

SEARCH FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Society for Vascular Ultrasound

Search conducted by Shira Lotzar, Purposeful Hire, Inc.

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SUMMARY

The Society for Vascular Ultrasound (SVU) is conducting a search for a visionary medical society executive to increase the visibility and recognition of this vital, yet niche, specialty healthcare sector. Building upon its recent membership growth, SVU is poised to leverage the deep expertise of its member base to cultivate a “One Community” vascular hub of research and educational offerings for the broader ultrasound sector. *This intentional expansion beyond SVU’s traditional focus on diagnostic vascular lab practitioners*, is an acknowledgement of the shifting landscape within the vascular ultrasound sector including changes in sonography school academic standards, regulatory dynamics, disruptive technology and the resulting diminished recognition from multi-modality healthcare providers, employers and policymakers.

The new Executive Director will partner with the Board of Directors to spearhead innovative initiatives designed to expand its member base, leverage partnerships, increase its educational portfolio, and boost its advocacy efforts. Among the keys to its success will be elevating the recognition of its signature publication, the [Journal for Vascular Ultrasound](#).

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

What is vascular ultrasound?

Vascular ultrasound (sonography) is a real-time bedside medical imaging modality that uses high frequency sound waves to create an image of arteries and veins and also evaluates the blood flow patterns within them.

The use of these sound waves is noninvasive, safe to patients, and does not contain harmful radiation. While ultrasound imaging is divided into several specialty areas such as obstetrics, gynecology, abdominal, echocardiography (heart imaging), and musculoskeletal, these specialty areas often overlap with vascular ultrasound.

What is a vascular sonographer?

A vascular sonographer (or technologist) performs non-invasive diagnostic examinations of the arteries and veins of the body. Most sonographers are credentialed through [American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#) or [Cardiovascular Credentialing International](#).

Who are SVU members?

Among its ~6,400 members, approximately 75% are credentialed sonographers or technologists primarily holding an RVT (Registered Vascular Technologist) designation or less commonly, the RVS (Registered Vascular Sonographer). The remaining member base consists of vascular physicians and students.

What is SVU's perceived value proposition?

With a strong reputation for its depth of vascular expertise, SVU members value the opportunity to network within a highly credentialed community. SVU offers free CMEs to members through the Journal and webinars along with reduced registration fees to a varied portfolio of conferences. As the Society membership continues to expand, reaching health practitioners in related fields of vascular diseases, it has the potential to broaden its educational offerings, increase recognition for its Journal, expand its advocacy efforts, and provide increased member value. Deeper member engagement research would shed light on the viability of these value-add areas.

THREATS TO THE PROFESSION

- **Educational standards.** In recent years, there has been a trend among accredited sonography schools to offer generalized training in ultrasound (i.e. not exclusively in vascular ultrasound), prompted in part by health care facilities that prefer to hire cross-specialty sonographers. While this has led to an increase in multi-credentialed sonographers (especially in obstetric/gynecologic and abdominal imaging), it has also diluted the value of the RVT, and provided post-graduates with less specialized expertise in vascular sonography. This lack of expertise likely impacts patient outcomes, decreases professional pride in the vascular specialty, and dilutes professional relevance. These factors combine to limit SVU's ability to attract dedicated vascular ultrasound professionals as members.
- **Advanced technology.** Artificial Intelligence and point of care technologies have enabled physicians, nurses and other non-vascular ultrasound practitioners to utilize vascular ultrasound imaging. While this may increase access for patients with suspected vascular disease, it may also replace vascular sonographers with less trained individuals. Such a scenario likely does not improve quality patient care. As a result, this disruptive technology can negatively impact patient outcomes, and lead to a continued de-valuing of vascular sonographers. However, SVU is seeking opportunities to properly train RVTs and non-RVTs on advanced technology best practices.
- **Changes to CMS Reimbursement Rates.** Vascular Sonographers work under the general supervision of physicians and typically provide diagnostic services in hospitals or physician offices. As such, reimbursements from CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) may be paid under the [OPPS \(Outpatient Prospective Payment System\)](#) or [PFS \(Physician Fee Schedule\)](#). Led by an advocacy committee chair, and supported by an external regulatory

affairs consultant, SVU has made strides in staving off deep cuts to reimbursement levels. Justifying the value of RVTs (Registered Vascular Technologists) to CMS has been an uphill battle, and requires more concerted efforts in partnership with allied medical societies. To this end, SVU partners with healthcare groups such as the Society for Vascular Surgery and Society for Vascular Medicine on select advocacy efforts.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Clarify and implement the strategic plan

In 2016, the SVU Board of Directors conceptualized a strategic plan with three core pillars:

1. Research – Establish value and impact on patient outcomes
2. Professional Growth – Advance the careers of vascular ultrasound professionals
3. Empowerment – Promote the vascular ultrasound profession

Focusing on other priorities in the intervening years, today SVU is poised to refocus its efforts on creating an actionable roadmap to accomplish these goals. The new Executive Director will partner with the Board, and if appropriate, the consultant who facilitated the original strategic planning process, to advance the profession while expanding the membership base under the new One Community umbrella.

