



The University of Vermont

**Search for the Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences**  
The University of Vermont, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Burlington, VT

**THE SEARCH**

The University of Vermont (UVM), one of the nation's premier medium-sized public research universities, seeks an accomplished scholar to serve as the next Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences (NFS). NFS is a dynamic, interdisciplinary academic department with expertise in local and regional food systems, community nutrition, food security, weight-inclusivity, innovative food science, and food product development. The Department is uniquely positioned for success at a university that is a pioneer in food systems and sustainability and home to a first-of-its-kind Food Systems Research Center. Students, faculty, and staff have the benefit of working and learning in a college with a multi-perspective approach to human and environmental health that is further complemented by the diverse mix of schools found across UVM – Vermont's land-grant university and home to the state's only college of medicine.

Reporting to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), the Chair will be responsible for leading a department with a mission to foster the intellectual and professional growth of students through engaged teaching, innovative instruction, and community-based learning opportunities. The Chair will strategically leverage the academic diversity of the department to recruit and develop faculty, build innovative programs that attract students, and forge partnerships with a wide variety of organizations and individuals across the state. The successful Chair will be an innovative leader with an outstanding teaching and research record and demonstrated administrative experience.

UVM has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations and applications with cover letters should be submitted in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT**

As the only research university in the state and Vermont's land-grant institution, UVM enrolls over 14,300 students, including more than 11,600 undergraduate, 1,600 graduate students, 480 medical students, 25 certificate students, and 550 non-degree students. UVM combines faculty-student relationships typically found in a liberal arts college with the scholarship and resources of a major research institution. The University is home to seven undergraduate schools and colleges, an honors college, a graduate college, a

college of medicine, and continuing education and extension programs. The University is the second largest employer in the state and is led by 4,066 full and part-time faculty and staff. It has attracted an increasingly distinguished faculty over the years that include members of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, National Academy of Practice, National Academy of Inventors, Fulbright scholars, fellows of leading professional organizations, NSF CAREER awardees, and NIH Outstanding Investigator awardees. UVM is ranked among the [top 100 public research universities](#) in the US according to the National Science Foundation.

UVM embraces both a strong teaching mission and a dedication to advancing fields of knowledge through research. The University has been consistently ranked among the nation's top 50 public universities in *U.S. News & World Report* and provides a rich environment for teaching, research, and scholarship in many realms of human inquiry, achieved in large measure through a distinguished faculty of accomplished teacher-scholars. UVM has also made *Princeton Review's* "Green Rating Honor Roll" in recognition of sustainability-related practices, policies, and academics, and it ranked first among institutions with larger populations in their list of top green colleges. In 1985 UVM was named a "Public Ivy" with seven other institutions and continues to hold this distinction. In 2022, UVM premiered their [Osher Center for Integrative Health](#), joining a prestigious international collaborative network of academic institutions as a center of excellence in integrative health aimed at improving patient care and well-being. The Osher Center provides educational opportunities, offering minor and certificate programs; clinical care, introducing integrative therapies for both outpatients and inpatients; and research, investigating clinical and educational outcomes to advance the field and shift the healthcare paradigm towards whole-person care.

UVM is classified as a high-activity research university by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Research at UVM, funded by federal and state agencies, corporate partners, foundations, and individual donors, reached nearly \$263 million in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 – the third consecutive year of record funding. The University offers an unusually rich complement of academic programs, including more than 100 bachelor's degree programs, 57 master's programs, 36 accelerated master's programs, 27 doctoral programs, and an M.D. program. The University's academic units include: the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Education and Social Services, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, Nursing and Health Sciences, Larner College of Medicine, the Grossman School of Business, the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, the Honors College, the Graduate College, the University of Vermont Extension, the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station, the Division of Continuing and Distance Education, and the UVM Libraries. Over the past decade, UVM has invested nearly \$500 million in new construction and renovations of teaching areas, research laboratories, athletic facilities, offices, residential halls, dining halls and libraries; with new construction yielding an approximate 10% growth in physical space.

## THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

The [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) offers [dynamic programs](#) in agriculture and the life and social sciences, with a focus on nutrition and food science, human and animal health and well-being, communication, entrepreneurship, sustainable and resilient communities, and the complex web of food systems. While connected to traditional agriculture of the past, CALS programs address current issues that are key to the future of Vermont, the nation, and the world. Enrolling over 1,300 undergraduate students and 152 graduate students, and supported by 101 faculty, the College's general fund budget is nearly \$20 million.

### *Academic Programs*

CALS is structured around six departments: Animal and Veterinary Sciences, Community Development and Applied Economics, Nutrition and Food Sciences, Plant & Soil Science, Plant Biology, and Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (which is shared with the Larner College of Medicine). It also includes four undergraduate interdisciplinary programs shared with other colleges: Biological Science, Biochemistry, Environmental Sciences, and Environmental Studies. CALS' diverse selection of majors (16), along with wide-ranging minors (19), appeals to a broad audience of students interested in agriculture, basic science, applied science, or linking applied work to the social sciences. UVM was the first school in the country to offer a full complement of academic programs in Food Systems, from an undergraduate degree through a Ph.D. Undergraduates who major in this innovative, interdisciplinary program take classes in all six of the College's departments.

