



Search for the Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
University of Michigan Medical School, Michigan Medicine
Ann Arbor, MI

The Search

The [University of Michigan Medical School](#) (UMMS) seeks a nationally recognized, dynamic, and visionary leader to become its next Chair of the [Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences](#) (DOVS). This is an opportunity to strengthen and amplify excellence in research, patient care, and education for an internationally renowned department while aligning the academic vision with clinical growth in an expanding health system. The next Chair will be a creative thinker who advocates across the missions of [Michigan Medicine](#) (MM) to empower talented faculty, staff, and learners. The Chair will be a champion of innovation and collaboration, have an inclusive leadership mindset and framework to navigate and supervise multidisciplinary teams, and move a highly supported and well-respected department forward.

UMMS has earned its reputation as one of the nation's premier public research-oriented medical schools and is home to over 3,850 faculty in 29 clinical and basic science departments and 4,900 staff. The school's renowned education programs currently include 692 medical students, over 1,300 residents and fellows, 896 graduate students, and 486 postdoctoral fellows. UMMS's \$746 million in annual research awards for FY22 represents a \$100 million growth since FY19. UMMS has remained devoted to delivering patient-centered care, advancing medical knowledge, and nurturing faculty, students, and staff. The University of Michigan recently inaugurated [Dr. Santa Ono](#) as its 15th president. Ambitious and dynamic, Dr. Ono is a biomedical researcher who has done pioneering work in vision and holds his faculty appointment in the DOVS. He is committed to amplifying Michigan's impact in the state and beyond.

MM is home to one of the largest healthcare complexes in Michigan. It consists of the [UM Health System](#) (which includes the Kellogg Eye Center (ranked the #1 ophthalmology hospital in Michigan and #8 in the United States), C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, Von Voigtlander Women's Hospital, University Hospital, the Frankel Cardiovascular Center, the Rogel Cancer Center, Chelsea Hospital, University of Michigan Health West, and University of Michigan Health-Sparrow), UMMS, and the Michigan Health Corporation (the legal entity that allows the Health System to enter into partnerships, affiliations, and joint ventures). The University of Michigan Medical Group (UMMG) is a physician-led organization of nearly 2,000 UMMS faculty physicians who practice evidence-based medicine to care for patients across three MM hospitals, 40 MM health centers, and other facilities throughout the state of Michigan, including specialized centers.

The DOVS recently celebrated its 150th anniversary and is recognized as a leader in advancing the field with distinct strength in research that explores the genetic, molecular, and biochemical underpinnings of sight. The Department's purpose is to improve lives through curing, preventing, and treating eye disease. It strives to operate with the guiding principles of innovation, teamwork, caring, diversity and inclusivity, and integrity. The Department has 108 [faculty](#), including 60 MD and MD/PhDs, 12 optometrists, 20 PhD investigators and 16 clinical instructors. The Department is housed in the over 250,000 square-foot [Kellogg Eye Center](#), a nationally recognized center for vision care and research and one of the largest and

highly specialized eye centers in the country. The Eye Center had over 200,000 patient visits in FY22 and performed over 10,300 major surgical procedures. The Department has an operating budget of \$76 million. The DOVS research program is supported by research funding totaling over of \$11 million (FY22) with \$8.2 million from federal grants for research and education – including R01 grants, K08 and K23 mentored awards, a K12 Institutional Clinical Scientist Development Program Grant, a P30 Core Grant, and a T32 Training Grant from the National Eye Institute - and \$2.8M in foundation grants. The DOVS was placed in the top ten Ophthalmology Departments in NIH funding in 2022.

Reporting to the Dean and Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs and the Executive Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, the Chair of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences will have a deep dedication to the clinical mission, a proven track record in developing research programs, a demonstrated commitment to education, and significant philanthropic, administrative, and budgetary experience to help advance a highly collegial and collaborative department that is an international leader in vision care. The Chair will also bring operational knowledge of complex vision care, business acumen related to strategic planning and business development, a track record of fostering collaboration, and outstanding communication skills. The Chair will be intentional about collaborations with key stakeholders and will find opportunities for alignment. They will promote diversity of thought and will implement practical approaches to enhancing teamwork and individual well-being. Candidates must have an MD, MD/PhD, or equivalent clinical doctoral degree, have a record commensurate with appointment at the rank of Professor, and be eligible for licensure in Michigan.

