



School of Medicine

University of Missouri

Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer, School of Medicine
University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri

THE SEARCH

The University of Missouri School of Medicine is entering a defining chapter. Under newly appointed Interim Dean Ross Zafonte, the School is sharpening its strategy, accelerating research growth, and redefining how it partners with MU Health Care and University Physicians. The School now seeks a Chief Financial Officer who will be far more than a steward of resources: a strategic architect and enterprise partner who will help the Dean turn ambition into investment, and investment into impact. This is an exceptional opportunity for a values-driven leader to shape the financial future of one of the nation's leading public medical schools and academic health enterprises, supporting excellence in medical education, biomedical research, clinical care, and service to the people of Missouri and beyond.

As the School's senior financial executive, the CFO will help shape its direction at a consequential moment of growth and change. Working across the School of Medicine, University Physicians, MU Health Care, the University, and the UM System, the CFO will develop the financial strategies, operating models, and institutional relationships needed to advance excellence in education, research, clinical care, and service to Missouri and beyond.

The School of Medicine is a critical component of Missouri's flagship public research university and plays a central role in training the next generation of physicians and scientists, advancing innovative research, and improving health outcomes throughout the state. The School's financial portfolio encompasses a diverse mix of revenue streams, including clinical operations, sponsored research, educational programs, and philanthropic support. As the institution continues to evolve in a rapidly changing healthcare and higher education environment, the CFO will be instrumental in ensuring sound stewardship of resources while positioning the School for future growth and impact.

The successful CFO will be a strategic and forward-thinking financial executive with substantial senior leadership experience, ideally within an academic medical center, healthcare system, research-intensive university, or similarly complex organization. The individual will bring the judgment, credibility, and enterprise perspective needed to guide consequential decisions, align resources with institutional priorities, and help position the School of Medicine for continued growth in research, education, and clinical care. Key opportunities and challenges facing the CFO include:

- Develop and execute a comprehensive financial strategy that advances the School of Medicine's mission;
- Guide institutional decision-making through strategic financial insight and analysis;
- Strengthen financial alignment and collaboration across the academic health enterprise;
- Enhance financial stewardship, accountability, and research administration; and
- Modernize financial operations and build organizational capacity.

The University of Missouri has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this important search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Considered one of the nation's top-tier institutions, the University of Missouri offers more than 300 degree programs, both on campus and online, across 13 colleges and schools: the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, the College of Arts and Science, Trulaske College of Business, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Engineering, the Graduate School, the College of Health Sciences, the Honors College, the Missouri School of Journalism, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, the Sinclair School of Nursing, and the College of Veterinary Medicine. The University of Missouri is part of the four-campus University of Missouri System and is governed by the University of Missouri Board of Curators. As Missouri's flagship public research university and a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an invitation-only organization of North America's leading research universities, Mizzou is recognized for its commitment to research excellence, innovation, and graduate education.

Mizzou is ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as a top-50 national public university. It is also one of only six public universities in the country with medicine, veterinary medicine, law, engineering, and agriculture all on one campus. Mizzou provides the state of Missouri with an educated workforce for in-demand professions. As a result, 95 percent of students are successful in launching into careers, graduate school, military service, or volunteer programs within six months of graduation.

Mizzou Tigers are lifelong learners with a desire to make an impact. Faculty researchers discover, on average, more than 100 new inventions each year, spawning commercialization of life-changing innovations. Mizzou students gain firsthand experience right from the start of their college journey through the *Missouri Method*, Mizzou's philosophy of learning-by-doing, wherein students find their voices by using them first. All Mizzou undergraduates have the chance to participate in research in science labs, field sites, libraries, art studios, campus museums, archives, and across the globe.

Power the Roar

The University of Missouri is in the midst of [*Power the Roar: Fueling Impact. Inspiring Change*](#), the most ambitious fundraising campaign in its history. With a goal of \$2 billion, the campaign unites alumni, friends, and partners in support of Mizzou's mission to educate future leaders, advance groundbreaking research, improve health and well-being, strengthen communities, and create lasting impact across Missouri and beyond. As philanthropy continues to play an important role in advancing institutional priorities, *Power the Roar* reflects the University's momentum as Missouri's flagship land-grant university and its commitment to expanding opportunity, discovery, and service for future generations.

