



SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Search for the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

University of Minnesota, School of Dentistry

Minneapolis, MN

THE SEARCH

The University of Minnesota School of Dentistry (SOD) seeks a dynamic, multifaceted leader to serve as the next Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to usher the School through its next phase of growth and innovation. Reporting to the Dean, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (AADA) will provide strategic leadership and facilitate a vision for all academic matters across the School of Dentistry, including curriculum development, student and resident affairs, advanced education, student admissions and progression, and more.

With a mission to advance health through scientific discovery, innovative education and the highest-quality care for all communities, the SOD is the only school of dentistry in Minnesota, and the only dental school in the northern tier of states between Wisconsin and the Pacific Northwest. The work of the School affects a significant proportion of Minnesotans, educating 73% of dentists in Minnesota, 68% of licensed dental therapists, and 49% of dental hygiene educators.

The SOD maintains an active, competitive, and successful research environment - investigators and programs in the School are currently supported with just under \$8 million annual external funding. Research is organized into five clusters: Behavioral, Public Health & Education Research; Biomaterials, Biomechanics and Technology; Oral Microbiology, Virology, Immunology and Cancer; Systems Biology of the Orofacial Complex; and Clinical & Translational Research. Working together across disciplines, faculty and students bring the latest knowledge and advancements from the classroom into clinics and offices across the state and beyond. The SOD is also the only dental school in the U.S with an MRI dedicated to oral health.

The successful candidate will have strong administrative leadership skills and knowledge of contemporary curricular modalities and transformative competencies to advance clinical education. The University of Minnesota offers a comprehensive and diverse landscape in health sciences education, research, and patient care, and the ideal ADAA candidate will have expertise in medical-dental integration and in building collaborative practice models. As the most senior leader at the SOD behind the Dean, the ADAA will work collaboratively with the Dean, other Associate/Assistant Deans, the Department Chairs, and the Director of DEI towards maintaining a culture steeped in academic excellence, while fostering a humanistic environment in their office and promoting the same throughout the academic environment. Additionally, the ADAA will work closely with Division Directors and the Associate Dean for Patient Care and Clinical Services to oversee and influence the academic components of student progression through their clinical coursework. This leader will have a strong understanding of the use of technology in education and the integration of basic, behavioral, and clinical sciences through the curriculum and will represent the School to external stakeholders as needed.

The SOD is at a pivotal moment of transformation, marked by exciting growth and bold initiatives. With an increasing focus on expanding its footprint in rural communities, embracing cutting-edge technologies in digital dentistry, and preparing for significant upgrades to its clinical facilities, the School is poised to shape the future of dental education and patient care. The ADAA role is uniquely integrated into every layer of these advancements, offering a rare opportunity for a visionary leader to make a profound and lasting impact. This is why we seek a strong, forward-thinking leader – because this position is vital to steering the SOD toward its ambitious goals and ensuring its continued success in this dynamic era.

University of Minnesota School of Dentistry has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in the search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

The School of Dentistry at the University of Minnesota has a long history of leadership in clinical education, research, and health care outreach serving the State of Minnesota and the northern tier of states looking westward that have no dental schools. The nation's eighth-oldest University-based dental program, the School began as a division of the University's Department of Medicine in 1888 and became the School of Dentistry in 1932. Over time, advanced dental specialty training programs were added for those wishing to obtain an education beyond the Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree. A two-year dental hygiene program was added in 1920, with a baccalaureate degree program established in 1990. During the years 1957 to 1993, several programs were developed to give dental graduates the opportunity to earn a PhD in various disciplines. In 2009, the University became the first dental school in the nation to educate dental therapists, and in 2016, that program evolved into a dual-degree program offering a BS in dental hygiene/MS in dental therapy.

The Dental Therapy degree program, launched in 2009 and the first such program in the country, trains students to provide oral health services in rural areas and underserved urban areas. The School has consistently been funded by the National Institutes of Health in its research and training programs and has an ongoing relationship with local industry, including a powerful partnership with 3M.

