



## **Position Description**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

#### **ASIAN CULTURAL COUNCIL (New York, NY)**

#### **ABOUT ASIAN CULTURAL COUNCIL:**

The Asian Cultural Council (ACC) advances international dialogue, understanding, and respect through cultural exchange activities in Asia and the United States to create a more harmonious and peaceful world. This mission is accomplished through fellowships, grants, and other programs that support individual artists, scholars, arts professionals, and cultural institutions.

Established by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in 1963 as the Asian Cultural Program of the JDR 3rd Fund to support cultural exchange in Asia and the US through grants to individuals and organizations working in the visual and performing arts, ACC incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 1980. Based in New York City, ACC established offices as well as partner foundations in Tokyo (1983), Hong Kong (1986), Taipei (1995), and Manila (2000). To date, ACC has supported over 6,000 exchanges across 26 countries and regions, and 16 artistic disciplines.

As a grantmaking and grantseeking organization, ACC raises funds from individual, foundation, and corporate donors. ACC also convenes arts leaders, fostering dialogue around the importance of cultural exchange in developing understanding and respect across international and cultural borders. Fellowships to individuals include not only grant funds to cover the costs of international travel, per diem, and research activities, but also substantial program support in the form of professional guidance, introductions to artists and other cultural leaders, and extensive logistical assistance. In addition, ACC supports cultural institutions to further its mission.

For more information please visit: [www.asianculturalcouncil.org](http://www.asianculturalcouncil.org).

#### **THE OPPORTUNITY:**

ACC is seeking a visionary leader with a proven track record of professional success and a passion to build and lead a dynamic, innovative, and unique organization focused on advancing cultural exchange between Asia and the US. The Executive Director will be charged with building a strategic vision for ACC that will: balance its Asia and New York offices; embrace the organization's 60-year-old tradition while bringing it into the digital age; forge partnerships with multiple entities to strengthen its mission; and continue to transform and impact arts and culture in Asia and the US, solidifying ACC's strong presence in the cultural exchange field.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSITION:**

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director (ED) oversees all aspects of the organization's work, including the execution of organizational strategies and oversight of the strategic, programmatic, fundraising, communications, human resources, and financial operations. This includes oversight of the \$4-4.5 million annual operating budget and \$30 million endowment and a total staff of 25, including staff members in New York City and Directors of the four regional offices. In addition to team leadership, the ED will also maintain key relationships with leadership of the affiliate foundations of each regional office, patron groups, as well as with other arts and cultural institutions in Asia and the US.

Key responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- Champion ACC's Vision: describe the ACC vision in a clear, engaging, and exciting way for all stakeholders, and serve as a compelling spokesperson for ACC's work in Asia and the US.
- Balance Resources: the three most important ones being people, ideas and capital. The ED must manage, attract and secure all three in the right quantities and at the right time.
- Anticipate and Respond to Dynamic Changes: Asia and the US are changing rapidly. The ED must anticipate such changes and respond accordingly, including developing new opportunities as they will surely emerge.
- Expand Fundraising: the ED must communicate with new and existing patron groups and donors, play an active role in any capital campaigns and promote a membership group in New York.
- Encourage and Align Asian Offices: ensure the ongoing alignment of the Asian offices with ACC's vision, while encouraging office initiatives from programming through fundraising.
- Lead the 60th Anniversary: in 2023, ACC will celebrate its 60th Anniversary; the ED will oversee events and fundraising to honor ACC's legacy while positioning ACC toward the future.
- Drive Impact: the ED sets the bar for the level of performance to be reached; the ED will lead an ambitious agenda that accelerates impact and is open to transformational ideas.
- Cultivate Partnerships: design effective partnerships internationally and in the US to expand ACC's outreach and mission.
- Nurture Alumni Network: ACC's alumni network in Asia and in the US is its greatest asset; the ED will nurture and strengthen ACC's relationships with its alumni community in Asia and in the US to further the mission of ACC.
- Enhance Technology: ensure ACC's platforms, including but not limited to the database, website, communications and programming platforms are using optimal technology. The ED will facilitate 'omnichannel' approaches to arts exchange, ensuring for best practice construction and most importantly best use integration of technology to promote and move ACC's mission forward.
- Represent ACC: serve as a compelling and credible ambassador of ACC's work to a wide and diverse range of people and organizations.

