

## Position and Candidate Specification

**Duke**  
UNIVERSITY

**Dean, Nicholas School of the Environment**



**PREPARED BY:**

Mary B. Gorman  
Michele E. Haertel  
Michael Steck

October 2024  
Assignment: 71395-002

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The search for the next Dean of the Nicholas School of the Environment (NSOE) comes at a pivotal moment for both the School and Duke University as a whole. As a world leader in environmental, earth science, and sustainability research and education, NSOE seeks to address society's most pressing environmental and sustainability challenges, and will play a key role in helping to realize the vision of the university-wide Duke Climate Commitment. Reporting to Provost Alec Gallimore, the Dean will lead NSOE's educational and research missions and ensure the enhancement of existing priorities and areas of strength, while also setting the vision for new goals and areas of impact. Leadership at Duke is collaborative, interdisciplinary, and mission-focused; the Dean will work alongside University leaders, deans, faculty committees, and institute and center directors to foster innovation in teaching and research, while also creating an environment in which NSOE's outstanding faculty, researchers, and students will thrive.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Serve as the chief academic officer and administrative leader of NSOE, leading the faculty with intellectual vision and overseeing all aspects of NSOE's mission.
- Articulate and implement a strategic vision for NSOE that leverages its interdisciplinary character and connections across the University, existing areas of strength, the [Duke Climate Commitment](#), and Duke's global reach.
- Emphasize the distinctiveness of NSOE amidst an increasingly competitive landscape for environmental and sustainability undergraduate, professional master's, and graduate and doctoral programs.
- Be a visible and vocal champion for NSOE, both within Duke and with external audiences, fundraising and attracting resources from a broad range of donors and partners.
- Lead with an unequivocal commitment to fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment at all levels of NSOE.
- Provide sound fiscal oversight, deftly navigating any financial and operational challenges to ensure NSOE's faculty and students have access to the physical, human, and financial resources required to excel in scholarship, research, and education.
- Act as an accessible, present, and transparent leader to NSOE's faculty, students, and staff, with the ability to effectively communicate across a broad range of stakeholder groups.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

**Reports to** Provost, Duke University

**Direct reports** Chairs for the Divisions of: Marine Science and Conservation; Earth and Climate Sciences; Environmental Social Systems; Environmental Natural Sciences  
Senior Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives  
Senior Associate Dean of Research and Doctoral Programs  
Director, Duke Marine Laboratory  
Associate Deans for: Student Services; DE&I; Communications and Marketing; External Affairs  
Dean's office staff, including Senior Staff and the Operations Management group

**Other key relationships** President, Duke University  
Nicholas School Faculty Council  
Nicholas School Board of Visitors  
Vice President and Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability  
Academic Deans, Center and Institute Directors, and Senior University Leaders  
NSOE Alumni Council

The Nicholas School of the Environment seeks a Dean with intellectual vision, an approachable and transparent leadership style, and a passion for excellence and innovation in both education and research. In addition to scholarly distinction and appropriate administrative experience, the successful candidate will be a creative leader committed to shaping Duke's approach to interdisciplinary environmental, earth science, and sustainability education and research. The Dean will be part of a collaborative University senior leadership team, working closely with the Provost, Academic Deans, and other key University leaders to advance the strategic priorities of the Nicholas School and Duke University.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Ideal candidates will demonstrate many of the following professional qualifications and experiences:

- An outstanding and widely-recognized record of scholarly achievement in a relevant field or area of study.
- Track record of success as an effective administrator and faculty leader, with management and financial oversight experience in a complex academic and/or research organization.
- Ability to listen and communicate transparently across a broad range of stakeholders and constituents, with demonstrated experience engaging in faculty governance.
- A deep and unwavering commitment to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Capacity to act as an effective and engaging fundraiser to secure resources from a variety of sources.
- Ability to serve as a compelling and visionary representative and spokesperson for the School.
- An individual with a robust professional network that extends beyond academia.

## CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

### Strategic Vision

Lead committed and diverse constituencies to ever-higher levels of achievement and contribute to the Nicholas School's and Duke's overall excellence by:

- Serving as a strong advocate for the NSOE's educational and research missions, strengthening the School's capacity to address critical environmental challenges and providing a transformative educational experience.
- Understanding the challenges and opportunities facing each of the divisions, programs, and units that comprise NSOE, appropriately balancing resources and attention across the School.
- Supporting the translation and commercialization of the NSOE's research into real-world applications.
- Serving as a strategic thinker who understands present and potential future challenges facing institutions of higher education.

### Institutional Representation

As the School's key spokesperson and chief advocate, the Dean must build relationships with a range of University and external constituencies by:

- Serving as a committed University citizen and willing collaborator with fellow Deans, the Provost, the President, other University leaders, and faculty in promoting the University's educational and research missions.

- Energetically representing the School to alumni and other internal and external constituencies in support of development activities in partnership with the development team, School faculty, and Duke University leaders.
- Working in close partnership with the Vice President and Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability to articulate and define the Nicholas School's key involvement in the Duke Climate Commitment.

### **Inclusive Leadership**

In an institution that values shared governance and community, the Dean will build consensus and support for strategic priorities and initiatives by:

- Serving as an intellectual leader among the faculty and displaying the highest aspirations in developing and fulfilling the School's educational and research missions.
- Supporting equity, diversity, inclusion, and community initiatives and goals through visible, vocal, and proactive leadership.
- Mentoring and supporting the development of the School's faculty and staff.
- Setting clear goals and advancing a culture that celebrates positive change and experimentation, engaging people through the School's distinct identity and character.

### **OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

- Intellectual curiosity, with an appreciation for the interdisciplinary character of the School.
- A student-centric perspective with a deep commitment to the School's educational mission.
- Excellent communication skills and strong listener. A facilitator and advocate, both within the Duke community and beyond.
- An entrepreneurial lens and focus on action, especially in the face of ambiguity and complexity; a creative and innovative thinker with the courage to explore new ideas and embrace change.
- An empathetic, compassionate leader with high emotional intelligence, integrity, and strong ethical values.

### **THE SEARCH PROCESS**

The Nicholas School of the Environment Search Committee is eager to receive input to help identify and attract a diverse pool of talented candidates. To that end, the Search Committee welcomes your comments, inquiries, applications, and nominations, which may be submitted via e-mail with supporting materials to:

[DukeNSOE@SpencerStuart.com](mailto:DukeNSOE@SpencerStuart.com).

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.

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, Duke prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any of its educational programs or activities. For more information, please visit

<https://hr.duke.edu/policies/diversity/>.

## **NICHOLAS SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Nicholas School celebrates its creation date as 1991, but it represents a coming together of three entities that are almost as old as the University itself. The School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Duke University Marine Lab (both formed in 1938) came together in 1991 to become the School of the Environment, which was named the Nicholas School of the Environment in 1995 following a \$20 million gift from Peter M. and Ginny Nicholas of Boston. In 1997, the Department of Geology (formed in 1936) joined the School as the then-named Division of Earth and Ocean Sciences (now the division of Earth and Climate Sciences) and focuses on areas at the intersection of earth, climate, and environmental sciences.

### **Mission:**

#### ***Creating Knowledge***

We create knowledge through basic, applied, and multidisciplinary research in the physical, life, and social sciences designed to expand our understanding of the Earth and its environment.

#### ***Creating Global Leaders***

We develop leadership through:

- [Undergraduate academic programs](#) designed to inspire and instill understanding of the Earth and environmental natural sciences, and social sciences.
- A [professional master's program](#) that trains the next generation of environmental professionals working in the public, private, and non-profit sectors with the knowledge and skills needed to devise and implement effective environmental policies and practices.
- [Doctoral programs](#) dedicated to mentoring and training world-class scientists, researchers, and educators.
- Numerous collaborations with the Law School, Medical School, Sanford School of Public Policy, Pratt School of Engineering, and the Fuqua School of Business in both coursework and joint degree programs.

#### ***Forging a Sustainable Future***

We strategically focus the intellectual resources and capital amassed in [research and education](#) to address the most challenging environmental issues confronting society across:

- Climate and Energy
- Terrestrial and Marine Ecosystems
- Human Health and the Environment

### **Academic Divisions and Programs:**

- (4) Divisions, including:
  - Earth and Climate Sciences
  - Environmental Natural Sciences

- Environmental Social Systems
- Marine Science and Conservation
  
- Programs and Degrees:
  - (3) [undergraduate majors and minors](#)
  - (4) professional [master's degrees](#)
  - (6) [doctoral degrees](#)
  - (5) [certificate programs](#)

### **Research**

The Nicholas School spans disciplines in [16 broad-based focal areas](#), with an explicit lens on applying research expertise to determine solutions to the most pressing environmental issues.

