

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Chief Information Security Officer Leadership Profile

April 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at UMass Amherst is a pivotal role responsible for overseeing the University's information security and assurance. This position involves developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy and privacy program to protect the University's information assets. The CISO ensures compliance with regulatory requirements and aligns security measures with the University's risk posture, balancing various drivers and constraints while maintaining objectivity.

UMass Amherst, the Commonwealth's flagship campus, is a nationally ranked public research university offering a full range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees. Situated on nearly 1,450 acres in the scenic Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts, the University provides a rich cultural environment in a bucolic setting close to major urban centers. As part of the Five Colleges consortium, which includes Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College, UMass Amherst benefits from a vibrant intellectual community.

The CISO at UMass Amherst will lead strategic security planning, contributing to infrastructure design, architecture, application development, identity management, and disaster recovery frameworks. This role requires excellent analytical skills to manage multiple projects under strict timelines and in a dynamic environment. The CISO must also possess strong leadership abilities to motivate cross-functional, interdisciplinary teams and achieve both tactical and strategic goals.

UMass Amherst's cybersecurity strategy works to enhance its information security posture. The CISO will collaborate with various internal departments and external agencies, as well as oversee and set the strategic direction for both internal and external elements of the University's digital infrastructure and focus on educating the campus community.

The CISO's purpose is to ensure the availability, confidentiality, and integrity of its information resources, while supporting the open information-sharing culture of the academic environment at UMass Amherst. The CISO aims to integrate cybersecurity into the University's culture, align it with the University's mission, and enhance visibility into the security posture. The role also involves maintaining a robust risk management program and protecting the University's assets from threat actors.

Desired skills for this role include a deep understanding of system, data, and network security in a complex network environment, experience with current information security and privacy laws, and proficiency in project management, including financial and budget management. The CISO should also be an effective communicator, capable of establishing relationships with key stakeholders and governance groups and possess the ability to mentor and develop information security personnel. Additionally, experience in managing vendor relationships and optimizing resource allocation for cybersecurity investments is essential.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy on page 11.

Role of the Chief Information Security Officer

The Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the University's information assets by overseeing campus-wide information security and assurance. This leadership position involves developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy and privacy program designed to protect sensitive data and ensure the integrity of the University's digital infrastructure. The CISO is tasked with identifying, evaluating, and reporting on information security risks, ensuring that the University remains compliant with regulatory requirements and aligns with its established risk posture. This role requires a deep understanding of the evolving threat landscape and the ability to anticipate and mitigate potential security breaches.

In addition to technical expertise, the CISO must balance various drivers and constraints, maintaining objectivity while recognizing that security is integral to the University's business activities and goals. This involves collaborating with stakeholders across different departments to foster a culture of security awareness and resilience. The CISO must navigate the complexities of the university environment, where academic freedom and open access to information are paramount, while ensuring robust security measures are in place. By effectively managing these dynamics, the CISO contributes to the University's mission of providing a safe and secure educational environment.



Position Summary

Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology, Chief Information Officer, Christopher Misra.

Responsibilities

The successful Chief Information Security Officer candidate will:

- Execute campus-wide planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of security services, controls, policies, and procedures. Establishes effective relationships and communications with key stakeholders, data custodians, and governance groups in the development of security and assurance policies and best practices.
- Lead strategic security planning contributing to infrastructure design, architecture, application development, identity management, and disaster recover frameworks.
- Define security strategies, metrics, and reporting mechanisms, and services for continual program improvements; stays abreast of information security issues and regulatory changes affecting higher education at the state and national levels.
- Manage tools and processes for vulnerability scanning and regular security assessment, ensuring continuous monitoring and proactive response. Generates security solutions and services to continuously advance the campus' security posture. Manages campus wide information security computer and data incident response team, overseeing digital forensics, post-incident analysis, and reporting.
- Oversee and direct a team of information security staff who are responsible for protecting the University's assets, intellectual property, and computer and network systems. Mentors, trains, and develops information security personnel and assists with university-wide activities; plans and promotes integration within the Information Technology (IT) organization.
- Support information technology compliance for higher education, business, and research functions including technical and procedural controls, and reporting requirements including FERPA, PCI-DSS, HIPAA, GLB, ISO 27000, and relevant data breach statutes. Responds to internal and external audits and oversees remediation efforts for deficiencies.
- Monitor the efficacy of deployed controls, measuring performance, and modifying business processes to reduce risk consistent with campus policies and procedures. Participates in governance committees and collaborates across various university departments and other University campuses to embed data security into university operations.
- Manage security aspects of vendor relationships, from assessments to attestations, ensuring vendor compliance to security policies. Builds and maintains relationships with university constituents, Higher-Ed groups, professional organizations, federal agencies and other relevant external agencies.
- Develop long-term strategies for cybersecurity investments and resource planning. Develops and manages the cybersecurity budget, optimizing resource allocation to maximize protection and efficiency. Monitors expenditures and ensures cost-effective use of financial resources.
- Perform related duties as assigned or required to meet department, executive area/division, and university goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified as priorities for this position:

