

Position and Candidate Specification



Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Chief Executive Officer

PREPARED BY:

Mark I. Furman, M.D.

Leslie Hortum

Katherine Stellato

About the Organization

Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit professional organization representing surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lungs, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest.

STS is the largest cardiothoracic surgery organization in the world with more than 8,000 members in 102 countries.

Key Services

Quality, Research, and Analytics

STS offers an array of resources and services to help hospitals and CT surgeons assess and benchmark their performance to improve quality, safety, and patient outcomes.

The STS National Database is the gold standard for CT surgery clinical outcomes registries, with nationally recognized quality performance measures for adult cardiac, general thoracic, congenital heart surgery, and mechanical circulatory support.

Research and analytics services are available to physicians, researchers, payers, and industry to use for quality improvement initiatives, comparative effectiveness research, post-market surveillance, clinical trials, and basic and translational research.

Education

STS offers education throughout the year through in-person and online courses, and digital resources, including Annual Meeting Online, webinars, podcasts, videos, and the *STS Cardiothoracic Surgery E-Book*. Programs are designed for all cardiothoracic sub-specialties and career stages.

The STS Annual Meeting is one of the largest cardiothoracic surgery meetings in the world. STS 2026 – the Society's 62nd Annual Meeting – was held January 29 to February 1 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Research

The Annals of Thoracic Surgery is an international, peer-reviewed journal that provides original research in cardiothoracic surgery patient care, clinical practice, research, education, and policy. With an impact factor of 5.102, *The Annals* is the most-cited journal in cardiothoracic surgery. *Annals Short Reports* is a fully open access companion journal.

Advocacy

STS is the only professional organization with a dedicated team in Washington, DC that advocates exclusively on policy and regulatory issues that affect cardiothoracic surgeons and their patients. STS-PAC is the only political action committee that exclusively represents cardiothoracic surgeons.

The Thoracic Surgery Foundation

The Thoracic Surgery Foundation is dedicated to improving patient care by investing in groundbreaking research, embracing innovation, supporting global humanitarian outreach, and promoting excellence in education for cardiothoracic surgeons at all career stages.

Headquartered in Chicago with an additional office in Washington, D.C., STS has a strong balance sheet, an annual operating budget of \$37 million and 80+ employees who are focused on the organization's mission of enhancing the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

Position Summary

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons works in partnership with the board of directors, the executive committee, other volunteer leaders, and staff to advance and strengthen the organization's strategic vision and to implement the Society's programs and activities. The CEO is responsible for the leadership, direction, and overall management of the organization, including oversight of the acquisition and effective use of its resources, as well as the recruitment, retention, and motivation of a talented staff. Working closely with the Society's elected officers, the CEO ensures the organization sustains an engaged membership through a clear and consistent value proposition, and is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the Society's financial health. The CEO oversees the organization's budget and allocates resources to maximize the Society's impact on behalf of its members.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to STS Board of Directors

Direct reports Senior Vice President, Quality and Research,
Education and Advocacy
Senior Vice President, Technology and External
Relations
Vice President, Marketing and Communication
Vice President, Finance and Administration
General Counsel
Associate Director for Industry
Executive Assistant

Other key relationships Current and prospective STS members
Related domestic and international medical
associations and societies
Key industry representatives
Relevant service providers

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- In concert with the board of directors, create a clear, sustained strategic direction that prioritizes the highest-impact initiatives and positions STS for long-term relevance, financial resilience, and mission impact.
- Preserve and enhance the STS registry's global impact by maintaining its gold-standard status while reducing burden, improving usability, and mitigating competitive and technological threats.
- Diversify and strengthen revenue streams beyond the registry through further commercialization of education, partnerships, data assets, and new digital offerings.
- Clarify and consistently communicate a compelling STS value proposition that drives member engagement, retention, and growth across career stages.

- Continue to provide steady, strategic leadership within a complex volunteer governance model, ensuring continuity and focus year to year.
- Enhance member experience by modernizing technology and communications to meet contemporary expectations and elevate STS's visibility, influence, and ease of engagement.
- Attract, retain, and empower staff, ensuring robust opportunities for professional development and advancement.
- Support a high-performance, accountable operating culture that delivers on priorities with speed and precision while preserving STS's collaborative, people-centered environment.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Executive-level management experience

Experience leading and managing a membership organization of comparable size, scope, and complexity, as well as expertise in building alignment among diverse constituencies.

Financial and business acumen

Experience overseeing complex budgets, stewarding significant reserves, diversifying revenue streams, and making strategic investment decisions.

External engagement and advocacy

A skilled spokesperson and politically astute advocate with experience engaging a variety of audiences.

Technology and digital fluency

Experience leveraging modern platforms, data, automation, and emerging technologies.

Appreciation for STS's mission

An understanding of the health care sector and appreciation for STS members' and the organization's mission to advance cardiothoracic surgery and improve patient outcomes.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Acting Strategically

- Works effectively with the board of directors to define STS's strategic vision and direction, and sets an enterprise strategy that is actionable and measurable.
- Anticipates competitive, technological, and regulatory threats—particularly to the STS registry—and positions the organization for long-term success and relevance.
- Makes disciplined choices about where to invest and grow, balancing mission advancement with financial stewardship and risk diversification.

Collaborating and Influencing

- Builds trust and alignment quickly with members, staff, and external stakeholders, driving consensus and momentum within a dynamic, volunteer-led governance environment.
- Brings people together around shared priorities, balancing inclusive collaboration with decisive leadership on strategy and results.
- While the volunteer leader (President) is the primary face and voice of the Society, the CEO may effectively serve as an advocate for the organization with partners and peer societies, as needed, while strengthening key relationships.

Leading People

- Sustains a high-performance culture that combines accountability, clarity, and timely execution with respect, empathy, and staff empowerment.
- Builds and sustains strong talent by setting clear expectations, recognizing performance, and thoughtfully strengthening capability across the organization.
- Leads with emotional intelligence and resilience, effectively balancing the needs of surgeon leaders and staff to foster trust, morale, and sustained effectiveness.

SEARCH PROCESS

The base salary range for this position is \$700,000 to \$800,000, with final determination of compensation made after consideration of qualifications and experience.

STS is being assisted in this process by Spencer Stuart and welcomes expressions of interest and referrals. If you wish to submit your own application materials or refer a prospective candidate, please send an email message with supporting materials to: STSCEO@SpencerStuart.com.