UMMS has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Founded in 1872, DOVS is one of the oldest departments devoted to the study and treatment of eye diseases in the country. The Kellogg Eye Center is the primary facility that provides comprehensive ophthalmology and cataract surgery clinic and [eight subspecialty clinics](#), six operating rooms, and suites for refractive and cosmetic surgery. In FY22 10,300 surgeries were conducted. Kellogg also serves its patients with specialists in genetic counseling, ocular prosthetics, and ophthalmic photography. In addition to the primary location in Ann Arbor, the Eye Center has [eight community clinics](#) to serve patients in surrounding communities: West Ann Arbor, Briarwood, Brighton, Canton, Chelsea, Grand Blanc, Northville, and Ypsilanti.

Clinical care also occurs in the Veterans Affairs Ophthalmology Clinic, which is at the 105-bed Ann Arbor VA Hospital acute care facility. This clinic has 16 exam lanes with an ophthalmic photography/ultrasound room and resident office space. Residents and faculty who staff this clinic conduct more than 18,952 patient visits and perform 1,219 surgical procedures in FY19.

Research in the DOVS is conducted at the Kellogg Eye Center in the adjacent Kellogg research tower and newer Brehm Tower in over two dozen basic science and clinical research [laboratories](#) where investigators study all aspects of eye development, function, and disease. Faculty are also committed to translating basic research discoveries into new therapies and treatments for eye disease. There are 15 [research areas](#) that span a diverse array of topic areas including ocular diseases and eye health in other disease states, epidemiology, and areas of technology and innovation. Supporting this research is the [Vision Research](#)

[Center](#) with its five cores. The Center acts as a central conduit for the exchange of information within the community of scientists at U-M and serves to promote collaboration and multidisciplinary approaches to vision research. Each core is supervised by research faculty and staffed by technical experts.

Clinical research faculty investigate new medications, treatments, and surgical techniques, carry out observational studies, as well as conduct clinical trials. Faculty also direct genetic research studies to advance understanding of inherited eye disease. The DOVS has created the [Kellogg Clinical Research Center](#) (KCRC) to grow patients' access to clinical trial treatments and to provide proper infrastructure support to faculty for participation in these trials such as contract negotiations, IRB approvals, proper billing, compliance, and trials tracking and reports. There are 29 [active clinical trials](#). The KCRC allows these trials to have separate clinic space while coordinating with normal clinic operations. The Department also has a strong health disparities research focus.

The DOVS maintains an outstanding research environment and provides state-of-the-art resources and facilities for [vision research training](#) and [clinician-scientist development](#). It boasts top 10 funding from the National Eye Institute of the NIH with a [T32 Vision Training Grant](#) supporting both graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, a [P30 Vision Research Core Grant](#) and a [K12 Training Grant](#) for vision research by clinician-scientists. Residents and trainees have access to the Michigan Ophthalmology Trainee Career Development Award ([MOTCDA](#)), which is merit-based funding available for faculty-mentored projects in clinical care delivery, education, health administration, basic science, clinical and translational research, and international health.

The DOVS has a deep commitment to educating clinical ophthalmologists and vision research scientists. Faculty and staff in the department are broadly involved in all areas of medical education. The DOVS has developed a significant [medical student ophthalmology training program](#) in conjunction with the UMMS curriculum, created a combined internship-PGY 1 pre-residency ophthalmology training program with the UMMS's Department of Internal Medicine, and is developing improved methods of surgical education. There is an entire team of ophthalmology faculty dedicated to supporting students through their medical school career, mentoring, and advising through the residency application process. The Department has developed multiple programs to introduce and recruit students to Ophthalmology at the university and across the country, with a special emphasis on underrepresented students, in a variety of unique programs: the [Minority Ophthalmology Mentoring](#) (MOM) program and the [Health Equity Visiting Scholars](#) program.

