

University of Colorado Boulder

Vice Chancellor for Sustainability



University of Colorado
Boulder

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<p>Overview</p>	<p>The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is a leading comprehensive graduate public research university and one of only 38 public research institutions in the Association of American Universities (AAU), a group of institutions recognized as America’s leading research universities. CU Boulder ranks as the #20 top university granting U.S. patents, the top 50 university for NSF research funding, and the first university to achieve a STARS Gold rating for sustainability. 136 CU Boulder based startups have raised \$3.8B. CU Boulder is the #1 public university for NASA awards and has been a home to, or affiliated with, 3 U.S. Supreme Court Justices, 5 Nobel Prize winners, 5 National Medal of Science winners, 9 MacArthur genius grant fellows, 51 members of the National Academy, 18 Boulder-affiliated astronauts, and since 2006, 51 Fulbright fellows.</p>
<p>Mission & Vision</p>	<p>CU Boulder’s mission is to serve as the state of Colorado’s comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards, offering a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degree programs.</p> <p>CU Boulder’s vision is to be a leader in identifying and addressing the humanitarian, social, and technological challenges of the 21st century.</p> <p><i>"The University of Colorado Boulder is a global research and education leader that transforms lives. We transform the lives of our students by enabling leadership, innovation, and impact. We transform human experiences through comprehensive research and creative work. We transform communities in Colorado and across the globe through our faculty research partnerships and alumni networks. And we transform ourselves in service to a sustainable, inclusive, and just world."</i></p> <p>- Chancellor Justin Schwartz, September 2024</p>
<p>Land Acknowledgement</p>	<p>CU Boulder, Colorado’s flagship university, honors and recognizes the many contributions of Indigenous peoples in the state. CU Boulder acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, and many other Native American nations. Their forced removal from these territories has caused devastating and lasting impacts. While CU Boulder can never undo or rectify the devastation wrought on Indigenous peoples, it commits to improving and enhancing engagement with Indigenous peoples and issues locally and globally.</p>
<p>Strategic Priorities</p>	<p>CU Boulder Research:</p> <p>CU Boulder is globally recognized for its research—as well as the comprehensive breadth and impact of its innovation, public scholarship, and creative work—and it will continue to lead.</p> <p>Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:</p> <p>CU Boulder, as a campus community, must continue the hard and ongoing work of ensuring the institution is a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming place for all who live, work, and study there. Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion is not the responsibility of a single campus unit, but of the entire</p>

campus community. All Buffs are expected to demonstrate these shared values in the classroom, on campus, and in the broader community. To learn more about CU Boulder's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, please see these [resources](#).

Student-Centered Campus Community:

CU Boulder's core public mission is centered on the belonging, well-being, and success of its undergraduate and graduate students.

Sustaining, Supporting, & Inspiring the CU Boulder Community:

CU Boulder is committed to supporting the community's health and wellness. Together, the university community will get through this, destigmatizing asking for help.

Campus Success:

Achieving future success also depends on aligning the university's physical, digital, and financial resources.

Sustainability at CU Boulder

For more than half a century, CU Boulder has been a leader in climate and energy research, interdisciplinary environmental studies, and a wide range of related disciplines. Building on that legacy, CU Boulder advances sustainability on campus and beyond through its research and academic mission, sustainable operational practices, and its campus and community engagement efforts.

CU Boulder is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains and home to the Renewable and Sustainable Energy Institute (RASEI), Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES), and Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR).

This nexus of university expertise is at the heart of one of the nation's top environmentally focused ecosystems. This ecosystem is sustained by strong collaboration and a shared devotion to environmental sustainability among the university, the city of Boulder, its residents, and local federal research labs and entities, including the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine, and the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). The city of Boulder also has a strong entrepreneurial culture that successfully fosters creative solutions in the private sector, including for renewable energy technologies, information technologies, organic food, and outdoor recreation.

