

# Senior Director of Research Strategy

## Global Security Initiative





## The Opportunity

Arizona State University's Global Security Initiative (GSI) seeks a Senior Director of Research Strategy (Senior Director) to drive growth in the university's defense and national security research portfolio, particularly around critical and emerging technologies. The advancement and responsible deployment of emerging technologies are central to U.S. national security and defense strategies over the next decade, and ASU seeks to positively impact the trajectory of such technologies through its growing defense-focused research portfolio. The Senior Director will fulfill a key role in advancing strategic research at ASU that positively impacts U.S. and allied national security.

With robust proposal and operational support, the Senior Director will work closely with faculty across ASU's academic units to align research interests and strengths with the mission needs of the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Intelligence Community. The Senior Director will help conceptualize large-scale research efforts; maintain and

build new relationships with core sponsors and partners from government, industry, and other academic institutions; bring together interdisciplinary teams of researchers; and contribute to ASU's evolving strategy for defense and national security research.

Arizona State University, a member of the prestigious American Association of Universities and top-tier public research university, ranks in the top 6 nationally for research expenditures among universities without a medical school. ASU enrolls approximately 80,000 full and part-time students on five metropolitan-Phoenix campuses, plus an additional 66,000 students through its digital immersion programs.

**#1 in the U.S.  
for innovation**  
ASU ahead of MIT and Stanford  
— U.S. News & World Report, 9 years, 2016–24





# Global Security Initiative

The Global Security Initiative's mission is to advance transformational capabilities at ASU in science and technology to meet defense, security and intelligence mission needs, through novel research and training experiences. GSI prioritizes impact, execution, and sustainable relationships with research sponsors and partner organizations.

Arizona State University is a proven leader in defense and national security research: Top 40 in Department of Defense research expenditures according to the most recent National Science Foundation HERD Survey; large-scale DARPA portfolios in cybersecurity and advanced communications; recently selected as one of eight hubs for the Department of Defense's Microelectronics Commons effort; home to a Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence; and the university with the most DARPA Young Faculty Awards in the nation since 2015.

The Global Security Initiative sits at the center of much of these efforts, serving as a core point of contact for science and technology engagements with defense and national security sponsors. Home to four research centers, GSI has a bifurcated mission: to drive transformational capabilities in core ASU strength areas such as cybersecurity, human/AI teaming, advanced communications, data visualization and analytics, and disinformation and strategic influence; and to foster growth in capabilities across the university in other critical technology areas important to the Department of Defense.

GSI's team includes approximately 150 faculty affiliates across the university, nearly 40 employees, and approximately sixty graduate student researchers. The core research programs of GSI contribute over \$30 million to ASU's annual research expenditures.

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## The GSI has Four Research Centers

- GSI's efforts in data visualization and analytics include the **Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE)**. This is a Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence led by ASU, with academic and industry partners from across the country. It draws upon the expertise of faculty in data analytics, operations research and systems analysis, homeland security risk sciences, and economic analysis. The research at CAOE helps the Department of Homeland Security improve efficiency, planning and resource allocation across component agencies such as the TSA, FEMA, CISA and other DHS agencies.
- The **Center for Cybersecurity and Trusted Foundations (CTF)** is a national leader in automated program analysis and vulnerability detection, with a currently active research portfolio over \$40M. Designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in cyber defense and research by a joint National Security Agency and U.S. Department of Homeland Security program, CTF is also engaged in genuinely unique educational efforts to develop the next generation of cyber experts (and non-experts who understand cybersecurity).
- The **Center for Human, Artificial Intelligence, and Robot Teaming (CHART)** is a multi-disciplinary center leading the charge to develop methods to assemble the most effective human-synthetic agent teams in support of national security. CHART is home to a series of unique testbeds – both physical and virtual – that allow ASU and partner organization researchers the ability to explore teaming dynamics among humans and synthetic agents in rapidly shifting environments like space exploration, search and rescue operations, and bomb-defusing scenarios.
- The **Center on Narrative, Disinformation and Strategic Influence (NDSI)** fuses humanities and social science research with state-of-the-art computer science and modeling to better understand how people make sense of the world around them, and thereby support efforts to safeguard the United States, its allies, and democratic principles against malign influence campaigns.



## Nadya T. Bliss, Ph.D., Executive Director

As the executive director of the Global Security Initiative, Nadya T. Bliss oversees efforts to address the complex, interdependent security challenges of today and beyond. Prior to leading GSI, Bliss served as assistant vice president of research strategy in ASU's Office of Knowledge Enterprise Development. Bliss holds a professor of practice appointment and is a member of the graduate faculty in the School of Computing and Augmented Intelligence, and a Senior Global Futures Scientist at the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory.

