Job Title: Assistant Director of Teaching and Research
Term: Full-time, permanent
Job Code: 1961
Job Family: 28
Job Level: 14

About the Duke Forest:

The Office of the Duke Forest (ODF) is the university department responsible for the management and stewardship of the Duke Forest Teaching and Research Laboratory. The mission of the Duke Forest is to facilitate research that addresses fundamental and applied questions across a variety of disciplines and to aid in the instruction of all students in their pursuit of knowledge, especially regarding the stewardship of our natural resources.

In total, the Duke Forest is approximately 7,100 acres in Durham, Orange, and Alamance counties. Management of the Duke Forest is guided by a comprehensive plan that promotes the Forest’s academic mission while ensuring the protection of its natural resources. Five major management priorities that aim to maximize a wide variety of forest benefits guide the allocation of forest resources, and in particular, direct staff time and energy. These priorities also underlie strategic efforts to enhance the value of the Duke Forest as a Duke University and community asset. More information is available at: dukeforest.duke.edu.

Occupational Summary:

The Assistant Director (AD) of Teaching and Research plays a key role in advancing the mission of the Duke Forest as a unique and irreplaceable teaching and research asset, as well as an invaluable demonstration tool for responsible natural resource management and environmental conservation. The AD of Teaching and Research is a dedicated leader, ambassador, and coordinator for academic uses of the Duke Forest within the Duke community and beyond.

This position provides the Office of the Duke Forest (ODF) with essential capacity to maintain its existing teaching and research portfolio while strategically expanding focus to projects and programs that support the University’s Climate Commitment; its push to expand experiential learning opportunities; and its efforts to develop academic initiatives and engagement opportunities that explore issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

The position reports directly to the Executive Director and collaborates closely with the ED, the Forest Supervisor, the AD of Engagement, as well as other programmatic and field staff. The role may include some supervisory responsibility for temporary and permanent staff, some budgetary responsibility for teaching and research programming and infrastructure, as well as the coordination of maintenance and upkeep of teaching and research infrastructure (e.g., physical signage, web-based data portal, weather stations).

Overall, the successful AD of Teaching and Research is a science and education professional with familiarity and experience in field-based learning programs and projects. The AD applies a keen
awareness and appreciation of the numerous roles the Duke Forest plays and the diverse audiences it serves while shaping and implementing relevant strategic aims. The AD expresses a sincere commitment to the Duke Forest mission and demonstrates enthusiasm for working within the dynamic, collaborative, and supportive Duke Forest team structure.

**Work Performed:**

- **Lead management and coordination of the teaching and research use of the 7,100-acre Duke Forest Teaching and Research Laboratory; including serving as the primary point of contact for teaching and research applications (~40-50 applications/year) and ongoing research projects (40-50 ongoing/year); managing/stewarding Duke Forest generated research data (historical and new, e.g. from long-term research plots); and liaising/building relationships with the teaching and research community (e.g. faculty, students, communicators) at Duke and in the region. Example tasks include:**
  - Gather information from applicants, solicit feedback, identify appropriate sites (with ODF staff support); and make approval decisions.
  - Maintain and update the Duke Forest Teaching and Research Database (in Airtable), the geospatial data of active and past research locations, the Duke Forest Data Portal, and the Duke Forest EndNote Library.
  - Ensure compliance with Duke Forest and University teaching and research policies (e.g., field safety; unmanned aerial vehicle use, minors’ policy).
  - Ensure teaching, research, management, and other activities do not conflict; mediate discussions and resolve issues if they arise.
  - Complete all necessary documentation related to teaching and research and synthesize various inputs for annual reporting.
  - Write letters of support for proposals by outside researchers.

- **Lead/guide/oversee implementation of the Duke Forest Strategic Plan across goals and actions focused on teaching and research. Example tasks include:**
  - Develop annual action plans with defined implementation activities; monitor and evaluate progress; and adapt the plan as needed.
  - Develop the Duke Forest cabin and associated property as a teaching and research center.
  - Facilitate activities that centralize access to research data and information.
  - Advise ED regarding financial requirements for new programs, infrastructure, and strategy implementation.
  - Create opportunities to build a stronger community of teaching and research users, e.g., by connecting them with the 90+ year legacy of Forest teaching and research.

