

# **UAB**

## **The University of Alabama at Birmingham.**

Chair, Department of Biomedical Engineering  
School of Engineering and Heersink School of Medicine  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Birmingham, Alabama

### THE SEARCH

The University of Alabama at Birmingham seeks an innovative, collaborative, and entrepreneurial leader to serve as the next Chair of the [Department of Biomedical Engineering](#) (BME). Founded in 1979, BME is a pioneering department that launched its undergraduate program in 2004 and became a joint department across the schools of [Engineering](#) and [Medicine](#) in 2014. Reporting to the deans of both schools, the Chair will leverage the strengths of an internationally-renowned research university and academic medical center to advance the department's mission to radically improve healthcare through scientific discovery, the identification of novel solutions for complex problems, and groundbreaking advancements in biotech, positioning BME at UAB for transformational impact. Throughout its history, BME has built on the natural advantage of the co-location of Schools of Engineering and Medicine within easy walking distance on a single campus.

Since the inception of the joint department, extramural funding has increased significantly, and in 2025 BME had over \$8 million in total research expenditures. BME's 18 primary faculty, 3 staff, 250 undergraduate students, and 47 graduate students have access to state-of-the-art research facilities across a single campus in downtown Birmingham that encompasses both schools as well as an [NCI-designated cancer center](#) and the [fifth-largest hospital in the nation](#). Birmingham is home to a compelling variety of existing and prospective corporate and research partners, presenting a unique opportunity for an entrepreneurial and creative Chair to capitalize on a wealth of experiential learning, and research.

A successful Chair will be able to capitalize on UAB's uniquely collaborative environment and propel the department to the next echelon. Sitting between the Schools of Medicine and Engineering, and with dozens of other departments, centers, and institutes eager for collaboration, BME could and should be a major hub for interdisciplinary research at UAB. Leveraging existing strengths while building in areas where the department is well positioned for success such as imaging, neuroengineering, cancer, artificial intelligence, and data science, the incoming Chair will strategically identify complementary research and programmatic areas to enrich the department through new hires and collaborations. The Chair should

also excel at identifying and cultivating talented faculty, students, and staff, raising the profile of the department through strategic recruitment, mentorship, and team-building. This leader should also prioritize effective communication about departmental goals and accomplishments to a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment effort. 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 UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) became an autonomous campus within The University of Alabama System in 1969. In only five decades, UAB has grown into a world-renowned research university and medical center, occupying more than 100 city blocks in the heart of downtown Birmingham – Alabama’s largest metropolitan area. UAB serves nearly 21,000 students, offering more than 180-degree programs. as the state’s largest employer, with more than 35,000 employees, and was named Forbes’ no. 1 large employer in the United States in 2021. UAB is a significant driver of the Alabama’s economy with an economic impact of \$12.1 billion. As an internationally renowned research university and academic health center, its professional schools and specialty patient-care programs are consistently ranked among the nation’s top 50. UAB hospital is now the fifth largest in the nation with 1,400 hospital beds.

## ABOUT THE SCHOOLS OF ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE

[The School of Engineering](#) comprises [four academic departments](#) and offers a curriculum focused on experiential learning and progressively advanced, hands-on applications. The school is home to 58 faculty, 10 instructors and research professors, 9 staff, and approximately 1,500 students. With more than 15 graduate degree programs and tracks to choose from at the master and doctoral level, plus a variety of certificates on offer, the school provides initiatives that range from traditional M.S./Ph.D. pathways to [online master of engineering degree](#) tracks for working professionals. In June of 2025, UAB inaugurated the SOE’s new home, the state-of-the-art [Frances and Miller Gorrie Hall](#).

Dedicated to training the next generation of physicians and physician-scientists, [the Heersink School of Medicine](#) (HSOM) has campuses in Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa, and is home to more than 845 students, 1,150 residents and fellows, and over 2,000 faculty across 27 academic departments. UAB Medicine comprises the HSOM and the UAB Health System, Alabama’s largest and most comprehensive health system, and is nationally recognized for delivering exceptional patient care, groundbreaking research, and advanced medical education. Each year, it cares for more than 1.45 million patients from every county in Alabama, all 50 states, and many countries across the globe.

