



Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL

THE SEARCH

Northwestern University and the McCormick School of Engineering seek an accomplished scholar, collaborative leader, and strategic thinker to serve as the Chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE). In addition to this appointment, the successful candidate will also hold the Dever Chair, an endowed professorship that recognizes scholarly distinction and provides support for the Chair's academic leadership and research program. Northwestern sees an opportunity to elevate the ECE department's national visibility and impact. Planned strategic hiring, investment in new engineering facilities, and major University-wide activity in artificial intelligence, advancing computing, quantum science, and technology, in addition to emerging areas, afford the Chair an unusual opportunity to shape both the intellectual composition of the department and its trajectory among the nation's leading ECE programs.

Northwestern Engineering is distinguished by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration and a commitment to tackling complex challenges through partnerships that span its departments, schools, and disciplines. ECE faculty are deeply engaged across the University, with joint appointments and collaborations that connect the department to the University's research strengths in computer science, materials science, robotics, artificial intelligence, and human health. As Northwestern advances its strategic priorities across these areas, the ECE department is well-positioned to contribute to and benefit from these efforts. The next Chair will have the opportunity to leverage Northwestern's distinctive strengths while helping define the department's role within a rapidly evolving field.

Reporting to the Dean of the McCormick School of Engineering, the Chair will provide academic, intellectual, and administrative leadership for the department. Working closely with ECE faculty, staff, students, and University leadership, the Chair will cultivate a culture of collective ambition, support faculty development and success, guide strategic recruitment, and align resources with the department's long-term priorities. Northwestern seeks a leader of scholarly distinction who brings sound judgment, a collaborative leadership style, and the ability to bring colleagues together around a shared vision for excellence in research and education.

Northwestern University has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to support this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING AT NORTHWESTERN

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) is one of Northwestern's most interdisciplinary academic units, with approximately one-third of its faculty holding joint or courtesy appointments across the University, extending its collaborative approach beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries.

ECE's research enterprise is organized across three divisions: Computer Engineering; Signals and Systems; and Solid State, Photonics, and Quantum Technologies. In recent years, the department has expanded its focus in areas such as AI engineering, computing and systems, intelligent systems, networks, and quantum and nanoengineering, reflecting the evolution of the field and positioning ECE to contribute to broader Northwestern priorities in artificial intelligence and data science, medicine, and sustainability.

Faculty pursue research at the intersection of hardware, software, computation, communications, and emerging technologies through a range of interdisciplinary centers, initiatives, and external collaborations. ECE faculty lead the [Center for Photonic Communication and Computing](#), the [Center for Quantum Devices](#), and the [Center for Ultra-scale Computing and Information Security](#), while also participating in Northwestern-wide institutes and research centers. The department also benefits from deep partnerships with Argonne National Laboratory and Fermilab, which connect it to the region's research and innovation ecosystem. Northwestern researchers are engaged in the [Illinois Express Quantum Network \(IEQNET\)](#), a pioneering quantum communication testbed that aims to advance next-generation quantum networking technologies. Faculty in ECE also collaborate with Argonne researchers on advanced materials, while partnerships with Fermilab support research in quantum computing and superconducting materials.

ECE offers undergraduate degrees in electrical engineering and computer engineering, as well as a combined BS/MS degree program. At the graduate level, the department offers master's and doctoral degrees and is affiliated with the Master of Science in Information Technology program. The department enrolls approximately 630 students, including 330 undergraduate students and 300 graduate students, and includes 33 full-time faculty members supported by professional and administrative staff. ECE faculty include 19 fellows of IEEE, ACM, Optica, and other leading professional societies, recipients of major research awards, and investigators leading significant interdisciplinary centers and federally funded initiatives.

To learn more about the Department, visit: <https://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/electrical-computer/>

THE MCCORMICK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

The McCormick School of Engineering, established in 1909 and located on Northwestern University's Evanston campus, is driven by a mission to develop leaders and pursue path-breaking research that creates positive change in the world. Its highly collaborative culture attracts leading faculty, staff, and students from across the globe and supports a growing community of approximately 300 full-time faculty, more than 200 part-time and adjunct faculty, 415 staff members, and more than 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

McCormick's academic enterprise spans nine departments: Biomedical Engineering; Chemical and Biological Engineering; Civil and Environmental Engineering; Computer Science; Electrical and Computer Engineering; Engineering Sciences and Applied Mathematics; Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences; Materials Science and Engineering; and Mechanical Engineering. Extending across these disciplinary homes is a broad interdisciplinary research ecosystem that includes 23 [centers and institutes](#) within McCormick and affiliations with 14 University-wide centers. McCormick has made collaboration across Northwestern a strategic priority, drawing on expertise across every school at the University to advance education, discovery, and innovation by creating connections with every school through joint ventures like the [Center for Engineering and Health](#), a partnership with the Feinberg School of Medicine, that develops methodologies and tools to improve health delivery and patient outcomes.

