POSITION AND CANDIDATE SPECIFICATION

OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

PRESIDENT

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POSITION SPECIFICATION

Client Organization

Otis prepares diverse students of art and design to enrich our world through their creativity, their skill, and their vision.

Otis College of Art and Design was founded in 1918, when General Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the Los Angeles Times, bequeathed his MacArthur Park property to the City of Los Angeles for “the advancement of the arts.” Originally named Otis Art Institute, the College became affiliated with New York’s Parsons School of Design in 1978 and was nicknamed Otis-Parsons. In 1991, it became an independent institution and was soon renamed Otis College of Art and Design. The College remained in its historic Westlake home until 1997, when the main campus was moved to L.A.’s Westside. Satellite locations were established in downtown Los Angeles, Santa Monica, El Segundo, and eventually Culver City.

Today, Otis is one of the world’s foremost professional schools of art and design, a recognized leader in academic excellence, learning technologies, community engagement, and professional preparation. The College’s reputation attracts a highly diverse student body, in terms of both geography, with representation from 40 states and 28 countries, and race/ethnicity and nationality (23% white, 25% Asian, 19% underrepresented minorities, 22% international, and 11% unknown). Diversity is one of the College’s greatest strengths; it stimulates students’ imagination and creativity, and prepares them for successful professional lives in global and multicultural contexts. The College offers an interdisciplinary education for 1,100 full-time students, awarding Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degrees in Architecture/Landscape/Interiors, Communication Arts (with areas of emphasis in Advertising Design, Graphic Design, and Illustration), Digital Media (with areas of emphasis in Animation, Game & Entertainment Design, and Motion Design), Fashion Design (with an area of emphasis in Costume Design), Product Design, and Toy Design; and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees in Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Public Practice, and Writing. The Continuing Education department offers certificate programs as well as personal and professional development courses.

Otis has prepared generations of artists who have been in the vanguard of cultural and entrepreneurial life. The College’s alumni are well represented at leading museums and prestigious collecting institutions throughout the world, including the Whitney Museum of
American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and many others. Otis-educated designers shape the visual world, from the products people use to the built environments they live in, from the clothes people wear to the toys children play with. Otis alumni are cultural leaders working around the world in such companies as Mattel, Sony Pictures, Nike, Gap, Pixar, and Disney. Imagine the Oscar ceremonies without its golden statuette, *The Sound of Music* without its costumes, *The Lord of the Rings* without its visual effects, *Avatar* without its trademark blue alien skin, or the Getty without its famed garden, and you will have a sense of the world without Otis alumni. Since 1918, Otis graduates have made an individual, positive, and lasting mark on the world.

**Opportunity for the Next President**

The next president of Otis College of Art and Design will take the helm of an educational institution that has carved out a unique identity for itself in Los Angeles and the nationwide. Known for its balanced academic programming, which pairs a strong liberal arts education with excellence in creativity, practical application, and innovation, Otis is poised to capitalize on the high reputation and distinct strengths it has developed over the last ten years.

Otis’ next President will have the opportunity to significantly advance the College’s mission by completing a well-developed plan for campus expansion, which promises to transform Otis to a residential college with a strong national and international reach, and by focusing on three key areas: Institutional Development, Reputation and Brand Building, and Strategic and Visionary Leadership.

The Otis community seeks an engaged and inspiring leader who will guide all constituencies toward a shared vision for the future and toward achieving current and yet-to-be-defined strategic goals, which will enable the College to fulfill its educational mission—to prepare leading creative professionals for the 21st century. Working in close consultation with students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and other stakeholders, the President provides overall leadership and direction for the College.