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## LEADERSHIP

### **Dean, School of Engineering**

Dr. Jeffrey Holmes is the seventh Dean of Engineering at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and assumed the role in July 2020. Holmes joined UAB from the University of Virginia, where he was a professor of biomedical engineering and medicine and the inaugural director of the Center for Engineering in Medicine. The initiative was designed to jumpstart medical innovation by fostering partnerships between engineers and clinicians. Prior to UVA, he taught at Columbia University and helped found and build a new biomedical engineering department there.

### **Dean, Heersink School of Medicine**

Dr. Anupam Agarwal is Senior Vice President for Medicine and Dean, Heersink School of Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). He served as Executive Vice Dean for the Heersink School of Medicine (2014-2022) and served as the Director for the Division of Nephrology from 2008 - 2021. He also served as the Program Director of the NIH/NIDDK funded O'Brien Center for Acute Kidney Injury Research. He has graduate faculty status in the Departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, Pathology and Cell, Developmental and Integrative Biology at UAB.

## ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

A dual report to the Deans of Engineering and Medicine, the Chair will serve as a key strategic partner and the department's chief administrative and academic officer. The Chair will be tasked with charting BME's strategic direction, setting and implementing goals around recruitment and programmatic expansion to scale interdisciplinary research, teaching, and innovation within the department. A key interlocutor between engineering and medicine, the incoming Chair will be strategically positioned to assist in streamlining administrative processes and optimizing communications between the schools.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHAIR

The successful Chair will address the following opportunities and challenges that are central to the sustained growth, impact, and success of the Schools of Engineering and Medicine:

### **Charter a dynamic strategic direction for BME at UAB**

BME at UAB is well-regarded nationally and enjoys a strong culture across a group of collegial faculty. It is positioned on the campus of a comprehensive university that is a national leader in research and healthcare. The undergraduate program attracts excellent students and continues to enjoy strong demand. Faculty lead a variety of major grants (U01, PPG, T-32) and are published in top journals in their fields. There is much to build on, but the incoming chair will need to position the department strategically

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for future growth, setting the course for hiring of new faculty, developing new programs that leverage the department's unique strengths, improving collaboration within and outside the department, and thriving in a changing landscape for science and education.

### **Broaden the research scope of the department**

Extramural research support in the department is excellent, with particular strength in cardiovascular physiology/engineering. The next chair must work to diversify research in the department through strategic faculty hires, support of existing faculty, and interdisciplinary collaborations to make the most of the vibrant research environment at UAB. Working with faculty and the deans, the next Chair will set a strategy to build upon potential strengths in areas such as imaging, neuro-engineering, AI, and cancer.

### **Further integrate the department across the Schools of Engineering and Medicine**

A collaborative department by design, BME attracts a collegial and innovative group of faculty and staff. The incoming Chair will work closely with the Deans of Engineering and Medicine to enhance collaborative efforts across the schools. Structured mentoring, joint lab meetings and courses, and shared trainee programs will be essential mechanisms to co-develop translational pipelines that span basic science to clinical application with a variety of interdisciplinary partners. Working to remove barriers to collaboration and encourage connectivity between researchers and scholars, the Chair will be tasked with cultivating financial, staffing, education, and administrative processes that increase transparency and reduce duplicative efforts across both schools.

### **Recruit, retain, and develop outstanding faculty and researchers**

BME faculty are evenly distributed between the Schools of Engineering and Medicine. With strong representation in the junior and full professor ranks, there are strategic opportunities to recruit and invest in the development of mid-career faculty while maintaining robust mentorship and training opportunities for all. Critically important to the expansion of departmental research, the Chair will lead efforts to recruit faculty with expertise that enriches the department's scientific output.

The Chair will enhance opportunities for teaching and scholarship, growing select aspects of the academic program while providing faculty with the protected time needed to engage in meaningful research. Promoting an ecosystem that drives discovery and yields advanced biomedical technologies and devices, the Chair will create a culture that simultaneously impacts positive outcomes for human health while advancing the profile of the department and promoting faculty excellence.

