



**CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY
GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

THE SEARCH

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (“UNC-Chapel Hill” or “the university”) Gillings School of Global Public Health (“Gillings” or “the School”) seeks a Chair of the Department of Epidemiology. This is an exciting opportunity to take an already prominent and successful department to new heights – ranked as the third-best department of epidemiology in the country, within the top ranked public school of public health (second overall), at a top ten research university with over one billion dollars in extramural funding – the opportunities for innovation and impact are without parallel (all rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*). The department chair also plays an important role in shaping and supporting the School's missions and goals. As a member of the Dean’s leadership team, they must take the perspective of and advocate both for their departments and the school, searching for innovative ways to support both.

One of the eight departments within Gillings, the department of epidemiology’s primary focus is the development and application of research methods to understand the patterns and causes of health and disease, and the application of that knowledge to improving the health of populations. It provides strong training in research methods and opportunities for the application of epidemiology to a wide range of health problems through its research. Throughout the stewardship of a series of highly visionary and effective chairs, the department's work has continuously expanded in its breadth and depth.

As the third highest funded unit on campus, with an excellent and renowned group of faculty, talented and dedicated staff, top-notch students and trainees, and the largest epidemiology PhD program in the country, there is ample opportunity to take the department to its next level of success. The incoming chair will be tasked with collaboratively creating and operationalizing an ambitious vision for the department’s future. The chair will inspire a culture of open communication, inclusive excellence, teamwork, trust, and innovation as the department’s stakeholders work together to support its mission areas.

The chair must bring leadership experience and a track record of supporting initiatives across an array of mission areas. Specifically, the successful candidate will have experience: promoting research and a deep understanding of the funding mechanisms to support it; inspiring innovative educational opportunities for trainees and students; managing a budget and diversifying revenues; recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty and staff; fostering interdisciplinary collaborations across units; and stewarding and

developing external relationships. Above all, the chair must have demonstrated success in creating a positive culture and an environment where all are heard, valued, and have the resources to thrive.

Isaacson, Miller is assisting with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications will be treated confidentially and should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is one of the nation's top-ranked public universities and one of the world's premier global research universities. The university serves its home state and beyond through an unwavering commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and public service. UNC-Chapel Hill consistently ranks among the world's best institutions in academic quality, research, access, engagement, and global presence. Through the efforts of its exceptional faculty and staff, and with generous support from North Carolina's citizens, the university invests its knowledge and resources to enhance access to learning and to foster the success and prosperity of each rising generation. With *lux, libertas* (light and liberty) as its founding principles, the university has charted a bold course to improve society and solve the world's greatest problems.

Today, UNC-Chapel Hill consists of 14 schools and one college. UNC-Chapel Hill is home to approximately 30,000 students (around 20,000 of whom are undergraduates). The university is proud of its 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio across its 78 bachelors, 112 masters, 68 doctoral, and seven professional degree programs. The university employs over 4,000 faculty and 9,000 staff members. UNC-Chapel Hill's faculty are leaders in some of the world's most prestigious academies and professional organizations, including Nobel Laureates, MacArthur Genius Grant honorees, and Fulbright Scholars. UNC-Chapel Hill also maintains an exceptional record in federally funded research, ranking 10th among research universities and attracting over \$1 billion in globally focused research funding annually. UNC-Chapel Hill is ranked 4th among U.S. public universities by *U.S. News and World Report 2024*. For the 18th time, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine ranked UNC-Chapel Hill as #1 in value among American public higher education. Finally, in 2019, the institution ranked 6th on *Reuters' Ranking of the World's Most Innovative Universities*.

THE HEALTH SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill maintains a robust Health Sciences division that looks to improve equity and access to healthcare and health services to the state's, nation's, and world's most underserved and vulnerable populations. Carolina's health science schools include the Adams School of Dentistry, School of Medicine, School of Nursing, Eshelman School of Pharmacy, School of Social Work, and the Gillings School of Global Public Health. Because all are within close physical proximity of each other, collaboration between the health sciences schools is not only possible, but embedded in the culture. The university prides itself on a uniquely high level of partnership across schools in the health sciences and throughout the institution more broadly.

THE GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

The Gillings School is the #1 *public* school of public health in the nation and #2 overall (*USNWR*). Located in the health science neighborhood on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, a short walk from the rest of campus, and not far from North Carolina's famed Research Triangle Park, the Gillings School has unparalleled access to experts, interdisciplinary study, and opportunities ranging from cutting-edge research assignments to internships and employment. For example, both the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and a major Environmental Protection Agency laboratory regularly work with Gillings students so that the edification of Gillings students and the well-being of North Carolinians advances together on all public health fronts.

