



# COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

*The* UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES

**Search for the Chair of the Department of Molecular Genetics and Genome Sciences**  
**The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine**  
**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

## THE SEARCH

The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine (OUCOM) seeks an innovative, visionary, responsive, and strategic builder to serve as the founding Chair of the Department of Molecular Genetics and Genome Sciences. This entrepreneurial academic leader will join the OUCOM at an exciting inflection point in its trajectory and will work with leadership, researchers, and staff across The University of Oklahoma's (OU) campuses to accelerate growth in the areas of genetics research and increase the impact the Health Sciences Center and the University have on Oklahoma and beyond.

The [University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center \(OUHSC\)](#) is a comprehensive academic health center with a rich history as the State's major educational resource for training physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, public health specialists, healthcare professionals, and biomedical scientists. An internationally prominent faculty, state-of-the-art facilities, and new technologies combine to make the OUHSC a leader in education, research, and patient care.

The University of Oklahoma [College of Medicine](#) (OUCOM) is the largest component of OUHSC and is the academic arm of [OU Health](#), the state's largest and flagship comprehensive academic health system. The health system and clinical group practice work in concert with the College of Medicine's educational and research missions. OUCOM, as part of the Health Sciences Center, is on a growth trajectory with an ambitious [strategic plan](#) aimed in part at leveraging its strengths to become a top-tier academic health center, enhancing national recognition, bolstering Oklahoma's healthcare and public health workforce, improving health outcomes and quality of life for many Oklahomans, and driving economic growth through the translation of research into commercial enterprises. This Chair will be an impactful contributor and enthusiastic partner in advancing these critical goals.

As an inaugural leader, the Chair will work as a strategic thought partner with and report to the Executive Dean of the OUCOM and will have the unique opportunity to build and develop a new department strategically integrating the components of genetics research that already exist at OUCOM. They will collaborate and align visions with the Dean and the chairs of the other basic science and clinical departments and existing Centers to support fundamental and translational research growth and ensure this new Department of Molecular Genetics and Genome Sciences is fully prepared to fulfill its academic and research mission. The Chair will possess strong scientific judgment and expertise in attracting, recruiting, and retaining leading figures in fundamental, translational, and clinical research. They will prioritize mentorship across faculty, students, staff, and post-doctoral researchers, fostering a culture of excellence in research and education. The Chair will inspire and guide faculty development, leveraging OUHSC's core facilities,

collegial environment, and endless opportunities for innovation and growth to attract top recruits. They will also establish the Department's visibility and reputation on national and international platforms.

Applicants for this position should be a PhD, MD, or MD/PhD, be eligible for appointment within the Department, and have a substantial record of leadership and achievement in research and education oversight. The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications will be treated confidentially and should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

### **The University of Oklahoma**

Founded in 1890, the [University of Oklahoma](#) (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma, is the state's premier institution of higher education and a leading research university. It spans three campuses and boasts a student body of 31,000 enrolled in 170 academic programs. With a significant commitment to research, OU expends \$416.6 million annually on research initiatives, driving a \$2.05 billion enterprise focused on transforming lives through scholarship and impactful research across Oklahoma.

### **The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center**

Located in Oklahoma City, the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) is one of the nation's few academic health centers with seven professional colleges on site, including [Medicine](#), [Allied Health](#), [Dentistry](#), [Nursing](#), [Pharmacy](#), [Public Health](#), and [Graduate Studies](#). With an annual budget of \$900 million, OUHSC employs over 800 full-time faculty and 4,000 staff. It educates and trains nearly 4,000 students and 1,000 residents, post-docs, and fellows across more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

The OUHSC is a dynamic clinical environment that leads cutting-edge clinical and translational research through strategic, programmatic [centers of excellence](#) such as the [Stephenson Cancer Center \(SCC\)](#), the [Harold Hamm Diabetes Center](#), and the [Dean McGee Eye Institute](#). The SCC is the only National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Cancer Center in Oklahoma. It currently ranks number one among all cancer centers in the nation for the number of patients participating in NCI-sponsored treatment trials, and it is one of only 30 lead centers in the NCI's National Clinical Trials Network. The Harold Hamm Diabetes Center is committed to curing diabetes and ending the diabetes pandemic in the 21st century by providing comprehensive care for people and families who live with diabetes, as well as conducting world-renowned research towards a cure. The Dean McGee Eye Institute is one of the most highly funded and multidisciplinary research programs at OUHSC, investigating a wide range of conditions with translational and fundamental scientists.

As part of the IDeA (Institutional Development Award) state network, OUHSC has three Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (CoBRE) grants in the areas of cancer, geroscience, and microbiology in addition to an IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) grant to develop research across the state of Oklahoma. Additionally, there are T32 training grants in geroscience from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and vision from the National Eye Institute (NEI). The site is also a [Nathan Shock Center of Excellence in Geroscience](#).