The university exemplifies leadership in sustainability through both its academic offerings and research efforts. Sustainability themes are increasingly woven into courses across disciplines, underscoring a deep institutional commitment to environmental education. The university offers multiple relevant degrees and certificates, including environmental justice and a Master's of the Environment professional degree. At the same time, faculty drive innovation through sustainability-focused research, reinforcing CU Boulder's position at the forefront of the field. This reputation is further bolstered by the university's earth and atmospheric sciences programs, ranked first and second globally (2023 ShanghaiRanking). Building on these core strengths, CU Boulder excels across disciplines—spanning communication, design, environmental studies, Indigenous studies, law, geography, psychology, social sciences, and the arts and humanities—establishing itself as a global leader in sustainability through a truly interdisciplinary approach.

Additionally, CU Boulder is in the process of hiring an Executive Director for the newly established Sustainability Research Initiative (SRI), a strategic effort to advance research in sustainability and resilience. The SRI will drive interdisciplinary research and innovation by uniting the university's expertise in earth sciences, engineering, energy, environmental policy and ethics, business, and more. These endeavors highlight CU Boulder's unwavering commitment to advancing just and equitable climate solutions for a sustainable future.

CU Boulder leadership is committed to achieving carbon neutrality and implementing its [Climate Action Plan](#), which was adopted in the spring of 2024. The university is reducing greenhouse gas emissions by implementing energy efficiency improvements and promoting renewable energy sources, while actively engaging its constituencies to identify and pursue diverse strategies for achieving its goals. CU Boulder encourages community involvement and student participation in sustainability through forums, showcases, and summits, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and innovation.

Notable Firsts:

CU Boulder was the first university to create a student-led Environmental Center, launch a student-led campus recycling program, purchase renewable energy credits, fuel campus vehicles completely with biodiesel, provide students with a comprehensive bus pass, build an NCAA Division 1 zero-waste athletics program, achieve a STARS gold rating, be named Sierra Club's #1 greenest school (AAU), and claim a carbon neutral student government and athletics program.

The first institution of higher education to earn a STARS Gold rating, CU Boulder has continued to do so since then in recognition of its sustainability achievements from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). The university has the goal of achieving STARS Platinum within two reporting cycles. STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System, measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education.

The Position

Position Title

Vice Chancellor for Sustainability

Reports To

[Justin Schwartz, Chancellor](#)

Location

Boulder, Colorado

Position Summary

The academic, research, and physical ecosystem at CU Boulder is the ideal environment for a sustainability leader to leverage CU Boulder's incredible assets. With a top-tier research infrastructure, exceptional faculty and students, a unique location on the Front Range, and a community deeply committed to sustainability, CU Boulder is well-positioned to be a preeminent global leader in sustainability.

CU Boulder seeks an inaugural Vice Chancellor for Sustainability (VCS) with a strong track record and reputation in advancing solutions to the global challenges of climate change and sustainability. The VCS will be the "face of sustainability" at CU Boulder, leading an interdisciplinary, inclusive, and holistic approach by advancing solutions on campus and across Colorado, the U.S., and the globe.

Reporting directly to the Chancellor, the VCS is charged with enhancing CU Boulder's global reputation and impact as a transformative leader in sustainability. The VCS will lead all sustainability efforts in collaboration with the university's executive leadership, faculty, students, staff, and external constituents and will collaborate with colleagues to build and cultivate national, tribal, and global partnerships with public and private entities.

The VCS will advance the university's strategy for collaborative sustainability and resilience research both on campus and with other institutions. Additionally, the VCS will lead the university's comprehensive strategic planning, implementation, tracking, and fundraising for sustainability goals and will drive the creation of a culture of sustainability and environmentally conscious decision making within the university. Serving on the Chancellor's Cabinet, the VCS will be a key campus leader and provide support for CU Boulder's [strategic priorities](#).

Responsibilities

As a member of the Chancellor's Cabinet and a senior leader on campus, the VCS will:

Strategic Leadership:

