An invitation to apply for the position of Dean
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Search

The University of Minnesota (UMN) seeks an innovative strategist to serve as the Dean of the School of Public Health (SPH or School). The COVID-19 pandemic has both emphasized the importance of public health and highlighted the negative consequences caused by health disparities and unequal access to healthcare. The next Dean will be poised to take advantage of the current moment for public health and work to elevate the School’s impact on the health and well-being of the citizens of Minnesota, the nation, and beyond. The next Dean will inspire a vision for the School of Public Health as both a high-energy public health scholar-advocate and leader in the field, guiding the School in creating inventive solutions in its commitment to make health a human right.

As one of the premier schools of public health in the world, the School of Public Health has prepared some of the most influential leaders in the field, transforming the way public health is practiced around the globe. The School has been recognized for its excellence in research and education and for advancing policies and practices that both create and sustain health equity. Consistently ranked in the top 10 by U.S. News and World Report, the School is ranked #2 for its Master of Healthcare Administration. The School also ranks #6 in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding among schools of public health, and its researchers receive more NIH funding than any other school of public health at a public university. The SPH has the highest level of research funding per faculty member at the University of Minnesota.

In addition to the School of Public Health, the University of Minnesota is home to Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine, providing ample opportunity to collaborate, share resources, and think boldly and broadly about interdisciplinarity. SPH researchers and educators also collaborate with other University of Minnesota schools and colleges outside of the health sciences including the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. Faculty and staff from the SPH are seen as resources to health departments, communities, and policymakers, providing information and guidance needed to make the best and most informed decisions about population health. To strengthen its impact, the SPH will need to steward these existing relationships and foster new ones, seeking partnerships that work to eliminate health inequities, promote health and wellbeing for all, and garner new resources and opportunities for the school and its programs.

Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean of the School oversees its four academic divisions, centers, educational programs including public health practice, and engagement with external stakeholders, and is responsible for sustaining an inclusive culture. The incoming Dean will, first and foremost, display a personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and eliminating health disparities, bringing with them experience in each of these areas and threading these values through all of the SPH’s work. In doing so, the Dean will inspire and implement an action-oriented strategic plan, grow and support the research and scholarly mission of the School, deepen SPHs relationship with the Minnesota Department of Health, and assure
that UMN is preparing its graduates to be successful public health leaders. The incumbent will also need to expand internal and external collaborations and partnerships and place a high value on the mentoring and development of faculty, staff, and students. The next Dean will be an inspiring innovator; someone who can highlight the excellent work being done at SPH and increase the School’s visibility by making UMN center to national and international public health conversations.

The University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

The University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota is a comprehensive public research university that is ranked among the world’s most respected institutions of higher learning. The University has scholars of national and international reputation as well as a strong tradition of education and public engagement. With five campuses located throughout Minnesota—the Twin Cities, Duluth, Morris, Crookston and Rochester - the University advances discovery and innovation to improve society for all. UMN has the special distinction of being both a globally engaged R1 research institution and Minnesota’s land-grant university, with a unique capacity and responsibility to improve the lives of Minnesotans and drive the state forward.

With an annual operating budget of $4.2 billion a year, the University generates an estimated economic impact of $9 billion for the Minnesota economy. The University enrolls 65,000 students, 52,000 on the flagship Twin Cities campus, and has over 25,000 faculty and staff. As a research university of exceptional breadth and depth, it has schools and colleges in the broad fields of liberal arts; biological sciences; dentistry; design; education and human development; food, agriculture and natural resource sciences; law; business; medicine; nursing; public affairs; public health; science and engineering; and veterinary medicine. The state’s sixth-largest employer, the University encompasses regional Extension offices, research and outreach centers, clinics, labs, professional education outreach, and K–12 educational engagement programs throughout the state, as well as world-class performing arts facilities, museums, and galleries. As one of an elite few land-grant universities that also are world-class research institutions, and one of few major land-grant research institutions situated in a major metropolitan area, the University consistently has advanced the land-grant mission with exceptional vigor—distinguished by a comprehensive commitment to integrating public engagement deeply into teaching and learning, research and discovery.

