



SIMONS LAUFER  
MATHEMATICAL  
SCIENCES INSTITUTE

## **Director** Leadership Profile

May 2026



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## Executive Summary

The Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute (SLMath) invites applications and nominations for the position of Director, a rare opportunity to lead one of the world's most influential mathematical research institutes at a pivotal moment in its history. This five-year appointment, with the possibility of renewal, calls for an internationally respected mathematician and accomplished leader who is prepared to guide SLMath through a period of strategic evolution, financial complexity, and extraordinary intellectual possibility. The Institute welcomes applications from visionary leaders as well as nominations of colleagues whose experience and stature uniquely position them to shape the future of mathematical sciences.

The Director of the Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute (SLMath) serves as the Institute's chief scientific and administrative leader, stewarding one of the world's foremost centers for research in the mathematical sciences through a period of significant opportunity and change. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the Director is responsible for articulating and advancing a compelling scientific vision, ensuring financial sustainability, and cultivating the institutional relationships and culture that allow SLMath to thrive as a uniquely impactful, independent research institute.

Founded in 1982 as the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), SLMath is among the world's preeminent centers for research in the mathematical sciences. Located in the hills above the University of California, Berkeley campus, the Institute hosts approximately 2,000 mathematicians each year from around the globe, for residencies ranging from weeks to a full academic year. While independent of UC Berkeley, SLMath enjoys a close and collegial relationship with the campus and its mathematics department. Over four decades, the Institute has earned an unparalleled reputation as a retreat-like environment where mathematicians can focus intensely on research, collaboration, and intellectual exchange, supported by an exceptional professional staff dedicated to creating a seamless experience for visitors.

Beyond its core research mission, SLMath plays a vital role in education, public outreach, and the broader communication of mathematics. Through innovative programs, public lectures, films, and initiatives that span career stages and institutional types, SLMath helps make mathematics visible, accessible, and compelling to audiences both within and beyond the discipline. The Institute has long been supported by the National Science Foundation, later joined by the National Security Agency, over 100 academic sponsor institutions, private foundations, and generous individuals who recognize the foundational role of mathematics in science and society.

The next Director will guide SLMath as it adapts to a rapidly evolving mathematical, technological, and funding landscape. Priorities include shaping a forward-looking scientific portfolio that maintains SLMath's historic strength in foundational mathematics while expanding its capacity to respond nimbly to emerging areas, interfaces with applied mathematics, data science, and AI, and new models of programmatic engagement, such as shorter, more flexible research programs designed to accelerate collaboration and discovery. The Director must bring not only openness to emerging areas but deep scientific judgment about how new tools and directions should inform, complement, or reshape fundamental mathematics and where SLMath should lead rather than follow. The Director will work closely with the Scientific Advisory Committee, Deputy Director, and senior leadership team to define strategic priorities that balance excellence, innovation, and community trust.

SLMath seeks a Director with exceptional mathematical depth and perspective, capable of setting long-range intellectual direction for the field while stewarding an institution whose identity and influence rest on sustained, curiosity-driven research. Balancing continuity and change with discernment – preserving what makes SLMath distinctive while positioning it thoughtfully for the next decade of discovery – will be central to this role.

The Director also bears primary responsibility for the Institute's external relations and long-term sustainability. This includes leadership of federal grant strategy – most critically, stewardship of the National Science Foundation relationship and future renewal efforts – as well as active engagement in philanthropic development alongside the

Director for Advancement and External Relations. With a funding environment that is both constrained and shifting, the Director must clearly articulate SLMath’s unique value proposition to funders, donors, policymakers, and academic partners, while remaining attentive to the values and sensitivities of the mathematical community regarding funding sources and institutional independence.

Internally, the Director is expected to foster a culture of trust, collegiality, and shared purpose across a deeply committed staff and leadership team. They should be a leader with strong emotional intelligence, clear and consistent communication, and the ability to empower staff. The next Director must value SLMath not only as a scientific institution but as a community of people who are deeply dedicated to the Institute.

Beyond the Institute, the Director represents SLMath as an active, visible member of the U.S. and global mathematical communities. Maintaining personal scientific credibility through research engagement and participation in major meetings is essential, as is advocacy for the role of mathematics in science, technology, and society. As mathematics faces both extraordinary opportunity and public misunderstanding, particularly amid rapid advances in AI and data-driven technologies, the Director will play a critical role in championing the enduring and evolving importance of mathematical research, expanding public outreach, and ensuring SLMath continues to serve mathematicians at all levels and from all backgrounds.