For more information on the University of Missouri, please visit: <https://missouri.edu/>.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The University of Missouri School of Medicine is a leading academic medical center dedicated to improving health through excellence in education, research, patient care, and service. As an integral component of the University of Missouri and a key partner within the broader MU Health Care enterprise, the School plays a vital role in training future physicians and scientists, advancing biomedical discovery, and improving health outcomes throughout Missouri and beyond. The School's clinical, educational, and research activities span a diverse and growing academic enterprise supported by strong partnerships across the University, MU Health Care, and communities throughout Missouri.

Research is a central pillar of the School's mission. Research activity is distributed across 19 clinical and four basic science departments, with investigators pursuing discoveries that improve health and advance patient care. The School benefits from the University's expanding research enterprise, including the Roy Blunt NextGen Precision Health building, a major interdisciplinary research facility that supports collaboration among nationally and internationally recognized investigators. The School also participates in the University of Missouri's partnership with the Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis through a National Institutes of Health Clinical and Translational Science Award, helping drive translational research that benefits Missouri and the nation.

The School of Medicine is also distinguished by its commitment to innovative medical education. In 1993, it became one of the nation's pioneers in implementing a problem-based learning curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, self-directed learning, and early clinical experience. To address physician workforce needs across Missouri, the School expanded its medical class size and established a clinical campus in Springfield in partnership with CoxHealth and Mercy. Through programs such as the Bryant Scholars Pre-Admissions Program and Pathways to Success (PAWS), the School is committed to expanding access to medical education and preparing physicians to serve communities throughout the state.

In addition to educating medical students, the School trains more than 500 residents and fellows across 37 graduate medical education programs and supports more than 200 master's and doctoral students annually. Academic programs span disciplines including biochemistry, health management and

informatics, medical pharmacology and physiology, molecular microbiology and immunology, pathology and anatomical sciences, nutrition and exercise physiology, and translational biosciences. These programs are closely integrated with the School's research enterprise, providing trainees with opportunities to participate in meaningful scientific discovery and innovation.

The School's impact is further strengthened through collaborations with MU Health Care, CoxHealth, Mercy, and the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital, where many faculty hold joint appointments and contribute to patient care, research, and education. These partnerships enhance training opportunities, expand access to care, and support the School's mission to improve the health and well-being of Missourians through teaching, discovery, and service.

Leadership

Ross Zafonte serves as Interim Hugh E. and Sarah D. Stephenson Dean of the University of Missouri School of Medicine. Prior to assuming the interim deanship, he served as Executive Vice Dean, overseeing the development, supervision, and assessment of the School's academic departments and working closely with MU Health Care leadership to advance shared strategic priorities. An internationally recognized physician-scientist, Dr. Zafonte is a member of the Association of American Physicians and is widely recognized for his contributions to the field of brain injury medicine. Before joining Mizzou in 2024, he held senior leadership roles at Harvard Medical School, Mass General Brigham, and Spaulding Rehabilitation.

ROLE OF THE CFO

Reporting to the Dean of the School of Medicine and serving as a key member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Chief Financial Officer is the School's senior financial leader, responsible for the development, implementation, and oversight of financial strategy, planning, budgeting, accounting, reporting, and resource management across the organization. The CFO provides leadership for financial administration, general accounting, financial planning, cost management initiatives, internal controls, and financial information systems, ensuring alignment with School, campus, and University of Missouri System policies and priorities. The CFO will bring the judgment, perspective, and financial acumen to be the voice leadership turns to when the stakes are highest and the decisions are most consequential.

The CFO is responsible for developing both long-term financial plans and annual operating and capital budgets in support of the School's strategic goals. Working closely with department chairs and administrative leaders, the CFO guides resource allocation decisions, monitors organizational financial performance, and provides regular and ad hoc analyses that support informed decision-making across the School.

The CFO partners closely with school leadership, department chairs, the Executive Director of University Physicians, financial leaders across MU Health Care, and university finance leaders to ensure the School's long-term financial strength and its ability to advance its education, research, and clinical missions. The

CFO serves as the principal representative of the School of Medicine within University and UM System finance, accounting, tax, and budgeting groups and represents the School on key institutional committees, playing an important role in fostering financial alignment across the academic health enterprise. A key responsibility of the role is overseeing the School's diverse portfolio of revenue streams, including clinical revenue, tuition, sponsored research, and philanthropic support. The CFO works closely with research administration and university finance leaders to strengthen grant and contract management, enhance post-award oversight, and support effective stewardship of externally funded programs. The CFO also ensures that departments have the financial tools, reporting, training, and support necessary to effectively manage resources and achieve strategic objectives.