- Enhance CU Boulder's influence and impact as a global leader in sustainability, facilitating its role in shaping local, state, national, and international dialogues, actions, and policies in sustainability and climate resilience.
- Manage a coherent, campus-wide sustainability portfolio by coordinating strategic alliances and research partnerships, championing academic collaborations and student sustainability activities, advising on campus operations and the implementation of the CU Boulder Climate Action Plan, integrating best research practices and Indigenous knowledge into campus planning and design, and playing a lead role in sustainability-related communications, events, and fundraising priorities.
- Develop and implement structures to enhance collaboration and coordination on all sustainability-related work across the CU Boulder campus.
- Partner with university leadership and CU Boulder communications teams to develop and execute communications, marketing, and events aimed at building CU Boulder's brand as a sustainability leader and raising internal and external awareness of, and support for, campus sustainability programs and activities.
- Lead the development of partnerships with peer academic institutions, local, state, regional, and national entities, federal agencies, the United Nations, national laboratories, foundations, non-governmental organizations, and corporate partners to identify key sustainability initiatives that will accelerate implementation of sustainable practices through collaborative efforts involving innovation, research, and policy that will establish CU Boulder as a global hub for sustainability.
- Pursue funding opportunities for sustainable initiatives from various state, federal, and non-governmental organizations and agencies. Support Advancement staff in prioritizing, cultivating, and growing fundraising and philanthropic outcomes.
- Ensure the overall fiscal health of sustainability fundraising and partnerships.
- Actively model the competence and confidence required to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within sustainability efforts. In collaboration with DEI colleagues, enable the integration of multi-cultural sustainability values and practices, as sustainability integrates ecological knowledge with equity and economics on topics such as a just transition and climate justice.
- Provide public visibility to CU Boulder's performance with regard to the Climate Action Plan and sustainability goals by tracking and reporting against key timelines and objectives, as well as by

connecting this mission with university values and interdisciplinary research.

Engagement & Promotion of University Education & Research Priorities:

- Collaborate with faculty leaders to enhance the integration and scaling of sustainability and climate-related academic courses, programs, and degrees in support of the CU Boulder “Sustainable Futures” common curriculum. In this work, maintain a focus on high-impact learning opportunities and career paths for current and future students that support emerging sustainability-related fields, solutions, and industries, meeting society’s state and global long-term climate resilience needs.
- Assist faculty leaders in promoting broad perspectives of sustainability in teaching from across the campus and academic disciplines, including the humanities, arts, sciences, business, engineering, and other fields of knowledge.
- Collaborate with university leaders to identify and prioritize areas for campus sustainability efforts, including working with deans, institute and center directors, shared governance leaders, the CU Boulder Environmental Center, and Native American engagement leaders to coordinate academic initiatives, plan and develop short- and long-range programs, and foster sustainability broadly across campus units, including initiatives related to climate justice, a just transition, and environmental justice.
- Lead and support committees and groups that advance sustainability on and off campus.
- Collaborate with the leaders from CU Boulder's Sustainability Research Initiative, colleges, and research institutes, including the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES), the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR), the Institute for Behavioral Science (IBS), and the Renewable and Sustainable Energy Institute (RASEI), among others, to promote sustainability research partnerships.

Operations:

- Lead the university in sustainability efforts on campus, including the development and implementation of innovative ways to increase operational efficiency and reduce consumption in facilities, energy, and water usage, while enhancing the impacts of sustainable practices and renewable energy technologies in university transportation services, supply chain management, recycling, composting, and waste reduction.
- In collaboration with Native American affairs colleagues, enable the integration of Indigenous knowledge with sustainability values and practices into the institution’s strategic planning processes, including the management of its resources and operations, facilities planning and design, research activities, curriculum, and the life of the university beyond its research and academic work.
- Develop, refine, and implement repeatable environmental and sustainability assessment and/or rating systems in alignment with national and global best practices (e.g., STARS, United Nations SDGs, etc.).
- Partner with key leaders like the Chief Operating Officer and Vice Chancellor for Infrastructure and Resilience to ensure the success of the Climate Action Plan and CU Boulder’s transition to net zero emissions.

The Person

Pivotal Experience & Expertise

CU Boulder encourages accomplished, high-profile, visionary leaders with the following qualifications to apply to become the university's inaugural VCS:

Sustainability Expertise: In-depth knowledge of sustainability challenges and the landscape of state, federal, and global sustainability research and implementation and experience working with diverse local, regional, national, and global environmental, sustainability, and energy experts and constituents. Advanced degree in a sustainability-related field, such as environmental studies, natural science, engineering or policy, environmental law, or environmental communication, with demonstrated understanding of how to conduct, lead, and/or coordinate research in sustainability-related fields, preferred.