- Sustain and Enhance the Culture: the ED ensures that ACC's core values are applied consistently from top to bottom, throughout the organization.
- Make Sound Decisions: the ED must be able to make tough decisions in a thoughtful, balanced, and inclusive manner.

#### **CAPABILITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED:**

The Executive Director will have a passion for the arts and culture as well as an understanding and strong interest (demonstrable by academic and/or relevant professional and/or personal experiences) in the countries of Asia. A belief that cultural exchange will create greater understanding must be coupled with a strong commitment to and understanding of the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. As such, the ED will possess a high level of cultural competence, effectively incorporating DEI into all aspects of their work, and working productively across lines of difference.

The ED will also possess the following critical leadership capabilities:

##### Strategic Thinking

As the leader of multiple goal-driven programs focused on cultural exchange between Asia and the US, the ED will do this by creating a strategy and vision that:

- Integrates current programmatic issues and initiatives, competitive challenges, core values, and future needs in a clear and coherent way.
- Provides a clear strategic direction for the entire organization and recognizing the external environment, leading to logical changes in actions across the organization.
- Reaches beyond five years.

##### Collaborating and Influencing:

The ED will need to mobilize a range of partners to collaborate with ACC to achieve its vision. Therefore, the ED:

- Uses complex, coordinated influencing/negotiation strategies, adapted to people, organizations and/or the situation, e.g., networks.
- Leverages direct reports to facilitate increased collaboration across the organization, tapping their motives and values to energize them.
- Builds partnerships based on a common agreement and looks for synergies.
- Travels, including overseas when appropriate, to build ongoing partnerships with key stakeholders.

##### Leading People:

ACC's strength is its people. The ED will foster a sense of community, common purpose, and development of staff. Therefore, the ED:

- Inspires and motivates people to mobilize behind the long-term direction and to collaborate on how to reach it.

- Delegates strategic objectives to the whole team with clear and explicit intent; knows the precise level of challenge and how individual team members will handle it.
- Sets up forums or practices to reinforce independent and open communication among the team members.
- Holds people accountable for their commitments, providing clarity and outlining in advance ramifications of failure.

Other desired personal characteristics include:

- Intellectually curious
- A steady source of optimism and energy
- Entrepreneurial and confident
- Honest, ethical, and known for integrity and credibility
- Principled, and values- and mission-driven
- Able to work well with, listen to, and respect all
- Versatile, centered, strategic, and able to take the long view
- Open to and excited by creative ideas about how to build and grow the organization
- Cool under fire; able to balance multiple points of view, and able to negotiate and influence effectively.

#### **CAREER PATH LEADING TO THIS POSITION:**

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success in a senior leadership position, having built high-performing teams and organizations. Balancing diplomacy and inclusion with charisma and decisiveness, the Executive Director will have generated widespread support for an organization through strategic planning and collaborative efforts with internal and external stakeholders. Demonstrated successful experience and comfort with fundraising is essential. Experience in creating and implementing plans, as well as using data in assessment and decision-making will also be important. The ED should also have a good understanding of effective, forward-looking fiscal management, including annual budgeting and cash flow analysis, and implications for nonprofits. Team management experience is required, and the successful candidate must demonstrate an ability to oversee, inspire, and collaborate with staff and will have a clearly articulated management philosophy which supports a positive team culture, high performance, and employee retention. Excellent communication skills, including public speaking and writing skills, and success in forming strong community partnerships are essential and expected. Experience working with volunteer philanthropic boards will be important. Although the person is most likely to come from the nonprofit sector, candidates with transferrable experience and passion for cultural exchange are encouraged to apply. A strong grasp of current geopolitical issues in Asia and Asia-US relations is required. Experience working and managing teams internationally, particularly in Asia, and proficiency in a language(s) other than English will be strongly preferred.

#### **COMPENSATION:**

Salary range is \$200,000-\$225,000 annually.

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS:**

Once safely permitted post-Covid-19, the Executive Director's role will require travel between the U.S. and Asia and attendance at performances and other evening or weekend events.

**TO APPLY:**

Please direct inquiries, nominations and applications, including resume and a letter of interest in confidence to:

Karin Berger Stellar  
Partner, Morris & Berger  
[kstellar@morrisberger.com](mailto:kstellar@morrisberger.com)  
Telephone 818-507-1234  
*Electronic submission is required.*

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