The scale and reach of this collaborative research enterprise are reflected in major interdisciplinary initiatives across the School. McCormick is a leader in the [Northwestern University Materials Research Science and Engineering Center \(NU-MRSEC\)](#) and also leads the [Human Augmentation via Dexterity \(HAND\) Engineering Research Center](#), established through a \$26 million multi-institutional grant from the National Science Foundation in 2024. More broadly, McCormick faculty draw support from a variety of federal agencies and other partners to pursue research spanning fundamental discovery through practical application.

Underlying McCormick's approach to education, research, and innovation is its philosophy of Whole-Brain Engineering. The philosophy recognizes that addressing complex problems requires both analytical rigor and creativity to not only develop technical solutions but also connect ideas across fields and translate them into meaningful impact. Recognized by the National Academy of Engineering with the 2017 Bernard M. Gordon Prize for Innovation in Engineering and Technology Education, this philosophy informs McCormick's strategic vision, organized around three interconnected priorities: revolutionizing engineering methods, transforming engineering education, and advancing critical engineering applications. Through these priorities, the School seeks to develop new approaches to research and discovery, fostering more adaptable and entrepreneurial models of engineering education, and concentrating expertise on areas of societal impact, such as biohybrid systems, materials design, data-driven discovery and decision-making, embodied artificial intelligence, resilient communities, remote environments, and human health.

Christopher Schuh began his tenure as dean of McCormick and John G. Searle Professor of Materials Science and Engineering in August 2023. A Northwestern alumnus and member of the National Academy of Engineering, Dean Schuh returned to McCormick after more than two decades at MIT, where he served as head of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering from 2011 to 2020. During his tenure as department head, he oversaw significant growth of the faculty, increased research expenditures, expanded and redefined the department's space, launched new academic and entrepreneurship programs, and led successful fundraising efforts. An accomplished researcher and entrepreneur as well as an educator, Dean Schuh has co-founded several companies focused on translating advances in materials science into commercial applications.

For more information on McCormick, visit: <https://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/>

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1851, Northwestern University provides students and faculty with exceptional opportunities for intellectual, personal, and professional growth in a setting enhanced by the richness of Chicago. The University has three campuses: a 240-acre lakefront campus in Evanston; a 25-acre campus in Chicago where the law and medical schools, as well as the business school's part-time program and professional program, are located; and a campus in Doha, Qatar that offers undergraduate programs in partnership with the Qatar Foundation. The McCormick School of Engineering and Medill School of Journalism and Media also recently opened a San Francisco space to facilitate immersion programs and connections with the entrepreneurial culture of the Bay Area.

The University has about 9,060 undergraduate students and 14,370 graduate students for a total enrollment of over 23,430 students across its 12 schools and colleges. More than 90 percent of undergraduate applicants rank in the top 10 percent of their high school classes. A charter member of the Big Ten and one of the conference's two private institutions, Northwestern sponsors 19 intercollegiate athletic teams (eight men's and 11 women's) and numerous club sports. Northwestern's approximately 230,000 alumni include leaders in education, government, law, media, medicine, performing arts, and science and engineering around the world.

The University's operating budget is about \$2.29 billion; its endowment is \$15.3 billion.

For more information, please visit <http://www.northwestern.edu>

ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The Chair serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the ECE department and reports to the Dean of the McCormick School of Engineering. The next Chair will build on the department's existing strengths while articulating a vision for its future, positioning ECE for continued growth and distinction in a rapidly evolving field. Working closely with faculty, the Dean, and colleagues across Northwestern, the Chair will help shape the department's strategic priorities, determine where McCormick and

Northwestern should make major intellectual investments, recruit and support outstanding faculty, and cultivate stronger connections between the department and University-wide strengths in AI, computing, quantum science, materials, robotics, and medicine. An accomplished and active scholar, the Chair will provide intellectual leadership while drawing effectively on the talents and expertise of the Department's 33 faculty and 8 support staff professionals and oversee a budget of approximately \$7 million annually.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Chair will lead ECE at an important point in the department's development, with opportunities for growth and greater impact. Realizing these ambitions will require a leader who can bring faculty together around a compelling direction for the department while navigating a complex and evolving institutional environment.

Chart a trajectory for departmental growth and distinction

The Chair will play a central role in positioning ECE for its next era of growth and achievement at a time of rapid change across the field. Advances in artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, semiconductors, computing, and other emerging areas are reshaping not only the frontiers of research, but also how engineering research is conducted and how students are educated. The next Chair will help the department anticipate these shifts and determine where ECE can lead, adapting its research and educational programs while sustaining excellence in the areas that distinguish ECE at Northwestern.

