



**O'Neill Sea Odyssey
Executive Director
Position Description**

Painter Executive Search is supporting O'Neill Sea Odyssey in their search for an Executive Director to lead the organization as it provides opportunities for youth to experience firsthand the beauty of the ocean, explore its biodiversity and learn the importance of the ocean to life on earth.

Since its founding in 1996, O'Neill Sea Odyssey (OSO) has invited over 100,000 students from schools throughout Central California to experience the magic of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Using a new 65-foot Catamaran as a mobile classroom, 4th - 6th grade students learn hands-on lessons in marine science through plankton sampling and collection, mathematics through navigation, and watershed ecology. The program, offered free of charge, seeks to provide those with the least access to the ocean, a transformative educational experience. OSO provides students the opportunity to experience firsthand the sights, sounds, and smells of the ocean. These indelible sensory impressions, not available through science textbooks, drive home the message that the oceans are something worthy of our care.

With COVID making normal programs impossible, OSO pivoted to remote learning working alongside school districts to provide engaging and interactive marine science education from a distance. Utilizing Google classroom and incorporating plankton identification footage, live streaming of underwater remote operated drone technology and adding projects such as scientific illustration challenges, OSO provided curriculum that could be completed safely from students' homes. By the end of 2020, these online efforts reached approximately 9,900 students, with the potential to accommodate many more than traditional boat-based trips.

In the next few years, OSO will continue to adapt and incorporate online and remote learning while ensuring the experiential boat-based program thrives. A new Executive Director will be key to assembling the team and the resources to continue the evolution of this much-loved program.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director (ED), reporting to the Chair of the Board and accountable to the Board of Directors, will be the public face and administrator for OSO. The ED will engage donors and build resources and relationships that support the program and operations of OSO and increases access to their education programs. In collaboration with staff and Board, the ED will envision, consider and buildout adaptations and expansions of programs and ensure all programs continue to be fun, transformative and curriculum aligned. The new ED will be a hands-on leader in all aspects of organizational development and focused on external relations and administrative management.

The ED works with a small, nimble staff including a fulltime Accounting Manager and Program Manager with seasonal instructors supporting the program delivery. While the education programs are developed and administered through OSO, the Catamaran is leased through Team O'Neill who owns and is responsible for maintaining the boat. In collaboration, OSO and Team O'Neill staff the boat with science educators who also

crew the boat. The ED works closely with the Skipper and other key members of Team O’Neill to ensure the safety of all participants and crew. OSO also has an important relationship with Santa Cruz Harbor staff including leasing (and sub-leasing) space for the OSO Education Center where both the classroom and administrative offices are located. The ED will manage the tenant/landlord relationships both with the Harbor and with sub-tenants of the Education Center building

The ED is responsible for stewarding a budget (FY22 \$1.3m) which includes program costs associated with returning to in-person programs beginning in Spring of 2022. OSO is financially healthy with an endowment, cash reserves and net assets of \$3.98 million. They have a lease negotiated for the Education Center building through December 31, 2028, with an option for extending.

The ED will work closely with a long-term Board of Directors who serve the vision of the organization and provide expertise in operations, legal and accounting. The Board is looking forward to collaborating on ideas to grow online programming and on other strategic goals including expanding the diversity of the Board and staff and ensuring their programming continues to build inclusivity and accessibility.

HIGHLIGHTS AND HISTORY

Jack O’Neill, inventor of the modern-day wetsuit and founder of the renowned surfing brand, O’Neill, said that creating the O’Neill Sea Odyssey was the best thing he ever did. His love of the ocean permeated his life and his words “the ocean is alive, and we’ve got to take care of it” guides OSO today.

From its inception, OSO has expanded who has access to the ocean, putting particular attention to schools inland from the coast. The most recent survey of attendees of OSO’s programs (2019) reported that nearly half (46%) of the 5,539 students in that year indicated it was their first time on a boat in the ocean. Based on population estimates, 68% of the students identified as Latinx, 17% White, 8% Asian, Filipino, or Pacific Islander, 1% were African American, less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, and 5% were of another race/ethnicity. It was estimated that 45% of the students attending the OSO program did not have English as their primary language. The majority (67%) of students were receiving free or reduced-price meals. Approximately 60% were from low-income groups, 28% from middle income groups, and 13% from higher income groups.

