

# Keck School of Medicine of USC

*Search for the Chair, Department of Molecular Microbiology & Immunology  
Keck School of Medicine  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, California*

The Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) at the University of Southern California (USC) invites applications and nominations for the position of Chair of the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology (MMI). The Chair will join a top-tier medical school with a legacy of educational innovation and community-based clinical care at an exciting time as USC continues making strides towards doubling its research enterprise while scaling its health system. Immune health lies at the heart of health, serving as a foundational component of many KSOM priority areas. This role will lead and further catalyze scientific collaborations across basic, translational, and clinical research activities across KSOM and USC, positioning the department to be a top national leader in immunology, virology, microbiology, cancer, inflammation, autoimmune and infectious diseases, as well as immune-related therapies.

With new leadership at KSOM and a presidential initiative focused on transforming health sciences and growing biomedical research across the enterprise, this is an exciting time to join the institution and oversee efforts aimed at maximizing the potential in immunology and translational immunobiology. Reporting to the Dean of KSOM, [Dr. Carolyn Meltzer](#), the Chair will oversee 25 faculty and 40 staff members, and be responsible for providing visions and strategic directions for the department, growing and supporting cross-unit research collaborations and NIH grants among faculty, partnering with clinical departments to enable clinical translation and applications, and bringing together talented scientists and physicians from across the institution. Leveraging strong assets from KSOM such as the [Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) and the [Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research](#), the MMI Chair will provide visionary leadership in connecting and collaborating with leaders in these disciplines. A strategic long-term goal for the department includes the creation of an immunology research center, in addition to re-establishing the department to be a top nationally recognized department. To be successful, the Chair will address a number of key opportunities and challenges, listed below and outlined in detail starting on page four of this document:

- Enhance the department, and elevate its presence and impact within KSOM and beyond
- Forge ties with key scientific partners at KSOM and grow research collaborations
- Strategically recruit, retain, develop, and mentor faculty and staff
- Strengthen and develop funding opportunities to help MMI achieve its many ambitions
- Foster and ensure a culture of trust, collaboration, productivity, accountability, and transparency

A complete list of the desired qualifications and characteristics can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was produced with the support of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm.

## **A New Era of Renewal, Opportunity, and Growth**

The Chair comes to KSOM at a time of great change and forward momentum, joining a new leadership team and organizational structure designed to further USC's ambitious but achievable goals to double the size of the health and biomedical research enterprise, build a top 20 "medical school for the future," and scale the health system to a \$5 billion+ enterprise. USC recently completed a \$7 billion fundraising campaign, the largest in University history and second-largest in national history, and will soon embark on a second multi-billion dollar campaign exclusively in support of the health sciences. Under the leadership of USC President, [Dr. Carol Folt](#), the Discovery Translational Hub, a multi-story multidisciplinary facility on the health sciences campus, is currently under design and will serve the purpose of translating new discoveries into clinical care at Keck. The sense of excitement at USC is palpable, and this energy extends to KSOM, where recent changes to the leadership structure, including the creation of a Health System Board and the appointment of Dr. Steven Shapiro as inaugural Senior Vice President for Health Affairs, has set the stage for significant advancements over the next decade.

Dr. Carolyn Meltzer, Dean of KSOM, assumed her new role in 2022. Dean Meltzer joined USC from Emory University School of Medicine, where she served as the Chair of the Department of Radiology and Imaging Sciences for nearly 16 years. Dean Meltzer also served as Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Executive Associate Dean of Faculty Academic Advancement, Leadership, and Inclusion for the medical school. Dean Meltzer has a lengthy history of service to the medical profession and the field of Radiology on a national level, including on professional and advisory boards like the Radiological Society of North America, Council of Faculty and Academic Societies at the Association of American Medical Colleges, American Society of Neuroradiology, American College of Radiology Board of Chancellors, and many others.