The University averages over $1 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking eighth nationally among public universities, and its faculty and experts are considered some of the best in their respective fields. UMN currently boasts 29 Nobel Prize winning faculty, recipients of prestigious awards such as Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, and many who are members of the National Academies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The University strongly embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational values and has made both engagement and diversity central to strategic planning across the system. Students on the Twin Cities campus include 24% students of color, 11% international students, and 25% of all undergraduates are first-generation students. The University ranks ninth nationally for students learning abroad and offers programs in more than 70 countries. In 2017, the Twin Cities campus received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from Insight into Diversity for the seventh year in a row, and in 2016, the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities named the UMN as recipient of its inaugural Institutional Award for Global Learning, Research, and Engagement.

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The Twin Cities campus is located in an increasingly diverse and economically vibrant region at the heart of an increasingly global Midwest, with 11 federally recognized tribal nations, the largest urban American Indian population in the country, and growing African American, Latinx, and Asian American populations. The links between Minnesota communities and communities around the world are notable: the Twin Cities has the largest number of people of Somali descent outside of Somalia and the nation’s largest urban Hmong-American population.

UMN is located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people. The University resides on Dakota land ceded in the Treaties of 1837 and 1851. The University acknowledges this place has a complex and layered history and is committed to ongoing efforts to recognize, support, and advocate for American Indian Nations and peoples. The University recently announced a search for the newly created position of new senior adviser to the president on Indian affairs who will focus on further strengthening the University’s partnership with Minnesota Tribal Nations.

Current University Context

Without question the year 2020 posed a series of challenges for the University of Minnesota. Like all universities and colleges across the country, UMN had to alter its typical operations with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. And in the summer of 2020, the University of Minnesota community was deeply affected by the killing of George Floyd by officers of the Minneapolis Police Department and is at the epicenter of protests that spread from Minneapolis across the globe as the largest demonstration of civil rights activism in a generation. This opened up a larger and continuing discourse about race and equity within the University.

UMN has maintained a steadfast commitment to its mission and in 2020 completed the development of its first systemwide strategic plan to chart a strong course for the future. Approved by the Board of Regents last year, MPact 2025, reflecting a deepened commitment to research, teaching, and service; open access to opportunity; and forward-thinking innovation to advance the University’s land-grant mission and impact the world. Campus units have collaborated to develop metrics to measure progress on the plan. Now in the early phases of implementation, the plan advances five core commitments:

- **Student Success**—meeting all students where they are and maximizing their skills, potential and well-being in a rapidly changing world;
- **Discovery, Innovation and Impact**—channeling curiosity, investing in discovery to cultivate possibility and innovative solutions while elevating Minnesota and society as a whole;
- **MNItersections**—work inspired by Minnesota to improve people and places at world-class levels;
- **Community and Belonging**—to foster a welcoming community that values belonging, equity, diversity and dignity in people and ideas;
- **Fiscal Stewardship**—stewarding resources to promote access, efficiency, trust and collaboration with the state, students, faculty, staff and partners.

The University is also nearing the completion of its 10-year Driven capital campaign, which is expected to reach if not exceed its $4 billion goal in 2021. The campaign has five main priorities: 1) elevate a world class student experience; 2) accelerate advances in health; 3) protect and sustain agriculture, food and water; 4) drive a Minnesota plan for innovation; and 5) provide a place of opportunity for everyone.
University Leadership

President Joan Gabel is the 17th president of the University of Minnesota. Prior to joining the University, President Gabel served as Provost at the University of South Carolina and Dean of the Trulaske College of Business at the University of Missouri.

Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson is the chief academic officer of the University of Minnesota multi-campus system and provost for the Twin Cities campus, with overarching responsibility for fostering the academic excellence of the educational and research missions of the University and providing leadership for undergraduate, graduate and professional education. Provost Croson came to UMN from Michigan State University, where she served as dean of the College of Social Science.