The School's 2025 strategic plan focuses on advancing education, patient experience and outreach, research & discovery, sustainability, culture and environment, and infrastructure with the following goals:

- Preparing students to be future-ready oral health professionals who are culturally competent in collaborative and team-based practice.
- Providing patient-centered care and education with oral health as integral to overall health and well-being.
- Developing innovative research programs throughout the School of Dentistry that benefit Minnesotans and beyond.
- Developing models and practices that provide long-term sustainability of clinical systems and expanded funding opportunities.
- Creating an environment that promotes excellence and respect of diversity in a collaborative and supportive framework.
- Providing technologies and facilities that enable us to excel in our mission and strengthen our core values.

The School's mission, vision, and strategic plan build on the University of Minnesota's unique strengths as a globally engaged research university of exceptional breadth and depth, its strong land-grant mission, and its locational advantages as one of only a few major public research universities situated in a major metropolitan area.

Educational Programs

The Doctor of Dental Surgery Program (DDS): The University of Minnesota has the largest enrollment of pre-doctoral dental students in the upper Midwest, with an entering class of 105 and 415 students overall. Emphasizing the scientific, scholarly, interpersonal communication, and practice management skills required of graduates in a continually changing profession, the DDS program provides students with the tools, technology, and rich educational experience to achieve their goals and become well-rounded dental professionals.

Dental students learn in the 3M Foundation Dental Simulation Clinic, a facility designed to create a realistic clinic environment. By practicing restorative procedures on simulated patients, the students learn the eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity skills, techniques, and procedures they'll use to treat real patients.

Dental Hygiene: The Division of Dental Hygiene comprises three programs, including the [Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene](#), the [Master of Science in Dental Hygiene](#), and the [Oral Health Educator Certificate Program](#). The Division of Dental Hygiene's mission is to educate individuals who are prepared intellectually, technically, and ethically to meet the oral health care needs and challenges of the future. The Division is committed to excellence in dental hygiene education, practice, public health, management, and research. The Master of Science in Dental Hygiene program prepares leaders in the profession for research, the healthcare industry, and academia. The Oral Health Educator Certificate is a 24-week program that educates dental, dental therapy, and dental hygiene educators with the skills needed for effective teaching.

Dental Therapy Program: As the only dental institution in the state, the School of Dentistry responded to the state legislative initiative and became the first dental school in the nation to educate dental therapists. This program has evolved into a B.S. in Dental Hygiene/Master of Dental Therapy dual degree program whose graduates, under supervision of a dentist, provide preventive, basic operative, and basic surgical services for children and adults.

Advanced Education and Graduate Programs: The School offers advanced education programs in endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral biology, orofacial pain, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics. A Master of Science in Dentistry is offered to prepare graduates for leadership roles in dental research, education, administration, and advanced clinical and oral sciences. There are also M.S. and PhD programs for those who wish to pursue advanced basic science training, clinical research, biological sciences, or public health. Master's and doctoral programs in basic science disciplines are offered in conjunction with other departments through the Graduate School.

Program for Advanced Standing Students (PASS): The University of Minnesota Program for Advanced Standing Students (PASS) is a 29-month program for graduates of dental schools outside of the United States and Canada. Graduates earn their Doctor of Dental Surgery to practice general dentistry in the United States. UMN PASS is one of the only programs that prepares graduates to take the dental board examinations so graduates can practice dentistry in Canada as well. A total of 16 students are admitted each year.

UMN PASS is an integrated program, therefore students receive the same clinical education as any other student graduating from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry. All instruction is research-based, taught by top faculty who are leaders in dentistry, and incorporates leading dental techniques, skills, and tools. UMN PASS facilitates a smooth transition into the United States and Canadian dental profession with 100% employment after graduation.

