Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (South Africa)

Director, CISL SA

Role Summary

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) works to build the leadership capacity necessary to tackle critical global challenges. CISL has a subsidiary branch based in Cape Town, South Africa known as Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (South Africa) (CISL SA).

The purpose of the Director is to lead a team delivering services that fulfil CISL’s mission in Southern Africa to help leaders understand and respond to global challenges, predominantly through education and engagement with business, government and the financial community. The Director fulfils CISL’s wider mission to place the University of Cambridge at the heart of global efforts to create a resilient, sustainable global economy, with a particular focus on Southern Africa and potentially the rest of Africa.

Specifically, the Director is responsible for:

- Creating, designing and delivering reputation-enhancing programmes that create influence and impact
- Generating new business and building growth
- Establishing and maintaining key relationships with a range of senior audiences and institutions in Southern Africa and rest of Africa.

The Director will develop CISL SA’s overall strategy and business plan, which will be signed off by CISL’s Executive Board, and ensure that all of the CISL SA activities are aligned with the Institute and this plan.

The Director routinely works with high-level executives including CEOs, Board members and senior executives in business and government and senior functional specialists (including strategy, finance, marketing, sustainability) to deliver CISL’s work.

The Director also takes direct accountability for the development of strong, high-income relationships with major clients, for developing major new projects and service offers, for setting overall standards for major parts of CISL’s services, and for building effective high-level international networks to inform and promote CISL’s work. This activity may involve the role holder taking a delivery role, for example by presenting substantive content, facilitating dialogue between groups of senior leaders, and analysing and preparing reports of the findings.

The Director is responsible for developing the performance of their team and ensuring that the team’s strategic relationships both inside and outside of the University are maintained and nurtured, resulting in increased impact and income for CISL.
Key Responsibilities

This section details, but is not an exhaustive list, of the specific activities or obligations for which we require and hold the role accountable.

**Business Strategy and Finance**

- Agree and continuously review CISL’s vision and mission, as captured by Rewiring the Economy and Rewiring Leadership, and oversee and monitor implementation of CISL’s strategic direction and growth plan, in agreement with the Management Board and in line with the University’s mission.
- Hold shared responsibility for ensuring effective policies, planning, organisational structures and resources are in place to achieve CISL’s goals.
- Hold shared responsibility for creating and promoting CISL’s identity, image and reputation with high-level stakeholders externally.
- Ensure the submission and delivery of a rolling three-year strategy and budget for the team comprised of detailed portfolio-level plans, reviewed on an annual basis.
- Act as the point of accountability for the team’s income generation.

**Business Development and Delivery**

- Create, design and deliver programmes and engagement activities for senior leaders, teaching as appropriate and supervising the related activities of relevant staff.
- Develop and deliver a strategy to grow CISL’s impact and income, identifying opportunities to secure the investment, resources and partnerships required.
- Lead the development of new client relationships and new products and services to meet agreed growth targets. This routinely includes providing high-level strategic advice, and delivering expert content through teaching or leadership group engagement.
- Maintain awareness of best practice in sustainability leadership in organisations to direct and advise on the implications for CISL’s strategy, products, services and research.
- Develop and/or maintain an understanding of global challenges facing senior leaders in private and public sector organisations to direct and advise on the implications for CISL’s strategy, products, services and research. Deliver this content as an expert provider in international conference circuits and to student/executive audiences engaged in CISL’s education programmes and leaders’ groups.
- Establish and maintain key relationships with a range of senior audiences and institutions.
- Develop new relationships with senior executives in private and public sector organisations, in order to respond effectively to the needs of potential clients and partners.
External Relations

- Identify strategic opportunities for CISL in Southern Africa and the rest of Africa, to work with senior leaders of business, government and finance institutions.
- Initiate, develop and maintain key external contacts to support CISL’s strategic objectives, including CEOs, Senior Government officials, Board members and senior executives, and senior functional specialists (including strategy, finance, marketing, sustainability).
- Maintain close and productive ties with international academics, think tanks and NGOs offering research and insight relevant to CISL’s work.
- Represent CISL in public events and meetings in Southern Africa, including public speaking, panel appearances and moderation and facilitation of conferences, workshops, seminars and roundtables.