Creating an inclusive, vascular “One Community” through transformed partnerships.

SVU exists among an ecosystem of vascular, endovascular and sonography societies / credentialing organizations who have both competed and partnered with SVU at various intervals.

Leveraging the new One Community brand to redirect SVU’s mission toward the vascular ultrasound sector, rather than solely toward vascular ultrasound professionals, SVU is poised to showcase its deep expertise in vascular ultrasound and re-position its educational, research, innovation and advocacy efforts in partnership with these allied organizations. The intention is that ALL stakeholders will benefit from mutual learnings, and that SVU will be viewed as THE go-to resource for cutting-edge vascular ultrasound practices.

Examples of these organizations include:

- [Society for Vascular Surgery](#)
- [American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#)
- [Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#)
- [Society for Vascular Medicine](#)
- [American Registry of Radiologic Technologists](#)
- [Cardiovascular Credentialing International](#)
- [Intersocietal Accreditation Commission](#)
- [American College of Radiology](#)

Bolstering educational offerings to advance careers and attract multi-modality practitioners

While SVU members have benefited from the free CMEs offered through the JVU and educational programs, there is a unique opportunity to expand and deepen SVU's educational offerings to advance the learnings of

- multi-credentialed ultrasound professionals who do not currently view themselves as vascular experts;
- multi-modality vascular practitioners (eg. cardiology, interventional radiology, interventional nephrology, surgery and vascular medicine)
- multi-modality sonographers, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and radiologists (eg. OB, abdomen, breast and echocardiography).

By increasing specialized / hands-on training (beyond standard CMEs), SVU can positively impact

- professional expertise of vascular and multi-modality practitioners
- patient outcomes
- professional pride in vascular ultrasound
- recognition from multi-modality physicians
- professional relevance
- membership recruitment / engagement

Protecting the profession through advocacy and advanced practice

Vascular sonographers (technologists) are credentialed to perform [vascular ultrasound](#) and [physiologic testing](#); however, are not yet licensed universally, and do not have state recognition. This has impacted the credibility of the vascular sonographers among physicians, employers, policymakers and the general public. In addition to its efforts to raise its visibility with CMS (see above), SVU has taken positions on [educational standards](#) for vascular ultrasound undergraduate programs, and has engaged in discussions around minimum educational requirements with the potential need for a Bachelors Level Entry.

Recruiting, retaining and engaging membership through value delivery

In recent years, SVU has successfully grown its membership base by >1000 due to intentional recruitment and win-back campaigns. Today, the Society is poised to enhance its membership expansion potential through a variety of efforts:

1. **Deeper analysis of member demographics.** More data are needed to ascertain which members hold multi-modality credentials; why members join and engage; who funds their dues; how they perceive their long-term member value; etc.

Estimated membership base: There are approximately 30,000 RVTs in the United States. However, their expertise in vascular diagnostics is often under recognized by their employers. Any perceived value of SVU membership will need to include raising attention at the level of employers and administrators.

2. **NextGen outreach.** With a graying membership, SVU has an urgent imperative to recruit, engage and mentor students and early career professionals in vascular lab settings who may not have received the specialized training obtained by their seasoned colleagues. Overcoming their lack of vascular specialization, time, and financial resources will be important considerations in the membership expansion process.
3. **Addressing the competitive landscape.** The universe of 30,000 RVTs (many of whom are multi-credentialed) are largely addressing their educational and networking needs through a variety of means beyond SVU. Some of these channels include membership in the [Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#) (an association for multi-modality sonographers); unaffiliated regional chapters and social media outlets; and corporate-provided trainings.
4. **Establishing a strong brand marketing strategy.** As SVU identifies its domestic and international market potential, it will need to create an intentional brand strategy to capture a greater share of RVTs, multi-modality practitioners, and corporate sponsors through the One Community vascular ultrasound umbrella.
5. **Formalizing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion platform.** Addressing the recent light shed upon systemic racial injustice issues, SVU has formalized a DEI Advisory Council to determine how the organization can advance social equity in its leadership and within the profession. As a nascent project, more effort needs to be given to this important endeavor.

Raising professional visibility, relevance and recognition through published research

Expected to reside in the [SVU Foundation](#) in the near future, The Quality Improvement and Research Committee (QIRC) pursues research projects demonstrating the intrinsic value of vascular ultrasound. Foremost among its goals, QIRC's aims to strengthen the quality of articles in SVU's [Journal for Vascular Ultrasound](#). A quarterly publication produced by Sage, JVU is making intentional efforts towards indexing, with the anticipated result of increasing the impact factor of its articles.

While the Journal currently publishes case studies, the goal is to solicit primary research in partnership with vascular physicians, both domestically and internationally. With the imminent onboarding of a new Editor-in-Chief and establishment of a new journal committee, SVU is positioned to elevate the standing of JVU, raise visibility for vascular ultrasound, and positively impact patient outcomes. This may also result in more insurance companies requiring licensure to conduct vascular exams, and may bolster SVU's efforts for state recognition of the RVT credential.