Throughout its history, KSOM has been at the forefront of innovation in academic medicine with an unwavering commitment to community service and healthy equity that continues to this day. KSOM is part of Keck Medicine of USC, the University's medical enterprise and one of only two university-based medical systems in Los Angeles, the second largest city in the United States. Keck Medicine of USC owns and operates the Keck Medical Center of USC, which includes Keck Hospital of USC and USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Hospital. Both hospitals are staffed by more than 500 physicians who are faculty at KSOM. Under Keck Medicine of USC, there are two community hospitals which include USC Verdugo Hills Hospital and USC Arcadia Hospital, as well as more than 40 outpatient locations. KSOM also holds academic affiliations with two Los Angeles-based hospitals – including Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and the county hospital, Los Angeles General Hospital (LAG). KSOM benefits from being part of an integrated health system that includes partnerships with USC health science schools and programs in engineering, pharmacy, dentistry, gerontology, business, occupational science, arts and sciences, and more. KSOM also houses the USC MESH Academy to facilitate industry collaboration and commercialization of discoveries.

KSOM is home to 2,079 full-time faculty, 269 part-time faculty; 2,080 voluntary faculty physicians; 1,006 residents and fellow physicians at Keck and LAG, and an additional 260 residents and fellows at CHLA; 2,329 staff; and 3,006 students, including MD, PhD, MD/PhD, master's, undergraduate, certificate, and part-time students. In addition to the MD program, whose innovative curriculum integrates clinical study with basic science and issues of health justice, and close work with faculty mentors, KSOM offers 30 graduate programs – MD/PhD, PhD, master's, and certificates – in which students work on the world's most pressing health and biomedical problems. KSOM also offers postdoctoral training programs, a number of professional degree programs, two undergraduate degree programs, and opportunities for continued medical education. *U.S. News and World Report* ranks KSOM 28<sup>th</sup> in research, and in the top 50 for the [most diverse medical schools](#) in the country. More details about KSOM and Keck Medicine of USC can be found in Appendices I & II.

### **About the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology**

MMI is one of the 26 clinical and basic science departments at KSOM. Embracing collaboration and using advanced instrumentation, MMI scientists create new knowledge about the basic mechanisms of disease and immunity, and cultivate real-world impact by adapting what they learn into new health solutions such as vaccines, gene therapies and immunotherapies.

USC, KSOM, and MMI offer a range of research programs designed to prepare graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to conduct diverse independent research. A great diversity of research areas include themes in virology (AIDS, hepatitis, herpes, papilloma, virus-induced cancers, viral pathogenesis), immunology (vaccine development, autoimmune diseases, allergy, asthma, immune therapy, immune evasion by viruses), cancer (oncogenes and tumor suppressor genes, cell cycle, apoptosis, signal transduction, drug development, mechanisms of virally-induced cancers, chemical carcinogenesis), stem cells (cancer and embryonic), premature aging (Werner syndrome, Progeria) and others. The department offers an MS program in Molecular Microbiology and Immunology and its goal is to prepare students for a career in the broad field of biomedical sciences with focus on, but not limited to, microbiology, virology, immunology and cancer research. MMI faculty take part in the interdisciplinary Program in Biomedical and Biological Science admissions program at KSOM, which has eight different PhD options. MMI also provides Postdoctoral Fellowships for early-career researchers to connect with principal investigators leading ambitious basic and translational studies.

MMI has several core facilities including flow cytometry and sorting, confocal microscopy, mass spectrometry, metabolomics and Biosafety Level 3. In particular, studies into dangerous airborne viruses and bacteria take place in an advanced biosafety level 3 lab with capabilities found nowhere else in L.A. County.

## **The Role of the Department Chair**

The Chair leads the research and education programs of the MMI department, with an emphasis on the values outlined by [JEDI-WeST](#) (see Appendix III for more details) – justice through equity, diversity, inclusion, well-being, and social transformation. The Chair is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations and strategy across the department, providing leadership over research and education missions for MMI, and proactive outreach to other basic science chairs, clinical department chairs, institute directors, faculty and staff members across KSOM and USC to advance research in the University's priority areas. The Chair will oversee an annual budget of \$11.2 million, 25 faculty members, 40 staff members, and over 40 students. Department funding includes gifts, grants (predominantly NIH grants), research support, and Dean's funds.

## **Key Opportunities and Challenges for the New Chair**

### ***Enhance the department, and elevate its presence and impact within KSOM and beyond***

- Bring a deep and interdisciplinary understanding of immunology and microbiology, to drive a strategic, forward-looking, and compelling vision that positions the MMI department to be a top-ranked program nationally;
- Strategically build out the next phase of scientific directions, growth areas and innovations in the field, leverage assets from KSOM including faculty, research institutes and 25 other basic and clinical departments, support faculty's diverse research activities and scientific missions, knitting multidisciplinary programs together more effectively;
- Propel the department to become a vital foundational pillar for the entire health system, and inspire cross-unit collaborations, scientific discovery, clinical applications, and more productive research and grant-seeking activities.