Supporting these efforts is the [Oklahoma Clinical and Translational Science Institute](#) (OCTSI). Funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), the OCTSI provides research expertise, strategic partnerships, and evolving infrastructure to improve the health of Oklahomans while promoting economic

development within the state. The OCTSI is engaged with research programs and centers on campus and with communities at large to build relationships and resources that stimulate clinical and translational research efforts at OUHSC. The OCTSI helps to support research cores in Biostatistics/Epidemiology/Research Design, Clinical Resources, Professional Development, Community Engagement, and Evaluation and Oversight/Management.

Research at OUHSC is integral to the University's goal to become a top-tier research university. OUHSC's current research strategic plan targets and builds upon existing research and clinical strengths to achieve a healthier future and vigorous economy for Oklahoma. OUHSC's research has led to the development of several Oklahoma companies that continue to create economic growth in the state.

### **The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine**

The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine (OUCOM) is the largest entity within the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and forms the cornerstone of OU Health. The COM boasts a distinguished faculty of nearly 1,350 members, including almost 1,000 full-time faculty and 218 endowed chairs and professorships. It comprises 21 academic departments including the clinical departments of [Anesthesiology](#), [Dermatology](#), [Family and Preventative Medicine](#), [Internal Medicine](#), [Neurology](#), [Neurosurgery](#), [Obstetrics and Gynecology](#), [Ophthalmology](#), [Orthopedic Surgery and Rehabilitation](#), [Otolaryngology](#), [Pathology](#), [Pediatrics](#), [Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences](#), [Radiation Oncology](#), [Radiological Sciences](#), [Surgery](#), and [Urology](#), and four basic science departments, which include [Biochemistry and Physiology](#), [Cell Biology](#), [Microbiology & Immunology](#), and [Oncology Science](#). Many faculty from these departments work within institutes and the centers of excellence at OUHSC such as the Stephenson Cancer Center, Dean McGee Eye Institute, Harold Hamm Diabetes Center, Reynolds Oklahoma Center for Aging, Oklahoma Shared Clinical and Translational Resources (OSCTR), the Oklahoma Center for Adult Stem Cell Research (OCASCR), and several NIH-supported Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence to advance research and clinical initiatives across diverse biomedical fields.

With the largest portfolio of National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding in the state, OUCOM grew its research portfolio by more than \$4 million last year, to \$64.4 million. Currently ranked 72nd according to the Blue Ridge Rankings, OUCOM aims to rank in the top 60 in the next five years and in the top 50 within 10 years. Key areas of research include cancer, diabetes, neuroscience/vision, and infectious diseases/immunology. The OUCOM has a solid core of basic and clinical researchers in these four areas, plus the largest biomedical infrastructure in the state, which includes the [Institutional Research Core Facility](#). Through recruitment, OUHSC continues to grow its ranks of top researchers.

The OUCOM provides training for undergraduate and graduate students and partners with the Graduate College, which grants Master of Science (MS) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees and is home to approximately 300 students enrolled in 30 nationally and internationally recognized research-based programs supported by approximately 400 graduate faculty members. The OUCOM collaborates closely with the Graduate College to provide the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences (GPiBS), which is a first-year, interdisciplinary program serving seven degree programs at OUHSC. Students in the GPiBS program graduate with a PhD from one of the participating programs, which include Biomedical Sciences, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Cell Biology, Microbiology and Immunology, Neuroscience, Pathology and Physiology to prepare them for careers in the biomedical sciences. OUHSC's internationally prominent faculty, state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge technology, and nearly \$200 million in external funding combine to make OUHSC the leader in graduate education and research in Oklahoma.

Ian F. Dunn, MD, FACS, FAANS, was appointed executive dean of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine beginning January 2024, where he also serves as Chief Academic Officer of OU Health. With a distinguished career spanning renowned medical institutions and pioneering contributions in neurosurgery, research, and healthcare leadership, Dr. Dunn brings a wealth of experience and vision to the College of Medicine. Dr. Dunn's journey to leadership at the college is marked by a pursuit of excellence. Prior to joining OU, he served as a trailblazing figure in neurosurgery and academic medicine. As an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and director of the Center for Pituitary and Skull Base Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Dr. Dunn gained national recognition for his expertise in resecting and treating complex brain tumors, particularly those in the skull base and pituitary region. He has published widely on these topics and on the role of genomic alterations in tumor natural history and has lectured around the world.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The inaugural Chair of the Department of Molecular Genetics and Genome Sciences will join OUCOM at a unique moment of impressive growth and, with an entrepreneurial spirit and growth mindset, will be tasked with building and leading through change. They will be responsible for addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Establish, lead, and strategically grow a genetics department**

The OUCOM is poised for a bright future, supported by its outstanding teaching and research facilities, fresh and inspiring leadership, and substantial financial backing. This inaugural Chair will collaborate closely with leadership to organize and build upon OUHSC's and OUCOM's current research strengths in genetics, provide strategic planning and a vision for the department's growth, and ensure that the administrative structure of the genetics department sufficiently supports the tripartite mission. The inaugural Chair must seize this momentum to establish and propel the research and scholarly activities of this new department. To support research growth, the Chair will focus on assessing and strengthening research support infrastructure and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations among both clinical and basic science departments and other colleges within OUHSC. They will identify and cultivate areas for growth by harnessing the financial strength of the system. This comprehensive approach aims to position the Department at the forefront of research excellence and innovation.