The DOVS residency and fellowship programs are highly competitive, are consistently considered among the top in the country, and attract some of the best candidates. The [residency program](#) (#6 nationally in Doximity's reputation ranking) currently has 21 residents and offers extensive education in comprehensive ophthalmology with broad exposure to subspecialty training. There are currently 15 clinical fellows in the DOVS [fellowship programs](#) who are subspecialty training in nine areas, including [cornea and external disease](#), [oculoplastics and cosmetic surgery](#), [glaucoma](#), [medical retina](#), [neuro-ophthalmology](#), [ocular oncology](#), [ophthalmic pathology](#), [pediatric ophthalmology](#), and [vitreo-retinal surgery](#). The Kellogg Eye Center and the DOVS have a robust continuing medical education program for practicing ophthalmologists, optometrists, and allied health professionals.

The DOVS has adopted cultural principles of innovation, teamwork, caring, diversity and inclusion, and integrity. These have been supplemented by strong employee recognition and customer service programs, a mission-based focus by staff on serving the faculty and the Department, strong mentoring

and support programs for junior faculty, and multiple opportunities for leadership participation and significant efforts at communicating with faculty and staff. The DOVS has long focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in many ways ensuring faculty and staff learn about and understand unconscious bias, working both locally and nationally to develop and encourage underrepresented minority candidates for science, medical school, and ophthalmology training, and supporting faculty participation in Women in Ophthalmology leadership development programs. The recently appointed Director of Equity and Inclusion and recruiting director ensure that each section's searches look for and encourage underrepresented candidates. The DOVS has supported multiple [diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives](#). The DOVS has also focused on improving faculty wellness and reducing burnout. A faculty member has been appointed as the Department's wellness director and leads a wellness committee to make recommendations for improvements.

The Role: Chair, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

The Chair of the DOVS oversees the Department's core leadership team which consists of two Vice Chairs, two Associate Chairs of Research and Strategic Implementation, and the Director of VA Eye Care. The Chair has direct oversight for all functions of the Department and is supported by the leadership cabinet, eight section leads, and 20 medical directors. The Chair works in partnership with the UMMS and UMMG to closely align the strategic direction of the DOVS with the overall missions of Michigan Medicine.

The Chair of the DOVS initiates and implements the clinical, research, education, and financial strategies for the Department. The Chair must be a thoughtful, accessible, and personable leader that can direct multidisciplinary teams. They will be an adept manager and creative problem-solver who can inspire a large team through a period of clinical expansion while maintaining the excellence of departmental research and educational programs. The Chair will also prioritize obtaining resources for the Department through philanthropy approaches to amplify the support and recognition of the DOVS. As a key stakeholder in MM, the next Chair will be an engaged partner with other department chairs and UMMG leadership, balancing advocacy for departmental interests with the needs of MM overall, as the success of each relies on the success of both.

The Chair will be a dynamic leader with national recognition. They will have a collaborative leadership mindset and exemplify the highest degree of integrity and professionalism as a role model within the department. They will maintain the collaborative nature of the department while being action oriented and comfortable making decisions. The successful Chair will exhibit outstanding communication skills and a deep commitment to education, research, and clinical care to effectively lead a phenomenal group of faculty, students, residents, and staff who have an alignment of mission and purpose.

