



## California Academy of Sciences Chief Innovation Officer

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- The California Academy of Sciences has welcomed over **18 million visitors** since re-opening in 2010
- **\$100M** in budget supported by **\$205M endowment**
- **2x LEED Platinum Certification:** The Academy's building received the highest possible rating from the U.S. Green Building Council for its sustainable design
- Ranked **#8** in "Best things to do in San Francisco" by [US News Travel](#)

### LOCATION

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- San Francisco Bay Area, CA

### EXECUTIVE TEAM

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- [Scott D. Sampson](#), Executive Director and William R. and Gretchen B. Kimball Chair
- [Shannon Bennett](#), Chief of Science and Harry W. and Diana V. Hind Dean of Science and Research Collections
- [Melissa Felder](#), Chief Experience Officer
- [Michael Costanzo](#), General Counsel and Chief Risk Officer
- [Jim Gohary](#), Chief Financial Officer & Managing Director
- [Estefanía Pihen González](#), Chief of Education and Learning

### ABOUT THE COMPANY

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The California Academy of Sciences, dedicated to 'regenerating the natural world,' is a global leader in biodiversity science, environmental education, and public engagement.

Housed in a LEED Platinum-certified building in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, the Academy welcomes over 1.5 million visitors annually, including 1.2 million youth.

With a mission to inspire and engage, the Academy conducts cutting-edge research, discovering nearly 2,500 new species, and provides vital STEM education programs for aspiring scientists.

Supported by a dedicated community of members and donors, the Academy plays a crucial role in safeguarding Earth's biodiversity.

The Academy has recently achieved significant milestones, including the debut of the award-winning planetarium show 'Expedition Reef' and the 'Giants of Land and Sea' exhibit. It has expanded its reach through initiatives like NightLife and Academy-for-All, ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences.

The Academy operates on a \$100 million budget, supported by a \$205 million endowment, 600 employees, and 500 volunteers. Grants from various sources are crucial for funding research and maintaining a competitive edge in the scientific community.

To learn more about the impact and aspirations of Cal Academy, please see [here](#) and visit [here](#).

### CORE VALUES

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- **Exploration:** We generate new knowledge and understanding of the natural world and the role of people within it through scientific excellence—asking bold questions about the nature and future of life on Earth and bringing innovation and integrity to answer them.
- **Collaboration:** We recognize that we can't solve our planet's vast environmental challenges alone, so we partner with world-leading environmental, scientific, and community organizations to strengthen and amplify our work and reach new audiences.
- **Diversity and equity:** Diverse communities are stronger and more resilient, both in nature and in human society. We are committed to cultivating a culturally inclusive and equitable environment in which diversity of thought and expression is valued, respected, and celebrated.

- [Amber Mace](#),  
Managing Director/Chief of  
Strategic Partnerships
- [Mark Ruffo](#),  
Chief Advancement Officer
- [Leah Van der Meij](#), Chief  
Operating Officer and Head  
of Government Affairs

## CONTACT US

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- **Courage:** Embracing the challenge of the present moment, we don't shy away from tough challenges. Science is more important to our daily lives than ever before, and we unapologetically advocate for using scientific data to solve problems and make informed decisions about our collective future.
- **Advocacy:** We harness our voice as a scientific and cultural institution to positively impact policy and public opinion in support of thriving social and ecological communities—and by listening to, lifting up, and learning from underrepresented voices.

## CIO POSITION OVERVIEW

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Reporting to the Managing Director and CFO, the Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) is tasked with driving innovation, enhancing operational efficiency at all levels, and aligning cutting-edge technology initiatives with the Academy's mission and long-term strategic objectives.

This role is first of its kind and has the unique opportunity to transform a highly-respected institution by fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation, and by developing impactful programs and initiatives that drive engagement, visitor traffic, memberships, and revenue across the organization.

### **Strategic Leadership & Innovation**

- Develops and articulates the company's innovation vision, strategy, and roadmap
- Identifies emerging trends, technologies, and market opportunities to inspire and engage visitors and global audiences alike
- Establishes an innovation pipeline that helps the organization quickly identify and validate new ideas and opportunities
- Creates an assessment framework to evaluate and prioritize investments, both from a risk and potential value-add perspective
- Solicits feedback and drives alignment among leadership and key stakeholders to balance new investment against existing priorities

### **Program Development**

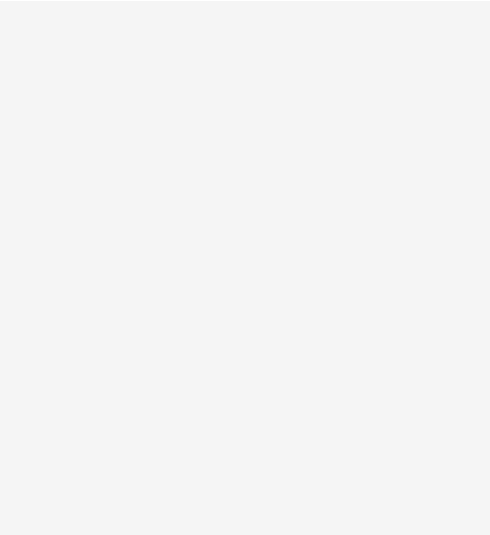
- Designs and oversees the creation of new exhibits, educational programs, and interactive experiences that inspire diverse audiences, advance scientific literacy, and grow the organization's membership and donor base
- Effectively stewards organizational resources, balancing allocation and investment against robust evaluation criteria to measure effectiveness, learn, and iterate

### **Technology Integration**

- Analyzes and evaluates existing technology programs to streamline processes and communication among various stakeholders and business units
- Ideates, prototypes and implements cutting-edge technologies and digital tools to improve visitor experience, operational efficiency, and educational outcomes

### **People Leadership**

- Fosters a culture of creativity and experimentation, encouraging new ideas and measured risk-taking

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- Sets a compelling vision that inspires the next generation of innovation leaders within the organization
  - Leads and mentors a high-performing team of innovation specialists, project managers, and creative professionals

## **TRACTION**

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- [California Academy of Sciences Announces New Chief Advancement Officer](#)
- [California Academy of Sciences Welcomes 14 New Fellows, Bestows Four Prestigious Awards](#)
- [The California Academy of Sciences Receives Second LEED Platinum Rating From U.S. Green Building Council](#)