The new Executive Director will be a strategic business partner to JVU's Editor-in-Chief and yet-to-be-established journal committee, ensuring that the indexing and research agendas are advanced expeditiously, operational roadblocks are removed, and that the Journal is elevated and leveraged to drive strategic partnerships.

Growing the annual conference and non-dues revenue streams

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SVU pivoted its 2020 Annual Conference to a virtual platform, which expanded access and boosted profits due to the absence of hotel costs. In August 2021, SVU will host a joint conference with the [Society for Vascular Surgery](#). Going forward, SVU should evaluate its conference offerings, registrant pool, pricing, and venues (in-person and virtual) to ensure maximum value and benefit to the organization and participants.

SVU's non-dues revenue has been generated primarily from conference registration, sponsors and exhibitors through an outside contractor. With the potential expansion to the multi-modality healthcare community, there could be significant opportunities to attract a wider vendor and conference registration community.

Streamlining and bolstering internal operations and governance structure

SVU is aware of several systemic operational challenges, which need to be further addressed during the onboarding of a new Executive Director.

- **Technology Enhancement.** Creating a better user experience for the website, UConnect (community platform), purchasing CMEs, and integrating a new Learning Management System.
- **Staff and Office Realignment.** With its staff of three (including the ED), several vendors, and budget of ~\$1M, there is an opportunity to right-size priorities based on the strategic plan, align staff talents, and re-examine fiscal objectives.
- **Office Virtualization & Outsourcing.** Currently based in Lanham, MD (a suburb of Washington, DC), the office has functioned remotely since March 2020. The Board of Directors has authorized the new Executive Director to permanently virtualize the office and explore new outsourcing arrangements to augment staff functions.
- **Committee Engagement.** SVU has a dedicated cohort of long-term volunteers who serve on their Board of Directors, Foundation, 17 committees, and as liaisons to allied medical organizations. These committees could benefit from a thorough examination of their priorities, volunteer recruitment and engagement, accountability structure, and decision-making procedures.

Clarifying and executing on the mission of the SVU Foundation.

The [SVU Foundation](#) was established in 2017 with a research and education mission. After recent fundraising efforts, The Foundation was able to award several research grants.

As a fledging organization, it is primed for growth through increased clarity around its core objectives, and fundraising potential. The Executive Director will lead the Foundation's strategic efforts and ensure that its goals are aligned with those of the Society.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- An entrepreneurial #1 or #2 executive leading a **professional medical society with members who serve in clinical practitioner roles.**
- Experience guiding a governing body in executing a strategic plan
- Measurable achievements adding value and growing a membership base through innovative offerings, including educational programs
- Success at leveraging strategic partnerships with allied health organizations
- Familiarity with best practices in conference development and non-dues revenue generation
- Experience re-aligning and developing staff to execute on strategic priorities
- Ability to develop and deploy a financial strategy, while leveraging the capabilities of an outsourced accountant.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience with CMS and medical reimbursements
- Exposure to advocacy initiatives
- Familiarity with managing the business operations of a medical journal

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

- Strategic, innovative thinker who can use foresight to assess and address changing market trends
- Affable, resilient change leader capable of influencing board leadership toward new strategic trajectories
- Collaborative and confident partner who exhibits active listening, continuous learning and humility
- Diplomatic and empathetic executive able to handle adversity with grace and aplomb
- Energetic, positive, roll-up-your-sleeves personality, able to think strategically and implement tactically
- Calculated risk taker who “measures twice,” then decides deliberately and acts decisively.

PERFORMANCE & BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES

- Deeply listens to the board, then communicates a clear vision
- Re-allocates division of responsibilities between ED and board
- Able to creatively increase SVU's visibility and relevance
- Forges and leverages external relationships and partnerships
- Honors the current organization while advancing a strategic vision
- Instills best practices in communicating and operationalizing goals
- Unifies the board, staff and partners around a common purpose

COMPENSATION

Based on SVU's current budget, the target compensation for this role is \$175,000 plus bonus potential.

LOCATION

This is a remote opportunity.

FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

Interested candidates should include the following in their submission:

- A thoughtfully crafted cover letter (several pages are encouraged) highlighting:
 - Your interest - and any familiarity - serving SVU's member population
 - Your alignment with the Qualifications and Qualities sections outlined above
- A tailored resume that aligns your skills with SVU's desired business outcomes

SUBMISSION PROCESS & SEARCH TIMELINE

Please submit your cover letter and resume to Shira Lotzar, Purposeful Hire Inc. at shira@purposefulhire.com by February 26, 2021. Candidates will be interviewed by Shira virtually, then a narrowed slate will be presented to the Search Committee by mid-March. Virtual interviews with the Search Committee, followed by the Board of Directors, is anticipated to occur in early April with a final employment contract executed late April.