Key Opportunities for the Chair of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

To succeed in this role, the Chair will address several key opportunities and challenges, as detailed below:

Provide strategic vision and guidance to direct the future innovation of the DOVS

The DOVS is nationally and internationally known for its impressive strengths and is consistently considered one of the best Ophthalmology Departments in the country by all measures. Its talented and productive faculty and staff are aligned around and dedicated to its mission, vision, and values. Strategic planning conducted in 2020 set the DOVS on a course that continues to distinguish and elevate its

preeminence in the field. One focus has been on new models of care like [MI-SIGHT](#), providing care to communities of need, and creating partnerships for healthcare innovation. Another focus has been driving the creation of a learning health care system based on data sciences to create greater value, safety, and efficiency to clinical care. With a focus on innovation and community impact, the next chair must transparently continue to communicate and implement the strategic vision that has provided defined objectives and goals for the Department, to streamline and build on the Department's strengths, and to identify and facilitate new opportunities that allow the DOVS to rise to the next level of excellence. The next chair will facilitate strategic planning discussions and ensure departmental support for a new plan.

Promote integration of ophthalmology and visual science both clinically and through research collaborations

The DOVS successfully collaborates internally, throughout MM and worldwide. Collaborations within MM include nearly every department in the medical and engineering schools. Examples of productive partnerships include the [Center for Eye Care Policy and Innovation](#) (CEPI) which build upon faculty participation in MM's [Institute for Health Care Policy and Innovation](#) (IHPI), the [Jacobson Program for International Ophthalmology](#), and the multi-institutional [Sight Outcomes Research Collaborative](#) (SOURCE) Ophthalmology Data Repository consortium. The Chair will need to maintain, enhance, and facilitate opportunities for collaboration to preserve the excellence of the DOVS. The next Chair will need to be attentive to a wide variety of integration opportunities that span internal concerns like communication and interaction between optometrists and ophthalmologists to research interests such as increasing clinical trial availability for patients to integration with the hospitals in the expanding MM health system. The Chair will remain an advocate and representative for the DOVS promoting its integration at all levels.

Support faculty recruitment, retention, and mentorship

The DOVS has established a culture and reputation that allows it to attract and motivate new and current faculty to contribute to its strategic goals. In a very competitive landscape, the Chair will deliberately recruit and retain a diverse and exceptional faculty who reflect the diversity of society and will define the future of vision care. It is essential that the Chair be not just an advocate but a driving force in supporting, engaging, and promoting women and underrepresented groups, which includes achieving increased diversity in faculty leadership. Over the past ten years the department's faculty has evolved from 38% to 47% women. The faculty includes seven individuals from underrepresented minorities and the most recent class of trainees is approximately 43% underrepresented minorities. The Chair will also be responsible for providing and encouraging mentorship among all Department members ensuring the Department retains excellent faculty with opportunities to progress in the department and MM throughout their career. The Chair will hold Department members accountable for excellence in education, clinical service, and research, and will work to inspire, develop, and guide faculty.

Encourage and support forward-thinking educational opportunities

The DOVS has outstanding educational programs with robust resources that are constantly striving to lead in developing the best practices for education of students and trainees. The DOVS has developed a significant medical student ophthalmology training program in conjunction with the UMMS curriculum and created a combined internship-PGY 1 pre-residency ophthalmology training program with the UMMS' Department of Internal Medicine. Current efforts are focused on developing improved methods of surgical

education. The next Chair will ensure that all the department's education programs remain excellent, that trainee recruitment is diverse and inclusive, and that faculty engagement and education is appropriately valued. Mentorship and teamwork are hallmarks of UMMS and the DOVS specifically, and the new Chair must embody these characteristics.

Ensure the financial success of the DOVS

The DOVS has an operating budget of \$76 million, gift endowment balances of over \$60 million, and holds 21 endowed professorships. The department enjoys a strong financial foundation and positive margins, while embracing the shifting and complex healthcare landscape and expansion of the health system. The DOVS plans to grow its clinical activity, limit overhead growth, and increasingly utilize development revenue for academic support to project margin sufficient to adapt to unexpected contingencies without reducing reserves. The next Chair will be financially savvy and quickly understand and guide the department's financial planning, which includes wide investments in new and current faculty to ensure the necessary returns. The Chair will provide leadership in development activities by maximizing donor support, enhancing cross collaboration of external fundraising, and garnering alternative sources of funding. The Chair will be a thoughtful advocate and partner to UMMG leadership and will understand how to gain support from the health system while providing transparent communication to the department about institutional needs.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate must have an MD, MD/PhD, or equivalent clinical doctoral degree and have significant experience as a clinical leader and in leading clinical program development. They must have an outstanding record of scholarly accomplishment and a portfolio of either clinical investigation, translational research, basic laboratory studies, and/or health-services research. They must also have a strong commitment to education across a broad spectrum of learners. The successful candidate must have a record commensurate with appointment at the rank of Professor and be eligible for licensure in Michigan. The Chair will also possess most, if not all, of the following qualities and characteristics:

