

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

LANDSCAPE & GROUNDS DIRECTOR

— POSITION DESCRIPTION —



The University of Oklahoma is seeking a visionary and accomplished leader to serve as Landscape & Grounds Director, overseeing the care, stewardship, and enhancement of all campus landscapes and grounds across the Norman campus. This highly visible leadership role is responsible for shaping and maintaining one of the university's most prominent assets — its outdoor environment — ensuring that OU's campus remains beautiful, safe, sustainable, and welcoming for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors.

THE UNIVERSITY & CAMPUS GROUNDS

Founded in 1890, the University of Oklahoma is the state’s flagship public research university, located in Norman approximately 20 miles south of Oklahoma City with roughly 3,200 acres, noted for its distinctive Cherokee Gothic architecture and award-winning landscaping. The Norman campus enrolls more than 30,000 students and consistently ranks among the most beautiful campuses in the nation.

The university has seen record setting enrollment as well as research growth and through the "[Lead On, University](#)" strategic plan, bold priorities have been set for OU's path forward. To ensure the campus evolves in ways that further the mission, elevate the student experience, and position OU for the next generation, a comprehensive [Campus Master Planning](#) process has been launched. The planning effort will establish a long-term framework to inform the physical evolution of OU's Norman campus. Guided by the priorities in the Strategic Plan, the Campus Master Plan will establish a cohesive vision that positions the university for responsible, sustainable growth while stewarding the history and character that define the OU experience.

The campus outdoor environment is among the university’s most treasured assets. From the tulip and mum displays of the South Oval to the tree-lined walks and historic quadrangles, OU’s grounds shape the daily experience of the Sooner community and leave lasting impressions on prospective students, alumni, and visitors alike. The Landscape & Grounds Director stewards this environment and carries forward the traditions that make the campus distinctive.

AT A GLANCE

- ~3,200 acres of central campus in Norman, Oklahoma
- 30,000+ students enrolled on the Norman campus
- Recognized member of Tree Campus USA
- Approximately **2,000** acres maintained by Landscape Services
- **Founded 1890** — flagship institution of the State of Oklahoma

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Facilities Management is responsible for meeting the University’s ever-changing needs for facility maintenance, utilities, landscape and custodial services. The team proudly serves University facilities and utilities while providing outstanding customer service to the campus community. The department employs more than 400 continuous, full-time employees at the OU-Norman campus. Employees include talented crafts people, skilled professionals, and highly qualified support personnel; employees make campus a comfortable place to study, work, live, play or just visit.

Service Areas within the Facilities Management Team include Facilities Services, Access Control, Custodial Services, Landscape Services, Maintenance Services, Projects and Remodeling, Sustainability, and Utilities.

THE LANDSCAPE & GROUNDS PROGRAM

The Department of Landscape and Grounds maintains over 3,000 acres of campus lawns and gardens and is organized around several core service areas that together sustain the appearance, health, and function of the campus outdoor environment:

GARDENING	Planting and monitoring of flowers, shrubs, and flower beds, including the campus’ signature seasonal displays. There are over 628,000 square feet of garden beds.
PEST CONTROL	Indoor and outdoor pest control response.
TURF MANAGEMENT	Mowing and edging of grass and turf and application of IPM.
TREE SERVICES	Planting and trimming of trees, in support of OU’s Tree Campus USA designation. OU maintains a campus tree advisory committee, a campus tree care plan, dedicated annual expenditures, Arbor Day observance, and student-service learning projects.

THE MUMS TRADITION

One of the university’s most beloved traditions, the mums display on the South Oval spans more than 70 years. Each year the Director of Landscape Services and the Landscape team create an entirely new design, and the team plants between 15,000 and 22,000 chrysanthemums on campus annually. Beds are typically planted in mid-to-late June with a target bloom timed to Homecoming in mid-to-late October, then pulled the week of Thanksgiving, when the public is welcome to take the plants. Leading and evolving this tradition is a signature responsibility of the role. In addition, the iconic South Oval is the main location for high-profile events. In 2025, those events included hosting ESPN College Gameday twice, SEC Nation three times, the Dan and Shay concert, as well as a daily holiday lights display in November and December.



A NEW CHRYSANTHEMUM DESIGN IS CREATED FOR THE SOUTH OVAL EACH YEAR



THE SEED SOWER OVERLOOKS OVER 3,000 ACRES OF MAINTAINED LAWNS AND GARDENS ACROSS THE NORMAN CAMPUS

THE POSITION

The Director provides strategic, operational, and administrative leadership for all landscape and grounds services, directing the planning, maintenance, renewal, and long-term development of the university's extensive outdoor spaces.