- **Establish Strong Relationships Across Campus:** Work collaboratively and develop strong trusting relationships and partnerships with stakeholders including administrators, faculty, and researchers across UMass in order to understand their needs and effectively advance information security.
- **Develop and Implement Security Strategies:** The CISO will be responsible for creating and executing comprehensive campus-wide security services, controls, policies, and procedures. This involves strategic planning and the design, implementation, and maintenance of security measures that protect the University's information assets. The CISO will work closely with key stakeholders, data custodians, and governance groups to develop and enforce security and assurance policies and best practices. This collaborative approach ensures that security measures are integrated into the University's business activities and goals.
- **Risk Management and Continuous Improvement:** Identifying, evaluating, and reporting on information security risks is a critical function of the CISO. This role requires ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and aligning security measures with the University's risk posture. The CISO will define security strategies, metrics, and reporting mechanisms to facilitate continual program improvements. Staying abreast of information security issues and regulatory changes affecting higher education at both state and national levels is essential for maintaining an effective security posture.
- **Incident Response and Compliance:** The CISO will manage the campus-wide information security incident response team, overseeing digital forensics, post-incident analysis, and reporting. This includes developing and managing tools and processes for vulnerability scanning and regular security assessments to ensure continuous monitoring and proactive response. Additionally, the CISO will support IT compliance for higher education, business, and research functions, ensuring adherence to relevant laws and regulations such as FERPA, PCI-DSS, HIPAA, GLB, ISO 27000, and data breach statutes. This comprehensive approach to incident response and compliance helps mitigate risks and ensures the University meets its regulatory obligations.
- **Vendor Management and Resource Planning:** Overseeing the security aspects of vendor relationships is another key responsibility of the CISO. This includes conducting assessments, obtaining attestations, and ensuring vendor compliance with security policies. Building and maintaining strong relationships with university constituents, higher education groups, professional organizations, federal agencies, and other relevant external agencies is crucial for effective vendor management. Additionally, the CISO will develop long-term strategies for cybersecurity investments and resource planning, including managing the cybersecurity budget. This involves optimizing resource allocation to maximize protection and efficiency, monitoring expenditures, and ensuring cost-effective use of financial resources.



Candidate Qualifications

Education/Certification

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred.
- Certified Information Systems Security Professional certification, such as a CISSP, CISM, or similar preferred.
- Valid Driver's License required.

Knowledge and Work Experience

- 10-12 years of relevant experience in information security and compliance with a minimum of four years in a senior leadership role.
- Experience working in a large, research extensive higher education institution, or military or not-for-profit or equivalent institution.
- Exhibit excellent analytical skills, the ability to manage multiple projects under strict timelines, as well as the ability to work well in a demanding, dynamic environment and meet overall objectives.
- Demonstrated experience and understanding of system, data, and network security in a complex network environment.
- Ability to lead and motivate cross-functional, interdisciplinary teams to achieve tactical and strategic goals.
- Demonstrated project management expertise, including financial and budget management skills.
- Experience with current information security and privacy laws.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- Solid relationship management skills, ability to motivate teams directly and indirectly through influence and strong stakeholder relationships.
- Team-oriented with strong skills in working within a collaborative environment and a strong customer service orientation.
- Proven analytical and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and ability to quickly diagnose and resolve issues.
- Excellent written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to translate complex technical information to various audiences.
- Understanding of how to garner consensus, make decisions, and effectively prioritize and execute tasks in high-pressure environments.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills, including listening and questioning, emotional intelligence, and ability to build, develop, and mentor high-performing teams.
- Deep knowledge of information security and privacy best practices, ability to provide project coordination across diversified operational units, and educate stakeholders about security-related issues.
- High integrity, good judgment, discretion in handling sensitive information, and ability to develop trusted partnerships with diverse groups.