### ***Forge ties with key scientific partners at KSOM and grow research collaborations***

- Engage faculty in conversations to identify strategic growth areas, and map out the future directions in translational projects, integrations with clinical departments, therapies, interventions, and treatments;
- Reach out proactively to relevant departments and research institutes for collaborations from basic research to clinical translations, to articulate an integrated scientific vision that will strengthen and rebuild the core strengths of the department and provide a strong research infrastructure that is alignment with the institutional priorities outlined by President Folt, in areas such as immunotherapies, cancer, transplants, infectious diseases, etc.;
- Act as an effective connector of people and ideas across the University to leverage USC's extraordinary interdisciplinary strength and identify and guide new opportunities around basic discoveries, translational and clinical research; many departments and programs look forward to developing exciting new projects and collaborations with the MMI department.

***Strategically recruit, retain, develop, and mentor faculty and staff***

- Strategically recruit exceptional faculty in the next phase of growth with an expansion into those with a track record in translational endeavors and targeted disciplines in cancer, immunology, infectious and inflammatory diseases;
- Continue developing and mentoring junior faculty through intentional professional and leadership development and guidance and nurture the next generation of leaders in the field;
- Support and mentor faculty in securing grants and research funding, as well as potential research areas and collaborations with other units across KSOM;
- Coordinate with other key partners across the University in conducting successful joint recruitments that will benefit KSOM and the University as a whole.

***Strengthen and develop funding opportunities to help MMI achieve its many ambitions***

- Improve and increase the grants received from NIH and other funding agencies, particularly around grants on translational research beyond basic discoveries;
- Develop new philanthropic opportunities and deepen relationships with diverse groups of donors, businesses, alumni, funding agencies, and nationally and internationally recognized organizations to generate and expand funds, resources, and partnerships.

***Foster and ensure a culture of trust, collaboration, productivity, accountability, and transparency***

- Cultivate a welcoming culture and climate in which faculty, staff, and students feel nurtured, empowered, respected, and valued as members of the broader community;
- Drive a firm and evident operationalization of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, well-being, and social transformation at all levels in alignment with the values outlined by [JEDI-WeST](#) (see Appendix III for more details);
- Celebrate values such as trust, collaboration, productivity, accountability, and transparency;
- Build an inclusive community with a strong sense of belonging.

**Qualifications and Characteristics**

This position requires a leader with vision, breadth, drive, and an entrepreneurial spirit. A compelling combination of organizational leadership skills and the interpersonal ability to lead and inspire confidence in diverse constituents working across a vast, matrixed environment. The Chair should possess a clear vision for how the MMI Department can combine translational, clinical, and basic research and education in alignment with KSOM's ambitious goals and strategies. We are seeking a leader who also understands how to engage, nurture, and maximize the potential of faculty and staff in order to enable their continued growth and success. The desired qualifications and experience of a department chair include the following:

- Stature and recognition for innovative, outstanding scholarship and leadership in the microbiology, immunology, virology, cancer, inflammatory and infectious disease fields; a PhD

or MD or MD/PhD, and an academic record commensurate with appointment to the rank of full professor is required;

- Effectiveness in a complex system of distributed leadership; experience working in a highly matrixed environment;
- Demonstrated leadership and success in advancing the tripartite missions of research, education, and clinical care; experience with and exposure to a hospital-based healthcare environment;
- A track record of securing grants and research funding, and supporting others in doing so;
- A commitment to excellence in recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty; a history of strategic investment in faculty and their research; extensive experience in promoting interdisciplinary research;
- A strong record of effective team building, managing, and collaborating with multiple stakeholders;
- The highest standards of ethics and integrity, with a deep commitment to transparency and accountability in policy and strategy;
- Demonstrated commitment to and concrete experience in fostering and supporting programs that address justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- Proven support for innovation in medical education and training programs, including promoting exceptional teaching and learning in an interprofessional environment;
- Excellent communication, listening, and interpersonal skills.

### **Compensation**

The anticipated salary for this position is about \$550,000 annually and is commensurate with related experience and qualifications. Relocation assistance is available. USC offers an inspiring higher education environment and excellent benefits, including medical, dental, vision, retirement, and paid time off. Learn more about USC Employee benefits at <https://employees.usc.edu/benefits-perks>.

