



# DIRECTOR OF THE OI

**ByalaSearch LLC** is pleased to announce that our firm has been retained by the University of Chicago to identify candidates for the position of the Director of the OI (Oriental Institute).

## ABOUT THE OI OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Oriental Institute (OI) is a leading center for the study of the ancient Middle East and North Africa that combines innovative methodologies with empirical research, following the highest standards of rigorous scholarship. With renowned expertise on a variety of subjects such as history, archaeology, languages, and linguistics, the OI is home to major dictionary projects and important fieldwork throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond. The OI Museum's collection of ancient artifacts counts over 350,000 objects, and its galleries welcome over 55,000 visitors annually (including many K-12 students from local schools). These objects, mostly excavated during OI field expeditions, showcase the lives and cultures of people inhabiting the region from the Neolithic to the Islamic era. In addition to the Museum, its storage and workrooms, the OI building, situated in the heart of the Hyde Park campus of the University of Chicago, houses a magnificent research library (containing over 65,000 volumes), a world class collection of cuneiform tablets, and its own Publications Office, which publishes long-standing series of dictionaries, excavation reports, conference volumes, and other scholarly works. The OI also manages a permanent mission in Egypt, the century-old Epigraphic Survey housed in the historic Chicago House campus in Luxor, which copies and publishes the architecture, inscriptions, and decoration on ancient Egyptian monuments. At this time, the Oriental Institute is undergoing the process of addressing its name and is taking actions that will ultimately result in the renaming of the institution. As this process unfolds, the institution will be referred to under the abbreviation "the OI."



## PRIMARY FUNCTION

The OI is headed by its Director who is appointed by the President and the Provost of the University. It is the Director's responsibility to oversee all OI activities, to foster and promote its work at home and in the field, and to be active in assuring its economic stability and growth. The new Director will find creative ways to harness the talents and attributes of the OI's faculty, staff, and resources while making the Museum a destination for visitors on campus, locally and from around the world. Reporting to the University of Chicago Provost, the Director will develop a strong vision for the future of the OI, maintain and build on funding sources to aid the Institute's mission, and oversee its \$11 million operating budget. The Director will be a leading scholar who holds a PhD or equivalent degree in a field relevant to the OI's areas of expertise and will be appointed with tenure. The Director will serve an initial five-year term, renewable following a standard review.

The Director will understand the OI's history, legacy, and core mission, and will provide vision to lead efforts to enhance the OI's commitment to fundamental research, interpretation, and dissemination of the place of the ancient Middle East and North Africa in human history. The Director will raise the OI's profile on and off campus as a resource and research-rich institution while maintaining its reputation as a leader in the field.

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Specific Responsibilities of the Director of the OI:

#### **VISION**

- Understand the OI's priorities and ensure these are widely and clearly articulated to faculty, staff, and internal and external partners;
- Lead the Institute while working closely with the University of Chicago administration; advocate for the OI with the administration when needed;

- Advance the research projects that are crucial to the mission of the OI; facilitate projects with internal administration as well as government officials;
- Foster partnerships and collaborations with other institutes and organizations, in related subjects and in the Chicago area;
- Work to make strong connections in the Chicago community, especially the South Side where the Institute and its Museum are located.

## **LEADERSHIP**

- Manage and lead different constituents of the faculty, research, and museum branches of the OI, which include approximately 60 to 65 faculty and staff (20-25 academic faculty/staff and about 40 administrative staff);
- Communicate frequently with different sections of the OI to develop and optimize OI endeavors;
- Connect with OI faculty and staff, and connect them to each other, incorporating their perspectives into decision-making;
- Build consensus from diverse constituencies on complex issues;
- Ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated.

## **FUNDRAISING**

- Cultivate strong relationships with Advisory Council members and OI donors;
- Working with the Provost and University Alumni Relations and Development, set development goals to further the OI's strategic initiatives. The Director will lead all fundraising efforts, including grant funding, steward current individual and institutional donors, and help build a pipeline of emerging donors for the future;
- Oversee the allocation of financial resources and the budget of the OI;
- Advocate for funding with the University of Chicago administration when needed.

## PROFILE RAISING

- Collaborate with colleagues in other departments to elevate the OI as a University resource;
- Make the OI more accessible and inviting to Chicago residents as well as to academic and visiting partners;
- Communicate the relevance of the OI in today's global environment, elevating the Institute and the University's role in a global cultural conversation.

### **Ideal Skills and Experience:**

- Senior scholar/researcher and ambitious thinker who holds a PhD or equivalent degree in a field relevant to the OI's areas of expertise: Ancient Near Eastern History, Comparative Semitics, Cuneiform Studies, Egyptology, Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East, Near Eastern Art and Archaeology, and Northwest Semitic Philology;
- Proven track record of leadership at an institute, or in a department or academic unit; ability to direct and delegate;
- Experience attracting students and/or faculty into departments and fields of study;
- Expertise balancing diplomacy and inclusivity;
- Experience in a complex, varied team environment;
- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral;
- History of influencing and engaging a wide range of partners internally and externally and building long-term relationships;
- Ability to work with faculty and officials in various countries around the world;
- Strategic thinker and strong decision-maker, along with the capacity to problem solve;
- Skills to work with people at all levels of an organization within a complex structure;
- Prior collections or museum experience is a plus.



**Critical Competencies for Success:**

- History as a thought leader and scholar who can establish trust with the OI faculty and maintain the OI's global reputation as a beacon of research;
- Leadership experience developing connections with various constituents, ensuring all are working together and toward the common good of an organization;
- Track record of building effective relationships externally and internally with constituents, including faculty, staff, donors and Board members;
- Proven fundraising experience engaging new and existing donors, organizations, foundations, and funding agencies to ensure the financial future of the OI.

**Other Characteristics:**

The successful candidate will be passionate about the mission of the OI and value its unique, leading position in the world. The candidate will be able to combine big picture vision for opportunities with practical, detail-driven decision-making skills and an ability to work across the highest levels of an institution, including the President, Provost, Deans, faculty and governing bodies. The Director will be a collaborative professional, capable of articulating the value and mission of the OI internally and externally. The ideal candidate will be organized, dynamic and charismatic, able to work with senior university administration to establish and manage a collaborative team, as well as to enable faculty and staff to perform at the highest level to achieve the best possible outcomes. The candidate must possess the maturity, integrity, and judgment to represent the OI with insight, energy, and authority within the University of Chicago as well as domestically and globally.



## KINDLY SEND NOMINATIONS OR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO:

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Please note that all job seekers wishing to be considered for the position must also submit their materials (cover letter and CV) through the University of Chicago's Interfolio site [apply.interfolio.com/107410](https://apply.interfolio.com/107410)

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