The School of Public Health

In its 77 years, the University of Minnesota School of Public Health has grown in its reach, reputation, and impact, proven by the excellent work of its 22 research centers, its #10 U.S. News and World Report ranking (2020), and its nearly 12,000 alumni who serve the discipline across the globe. The School prides itself in its innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. With the first epidemiology PhD program and the first maternal and child health program in the nation, the SPH’s research, policy work, impact on health equity, and bi-modal educational offerings continue to make the School a leader in the field. The current strategic plan, SPH2030, provides direction and vision for advancing the School’s various missions in its goal to create a healthier world.

The outgoing Dean, Dr. John Finnegan, has been in the role since 2005. During Dean Finnegan’s tenure, the School’s faculty has increased by approximately 40%, and the number of its graduate and professional students has more than doubled. Working with the School’s current stakeholders and its committed alumni base, Dean Finnegan has advanced the School as a leader in research, education, e-learning, and community-engaged partnerships, and has prepared it to meet the health challenges that will shape the world of 2030 and beyond. A true believer and active participant in community service, he has served in community health leadership roles such as Chair of the Board of Children’s HeartLink, Minneapolis, MN; board member of HealthPartners Research and Education Institute, Bloomington, MN and the World Federation of Academic Institutions of Global Health (WFAIGH); and the Minnesota Department of Health’s Office of Minority and Multicultural Health, Advisory Committee. At the University of Minnesota, he co-chaired the President’s Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct, a public health issue of national importance.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

A deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social change addressing determinants of health is at the heart of everything the School of Public Health does. Every day the School challenges the assumptions that negative health outcomes are inevitable, while standing in solidarity with the most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations. No profession has had greater impact on bettering the lives of the population than has public health, and thus, the SPH has a tangible commitment to centering the marginalized and helping historically oppressed communities become healthier.

To support these values, the School has a diversity and inclusion office that guides a comprehensive plan in addressing systemic racism and oppression through education, hiring, fundraising, research, and community engagement. During Summer 2021, the School of Public Health will begin implementing its strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The strategic plan is not only a set of goals and strategies to guide the School to
living its values, but a commitment to lasting change. The School also boasts several diversity, inclusion, and health equity groups, listed below.

- **Action Alignment Team** is the central organizing group for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the SPH.
- **Diversity Network** is a SPH community-building student organization that focuses on cultivating personal and professional development in DEI. This is an inclusive space that brings students together to engage in conversation and learn from each other. Additionally, Diversity Network is involved in social programming and collaborates with the SPH Student Senate to improve the student experience.
- **EDIT (Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Team)** is a SPH initiative open to all students, faculty, and staff, whose primary mission is to proactively increase awareness around equity and diversity while building a more inclusive community by working together to host events and facilitate challenging conversations.
- **Health Equity Work Group** gives greater visibility to health inequalities research at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and nationally, develops collaborations with faculty and community partners, and ensures SPH students are well trained to work in a diverse society.

In February 2021, the SPH received a $5 million philanthropic gift (the largest in the School’s history) from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota to establish the **Center for Antiracism Research for Health Equity**. This Center will work to dismantle structural racism and its negative impact on health. The Center for Antiracism Research for Health Equity will develop education and training on structural racism and health inequities, foster authentic community engagement to address the root causes of racial health inequities and drive action, change the narrative about race and racism to one that does not hold up whiteness as the ideal standard for human beings, and serve as a trusted resource on issues related to racism and health equity. Most critically, when it comes to long-term change, the Center intends to be a leader in antiracist health research.