Taken together, this is a rare opportunity for a respected and visionary mathematical leader to shape the future of a singular institution, one that combines intellectual intensity, global reach, and deep community care, and to help define how mathematical research will be convened, supported, and sustained in the decades ahead.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.



## Role of the Director

The Director of the Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute (SLMath) serves as the Institute's chief scientific, administrative, and external affairs leader. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the Director has ultimate responsibility for advancing SLMath's mission through the stewardship of its scientific programs, finances, operations, and external relationships.

The Director works in close partnership with the Deputy Director and senior leadership team to ensure effective day-to-day management while maintaining primary accountability for institutional strategy, funding, governance, and scientific direction. The Director represents SLMath to its key constituencies, including federal agencies, academic sponsors, private donors, advisory bodies, and the global mathematical sciences community.

### Core Responsibilities

- Provide overall leadership and accountability for SLMath's scientific programs, education and outreach activities, operations, and financial health.
- Serve as the Institute's principal external representative to funding agencies, sponsors, donors, and institutional partners.
- Work closely with the Board of Trustees and its committees on governance, strategy, and trustee recruitment and engagement.
- Partner with the Scientific Advisory Committee in shaping the Institute's research agenda and programmatic portfolio.
- Lead, mentor, and support a senior leadership team responsible for operations, finance, advancement, and external relations.
- Maintain an active personal presence in the national and international mathematical sciences communities.

### Direct Reports

- Deputy Director
- Director of Finance and Accounting
- Director for Advancement and External Relations
- Associate Director of Operations

## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

SLMath stands at a pivotal moment as it adapts to a changing scientific, technological, and funding environment while remaining true to its distinctive culture and mission. The next Director will be expected to lead the Institute through this period with clarity, conviction, and care. The following opportunities and expectations, informed by extensive stakeholder input, outline where leadership will be most consequential.

### Set and Communicate a Compelling Strategic Direction

- Articulate a clear, integrated vision for SLMath's scientific future and institutional sustainability, balancing historic strengths in fundamental mathematics with emerging opportunities in applied areas, technology, and artificial intelligence, and defining with clarity where SLMath will lead the mathematical sciences to ensure that new directions strengthen rather than dilute its foundational commitments.
- Translate that vision into a coherent strategic plan that aligns scientific programming, funding strategy, staffing, governance, and operations – and communicate it clearly to staff, trustees, sponsors, and the broader community.
- Guide strategic decisions about the pace and scope of change, recognizing that SLMath's influence derives in part from its distinctive role as the nation's preeminent institute for deep, fundamental mathematical inquiry, even as funders and partners seek evidence of responsiveness to emerging questions.

### Strengthen Financial Sustainability

- Lead a diversified funding strategy that reduces long-term dependence on NSF support, including expanded philanthropy, multi-year commitments, and thoughtful engagement of new donors and donor communities.
- Serve as SLMath's primary advocate with NSF, other federal agencies, donors, and policymakers, articulating the enduring value of mathematical research at a moment of increased scrutiny and competition for resources.
- Bring nuanced leadership to navigating the federal funding landscape and its shifting expectations, including the ability to engage creatively and strategically with NSF and other agencies during a period of fiscal constraint, political sensitivity, and evolving programmatic priorities.
- In addition to stewarding SLMath's major NSF grant renewals, think proactively about long-term scenarios for sustaining SLMath's mission and independence, including planning for the possibility of existential changes in federal support.

### Modernize Programs While Preserving SLMath's Distinctive Culture

- Guide the continued evolution of SLMath's research portfolio, including more agile program formats such as one-month programs, while preserving the deep, immersive, face-to-face collaborative experience that defines the Institute.
- Ensure programmatic change strengthens intellectual vitality, responsiveness to emerging ideas, global engagement, and access across career stages.

### Serve as a Trusted Convener and Advocate for Mathematics

- Deepen SLMath's role as a global hub for mathematical collaboration, navigating international challenges, travel constraints, and geopolitical uncertainty with creativity and flexibility.
- Champion public communication and outreach, helping diverse audiences understand why mathematics matters and how it underpins advances in science, technology, and society.
- Advance SLMath's influential role in pre-college education, which has become an important and distinguishing component of the Institute's broader mission. Value this work as an integral element of SLMath's contribution to the mathematical ecosystem, engaging deeply with the K–12 educational landscape to ensure the Institute continues this work thoughtfully and effectively.

