



Inaugural Dean of Natural and Environmental Sciences

The College of Charleston's School of Natural and Environmental Sciences is at a pivotal moment, offering an exceptional opportunity for its next dean to shape the future of scientific education, scholarship and community engagement in the region. As environmental challenges and scientific innovation become increasingly important issues both locally and globally, the inaugural dean will have the opportunity to lead a diverse and talented faculty, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and champion sustainability initiatives that position the School as a regional and national leader.



The new dean will report directly to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Suzanne Austin. They will also be joining a group of talented and engaged colleagues in the School and throughout the college who are eager to collaborate in new and innovative ways to advance the School as well as the success of its alumni.

The incoming dean will guide the School's academic vision, supporting innovative curriculum development, promoting excellence in teaching and scholarship, expanding research

opportunities for faculty and students, and establishing strategic partnerships with both industry and the community. This is a unique opportunity to enhance academic programs that address emerging scientific fields and environmental issues and ensure that students gain the skills and knowledge needed for successful careers in science, technology, and policy, while also developing ethically centered and intellectually versatile citizens.

About the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences

To adapt to the needs of students and the regional workforce, the College of Charleston created two new schools in spring 2024: the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences (SNES) and the School of Engineering, Computing, and Mathematics (SECM). The formation of these two schools underscores the College reputation as a world-class undergraduate and master's level comprehensive public university that prepares students for a globally connected world through an emphasis on academic excellence and experiential learning.

The team of faculty and staff in the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences serves its students, the state, and the nation by integrating discovery, innovation and education. The principal responsibility of SNES is to provide science literacy for all students at the College and to equip natural and environmental sciences majors with the knowledge and skills to pursue careers in a wide variety of fields.

The school offers 11 major and 7 minor undergraduate programs across the departments of Biology, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Geology & Environmental Sciences and Physics & Astronomy. The school's graduate programs in marine biology and environmental and sustainability studies have been carefully selected to complement the undergraduate programs in areas of significant national strength and to meet the intellectual, professional and economic needs of the region and the state.

A key element of SNES's mission is accountability, which includes regular assessments of the effectiveness of its programs. Departments continue to seek opportunities to measure their programs against objective indicators of programmatic quality, such as accreditation reviews and external program evaluations.



The Role of the Dean

The inaugural dean for the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences (SNES) at the College of Charleston will find a unique opportunity for visionary and transformative leadership.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Reporting directly to the provost, the dean is responsible for providing the academic leadership and vision necessary for setting strategic, operational and financial direction for the school.

Strategic Vision and Institution Building

The new dean will lead the school in the development of a strategic plan, seeking to define its mission, values, and strategic priorities, aligning them with the College of Charleston's priorities as well as broader trends in natural and environmental sciences.

In motivating faculty, staff, students as well as the broader community in this work, the dean will support the advancement of SNES toward its goal of becoming a nationally recognized institution dedicated to preparing future leaders in science and environmental stewardship. This leadership will also lay the groundwork for sustained excellence, continued growth, and the development of a strong and shared institutional identity.

Promoting Academic Excellence

As a cornerstone of academic excellence, the new dean will engage with and support faculty in the design of innovative academic programs, interdisciplinary curricula, and research initiatives that address pressing environmental and scientific challenges. Attracting, supporting and mentoring world-class faculty as well as fostering a collaborative and inclusive academic environment will be key to accomplishing this goal.

Resource Development and Institutional Growth

The next dean will play a central role in shaping the direction and stature of the school as well as fostering innovation, sustainability, and educational excellence for years to come. With a strong foundation and growing recognition, SNES offers the next dean a significant opportunity to lead fundraising initiatives, secure extramural funding, and build relationships with alumni and donors. This work will be key in developing the resources needed to support cutting-edge research, upgrade facilities, and provide funding to support students and attract top faculty talent.

Research Leadership and Innovation

The dean will support faculty and students in their pursuit of significant research and meaningful outreach to the community and industry, helping students and faculty tackle complex problems such as climate change, coastal ecosystem management, urban sustainability and human health. The dean will also secure the requisite resources to support this work by securing grants from federal and state agencies and foundations as well as establishing strategic partnerships with



industry and the community. These efforts will raise the school's profile and expand its impact both on campus and in the broader Charleston and South Carolina area.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Community Engagement

The dean will foster meaningful collaboration between departments and other schools at the College in the formation of integrated programs and strategic partnerships that harness expertise from the humanities, social sciences, and technology. In doing so, SNES will bring together students and faculty from diverse fields such as marine biology, geology, chemistry, and physics to address complex environmental challenges and human health issues. Additionally, by collaborating with local schools, museums, conservation groups, and industry partners, the school will promote science education and raise environmental awareness throughout the community.

Regional Impact and Thought Leadership

The dean will support faculty in their work to establish the school as a thought leader and valuable resource for the Charleston community and the Southeast region by actively addressing pressing environmental and scientific issues. Through meaningful engagement with policymakers, local government, and advocacy organizations, the school will also advance environmental stewardship and champion science-based solutions to regional challenges.