**Education at the School of Public Health**

Public health has been taught at the University of Minnesota since 1874, well before the School of Public Health was established in 1944. Since then, public health at UMN has continued to grow in its reach and reputation. Today, approximately 120 fulltime faculty support more than 1,300 students across 15 master’s and four doctoral programs, through four academic divisions:

- The Division of Biostatistics focuses on the development of statistical methods for biomedical research and collaborates with University research partners on projects involving HIV/AIDS, heart and lung diseases, cancer, neuroimaging, and many other clinical disciplines. Performing methodological research in areas including Bayesian analysis, spatial statistics, statistical genetics, and causal inference, division faculty, students, and staff are involved in more than 100 research grants and contracts totaling more than $150 million. The division is well known for the design and conduct of multi-center international clinical trials and currently has several ongoing COVID-19 related clinical trials.

- The Division of Environmental Health Sciences focuses on environmental and occupational health concerns, from investigating hazards in our environment to establishing the basis for public health policy. The Division offers MPH, MS, and PhD degree options across a number of specialty areas, allowing students to focus on an area of concentration. The Environmental Health General Program allows for degree customization to fit the student’s interests and career goals. Faculty are leaders in the field, researching all aspects of environmental health, while the numerous research centers help connect it to the community through events, research initiatives, and outreach.
The Division of Epidemiology & Community Health focuses on disease and health in various populations. The faculty and students examine the distribution, cause, and prevention of diseases, and how human behavior affects overall health. The Division offers MPH, MS, and PhD degrees, as well as dual and joint degrees. The Division and its faculty are often partnering with other research entities and community organizations on public health research and interventions.

The Division of Health Policy & Management is focused on ways to improve health and healthcare, and its faculty are reshaping and improving the rapidly changing healthcare environment. Degree options are varied, from full-time programs to flexible executive programs for working professionals.

The School of Public Health has been accredited since 1946. Its next accreditation visit is spring of 2022.

Research at the School of Public Health

Working across disciplines and with local, national, and international colleagues to make real and lasting change, the SPH is involved in research across the spectrum of public health, addressing the globe’s most pressing problems. Ranked #6 in NIH funding among schools of public health, and with average grant funding per faculty member of $568,000, the University of Minnesota School of Public Health is a leader in impactful research (boasting $67 million in research grants and contracts in 2020). The SPH is home to 22 nationally and internationally recognized centers, as well as Global Health and Health Equity Work Groups which provide high-caliber research, outreach, and training.

The School’s research is highly collaborative within the health sciences, across the University, and throughout the state, region, and nation. Faculty, staff, and students (who are considered vital to the SPH’s research success) bring innovative thinking and concrete action to emerging and persistent challenges, including structural racism, gun violence, the expanding aging population, and a changing climate. From conducting the first Ebola vaccine trial in West Africa and leading the largest global HIV/AIDS treatment study, to confronting environmental pollutants in rural India and hunger in the U.S., the School of Public Health’s goal is to give everyone the chance for a healthy life. The far-reaching positive impacts of SPH’s research are clear, and today’s projects are addressing some of the most crucial issues our world faces.

Public Health Practice and Policy Work

When it comes to working with communities, the SPH has long embraced the notion of “engagement” rather than “outreach,” knowing that a multidisciplinary, multidimensional approach to public health can occur only through true partnerships. Nearly all of the SPH’s research centers have a broader public mission, working to make real change within the Minneapolis region and beyond. Additionally, all Master’s in Public Health students must complete a field experience, engaging students in this critical work from the start. A long and close partnership with the state health department—one of the best in the country—gives students on-the-ground experience and allows faculty to work with colleagues in the field.

The Role and the Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Dean

The next Dean has an unparalleled opportunity to lead a world-renowned school of public health in these unprecedented and turbulent times during which the importance of public health has never been more center stage. With its deep and unwavering commitment to health equity and eliminating disparities, the SPH has the opportunity to distinguish itself by tapping into each aspect of its mission to support faculty, students, and staff to reach new heights in their work, and to succeed as a home to an inclusive community that is strengthened by its diversity.
across many different dimensions. To do so, a successful Dean will address the following opportunities and challenges.