Born out of the School of Medicine in 1940, the school was the fourth public health school in the nation and the first at a state university. In 2008, the school was named the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health in recognition of the largest single gift in the history of UNC-Chapel Hill at the time, totaling \$50 million from Dennis Gillings (a former biostatistics professor at UNC) and Joan Gillings. Today Gillings has eight academic departments, including Biostatistics, Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Epidemiology, Health Behavior, Health Policy and Management, Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition, and Public Health Leadership and Practice which fill nearly [an entire block](#) on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. With a 125,000 square foot state-of-the-art teaching and research building at the heart of the school, the Michael Hooker Research Center houses not only labs, but the spirit of the school with a surplus of places for collaboration and creativity.

Dr. Nancy Messonnier, MD, became the new Dean of the Gillings School of Global Public Health in September 2022. Dean Messonnier began her public health career in 1995 at the CDC as an epidemic intelligence officer and went on to hold a number of posts within the organization, including first as deputy director and then as director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) from 2014-2021. She led the CDC's NCIRD response to what began as an unknown respiratory disease in China in late 2019 and evolved into the COVID-19 pandemic. She served as the CDC's chief architect of the COVID-19 vaccine implementation program and helped to develop, evaluate, and distribute vaccines across the United States. While at the Skoll Foundation — a private foundation that invests in social entrepreneurs and other innovators who advance solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems — Messonnier helped lead efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic and build a global response and preparedness system to prevent future pandemics. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Chicago School of Medicine. She completed her internal medicine residency training at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2021, she was inducted into the National Academy of Medicine.

Education at Gillings

The approximately 2,300 students at Gillings are some of the most creative, committed change agents in the discipline. Gillings' distinct undergraduate, masters, doctoral, certificate, and dual degree offerings include numerous experiential and cooperative learning activities, giving students access to a wide range of local and global hands-on training opportunities that provide them with the skills that are needed to move public health evidence forward. Students collaborate with faculty and staff on research projects, co-author papers, and create burgeoning non-governmental organizations, all while gaining a world-class public health education. Over 97% of Gillings graduates start their careers or continue their education within six months after graduation.

Research at Gillings

The Gillings School of Global Public Health is the #1 *public* school of public health for National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding. Since 2013, Gillings has brought in over \$1 billion in [research funding](#). During the 2022 fiscal year, the School acquired \$1.4 million in funding per PI, totaling approximately \$200 million in research dollars from over 450 projects. The Gillings School is focused on achieving significant public health impact "from the Well to the World," boasting many [research strengths](#) within the School's specified [strategic objectives](#). Engaged faculty, students, and staff members work with communities and across disciplines — in North Carolina and around the world — to solve some of the most challenging issues including: making a substantial impact on COVID-19; helping to solve the opioid abuse epidemic; preventing and controlling cancer; improving water access and quality; and using big data and machine learning to solve public health problems. Having conducted research in all 100 counties in North Carolina, 60 countries, and [6 continents](#), the Gillings School is well on its way to fulfilling that mission.

Gillings has a dedicated [Research, Innovation, and Global Solutions Office](#) to bring research and practice together in the spirit of innovation. To fulfill this mission, Gillings has introduced over ten courses focused on innovation. Nearly \$7 million has been raised to launch over [55 Gillings-affiliated startups](#), which have generated almost \$800 million in revenue. Additionally, in 2007, a gift by the Gillings family allowed for the creation of 38 [Gillings Innovation Labs](#) (GILs), creating dedicated funding for some of the School's most important breakthroughs. Since the creation of GILs, the labs have brought in more than \$135 million in follow-on research funding, have produced over 200 publications, and have trained/funded 240 students.

Practice and Service at Gillings

At the Gillings School, practice and service is a significant piece of the work that is performed at and on behalf of the School each day. Practice at Gillings affirms the school's commitment to building partnerships amongst its three-fold initiatives - practice, service, and research - through coordinating and communicating practicum, service-learning, and community-based research opportunities. Throughout the Gillings School, students, faculty, and staff are eager to engage with community partners and connect in meaningful ways to improve the health and well-being that exists in all communities.

The school's 240 full-time faculty serve as vanguard caretakers of this mission. Across all levels of practical teaching are two foundations: a focus on eliminating health inequities and a commitment to improving health locally and globally. The faculty are an extraordinary group of educators, scholars, practitioners, and researchers who are engaged in groundbreaking research, practice, policy influence, and teaching, all while remaining accessible and committed to mentoring students. Gillings faculty members are also [essential to the state and the region during the pandemic](#), and faculty include architects of several COVID-19 vaccine breakthroughs, the head of infectious disease control for UNC Health, the lead statistician for COVID-19 treatment trials, and key members of the community task force creating messages and programs that encourage people in North Carolina to follow safe pandemic practices. The chair must support Gillings' practice leadership and infrastructure so the school can harness its capacity to make a difference in health equity outcomes in North Carolina and with global partners.