### *Research*

CALS has a growing research portfolio, with more than \$39 million in research awards in FY23. The largest source of outside research funding is the National Institute of Food and Agriculture/USDA, followed by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases/NIH; the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets; and the National Science Foundation. Capacity-building grants, including Hatch from the USDA and Smith-Lever, along with grants from the Renewable Resources Extension Act Program (RREA), and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), are also important funding sources.

Enhanced by an array of physical resources that include research stations, farms, laboratories, horticultural facilities, and biodiversity collections, CALS plays an integral role in UVM's research and outreach missions. It supports a wide range of interdisciplinary initiatives across the college and as home to [UVM Extension](#) and [Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station](#) as well as four key agricultural facilities, including two sites of historical significance to both the University and the state: [Proctor Maple Research Center](#), [Morgan Horse Farm](#), [Paul R. Miller Research and Educational Center \(MREC\)](#) and [Ellen A. Hardacre Equine Center](#), and [The University of Vermont Horticultural Research Center \(HREC\)](#). In each of these dimensions, the work of CALS takes full advantage of Vermont's unique position as a living laboratory for

agriculture and food systems helping communities across the state find solutions to many challenges through integration of research efforts between extension and academic groups.

## DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCES

The Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences (NFS) integrates research, teaching, and hands-on, community-based learning to provide students a dynamic and interdisciplinary academic experience and understanding of nutrition and food science. It offers a variety of nutrition, food systems and food science courses from large lectures to small seminars, including lab-based culinary, foods, and food science courses. The department has existed for almost 25 years and has seen considerable change in alignment with faculty expertise, the types of active research enterprises on campus, and the connections between NFS curriculum and the larger university. Such changes have been integrated via the organization of the curriculum and the integration of research interests into the mission of the department. NFS is home to 144 undergraduate majors, 11 active faculty (2 full professors, 2 associate professors, 4 assistant professors, 2 clinical professors, and 1 senior lecturer) and 3 staff and has a general fund budget of just over \$1.5 million. The department has amassed over \$3 million in sponsored research from FY19-22 (~\$745k in FY22 alone).

### *Academic Programs*

The department offers a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Food Science at the undergraduate level with three concentrations: Dietetics; Nutrition, Sustainability, and Society; and Food Sciences. The NFS program encompasses both natural science and social science, represented in the shared common core of courses across concentrations including chemistry, biochemistry, anatomy/physiology, nutrition, food microbiology, as well as psychology, anthropology and food systems. NFS prides itself on taking a food systems approach, focusing on the intersection between health, nutrition, food, and the environment. It is distinct in its academic offerings in that students are provided a strong and robust science/nutrition science education in addition to exposure to the anthropological view of nutrition and food. The department has the sixth-highest enrollment for a minor at the university, with 180 minors currently enrolled. The majority of student credit hours are in nutrition courses, with robust enrollments in food systems and food science courses.

Roughly half of the department's majors are in the Dietetics concentration. The Dietetics program has been accredited through ACEND since 2004 and prepares students for careers as registered dietitian nutritionists (RDs). The Nutrition, Sustainability, and Society concentration prepares students for careers in nutrition outside of the registered dietitian role. This includes roles in policy, public health, and community programming. The Food Sciences concentration emphasizes food safety and quality and has increased connections for careers in the food industry.

The department offers three Master of Science programs: a MS in Nutrition and Food Sciences, a MS in Dietetics (ACEND accredited), and an accelerated 4+1 MS program available in the three concentrations seen in the undergraduate program. NFS participates in interdisciplinary graduate programs, including the Food Systems MS and PhD programs, the Animal Biosciences graduate program, and the Complex Systems/Data Science graduate program. Faculty in the department of Nutrition and Food Science supervise doctoral students and research MS students in the Food Systems program.

### *Research*

The department has a long-standing commitment to collaborative and translational research. There are numerous opportunities to work across disciplines in complementary nutrition, food science, and food systems research. UVM is home to several academic programs, centers, and institutes outside the department that are relevant to the departmental research including: the Food Systems, Complex Systems, and Public Health graduate programs; the [Biomedical Statistics Research Core](#); the [Gund Institute for the Environment](#); and the newly established [Food Systems Research Center \(FSRC\)](#) in collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture. The FSRC is the first USDA research unit designed to study local and regional food systems. The Center conducts interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research to study food systems: the networks of people, institutions, physical infrastructure, and natural resources through which food is grown, processed, distributed, sold, prepared, and eaten.