The position leads and inspires a large and diverse operation responsible for campus landscaping, horticulture, grounds maintenance, irrigation, seasonal displays, and environmental stewardship initiatives; and shapes a positive and productive team culture by building trust, cultivating staff buy-in, encouraging professional growth, and guiding teams through change with a focus on collaboration, service excellence, and continuous improvement.

Working closely with university leadership and campus partners, the Director establishes landscape standards, manages resources and budgets, oversees design review and project implementation, and develops long-range plans that support the university's mission and enhance the campus experience. The Director champions innovation, sustainability, operational excellence, and customer-focused service while ensuring compliance with safety requirements, university policies, environmental standards, and applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting to the Senior Director of Facilities Management, and sitting on the Senior Leadership team, the Director leads a team of 43 and an operation budget of \$7.7 million.

KEY DUTIES AND PRIORITIES

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP & SERVICE DELIVERY

- Direct the daily and strategic operations of Landscape Services, including landscape maintenance, horticulture, turf management, arboriculture, landscape construction, hardscape maintenance, and related campus exterior services.
- Establish project priorities, allocate resources, and oversee project execution to ensure work is completed safely, efficiently, on schedule, within budget, and in accordance with established quality standards.
- Coordinate landscape support for campus events, seasonal operations, emergency response activities, and other university operational needs.
- Steward the university's signature horticultural traditions and seasonal displays — including the South Oval mums — and preserve the character of OU's award-winning campus landscape.
- Champion innovation, sustainability, operational excellence, and customer-focused service across all landscape and grounds operations, ensuring an exceptional campus experience for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors.
- Monitor departmental performance using inspections, work management systems, operational metrics, customer feedback, and industry best practices to support continuous improvement and service excellence.
- Perform other duties as assigned to support departmental and institutional objectives.

PLANNING, DESIGN & CAMPUS STEWARDSHIP

- Develop, implement, and maintain the campus landscape master plan, design standards, maintenance standards, service levels, and long-term stewardship strategies that support the university's strategic, operational, and sustainability goals.
- Provide leadership and professional expertise for campus planning, landscape architecture, and capital improvement projects, including the planning, design, review, and implementation of new construction, renovations, infrastructure improvements, and campus beautification initiatives.
- Review landscape designs, construction documents, site plans, planting plans, irrigation systems, and hardscape improvements to ensure compliance with university standards, accessibility requirements, sustainability objectives, regulatory requirements, and long-term maintenance considerations.
- Evaluate existing campus landscapes and recommend improvements that enhance safety, functionality, aesthetics, environmental stewardship, and the overall campus experience.

TEAM LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Lead, develop, and supervise departmental personnel through workforce planning, recruitment, hiring, onboarding, training, performance management, coaching, employee development, and corrective action.
- Establish and enforce departmental policies, operating procedures, safety programs, equipment standards, regulatory compliance, and employee training to promote a safe and effective work environment.
- Collaborate with university leadership, Facilities Management, architects, engineers, planners, contractors, consultants, and campus stakeholders to coordinate projects, support institutional priorities, and ensure successful project delivery.
- Represent Landscape Services on university committees, planning initiatives, capital project teams, and Facilities Management leadership meetings.

FISCAL & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- Prepare and manage operating and capital budgets, project cost estimates, contracts, procurement activities, expenditures, payroll approvals, and other administrative functions related to Landscape Services.
- Manage consultant and contractor performance, including procurement, contract administration, inspections, and acceptance of completed work.

QUALIFICATIONS

REQUIRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor's degree in horticulture, plant and soil sciences, agriculture, landscape management, landscape architecture, environmental science, construction management, public administration, business administration, facilities management, or a related field.
- Seven years of progressively responsible experience in landscape and grounds operations, horticulture, facilities operations, parks management, landscape construction, campus services, or a closely related field. The required experience must include at least two years of management or supervisory responsibility involving employees, budgets, contractors, projects, or operational planning.
- **Equivalency / substitution** — a total of 11 years of combined education and progressively responsible related experience is required. Four years of the required experience may substitute for a bachelor's degree.

TO APPLY

OU has engaged Opus Partners to support this search. Kenna Boyd, Partner, and Katie Dean, Senior Partner, are leading the search, which will remain confidential until the final stage of campus visits. For additional information, to nominate qualified candidates, or to apply, please contact kenna.boyd@opuspartners.net

To be considered candidates must provide a resume and a letter of introduction that addresses the specific responsibilities, expectations, and qualifications described above. Please consult Opus Partners for more information about the application

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The University, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, genetic information, gender identity/expression (consistent with applicable law), age (40 or older), religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, housing, financial aid, and educational services.