### **Recruit, mentor, and retain outstanding research faculty and staff**

Strategic recruitment, mentorship, and retention of faculty and staff is critical to building the department and advancing the research enterprise. The Chair will work with other leaders across OU to identify areas for faculty appointments and joint faculty recruitment to ensure that the institution attracts high-quality candidates to maximize the department's growth potential. Benefits of joint recruitments include access to more resources, larger start-up packages, additional positions, stronger ties to existing areas of interest, specialized facilities and equipment, and the development of training grants and other institution-based projects.

The Chair will play a key role in mentoring and supporting faculty, ensuring all new and existing faculty can reach their individual and collective potential. In the beginning stages of the department, the Chair will assist in identifying federal funding opportunities to support early- and mid-career researchers in their

professional development. In the face of the necessary growth of the department, the Chair will set the tone for the culture of this new genetics department, placing emphasis on transparency and collaboration as a means to achieving its goals.

### **Promote interdisciplinary and team-based science**

The research portfolio of the COM has been on an upward trajectory, having doubled over the last five years. Critical to the continued growth of the research enterprise is the promotion of interdisciplinary and team-based science. OUCOM is well positioned in this regard, with capable partners across the OUHSC and on the OU Norman and Tulsa campuses. There exist many opportunities to build interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research teams in the areas of bioinformatics and data science, genetic analysis, epigenetics, health outcomes, personalized medicine, and others. There are opportunities to identify additional external partners to engage in research and to enhance current partnerships, including those with the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, a private non-profit biomedical research institution close by that focuses on treatment of cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, arthritis, lupus and AIDS.

### **Create and support the education mission**

Given that this is a new department, it will take some time to establish a graduate program specific to genetics. The Chair will work with the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences (GPiBS) to promote graduate studies in genetics and ensure the provision of appropriate resources to develop and support an innovative and progressive graduate student program. The Chair will promote the health and wellbeing of post docs and graduate students and will be committed to educating and serving the diverse needs of Oklahomans.

Additionally, the Department of Genetics could eventually be an excellent resource for other departments in translational, clinical, and basic science to gain training in genetics and the genomic sciences. The Chair must promote the expertise of the Department of Genetics to serve and educate the local community as well as think strategically about ways to establish a strong national reputation.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Candidates must have qualifications commensurate with an academic appointment at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine. In addition, the ideal candidate will possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- PhD, MD/ PhD, or MD in a relevant field of science with a broad knowledge of genetics who has a distinguished record of research and publications that would support appointment at OUCOM;
- An accomplished scientist who has a national reputation as a thought leader in genetics, genomics, and/or genetic diseases;
- A keen understanding of the funding environment for science, the possibilities for research collaborations, and creative appeals for research funding;
- Experience supporting and growing research and scholarship;
- Administrative leadership experience in an academic medical center environment;
- Demonstrated commitment to excellence in recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty;
- Experience building internal and external partnerships;
- Demonstrated commitment to the education mission;

- Effectiveness in a complex system of distributed leadership and experience working in a highly matrixed environment;
- Proficiency in managing and engaging with stakeholders within an intricate political environment;
- Strong acumen and judgment in managing financial resources and the ability to develop and implement budgets effectively, aligning resources with strategic priorities;
- Experience promoting a welcoming culture in an academic environment;
- Demonstrated vision, a growth mindset, a results-oriented approach, the highest level of integrity, and evidence of timely and principled decision-making.

## **OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

To explore Oklahoma City, please visit: <https://www.okcchamber.com/>

## **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search via this link: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-oklahoma-health-sciences-center-college-medicine/chair-department-genetics>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

**Ariannah Mirick, Partner**  
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*The University of Oklahoma, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, age, religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes, but is not limited to: admissions, employment, financial aid, housing, services in educational programs or activities, or health care services that the University operates or provides.*

### ***Why You Belong at the University of Oklahoma:***

*The University of Oklahoma fosters an inclusive culture of respect and civility, belonging, and access, which are essential to our collective pursuit of excellence and our determination to change lives. The unique talents, perspectives, and experiences of our community enrich the learning, and working environment at OU, inspiring us to harness our innovation, creativity, and collaboration for the advancement of people everywhere.*

### ***Mission of the University of Oklahoma:***

*The Mission of the University of Oklahoma is to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.*