NRRI Business and Operations Director
Associate Director Cmp/Col, 9335
Position Number 286314

Background:
The Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) at the University of Minnesota Duluth is an applied research organization whose charter is "to foster the development of Minnesota's natural resources in an environmentally sound manner to promote private sector employment". As a key asset to the University of Minnesota system, NRRI engages in collaborative, applied research to deliver excellence in science, engineering and economic analysis in support of natural resource use and management decisions.

Position Description:
This position will be part of the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) central administration group and will be located at the Duluth Miller Trunk Highway facility. Regional travel will be required. The position will report directly to the NRRI Executive Director and will interface closely with NRRI research, information, and financial managers and work with University departments, public and private sector groups, legislatures, governmental agencies, industry and the business community. The position will have both direct and indirect supervisory responsibilities.

Although the assignment will evolve with Institute development, the overall role of the Business/Operations Director is to work with the Executive Director to develop and maintain business connections to the Institute, to introduce and drive business practices within the institute and to manage day to day operations and procedures of the Institute. The Business/Operations Director will serve on the Institute senior management group.

Job Duties:
Specific duties will be listed under the following descriptive functional headings.

Business Director (~60%)
  a. Introduce and manage business best practices in identifying and scoping opportunities, organizing major projects utilizing project management and ensuring linkage with project goals.
  b. Bring business planning practices into mission-driven work of the Institute
  c. Lead Institute in application of Six Sigma/Lean practices and lead delivery of services to clients
  d. Interface with UMD economic development and business assistance efforts as NRRI contact to identify and coordinate technical programs supporting regional businesses and entrepreneurs
  e. Participate on development teams as needed to assist in grant preparation and project execution
  f. Assist executive director in public engagement and legislative contacts

Operations Director (~40%)
  a. Manage day to day operations of Institute infrastructure
  b. Create processes to assist in defining policy and application
  c. Interface with UMN facilities/maintenance, operations planning and capital planning
  d. Manage safety program and initiatives across Institute
  e. Lead efforts to achieve and maintain laboratory certification (chemical analysis, mechanical and physical testing, materials characterization, etc.)

Operational Role
Modifies practices and procedures to improve efficiency and quality; searches for better ways to effectively achieve end results by, for example, scheduling work steps, arranging/ re-arranging the way work is generally performed, and adding or deleting elements of processes as necessary.

Scope of Measurable Impact
Actions tend to affect a department or critical project outcomes; performance results tend to relate to efficiency, degree of waste/cost overruns, quality/continuous improvement, timeliness, and resource allocation/effectiveness.
Independence and Decision-Making
Works independently according to agreed-upon objectives; generally responsible for keeping processes moving in a productive direction, and will look for supervisory approvals when changes to process steps are considered and when additional resources for task completion are required.

Complexity and Problem Solving
Problems are increasingly difficult to identify and are sufficiently difficult that they cannot be solved using existing practices and procedures; may have to respond/adapt to changing conditions or circumstances requiring creativity and the development of new approaches when resolving issues.

Leadership and Collaboration
This position will engage broadly, both internally and externally. The incumbent will need to be a team-oriented individual with strong customer focus and an ability to effectively build, lead and assist development teams.

Supervision
Has the authority to hire, transfer, promote, discharge, suspend, assign work, reward, discipline, and direct the work of both full-time and part-time University employees.

Required Qualifications
- MA/MS (science, engineering, business or related) with at least 5 years of industrial/business experience
- Demonstrated team-oriented leadership skills; capable of leading by position as well as by influence
- 5 years demonstrated experience in project management - simultaneously managing multiple, significant, multidisciplinary projects
- Six Sigma/LEAN training, experience and portfolio of applications
- Detail-oriented, self-motivated, strong organizational skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills; demonstrated ability to lead by influence, contribute as leader and/or collaborator; able to build networks and multidisciplinary team relationships
- Excellent written communication skills; demonstrated skills in technical writing, editing and organization of data
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate as part of research efforts (work with principal investigators in creation of successful grant proposals and in driving managed execution of research programs)
- Experience in marketing and sales

Preferred Qualifications
- Master’s or doctorate degree in science, engineering with MBA or related training
- 10 years experience in industry and/or business
- Experience in life cycle analysis of products and/or processes
- Intellectual property management experience
- Occupational Safety experience
- Experience in identification of grants and grant writing
- Demonstration of clear verbal communication skills in the English language