



President and Chief Executive Officer
The Wistar Institute
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

At an exciting time for biomedical science and discovery, the Board of Trustees of The Wistar Institute (The Institute, Wistar), the nation's oldest, independent biomedical research institute, seeks a distinguished scientist and accomplished leader to serve as President and CEO. The Wistar Institute is frequently cited among the most innovative research organizations in the world and is a global leader in research across cancer, immunology, and infectious disease. It is dedicated to the mission of advancing high-impact scientific discovery and has made fundamental contributions to discoveries and IP that have led to commercially successful therapies and vaccines. Today, The Wistar Institute continues to pursue novel and courageous research paths and strives to shorten the path from bench to bedside. The next President and CEO will build upon the legacy of outstanding discoveries, lead a talented faculty focused on collaborative and cross-disciplinary research, and expand its already significant impact.

The Wistar Institute has had remarkable success over the past decade. The annual budget now surpasses \$100 million, and the endowment has risen to roughly \$300 million. New research centers have been launched, and the number of independent labs has grown from 30 to 41. The [Ellen and Ronald Caplan Cancer Center](#), the first NCI-designated cancer center for basic science, has maintained uninterrupted funding since 1972 and was [renewed again in 2025](#) with its third consecutive exceptional rating. The Institute is also near the conclusion of its largest facility expansion in its more than 130-year history, adding new research space and undergoing significant renovations of the existing footprint.

The Institute has had remarkable success in garnering philanthropic support, including the single largest charitable commitment (\$30 million in 2024) and the most successful fundraising campaign in the Institute's history (\$67 million for the Bold Science/Global Impact Campaign). In 2025, Wistar received \$42 million in NIH awards and over \$60 million in total extramural funding. The Institute also serves as a key institution and partner in the Philadelphia region to grow the biotechnology sector, including a robust Biomedical Technician Training program and registered apprenticeship programs to advance workforce development.

This is a unique opportunity to lead a thriving biomedical research institute and shape the next chapter of impact in infectious disease, immunology, and cancer research.

About the Institute

The Wistar Institute comprises four research centers: the Ellen and Ronald Caplan Cancer Center, an NCI-designated basic science cancer center; the [Vaccine and Immunotherapy Center](#); the [HIV Cure and Viral Diseases Center](#); and the [Center for Advanced Therapeutics](#), its newest center, launched in 2025. The [Center for Systems and Computational Biology](#) bridges Wistar's research programs, providing space and resources for computational and advanced technological platforms. The Institute is also dedicated to training the next generation of scientists, with the [Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Education and Training Center](#) bringing together students and fellows from across the region to participate in educational opportunities, including undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral programs. The Institute partners with local colleges and universities, along with several international universities, and graduate students from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, the University of Bologna, and the University of Milan can choose to complete their thesis research at The Institute.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The President and CEO of The Institute is appointed by and reports to the Board of Trustees. They serve as the chief executive, scientific leader, and principal external representative. The CEO is responsible for strategic direction, scientific excellence, operational leadership, financial stewardship, philanthropy, and external engagement. The CEO is an officer of the corporation and attends meetings of the Board of Trustees.

KEY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Leadership

- Collaboratively develop and execute Wistar's strategic vision, upholding Wistar's commitment to high-risk, high-reward biomedical research and innovation.
- Support strategic institutional growth, including expansion of research centers, faculty recruitment, and program development.
- Formulate plans to navigate a dynamic funding environment, including diversification strategies.

Operational & Financial Management

- Ensure strong financial stewardship consistent with Wistar's continued growth of revenue and endowment.
- Identify and advance capital projects, infrastructure modernization, and core facilities to support cutting-edge science and discovery.

Fundraising, External Relations & Partnerships

- Lead significant philanthropic efforts, presenting a compelling narrative to individual donors and foundations.
- Serve as Wistar's primary ambassador to local, state, and federal government partners, including funding agencies such as the NIH.

- Strengthen collaborations and partnerships with industry and academic institutions to enhance research collaborations, translational science, and commercialization opportunities.

Scientific Leadership and Faculty & Research Development

- Collaborate with leadership of Wistar's research centers to maintain excellence, impact, national stature, and strong funding portfolios.
- Oversee faculty recruitment and development, ensuring a robust pipeline of scientific talent.
- Foster interdisciplinary research across centers.
- Emphasize and support increased capabilities for translational research.

Culture and Community Building

- Establish trust and build relationships across the Institute through transparent and consistent communication.
- Foster a culture in which all members of the Institute feel valued, respected, and included.

Governance

- Collaborate with the Board of Trustees on strategy, risk management, and institutional priorities.
- Maintain transparent communication regarding scientific progress and operational performance.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The next CEO will possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Distinguished scientific record in cancer research, immunology, infectious disease, or a closely related biomedical field.
- Visionary, strategic thinker.
- Demonstrated leadership experience in directing major research labs or programs, academic departments, or cancer centers.
- Experience managing federally funded programs and multidisciplinary scientific teams.
- Strong track record of financial stewardship and organizational growth.
- Capacity to lead significant fundraising efforts and steward donor relations.
- Proven ability to build strong partnerships with government agencies, industry, and academic institutions.
- Commitment to workforce development and mentoring future scientific leaders.
- A collaborative, engaged, and accessible leadership style.
- High EQ and capacity to build strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Integrity, transparency, and mission-driven decision-making.
- Demonstrated commitment to scientific excellence and innovation.

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/wistar-institute/president-and-chief-executive-officer>

John Muckle, Partner
Nick Strand, Managing Associate
Ethan Thomas, Managing Search Coordinator

It is the policy of the Institute to provide equal employment opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, citizenship, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability (including HIV and AIDS), pregnancy, caregiver status, domestic or sexual violence victim status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or on the basis of genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law, with respect to all terms and conditions of employment.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by The Wistar Institute. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by The Wistar Institute would supersede any conflicting information in this document.