



# Position Specification

## Vice President, Programming

### Calgary, AB

Confidential



## Company Description

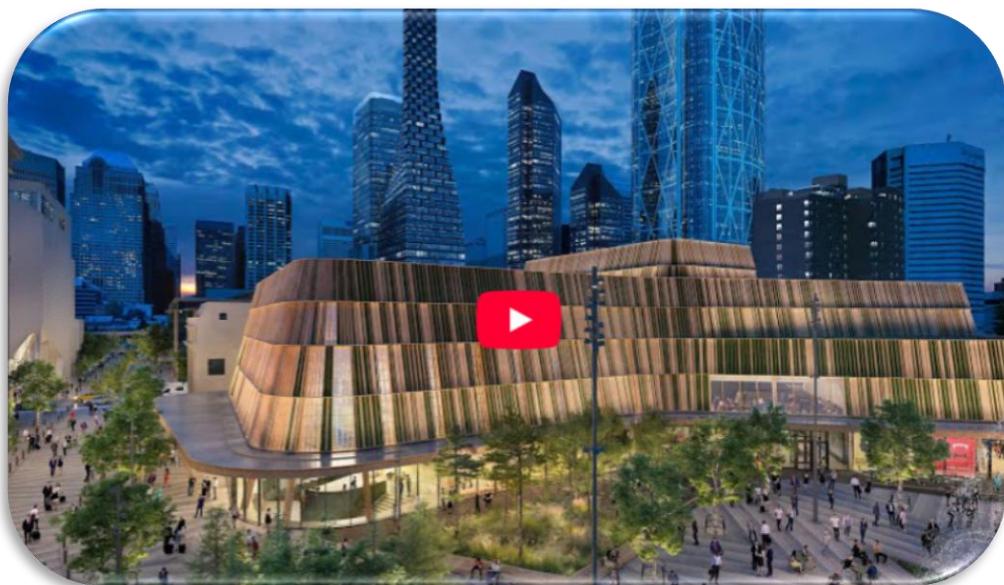
The largest performing arts centre in Western Canada, Werklund Centre occupies a full city block in the heart of Calgary's Cultural District in the downtown core. It is home to the 1,797-seat Jack Singer Concert Hall and five theatres, including the 750-seat Max Bell Theatre, the 412-seat Martha Cohen Theatre, the 190-seat Big Secret Theatre, the 185-seat flexible Engineered Air Theatre, and the 50-seat black box Motel Theatre, as well as additional event and education spaces. Werklund Centre also houses rehearsal halls, costume and set construction shops, administrative offices, meeting rooms, a café, and a centralized box office. Currently going through an immense expansion and transformation that will see the construction of a new building with two state-of-the-art theatres, the reimagining of Olympic Plaza as an outdoor cultural/civic gathering space, and the modernization of its currently facility, there is a palpable buzz and excitement surrounding this unique performing arts centre.

Werklund Centre hosts more than 2,000 events each year, including live theatre, concerts, dance productions, readings, public forums, art exhibits, and more – many of which are free to the public. In addition to Werklund Centre's Presenting, Education, and Artist Development programs, other programmers include resident companies Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary, all of which create, perform, and present a wide range of award-winning and highly acclaimed theatrical events and concerts. Werklund Centre supports artists and arts organizations that call Werklund Centre home, including the more than 200 community groups that utilize their venues to realize their missions and to foster opportunities for collaboration across Werklund Centre's cultural campus. Historically, Werklund Centre has hosted almost double the number of events when compared to similar sized venues – a level of activity it will exceed with its expansion in the years ahead.

Werklund Centre has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and wellbeing of Calgarians and visitors since its founding in 1985. It typically serves more than 400,000 patrons at ticketed events and more than 150,000 people annually at free events and gatherings. The existing facility has been enormously successful, consistently working far beyond industry standards.

### The Werklund Centre Transformation (WCT) and the Olympic Plaza Transformation (OPT)

*The World Will Call It Iconic. Calgary Will Call It Home*



The Werklund Centre Transformation (WCT) and the Olympic Plaza Transformation (OPT) projects are a generational investment in the creation of the Werklund Centre campus, the largest cultural infrastructure project in Canadian history.



Together, these projects are a comprehensive investment in Calgary's downtown core that will do far more than expand and modernize Calgary's premiere performing arts centre – it will revitalize Calgary's downtown, fundamentally changing the way people perceive, experience, and talk about the arts. This endeavour will result in a vibrant, accessible, safe, and welcoming centre for all to gather, celebrate cultural identities, improve social cohesion, and enrich lives – both inside the venues and outside on historic Olympic Plaza.