Students

The School is committed to graduating professionals who provide the highest quality care and service to the people of the state of Minnesota, the nation, and the world. Each year, approximately 105 dentists plus PASS students, 8-9 dental therapists, and 21 dental hygienists graduate from the School of Dentistry, gaining experience in a wide range of settings from rural to urban, and learning to work effectively in a rigorous team-based environment.

The University of Minnesota School of Dentistry embraces a strong [commitment to diversity](#), in alignment with the University's mission and priorities and the School's mission to "provide oral health care to a diverse patient population in a variety of settings." The School seeks to recruit, retain, and graduate students from underrepresented and underserved communities, to ensure their appropriate representation in the dental profession and to provide culturally competent care to the diverse and changing communities of the state and beyond. Many factors are used in evaluating a student's potential contributions, including attention to geographic diversity, disadvantaged educational background, racial and ethnic background, evidence of outstanding leadership, and experience and/or interest in research and teaching.

Students in the School are attracted from a wide geographic area, with a significant number from Minnesota and nearby states. Additionally, 73% of the state's dentists graduated from the University of Minnesota. Dental students at the University of Minnesota are also active professionally. Minnesota dental students were the first in the nation to become members of the state's professional association, in the 8th District Dental Society of the Minnesota Dental Association. Students participate in Association committees, and have voting representation on its Board of Trustees and at policy making sessions of its House of Delegates. Minnesota dental students are also active as leaders of the American Student Dental Association (ASDA), and are the recipients of numerous ASDA, University and Alumni Association leadership and service awards.

Faculty

The School's excellence rests on the distinction of its faculty, who have earned a worldwide reputation for educational innovation and contributions in many areas of research. The School particularly has achieved an international reputation for breakthrough work in biomaterials and biomechanics through the following research clusters: 1) Behavioral, Public Health and Educational Research; 2) Biomaterials, Biomechanics and Technology; 3) Oral Microbiology, Virology, Immunology and Cancer; 4) Systems Biology of the Orofacial Complex; 5) Clinical and Translational Research.

The School has 309 staff and 127 faculty, 52 of which are tenured or tenure track, 70 are clinical, 4 are research, and 1 teaching.

Research Excellence

The University of Minnesota School of Dentistry maintains an active, competitive, and successful research environment. Investigators and programs in the School are currently supported by \$7,879,373 of external funding in FY2024. The School is committed to discovering new knowledge through research, thus inspiring innovation in the biomedical, behavioral, and clinical sciences. The School's faculty members have pioneered discoveries in pain research from both a basic science and clinical perspective, in how bacterial viruses invade healthy cells and replicate themselves, and in bone biology, which has implications for dental implants, periodontal health, endodontics, and orthodontics; it has also achieved an international reputation for work in the development and testing of dental and dental-related materials.

Service and Community Outreach

The School of Dentistry is inextricably linked to the larger community and provides oral health care to a diverse patient population in a variety of settings. Its larger community includes the citizens of the state, various state and local health agencies, professional dental organizations, and a variety of healthcare delivery organizations serving Minnesotans. The School also recognizes its role and responsibilities regionally and nationally, and makes a special effort to be engaged with communities of the Dakotas, which have no dental school.

Aligned with the mission and priorities of the School and the other health science schools and colleges, and the broader University land-grant and engagement commitments, the School's training and outreach programs support expanded access to dental care across the state and further the goal of expanding the oral health workforce in pediatric, general, and public health dentistry.

The School's community-based service-learning program is an important part of its educational program, as well as its service mission. There are more than 100,000 patient visits to the School's campus-based clinics each year, and more than 16,000 in the School's community-based clinics. Special clinics include a pediatric dental clinic, which is fully integrated with the new University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital. There are a number of specialty and advanced clinics whose services include treatment of a range of issues, including orofacial trauma, orofacial pain, cleft lip and palate, dental infections, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders, and services for hospital and special needs patients.

