



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to Discover®

Dean, College of Biological Sciences

Minneapolis–St. Paul, MN

Leadership Profile

The University of Minnesota seeks a collaborative and visionary scholar, leader, and educator to serve as the Dean of the [College of Biological Sciences \(CBS\)](#). The Dean reports to the Executive Vice President and Provost and serves as the chief executive and academic officer of the College. CBS is one of just two colleges nationally focusing exclusively on the biological sciences, and is uniquely situated within a globally-engaged, public land-grant, AAU and R1 public research university that is consistently ranked among the world's most comprehensive and renowned institutions for academic, clinical, and research advancement. (*See Appendix: University of Minnesota-Twin Cities*).

The next Dean will extend the preeminence of CBS in education, research, and public engagement. With field-shaping faculty whose expertise spans from molecules to ecosystems, CBS advances cutting-edge and collaborative research to improve human health and the environment and to prepare today's students to create the biology of tomorrow. The College's multidisciplinary programs include five academic departments, two shared with the UMN Medical School, working alongside 10 closely-affiliated sponsored or cosponsored centers and institutes. The College spans the University's flagship Twin Cities campus in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

CBS offers eight undergraduate majors and six graduate programs, including three rated among the best in the world: ecology, biochemistry, and biotechnology. It includes 114 faculty (plus 44 additional Medical School faculty engaged in shared programs), 222 staff, and 59 postdoctoral researchers (and a total of 77 including postdocs in Medical School shared programs). CBS enrolls 2,323 undergraduate students and 297 graduate students.

In addition to on-campus facilities, the College runs two high-profile field stations—Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories and Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve—as well as the CBS Conservatory & Botanical Collection. CBS also has a strong partnership with the Bell Museum of Natural History. The College has an annual operating budget of \$103 million and has a robust research portfolio including sponsored research expenditures of \$33 million for fiscal year 2022.

The new Dean will provide leadership to advance and strengthen an inclusive and welcoming community where faculty, staff, and students thrive and feel a sense of belonging and shared purpose. The Dean will cultivate a culture of innovation and excellence to ensure that CBS remains on the leading edge in research, defining the future of the biological sciences and enhancing the College's global impact. This includes specifically expanding the College's strength in biotechnology and building new research collaborations with industry partners.

The Dean will champion the unparalleled undergraduate education, pedagogical innovation, and high-quality student experience that distinguish CBS nationally. The Dean will also enhance support

for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, including the cultivation of multifaceted professional development and career opportunities. The Dean will increase philanthropic support and enhance corporate philanthropy. At the core of the Dean's leadership will be a priority commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion to build on work underway across the College.

The Dean is responsible for all areas of strategic, academic, and administrative leadership and oversight for the College. Working collaboratively within CBS and across the University, the Dean will provide leadership to create and sustain a unified vision for the College and to advance its overall quality, reputation, stature, and aspirational goals. As a senior academic administrative leader for the University and as a member of the Twin Cities Deans Council, the Dean also plays a collaborative leadership role in campus-wide academic affairs, working with other institutional leaders and collegiate deans to advance the overall mission and strategic priorities of the University and to develop joint educational and research activities.

The University and College seek a leader with intellectual vision, a collaborative leadership style, experience with strategic and operational leadership, and the ability to inspire CBS to a new level of preeminence. Candidates should have a record of academic leadership, the ability to cultivate consensus, and demonstrated accomplishments in fostering a climate of inclusive excellence. Candidates must have an earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree in the biological sciences or relevant field and a record requisite for an appointment as a tenured full professor at the University.

The University has retained the global executive search firm WittKieffer to assist with this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed as noted at the end of this document.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

In support of CBS's future, the new Dean will focus on the following immediate priorities:

- **Grow the College's research ecosystem**

CBS ranks among the UMN's most research-active colleges as measured by overall percentage of sponsored expenditures. The high productivity of CBS faculty and the quality of their research is evident in program rankings: No. 2 in the world for ecology and environment and No. 14 in biotechnology (2022 Shanghai rankings). In addition, biochemistry is the No. 1 ranked program nationally for NIH funding (Blue Ridge Institute). The Dean will make the continued investment in a robust research ecosystem that supports this level of excellence a top priority.