- Exceptional leadership skills and judgment with the proven ability to foster a spirit of unity and collaboration as well as learn from the perspectives of others
- Strong interpersonal skills to build and maintain relationships with faculty, administration, trainees, and medical staff
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Experience working in a highly matrixed environment and proven effectiveness in a complex system of distributed leadership
- Demonstrated commitment to valuing and actively promoting diversity
- Effective, collaborative and transparent; a strong and facile negotiator in a complex, dynamic environment with multiple stakeholders
- A detailed and nuanced understanding of both research and clinical practice in ophthalmology, optometry, and visual sciences
- A respectful, inclusive, compassionate, and supportive management style
- Demonstrated experience in recruiting and retaining top faculty, fellows, and residents through active mentorship
- Established contributions to the continuum of medical education that spans undergraduate, graduate, and continuing medical education

- Exceptional planning and organizational skills, superb follow-through, and timely task completion
- Demonstrated capacity to win the loyalty of staff and earn credibility with colleagues
- A demonstrated record of strong financial, budgeting, and resource management skills; experience with philanthropic efforts is advantageous
- Personal qualities that include creativity, flexibility, adaptability, tenacity, courage, a sense of humor, and unquestionable integrity

Ann Arbor, Michigan

The vibrant and active city of Ann Arbor is a cultural hub and urban oasis in the heart of the Midwest that is consistently rated as one of the nation's top college towns. It is no surprise to residents that a recent publication named Ann Arbor as #1 among "[Best Places to Live in the U.S.](#)" In addition to its world-class university, Ann Arbor is home to high-tech research companies and charming neighborhoods with a rich mix of cultures. People from across the country and around the world come to Ann Arbor to study, work and thrive. Downtown Detroit—with its eclectic mix of entertainment and professional sports—is less than an hour's drive away, and Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) offers a nearby (half-hour from Ann Arbor) gateway to the globe.

Although geographically small, the Ann Arbor area is perhaps most renowned for its cultural offerings and nightlife. It boasts a vibrant arts sector with renowned galleries, museums, and arts non-profits as well as theatrical and musical organizations, such as the Ann Arbor Symphony. The University Musical Society is among the top four university presenters in the nation and features 70–80 performances by world-class artists each season, such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Ballet Preljocaj, and the Royal Shakespeare Company. From independent bookstores and cutting-edge art exhibits to performances by local, regional, and international artists, there are abundant opportunities to enjoy arts and culture throughout the community. Every July, the award-winning Ann Arbor Art Fair transforms the campus and downtown into an art gallery featuring thousands of juried artists and drawing nearly 500,000 visitors. The Ann Arbor Summer Festival hosts a month-long schedule of performances each June, many of which are outdoors and free. Additionally, athletics is woven into the fabric of U-M. The University boasts 29 NCAA Division 1 teams (14 men's and 15 women's) as well as 35 club sports.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations, and applications, should be directed in confidence to:

Jamie Sands, Partner
Natalie Leonhard, Partner
Jane McInerney, Senior Associate
Erin Schwass, Senior Associate
Lileana Sethares, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-michigan-medical-school/chair-department-ophthalmology-and-visual-sciences>

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Michigan Medicine seeks to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as a reflection of our commitment to serve the diverse people of Michigan and to maintain the excellence of the University. We welcome applications from anyone who would bring additional dimensions to the University's research, teaching, and clinical mission, including women, members of minority groups, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all persons and will not discriminate against any individual because of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status. The University of Michigan is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.