### **Location**

The University developed in stride with the dynamic city of Los Angeles, a global center for art, technology, culture, industry, and trade, and a vividly international city with one of the most diverse populations on the planet. Now the creative capital of the Pacific Rim, Los Angeles has never lost its frontier edge and constantly re-invents its physical fabric, its economy, and its society. USC is both in and of its city. It was shaped by a succession of visionaries who invested their time, insight, and financial resources to build one of the world's great universities in the heart of a consequential global mega-region.

USC contributes significantly to the region as one of its largest economic engines. The University is the largest private employer in the city of Los Angeles, providing nearly 27,000 jobs and creating non-university job opportunities for thousands of additional residents each year. USC generates \$4.9 billion annually in economic activity in the Los Angeles region and beyond, which does not include the direct

spending or impacts of the USC hospitals. In addition, because of USC's long tradition of excellent professional education, USC alumni represent a large percentage of the business leaders and practicing professionals in the region. More details about Los Angeles can be found [here](#).

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, as well as application packets (CV and cover letter) should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-southern-california-keck-school-medicine/chair-department-molecular> Electronic submission of materials is required.

David Bellshaw, Silvia Cheng, and Christina Errico  
Isaacson, Miller  
1000 Sansome Street, Suite 300  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
[www.imsearch.com](http://www.imsearch.com)

*USC is an equal-opportunity educator and employer, proudly pluralistic and firmly committed to providing equal opportunity for outstanding persons of every race, gender, creed and background. The university particularly encourages members of underrepresented groups, veterans and individuals with disabilities to apply. USC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Further information is available by contacting [uschr@usc.edu](mailto:uschr@usc.edu).*



## Appendix I

### About the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM)

The Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California was established in 1885 as the region's first medical school and the second professional school founded at USC. In July 1999, USC received a gift of \$110 million from the W.M. Keck Foundation, the largest gift ever made to a medical school at the time. In recognition of the gift, USC renamed its medical school the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California. The gift has enabled USC to pursue strategic initiatives aimed at transforming Keck School of Medicine into one of the most highly regarded and competitive medical schools in the nation.

In addition to its education and training programs, KSOM is home to 47 research-oriented basic, clinical, and population-based programs that generated \$373 million in annual sponsored research (FY20). Clinical departments include Anesthesiology, Dermatology, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Medicine, Neurology, Neurology Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Pathology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Radiation Oncology, Radiology, Surgery, and Urology. For more information, visit <https://keck.usc.edu/clinical-departments/>.

KSOM's basic science departments bring in more than \$84 million in funding annually and emphasize research in the fundamental understanding of biological systems and the biology roots of disease. Departments include Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, Integrative Anatomical Sciences, Medical Education, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, Physiology and Neuroscience, Preventative Medicine, Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, and Translational Genomics. For more information, visit <https://keck.usc.edu/about-us/departments-institutes/basic-science-departments/>.

KSOM also has 31 research centers and institutes. Research institutes provide a space for in-depth study and serve as a hub for multidisciplinary collaboration and innovation in research. Institutes include the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research, the USC Mark and Mary Stevens Neuroimaging and Informatics Institute, and the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute, the Alzheimer's Therapeutic Research Institute, among others. Research centers may be housed within academic departments, research institutes with departmental status, or the office of research advancement, and include the Center for Applied Network Analysis, the Center for Genetic Epidemiology, the Center for Health Equity in the Americas, and the USC Hastings Center for Pulmonary Research. For a complete list of centers and institutes, visit <https://keck.usc.edu/research/institutes-centers-programs/>.

### *Affiliations*

KSOM holds academic affiliations with two Los Angeles-based hospitals: the county hospital, Los Angeles General Hospital (LAG), and Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA).



The Los Angeles General Hospital, formerly called LAC+USC Medical Center, opened in 1878 when the County of Los Angeles opened a 100-bed hospital to care for Los Angeles' indigent population and in 1885, the County affiliated with USC Medical School for the provision of care. The hospital, now a Level-One trauma center and hub in the County-run healthcare system serving 10 million residents, is the main training site for over 700 Keck medical students, as well as for nearly 1,000 physician interns, residents, and fellows completing their graduate medical education (GME) in nearly every medical specialty and subspecialty. The GME program is administered through faculty and staff at KSOM.