At the heart of this ecosystem are the 114 highly accomplished CBS faculty, including several members of the National Academy of Sciences. The new Dean will ensure appropriate mentorship and development of early-career and mid-career faculty and the continued success of senior faculty. This includes a strong focus on retaining faculty whose work is attracting national attention and an ongoing investment in areas of excellence to further extend their scholarly impact and influence.

CBS is home to two longstanding field stations that are central to CBS's research excellence and national prominence: the [Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve](#) and the [Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories](#). Both hold special importance to the University and state, providing exceptional

opportunities for high-impact research, education, and public engagement. The Dean will ensure continued investment in these facilities to ensure CBS's preeminence in ecosystem biology.

▪ **Promote and further strengthen collaboration across the University**

CBS enjoys the tremendous advantages of being part of a university with a world-class medical school, health care system, and [health sciences programs](#). Two departments—Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics and Genetics, Cell Biology and Development—are housed in CBS but shared with the Medical School. Two other departments, Microbiology and Neuroscience, are housed in the Medical School but are affiliated with CBS. These shared and interconnected programs leverage faculty expertise and facilitate collaboration among faculty and students. As with any shared departmental structure, there are differences in financial and operational systems that must be navigated successfully to allow each program to flourish. The Dean will cultivate a strong and mutually supportive relationship with the Dean of the Medical School in support of these collaborative programs.

Likewise, CBS has developed strong collaborations with other units including the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) and College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), among others. CBS collaborates with the UMN Bell Museum of Natural History, Minnesota's statewide natural history museum, to provide curatorial expertise and science programming for teaching and outreach programs. The Dean will build strong, sustainable relationships across the University. As an institutional leader, the Dean will contribute to a University-wide culture of interdisciplinary collaboration and excellence in research and education.

▪ **Expand and harness CBS's biotechnology strengths to advance discovery and innovation with statewide, national, and global impact**

The University of Minnesota has a rich biotechnology enterprise that includes involvement of CBS, the Medical School, CFANS, and CSE as well as regional industry and state and federal agencies. The [Biotechnology Institute](#), co-led by CBS in collaboration with CSE, plays a central role in these endeavors. CBS is well positioned to expand its biotechnology influence, building on University-wide excellence and leveraging the burgeoning interest, and increased resources available, in this area.

The University's enhanced support for biotechnology includes the new Microbial Cell Production Facility that allows for a significant expansion of the [Biotechnology Resource Center \(BRC\)](#). One of the few such facilities nationally, the BRC provides expertise and services that attract academic partners and industry clients spanning the fields of agriculture, biofuels, human therapeutics, industrial biotechnology, and veterinary medicine. The BRC's expansion will allow UMN to grow as a key resource in the strong bio-manufacturing ecosystem in Minnesota and across the nation. In its first year, the BRC's expanded capacity returned significant revenue to CBS with a projection of substantial continued growth.

The new Dean will identify and advance opportunities to build new collaborations with industry partners; expand internship, mentorship, and job opportunities for students; and enhance resource development and corporate philanthropy in this area. The recently launched U.S. [National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative](#) will spur significant government and private funding for which CBS is well positioned. The state is a recognized global epicenter for life science

innovation and the Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics, a state-funded initiative, provides support for innovative research conducted by teams from the UMN and the Mayo Clinic.

- **Support and further cultivate diversity, equity, inclusion and justice and a welcoming, inclusive, and engaged College community for all faculty, staff, and students**

The College has fostered collaborative work to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice and ensure a welcoming and inclusive community for students, staff, and faculty—values core to the mission of CBS and the University. College-wide initiatives include a DEIJ Community of Practice, micro-grants program, and an anti-racism work group, aimed at supporting central collegiate efforts, department-level work, and individual advocacy. The Dean will provide vision and leadership to advance these critical efforts.

Relationships throughout the college are highly congenial. People enjoy working together and share mutual pride in their collective and individual successes. The new Dean will cultivate and strengthen the CBS community, providing visible and accessible leadership, engaging regularly with faculty, staff, and students, and promoting shared purpose across departments and programs that span Minneapolis and St. Paul campus locations. The Dean will seek to understand and address the unique needs of each CBS constituent group to ensure their success, enhance belonging, and foster an environment where faculty, staff, and students can thrive.

