developing or overseeing education programs based on collections;
- Proven experience in organizational dynamics, consensus building, and prioritization in the face of competing interests and resource constraints;
- Proven experience in translating strategy to operational activities, establishing accountabilities, and measuring progress;
- Proven experience in effectively communicating and engaging with all donor segments and providing leadership in the fundraising efforts.

Ideally, candidates will possess knowledge of:

- Regulations and standards associated with the management of zoological parks and animal collections;
- The principles and practices of zoo design and development;
- Utilization of data and analytics to develop operational improvement strategies and tactics;
- Experience with commercial visitor-driven business.

PERSONAL / PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- A dynamic, innovative leader and creative thinker who can present a vision of the future and drive the achievement of that vision;
- Commitment and passion to conservation, animal welfare, and the environment, and for the mission of zoos;
- Ability to represent the organization and the field during this challenging time for zoos and aquariums;
- Highly energetic, goal-oriented, deal closer who is driven by innovative business solutions;
- Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills and the capability of working effectively with internal and external stakeholders;
- Personal initiative with the ability to lead, direct, and motivate;
- Strong verbal and writing skills and the ability to communicate effectively at all levels;
- Ability to analyze complex business, human resources and operating situations, identify solutions and make decisions;
- Authentic, tactful, diplomatic, trusting, and approachable; team-oriented with good listening skills;
- Must demonstrate integrity, strong ethics, and the highest personal and professional value;
- A commitment to DEI and to empowering, training, and promoting employees;
- Advanced business acumen to plan and control capital and operating expenditures and revenue-producing activities;
- Ability to maintain effective working relationships with Zoo staff, the Board of Directors and Appoint Board, the accrediting organizations, and corporate community, governmental authorities, volunteers, and the public;

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