



## **Executive Director, Center for the Environment**

Catawba College invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for an experienced and innovative leader to serve as its next Executive Director for the Center for the Environment. The Executive Director will ensure that Catawba will continue to provide a transformative education for its 1,300 students and foster environmental solutions to address societal needs. This position presents a unique opportunity for a leader who is committed to undergraduate education in a learning environment that values the personal formation of students, the exploration of vocation, and interaction with faculty and students who routinely work across varied disciplines.

The College recently received a gift to the endowment of \$200M, of which one-third is designated to excellence in the study and promotion of environmental stewardship and sustainability on campus and in the community. The Center for the Environment is an important component to meeting this commitment.

### **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

The [Center for the Environment](#)'s mission is to provide education and outreach centered on prevalent environmental challenges and to foster community-oriented sustainable solutions that can serve as a model for programs throughout the country. The Center for the Environment at Catawba College has been deeply involved in North Carolina's environmental issues since its inception in 1996. The Center strives to serve as a model to the region, lending expertise on a wide range of issues – from air and water quality to land preservation and sustainable development. In the process, Catawba students receive a value-added education through involvement in the Center's activities.

The Center for the Environment is currently involved in several major initiatives: the Campaign for Clean Air, the [National Youth Environmental Summit](#), the [North Carolina Green Schools program](#), and the promotion of sustainable practices.

The Center brings renowned speakers to the campus, offering students a rare chance to interact with respected environmental professionals. It also arranges opportunities for students to engage in campus projects that positively impact the environment. These real-world experiences offer a breadth of study typically found only at a large university. Consequently, Catawba students receive the best of both worlds: the breadth of a large university and the personalized education of a small college – an extraordinary combination.

Catawba College endeavors to offer the nation's premier undergraduate education in environmental studies, where the study and practice of environmental stewardship and sustainability are infused throughout the curriculum. The Center works closely with all departments across campus but especially with the [Biology](#) and [Environment and Sustainability](#) departments at Catawba College to offer students a wealth of opportunities beyond the classroom. This value-added education includes everything from field trips and professional conferences to internships and opportunities to teach members of the community about topics of special interest. Increasing collaboration between Catawba's academic departments and the Center will be an opportunity for the new Executive Director. Additionally, Catawba is hiring a cluster of faculty in various disciplines that will collaborate to model for all learners the use of interdisciplinary approaches to addressing important questions in environmental stewardship and sustainability. As you can see, the sky is the limit for the Center for the Environment's future. The transition to a new Executive Director, the first transition in the last 25 years, is an important opportunity for new vistas and ways of serving the Center's mission to be considered.

### **FRED STANBACK ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE**

The Fred Stanback Ecological Preserve is located behind the Center for the Environment facility. The 189-acre ecological preserve gives students ample opportunities for analyzing ecosystems and learning about conservation management as well as providing a habitat for wildlife and a source of water purification.

In 1998, the Center for the Environment at Catawba College worked with the LandTrust for Central North Carolina, now [Three Rivers Land Trust](#), to place 130 acres of its preserve under a permanent conservation easement, which ensures that the land will always be held in its natural state. The Center also worked with the LandTrust to secure the wildlife refuge, which has also been placed under a conservation easement. The Ecological Preserve is managed and maintained by the Center for the Environment staff, Catawba students, and volunteers. Members of the Catawba College and Salisbury community enjoy recreational opportunities with the Ecological Preserve's trails, which are viewable [here](#).

The preserve floodplain drains toward Grants Creek and includes Lake Baranski and numerous more recently created ponds and impoundments. A significant portion of the Preserve along with the adjacent Rowan Salisbury School property, Horizons Unlimited, have been designated by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program as a significant Natural Heritage Area.

The Ecological Preserve is overseen by Dean of Science and the Environment [Jay Bolin](#), a key partner and collaborator for the next Executive Director.

### **ELIZABETH STANBACK WILDLIFE GARDEN**

Native North Carolina plants grow in the Elizabeth Stanback Wildlife Garden, which surrounds the Center for the Environment. Designed as a naturalistic environment, Catawba College focuses on the native surroundings in the area. This garden is not only home to more than 160 native plant species, it is also different from many other public gardens in that the covenants of environmental stewardship are practiced in its maintenance and perpetuation. The Elizabeth Stanback Wildlife Garden not only provides a natural habitat for butterflies, insects, birds, and other wildlife, but also provides a learning laboratory for Catawba students.

## THE GREEN BUILDING

From the first day the [Center for the Environment facility](#) opened in 2001, it became a model of sustainability for the state. Bill Holman, then secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, called it “the wave of the future in resource and energy efficiency.”