In today's context of workforce shortages, retention of the College's talented staff is vital. The Dean will appreciate their value as partners in the College's success. The Dean will ensure a college-wide commitment to staff engagement, career growth, and professional development to support the needs and interests of staff and will be attentive to the impact of growth and change on staffing levels and workflows to ensure optimal support for the College's activities.

- **Ensure an outstanding undergraduate education and student experience**

CBS is a top destination for undergraduate students from across the world. Demand for biology majors is higher than ever; enrollment at CBS is on the rise. The College provides undergraduate students with an education centered in active learning and strong student support within a dynamic educational and research community. The summer before their freshman year all undergraduates take part in the College's four-day [Nature of Life](#) program, an immersive experience at the Itasca Biological Field Station and Laboratories that builds community, promotes active learning, and develops the skills that contribute to success in college and beyond. The innovative program continues through a two-year Foundations of Biology curriculum that engages students in hands-on learning and research experiences. The [Dean's Undergraduate Research Program](#) underscores the college's commitment to a robust undergraduate experience. The College's [Department of Biology Teaching and Learning \(BTL\)](#), created in 2014, distinguishes CBS as a leader in biological sciences education, contributing significantly to pedagogical innovation nationally.

CBS's first-year retention rates and four- and six-year graduation rates far exceed those of other colleges at the University. The new Dean will support and invest in CBS's excellence in undergraduate education and research, as well as the delivery of a unique undergraduate experience that attracts top students and enables an increasingly diverse student body to thrive.

▪ **Bolster support for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars**

CBS is home to 297 high-achieving graduate students as well as 59 postdoctoral scholars and researchers who bring distinction to the College as emerging leaders in biological sciences research and education. The Dean will ensure the professional development of graduate students and postdocs and support avenues to help them prepare for careers both within and outside of academia. The Dean will also value the important contributions of graduate students and postdocs to the College's mission and community including vital engagement as teaching assistants for CBS academic programs. With issues such as workload and compensation in the forefront across the country, the Dean must be keenly attuned to the perspectives and concerns of graduate students and postdocs and make addressing them an important part of their agenda. The Dean will ensure that CBS remains a top destination for the strongest graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

▪ **Increase revenue to support College priorities**

With an operating budget of \$103 million for fiscal year 2022 and within the context of the University's resource-centered management (RCM) budget model, CBS is in a strong financial position. CBS benefits from increases in student enrollment, a growing research portfolio, robust philanthropy, and the success of the Biotechnology Resource Center, among other factors. At the same time, CBS has financial pressures including the financial commitment related to the Microbial Cell Production Facility, the ongoing need to invest in research infrastructure, the need to consider increased support for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, and pressure on faculty and staff salaries to remain competitive. Managing and growing the College's revenue while meeting increasing financial demands requires the new Dean to bring an entrepreneurial, creative, and resourceful approach.

In 2021, the College completed a record-breaking campaign that raised more than \$29 million. Over the past seven years, CBS annual fundraising has increased from \$1.2 million to \$4 million. The College's team of eight advancement professionals jointly supported by the UMN Foundation value a strong partnership with the Dean. Following the success of the University's \$4 billion campaign, UMN is planning for its next campaign. The Dean will support robust fundraising, corporate engagement, and alumni relations programs and will lead in identifying CBS priorities and achieving an ambitious fundraising goal.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Candidates must have an earned doctorate in the biological sciences or related discipline from an accredited higher education institution and a distinguished record of teaching, scholarship, and professional service commensurate with appointment as a tenured full professor at the University. In addition, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following qualities and qualifications:

- **Research record:** a record of sponsored research; deep knowledge of the internal and external mechanisms required to sustain and expand a world-class research program.
- **Leadership:** extensive experience as an academic leader—for example, as a department chair, associate dean, institute director, or other senior academic administrator.