### **Advocate for internal resources to support the department's tripartite mission**

BME is poised for regional, national, and global impact and to thrive as a hub for translational innovation. To achieve the department's ambitious research goals over the next five years, strategic investment is essential across infrastructure, personnel, and collaborative frameworks. Equally important is the

enhancement of department core facilities, particularly imaging platforms, bioinformatics pipelines, and shared wet lab spaces, to support high-throughput data generation and analysis.

The incoming Chair will clearly articulate the department's influence on research, clinical, and translational outcomes to a variety of senior leaders across the campus. Tasked with leveraging existing disciplinary strengths and maximizing interdisciplinary opportunities to maximize BME's impact, the Chair will work collaboratively with departmental and decanal leaders across each school and the university as a whole to identify strategic resources and establish seed funding mechanisms to empower interdisciplinary pilot projects and foster innovation.

### **Strengthen and expand strategic partnerships to increase visibility and maximize impact**

Actively engaged in the cultivation of productive regional, national, and global partnerships, the incoming Chair will serve as a champion of the department externally. With a deep understanding of prospective industry leaders, the Chair will seek interdisciplinary approaches to securing strategic partnerships that promote philanthropic, programmatic, and research engagement. The Chair will reengage alumni and strengthen pathways to translational collaboration, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary research.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The Department of Biomedical Engineering seeks candidates with a deep understanding of emerging opportunities in biomedical engineering coupled with strong administrative and management skills. While few candidates will possess all the qualifications and characteristics the search committee is seeking, the ideal candidate for the Chair role will have many of the following:

- A record of research and teaching excellence that merits appointment with tenure within the department
- Deep experience developing and executing upon a compelling strategy to achieve departmental or institutional goals
- Ability to recruit, support, and retain exceptional faculty members
- A strong record of mentoring staff, faculty, and students
- Exceptional experience in teaching, with a commitment to high-quality instruction in biomedical engineering, and interest in advancing education programs with a balance between undergraduate and graduate levels
- Superb interpersonal skills combined with a commitment to broad consultation, openness to multiple views and perspectives, and the ability to recognize the ideas of others and to listen to the voices and opinions of all
- Clear capacity for strategic visioning; a track record of innovation, imaginative problem-solving, and impeccable judgment with the ability to execute ambitious, fiscally responsible, entrepreneurial initiatives

- Eagerness to create new external partnerships while continuing to build existing relationships with companies, foundations, healthcare systems, and other organizations
- Effective change agent, with the ability to think strategically and translate ideas into action; self-assured problem solver who can anticipate challenges and obstacles and has the intelligence, creativity, and tenacity to provide and execute strategic and effective solutions
- Commitment to collaboration, transparency, and entrepreneurship
- An appreciation of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration with both basic science and clinical disciplines

## ABOUT BIRMINGHAM

Greater Birmingham is Alabama's largest metropolitan area and is a center for business, science and the arts. UAB is not just a place to learn; it is a community set within the vibrant city of Birmingham. The campus is a lively, and vibrant place with ample opportunities for engagement, relaxation, and personal growth. Birmingham, the heart of Alabama, is a cultural hub with a rich history, bustling arts scene, and an array of culinary delights.

Relocation to a new city is a complex, major life decision. Throughout the recruitment process, UAB pairs candidates with local recruitment resources to provide an individualized introduction to Birmingham based on the personal needs and interests of the recruit and their family.

[Explore what Birmingham has to offer.](#)

## 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 electronically via the UAB website for the search: <https://uab.peopleadmin.com/postings/27325>

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Afi Tettey-Fio, Senior Associate  
Maya Bennett, Senior Search Coordinator  
Victoria Castillo, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.*

*UAB is an Equal Employment/Equal Educational Opportunity Institution dedicated to providing equal opportunities and equal access to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender*

*identity, gender expression, and veteran's status. As required by Title IX, UAB prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to UAB's Assistant Vice President and Senior Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located at [uab.edu/titleix](http://uab.edu/titleix)*

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