



# Position Specification



Pew Research Center

Vice President of Research



## Our Client

Pew Research Center is a highly respected, nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the world. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic analysis, and other data-driven social science research to achieve its mission of generating a foundation of facts that enrich the public dialogue and support sound decision-making. They do not take policy positions. They are nonprofit, nonpartisan, and nonadvocacy. Their mission is to inform, not to prescribe. They value independence, objectivity, accuracy, rigor, humility, transparency, and innovation.

The Center's empirical research on a wide range of [topics](#) helps U.S. and international policymakers, civic leaders, educators and the public at large understand and address some of the world's most challenging problems. Their public opinion surveys allow the voice of the people to be heard, and their demographic and economic analyses provide context to understand how the world is changing. As stated in the Center's founding charter, "Fact-based information is the fuel democracies run on—the raw material from which societies identify problems and construct solutions."

Their primary areas of study include politics and policy; news habits and media; the internet and technology; religion; race and ethnicity; international affairs; social, demographic and economic trends; science; research methodology and data science. They're committed to meeting the highest [methodological standards](#) — and to exploring the [newest frontiers](#) of research, including an ongoing commitment to the developing field of computational social science.

## People

The Center is led by [Michael Dimock](#) and [Claudia Deane](#) and has a staff of about 170 people. Their [experts](#) combine the observational and storytelling skills of journalists with the analytical rigor of social scientists. Pew Research Center is stewarded by a nine-member [volunteer board](#).

Because Pew Research Center aims to inform policymakers and the public by holding a mirror to society, it is important to them to reflect society's many voices, backgrounds and perspectives. Being inclusive, diverse and equitable is foundational to the Center's mission and is integral to how the Center achieves excellence. This is reflected in their staff [demographics](#).

## Funding

They are a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, their primary funder. They partner strategically with philanthropists and institutional funders who share their commitment to impartial research and data that drive discussion.

## Pew Research Center Reach in 2021

- The Center issued 447 publications, an average of 37 each month (or more than one each day).

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- The [Center's website](#) drew 54.5 million visitors in 2021, their second highest annual total after the juggernaut that was 2020. Roughly a quarter of their web traffic is from international visitors.
- Their social media channels had more than 1.8 million followers, and they netted strong follower increases on growing platforms Instagram and LinkedIn.
- The Center earned nearly 14,000 unique media clips, or an average of 38 daily and they are annually the most cited think tank.
- Their data was cited 230 times by federal U.S. policymakers, including President Joe Biden, Supreme Court Associate Justice Stephen Breyer, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel, former RNC Chair Michael Steel, 197 members of Congress, and 24 federal departments or agencies.
- Internationally, their work was cited by the OECD, the World Economic Forum, the Munich Security Conference, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

The collective body of work being produced by the Pew Research Center is more important now than it has ever been. As one of the last nonadvocacy and fact-based organizations focusing on a broad range of research areas that touch nearly every aspect of society, it plays a critical role in educating the engaged public and providing data and insights to policymakers and the media. In today's landscape and with an eye to the future, it is becoming increasingly clear that each of their research areas overlaps more and more each year, and that they must be deliberate and strategic in connecting the dots on these themes. As such, they are seeking a visionary, multi-faceted, and collaborative Vice President of Research who can elevate the Center's world-class research and connect it to the broader thematic conversations that are of most relevance to a wide audience. This leader will need to possess the right mix of skills to define and implement a strategy that enables the organization to fulfill its dual mission of enriching public dialogue, and supporting sound-decision making in a nonpartisan way.

For more information on Pew Research Center's mission, history, topics of research and team, please visit their website: [Pew Research Center](#).

## The Role

Based in Washington, D.C., the Vice President of Research ("VP") at Pew Research Center will play several inter-related roles. Reporting to the EVP and serving on the executive team, the VP will curate the Center's research agenda and oversee all research work including project performance, staff development, and thought leadership. The VP will work closely with the VP for methods and innovation to ensure a best-in-class research product during a time of constant change on the methodological front. At the same time, the VP will partner with the incoming VP for communications to re-evaluate their products and audience in light of the ever-shifting digital media landscape and the evolving opportunities to put data directly into the hands of the interested public. The workplace is hybrid, allowing staff to work from home up to three days per week.