The facility that houses the Center for the Environment was one of the first “green” buildings constructed in the state. The Center wanted to lead by example, encouraging others to use environmentally friendly products and practices in the construction of new facilities.

This structure reflects the spirit of the College’s environmental programs. The planning process, which was initiated long before construction began in November 1999, engaged everyone from the donors and president of the college to the faculty, staff, and students. The 21,000-square-foot building has emerged as a three-dimensional incarnation of the Center’s sustainable curriculum — an exciting teaching tool as well as an environmentally friendly sound project.

Located on the edge of the college’s 189-acre preserve, it merges seamlessly with the natural environment. Everything about the facility — from the site design to the environmentally friendly building materials, from energy and water conservation issues to recycling and waste management — is grounded in principles of sustainability. For example, Catawba students implemented the waste reduction plan, recycling more than 86 percent of the construction waste. This facility represents Catawba College’s commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of the earth’s resources. The Center for the Environment facility is undergoing enhancements presently, and it is expected that the Center’s permanent facility will reopen in January of 2023 with updates that will allow the facility to maintain its cutting-edge reputation.



## SALISBURY GREENWAY

The Center for the Environment has been instrumental in the development of the [Salisbury Greenway System](#), which is maintained for active recreation and modes of transportation other than the automobile. In the 15-plus years that Salisbury, North Carolina has been developing the greenway system, it has become increasingly evident that the development of systems within communities for car-free travel are important.

The Salisbury Greenway provides connections between recreational areas, parks, and natural areas. Through its construction of the greenway, the Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department fulfills its

mission to provide quality leisure services through safe, attractively maintained parks and diversified programs that meet the current and future needs of the community. The Forest Hill Park, located along the greenway, is a 9.4-acre park that is conveniently located and provides a greenway connector between Memorial Park and several elementary schools. The connector features an attractive bridge with inviting walking and sitting areas. The City of Salisbury is well on its way to achieving this goal but still has a few sections that need to be finished in order to complete a loop of Salisbury.

The Catawba College Ecological Preserve extends to the edge of the greenway where a small dam and natural areas exist.

## **ABOUT CATAWBA COLLEGE**

[Catawba College](#)'s scenic campus is located in the historic piedmont city of Salisbury, North Carolina, (pop. 34,000) located 45 minutes from the greater Charlotte area and the Greensboro and Winston-Salem areas. Spread out over 276 wooded acres and 41 buildings, the campus is a beautiful blend of neogothic architecture set on a shaded hillside adjacent to the Center for the Environment facility and the ecological preserve. Centrally located, it is only two hours away from the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina and four hours away from some of the best beaches on the Atlantic Coast.

Catawba's 1,300 students hail from 29 U.S. states and 19 foreign countries. Like the student body, the Catawba faculty is broadly diverse. It embodies a significant range of opinion and philosophy, founded in study at many of the nation's leading colleges and universities. Thirty-six percent of students identify as first-generation students, 45 percent of students are Pell-eligible, and 45 percent of 2019-20 first-year students identify as non-white (21 percent African American, 11 percent Hispanic). All Catawba students receive financial aid, and, on average, 78 percent of financial need is met by the College. The first-year retention rate for full-time undergraduates is 73 percent. Within six months of graduation, 97 percent of Catawba alumni are employed professionally or enrolled in graduate school.

Of the 90 full-time teaching faculty employed at Catawba, 83 percent hold the doctorate or terminal degree in their discipline. Ranked as one of the best colleges in the south, Catawba offers 70 [fields of study](#). Catawba provides an education focused on an institutional philosophy of a liberal education, which entails a broad range of knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, and individual and social responsibility fostered and developed in all academic programs. Catawba is a learning community that provides students unique opportunities to explore vocation, helping students to consider their calling, their passions, and their purpose as they prepare to reach their highest potential. Catawba's mission is to provide "students an education rich in personal attention that blends the knowledge and competencies of liberal studies with career preparation" and to enable "students to reach their highest potential while becoming responsible citizens."

Catawba is a supportive community committed to students both in and out of the classroom. The College's faculty are not only excellent teachers, but individuals who also have the capacity to guide and challenge students through interaction with them in clubs, scholastic organizations, and athletic and social activities. Faculty and staff are genuinely committed to the mission of the College, which expresses concern for the total development of the student. The 12:1 student-faculty ratio supports an environment where former students often attribute their success to the fact that faculty members cared about them as persons, not students, in an academic environment.

In [Salisbury](#), you will find both a quiet countryside filled with wineries and pick-your-own farms, and a bustling downtown district with breweries, historic trolleys, a thriving arts scene, and more. Salisbury is home to the [Lee Street Theatre](#), the [Meroney Theater](#), the [Novell Theater](#), and the [Salisbury Symphony Orchestra](#).

