



Search for the Chair, Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, College of Medicine  
Little Rock, AR

## THE SEARCH

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), the state's only health sciences university, seeks a collaborative academic scientist with a unique vision, enthusiasm, and experience to serve as the next Chair of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences. Founded in 1879, UAMS plays a pivotal role as the foremost provider of comprehensive medical education, research, and academically oriented clinical care in the state. The UAMS community includes more than 2,000 faculty, over 3,200 students, and 900 medical residents on the main campus in Little Rock, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Campus in Fayetteville, and a statewide network of regional campuses. UAMS offers over 70 degree programs from baccalaureate through doctoral level, along with certificate programs, across the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions, Public Health, and the Graduate School. UAMS secured \$203.1 million in research funding for FY22, placing it in the top 14 percent of all U.S. colleges and universities in terms of research funding from the federal government.

Within the College of Medicine (COM) at UAMS, the Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences plays a key role in the research and teaching missions of the College. The Department has a long-standing history of strength in cellular, molecular, and translational neuroscience with current expertise in neurodegenerative and neuroendocrine diseases and an emerging focus on physiological and pathological control of cellular plasticity and the underlying molecular mechanisms regulating cell fate. In addition to research, the Department is equally committed to its educational mission, with faculty serving as one of the College of Medicine's key sources for preclinical teaching activities. Department faculty lead the human structure/gross anatomy, Brain and Behavior, and Gastrointestinal modules in the COM and Gross Anatomy courses for physician assistants and nurses in the Colleges of Health Professions and Nursing. They are also involved with teaching activities in interdisciplinary neuroscience, cell biology, and biochemistry track graduate programs offered at the Graduate School.

Reporting to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the College of Medicine, the next Chair of the Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences will ensure the growth and excellence of its educational and scientific programs, balancing both areas of priority for the Department. The Chair will be expected to maintain and expand research areas, garner support internally and externally to enhance resources, promote research partnerships within UAMS's various institutes and clinical partners, and recruit and retain outstanding faculty. The successful Chair will have an opportunity to set and execute a strategic vision that will chart the course for this vitally important Department for years to come. For a visionary and collaborative leader, this is an exciting time to join UAMS, as it is immersed in its bold 10-year Vision 2029 strategic plan and continues to expand its impact across the state and region.

In this next Chair, the College seeks an exceptional scientist with the intellectual vision to develop and expand research within the Department. The successful Chair will possess significant leadership and communication skills, bring a record of outstanding science, and convey an understanding and commitment to the education mission. The Chair will provide effective and creative management to leverage current strengths and to build relationships across UAMS and with partners including Arkansas Children's Hospital and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. The incumbent will continue to foster the positive culture of collaboration, partnership, and support that is fundamental to UAMS and the Department.

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed in confidence to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

## **LITTLE ROCK**

Little Rock, the capital and largest city in Arkansas, boasts a unique blend of urban charm and natural beauty. Its residents enjoy the best of both worlds with big city attractions and amenities while preserving a warm, hometown ambiance. The city is a treasure trove of picturesque scenery, world-class museums, vibrant cultural events, and a diverse culinary scene. The UAMS campus's strategic location ensures convenience, as a mere 20-minute drive grants access to any part of the city, while numerous Arkansas attractions are within a two- to three-hour radius. Arkansas, referred to as "The Natural State," envelops Little Rock in a tapestry of state and national parks, all easily reachable by car. Travel to and from Little Rock is made seamless through the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport, offering nonstop connections to 16 destinations including New York, Los Angeles, Washington, Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, Denver, and Houston. UAMS invites you to visit the following [link](#) for more information on Little Rock, Arkansas.

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES**

UAMS is part of a statewide network of postsecondary education institutions of the University of Arkansas System governed by a 10-member Board of Trustees. UAMS is the largest public employer in the state, with a workforce exceeding 10,000 employees, and consistently garnering recognition for housing the state's premier hospital. UAMS has a substantial economic influence within the state, with an estimated annual financial impact of \$4.5 billion, bolstered by key partnerships with entities such as Arkansas Children's Hospital and the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System.

By seamlessly integrating education, research, and clinical initiatives, UAMS possesses a unique capacity to spearhead statewide improvements in healthcare. The University's reach extends across all 75 counties in Arkansas, encompassing [eight UAMS Regional Campuses](#), [seven regional Centers on Aging](#), and a nationally acclaimed [Head Start program](#). Its assets include a statewide network of area health education centers and its seven institutes: [the Translational Research Institute](#), [the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute](#), [the Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute](#), [the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging](#), [the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute](#), [the Psychiatric Research Institute](#), and [the Myeloma Institute](#). Innovative digital health programs are central to UAMS's outreach efforts and its vision to eliminate healthcare disparities across the state; UAMS established the [Institute for Digital Health & Innovation](#), leveraging its healthcare innovations to improve the access to and the quality of clinical care,

education, and research leveraging its healthcare innovations to improve the access to and the quality of clinical care, education, and research.

