

# EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE

## Chief Operating Officer (COO)

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This search is being conducted by:

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# I. Position Description

## The Role and Its Function

The **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** reports to ASM's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The COO works closely with the CEO at all times, and is among the key leaders asked to step in when the CEO is absent. The COO is accountable to the CEO for three primary functions:

- Support the CEO in communicating strategic intent to the COO's direct reports, and translate that intent into effective programmatic operations. This includes reporting to and consulting with the CEO on operational opportunities, progress, risks and issues.
- Supporting a team of seven executive level direct reports in implementing organizational strategy. This includes fostering continuous improvement and maximizing programmatic performance within each business unit, as well as facilitating appropriate cross-program collaboration.
- Partnering with a team of six CEO direct reports to support enterprise level effectiveness and strategy implementation. This includes proactively bringing other departments to the table to ensure that critical enterprise views are considered in Society programmatic operations.

The COO must be an effective listener, communicator and facilitator. The COO drives success by complementing the expertise of her/his direct reports with additional business acumen and critical thinking/analysis. This acumen includes the ability to identify industry and environmental opportunities and threats, and orient program operations accordingly.

The COO plays a key role in helping to ensure that organizational priorities translate into clear, tangible and realistic targeted outcomes. The COO helps the CEO "connect the dots" for the senior team and for all staff by linking strategic concepts to effective implementation approaches. By keeping these priorities in focus, the COO supports her/his direct reports in their efforts to achieve those outcomes.

The COO works closely with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to ensure financial performance measurement of the various units.

The COO actively manages a productive dynamic between her/his direct reports and the CEO. This dynamic balances appropriate direct access to the CEO for strategic input and the CEO's need to reserve bandwidth to engage with the Board of Directors and key volunteer and external stakeholders.

### Level of Effort Estimates

- Support the CEO: 30%
- Support COO Direct reports: 50%
- Partner with CEO Direct reports: 20%

### ASM Departments Reporting to the COO

- American Academy of Microbiology
- Clinical and Public Health Microbiology
- Education
- International Affairs
- Journals
- Meetings
- Press

## Desired Experience and Capabilities

The successful COO candidate possesses strong business acumen and experience quantifying business opportunities, risks and return on investment.

Because ASM's programs are also the Society's primary sources of revenue, the COO must have a proven track record of supporting profitable revenue growth. Experience launching new products, services and innovation initiatives preferred. Strong analytical skills and data management are highly desirable. The COO must possess sound judgement to balance the needs of revenue generating programs and programs that invest ASM resources mission-oriented outcomes.

The Society's programs center on content- and information-based products and services. Experience in developing and monetizing information-based products is desirable.

The COO candidate's track record should include successfully leading operations and process improvement efforts. The candidate makes effective use of data, including financial models, to identify options and to support operational decision making. The ability to seek out and share leading practices that foster continuous improvement and operational effectiveness is highly desired.

The COO must have experience managing and developing senior level direct reports, helping them to further their skills and abilities as people managers, operational managers and organizational leaders.

Experience within matrixed organizations of ASM's size or larger may be helpful, especially the ability to foster positive, collaborative relationships and find "win-win" approaches with other executives.

The COO must have exceptional listening skills, and actively seek to understand and expand on the ideas of her/his direct reports. The successful candidate expertly synthesizes ideas and "connects the dots" between opportunities to realize the value in program concepts and strategies.

## Personal Attributes

The successful COO candidate embraces the concept of servant leadership. She/he will realize their own success through the support of her/his direct reports, and the growth of the programs these individuals direct. The COO recognizes and fosters the expertise of others and complements this with her/his own business skills. The COO will support and learn with other ASM staff leaders as they continue to

embrace and evolve what servant leadership means within the Society.

The COO is a "good fit" for working in close partnership with the CEO, to channel the organization's decisions, policies and priorities.

The COO possesses a high level of emotional intelligence, and continuously evaluates when team success requires support and facilitation, versus specific directional leadership.

The COO actively seeks out and values individual diversity and diverse perspectives, foremost promoting gender, race and diversity in general with the ASM team. She/he proactively evaluates and ensures that the right stakeholders are at the table to evaluate and decide on operational direction.

The COO is as comfortable sharing what she/he does not know, as they are sharing their knowledge and expertise. The COO manages ambiguity successfully by proactively seeking paths forward and options to successfully implement organizational strategy.

The successful candidate respects well-reasoned push back, and respectfully pushes back on other ASM leaders. The COO always focuses this push back on constructive and positive discussion that drives towards improved operational outcomes.

The successful COO candidate is politically astute, but not driven by politics; rather by evidence and data. Individuals from the for-profit sector are encouraged to apply, but experience with association governance structures and volunteer-based dynamics are critical to the COO's success.

The COO must be able to develop positive working relationships with Board and Committee volunteers. These relationships should focus on the right balance between directional inputs from volunteers and sound business execution by ASM staff teams.

## II. Organization Review

### About ASM

The American Society for Microbiology is the largest single life science society, composed of more than 30,000 scientists and health professionals. ASM's mission is to promote and advance the microbial sciences. ASM has a staff of 170 employees and generates \$52 million in revenue.

The Society advances the microbial sciences through conferences, publications, certifications and educational opportunities. It enhances laboratory capacity around the globe through training and resources. It provides a network for scientists in academia, industry and clinical settings. Additionally, ASM promotes a deeper understanding of the microbial sciences to diverse audiences.

### Leadership

- **Michele Swanson**, *President*
- **Stefano Bertuzzi**, *CEO*
- **Robin Patel**, *President-Elect*
- **Pessy Cotter**, *Past President*
- **Tim Donohue**, *Secretary*
- **Marylynn Yates**, *Treasurer*

### Headquarters

1752 N Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

### Web Presence

[www.asm.org](http://www.asm.org)

## III. About Vetted Solutions

The ASM has retained Vetted Solutions to serve as its partner for this search. For confidential consideration, please contact the search partner below. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume/CV directly to Vetted Solutions.



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**Vetted Solutions** is an executive search firm specializing in association, nonprofit, and hospitality/destination marketing community, recruiting and consulting. We focus on CEO and senior staff positions.

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