To foster a sense of community responsibility, students accepted to the program are required to design and perform a project to benefit their community. These student-led community service projects are an important part of the OSO program. The service projects have included a wide range of activities including beach or shoreline clean up, native plant restoration, gardening work, community education programs, school-wide recycling programs, adopt-a-family, adopt-a-creek, or fundraising activities for non-profit organizations such as native animal rescue.

In the early 2000s, OSO staff began efforts to ensure that it could properly serve all students who participate, including a program for students with special needs, bilingual instruction, and curriculum published in Spanish and English. In 2006 OSO began to provide bus transportation for lower income schools, a critical resource that allows many classes to participate that otherwise could not.

OSO’s most recent outcome evaluation through Applied Survey Research found that the program was very well attended by the target population of students; the program materials were frequently used; and the program was very highly regarded by teachers and group leaders. In addition, results of a Student Survey suggest that the

OSO program succeeded in bringing all students to a higher level of environmentally conscious behavior and knowledge.

A former instructor of the program and college lecturer developed a peer-reviewed long-term study of OSO's program effectiveness, it reported: "A survey administered to 261 students...revealed that 75% of 86 former OSO participants retained a high level of awareness of the connection between non-point source pollution and personal behaviors two to five years after the program, regardless of differences in sex, language, grade level, and community setting. These results indicate that OSO participants retained a long-term conceptual awareness about environmental stewardship behaviors taught during the OSO program."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Be an effective and community engaged leader for OSO; represent the organization to partners, teachers, environmental education colleagues, supporters, community leaders, the general public and all those with an interest in cultivating appreciation of the ocean;
- Work closely with the Board to ensure strong Board governance; assist the Board in the recruitment of new board members and actively inform the Board of anything of importance to the successful operations and strategic direction of OSO;
- Inspire; support staff and program development; appreciate and challenge the whole organization toward excellence in pursuit of the mission;
- Research, write and review grant applications and reporting for public and private funds;
- Collaborate to develop new strategic initiatives that respond to the current opportunities and explore online program delivery, increased cultural competence and expanded access;
- Provide a clear vision and strategy for evaluating existing programs and considering new work.

Fundraising and Communication

- Be the chief advocate and external face of OSO; foster robust partnerships, actively identify, steward and solicit new and prospective donors, educate and engage the public-at-large to further OSO's mission and meet the needs of the organization;
- Effectively and appropriately represent the organization and its mission to the public; be an enthusiastic supporter of ocean science education;
- Coordinate with and engage the Board and staff in donor cultivation activities, including community outreach, solicitations, events, and stewardship;
- Individually reach out to a wide range of constituents including philanthropic decision-makers, advisors, nonprofit partners, corporations, and individuals to develop their support for OSO;
- Plan and facilitate OSO fundraising events and donor communications including annual appeals;
- Research, write and review grant applications and reporting for public and private funds;
- Oversee communications; personally, and collectively engage the media (both traditional and social media) around ocean science and local issues impacting marine health.

Administration, Management and Program Oversight

- Support and partner with the Program Manager to ensure programs continue to meet OSO's high delivery standards, teacher's educational goals and core science curriculum;
- Lead the recruitment of a passionate, diverse staff and instructors;
- Ensure the staff, instructors, and interns have access to the tools, training and information required for managing their areas of responsibility; encourage open and productive communication;
- With the Accounting Manager prepare and present the budgets to the Board for approval, together regularly review and report variances;
- Facilitate the organization's day-to-day operations;
- Foster strong working relationships with Team O'Neill;
- Ensure compliance with all policies, legal and contractual obligations;
- Champion OSO's education programs; adapt programs as needed to foster learning and build the next generation of environmental stewards;
- Ensure program grants are utilized effectively; monitor project budgets and submit reporting that deepens support for OSO's work.

EXPERIENCE

A successful ED candidate will likely have:

- A passion for oceans and an enthusiasm for sharing ocean science;
- Hands-on business and management skills; nonprofit experience highly desired;
- Fundraising skills and the passion to effectively communicate the mission of OSO, actively develop and steward donors and advance key partnerships;
- Experience as the face of an organization; well-developed interpersonal skills including excellent oral and written communication skills; excellent listening skills; Spanish language skills a plus;
- Experience working with a Board; capable of partnering to strengthen the Board's capacity and diversity;
- Knowledge of marine science or related field; BS degree or equivalent;
- A history of strong collaboration; someone who actively seeks strategic partnerships and develops effective relationships;
- Solutions-oriented; able to inspire possibility and retain focus to accomplish important work;
- Resourceful—able to set goals and respond to challenges creatively.

For additional details or to submit your resume and cover letter for review, please contact;

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