### ***Strategic Plan***

In 2020, UAMS embarked on a visionary strategic plan, [Vision 2029](#), charting a path to lead Arkansas toward becoming the healthiest state in the region. This ambitious goal underscores UAMS's commitment to synergizing education, clinical care, research, and purposeful leadership in pursuit of a healthier future for all Arkansans.

### ***The College of Medicine***

Since its inception in 1879, the [College of Medicine](#) has successfully educated and trained over 10,600 physicians. The College plays a pivotal role in the education and training of Arkansas's physician workforce, being a primary source of the state's practicing physicians. The College community today includes over 700 medical students, 700 medical residents, and a dedicated faculty of over 1,500, distributed across 22 clinical and seven basic science departments. College faculty deliver highly specialized, patient-centric care across various UAMS Medical Center facilities, the Arkansas Children's Hospital, the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, eight regional teaching centers, and numerous clinics statewide. The College is home to four research hubs—neurodegenerative disease, lifespan cardiometabolic health, musculoskeletal health and disease, and artificial intelligence for health, and four centers—the Arkansas Nanomedicine Center, Center for Translational Neuroscience, Center for Musculoskeletal Disease Research, and Center for Microbial Pathogenesis and Host Inflammatory Responses.

### ***UAMS Health***

UAMS is present clinically in nearly every county in Arkansas and excels in providing care that is not routinely available in many communities. The University has a 535-bed hospital and outpatient clinics across the state, including those for pediatric, geriatric, stroke, high-risk pregnancy, and psychiatric patients. UAMS's Family Medical Centers on its six regional campuses had over 151,000 outpatient visits in FY22.

UAMS has a team of 912 clinicians from the College of Medicine who staff UAMS Medical Center, Arkansas Children's Hospital, and the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. Additionally, UAMS collaborates with other healthcare providers in the state to provide specialized care services. For example, UAMS provides cancer diagnostic and treatment, vascular surgery, maternal-fetal medicine specialists, and physical and rehabilitative medicine at Baptist Health. Orthopedic services are offered at Baptist Health in Conway, and faculty physicians at eight Family Medical Centers provide care and supervise residents at UAMS Regional Centers outside of central Arkansas.

UAMS is the only liver transplant program, kidney transplant program, and bone marrow transplant program in Arkansas. Its liver and kidney transplant survival rates are higher than the national average. UAMS has the first accredited echocardiography lab for careful cardiac diagnosis and the only high-risk pregnancy program in Arkansas with board-certified maternal-fetal specialists.

UAMS is also expanding its care services to rural areas in Arkansas. The UAMS Health Comprehensive Care at Home program will start in 2023, offering comprehensive home health services to patients through a

partnership with Amedisys and Contessa. UAMS joined a consortium of stakeholders to form the South Arkansas Regional Hospital (SARH) in 2023 to purchase the Medical Center of South Arkansas hospital in El Dorado to ensure continued quality health care delivery in south Arkansas.

### ***Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences***

The [Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Neurosciences](#) is structured around two divisions, which are designed to facilitate and support the growth and development of its research and teaching missions: the Division of Clinical Anatomy and the Division of Translational Neuroscience.

The Department's investigators address fundamental problems in neurobiology, from single molecules to behavior, using both invertebrate and vertebrate model organisms, and aim to understand the complexity of brain development, function, addiction, repair, and degeneration. The Department is home to three campus-wide research centers—The Center for Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience, The Center for Translational Neuroscience, and the J. Thomas May Center for ALS Research—that focus on neuroscience and neurodegenerative disease studies. UAMS fosters a collaborative atmosphere where researchers investigate neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, a focus that has received sustained funding through a program project grant for more than two decades. Other areas of research emphasis include Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Stroke, Retinal Neurodegeneration, Obesity, and Infertility. Within this research environment at UAMS, there is access to [UAMS Bioventures](#) for assistance in safeguarding and licensing intellectual property.

Current faculty are collaborating across the neuroscience landscape in an effort to revitalize the J. Thomas May Center for ALS Research, and to establish fresh programmatic grant funding opportunities. This comprehensive effort includes the recruitment of two distinguished endowed chairs (one clinical and one basic science) at the associate or full professor level. The Department is seeking a qualified basic scientist to occupy the Paul Dunn Endowed Chair of ALS Research, with the appointed individual working closely with the Tommy May ALS Endowed Clinical Chair within the Department of Neurology, jointly overseeing the administration of the J. Thomas May Center for ALS Research.