Enhance the cultural and structural commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and the School’s efforts to eliminating health disparities

As part of its commitment to inclusion and equity, it is critically important for the next Dean to build on the SPH’s ongoing efforts to diversify the faculty, staff, and student body. The Dean must foster an environment in which all members of the community are valued and heard, and an organizational structure that promotes cultural change in supporting these values. The incoming Dean will leverage the SPH’s impressive Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, guiding its implementation and championing its integration at every level of the School’s work. Working with the new Center for Antiracism Research for Health Equity, the Dean will be expected to identify ways to finance action and inspire collaborations across not only the SPH, but also the other health sciences schools, the broader University, and external stakeholders to address these issues through a multifaceted approach.

The Dean is responsible for creating community, identifying avenues that draw people across roles together, creating organizational structures that are personal and responsive, ensuring transparency about critical decisions, messaging frequently and consistently to the community, and implementing best practices across the School.

Inspire and implement an ambitious, outcomes-oriented vision for the next era of the SPH

The next Dean, working in close collaboration with its many stakeholders, will be expected to outline a clear vision for the School of Public Health’s future as a preeminent institution of public health education, research, and practice, raising the visibility of SPH. The vision must reflect all aspects of the School’s quadripartite mission—education, research, service, and practice—and address the public health challenges facing the State of Minnesota and beyond. The Dean must incorporate the deep expertise in and around the School to take advantage of this unique moment in time, both in terms of the pandemic response and the wealth of faculty expertise across numerous disciplines. In pursuit of the School’s aspirations, the Dean will chart a direction for the SPH through a collaborative strategic planning process that engages all stakeholders and ensures alignment with the University’s strategic priorities.

To be successful in both creating and implementing such a vision, the Dean must collaborate across the SPH, with the other health sciences schools, and broadly throughout the University of Minnesota. The Dean must work to close the gaps between the natural silos existing between the four SPH divisions, finding substantive ways for them to work together across research, education, and community engagement. The Dean must also proactively reach out to other schools at UMN, finding way to leverage resources and create “win-wins.” The Dean must be a champion for the School, serving as its advocate with University leadership, and work to ensure that its priorities and programs are supported and advanced for continued success.

Provide strong stewardship of the SPH operations and infrastructure

As the leader of the School, the Dean must balance outward-facing responsibilities with an equally important commitment to the functioning of the School, including ultimate oversight of policies, procedures, School-wide administrative matters, strategic infrastructure needs, and, in particular, the well-being of staff and faculty. The faculty, staff and students are inspired to engage with the Dean in open and transparent decision making across the many programs of the School. The Dean will be in a unique position to bring a fresh, holistic view of the School
and to critically assess current practices and existing processes and systems employed in carrying out the work of this multi-faceted School.

**Promote innovative, forward-thinking educational offerings**

The SPH has seen nearly a 30% increase in student applications in the past year; the demand for high-quality educational programs is growing along with the visibility of the field. The Dean must embrace the educational mission of the SPH as central to all that it does, placing learners at the center while incorporating research and practice into education. To ensure the success of the School’s academic offerings, the Dean must implement an academic program review process, ensuring that all programs are innovative, competitive, and leverage the resources of other offerings at the University where collaboration is possible. Over 70% of course registrations at the SPH are online, making it necessary for the Dean to have a strong understanding of, and commitment to, investing in non-traditional modalities of learning. Finally, the Dean should seek to build upon the career and professional development opportunities for students.

**Grow resources and opportunities for scholarship, especially collaborative research**

The research being conducted at the SPH is growing in its impact, but to both maintain and enhance this trajectory, the Dean must inspire collaborative research. The Dean will work to define opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary research, as well as program project grants. As the funding landscape becomes increasingly competitive, the Dean must find ways to support faculty and students in their scholarly endeavors through mentoring and development, as well as seeking additional funding support.