## **GREEN CAMPUS**

Catawba College has taken multiple steps to enhance the environmental friendliness of the campus. In 2004, students in the environmental club, NatureSAFE, revived campus recycling. Later, students in the Environmental and Sustainability Program launched a Campus Greening Initiative that spawned energy and water-efficient measures as well as improvements in waste reduction. In 2007, the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling was established within the facilities department to champion waste reduction and recycling efforts. The College has ramped up efforts even further in the past years.

Catawba College has been named to *The Princeton Review's* 2021 Top 50 Green Colleges list. *The Princeton Review* noted Catawba's "well-rounded education grounded in the liberal arts, a commitment to environmental sustainability, and classes structured around current events." Additionally, *The Princeton Review* recently awarded Catawba College a Green Rating score 97 out of 99 in its [Green Colleges Guide](#).

## **CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOALS**

Themes that emerged during 2021 planning sessions and workshops appear below. These foci are not dictates for the next Executive Director but forums for gathering insights as the Center embarks on future planning and the leadership transition.

**Educate** by greening the curriculum, using campus as a living lab, and acknowledging the indigenous environment.

- Affirm that stewardship should continue to be the cornerstone of the Center for the Environment's mission focused on aligning with the environmental jobs of the future;
- Integrate environmental studies throughout Catawba College's greater curriculum and create bridges between environmental studies and other departments throughout the College;
- Recognize student ambassadors and encourage expanded service-learning opportunities within the Center's mission; and,
- Provide opportunities for immersive academic experiences and best practices in environmental stewardship and resource conservation in both the campus setting and campus operations.

**Engage** with the community and regional resources, amplify partnerships and allied organizations, and expand community programming.

- Continue and expand outreach to schools and engage with younger students to animate greater interest in the environment and its relationship with their future;
- Develop a new model to engage with diverse communities, sharing environmental research and best practices that contribute to greater understanding, awareness, and knowledge of the impact and importance of environmental stewardship;
- Involve the community by inviting environmental educators and researchers for conferences, summits, and a speaker series;

- Expand how the Center and Catawba College more broadly broadcast learning and outreach opportunities to better reach targeted audiences;
- Find creative ways to engage with and educate Catawba College campus users;
- Partner with other higher education institutions in the region to bring greater environmental best practices to their campuses; and,
- Engage with local companies and offer professional training as part of workforce development, to educate them on sustainable practices relative to their business.

**Advocate** and support policy changes and work to better align change/social justice advocacy.

- Host local and regional environmental summits for policy makers and business leaders that bring national and international speakers to Catawba College;
- Educate and raise awareness in the media, providing a scientific and environmental lens on important climate issues; and,
- Address the urgent need for political councils at all levels (locally and regionally) to understand and create policies that advocate for sustainable changes.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

The environmental justice movement is an important and growing area of contribution for the Center. The College's [Equity, Diversity, Justice, and Inclusion \(EDJI\) Task Force](#) aims to build a campus community where all members thrive by working to cultivate critical conversations and practices that close opportunity gaps and promote equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion on our campus and in the larger community. The intentionality of this group stems from the principles of supportive solidarity. An empathic understanding of the complex ways in which individuals interact with systems and institutions is an imperative for progress, and the Task Force works to support and amplify the voices of Catawba's more underserved students, faculty, and staff.

The EDJI Task Force asks: What can we as a community do to actively influence the social change needed to make an impactful difference in our world? With this orientation, one easily can see opportunities for collaboration and reinforcing support between the Center for the Environment and the efforts undertaken by Catawba College's EDJI Task Force.

## **THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Reporting to Catawba College's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs [Dr. Constance Rogers-Lowery](#), with a dotted-line report to [President David Nelson](#), the Executive Director will oversee the Center's activities and talented [staff](#).

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**Plan and implement a visionary strategy** – In collaboration with Catawba College's leadership, the Executive Director will define the Center's immediate and long-term strategic priorities and identify actionable means for achieving excellence and influence. They will develop the Center's next strategic

plan with transparency, clarity, and the full participation of others, thoughtfully navigating the challenges too often encountered by interdisciplinary environmental centers at colleges and universities. The Executive Director will facilitate the execution of the plan, bringing experienced judgment, creative perspective, and, crucially, a naturally inclusive personality.

**Develop strategic partnerships** – The Executive Director will build sustainable, strategic relationships with Catawba College faculty, staff, and students as well as local community representatives and organizations (including those that compete with, as well as complement, the Center’s initiatives). They will work with stakeholders to identify emerging research opportunities and forge coalitions that align with the Center’s mission and optimize its tools and resources. Partnerships could include, but are not limited to, project development and execution collaborations, organizational affiliations, professional development programming, conferences and events, commissions, and advocacy coalitions.