### ***Facilities***

The Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences operates its research facilities within the Biomedical Science Research Building-2. These facilities encompass core resources that facilitate molecular assays, as well as metabolic and behavioral studies. Additional laboratory spaces can be found in the Cancer Center and the Jackson T. Stephens Spine Center and Neuroscience Institute, both equipped for studies involving transcranial magnetic stimulation equipment.

Teaching faculty are primarily located in the Rahn Educational Building, which houses the Patrick Tank Educational Facility and the Office Suite for the education faculty. The Patrick Tank Educational Facility is a recently designed space that provides state-of-the-art support for teaching human anatomy, including the provision of its own morgue and amenities for the use of lightly embalmed cadavers. This facility is maintained by the Department to serve a comprehensive educational mission, accommodating various colleges and residency programs in addition to the College of Medicine.

## **ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF NEUROBIOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENCES**

The Chair will oversee 15 primary faculty, nine emeritus, secondary and adjunct faculty, and six administrative staff who sustain the Department's educational, research, and operational efforts. As administrative head of the Department, the Chair will oversee the budget and compliance with grant, legislative, and institutional guidelines. The Chair will collaborate closely with other clinical, research, and educational leaders to spearhead interdisciplinary teams and lead cutting-edge projects, fully leveraging the tremendous collaboration opportunities that exist across UAMS. The Chair will recruit and support principal investigators and other faculty within the Department in efforts to secure NIH and other grant funding to support research priorities. Moreover, the Chair will ensure the delivery of excellent education and research training to medical, graduate students and residents all while sustaining a culture that deeply embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHAIR**

The opportunities and challenges facing the next chair of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences include:

### ***Set a strategic direction for the Department that reflects excellence in research and teaching***

The Department has a rich history of research and teaching. The Chair must develop a targeted plan to leverage existing areas of strength in the Department and within UAMS, and to renew the Department's research focus, productivity, and funding. The Chair can pursue new and emergent areas of neurobiology that have high potential for major impact, and to advance collaborations with investigators across UAMS and its partners. With the Department's major contributions to medical education, the Chair will also be a key voice as the College of Medicine begins the process to revise its curriculum and builds out the educational and research offerings to students on its Northwest Arkansas campus.

### ***Recruit, support, and develop a diverse faculty***

Recent and upcoming faculty retirements in the Department provide opportunities for growth linked to the future direction set by the next Chair. A crucial measure of the next Chair's success will be their ability to work with the faculty and shape the next generation of academic scholars through strategic recruitment and mentorship. The Chair must have excellent judgment and be adept at attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse group of faculty to include those at the cutting edge of discovery and exceptional educators. Current Department faculty are highly invested in mentorship. The Chair will serve as a role model and personally demonstrate and support the development of faculty, students, post-doctoral researchers, and fellows.

### ***Champion collaboration across UAMS and beyond***

UAMS is characterized by the strongly collaborative spirit of faculty and staff. Faculty in the Department already engage in numerous collaborations on and off campus. UAMS has strong research in a multitude of institutes, such as the Jackson T. Stephens Spine and Neuroscience Institute, and multiple other programs that include a neuroscience focus. Looking forward, the Chair will continue to seek opportunities for the Department to serve as a bridge to investigators in basic and clinical departments and centers, and with key partners like Arkansas Children's Hospital and the VA.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following qualifications represent the broad set of skills and personal attributes deemed important for success as the next Chair of the Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences. While no candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal assets:

- A PhD, MD, or MD/PhD in Neurobiology, Neuroscience, or a related field (required)
- A distinguished record of research and publications that would support appointment as a tenured full professor in the UAMS College of Medicine (required)
- Demonstrated contributions to research success relevant to the Department of Neurobiology and Development Sciences, including a record of successful mentorship, along with a record of academic accomplishments as reflected in publications, research funding, and membership to national and international societies
- Service as a chair, vice chair, division chief, or in a similar executive role with a record of developing scholastic programs, advancing the careers and achievement of faculty and staff, and leading the educational activities of students, residents, and fellows
- Understanding of, and commitment to, advancing excellent educational programs and teaching
- Experience crafting a vision and executing on a strategic plan to elevate a department, center, program, or other unit
- Experience building internal and external partnerships
- Financial acumen and experience in managing complex budgets
- An accessible and engaging style as a colleague, manager, and university leader; a willingness to communicate often and to consult closely with colleagues, coupled with a willingness to act decisively
- Commitment to the culture of equity, diversity, and inclusivity at UAMS and demonstrated success in advancing these principles
- An impeccable reputation for personal and organizational integrity, transparency, compliance, and accountability

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, and applications (CVs with cover letters) should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/UAMS-chair-neuro>.

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Jay Torio, Partner  
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*It is the policy of UAMS to provide equal opportunity to all applicants and employees consistent with all legal protections offered by state and federal laws. This is applicable to all phases of employment to include hiring, promotion, transfer, and treatment of UAMS employee.*