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### **Empower and Partner with an Exceptional Staff**

- Build strong internal partnerships by setting clear direction, trusting staff expertise, and fostering transparency around roles, decision-making, and accountability.
- Invest in mentoring, professional development, and open communication, reinforcing SLMath as a people-centered, values-driven workplace.

### **Strengthen Operations and Institutional Infrastructure**

- Lead the next phase of organizational maturation by streamlining administrative processes, modernizing systems, and improving data and documentation practices.
- Manage change thoughtfully while establishing resilient operational structures that support long-term institutional success.

## **Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities**

### **Distinguished Scientific Credibility**

- An internationally recognized mathematician with a distinguished record of scholarly achievement and deep familiarity with the culture, standards, and rhythms of advanced mathematical research. Ideally, the successful candidate will qualify for a tenured faculty appointment at the level of full professor or for an appointment as professor in residence in the Department of Mathematics at UC Berkeley.
- Active engagement in the U.S. and global mathematics communities, with sustained visibility through research contributions and participation in major scientific convenings.
- Broad scientific judgment and perspective, with the stature to earn trust across subfields, institutions, and career stages and to shape long-range scientific priorities.
- The intellectual confidence and technical breadth to evaluate tradeoffs among competing directions in the mathematical sciences, including judgments about emerging methodologies, tools, and interdisciplinary approaches.

### **Proven Leadership of Complex, Mission-Driven Organizations**

- Demonstrated success leading complex academic, research, or nonprofit organizations, ideally within environments defined by multiple stakeholders, advisory bodies, and funding sources.
- Capacity to provide integrated oversight of scientific programs, operations, and finances, while maintaining excellence in execution and service to visiting scholars.
- Experience working productively with boards and advisory committees, contributing to effective governance, strategic decision-making, and institutional accountability.

### **Fundraising, Grants, and External Relations Expertise**

- A strong record of success in grant development and management, including relationships with federal agencies such as NSF and NSA and leadership of major funding renewals.
- Demonstrated enthusiasm for and effectiveness in fundraising, including engagement with donors, private foundations, academic sponsors, and corporate partners.
- Ability to articulate a compelling case for investment that connects SLMath's scientific mission to long-term institutional sustainability and public value.



### **Strategic, Forward-Looking Institutional Stewardship**

- A forward-looking, strategic leader able to align scientific ambition with financial resilience and organizational readiness.
- Intellectual curiosity and openness to innovation, including sustained engagement with emerging technologies and new directions shaping the mathematical sciences.
- Ability to guide adaptation and change while preserving SLMath's distinctive culture, values, and independence as a scholarly institution. Comfort fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and strategic alignment across all functional areas.

### **Commitment to Community, Outreach, and the Broader Mission**

- Demonstrates a persistent commitment to developing the U.S. STEM workforce and to expanding opportunity within the mathematical sciences.
- Brings genuine enthusiasm for public outreach and education, valuing programs that make mathematics visible, engaging, and accessible to audiences beyond the research community.
- Understands SLMath as both a scholarly center and a civic institution, balancing excellence in research with responsibility to the wider public.

### **Communication and Values-Driven Leadership**

- An effective communicator—written and verbal—capable of translating complex ideas into clear narratives for scientific, public, and philanthropic audiences.
- A collegial, people-centered leader with strong emotional intelligence, ethical judgment, and respect for staff, scholars, and visitors as whole individuals.
- Commitment to outreach, education, and broad participation in the mathematical sciences, recognizing SLMath's role as both a global research center and a public-facing nonprofit institution.
- A natural convener who energizes others around a shared direction, helping staff, board members, sponsors, and the global mathematics community see how their contributions advance SLMath's mission.

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# About the Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute

## Overview

The Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute (SLMath) is one of the world's leading centers for collaborative research in the mathematical sciences. Founded in 1982 as the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), SLMath is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit research institute located on its own campus in the Berkeley Hills, adjacent to the University of California, Berkeley. While independent of the University, SLMath maintains longstanding and productive relationships with Berkeley's mathematics department and the broader campus community.

For more than four decades, SLMath has served as a global convening point for mathematical research. Each year, more than 2,000 mathematicians from around the world spend time at the Institute, participating in research programs, workshops, and public events. Visitors span the full range of career stages, from graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to senior leaders in the field, making SLMath a central node in the international mathematical ecosystem. In 2022, following a transformational [\\$70 million unrestricted gift](#) from James and Marilyn Simons and Henry and Marsha Laufer, the Institute was renamed the Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute, reflecting both its strengthened endowment and its long-term commitment to scientific independence and excellence.