WCT's expansion will add two versatile, purpose-built venues to meet growing market demands and community aspirations. It will amplify Werklund Centre's commitment to increase access to the arts for all, contribute to the health and emotional wellbeing of all Calgarians, represent a model for how arts organizations can be self-sustaining, be a Canadian and global hub for the exploration of artistic innovations and partnerships, and create a ripple effect of economic activity in our downtown and beyond. WCT's modernization of Werklund Centre will revitalize the existing 560,000 square-foot complex and elevate the public's experience through upgraded amenities and technology. In total, WCT will generate almost 1,000 permanent jobs and will have an annual economic impact of more than \$95 million. The newly redesigned Olympic Plaza, which will be managed by Werklund Centre once open, will feature an accessible, flexible outdoor gathering space for day-to-day use that can support large-scale events of up to 5,000 people, a striking central water feature and splash pad in the summer, a skating rink in the winter, and a new pavilion with seating and amenities to support year-round gatherings.

Werklund Centre is governed by a 20-member board of directors, led by Board Chair David Smith. Currently, there are approximately 67 full-time and 150 part-time employees, led by President and CEO, Alex Sarian, who joined Arts Commons (now Werklund Centre) in May of 2020. In the 2024-2025 season, Werklund Centre had an operating budget of \$16 million and the VP, Programming will be responsible for a \$2 million budget.

## **Mission, Mandate, & Values**

Our vision is for Werklund Centre to be a lasting ecosystem where people of all backgrounds and lived experiences can engage with artistic experiences that honour the cultures, stories, and creative expressions that shape Calgary – fostering connections, celebrating creativity, and reflecting our city's social fabric.

### **Mission**

We pursue artistic leadership through shared cultural experiences – creating opportunities that bring people together to celebrate who Calgary is today and spark the conversations that will shape our city's future.

### **Mandate**

We are here for Calgary – bringing people together through the arts and to celebrate the many cultures that shape our city. By stewarding our cultural spaces and civic gathering places, we uplift artists and organizations as they amplify Calgary's voice within Canada's cultural story.

### **Values**

Do the right thing  
Behaving with integrity, applying professionalism, being honest, and erring on the side of grace.

Be our best always  
in service, in leadership, in professionalism, and in providing a quality experience.

Be open: minds, hearts, arms  
through empathy, openness, trust, and collaboration, seizing opportunities to impact our community in a positive way.

### **Reconciliation Principles**

*Ethical Space* – A space where two knowledge systems can exist in parallel and can co-create.

*Sanctified Kindness* – Safe space for open conversation, equality, compassion and gentleness.

*Making Relatives* – The notion that all things in creation are related, understood and practiced through principles of Discipline, Responsibility, Respect and Accountability.

To learn more, visit <https://werklundcentre.ca/>



## Scope and Responsibilities

Reporting to the President & CEO, the Vice President, Programming will lead Werklund Centre boldly in the exploration of new experiences, genres, disciplines, and art forms, and – more importantly – be committed to reaching new audiences in unconventional ways, including exceptional educational and community partnerships, and artist development programs. The Vice President, Programming oversees a small but mighty Programming team of five salaried staff members, with three direct reports. This includes three talented Associate Directors, each a specialist in their field: Associate Director, Presenting; Associate Director, Artist Development & Curatorial; and Associate Director, Education. The department also contracts many artists and teaching artists each year. This role is a member of the executive leadership team and collaborates extensively with colleagues across advancement, operations, brand & audience development, and strategic projects to ensure cohesion across all departments. This role does not operate in a programming vacuum but instead builds transformative partnerships internally and externally to manifest Werklund Centres' three programmatic priority areas: presenting, education, and artist development.

The Vice President, Programming will have overall responsibility for three distinct and growing areas:

(1) **Presenting**, ensuring that Werklund Centre is home to a series of curated lineups of professional artists and companies selected with Calgary audiences in mind. Recent and current presenting series include National Geographic LIVE!, Classic Albums Live, as well as several special presentations with guests such as Morgan Freeman, the late Jane Goodall, and chef Yotam Ottolenghi. This commitment to presenting is also brought to life through the curation of visual and media arts galleries throughout Werklund Centre – featuring the work of local, emerging artists;

(2) **Arts Education programs** represent a growing priority for Werklund Centre as we seek to engage young people, families, and teachers, ultimately ensuring that the transformative power of the arts is accessed by all Calgarians. Current programs include the ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning; Arts ReimagineD; Campus Calgary, and others; and,

(3) **Artist Professional Development** initiatives, such as the TD Incubator program, which nurtures, elevates, and celebrates Calgary's artist community at a time of rapid growth in our city. Our commitment to local artists, many of whom



represent communities historically excluded from the downtown arts scene, also helps Werklund Centre better understand the needs of local artists in a changing Calgary.

As a leader in creating new experiences, the ideal candidate will push new boundaries, incite unexpected artistic collaborations, and embrace the impact of the arts in different settings. They will be passionate about developing high performing leaders and collaborating across the cultural community both internally and externally.