Gillings' Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

The Inclusive Excellence Framework at Gillings re-envisioning both quality and diversity. It reflects a striving for excellence in higher education; seeks to infuse diversity into recruiting, admissions, hiring, curriculum, administrative structures and practices; and embraces newer forms of measuring excellence, emerging research on learning and brain functioning and more nuanced accountability structures. Inclusive Excellence moves beyond numbers to multilayered processes that achieve excellence in learning; research and teaching; student development; local and global community engagement; workforce development; and more. Through purposeful and targeted efforts outlined in the Gillings [Inclusive Excellence Action Plan](#), the goal is to empower all students, faculty, and staff members to advocate for inclusive excellence while working in North Carolina, the United States, and throughout the world.

Global Health

Gillings' global health work impacts policy and programs locally and globally, focusing on population and health issues (and solutions) that cross borders. This work affects global health policy and practice through researching, advocating, educating, policy-influencing and providing advice and technical support at all levels from local communities to global bodies such as the World Health Organization and World Bank. The school has an extensive network of faculty, students and alumni who conduct global health research and practice. The community is collaborative and supportive of those who want to partner to address complex public health challenges or join Gillings to build their careers in global health.

THE GILLINGS DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

Founded in 1955, the Department of Epidemiology in the Gillings School of Global Public Health has developed into an internationally recognized leader in epidemiologic research and training and is consistently ranked in the top three epidemiology programs by *U.S. News and World Report*. Renowned faculty members empower students with training in effective research practices and methods, conducting

innovative, interdisciplinary research and providing classroom and real-world education that emphasizes the integration of substantive area knowledge with cutting-edge epidemiologic methods. The faculty and students in the department work closely with colleagues throughout Gillings as well as with the schools of medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry, and other academic and applied settings throughout the university and in the region.

The department's mission is to improve the public's health by training epidemiologists and by advancing knowledge concerning the causes and prevention of disease and the promotion of health. It strives to creatively integrate substantive knowledge and methods from many fields into epidemiologic research, teaching, and practice, with an ultimate commitment to benefit public health. The department currently has 74 faculty members (39 tenure track, 10 joint tenure track, and 25 fixed term) that work together to fulfill this mission.

Education in the Department of Epidemiology

Just as the field of epidemiology is referred to as "the basic science of public health," the department of epidemiology plays an analogous role at Gillings. The department serves an essential role in training public health professionals throughout the school, offering core coursework for all students and an advanced curriculum for those students seeking degrees (including a minor) in epidemiology. The Department of Epidemiology awards [four degrees](#): master of public health (MPH) in either Applied Epidemiology or Health Equity, Social Justice, and Human Rights; Master of Science in Clinical Research (MSCR); and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)—all accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). The department educates 20 postdoctoral students and 181 students (162 PhD and 19 masters students).

Research in the Department of Epidemiology

The Department of Epidemiology is one of the highest-funded units at UNC. Its approximately \$35 million in annual research expenditures support research across a diverse array of interest areas across basic, clinical, methodological, and applied sciences. The department's faculty conduct research across nine [Research Program Areas](#): cancer epidemiology, cardiovascular epidemiology, environmental/occupational epidemiology, infectious disease, injury epidemiology, pharmacoepidemiology, reproductive pediatric epidemiology, social epidemiology, and genetic epidemiology.

Departmental faculty research programs benefit from multiple interdisciplinary centers, programs, and databases at UNC, including the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities (CIDD), The Carolina Population Center (CPC), the Sheps Center for Health Services Research, the Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), the Center for Pharmacoepidemiology (CPE), the Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility (CEHS), The Causal Inference Research Group (CIRG), the North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute (NC TraCs), Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center (LCCC), and the Institute for Global Health and Infectious Diseases (IGHID). Collaborations are also encouraged with other Research Triangle Institutions such as the Research Triangle

Institute (RTI), FHI 360, Duke University, NC State University, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT CHAIR OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

Reporting to the Dean of the Gillings School of Public Health, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, and as a key member of her leadership team, the chair will have the opportunity and responsibility to advance the department's mission and continue the department's standard of excellence. With a budget of \$27 million, two associate chairs, and a business manager on the departmental leadership team, the Chair has the structural support to delegate areas of responsibility for oversight while keeping a finger on the pulse of the department. To successfully lead the Department of Epidemiology, the Chair will be expected to:

Articulate and advance a dynamic strategic vision for the Department of Epidemiology