**CANDIDATE SPECIFICATION: KEY SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Ideal Experience**
The Otis President should bring an evident passion for art, design, and education, and a demonstrated commitment to expanding the role that creativity and art and design can play in society. He/she will have a record of building success, a history of active engagement with art and design, and a strong commitment to excellence in higher education. It is anticipated that the next President of Otis College of Art and Design will bring a portfolio of experience that includes:

- Credibility based upon reputation built within an organization and/or industry as an outstanding leader, manager, and communicator who has earned the respect and trust of stakeholders
- Skill in securing significant philanthropic and other financial support
- Marketing, branding, and profile-raising expertise
- Evidence of substantive experience as a leader of people, and manager of budgets and related processes
- Strong professional credentials with experience in, or meaningful exposure to, academic settings
- A keen understanding of the challenges facing higher education today, and an eagerness to engage these on behalf of a distinguished independent college
- A history of collaborative leadership in working with stakeholders to create productive internal governance systems
- An understanding of how education delivery and organizational effectiveness can be transformed through the application of technology
- Success in connecting an organization to the larger community in which it resides
- An appreciation for and ability to work with international constituencies to identify and pursue opportunities to increase the scope and impact of Otis and nurture a global population.

**Major Responsibilities**

- Communicate to internal and external stakeholders a clear vision with practical strategies to enhance Otis’ reputation and position as a major competitive force in developing well-educated artists, designers, and cultural leaders, and as a critical educational, cultural, and economic asset in the local and regional communities.
- Significantly increase the College’s financial assets through a variety of channels.
- Oversee the completion of Otis’ major campus expansion.
• Ensure development and implementation of Otis’ marketing strategies to effectively build its brand, differentiate it from its peers, and optimize visibility and market share.

• Play an active and immersive role in the Los Angeles community by reaching out to community members and connecting them to the College.

• Champion the values of Otis College of Art and Design, particularly as they relate to appreciating and actively supporting and advocating for diversity in the broadest definition of the term.

• Respond to and help shape Otis’ strategic plan with inventiveness and farsighted consideration of the future of the College and its graduates.

• In concert with the senior leadership team, monitor and support curricular developments that reflect and complement the mission, the unique character of the College, and the changing needs and requirements of today’s art and design students.

• Strengthen and develop economic, philanthropic, cultural, and social ties in the Los Angeles region to promote the growing role of creativity in the economy and its beneficial impact on the region.

Critical Competencies for Success

Institutional Development

Build a culture of philanthropy that identifies, cultivates, and leverages existing and as yet untapped relationships with alumni, the for-profit and nonprofit communities, and other supporters. Demonstrate the ability to engage alumni and friends and leverage those relationships into a significant base of support. Continue to attract top-tier administrators, faculty, and students to Otis. In partnership with a high-functioning senior leadership team, build, enhance, and maintain world-class curricula and facilities that support leading art and design education.

Reputation and Brand Building

Clearly articulate a distinctive marketplace position and enhance Otis’ reputation as one of the premier art and design leaders and innovators locally, nationally, and internationally. As Otis’ ambassador, communicate the College’s vision with energy and passion in a way that highlights the influential role that Otis plays in the art and design sector. Exhibit exceptional acumen for community building and an eagerness to be the public face of Otis internally and externally.

Strategic and Visionary Leadership

In partnership with the Board of Trustees and a strong senior leadership team, develop and direct the implementation of a forward-looking vision for Otis that recognizes trends and opportunities that shape art and design education today and that can help Otis capitalize on those trends. Work closely with the senior leadership team to enhance current and future programmatic initiatives
and bring these to fruition with clarity and purpose, balancing academic goals and financial implications for long-term sustainability. Build a strong sense of community marked by collaboration, trust, respect, open communication, clear expectations, and accountability.

**Key Personal Characteristics**

- Outstanding communication skills
- Passion and energy for leading complex, multi-site organizations
- Appreciation for the arts and an understanding of art and design education and of art and design as professional sectors
- Sensitivity to and appreciation for the diverse views of a talented group of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and trustees, with the ability to inspire their trust, respect, and collaboration
- Creativity, imagination, energy, and lively intellectual curiosity
- Ability to inspire, collaborate, and lead with high emotional intelligence

**Applications and Nominations**

If you wish to submit application materials or nominate someone to serve as the next President of Otis College of Art and Design, please email to otispresident@spencerstuart.com.