As McCormick advances plans for faculty expansion, new facilities, and a broader strategic vision for engineering, ECE is well-positioned to build strength in these emerging areas while deepening interdisciplinary connections across the University. The Chair will work with faculty and McCormick leadership to identify opportunities where focused investment, strategic hiring, new educational offerings, and collaboration can build distinction. These decisions will be important not only to the department's future composition but also to defining a clearer intellectual identity and strengthening ECE's standing among leading departments in the field.

Inspire a culture of collective ambition

ECE's success will depend not only on the strategic choices it makes but also on its ability to channel the talent and expertise of its faculty toward a common ambition. The next Chair will foster a sense of possibility within the department and encourage faculty to think boldly about ECE's direction and their role in shaping it. As a visible and community-oriented leader, the Chair will support faculty development and leadership growth while creating stronger connections across the department. Building trust and shared investment will be essential to sustaining the collective ambition necessary for ECE to pursue new opportunities and extend its impact.

Creatively steward resources in an evolving budget environment

McCormick is entering a period of institutional change as it transitions to a new budget model that will more closely connect resources to departmental activity. New approaches to budgeting, combined with planned faculty growth, investments in facilities, and evolving research priorities, will create both possibilities and new considerations for departmental leadership. The next Chair will help position the department within this changing environment, thoughtfully balancing immediate needs with long-term priorities and ensuring that resources are aligned with areas of greatest promise. The Chair may also have opportunities to partner with the Dean's Office on fundraising efforts that support strategic priorities within the department. As decisions are made about future investments, enrollment, research activity, and faculty growth, the Chair can help ensure the department is well-positioned to capitalize on the opportunities ahead.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Although no single person will embody all the qualifications and characteristics below, the successful candidate will exemplify many of the following:

- An earned PhD in electrical engineering or a related field and teaching, research, and scholarly accomplishments commensurate with the rank of full professor with tenure;
- A distinguished record of scholarly research, with high levels of recognition for technical contributions and leadership in the area(s) of expertise;
- Ability to develop and execute a strategic vision for department growth and distinction by leveraging existing strengths and broader institutional opportunities and anticipating emerging trends;
- Demonstrated success recruiting, developing, mentoring, and retaining outstanding faculty, including the ability to identify and capitalize on strategic hiring opportunities;
- A commitment to excellence in undergraduate and graduate education by supporting a high-quality learning environment dedicated to student success;
- A collaborative and transparent leadership style with the ability to build consensus, cultivate trust, and align stakeholders around shared priorities;
- Demonstrated success advancing a vibrant research enterprise, including supporting faculty scholarship, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and promoting research excellence and impact;
- Ability to cultivate relationships with industry partners, federal funders, and other external stakeholders;
- Experience leading within a complex academic environment, including responsibility for faculty affairs, personnel matters, strategic planning, resource allocation, and effective financial stewardship;
- Exceptional organizational, interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills.

COMPENSATION

The expected nine-month academic base salary at the Full Professor level is \$190,000 to \$250,000 and does not include summer salary. The successful candidate will also hold the Dever Chair in Electrical and Computer Engineering. Final compensation will be competitive and commensurate with experience, qualifications, and the responsibilities of the role. Sponsorship for an H-1B visa may be available for qualified candidates, subject to institutional policies and applicable immigration regulations.

Northwestern University has provided a pay range representing its good faith estimate of what the university reasonably expects to pay for the position. The pay offered to the selected candidate will be determined based on factors including (but not limited to) the experience and qualifications of the selected candidate, including years since terminal degree, training, and field or discipline; departmental budget availability; internal competitors; and external market pay for comparable jobs.

At Northwestern, we are proud to provide meaningful and competitive benefits. The available benefits package for this position will include health, dental, vision, disability, and life insurance; paid medical/sick and parental leave; tuition benefits for the employee and dependents; pre-tax and flex spending accounts for commuting and dependent care; generous retirement savings options; and wellness programs. For a comprehensive overview of available benefits, including eligibility details, visit us at [Northwestern Benefits](#) to learn more.

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/northwestern-university-mccormick-school-engineering-and-applied-science/chair>

John Muckle, Partner
Karen MacPhedran, Managing Associate
Damla Williams, Senior Associate
Ethan Thomas, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Northwestern University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics, including disability and veteran status. View Northwestern's [non-discrimination statement](#). Job applicants who wish to request an accommodation in the application or hiring process should contact the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance. View [additional information on the accommodations process](#).

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