About University of Massachusetts Amherst

Overview

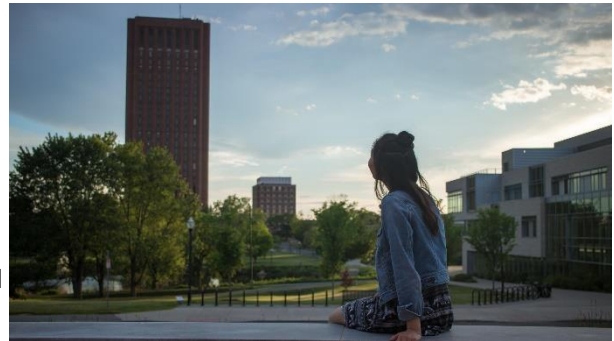
Since its founding in 1863 as the Massachusetts Agricultural College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst has been deeply committed to driving social change and fostering a brighter future. For over 150 years, they have remained at the forefront of pivotal societal movements, championing causes from women's rights to abolitionism.

Currently, they proudly rank among the top 200 programs worldwide in 29 academic disciplines, earning global acclaim for their research, scholarship, and entrepreneurial endeavors. Their campus remains a vibrant hub of activism and advocacy, fueled by a dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all members of their community.

From their academic approach to the flourishing student organizations, the UMass community of students, faculty, and staff are dedicated to making a difference in the world with every step they take.

Points of Pride

As the flagship public higher education campus in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the University of Massachusetts Amherst holds a pivotal role in driving positive change for the greater good. They have grown to become the largest public research university in New England, renowned for the outstanding quality and diversity of their academic, research, and community engagement initiatives. Presently, their student body comprises over 24,000 undergraduates and 7,800 graduate students from 71 countries and all 50 states totaling more than 31,800 individuals.



- Number 26 U.S. News & World Report Ranking Among National Public Universities
- Top 50 Best Value Public Colleges, The Princeton Review
- 1,900 Faculty Members and Nearly 4,500 Professional, Clerical and Trade Staff
- Over 100 Undergraduate Programs as Well as Over 120 Graduate Programs
- One of the Nation's Top-Producing Research Universities for Fulbright Scholars
- Number One Best Campus Food, The Princeton Review
- Four-Year Graduation Rate of 76% ranks in the Top Six Nationally Among Public Universities
- Revolutionary Research—UMass Amherst Research Expenditures in Fiscal 2023 totaled \$269 million
- #20 in Artificial Intelligence, U.S. News & World Report
- 21% of the student body are the first in their families to attend college
- The LGBTQ Center and Women's Center, Among the First Established in The Nation

- A Recognized Leader in Recruiting and Supporting Veterans in Their Post Service Education. The Campus Currently Serves More than 400 Veterans
- A Powerful Network of More Than 330,000 Alumni Working in Such Dynamic Places as Broadway, NASA, Google, Fenway Park, IBM, The Brooklyn Museum, CNN, General Electric, and Alaska's Denali National Park. They are Leaders on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill, on the Stage and on the Field, in the Board Room and in the Laboratory
- The Fine Arts Center Brings Nationally Known Theater, Music, and Dance to Campus Year-Round with Six Campus Galleries Exhibiting Visual Arts
- The Road to Carbon Zero—UMass Amherst is committed to fully transition to renewable energy sources—including wind, solar, and geothermal
- A Fantastic College Town—Hiking, Biking, Museums, Music, Theatre, History, Food and Farms - it's All in Amherst



About the Information Technology Department

At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, [Information Technology](#) plays a crucial role in many key areas, including but not limited to student success and engagement, research competitiveness, and multi-modal education.

The role of the IT organization is to provide comprehensive, high-quality technology services that enhance the academic mission and business processes for students, faculty, and staff. IT's services portfolio includes user-facing services such as email and collaboration tools; technology in instruction, innovation, and learning spaces; infrastructure, including networks, computing, storage, and web services; and core enterprise systems, such as student administration, learning management, and data analytics systems. IT establishes standards, assesses trends in the rapidly changing IT industry, and pursues emerging technologies that improve the professional and personal experiences of the campus community.

IT maintains a commitment to a culture of quality customer service and responsible stewardship of resources. Through strong campus partnerships with campus leaders, IT is proud to support the teaching, research, service missions and strategic goals of the commonwealth's flagship campus.

Leadership

Dr. Javier Reyes, Chancellor



Javier A. Reyes. PhD, became the 31st leader of the University of Massachusetts Amherst on July 1, 2023, following his selection as chancellor of the commonwealth's flagship campus by the UMass Board of Trustees.

