



## **STERN CENTER SEEKS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Search Committee of the Board of Directors at the Stern Center for Language and Learning invites nominations and applications for the position of President. We seek an innovative, energized, and results-driven visionary to lead our non-profit learning center specializing in research-based education services and professional learning models. Qualified candidates will have a comprehensive background in organizational leadership, strong business acumen, expertise in non-profit advancement, and an extensive educational network. Ideal candidates will also have unbridled enthusiasm for our mission and deep understanding of literacy, language, and systems change models. The candidate selected will be an emotionally intelligent and collaborative leader capable of inspiring staff, Board, and stakeholders to new levels of excellence and continuing the organization's culture of transparency, collaboration, and mutual respect.

The Stern Center's trajectory has been remarkable not only in terms of our growth in service delivery and revenue generation but also in terms of our vision, quality, and reputation. The incoming President will join the organization at an exciting transformational time in our thirty-six-year history. In 2017, the Board approved a plan for the continued growth of our highly regarded core services and the development of innovative systems change models in schools through the Cynthia K. Hoehl Institute for Excellence. We are in the second pilot year of our large-scale *Lead to Read* systems change initiative to bring the science of learning to classrooms to improve literacy outcomes. We are powerfully positioned to improve outcomes and equity for learners in Vermont and beyond with our dual mission to serve individual learners and develop the capacity of public schools to serve all children.

The Stern Center for Language and Learning is a non-profit learning center that employs 60 to 80 employees annually with a budget of \$3.4M. We evaluate and teach approximately 600 children and adults and design and deliver professional learning coursework and coaching to over 900 educators each year. Our instruction, evaluation, and social learning/communication services are tailored to meet the needs of individual students because we believe *all great minds don't think alike*.

### **Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership:**

The incoming President will be charged with advancing the organization's mission, attracting philanthropic support, cultivating educational partnerships, and propelling the realization of our 2030 vision. The role also assumes accountability for the organization's sustainability, the elevation of the organization's reputation, and the growth and excellence of Stern Center programs. The President oversees the Leadership Team and reports to the Board of Directors.

The 2030 vision serves as an important guide toward our strong upward trajectory. Key elements for leadership implementation include:

## **Core Service Growth**

The Stern Center's prestigious core services await growth opportunities. We have built our stellar reputation by delivering high quality evaluations, customized instruction, social learning and communication services, and professional learning. Our programs provide the latest in proven, research-based interventions to help students recognize their strengths, confront their challenges, and learn real-life strategies to ensure future success. The President will collaborate with Program Directors to ensure all programs and activities support the mission-aligned goals. The President will drive program growth while ensuring that the Stern Center upholds its reputation as a model for evidence-based best practices.

## **Leveraging technology**

Our relevance and sustainability require technological investment. Our programs will profit from technological expertise to enable their availability remotely. The organization is in a period of technological growth, and there is vast potential to expand the reach of our mission through virtual coursework, coaching, instruction, and evaluation. Our eLearning instruction services have grown an impressive 150% since we started offering remote instruction in 2017. Our professional learning program is also poised to expand with increased online access to our courses. As we develop our technology for remote applications from coursework to coaching, we also continue to build our brand internationally as the resource hub for structured literacy and social emotional development. The incoming President must strive to equip the organization to become a state-of-the-art virtual environment and leverage technological advances to extend the Stern Center remotely to reach more learners.

## **Systems change prominence**

The President will propel our transformative commitment to extend our thirty-six years of accumulated knowledge of how children learn beyond our walls. Our *Lead to Read* initiative will bring the science of learning to classrooms to improve literacy outcomes in Vermont and beyond. The time is opportune for systems change given increasing awareness of concerning declines in reading achievement data. This window of opportunity will open further as we publish and present data from the *Lead to Read* pilot projects currently underway and hone our coursework delivery and coaching. Effective leadership and vision will be essential in capitalizing on our success and assuring the Stern Center is a leading national and international literacy resource.

## **Expanding Educational Partnerships**

There is tremendous opportunity to expand the reach of our mission through educational partnerships with government agencies, higher education, educational policy makers, and other national organizations engaged in similar activity. Higher education collaborations will be critical for the Stern Center's future to promote structured literacy as an essential component of undergraduate training curricula. Partnerships with higher education, both locally and nationally, also will position the Stern Center for larger grant opportunities.

## **Ensuring financial sustainability**

Our organizational structure is a hybrid model in that we operate as both a nonprofit agency and a business. It is this combination of excellence across our professional commitment to the science of learning and our corporate consciousness of entrepreneurial business practices that have been the hallmark of our being recognized as an exemplary, well-run nonprofit organization. The overarching financial goal for the President will be to minimize the need for development to balance the budget. Revenues from fundraising could then be directed towards scholarship, research and advancement to move the organization toward even greater heights of accomplishment and expansion of our mission. Seeking grant support from foundations and government

agencies to expand our research and outreach will also be a priority. The President will be charged with seizing opportunities that align with our mission and address emerging educational trends while scrupulously monitoring fiscal health and growth.

### **Extending philanthropic opportunities**

The President will vigorously heighten the organization's visibility and credibility in philanthropic communities to expand our donor base. This role works in close partnership with the Director of Development to identify donor prospects and cultivate, solicit, and steward donors. The Stern Center systems change initiative positions us well to develop partnerships for major grant opportunities. It will be imperative to continue actively promoting philanthropy to enable the organization to advance its mission and reputation.

### **Accessibility**

The Stern Center is committed to increasing accessibility to core services across income levels. The President will champion educational equity by increasing opportunities for all students to receive evaluations, instruction and social learning/communication services affordably. Growing both the Scholarship and Cynthia K. Hoehl Endowments will be important to that end.

### **Staff Investment**

We have long recognized that programs are people, and ours are among the very best and brightest. We have minimal attrition with many staff remaining for the bulk of their careers. We have been able to compete favorably with schools for employees given our mission, work environment, and flexibility in scheduling. The President must be committed to recruiting, retaining, and supporting our highly qualified talent. The President will also lead in continuing our organizational culture of transparency, collaboration, and mutual respect.

### **Qualifications**

An earned doctorate in education or a closely related discipline is preferred with at least five years of relevant, successful educational leadership experience such as Executive Director or Department Chair. Candidates must have strong collegial relationships and communication skills as well as experience in nonprofit management and organizational advancement. The ideal candidate will also have a deep knowledge of structured literacy and integrated systems change learning models.

### **Application Process**

*Review of applications is ongoing.  
Preferred starting date is July 1, 2020.*

For inquiries about the position, please contact Human Resource Director Emily Dawson at the Stern Center ([edawson@sterncenter.org](mailto:edawson@sterncenter.org)). Include a cover letter with a description of interest in and qualifications for this position and a current curriculum vitae.

*The Stern Center for Language and Learning is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Applications from women, veterans and individuals with disabilities, and people from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are encouraged.*