The partnership between LA County and USC is governed by a master legal agreement, which has gone by several different names over the years. The most recent name is the Medical School Affiliation Agreement (MSAA). The MSAA contract revenue represents approximately 16 percent of the overall KSOM revenue budget, and the majority of the residency training takes place at LA County.

Since 1932, Children's Hospital Los Angeles and the faculty of KSOM have worked together to create an excellent pediatric care center, a perennial top five *U.S. News and World Report* children's hospital. All full-time and part-time CHLA faculty hold faculty appointments at KSOM. Training programs at CHLA include 402 medical students, 109 full-time residents, three chief residents, and 151 fellows.

For more information on the Keck School of Medicine, visit <https://keck.usc.edu/>.

## Appendix II

### About Keck Medicine of USC

KSOM is part of Keck Medicine of USC, the University of Southern California's medical enterprise and one of only two university-based medical systems in the Los Angeles area. Keck Medicine owns and operates the Keck Medical Center of USC, which includes two acute care hospitals: Keck Hospital of USC and USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Hospital. Both hospitals are staffed by more than 500 physicians who are faculty at KSOM. This includes the ownership of the community hospital USC Verdugo Hills Hospital, USC Arcadia Hospital, and more than 40 outpatient locations.

In addition, Keck Medicine operates USC Care Medical Group, a medical faculty practice which has been greatly strengthened in recent years and is essential to clinical recruitment and clinical strategy. The system has grown from \$550 million six years ago to \$2.3 billion today. This is the product of strong clinical and academic recruitment, healthcare innovation, and improved referral patterns, which have fueled strategic growth, alliances, and acquisitions.

Keck Medicine of USC has been named one of the country's best cancer care providers and among the best in eight other specialties, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. USC Norris renewed its NCI Comprehensive designation in 2021 with one of the best scores in the nation. The medical center also ranked in the top 10 in urology and geriatrics; top 20 in ophthalmology, neurology and neurosurgery, and cardiac and heart surgery; and top 30 in orthopedics, nephrology, and cancer care.

## Appendix III

### About JEDI-WeST

#### *Vision*

JEDI-WeST envisions an inclusive and diverse environment at KSOM where all constituents (learners, staff, and faculty) are respected, valued, encouraged and supported to thrive in pursuit of solving the most intractable health problems afflicting humanity.

#### *Mission*

The mission of JEDI-WeST is to support and develop programming, policies, and practices that create an inclusive and diverse community at KSOM.

#### *Values*

JEDI-WeST values align with USC's six unifying values of integrity, open communication, excellence, well-being, accountability and diversity, equity & inclusion.

#### *Background*

In the fall of 2020, Interim Dean Rao charged [Dr. Ricky Bluthenthal](#) with leading an important new initiative for the Keck School known as JEDI-WeST: Justice through Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Well-being and Social Transformation. The JEDI-WeST committee believes that the Keck School has an ethical imperative to build a foundation of psychological safety for ALL members of the HSC community—especially those from historically minoritized groups—and to develop a culture that appreciates, respects, and values diverse individuals because they are necessary to achieve the excellence to which our school aspires.

By uniting and coordinating KSOM's current initiatives from the [Office of Diversity & Inclusion](#), [Office of Social Justice](#), [Center for GEMS](#), and [Office of Well-being](#), JEDI-WeST strives to achieve greater visibility, influence and impact. JEDI-WeST is working to accomplish its mission through programs and policies that encourage faculty/staff/learner engagement, professional development and mentoring, departmental and interdisciplinary partnerships and collaboration, and community outreach & service. Additionally, JEDI-WeST intentionally coordinates efforts with existing and future University-wide equity, social justice and well-being initiatives and goals.

Expected outcomes from JEDI-WeST include: 1) Creating a space of belonging for all employees and learners, especially those in historically marginalized groups, 2) Assisting in the recruitment of a diverse workforce and student population by demonstrating a commitment to inclusion, 3) Supporting employee well-being, psychological safety, engagement, retention and professional fulfillment, 4) Providing leadership development and career promotion, 5) Strengthening community partnerships, and 6) Encouraging innovation within the HSC community.

For more information on JEDI-WeST, visit <https://keck.usc.edu/jedi-west/>.