## Mission and Vision

SLMath's mission is to foster and communicate mathematical research across a broad range of fundamental topics and applications; to develop mathematical talent and cultivate excellence, community, and engagement; and to inspire appreciation for the power, beauty, and joy of mathematics. Since its founding, the Institute has played a defining role in shaping the direction of contemporary mathematics by bringing together people and ideas in an environment designed to promote creativity, sustained focus, and deep collaboration.

Widely regarded by mathematicians as a retreat for research, SLMath enables scholars to step away from the demands of their home institutions and immerse themselves in a community built around shared inquiry. Its programs have catalyzed breakthroughs, launched new research areas, and helped shape generations of mathematical careers, particularly through intentional inclusion of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early-career faculty alongside senior leaders.

## Research Programs and Scholarly Community

SLMath's scientific activities are community-driven and guided by its [Scientific Advisory Committee](#). The Institute is best known for its semester-long research programs, which become global centers of activity for the fields they highlight, bringing together 30 or more participants at a time for sustained collaboration. In addition, SLMath hosts a wide array of shorter workshops, thematic programs, and special initiatives that allow it to respond more nimbly to emerging developments in mathematics and related disciplines.

The Institute's research portfolio spans pure and applied mathematics, statistics, and areas at the interface of computer science and data-driven methods. In recent years, SLMath has increasingly engaged with new tools and perspectives such as artificial intelligence and formal methods while remaining grounded in its foundational commitment to deep, curiosity-driven research.

A defining strength of SLMath is its staff and institutional culture. The Institute is known throughout the mathematical community for the quality of its hospitality and operational support, enabling visitors to focus fully on research. This commitment to care, alongside a strong ethos of collegiality and respect, has made SLMath not only a premier research institute but also a place where lasting intellectual and professional relationships are formed.

## Education, Outreach, and Public Engagement

Beyond its core research mission, SLMath plays a significant role in education and public outreach. Its portfolio includes [Summer Graduate Schools](#), programs supporting underrepresented groups in mathematics, and initiatives focused on mentoring and professional development. These efforts reflect a longstanding commitment to broadening participation and strengthening the U.S. mathematical sciences workforce.

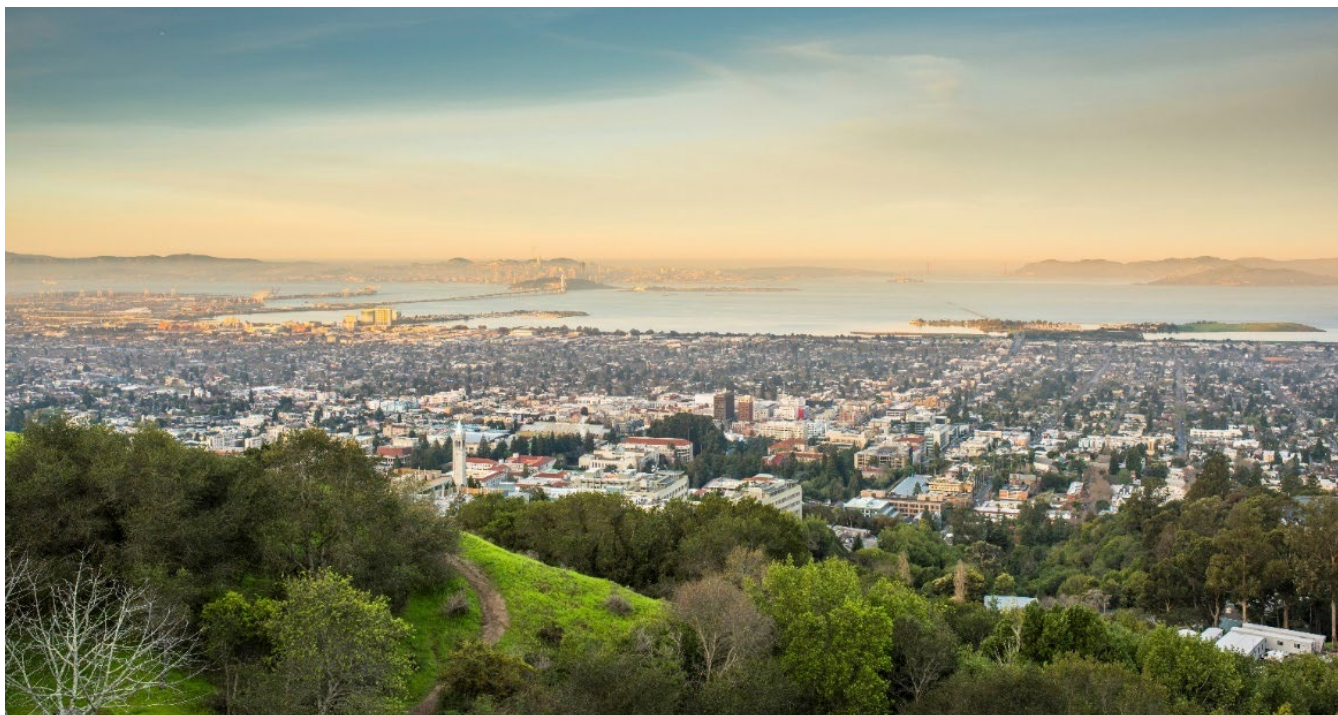
SLMath also engages the broader public through lectures, films, publications, and accessible programming that communicate mathematical ideas beyond the research community. Through its book series, newsletters, and digital publications, the Institute contributes enduring scholarly resources while also helping articulate the relevance of mathematics to science, technology, and society.

