**Executive Director, Office of External Partnerships**

Duke University seeks a dynamic, creative, collaborative, and enterprising Executive Director to lead its new Office for External Partnerships (OEP), a component of the Office of Research & Innovation. OEP was formed to foster broader and deeper engagement between Duke researchers and industry partners as well as other universities, government groups, and foundations. Reporting to the University’s Vice President for Research & Innovation, the Executive Director will work with faculty, Schools, Centers, and Institutes to engage proactively with industry in order to develop new partnerships.

**Research at Duke**

Across its 10 schools and the Duke University Health System, Duke researchers advance knowledge in every conceivable discipline. Duke faculty are leaders across a broad array of research disciplines: of the University’s 1,692 tenured and tenure-track faculty and 2,274 other regular-rank faculty, 36 are members of the National Academy of Medicine, 28 are members of the National Academy of Science, eight are members of the National Academy of Engineering, 17 are members of the National Academy of Inventors, 60 are members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, four are MacArthur Foundation Fellows, and two are Nobel Laureates.

Duke ranks 10th in research and development funding as reported by the NSF Science and Engineering Research Indicators. In FY 2020, $1.2B – roughly 40% of its $3B in revenue – came through grants and contracts from government and private sources, with some $750M from government and $450M from private sources.

**Duke Clinical Research Institute**, the world's largest academic center for clinical research trials thanks to its mix of industry-sponsored and government-sponsored clinical trials, generated 21% of Duke’s $1.2B in research-related revenue.

The **Office of Translation and Commercialization** (OTC) is responsible for identifying, protecting, marketing and licensing intellectual property created by Duke employees, including providing assistance for startup formation. In FY 2020, OTC received over 200 disclosures, obtained 98 issued patents, filed 450 patent applications, entered into over 100 option and license agreements, and assisted in spinning out 17 new startups. Revenue from licensing operations topped $65M.

For more about research at Duke, visit [https://research.duke.edu/](https://research.duke.edu/).
Between May 2020 and March 2021, a working group led by the interim Vice President for Research & Innovation (VPRI) was commissioned by the University's president and Board of Trustees to study opportunities for Duke to expand its research-related engagement with industry partners. The working group’s final report, published in May, highlighted the opportunities for the University through enhanced attention to and investment in an integrated set of activities dubbed “research translation and commercialization” or RTC. The report recommended that the University “enhance [its] prowess and reputation for excellence in research translation and commercialization and ... increase the scale and impact of strategic corporate and university partnerships.” OEP is a central element of this University-wide investment in research translation and commercialization: it will play a visible and transformative role in increasing opportunities for Duke researchers to collaborate with industry, for industry to support and benefit from engagement with Duke researchers, and for Duke research to have a broader impact in the world.

The mandate of OEP is to proactively pursue and support partnerships between the University and any external parties, including but not limited to business, government, and foundations. Such partnerships leverage any University faculty, staff, and students, as well as IP, resources, and other assets to address important problems in science and technology. While corporate partnerships may represent the biggest opportunity for Duke, OEP’s remit certainly encompasses foundations and other kinds of philanthropic, civic, and government entities as well as potentially other universities.

Baseline expectations for OEP include engaging with potential external partners to understand their needs and matching with opportunities originating with faculty; providing a clear and unambiguous front door, with streamlined navigation to relevant decision makers in the various Schools and Centers; establishing streamlined contracting processes to facilitate aspirations of faculty; expanding opportunities for faculty to engage in industry relationships while enhancing quality control and risk management for partnering with industry, and contributing to the ongoing development of a culture of dynamic and entrepreneurial innovation in Duke’s research enterprise.

**The Executive Director, OEP**

In this highly visible new leadership role, the Executive Director leads and facilitates the identification, development, and execution of effective research and educational partnerships with companies, research organizations, corporate foundations, and government groups. The Executive Director serves as Duke's senior authorized representative for outreach to third parties wishing to develop partnerships with Duke, and acts as OEP's lead representative for coordination of University implementation and stewardship of these partnerships. The Executive Director identifies and aggregates opportunities for both outbound and inbound collaborations – connecting researchers with external partners and helping external partners identify researchers best prepared to advance their research and development objectives.
Primary responsibilities

- Conduct outreach, make initial contact with potential partners, oversee meetings, and lead and facilitate Duke engagement with potential partners.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with faculty at Duke who do or can participate in external partnerships; assist faculty in identifying corporate partners for their research.
- Oversee OEP’s negotiation of partnership agreement terms with various internal and external contacts and stakeholders, in collaboration with the Office for Technology Commercialization and General Counsel.
- Maintain OEP as the primary and most visible point of contact for external entities considering research and educational partnerships with University faculty, staff, and students.
- Manage, direct, and supervise OEP’s operations, including direct oversight of senior OEP staff; the quality and usefulness of OEP databases, information systems, and communications; and the day-to-day functions of the OEP office.
- Produce, in collaboration with the VPRI and OEP staff, the Office of Translation and Commercialization, and other related offices, the OEP multi-year strategic plan along with a workplan, budget, and performance metrics on an annual basis.
- Hire, develop, and ensure the professional performance of the OEP team.
- Establish mechanisms for OEP to work collaboratively with other Duke central offices to maximize the effectiveness of each partnership. This includes the Office of Translation and Commercialization, Schools and Centers, Development, and Career Services in forming partnership terms and deliverables; the Office of Research Integrity to manage potential conflicts of interest; and General Counsel and Sponsored Research in reviewing contract terms and executing agreements.
- Recommend to the VPRI any changes in policy or new policies or processes that may be required to facilitate OEP’s mission.
- Advise staff on alternative solutions to contractual issues that arise in the context of negotiations and attempt to reconcile the perspectives of academia and industry within established guidelines and in a manner that complements and supports Duke’s overall academic mission.
- Establish and maintain appropriate electronic systems to track partnership agreements and corporate and foundation interactions with Duke in a timely and accurate manner. Use OEP’s tracking tools to analyze qualitative and quantitative measures for continual improvement of OEP performance to assess OEP impact on University corporate research.
- Pursue the continuous improvement of OEP, its policies, processes, and operations.
- Communicate proactively and comprehensively on OEP accomplishments, services, and evolving plans.

