



Chief Executive Officer

Position Overview

The Clemson University Foundation (CUF or Foundation) invites nominations and applications for the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO serves as the chief executive leader of the Foundation and holds executive responsibility for its two affiliated entities: the Clemson University Real Estate Foundation (CUREF) and the Clemson University Land Stewardship Foundation (CULSF). This leader is charged with growing the endowment, strengthening long-term financial sustainability, and guiding the overall management, operations, and impact of all three foundations. The CEO ensures each organization operates with integrity, transparency, and accountability while always honoring donor intent and stewarding resources with care.

The CEO plays a vital role in shaping a strong, collaborative philanthropic environment. In partnership with Clemson's fundraising and Advancement teams, this leader ensures that philanthropic activity is supported by clear, efficient, and donor-centered Foundation operations. Core responsibilities include oversight of all daily operations including but not limited to financial and investment results; financial affairs; management of gifts, funds, and donor-restricted resources; maintaining accurate financial records and reporting; and ensuring that resources are used as donors intended. The CEO oversees Clemson University Foundation staff, recommends policy and program enhancements, and recruits and develops talent in alignment with approved budget parameters to foster a high-performing and service-focused team.

The CEO reports to the Board of Directors of the Clemson University Foundation, with a dual reporting relationship to the Vice President for Advancement to ensure strong alignment and coordination across the philanthropic enterprise including IPTAY, the Clemson Alumni Association, the university's Capital Campaign leadership and working teams. The CEO also serves as a key member of the Advancement Leadership Team which helps to shape priorities, strengthen collaboration, and ensures cohesive execution of our shared philanthropic goals.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & Management

- Provide leadership across CUF, CUREF, and CULSF to ensure alignment with advancement priorities and foster thoughtful, sustainable growth of the Foundation.
- Partner with all Clemson University development leaders to elevate the donor experience and advance philanthropic growth. Work to strengthen alignment, operational excellence, and donor-centered foundation practices while championing the Order of the Oak volunteer group and the culture of lifetime giving it represents.
- Serve as a key leader within the Advancement Leadership Team to shape enterprise-wide priorities, strengthen organizational effectiveness, and ensure integration of CUF strategy with Clemson's philanthropic goals.

- Support effective Board of Directors leadership by preparing key materials, facilitating committee work, and ensuring directors have clear, timely information for decision-making.
- Hire, develop, and lead Foundation staff to foster a high-performing, service-oriented culture grounded in clarity, accountability, and collaboration.

Financial and Investment Oversight & Compliance

- Provide strategic oversight of the Foundation's investment portfolio and real estate and land assets, including acquisition, development, stewardship, and disposition strategies to drive long-term growth and support Clemson University's mission and priorities.
- Collaborate with the Board of Directors and its finance and investment committees to inform and advise on strategy, support prudent investment management, ensure transparent reporting, and enable aligned financial decision-making.
- Safeguard donor intent and ensure the ethical administration of funds, gifts, and donor-restricted resources through strong policies, oversight, and accountability.
- Provide strategic direction and executive leadership for the real estate portfolios managed through CUREF and CULSF, ensuring strong governance, risk management, and alignment with Clemson's long-term priorities.
- Ensure rigorous compliance with university policies and applicable state and federal regulations and champion a culture of continuous improvement in financial and operational practices.
- Strengthen internal controls, risk management practices, and financial policies to protect the Foundation's assets, ensure long-term sustainability, and maintain the trust of donors and stakeholders.

Operations, Stewardship & Strategic Planning

- Lead the Foundation's overall operations, including donor gift agreements, property and real estate holdings, and the stewardship and administration of endowment and Foundation funds.
- Develop and strengthen Technology and human resource systems to support efficient Foundation operations and meet the evolving needs of Advancement.
- Ensure donor intent, ethical standards, and compliance are upheld in partnership with University Counsel and Advancement.
- Maintain clear policies, documentation, and communication related to fund establishment and stewardship.
- Coordinate effectively with the Board of Directors to bring forward policies, program changes, and recommendations for consideration and approval.
- Lead strategic planning for the Foundation to ensure long-term alignment, operational excellence, and support for Clemson's philanthropic priorities.

Relationship & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and sustain influential, trust-based relationships with university leaders, deans, donors, and key volunteer partners to advance strategic philanthropic priorities and strengthen the Foundation's impact.
- Represent the Foundation in key university settings to provide clarity, partnership, and alignment with campus priorities.

- Foster strong working relationships between the Board of Directors, university partners, IPTAY, Clemson Alumni Association and Advancement leadership to support a shared vision for Clemson's philanthropic success.

Qualifications

Required

- Bachelor's degree.
- Leadership experience in higher education, nonprofit, foundation administration, or advancement services.
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with fundraising teams, boards, and senior leaders.
- Strong understanding of foundation governance, fiduciary responsibility, and stewardship.
- Excellent communication and relationship-building skills.

Preferred

- Advanced degree (e.g., MPA, MBA, JD, Nonprofit Management).
- Experience in university advancement or with higher education foundations.
- Familiarity with endowment stewardship and donor intent management.
- Experience working with volunteer boards.

Leadership Attributes

- Collaborative, service-oriented, and grounded in ethical practices.
- Values Clemson's heritage while encouraging thoughtful progress and continuous improvement.
- Exercises sound judgment, discretion, and humility while leading with integrity and purpose.
- Skilled communicator who brings clarity to complexity and builds trust across diverse stakeholders.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer Search Committee invites confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications (letter of interest, resume/CV and contact information for at least five professional references) to be submitted to the search firm assisting the Clemson University Foundation. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. It is preferred, however, that all nominations and applications be submitted prior to March 9, 2026.

Laurie C. Wilder, President

Porsha L. Williams, Vice President & Managing Director

Skylar R. Peterson, Executive Recruiting Coordinator

Parker Executive Search

Five Concourse Parkway, Suite 2875

Atlanta, Georgia 30328

770-804-1996 ext. 117

lwilder@parkersearch.com | pwilliams@parkersearch.com | speterson@parkersearch.com

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