Student Success and Engagement



The new dean will seek to enrich the student experience by expanding access to hands-on learning, internships, fieldwork, and global learning opportunities to ensure that students are well-prepared for graduate and/or professional study as well as for successful careers in industry, government, and the nonprofit sector in the natural and environmental sciences. In fostering a globally focused learning community, the dean

will also advance programs that foster access, equity, and a strong sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff, thereby cultivating a welcoming and supportive academic community.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The School of Natural and Environmental Sciences seeks a dean who will possess the following preferred qualifications, characteristics and values:

Professional Qualifications

- An earned doctorate in one of the disciplines that are included in the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences.
- A distinguished record of teaching and scholarship commensurate with appointment as a tenured professor in an academic department within the school.
- A proven record of collaborative leadership and administration in higher education, including experience with faculty evaluation, academic program leadership and budget management.
- An intimate and wide-ranging knowledge of higher education and how colleges and universities operate.
- An understanding of the challenges and key issues confronting higher education today and transformational ideas of how to address these challenges.
- An understanding of the role of a comprehensive public university in the 21st century and the strategic vision to keep SNES and its offerings relevant.
- A compelling record of supporting respect for the individual in all of its varied manifestations, including a demonstrated sensitivity to the unique needs of all faculty, students and staff.

Personal Qualities

- Ability to focus on strategic priorities, implement strategic plans and execute strategic initiatives.
- Collegial and collaborative approach to the work of the school, with the ability to build consensus and motivate the others.
- Exemplary communication and interpersonal skills, with a strong command of verbal and written communication; great listening skills, and an openness to the values and ideas of others along with cross-cultural understanding and skills.
- Ability to engage with alumni and donors as well as to create relationships with local, state and national political leaders.
- Comfort and skill in engaging in all types of fundraising activities as well as a clear understanding that fundraising is a critical part of the job.
- Self-confidence and the ability to encourage self-confidence in others by showing trust in direct reports and delegating authority when necessary.
- Unquestioned integrity, with the highest ethical standards, and sound judgment.
- A demonstrated respect for transparency, fairness and respect for others.
- A visible commitment to and appreciation of the academic life of SNES as well as a willingness to be present at events.
- Dedication to interacting with students and celebrating their success.

About the College of Charleston

Founded in 1770, the College of Charleston is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the United States. Situated in the heart of historic Charleston, South Carolina, the College is renowned for its commitment to academic excellence, its rich history, and its vibrant campus life.

Academic Excellence and Innovation

The College of Charleston offers a diverse array of undergraduate and graduate programs across nine schools. Our academic community is characterized by a strong emphasis on undergraduate education, supported by a commitment to research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. We pride ourselves on providing a rigorous and supportive learning environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and personal growth. Our faculty members are dedicated educators and accomplished scholars who engage students in meaningful research and experiential learning opportunities.

Historic and Dynamic Campus

Our campus is an inspiring blend of historic charm and modern facilities. The College's main campus, located in the historic district of Charleston, features beautiful 18th-century architecture alongside state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories, and student spaces. This unique setting not only enhances the educational experience but also offers students a vibrant cultural and social environment. The city of Charleston, known for its rich history, culinary excellence, and dynamic arts scene, further enriches the student experience and provides a stimulating backdrop for academic and personal development.



Community and Culture

At the College of Charleston, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive community where students, faculty, and staff collaborate to create a thriving academic environment. We value diversity and strive to ensure that all members of our community feel valued and supported. Our commitment to community engagement is reflected in our numerous partnerships with local organizations, as well as our emphasis on service, learning, and civic responsibility.

Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, the College of Charleston is poised to build on its storied legacy while embracing innovation and growth. We are committed to enhancing our academic programs, expanding our research initiatives, and strengthening our community connections. As we continue to evolve,



we remain steadfast in our mission to provide a transformative educational experience that prepares our students for success in an ever-changing world.

The City of Charleston

Charleston is the oldest and largest city in South Carolina, known for its rich history, well-preserved architecture, and charming cobblestone streets. It is where historic charm meets modern innovation, where opportunity overflows with culture. It is a major port city on the Atlantic coast and known for its historic landmarks like the French Quarter and Fort Sumter. It is famous for its historic downtown on a peninsula formed by the Ashley and Cooper Rivers along with its modern culinary and cultural scene.

Charleston is America's original artists' colony. Throughout its 300-plus-year history, the city has been a playground for painters, jazz musicians, playwrights and more. This is where the New World's first public theater was established, as well as the country's first resident ballet company and its first museum.

As an arts, outdoor and culinary destination, Charleston hosts several events throughout the year that one might expect in a city twice its size. Among these events are the Spoleto Festival USA, the Cooper River Bridge Run, and the Charleston Wine + Food Festival.



Application & Nomination Process

The Dean of the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences Search Committee will begin the review of applications immediately and will continue to work until an appointment is made. To ensure full consideration, applications should be received by **January 19, 2026**, and must include:

- A letter of interest addressing the strategic objectives and qualifications identified in the profile;
- A current curriculum vitae; and
- The contact information (email and phone) for five professional references, including their relationship to the candidate. *References will not be contacted without prior authorization from the candidate.*

The College of Charleston is being assisted by AGB Search. Application materials should be submitted through the AGB Search portal system here: [College of Charleston, Dean](#)

Please direct nominations and expressions of interest or any questions regarding the application process to: COFCDeanSNES@agbsearch.com or:

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