The Executive Director will work with the Vice President for Research & Innovation and other University leaders to refine the metrics and identify further investments in External Partnership resources to significantly enhance its impact. Currently, Duke anticipates measuring and comparing outcomes against baseline levels of the following:
Number and scale of active corporate and university partnerships including partnerships that may generate value outside the context of research.

Notable RTC success stories featuring Duke.

Financial returns to the University from external partnership revenue and philanthropy attributable to External Partnership activities.

New internship and employment opportunities for Duke students and graduates.

Progress in racial and gender equity within research translation and commercialization activities.

Economic and social development of the Durham community, the region, and the state.

Key internal relationships

To create new value at Duke, OEP will work effectively with several other offices across the University. These include:

- Duke’s Office of Translation & Commercialization, which is responsible for managing the development and commercialization of the University’s intellectual property through licenses to established companies and nurturing spinout companies. The vision for increased engagement in research collaborations with external partners calls for close collaboration between OEP and OTC, including with regard to Duke intellectual property.

- Duke Clinical Research Institute, which will remain responsible for managing all clinical trials conducted by Duke University and Duke University Health System researchers.

- Duke University Health System, which is in the early stages of developing an initiative to cultivate more industry engagement across its clinical activities that is expected to operate in partnership with OEP.

- The Office of University Development, which is responsible for all fundraising including an established function to engage corporate philanthropy.

- Duke’s Career Center, a Student Affairs unit dedicated to helping current and former students find internships and advance their careers.

Along with OTC, other units within Research & Innovation as well as the Office of General Counsel will contribute to efficient management of intellectual property, conflict of interest, and other matters that will arise as Duke’s engagement with external partners increases.

Qualifications and competencies

Given the mission of OEP, the Executive Director will possess a distinctive and verifiable track record of starting, building, or expanding research-related alliances that, ideally, sustain themselves as multi-year, multi-dimensional partnerships. Experience developing research partnerships between industry and academic institutions is highly desirable. 10 years of relevant experience and a bachelor’s degree are required; an advanced degree such as MBA, Ph.D., or M.D. is preferred.
In addition, candidates will demonstrate the following attributes and competencies:

- The enterprise, creativity, relationship skills, and business-development abilities needed to build energy in this initiative, develop a sustainable business model for it, and create measurable value through it.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail with the ability to develop, scale, and advance multiple complex projects/problems simultaneously.
- A sophisticated approach to cultural change that balances awareness of established practices with bold, reasoned pursuit of innovation.
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively regarding Duke’s mission and research strategy both verbally and in writing with all levels of the organization and external stakeholders.
- Ability to work collaboratively with internal and external partners.
- Ability to manage and provide oversight for budgeting, accounting, internal controls, and financial reporting for research and sponsored program activities.
- Demonstrable commitment to integrity, diversity, equity, and inclusion in research.

**Duke University**

Duke University ([www.duke.edu](http://www.duke.edu)) was created in 1924 with a gift from James Buchanan Duke to Trinity College. Today, it is universally regarded as one of the leading American and global research universities. Duke has developed a distinctive educational identity that integrates undergraduate teaching with front-line research and wide access to the professional schools. Duke has grown to include 10 schools and colleges comprising more than 6,900 undergraduate students, 8,800 graduate and professional students, 3,900 faculty, 41,000 employees (including employees of Duke University Health System) and 171,000 active alumni.

Duke’s home campus is situated on nearly 9,000 acres in Durham, NC, a city of more than 260,000 people. Durham has become an entrepreneurial hotbed and a cultural center. Duke has deep community ties, is a key partner in the development of the region and has more than one million square feet of laboratories and offices in downtown Durham, with more planned. The University is also active internationally through the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School in Singapore, Duke Kunshan University in China and numerous research and education programs across the globe.

Duke prides itself on an exceptionally diverse, engaged, and talented student body. Duke students typically exercise a breadth of academic choice in the context of a rigorous liberal arts program with interdisciplinary majors, minors, and concentrations, blending that with civic engagement, both local and global, on issues large and small. Students represent a broad range of intellectual, cultural, and demographic perspectives that create a well-rounded learning and living community. The leadership at Duke has committed to a campus life experience that is welcoming to all students while providing the experiential education needed for student success.
Opus Partners is assisting Duke University with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Interested candidates should submit in electronic form (Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF files preferred) a CV or resume and a letter of interest to the Opus consultants leading the engagement – Craig Smith, Partner, Katie Dean, Associate Partner, and Jeffrey Stafford, Senior Associate:

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Duke University prohibits discrimination and harassment and provides equal employment opportunity without regard to an individual's age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Duke is committed to recruiting, hiring, and promoting qualified women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. For additional information about Duke’s policies on equal opportunity, affirmative action, and diversity, equity, and inclusion, see https://hr.duke.edu/policies/diversity.