

## **Mystic Aquarium**

### **Vice President of Talent, People and Culture**

***This new position will report to the CEO and evolve/enhance the aquarium's business culture, workflows, people management policies and career development practices, and in the process implement accountability approaches that encourage cross-departmental collaboration.***

Mystic Aquarium inspires people to protect our ocean planet through conservation, education and research. Founded in 1973 to serve as a living conservation laboratory, Connecticut's [Mystic Aquarium](#) is today home to thousands of marine mammals, fish, invertebrates and reptiles central to its marine conservation, research and education mission.

The 18+ acre campus provides a broad array of environments for different animals; research and care facilities; educational exhibits; and playful learning areas for children and families. Visitors are transported to shorelines of the Arctic; North America's Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coastal waters; and to tropical and other marine ecosystems in ways that bring into focus global concerns about how we treat our planet and its marine inhabitants. Highlights include a penguin pavilion, a ray and shark touch pool, a jellyfish gallery, an animal rescue clinic, and the largest outdoor Beluga whale exhibit in the United States. The Aquarium also serves as home to a Veterinary and Animal Health Center, a recently completed 18,000 sq foot Ocean Science and Conservation Center, and state-of-the-art classrooms, conference facilities, and a \$1.5m aquaculture lab and animal holding area.

Mystic Aquarium is a member of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA), and an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). With an annual budget of \$25m, 250 full-time staff and 600 volunteers, Mystic Aquarium enjoys outstanding local, national and international partnerships with premier educational and academic research institutions. A key driver of the regional economy, the Aquarium annually hosted 800,000 visitors prior to the COVID lockdown of 2020.

With America re-opening for business and attendance being rebuilt, the Vice President will encourage a culture of collaboration and accountability. Cultural attributes and workflows will be shaped so that each member of each department has personal ownership for delivering a phenomenal experience to each and every Mystic Aquarium visitor.

#### **BASIC FUNCTION**

Reporting to the CEO, the Vice President is a member of the senior management team, and will lead HR staff and associated functions. Along with the CEO and COO, the Vice President ensures that the mission, value and culture of the organization are upheld, and advances staff cohesion and camaraderie.

Working closely with the finance department, the Vice President will lead all functions related to the organization's business culture, hiring, on-boarding and retention; training and career development; employee relations and recognition; reviews and assessments; termination and exit interviews; and legal matters as they relate to personnel. Additionally the Vice President will:

- Become thoroughly familiar with Mystic Aquarium's history and culture, programs, conservation-focused research and current systems and processes.

- Understand the current business culture and its impact on the organization's overall ability to implement the CEO's vision for the organization; and evolve the business culture to more closely align with the CEO's vision for Mystic Aquarium.
- Establish collaborative working relationships with fellow senior leaders, the management team, staff, and other constituencies; foster and sustain a culture of cooperation, trust, communication, mutual support, teamwork and integrity.
- Attract and retain high-performing staff by using best practices to guide and strengthen strategies to improve recruiting, hiring, on-boarding, compensation, recognition, evaluation, and career advancement opportunities.
- Assure a strong and thoroughly documented employee performance review system that distinguishes between employees who are critical to the organization's success and are exceptional performers aligned to the CEO's vision, from others who might require counseling or even exiting from the organization.
- Coordinate legal matters related to human resources and personnel, working with legal counsel as needed.
- Provide guidance, tools, training and coaching to staff leadership so they are able to manage employee relations with skill, compassion and fairness.
- Develop, strengthen and implement conflict resolution processes and facilitate team building and decision making based on a shared belief in the mission, vision and goals of the organization.
- Set goals for what needs to be accomplished to strengthen the organization's business culture, workflows, people management policies and career development practices, and provide ongoing support to ensure goals are being met.
- Guide the development and updating of people management programs, policies and processes, ensuring they are aligned with best practices and reflect the mission, vision, values and goals of Mystic Aquarium.

### **IDEAL EXPERIENCE and CHARACTERISTICS**

The Vice President should have the following experience and qualifications:

- Broad-based management experience as a leader who delivers outcomes, preferably in a complex nonprofit or business environment; experience with family attractions or science/education/conservation oriented museums or attractions would be advantageous;
- Extensive experience creating accountability structures inside an organization's culture; knowledge of benefits and the human resource management systems, workflows and operations of a modern, best-practices HR Department;
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills; a good listener who is comfortable receiving input from many sources;
- A mission-driven individual who values diversity, equity and inclusion, and has strong affinity for science, education, and conservation;
- A deep commitment to the vision, mission and values of Mystic Aquarium and with outstanding human qualities;

- A team builder – confident and competent, with strong skills in management and leadership; one who understand the subtleties of motivating and directing a diverse group of personalities with different work styles;
- A facilitator able to make or support unpopular decisions when necessary and explain them; an ability to negotiate with people having sharply defined opinions while maintaining positive, respectful relationships;
- A hard worker with a high energy level; a “doer” with a willingness to work hands-on in developing and executing a variety of activities;
- Emotional maturity, self-reliance, and a sense of perspective and humor.

For more information please contact:

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