## Institutional Context and Support

Since its inception, SLMath has been supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation, later joined by additional federal agencies such as the National Security Agency, more than 100 academic sponsor institutions, private foundations, corporations, and individual philanthropists. This diversified base of support has allowed SLMath to maintain scientific independence while remaining accountable to the mathematical community it serves.

As SLMath approaches its 50th anniversary in 2032, the Institute stands at an important juncture. With a strengthened endowment, an evolving programmatic model, and a rapidly changing scientific and funding environment, SLMath is poised to build on its extraordinary legacy while adapting thoughtfully to the future. Its purpose remains constant: to convene people and ideas in service of mathematical discovery, and to sustain mathematics as a foundational discipline shaping the future of science and society.





## Berkeley, California

Berkeley, California, is a dynamic, community-centered city located in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area. Known globally for its intellectual vitality and civic engagement, Berkeley is home to the Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute (SLMath), located on the UC Berkeley campus, and the University of California, Berkeley, institutions that together reflect the city's deep commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and public service. The city values inclusivity, social responsibility, and collaboration, fostering a culture in which ideas are rigorously pursued and broadly applied for the public good.

Berkeley offers a high quality of life, with diverse and vibrant neighborhoods, a strong arts and cultural scene, and access to exceptional public schools, parks, and community resources. Residents enjoy close proximity to San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and the region's renowned natural landscapes, including the Berkeley Hills and nearby coastal areas. With its strong sense of community, commitment to sustainability, and global outlook, Berkeley is an ideal setting for leaders who are passionate about engagement, equity, and shaping the future through collective action.

## Procedure for Candidacy

Applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited.

Applications should include, as two separate documents, a CV/resume and a letter of interest. Please submit applications through the [WittKieffer Candidate Portal](#). Candidates can also find this portal via the WittKieffer website at [www.wittkieffer.com](http://www.wittkieffer.com). For full consideration, all materials should be received by Friday, July 10, 2026.

Please direct inquiries and nominations to the WittKieffer consultants assisting the Institute with this recruitment:

Suzanne Teer and Lauren Bruce-Stets

[suzanne.teer@wittkieffer.com](mailto:suzanne.teer@wittkieffer.com) or [lstets@wittkieffer.com](mailto:lstets@wittkieffer.com)

*SLMath will offer an annual salary range of \$350,000 – 425,000 for this role.*

*SLMath is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions in compliance with all applicable equal employment opportunity (“EEO”) laws.*

*SLMath prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race), color, creed, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), national origin, ancestry, age (40 and over), alienage or citizenship status, physical or mental disability (actual or perceived), medical condition including genetic characteristics, AIDS/HIV status, family care status, military or veteran status, marital status or registered domestic partner status, sexual orientation, gender identification or expression, height, weight, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, arrest record, or taking or requesting statutorily protected leaves, or any other basis protected by federal, state of California, or local laws.*

*SLMath will provide reasonable accommodations to individuals who submit a written request for an accommodation so long as the accommodation would not impose an undue hardship on SLMath, and would enable the individual to apply for, or perform the essential functions of, the position in question. A healthcare practitioner’s certification, which substantiates and clarifies the limitations, may be required. All reasonable accommodations should be directed to, managed by, and granted or denied by the Operations Manager.*

*Employees of SLMath will receive a handbook with employee-specific policies, including California Civil Rights Department and federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) information.*

*View the [Institute’s Disability and Accommodations Statement](#).*