This ideal candidate will be a data-driven, innovative, and "big picture" thinker who can think beyond the "here and now" and can separate trends from fads, and who understands that the Center's relevance is not only about being interesting as much as it is about being important. The Center welcomes new ideas and disruption and will look to this leader to be aggressive in both supporting and challenging the way in which they approach their overall research portfolio. They must recognize and appreciate the extraordinary colleagues, research and resources within the Center and be passionate about harnessing and accelerating its impact and connecting it to the audience strategy. Externally, the Vice President of Research will be an ambassador for the organization and will help to build relationships with the media and major stakeholders.

Over the course of 2021 the Pew Research Center's board, president and primary funder (The Pew Charitable Trusts) undertook a significant strategic planning initiative to set their course for the next five years and beyond. This strategic planning identifies three thematic areas their work will advance (Trust, facts and democracy;

Technology, science and society; and Tolerance, diversity and identity), an audience strategy focusing on media and digital innovation, and methodological investments that distinguish the Center in a crowded data-marketplace.

This strategic plan also led to a restructuring of the executive team, which is now built around a tightly knit and collaborative five-person team. As president and executive vice president, [Mike Dimock](#) and [Claudia Deane](#) operate as partners with Mike accountable for business strategy and development, including revenue, infrastructure, policies and operations, and Claudia accountable for the content they generate and how they make it serve their audiences. They will be joined by three leaders with the expertise and experience to advance the pillars of their work: research, methodology and communications.

## **Primary Responsibilities:**

### **Research Thought Leadership and Strategic Planning**

*As the executive with primary responsibility for the research division, this leader will work collaboratively across the Center in the design and development of the Center's full body of research work, key products, dissemination activities, etc., and translate those conclusions into work plans for the division.*

- Lead efforts to generate ideas for an impactful research agenda; balancing core research with new and creative focus areas
- Work with research teams to iron out project specifics, including financial and human resource needs
- Provide big picture oversight, ensuring research gaps are identified and addressed as part of the planning process
- Work to find connections across research areas and create bridge products that allow audiences to see how the work ties together
- Represent the annual research agenda and the strategy behind it to the Center's board of directors
- Foster opportunities for research directors and staff to engage new perspectives, learn from other experts, and sharpen their strategic and research skills

### **Team Leadership**

*Lead organization-wide, cross-functional research teams through 8 highly-skilled and specialized research directors*

- Support research directors as effective leaders who both have ownership of their fields of work as well as a stake in the larger Center-wide enterprises.
- Advise directors on research strategy development or realignment.
- Ensure the high quality of all research products and that they are on time and on budget.
- Work with research directors to ensure workloads are manageable and balanced, prioritizing what's important and stopping what's not.
- Seek out, find, and encourage opportunities for collaboration across the Center wherein new perspectives would add value to initiatives/projects and opportunities for innovation.
- Lead efforts to ensure strong cross-team collaboration, and intervene as needed to resolve conflict.
- In all interactions, model the behaviors that support a respectful workplace, built on the core values of respect, collaboration, openness, accountability and community building.
- Create clearly defined performance and personal development goals with and for direct reports; ensure same happens with indirect reports.
- Actively and visibly champion the Center's inclusion, diversity, and equity efforts by empowering others and championing diversity of thinking. Support IDE goals and objectives by attending and fully engaging in available trainings, making IDE a priority of the research division as a whole, and supporting and participating in in diversity hiring practices.

## Organizational Leadership

*Collaborate with the EVP, two other VPs, and the Center's President as a member of the executive team*

- Advise the president on organizational strategy and ensure its implementation through their individual roles and responsibilities.
- Collaborate to generate the highest quality, highest value, and highest impact work to serve the Center's mission and advance its strategic goals.
- Set and communicate the organization's culture.
- Participate fully in the Center's commitment to Inclusion, Diversity and Equity as a member of the IDE Council's steering committee.
- Be a part of key organizational decisions on budgeting, staffing plans, research agenda, audience definition, and resource prioritization.
- Play a key role in communicating those decisions to staff.
- Serve as a collaborator and internal advocate for the division's staff members with Center and Trusts operational units.