**Serve as a leading voice and spokesperson** – The Executive Director will be a powerful voice for the Center, serving as a bridge builder between Catawba College, the Salisbury and regional community, and a broad network that includes prospective community collaborators, partners and supporters on campus, organizational partners, policymakers, donors, foundations, government agencies, and others. They will persuasively share the story of the Center and engage others in communicating its success.

**Organize and lead community-based research** – As the Center evolves over time, the Executive Director will engage in an array of new and varied activities in support of its mission. They will ensure the appropriate resources, processes, policies, and procedures are in place to support the Center’s development and both widen and sustain its reciprocal relationships with increasingly diverse stakeholders.

**Foster a culture of collaboration, communication, and cohesion** – As a highly visible feature of Catawba College, the Center is advantageously positioned to enjoy the best of both an institution of higher education and an advocacy and impact organization. The Executive Director must take full advantage of this unique identity and set of relationships by realizing and celebrating the synergies that exist. They will model creative and inclusive leadership and develop an organizational culture that models the values of Catawba College.

**Attract, support, and develop a diverse and high-performing team** – Through its home at Catawba College and its deep relationship with local partners, the Center boasts access to a strong team of leaders, faculty, students, and staff deeply committed to their work and the mission that the Center represents. It will be crucial that the Executive Director lead team member recruitment and retention efforts that promote



diversity, equity, inclusion, professional development, career advancement, and technical excellence. The Executive Director will carefully and consistently incorporate themes from the College's strategic plans, build on Catawba's momentum, and draw on the distinctive assets that both afford to attract and retain talented professionals for Center initiatives.

**Develop and implement an operational strategy that supports growth** — Infrastructure developments that both promote and support the Center's growth are crucial. The Executive Director will be instrumental in ensuring that the aspirations of the Center are realized and supported by internal processes and systems that reflect the needs and stature of a signature Catawba College initiative. They will have the opportunity to identify and address the Center's evolving needs in areas such as technology, physical space, staff hiring and development, budget processes, student and fellows support, donor engagement, and others as identified.

### **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

- Demonstrated entrepreneurial experience, including formulating and executing on a strategic plan in support of growing partnerships, programs, activity, and impact;
- Experience with environmental issues central to the Center's activities;
- Outstanding diplomatic and negotiation skills and the ability to articulate complex and nuanced topics accurately in multiple contexts;
- An agent of change with the ability to influence and persuade among peers and partners;
- Exceptional project management experience with strong attention to detail and the ability to manage quick-turnaround deliverables, long-term strategy implementation, reporting, and metrics tracking;
- A clear, open, and relatable communication style, with the skills to adapt information delivery to a wide array of internal and external constituents;
- Strong inclination toward experience with interdisciplinary collaboration and an ability to work across constituencies;
- Keen emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and the ability to work well on a team;
- The energy, enthusiasm, and ability to secure partnerships of impact, including garnering support from private sector sources;
- Excellent decision-making and delegating abilities paired with a transparent, collegial, inclusive, and consensus-building approach to implementing change that draws in talented parties;
- The ability to develop positive, memorable experiences that attract leaders, participants, and collaborators from diverse fields within the Center's topical foci for the long term;
- Imagination, persistence, and integrity;
- The ability to represent the Center to a wide array of constituents to bolster research-to-impact opportunities and communicate this work externally in ways that focus positive attention on the Center and its partners;
- Demonstrated success in developing and motivating internal teams, especially those consisting of faculty who can be led through influence rather than traditional hierarchies;



- Facility with budgets and a record of effectively allocating resources;
- Demonstrated leadership practices that foster diversity, inclusion, and equity within an organization and a history of promoting initiatives and practices that support scholars and practitioners from underrepresented groups;
- Demonstrated commitment to transparency;
- An openness to teaching Catawba College courses as time allows;
- An advanced degree (M.A., M.B.A., J.D., Ph.D.); and,
- Experience in or demonstrated familiarity with higher education.

For best consideration, please send all nominations and expressions of interest to:



Jim Sirianni, Managing Director  
Sara Swisher-Anderson, Senior Associate  
Storbeck Search  
[CatawbaEDcenterforenv@storbecksearch.com](mailto:CatawbaEDcenterforenv@storbecksearch.com)

*Catawba College is an equal opportunity employer. As such, the College is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all employees, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status, unless allowed by law and deemed necessary to the operation of the College. The College complies with all federal, state, and local laws governing non-discrimination.*