### *Community Partnerships*

Being a department in Vermont's land grant university, NFS has a rich history of community partnerships and interaction with entrepreneurs and industry groups throughout the state. CALS is home to UVM's Agricultural Experiment Station, a state center with a mission to address Vermont's agricultural issues through research. The research done at the Station falls under the USDA goal areas, including food safety and nutrition, making NFS a natural collaborator and further strengthening the department's relationship with the community through applied and translational research. Working with the community is embedded in NFS academic programs. Students participate in hands-on learning experiences through food industry, nutrition, or dietetic practicums. The intentional exposure to community businesses and organizations in NFS allows students to transition into local nutrition or food-related careers after they graduate.

### **ROLE OF THE CHAIR**

Reporting to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the next Chair will provide leadership and vision; support the continued growth and expansion of the Department's research portfolio; encourage cross-departmental and cross-college collaborations; encourage academic excellence and innovation of program offerings; and support, retain, and mentor faculty. The Chair will champion the department and contribute to conversations and strategy that will shape the future of academic programs and research in the College.

Chair responsibilities include strategic planning, operations, finances, academic affairs, external relations, and oversight of the external (ACEND) accreditation of the undergraduate and graduate dietetics programs. The Chair leads the faculty, both in recruitment and the oversight of the promotion and tenure process, as well as the requisite support staff and professionals essential to supporting the department's mission.

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

The Chair will address the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Develop a unifying strategic vision for the future of the department**

The interdisciplinary nature of the department provides opportunities for faculty collaborations across areas as well as a flexibility for students who wish to pursue a range of careers. It also presents challenges in the development of strategic priorities and unifying goals. The Chair will work with faculty to build connections across the Department, seeking opportunities for developing complementary strengths and unifying themes that cut across the Department's different areas of focus. The Chair will ensure that all constituencies are heard and will balance consultation with timely and transparent decision-making, cultivating a culture that respects the many perspectives that exist while embracing opportunities to collaborate.

### **Encourage academic excellence and support the growth and innovation of academic programs**

The department prides itself on preparing and training its students for their future careers and the successful Chair will work with faculty to develop and revise academic programs that attract students and provide the exceptional academic experience the department is known for. NFS has implemented multiple programmatic innovations in recent years, such as restructuring the major to provide focused exploration of career pathways for students and converting the MS in Dietetics to an online program, leading to significant enrollment growth. The department must continue to be responsive to student needs, developing and revising programs and teaching methods and pursuing experiential and community-based learning experiences for students.

### **Identify opportunities for greater research productivity**

The Chair will bring knowledge of the federal funding landscape and its priorities and an appreciation for the importance of collaborative research throughout the College and University, including the recently established FSRC and Osher Center. Located on a campus with a comprehensive range of colleges – including a college of medicine and a school of environment and natural resources – and in state that is a leader in the farm-to-plate movement, the department is in a truly unique position to make an impact on pressing issues of importance ranging from sustainability to food security to food science innovations and

weight inclusivity. The Chair will work to connect faculty with research opportunities, remove obstacles, and advocate for resources, allowing faculty to focus on their science.

### **Mentor, develop, and retain excellent faculty**

The Chair will be charged with leading and supporting the development of accomplished educators and scholars. The department made two new assistant professor hires in 2023 and will continue to evolve and recruit new faculty in the coming years. An endowed professorship is available for potentially for the Chair or for recruitment/retention of another qualified faculty member. The Chair will work with faculty and the dean to strategically build the department and recruit and mentor faculty. They will provide career guidance and mentor faculty and staff, recognizing the unique goals of each and identifying opportunities for professional growth and advancement in research, teaching, and service. The Chair will foster a culture of intellectual generosity, encouraging all to take an active interest in their colleagues' work and mentorship.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate will be an accomplished scholar with a strong track record of research and teaching in nutrition or food science. While no candidate will bring all of these experiences and traits, CALS envisions that its next NFS Chair will have many of the following:

- an earned doctorate or equivalent in the field of nutrition or food science meriting a tenured appointment – preferably full professor – appointment in the department;
- a seasoned educator; with a track-record of high-quality and innovative research, teaching, and advising at the undergraduate and graduate level;
- successful administrative expertise, including superb planning, management, and financial skills to lead a multifaceted department;
- a management style that reflects emotional intelligence, is inclusive and empowers others to succeed, fosters respect, and builds pride in the accomplishment of shared goals;
- political acumen and an ability work collaboratively at all levels to advance strategic opportunities for growth;
- commitment to enhancing and nourishing a cultural climate that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion in all facets;
- demonstrated ability to identify, recruit, and retain faculty, students, and staff;
- an entrepreneurial spirit, highest integrity, and outstanding listening skills, along with superior communication skills, both oral and written.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The University is especially interested in candidates who can contribute to the diversity and excellence of the academic community through their research, teaching, and service. Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, has been retained by UVM to assist in this important search. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters in confidence to:

Greg Esposito, Partner  
Courtney Cabansag, Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
263 Summer Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02210

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-vermont/chair-department-nutrition-and-food-sciences>

*Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.*

*The University of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other category legally protected by federal or state law. The University encourages applications from all individuals who will contribute to the diversity and excellence of the institution.*