The CFO leads and develops a distributed financial organization, providing guidance to departmental finance personnel and fostering a culture of accountability, compliance, continuous improvement, and service. Success in the role will require a collaborative leader who can modernize systems and processes, leverage data to strengthen financial decision-making, communicate complex financial matters clearly to diverse audiences, and help leadership navigate the School's most important opportunities, challenges, and decisions.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CFO

Develop and execute a comprehensive financial strategy that advances the School of Medicine's mission.

The CFO will serve as the School's principal financial strategist, guiding long-term planning, investment decisions, and resource allocation across its education, research, and clinical missions. Working closely with the Dean and executive leadership, the CFO will ensure that the School's diverse revenue streams support institutional priorities, sustainable growth, and long-term financial resilience.

Guide institutional decision-making through strategic financial insight and analysis.

The CFO will provide proactive financial counsel to the Dean, Executive Leadership Team, department chairs, and administrative leaders. Success will require translating complex financial information into actionable insights, helping leaders evaluate strategic opportunities, manage competing priorities, and make informed decisions that advance the School's mission while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Strengthen financial alignment and collaboration across the academic health enterprise.

Operating within a highly collaborative and interconnected environment, the CFO must build strong partnerships across the School of Medicine, University Physicians, MU Health Care, campus leadership, and the UM System. The CFO will foster transparency, trust, and shared accountability while ensuring financial priorities are aligned across organizations and that stakeholders have a common understanding of resources, risks, and opportunities.

Enhance financial stewardship, accountability, and research administration.

The CFO will oversee budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, and grant management activities across a complex academic enterprise. A key priority will be strengthening financial accountability, improving visibility into departmental performance, supporting effective management of sponsored funding, and promoting consistent financial practices that enable both operational excellence and continued growth in research activity.

Modernize financial operations and build organizational capacity.

The CFO will evaluate existing systems, processes, and reporting structures to identify opportunities for greater efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency. Through thoughtful process improvement, effective change management, staff development, and strategic use of technology and data, the CFO will build a modern, service-oriented finance organization capable of supporting the School's evolving needs and ambitions.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The CFO will be an enterprise-minded, strategic, and service-oriented financial leader with exceptional analytical, communication, and relationship-building skills. The successful candidate will bring the credibility and judgment to influence consequential decisions, communicate effectively with senior leaders, and foster strong partnerships across the School of Medicine, University Physicians, MU Health Care, and the broader University of Missouri community. The successful candidate will possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Substantial senior financial leadership experience at the CFO, deputy CFO, associate vice president, or comparable level within an academic medical center, integrated health system, faculty practice organization, research-intensive university, or similarly complex enterprise;
- Deep knowledge of the financial drivers of academic medicine, including clinical operations, sponsored research, education, philanthropy, and the interdependencies among schools of medicine, faculty practices, and health systems;
- Demonstrated success overseeing complex financial operations, including budgeting, financial reporting, accounting, internal controls, and research administration, while ensuring effective stewardship of institutional resources;
- A record of counseling senior leaders, delivering strategic financial analysis, and translating complex financial information into clear, actionable recommendations;
- Experience leading organizational improvement initiatives, leveraging technology and data to enhance financial processes, reporting, decision-making, and operational effectiveness;

- Demonstrated success building, mentoring, and leading high-performing teams within large, matrixed organizations and fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, service, and continuous improvement;
- Excellent interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills, coupled with a collaborative leadership style characterized by integrity, transparency, sound judgment, emotional intelligence, and the ability to build trust across diverse stakeholder groups; and
- A bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business administration, healthcare administration, or a related field is required; an advanced degree and/or professional certification (e.g., MBA, CPA) is preferred.

LOCATION

Columbia, Missouri, is consistently recognized as one of the nation's most livable communities, offering an appealing blend of small-town charm and metropolitan amenities. Home to more than 128,000 residents, Columbia combines an affordable cost of living, excellent public schools, and a vibrant cultural and economic environment. Situated midway between St. Louis and Kansas City, the city provides convenient access to two major metropolitan areas while maintaining a strong sense of community. It is served by a rapidly growing regional airport, providing convenient connections throughout the region and beyond.

Mizzou's campus is seamlessly integrated with downtown Columbia, placing students, faculty, and staff within walking distance of locally owned restaurants, shops, entertainment venues, and community gathering spaces. This close connection between the University and the surrounding community contributes to Columbia's distinctive character as a quintessential college town.

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/resumes with cover letters should be submitted via the Isaacson, Miller website:

Rebecca Kennedy, Jasmine Miller, and Cortnee Bollard
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-missouri-school-medicine/executive-director-finance-and-business>

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