### **Locations and Facilities**

The Nicholas School boasts proximity to marine, forest, and mountain ecosystems, along with its location in the Research Triangle and its world-class facilities and research centers.

- Grainger Hall: The 70,000-square-foot home of the Nicholas School houses five classrooms, a 105-seat auditorium, 45 private offices, 72 open office spaces, a 32-seat computer lab, an outdoor courtyard, the Wegner Art Gallery, conference rooms, shared workrooms, wellness rooms, and common areas. Opened in 2014, Grainger Hall is LEED Platinum certified by the U.S. Green Building Council, signifying that it meets or exceeds the highest standards for sustainability and green design.
- Levine Science Research Center: The Nicholas School facilities are located in the 'A wing' of the Levine Science Research Center (LSRC) and include laboratory space, faculty offices, teaching facilities, and classrooms.
- Duke University Marine Lab: The Marine Laboratory in Beaufort, NC, is a campus of Duke University and a unit within the Nicholas School of the Environment. The Marine Laboratory operates year-round to provide educational, training, and research opportunities to about 1,000 individuals annually, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional students enrolled in the University's academic programs; visiting student groups who use the laboratory's facilities; and scientists who come from North America and abroad to conduct their own research.
- Duke Forest: The Duke Forest Teaching and Research Laboratory, an important resource for Nicholas School students and faculty, comprises just over 7,000 acres of land across three counties, beginning next to Duke's West Campus. A variety of ecosystems, forest cover types, plant species, soils, topography, past land-use conditions, and human histories are represented within its boundaries. It also plays a critical role in the region as a producer of ecosystem services and as an anchor of landscape-level habitat connectivity. With its proximity to campus, series of long-term data sets, and a professional staff with expertise in research, education, and natural resources management, the Duke Forest is an invaluable resource for all faculty and students at NSOE.

For additional information about the Nicholas School of the Environment, please visit <https://nicholas.duke.edu/>.

## THE UNIVERSITY

A member of the Association of American Universities, Duke University was created in 1924 with a gift from James Buchanan Duke to Trinity College. Since then, Duke has grown to include 10 schools (Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, Fuqua School of Business, Divinity School, Pratt School of Engineering, Nicholas School of the Environment, Graduate School, School of Law, Sanford School of Public Policy, and the Schools of Medicine and Nursing). The University has over 6,600 undergraduate students, 10,400 graduate and professional students, 4,100 faculty, 47,000 employees, and 196,100 active alumni. Duke had total operating expenditures of \$8.2 billion in fiscal year 2023 and an endowment of \$11.6 billion.

Duke's shared values—respect, trust, inclusion, discovery, and excellence—are the foundation of the University's culture. They also guide and inform the institution's strategic direction as Duke seeks to adapt to and shape the course of a changing world.

Since its founding, Duke University has been dedicated to a liberal and broad-based education at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels and the ethical pursuit of knowledge that advances humankind. Duke offers a distinctive educational identity that integrates undergraduate teaching with a collaborative research culture, with 15 associated Nobel Laureates and 50 Rhodes Scholars; it fosters a diverse, inclusive, and exceptionally talented campus community, boasting excellent professional schools, a vibrant arts community, and an internationally renowned athletics program. It is also home to a health system that serves as a vital hub for the region and is a leading center of innovation in research and healthcare delivery. The University is universally regarded as one of the leading American and global research universities and academic medical centers.

## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Duke aspires to create a community built on collaboration, innovation, creativity, and belonging. Our collective success depends on the robust exchange of ideas—an exchange that is best when the rich diversity of our perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences flourishes. To achieve this exchange, it is essential that all members of the community feel secure and welcome, that the contributions of all individuals are respected, and that all voices are heard. All members of our community have a responsibility to uphold these values.

For additional information on Duke University, please visit <https://duke.edu/>