## Outreach and Impact

- Work with the incoming VP of communications and across teams to evaluate current dissemination activities (reports, blogs, interactives, data essays, quizzes) in lights of goals and metrics, committing to a joint strategy that will create maximum impact.
- Work with the president, EVP, and fundraising staff to review and approve all proposed partnerships between projects of the Center and outside entities.
- Act as spokesperson and representative to both internal and external audiences, both as a Center spokesperson or a research product expert as appropriate.

## Editorial Direction

- Provide strategic editorial guidance to research projects.
- Ensure clarity of communication and methodological transparency.
- Provide leadership in ensuring a consistent, transparent corrections policy and address any systemic problems that might arise.

## Stewardship of Financial and Human Resources

- Partner with research directors and finance to properly disperse and manage the overall research budget.
- Partner with HR and research directors to develop and/or approve team staffing plans in line with research strategy and budget.
- Develop new and creative approaches to sharing staff resources and expertise across the research division.
- Support and drive efforts to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse team of talented research staff.

## Candidate Profile

### Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Must have a core passion for the mission of an organization that prides itself in executing high quality social science research and then translating those findings in a way congenial to an engaged public audience.
- Dedicated to the highest principles of transparency and accountability.
- Excellent written and oral communications skills and a keen understanding of the importance of clear and ongoing communications with staff at all levels.
- Mature leadership, seasoned judgment and high integrity.
- Ability to develop and manage productive relationships at all levels.
- Strong diplomatic skills to relate effectively to staff at all levels.

- Ability to recognize and capitalize on new opportunities to further the organization's mission.
- Ability to network and communicate effectively with key external constituencies, including journalists, peer organizations, government officials and philanthropists.
- Strong management skills, including the ability to attract and retain top talent, with at least 7 years of experience directly managing large and/or complex teams.
- Political savvy to be involved in highly charged policy issues while maintaining credibility and neutrality.
- PhD or equivalent in a relevant social science research field (e.g., political science, journalism, public policy, survey methodology, etc.) with 15 or more years of relevant work experience in a comparable organization dedicated to research excellence and production of information serving the public.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

## **Setting Strategy**

- The ability to create and articulate an inspiring vision for the organization, not only for the areas s/he is directly responsible for, but the enterprise as a whole.
- The inclination to seek and analyze data from a variety of sources to support decisions and to align others with the organization's overall strategy.
- An entrepreneurial and creative approach to developing new, innovative ideas that will stretch the organization and push the boundaries within the industry.
- The ability to effectively balance the desire/need for broad change with an understanding of how much change the organization is capable of handling, to create realistic goals and implementation plans that are achievable and successful.

## **Executing for Results**

- The ability to set clear and challenging goals while committing the organization to improved performance; tenacious and accountable in driving results.
- Comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty; the ability to adapt nimbly and lead others through complex situations.
- A risk-taker who seeks data and input from others to foresee possible threats or unintended circumstances from decisions; someone who takes smart risks.
- A leader who is viewed by others as having a high degree of integrity and forethought in his/her approach to making decisions; the ability to act in a transparent and consistent manner while always taking into account what is best for the organization.

## **Leading Teams**

- The ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate the team, delegate effectively, celebrate diversity within the team, and manage performance; widely viewed as a strong developer of others.
- The ability to persevere in the face of challenges, and exhibit a steadfast resolve and relentless commitment to higher standards, which commands respect from followers.
- A leader who is self-reflective and aware of his/her own limitations; leads by example and drives the organization's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement.

## **Relationships and Influence**

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.
- An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in his/her beliefs, and active drive.
- Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.
- Creates a sense of purpose/meaning for the team that generates followership beyond his/her own personality and engages others to the greater purpose for the organization as a whole.

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## Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to apply directly by sending their CV and brief explanation of interest to [Pew\\_VPofResearch@russellreynolds.com](mailto:Pew_VPofResearch@russellreynolds.com). The Pew Research Center is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a protected veteran.

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