Before joining ASU in 2012, Bliss spent 10 years at MIT Lincoln Laboratory, most recently as the founding group leader of the Computing and Analytics Group. Under her leadership, the Group's research portfolio included a wide range of programs funded by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity, Office of Naval Research, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, U.S. Air Force, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and other U.S. government sponsors.

In 2011, Bliss was awarded the inaugural MIT Lincoln Laboratory Early Career Technical Achievement

award. Presented annually to employees younger than 35, the award recognized her work in parallel computing, computer architectures and graph processing algorithms as well as her leadership in anomaly detection in graph-based data. She received the R&D 100 award in 2011 for her work on PVTOL: Parallel Vector Tile Optimizing Library.

Bliss received bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science from Cornell University and a doctorate in applied mathematics for the life and social sciences (complex adaptive systems science) from Arizona State University.

Bliss currently serves: as the chair of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Information Science and Technology (ISAT) study group; as vice-chair of the Computing Community Consortium; and on multiple National Academies' efforts, including the Climate Security Roundtable and a Standing Committee on Transformative Science and Technology for the Dept. of Defense.



# Senior Director of Research Strategy

GSI's Senior Director of Research Strategy reports to the Executive Director of GSI and is a core member of GSI's leadership team. The Senior Director will oversee a team focused on proposal support and sponsor engagement that includes an associate director and an assistant director, as well as full-time proposal managers. This is an opportunity to be a part of shaping the strategic, cutting-edge research at the nation's most innovative university. GSI anticipates significant growth over the next decade, and the Senior Director will play a vital role in the expansion of the research enterprise.

The successful candidate will have proven leadership skills, experience executing Department of Defense research in government, academia or the private sector, and an existing network of relationships in the defense science and technology and research and development communities. The Senior Director will evaluate research opportunities and develop strategies to engage faculty

researchers, university research leaders, and staff in new thematic growth areas. The Senior Director will foster collaborations with other universities, research entities, and national laboratories. In addition, and most importantly, the successful candidate will build lasting relationships with R&E sponsors in the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Intelligence Community.

This role requires not only knowledge in relevant disciplines, but also a commitment to high standards of conduct, a considerable breadth of interest and receptivity to new ideas, creativity and good judgment, a strong work ethic and high level of energy, and a high degree of personal integrity.

This position is based in Tempe, AZ, with anticipated travel to Washington D.C. to meet with sponsor agencies and partners.



# QUALIFICATIONS

## Minimum Qualifications

- Ph.D. in a field with relevance to the Critical Technology Areas (CTAs) of the Department of Defense. Individuals with an M.S. in a field related to the CTAs with substantial research experience may also be considered.
- Experience managing complex research endeavors. It is preferred that the candidates possess 10 or more years of research-related experience.
- Demonstrated supervisory experience. A total of 5 or more years of experience is desired.
- Ability and willingness to obtain a U.S. security clearance.

## Preferred Experience

- Experience overseeing the hiring of science and technology professionals.
- Demonstrated ability to lead cross-functional teams consisting of scientific/technical and programmatic personnel engaged in research and development.
- Experience building and sustaining partnerships.
- Demonstrated history of providing insight, advice, and scientific/technical guidance on programmatic and engineering strategies and project execution requirements for Defense and Intelligence community sponsors.
- Experience working with academic institutions on research and development proposals and projects.

## Desired Qualities

- Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- Demonstrated ability to generate and articulate scientific and technical priorities across a breadth of disciplines.
- Ability to influence and incentivize without formal authority.
- Ability to conceptualize a strategic plan and generate wide support for its implementation.
- An entrepreneurial approach to generating research funding.
- An inclusive attitude to embracing diverse opinions, experiences, and backgrounds in creating a robust work environment.





# Opportunities and Challenges

The next Senior Director will be engaged at the forefront of ASU's global security efforts in helping connect GSI with ongoing and new opportunities for research to maintain our nation's security. The Senior Director will be a liaison between the GSI and the over 150 faculty affiliates who have expertise and interest in national security research. The Senior Director will interface with program managers and other representatives from research sponsoring organizations at the national level in matching their needs with ASU researchers with appropriate expertise to address those research needs. Consequently, much of the work of the Senior Director will be maintaining relationships and identifying ongoing and future developments and opportunities for new technological advances. The overall goal will be to grow the research portfolio of GSI.