The School of Dentistry also partners with community stakeholders to establish clinical rotations at their outreach sites. Community outreach is a graduation requirement for all senior-level students (DDS, dental therapy, and dental hygiene). Students spend approximately ten weeks in outreach rotations, gaining experiences that reinforce their knowledge of the principles of dental care delivery, while they provide needed dental services to a variety of patients, including underserved patient populations, in on- and off-site clinical settings.

In the Twin Cities area, students care for patients at three inner-city clinics—all within fifteen miles of campus—that serve diverse communities. The remaining seven outreach sites are at locations around the state. One is based at a hospital serving a fifteen-county rural community, two are specifically targeted to Native American populations, and one specializes in providing geriatric dental care. In the last ten years, students have provided over \$43 million worth of dental services in community clinics, federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Service and tribal clinics, all serving underserved populations in the region.

Leadership

Keith Mays, DDS, MS, PhD is Dean of the School of Dentistry. Prior to assuming the deanship, Dr. Mays was Associate Dean for Academic Affairs from 2015-2020. Previously, Dr. Mays served as Division Director of Prosthodontics at East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine. He also served as Assistant Director of the University of Maryland General Practice Residency Program. His academic career includes teaching in preclinical and clinical prosthodontics, student mentoring and advising, and private faculty practice.

Dr. Mays earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry and a Master of Science and Certificate in Prosthodontics from the University of Iowa. He completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Morgan State University and earned a PhD at the University of Maryland. Dr. Mays has served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Dental Education Association, and has held numerous leadership roles with ADEA and the National Dental Association. He currently serves on the commissioner board of the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

Dr. Mays's several research interests have included clinical and educational research. His clinical research interests focus on improving oral motor function, specifically investigating compensatory movements of the tongue and jaw during speech, swallowing, and mastication. His educational research interests focus on community-based dental education, student well-being, improving the academic environment, the use of CAD/CAM as an assessment tool in pre-clinical dental education, and enhancing service-learning during community-based dental experiences for students. His advocacy for better oral health as a pathway to improving overall health has shaped his research interest in the role of oral health in interprofessional education and collaborative practice.

Dr. Mays is an active mentor of students and student organizations. He currently serves as the faculty advisor for the Student National Dental Association and as a previous thesis committee member for master's student candidates in dental specialty training programs. In addition, he has served as a research mentor for students and an ADEA faculty advisor for the Academic Dental Career Fellowship Program.

THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the School of Dentistry is responsible for providing strategic leadership for curriculum management, student and resident affairs, advanced education, student progression, admissions, and other academic areas. The ADAA reports directly to the Dean of the SOD and is a member of the Dean's Executive Team, known as the Council of Chairs. The Academic Dean, in partnership with the Dean, will facilitate a vision for all academic matters within SOD.

The Academic Dean represents the SOD on the Academic Health Sciences Associate Deans and Program Directors group under the Associate Vice Provost for Health Sciences of the office of Interim Associate Vice President and the Council of Faculty of Associate Deans of the office of the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. This position oversees the SOD Director of Global Programs, the Assistant Dean for Advanced Education, the Assistant Dean for Resident & Student Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Faculty Development, and all interprofessional education initiatives.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Advance the School's educational mission through curriculum development and innovative educational offerings.

The new ADAA will foster a culture of excellence in teaching by incorporating advanced technologies and innovative and evidence-based methodologies into the curriculum, ensuring the School's educational programs stay at the forefront of the evolving dental field. The ADAA must assure that the School's impressive programs remain relevant and responsive to student needs, continues to prepare an inspired dental health workforce, and remains accessible and affordable for students.

The ADAA must also assess current offerings, identifying additional needs or areas of growth and collaboration for the SOD. Importantly, the ADAA will provide strong leadership and vision for an innovative team care clinic model. The curriculum has recently expanded to include four tracks (General, Research, Rural, and Academic) for dental students to explore different areas of dentistry. The ADAA will be expected to further expand and develop these tracks to include dental hygiene and dental therapy students, and to ensure continued success and effectiveness over time, which may include faculty participation in each track, creating opportunities for more specialized mentorship and development.