## Specific Responsibilities

This is a critical role in Werklund Centre's continued success and growth. The role is accountable for the following:

### Executive Management

- Participate as a member of the executive leadership team, fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, inclusion, creativity, and operational excellence.
- Participating in key decisions pertaining to strategic initiatives, operating model, and operational execution.
- Engaging members of the Werklund Centre leadership team in key decisions pertaining to programming.
- Always acting in the best interests of Werklund Centre.

### Programming

- In collaboration with advancement, operations, brand & audience development, developing and executing the implementation of a bold and inclusive programmatic strategy that is anchored in a deep understanding of global trends and local audiences, with an unflappable appreciation of the business model required to support it.
- Serving as Werklund Centre's artistic and programmatic ambassador to the world and as an advocate for the value of the arts sector locally, national, and globally.
- Inspiring creative collaborations within the Programming department (Presenting, Education, and Artist Development), and across the Werklund Centre campus in partnership with resident companies, community partners, and beyond.
- Working closely with the Brand & Audience Development department to explore new experiential formats and distribution channels for programmatic engagement.
- Curating a healthy mix of programmatic choices, ranging from commercial successes to art forms that have not traditionally been associated with Werklund Centre or the downtown Calgary arts scene.
- Collaborating with government agencies, civic partners, and other organizations to make Werklund Centre and Downtown Calgary a destination where all Calgarians and visitors feel they are welcome and belong.

### Team Leadership

- Engaging, motivating, retaining, building, and mentoring a high-performing programming team – a team that is inspired in uplifting the arts scene through programming, collaboration, accessibility, and education.
- Directing departmental operations in alignment with organizational objectives while supporting positive employee development and strong organizational culture.
- Ensuring both cohesion amongst the programming team and seamless collaboration between departments.
- Harnessing and inspiring the energy that exists in the team.
- Demonstrating a commitment to strong staff engagement, equity, and inclusivity through a track record of leading a performance-based culture that motivates employees to achieve excellence and that promotes accountability.
- Developing and mentoring individual team members to ensure they develop as professionals and evolve alongside the Werklund Centre as it undergoes significant transformation, while at the same time having significant positive impact on Werklund Centre.



## Financial Accountability

- Proactively working with other members of the Werklund Centre leadership team to ensure the programming department operates effectively and efficiently, achieving programmatic success in alignment to policy and budgets.
- Demonstrating a commitment to financial acumen through staff engagement, motivating employees to achieve excellence while ensuring accountability.
- Developing and mentoring individual team members to ensure they understand the financial realities of decisions that affect a multi-million-dollar arts organization.



## Desired Candidate Abilities, Background and Experience

Given the role this individual will play in Werklund Centre's continued growth and success, it is essential that the successful candidate possess the following education, experience, and personal characteristics:

### Education

- A bachelor's degree or higher education level in venue, attractions, theatre, or arts management is an asset.

### Experience

- At least seven years of progressive experience at a leadership level with increasing responsibility at a performing arts, event, attraction, or convention centre.



## Personal / Professional Attributes

- Belief in the transformative power of the arts to shape society and redefine Calgary.
- Innovation rooted in bringing people together around a shared commitment to radical joy in a way that inspires others to think differently and brings new opportunities to Werklund Centre.
- Leadership style that is energetic and empathetic, and able to bring incredible people along on a new journey.
- Flexible and adaptable and will thrive as the transformation of Werklund Centre takes place.
- Aligned with Werklund Centre's organizational values and experienced in fostering an inclusive and respectful workplace.
- Demonstrate a commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, and the ability to serve as an exemplar for Werklund Centre's values and commitment to reconciliation – both with internal and external stakeholders.
- Recognize that the best results come from teamwork, and adept at working closely with all parts of a growing organization, regardless of department or role.
- Humble and confident enough to leverage others expertise.
- Committed to advancing and fostering civic dialogue through the arts without compromising on commitment to high-quality experiences.
- Embrace an expansive and inclusive view of artistic expression and engagement.

## Attractions

This role provides an opportunity to join a company that is poised for continued growth. Other attractions include the opportunity to:

- To be part of the biggest arts centre transformation in Canada;
- Live and breathe the arts, and to impact the way in which the arts are presented and experienced in Calgary, Canada, and around the world;
- To steward and re-imagine performing arts in Western Canada's largest arts centre, and the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core;
- To champion inclusion and reconciliation, and increase the accessibility and reach of the arts in Calgary;
- To lead where artists, community, and organizations celebrate cultural identities, experience the full breadth of human emotions, and ignite positive change;
- To mentor and elevate a strong and capable team of dedicated leaders; and,
- To build amazing partnerships that elevates all.

## Contact Information

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