The SDRS will be a teambuilder with the ability to identify researchers at ASU with the talents to address emerging and critical technologies related to global security. As a curious and entrepreneurial leader, they will have the capacity to imagine new research innovation in the global security arena and then explore its development with ASU researcher and potential sponsors. The Senior Director will strive to create synergy among the various researchers in the existing and future research thrust areas within the GSI. Additionally, the Senior Director will exhibit a collaborative approach in leading and mentoring individuals in the GSI.

A challenge for the Senior Director will be to keep fully abreast of relevant developments in national security and defense science and technology, in order to position ASU for future research opportunities, and when possible to inform national direction on key ASU research areas. It will be necessary for the Senior Director to travel on a regular basis to meet with officials at federal agencies, national laboratories, and other leading research universities. The Senior Director will be expected to have a deep understanding of emerging technologies and their current and potential impact on national security, and to have the ability to foresee the trajectory of new developments in the field.





# Arizona State University

ASU's research, teaching and community-oriented programs are central to the emergence of one of the fastest growing counties in the country. Ranked #1 Most Innovative School by U.S. News & World Report nine years in a row, Arizona State University has developed a bold new model for the American research university.

**A comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural, and overall health of the communities it serves.**

The ASU faculty is at the forefront nationally in advancing research and discovery. The University's more than 5,000 faculty members inspire new ways of thinking, innovating and solving problems socially, culturally and economically in our region and in the international community. ASU is one of the fastest-growing research universities in the nation, having increased research expenditures six-fold over the last 20 years. ASU reported \$797 million in research expenditures in 2022, up from \$677 million the prior year.

Nine design aspirations guide the ongoing evolution of ASU. These institutional objectives are integrated in innovative ways throughout the University to achieve excellence, access and impact.

- Leverage** Our Place
- Enable** Student Success
- Transform** Society
- Fuse** Intellectual Disciplines
- Value** Entrepreneurship
- Be Socially** Embedded
- Conduct** Use-Inspired Research
- Engage** Globally
- Practice** Principled Innovation

**11** MacArthur fellows

**10** National Academy of Engineering members

**41** Guggenheim fellows

**5** Nobel laureates

**28** American Academy of Arts and Sciences

**158** National Endowment for the Humanities fellows

**10** Pulitzer Prize winners

**23** National Academy of Science members

**287** Fulbright American Scholars



# Applications, Nominations and Expressions of Interest

**AGB Search is pleased to assist ASU with this important search.** Nominations and expressions of interest are encouraged. Please direct them to: [DirectorGSI@agbsearch.com](mailto:DirectorGSI@agbsearch.com) to the AGB search consultants listed below.

ASU will begin review of applications immediately and continue until an appointment is made. For full consideration, application materials should be received by **March 25, 2024** and include the following:

- Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- A letter describing your interest in and qualifications for the Senior Director of Research Strategy position
- Names and full contact information for five references (*references will not be contacted without prior approval*)

## AGB Search – GSI Consultant Team

**Jerome A. "Jerry" Gilbert, Ph.D.**, Executive Search Consultant [jerry.gilbert@agbsearch.com](mailto:jerry.gilbert@agbsearch.com)  
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C (540) 761.9494

*Please direct any general questions regarding the position or search process to the AGB Search associate listed below:*

**Nicholas "Nick" Omichinski**, Research Associate [nick.omichinski@agbsearch.com](mailto:nick.omichinski@agbsearch.com)  
C (734) 780.6069

**All application materials should be submitted in PDF format through this link:**  
<https://bit.ly/49hEC0j>



## AGB SEARCH

Arizona State University is a VEVRAA Federal Contractor and an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other basis protected by law. Employment may be contingent upon successful passing of background and fingerprint checks.



# Greater Phoenix

One of the fastest growing regions in the nation, Greater Phoenix, which includes the cities of Glendale, Scottsdale, Tempe, and Mesa, has a population of nearly 4.8 million.

## Cost of Living

Greater Phoenix offers the diverse amenities of a major metropolitan region without the high cost of living. As one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing regions in the nation, living and working here is both exciting and affordable.

## Things to Do

Greater Phoenix offers an array of amenities and attractions expected of bustling urban and suburban regions. From fine arts to major sporting events, outdoor activities and unique dining, the region offers something for everyone.

## Low Tax Position

Low personal income taxes and low effective property tax rates offer affordability and opportunities for everyone to thrive.

For more information about Phoenix and Tempe, visit [www.visitphoenix.com](http://www.visitphoenix.com) and [www.tempe.gov](http://www.tempe.gov).