

New Burke Project Manager

The Burke Museum is involved in a multi-year transformation project that will culminate in a new museum facility. The “New Burke” will be a groundbreaking museum of natural history and culture that inspires wonder and pride about the Northwest and our place in the world.

Typically, museums display only a small percentage of their objects. The New Burke will break down barriers between public and “back-of-house” spaces, integrating collections and research labs with traditional galleries to create an experience that invites everyone—from curators to visitors, educators to students—to engage in the dynamic process of scientific and cultural discovery.

On behalf of the museum, The University of Washington has contracted with Olson Kundig Architects to design the new museum. Schematic design will begin in January, 2014. Architectural and exhibit design are expected to be complete by 2015. The museum hopes to begin construction in 2016, with a goal of opening the new facility in 2018 or 2019.

Position Overview:

As a critical team member of the Director’s Office, the Project Manager works closely with the Executive Director to serve as the critical link between the Burke Museum and the Capital Projects Office, UW Architect’s Office, the design team, and the construction team for the New Burke. The primary purposes of this position are: to serve as a single, internal point of communication who can manage the Burke’s response to requests from external parties; and to facilitate decision-making and ensure follow-through by the Director to keep the project moving ahead on schedule. He/she has knowledge of all facets of the museum’s operations, is fully committed to the mission of the museum, and advocates strongly for building decisions that support both the museum’s operations and its mission.

Primary Responsibilities

Project Management:

- Serve as the museum’s primary liaison with all working groups associated with the building project and lead vendors, with delegated authority to represent the museum in lieu of the Director.
- Consolidate information from all meetings, documents and strategic interactions to make recommendations to the Director on how to move the project forward. Serve as an internal consultant on all building-related matters.
- With CPO, ensure that operational standards for critical museum functions are established and communicated to all external parties. Represent the interests of the Burke Museum in communication with external parties, and bring concerns to Burke leadership as needed for resolution.
- Arrange logistics and facilitate internal working group meetings based on the needs of the project communicated by Burke leadership. Work closely with staff to provide consistent and accurate information that will ensure their continued commitment to the building project. Work to resolve communication or planning issues that arise between internal working groups in a manner that provides optimal benefit to the museum. Bring in key Burke leaders to support resolution if issues escalate.
- Coordinate with key staff to identify and pursue government grant opportunities to fund capital projects.

Project Logistics:

- Organize meetings of various working groups (collections, visitor experience, IT, etc.). Determine location of meetings, invite attendees, organize agenda and coordinate comfort items for all meetings. Synthesize and communicate information and outcomes to all appropriate parties.
- Ensure that building decisions and design solutions are executed within the scope of the project's schedule and budget.
- Track and report on project milestones and provide status reports to team, stakeholders, and sponsors.
- Maintain project schedules and budgets, and review/approve invoices from consultants; allocate resources for specific project management related matters, such as meeting rooms, speaker honorariums, and travel expenses.

Project Communication:

- Gather information at each meeting, synthesize/analyze information and ensure the appropriate people – internal or external – follow up with next steps in a timely manner Report information to Burke decision-makers, and communicate key decisions points to keep the project moving forward. Sit in meetings as independent Burke representative as needed. Ensure that all decisions are made and conveyed in a timely manner
- Communicate Burke goals, expectations and project criteria to external parties (consultants and other UW units) to team members and stakeholders.
- Produce regular written communications that document project progress and share with others both in the museum and outside.
- Produce milestone reports and present at meetings of museum staff, board, and stakeholders.

Required knowledge, skills and abilities

- Bachelor's degree in business, operations management or related field.
- Minimum two years' experience coordinating projects within a team environment.
- Familiarity with the operational needs of a natural history museum.
- Ability to communicate clearly with diverse groups that include architects, museum staff, designers, board members, etc.
- Demonstrated skills in teamwork and collaboration with colleagues of varied backgrounds and areas of expertise.
- Ability to remain neutral and retain objectivity, always advocating for decisions that benefit the museum as a whole.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality, elicit cooperation, and garner trust of all parties.
- Ability to exercise initiative and good judgment in anticipating problems before they arise.
- Extremely organized and detail oriented.
- Strong communication skills, both written and spoken.

Desired Education and experience

- Experience with industry project management tactics, processes, and software
- Experience working with museum staff, funders, architects, designers, engineers, and construction managers.
- Knowledge of museum operations, including collections care, research activities, pest management, environmental controls, security, maintenance, visitor needs, and staff support.
- Understanding of how building systems support museum-specific operations.

Familiarity with the organizational structure of a natural history museum.