**Expand the SPH’s community engagement and practice opportunities**

Faculty in the SPH have developed and nurtured strong relationships with a variety of community organizations as well as the Minnesota state legislature in an effort to increase the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Minnesota. University of Minnesota is a land grant institution and as such, the incoming Dean must prioritize these types of external relationships, viewing them not only as critical, but as essential to advancing public health practice and providing opportunities for students and faculty to engage with the community. The incumbent must be familiar with public health policymaking, and will work closely with state and local departments of health and the state legislature. The Dean should ensure that the excellent work being done by the students and faculty at the SPH is integrated in the community through public health practice and policy work and should continue to strengthen existing relationships and build new external partnerships to assure that the SPH’s impact can permeate.

**Generate and manage new resources, especially through fundraising**

The School and the University operate on a Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) model, giving the Dean real opportunity to grow resources. The incoming Dean should be astute in thinking about how to increase and diversify resources, leveraging the School’s strengths, finding partnerships to create shared resource opportunities, and securing new funding sources. The donors and alumni of the SPH are informed about and engaged in the School’s growth and development and are invested in its future success. The Dean will continue to build on these strong relationships, creatively utilizing the expertise and commitment of the School’s supporters.

**Recruit, mentor, and retain an excellent and diverse faculty and staff**

The Dean will work with division heads and center leaders to recruit, retain, and mentor talented faculty and staff, while consistently focusing on diversity at all levels, and, above all, creating an inclusive and equitable culture. The
Dean must be a caring, supportive, and thoughtful leader with a generosity of spirit, focused on investing in the development of others. The Dean must identify and implement real pathways for growth and build structures for formal mentoring. The Dean must galvanize and inspire continued success across all missions, serving as a champion for faculty, staff, and students, and connecting their work to the broader missions of the School, the University, and the health of Minnesota.

**Qualifications and Experience**

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated intellectual leadership in public health, a substantial record of scholarly or health policy achievement, strong visibility in the public health research community, and the capacity to exercise policy leadership at the local, state, and national and/or international levels. Candidates must have qualifications commensurate with tenure at the rank of Professor at the University of Minnesota. In addition, the ideal candidate will possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- A track record of being action-oriented in partnering with a breadth of stakeholders to develop, inspire, communicate, and operationalize a shared, focused, and clear vision and strategic plan
- Commitment to excellence and innovation across the quadripartite mission: research, service, public health practice and policy work, and education
- Demonstrated record of excellence in leading complex organizational culture change; a personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and addressing health disparities
- Experience in and an appetite for stewarding donors and bolstering philanthropic support
- Excellent listening and interpersonal skills grounded in a direct and transparent style of communication as well as an open-door policy
- Success leading or supporting faculty recruitment, retention, and development efforts that enhance academic excellence, diversity, equity, inclusion, and empowering others
- A track record of providing a meaningful and innovative educational experience; a commitment to nontraditional learning modalities
- Deep commitment to continuous learning about the international landscape of public health; the capacity to ensure that the School leads and/or participates in important national conversations on the future of public health
- The necessary skill set to be a strong advocate for the School of Public Health both internally within the University and externally
- A track record of leveraging shared resources and proactively seeking collaboration across institutions, departments, or divisions to create “win-wins”
- Ability to develop a strong leadership team and to delegate authority to streamline policies, processes, and procedures within a complex, evolving, and dynamic environment
- Demonstrated commitment to principles, practices, and outcomes of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Experience working with and engaging diverse staff and the ability to foster an environment that welcomes and respects people from all backgrounds
- Demonstrated competency with prevention measures and effective response to sexual harassment and interpersonal violence, using a trauma-informed approach; a track record of fostering an environment that is safe, inclusive, and equitable for all
- Strong emotional intelligence, combined with nuanced listening and interpersonal communication skills
- Experience managing complex budgets and generating revenue;
- A global lens of public health, and a strong vision for the future of the field with the ability to not only adapt to the changing landscape but define it
- An authentic style coupled with humility, empathy, curiosity, and a sense of humor
TO APPLY

The University of Minnesota School of 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 Alberry - Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller
https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S7-883

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