Strategic Leadership: Demonstrated leadership and managerial experience and outstanding leadership qualities, including the ability to set and pursue a strategic vision for sustainability at CU Boulder. Proven capacity to oversee successful execution of large-scale collaborative initiatives and experience in strategic planning, assessment, and execution within a large, complex organization.

Stakeholder Management & Influencing: Experience working in a university setting or other large multi-dimensional organization, with numerous internal constituents, including but not limited to staff, faculty, students, committees, councils, and more. Ability to lead and foster collaboration and coordination amongst different groups.

External Engagement & Communication: Proven record of accomplishment in partnership development, fundraising, and external engagement and a demonstrated history of engagement with both public and private constituents, including with tribal and government agencies, industry, nonprofits, non-governmental organizations, and private foundations, both nationally and internationally, to develop and fund sustainability initiatives. Exceptional ability to communicate effectively across diverse audiences and constituents, with experience shaping policy and translating research into action, preferred.

Culture Impact

Authenticity & Integrity: Demonstrated professional commitment to transformative leadership values (e.g., integrity, humility, accountability, care, and vulnerability) and forging authentic relationships.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Ability to foster an inclusive and collaborative environment that balances influence and authority to achieve goals through shared equity leadership. Proven record of leading and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within large organizations and a commitment to climate justice and a just transition.

Global Lens: A deep understanding of the local, national, and international sustainability landscapes, with the strong potential to advance CU Boulder's national and international visibility in the sustainability space.

Engagement Team

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Nomination/Application Information

Initial screening of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. All applications received by December 1st, 2024 will receive full consideration.

Nominations and applications should be directed to: cubouldervcsustainability@heidrick.com

The salary range for this position is \$300,000-\$360,000. A signing bonus is available for this position and relocation expenses are available for eligible candidates.

CU Boulder offers excellent [benefits](#), including medical, dental, retirement, paid time off, tuition benefit, and ECO Pass. CU Boulder is one of the largest employers in Boulder County and offers an inspiring higher education environment.

CU Boulder is committed to building a culturally diverse community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to contributing to an inclusive campus environment. CU Boulder is an Equal Opportunity employer, including veterans and individuals with disabilities.

Land acknowledgments honor the contributions, histories, and place-based knowledge of Indigenous peoples with historic and contemporary ties to lands across what is today known as the United States. Land acknowledgments also recognize the devastating and lasting impacts of the forced assimilation and forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories and ancestral homelands, including the lands that are now part of Colorado and CU Boulder.

CU Boulder, founded the same year Colorado became a state in 1876, recognizes that it sits on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, and many other Native American nations. Recognizing the history of the state, the university, and the campus's origin story, however difficult, and the histories and experiences of the Indigenous peoples who have lived in these territories for millennia aligns with the campus's academic and research missions as Colorado's flagship public research university.

CU Boulder's land acknowledgment is an iterative work in progress and is expected to evolve over time. While it is not a requirement, students, faculty, and staff may read the land acknowledgement during campus meetings and use it in email signatures and on campus websites to show their support for the success and well-being of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff at CU Boulder, for Native American communities in Colorado and nationwide, and for First Peoples worldwide.

CU Boulder, Colorado's flagship university, honors and recognizes the many contributions of Indigenous peoples in Colorado. CU Boulder acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, and many other Native American nations. Their forced removal from these territories has caused devastating and lasting impacts. While CU Boulder can never undo or rectify the devastation wrought on Indigenous peoples, the university commits to improving and enhancing engagement with Indigenous peoples and issues locally and globally.

CU Boulder will do this by:

- *Recognizing and amplifying the voices of Indigenous CU Boulder students, staff, and faculty and their work.*
- *Educating, conducting research, supporting student success, and integrating Indigenous knowledge.*
- *Consulting, engaging, and working collaboratively with tribal nations to enhance CU Boulder's ability to provide access and culturally sensitive support and to recruit, retain, and graduate Native American students in a climate that is inclusive and respectful.*

Heidrick & Struggles serves the executive leadership needs of the world's top organizations as a trusted advisor for leadership consulting, culture shaping, and senior-level executive search services. Our data-driven solutions empower senior executives and boards of directors to transform their organizations by leveraging top talent and accelerating performance across all layers of the business.