Management and Supervision

- Maintain and develop the dedicated professionals in the team in accordance with CISL staff policy and procedures.
- Hold direct responsibility for the performance of immediate reports against agreed objectives, and all other team members through line structures.
- Hold shared responsibility for ensuring that all CISL staff are motivated and resourced to deliver their objectives within a positive learning and delivery climate.

Human Resources

- Hold shared responsibility for ensuring that CISL manages HR matters in accordance with CISL’s policy and procedures and in compliance with legislation.
- Work with the Director and the HR Manager to ensure that CISL’s HR policies and procedures are aligned around CISL and the University’s mission and values.
- Hold shared responsibility for ensuring that CISL SA maintains sufficient skills and knowledge to achieve its goals, growing capacity as needed through development, recruitment and improved cross-CISL efficiency and cooperation.

Marketing and Communications

- Hold shared responsibility for CISL’s marketing and communications strategy.
- Work with the Communications team to raise the profile of CISL as a premier source of thought leadership and practical knowledge for its key audiences.
Quality Assurance and Risk

- Work with the Director to ensure that CISL operates the management, financial, and operational quality systems necessary to ensure consistent high quality outputs.

- Hold shared responsibility for ensuring that all CISL’s outputs are delivered to the quality standards demanded by our clients and by the University.

- Hold shared responsibility for the maintenance and effective use of CISL’s risk register in order to protect CISL, the University from reputational challenges, liabilities and other forms of risk.

Person Profile

This section details the knowledge, skills and experience we require for the role.

Education and qualifications

- Formal education to at least degree standard.

- Postgraduate degree in a relevant subject.

Relevant experience

- Experience of operating at an executive level within a business or policy organisation, with a proven track record of strategic planning, financial management and team leadership.

- Track record of business development with organisations, working at the most senior levels and demonstrating high-level negotiation and relationship management skills.

- In-depth awareness of the academic, as well as the leadership context within which CISL operates.

- Knowledgeable about core areas of CISL’s business, including the challenges of global leadership, sustainable development and corporate sustainability.

- Understanding of the political and policy context within which leaders of global corporations operate.

- Experience of working in fields related to sustainable development and having an understanding of how social and environmental issues relate to strategy, leadership and organisational risk and opportunity.

- Experience working with senior leaders in business and the public sector.

- Experience of presenting to and facilitating dialogue with senior executive audiences.

- Experience of leading large teams and managing people.
Interpersonal and communication skills

- Excellent written and oral communication, good interpersonal skills, and qualities of leadership suited both to an academic and an entrepreneurial, commercially orientated organisation.

- Leadership skills appropriate for a ‘bridge’ organisation that embraces the worlds of global business, government, finance, academic and civil society, including an ability to forge high-level partnerships and networks with these institutions in a manner which demonstrates empathy with the demands upon them.

- Strong entrepreneurial skills, with the vision and ability to translate opportunities for innovative products, services and markets into commercially viable business that is client-focused and responsive to the needs of a demanding marketplace.

- Expert client management skills.

- Financial management skills, with the ability to secure funding to underpin the growth and future security of CISL.

- People and team management skills.

- Ability to operate effectively, including problem solving, within complex contexts and to innovate to develop new solutions.

- Strategy development and implementation skills.

Additional requirements

- A demonstrable interest in Sustainability and committed to the values that underpin CISL’s work.

- Able to undertake national and regional travel on a regular basis, and occasional international travel as required.

Terms and Conditions

Location
Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, South Africa: Deneb House, Browning Rd, Observatory, and other CISL and client offices/external venues as required.

Working pattern and hours of work
Full time: 8 hours a day, 40 hours per week.

Length of appointment
Permanent

Annual leave
30 days per year