- **Lead/guide/oversee efforts (in concert with the ED and other Duke offices/colleagues) to expand focus to projects and programs that support Duke’s Climate Commitment; its push to expand experiential learning opportunities; and its efforts to develop academic initiatives and engagement opportunities that explore issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.**

- **Serve as coordinator, client, and/or mentor for student and community science projects, with a particular focus on facilitating investigations around critical Duke Forest management questions and translating the results, when appropriate/feasible, into adaptive or responsive management actions.**

- **Represent the Forest to a diverse suite of academic/education-related/knowledge-seeking stakeholders including: the higher-ed academic community at Duke and beyond; local K-12 faculty and students; local citizenry and community groups; and Duke University staff and administrators.**
• Lead/assist staff:
  o In responding to internal, university, or external teaching and research issues, new technology, etc., as needed.
  o With ongoing projects or annual events such as the annual Duke Forest Research Tour, the Annual Gathering, Deer Spotlight Surveys, community science projects, and others as needed.
  o With education and outreach activities including content development and presentations to and/or tours for labs, classes, alumni groups, and the public.
  o With design and follow-up data analysis of ODF programs/initiatives (e.g., community science, deer management, annual reporting, fundraising), as needed.

• Ensure compliance of teaching and research activities with the Duke Forest’s certification for responsible management (e.g., chemical use, non-native plantings, etc.).

• Support the field team’s response to research site vandalism, animal damage, and storm damage, as well as site access and provisioning.

• Support the office team’s processes to issue parking passes, gate keys, research equipment stickers, and researcher invoices.

• Assist in various personnel functions including hiring; performance appraisal; promotions; transfers; and vacation schedules.

Qualifications:

Education/Training

Required
  • Bachelor’s degree in an applicable field (e.g., natural sciences, environmental education, etc.)

Preferred
  • Advanced degree (master’s or Ph.D.) in an applicable field (e.g., natural sciences, environmental education, etc.)

Experience

Required
  • A minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience (e.g., conducting/managing research and/or teaching within the natural sciences, environmental science, or other related disciplines)
  • Demonstrated expertise in academic research methodologies, including data collection and management, statistical analysis, and interpretation
  • Demonstrated experience working alone and in highly collaborative, interdisciplinary environments

Recommended
  • Familiarity with forest management certification
  • Experience supervising and mentoring graduate students, researchers, or teaching assistants
• Prior involvement in grant writing: either securing external funding for research projects or awarding
• Experience leading or participating in community science (i.e., citizen science) programming

Skills

Required
• Proactive attitude and ability to work independently while also working effectively with faculty, staff, students, teachers, researchers, and the public in a variety of contexts.
• Strong organizational skills and ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously.
• Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking and ability to translate research findings for public media and for the ODF forest management team.
• Advanced experience with the Microsoft Office Suite, cloud-based database software (e.g., Airtable), EndNote, statistical software, and ESRI geospatial, including ArcGIS Pro.

Location:

The AD of Teaching and Research is an office-based role that will primarily work from ODF’s office location on Duke University’s West Campus in Durham, NC with fieldwork performed as needed in the Duke Forest, which occupies lands across 3 counties. The successful applicant must be willing and physically able to endure partial workdays in the field under all weather conditions.

Hours:

40 hours per week, typically 8 – 4:30pm. Some weekend and after normal business hours work is required.

To apply:

Please visit this link (https://dukeforest.duke.edu/adtr) to submit a resume and cover letter summarizing your experience, interest, and appropriateness for this role. Address cover letter to Sara Childs, Duke Forest Executive Director. Applications will be accepted and processed on a rolling basis. Selected applicants will be contacted for phone and/or in-person interviews.