Nurture an administrative infrastructure that supports growth, innovation, and scholarship.

As the School of Dentistry looks toward an era of continued innovation, the ADAA will ensure infrastructure and systems best support the SOD's needs as they continue to evolve. The incoming ADAA will inherit a group of strong Assistant Deans who anticipate a leader who can assure operational excellence through integration. The ADAA will have the ability to lead through both formal reporting lines and influence, effectively managing change, and overseeing large scale academic projects, while communicating effectively and ensuring transparency regarding critical decisions.

Foster a diverse, inclusive and collegial environment throughout the School that reflects the patient population.

The ADAA will champion inclusion, transparency, and collaboration among students, faculty, and staff, fostering a supportive and collegial environment where diverse perspectives and expertise are valued and leveraged for the greater good. They will promote teamwork, professional growth, and innovation to address evolving needs in dental education and healthcare. By fostering strong, collegial relationships, the ADAA will enhance the School's ability to innovate and adapt to the changing landscape of dental education and dental healthcare delivery. The ADAA will support initiatives that facilitate cross-disciplinary research, shared learning opportunities, and community service projects.

Promote a culture of collaboration, communication, and trust across health sciences.

The ADAA will be a participatory leader who can bring people together in new and exciting ways. Leveraging the University of Minnesota's robust health sciences landscape, which includes one of the most comprehensive academic health centers in the nation, the ADAA will have the opportunity to foster greater interprofessional collaboration. This includes advancing medical-dental integration and developing collaborative practice models, inclusive of all members of the oral healthcare team, that enhance education, research, and patient care within the academic dental setting. By tapping into this dynamic environment, the ADAA can lead initiatives that not only strengthen connections across disciplines but also position the School of Dentistry as a leader in transforming healthcare delivery and education.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Candidates must have a DDS, DMD, or equivalent in a related field, as well as a proven record of scholarly achievement commensurate with an appointment as a tenured professor at the University of Minnesota. Successful candidates will be able to play a major administrative and strategic leadership role in a large, complex, public research university.

Successful candidates also will have a broad set of skills and assets deemed important for success. While perhaps no candidate will possess all the following traits, the successful candidate will bring many of these personal attributes, professional experiences, and demonstrated strengths:

- A track record of successful leadership in education, clinical care and/or research, service, and administrative management.
- A distinguished academic background. A record of exceptional scholarly achievement, a history of teaching effectiveness, a record of administrative effectiveness, and acknowledged reputation in the provision of exemplary health care are among the preferred criteria, in addition to the requirement that candidates have a scholarly record commensurate with an appointment as a tenured professor at the University of Minnesota.
- Demonstrated success in managing and leading a complex organization undergoing significant and persistent change.
- Demonstrated ability to build a sense of community and to actively engage faculty, staff, students, alumni, and oral health professionals in support of a shared strategic vision.
- Demonstrated success in enhancing the education agenda of an academic unit or program, in responding to student needs, and building environments that enhance student learning.
- Demonstrated commitment and success in promoting and supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students and in the training of oral health practitioners who are prepared to attend to the unique needs of an increasingly diverse patient population.
- Demonstrated interest and ability in generating external funding, including private fundraising for the School.
- Exceptional interpersonal and communications skills; the ability to listen attentively to varied perspectives; the ability to foster a supportive and collaborative working environment.
- A clear understanding and interest in embracing new pedagogical and clinical care techniques, such as use of digital dentistry, to meet current and future needs of learners and clinicians.
- Experience with and an interest in exploring ways in which the School might become more involved in the global community of dentistry as a key part of an integrated and interprofessional healthcare team.
- A high level of integrity and professionalism, and a commitment to support the professional development of faculty and staff, and
- An understanding and deep appreciation of the historic land-grant mission of the University of Minnesota and the School of Dentistry.

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: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-minnesota-school-dentistry/associate-dean-academic-affairs>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Jay Torio, Partner
Jasmine Miller, Senior Associate
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