The chair will work collaboratively with departmental leadership and faculty to develop a vision and strategic plan for the department's next phase of growth and impact. This vision should be aligned with and support the Gillings and UNC strategic goals and values of making a difference in improving health outcomes in the state and beyond. The chair will devise solutions-oriented plans to address each of the areas in support of the departmental missions and uphold its reputation as a national leader and epidemiology program of choice for students. With the opportunity to collaborate broadly across Gillings, the chair will be a thoughtful communicator, a great steward of resources of all kinds, and a coalition builder to successfully implement their vision and continue the department's culture of excellence. To support this work, the chair will ensure that the structure of the leadership group and the amount of administrative support are adequate in supporting the department.

Develop a strategy to recruit, retain, and develop faculty, and inspire a culture of inclusive excellence and trust

The chair will be responsible for the strategic recruitment of faculty at the cutting edge of discovery (including working with other units across campus on dual hires and appointments), with attention to bringing candidates from diverse backgrounds to the school. Additionally, the chair is charged with retention and should prioritize professional development and a culture of mentorship. As a leader in a public university, the chair must work to promote and enhance success in an environment committed to inclusive excellence. The chair will set the tone for the culture in the department and will be responsible for frequent and transparent communication, bringing people together across disciplines, inspiring life-long learning, and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. The chair must be accessible to faculty, staff, and students, and an active and engaged listener.

Foster collaboration across Gillings, UNC, and beyond

As one of the larger departments in the school and by nature of its multi-disciplinary work, the department interacts with all other departments in Gillings and many others across the institution. The chair will benefit from joining a highly collaborative group of fellow department chairs. The chair will nurture this collegial, collaborative style of UNC to expand on existing relationships and create partnerships in new areas. This includes stewarding relationships and meaningful partnerships with external and community partners, as well as building relationships with donors and increasing philanthropic support for the department.

Encourage continued growth of the department's research program

Because the research within the department is so strong, it is essential that the chair bring deep knowledge about the breadth of research across epidemiology as well as the many funding mechanisms that support it. The chair will support the continued growth and impact of the department's research portfolio, encouraging new funding streams. The chair must also ensure that faculty members are provided research mentoring support and have the pre-and post-award services they need for success. With a large doctoral program, there is an opportunity for the department to expand funding and resources to further support graduate students during their training.

Enhance and promote educational activities

The next chair must be passionate about training the next generation of epidemiology leadership as this leader will inherit the largest epidemiology PhD program in the nation, a relatively young MPH program, and several other thriving degree programs. In an era of interdisciplinarity, the need to effectively integrate epidemiology in the continuum of public health training, research, and implementation is paramount, and the chair must find ways to heighten joint training and learning with other disciplines. Above all, the chair must be student-centered. In addition to being committed to recruiting and retaining an outstanding and diverse student body, the chair must ensure that there are effective means for students to participate in the department, that advising and mentoring are of the highest quality, and that Gillings courses and programs are responsive to students' needs.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Candidates must have qualifications commensurate with tenure at the rank of Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition, the ideal candidate will possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- MD, DrPH, PhD or related in an appropriate field;
- Track record in scholarly achievement and prior success in obtaining extramural funding;

- A track record of partnering with a breadth of stakeholders to develop, inspire, communicate, and operationalize a shared vision and strategic plan;
- Diversity and inclusion as lived values and evidence building cultures that ensure equity; a track record of positively impacting these values;
- Demonstrated commitment to addressing health disparities;
- Strong ability to collaborate and build trust with a diverse group of stakeholders within large and complex organizations;
- A track record of supporting collaboration across departments, divisions, and institutions to unite diverse stakeholders around a shared vision;
- Experience supporting and growing research and scholarship;
- Deep commitment to continuous learning about the national landscape of epidemiology; the capacity to ensure that the department leads and/or participates in important national conversations on the future of epidemiology;
- A track record of providing a meaningful and innovative educational experience that helps recruit and retain students while providing them with skills to make them successful members of the future epidemiology and public health workforce;
- Strong acumen and judgment in managing financial resources and the ability to develop and implement budgets effectively, aligning resources with strategic priorities;
- Success leading or supporting faculty recruitment, retention, and development efforts that enhance academic excellence, diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
- Commitment to excellence and innovation across the quadripartite mission: research, service, public health practice, and education.

TO APPLY

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent in confidence to:

Stephanie Fidel – Partner

Randi Herrick – Partner

Jasmine Miller – Senior Associate

Maria Pena – Search Coordinator

Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-north-carolina-chapel-hill-gillings-school-global-public-health/chair>

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Schoolwide Leadership Organizational Chart

We're on it!