Reyes is an economist who has devoted his career to the cause of public higher education, holding leadership positions at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), West Virginia University, and the University of Arkansas. Born and raised in Mexico, he is the first Hispanic person to serve as chancellor of UMass Amherst.

Before coming to UMass, Reyes served as interim chancellor of UIC, Chicago's largest university campus, with more than 33,000 students and \$440 million in research awards. Previously, he served as UIC's provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, joining the campus in 2021. Leading UIC, first as provost and later as interim chancellor, Reyes initiated a redesign of UIC's budget model and a restructuring of teaching innovation environments to position UIC for success amid a new era of innovative and accessible education. Committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Reyes outlined a bold vision to address critical gaps in racial equity across the institution, with a specific focus on increasing Black student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

Reyes served as dean of West Virginia University's John Chambers College of Business and Economics from 2016–2021 and vice president for StartUp West Virginia from 2018–2021. He built impactful corporate partnerships to strengthen student placement and serve West Virginia's land-grant mission. He spearheaded the transformation of the college into a pillar of inclusive entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development for the university and the state.

Prior to moving to West Virginia, Reyes served as vice provost for online and distance education at the University of Arkansas and as the associate dean for undergraduate studies and executive education in the Sam M. Walton College of Business. He initially joined the economics faculty of the University of Arkansas in 2003.

Reyes has been a National Science Foundation proposal reviewer, invited lecturer, and visiting scholar at a number of institutions internationally, including the Clinton School of Public Service and the International Monetary Fund. He also has served as an academic scholar in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London, as a research analyst for the investment firm Value Casa de Bolsa, headquartered in Mexico. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Field Museum, the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, Miller Industries (NYSE: MLR), and City Holding Company (NASDAQ: CHCO). He is actively engaged with the TIAA Diversity Council and the Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA).

Reyes received his bachelor's degree in economics from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Estado de Mexico, in 1998, and his doctorate in economics from Texas A&M University in 2003.



Christopher Misra, Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer

Christopher Misra is the Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. With more than 25 years of experience at UMass, Chris leads the university's IT strategy and operations to support its mission of teaching, research, and public service.

Throughout his career, Chris has worked on many of the challenges involved in running IT for a large public research institution. He's held roles in network systems, cybersecurity, and technology planning, and embraces the chance to tackle complex problems where there are no easy answers. In his current role, he focuses on building reliable systems and making sure students, faculty, and staff have the tools to do their best work.

Chris also serves as Vice Chair of the InCommon Steering Committee, is a board member for the Northeast Research and Education Network (NEREN) and OSHEAN, and serves on the EDUCAUSE Nominations and Leadership Development Committee. He values working with peers across higher education to share ideas, learn from others, and contribute to efforts that strengthen the broader IT community.

A UMass Amherst graduate with a degree in civil engineering, Chris approaches his work with a practical mindset and a focus on solutions that translate to success. He believes in doing the work, supporting the people around him, and contributing where it counts.



Amherst, MA

The town of Amherst, located in the scenic Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts, is an inclusive community offering numerous educational and cultural opportunities. Amherst and its surrounding areas are bubbling with culture, art, music, fine dining, theater, and history and offer activities and resources that can be enjoyed by all ages. The Amherst Public School System has an exceptional reputation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Amherst enjoys a tradition of open professional government, quality education, support for open space and agriculture. For those looking for a more metropolitan connection, Amherst is located:

- 12 miles east of Northampton, MA 30 miles north of Springfield, MA 53 miles north of Hartford, CT
- 90 miles west of Boston, MA
- 175 miles northeast of New York, NY

There is also the great outdoors, with miles and miles of hiking trails that cut across rocky peaks and dive deep into quiet woodlands. There are bike paths that run from one town to the next on the old rail lines that first defined New England. And there is absolutely nothing quite like the beauty of fall in western Massachusetts.

Procedure for Candidacy



All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Massachusetts Amherst in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by May 15th.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Christy Pratt, Zach Durst, Ben Haden, and Ethan Robles

UmassCISO@wittkieffer.com

UMass Amherst is committed to a policy of equal opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, caste, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, disability, political belief or affiliation, pregnancy and pregnancy-related condition(s), veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, natural and protective hairstyle and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination in employment, admission to and participation in academic programs, activities, and services, and the selection of vendors who provide services or products to the University. To fulfill that policy, UMass Amherst is further committed to a program of affirmative action to eliminate or mitigate artificial barriers and to increase opportunities for the recruitment and advancement of qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans. It is the policy of UMass Amherst to comply with the applicable federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations concerning equal opportunity and affirmative action.