- **Collaboration:** the ability to inspire key constituencies to collaborate to achieve the University's priorities and to model a collaborative approach in all areas of their work; the passion for bringing faculty and staff together that may have varying opinions, thoughts, and ideas; a commitment to fostering participatory leadership which supports the development of all employees in an environment of collaboration, accountability, diversity, and respect.
- **Management:** successful experience managing staff and overseeing personnel matters; ability to lead a team, delegating and effecting results through others; a commitment to providing professional development and opportunities for career advancement for staff; the desire to create a work environment that positions individuals and teams to excel and be creative; the ability to make and stand by tough decisions and take risks, coupled with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect.
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion:** demonstrated success in advancing institutional equity, diversity, and inclusion; a history of and commitment to valuing diversity in perspectives; a commitment to experience creating a welcome environment and promoting broad access and equitable opportunities for all faculty, staff and students.
- **Shared governance:** a philosophical perspective of service to others, collaborative and shared governance, and an emphasis on clear, honest, and transparent communication.
- **Faculty recruitment, retention, and development:** demonstrated success in recruiting, hiring and retaining exceptional faculty; a commitment to effective mentorship of faculty at all levels to help shape the current and next generation of collaborative, interdisciplinary leaders.
- **Financial acumen:** proven financial management experience with the ability to ensure transparency around the allocation of resources and budgeting decisions.
- **Interdisciplinary focus:** the desire and ability to support and provide collaborative leadership for work across the varied spheres and disciplines of the College, its unique field stations and centers, its shared and interconnected programs with the Medical School, and many biology-intensive activities within other colleges and schools across the University of Minnesota.
- **Student-centered:** steadfast commitment to a student-centered approach to education, including a focus on post-graduation readiness and career placement across varied spheres.
- **Fundraising and external engagement:** a track record of successfully connecting with potential donors, industry partners, and/or alumni in support of external funding; experience building and sustaining strong external partnerships; the capacity to build a strong external presence and to clearly articulate a vision that will engage others and generate excitement; the ability to connect with the biological sciences community regionally, nationally and internationally.
- **Community and constituent outreach and engagement:** commitment to the land-grant mission of serving the public and engaging with the needs of the state; working with businesses and industry to attract, retain, and develop a talented workforce to address 21st-century challenges in environment, health and wellbeing; and engaging with communities to help define and develop research and education agendas and collaborations.

- **Interpersonal and communication skills:** exceptional relationship building and interpersonal skills; vibrant and persuasive communication skills; the ability to engage faculty, staff, and students to work effectively across the campus and with external groups.
- **Advocacy for biology:** The ability to advocate for the critical importance of biology in addressing critical challenges in Minnesota and the world—communicating this importance to the University, the public, key stakeholders and beyond.
- **Personal qualities:** self-awareness and a high degree of emotional intelligence; optimism and openness to new ideas; persistence and flexibility; a collegial, accessible, and consultative approach; integrity and impeccable judgment.

More about the UMN College of Biological Sciences

For extensive information and data on the College and its students, faculty and research, DEIJ initiatives, outreach/engagement, advancement, and financials, please see the [CBS Annual Report](#).

Additional Links of Interest

- [Academic Departments](#)
- [Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics](#)
- [Biology Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Ecology, Evolution and Behavior](#)
- [Genetics, Cell Biology and Development](#)
- [Plant and Microbial Biology](#)
- [College Leadership](#)
- [Equity and Diversity](#)
- [Research Centers and Institutes](#)
- [Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve](#)
- [Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories](#)
- [CBS Greats](#)

Inquiries, Nominations, and Applications

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited and may be directed in confidence to WittKieffer, which is assisting the University of Minnesota with this search. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#). Consideration of candidates will continue until the position is filled.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed confidentially to:

Suzanne Teer, Jessica Herrington, and Stacey Carbol at MinnesotaDeanCBS@wittkieffer.com.

The University of Minnesota shall provide 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.

Appendix: About the University of Minnesota Twin-Cities

With five campuses located throughout Minnesota—Twin Cities, Duluth, Morris, Crookston, and Rochester—the University of Minnesota is a research university of exceptional breadth and depth. UMN has the special distinction of being a globally engaged R1 and AAU research institution as well as Minnesota’s land-grant university. This combination creates a unique capacity and responsibility to improve the lives of Minnesotans and drive the state forward through education, discovery, and collaboration. 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 metro area, the University consistently has advanced the land-grant mission with exceptional vigor—with a comprehensive commitment to integrating public engagement deeply into teaching and learning, research, and discovery.

With an annual operating budget of \$4.2 billion a year, the University generates an estimated yearly economic impact of \$9 billion for the Minnesota economy. The University enrolls 69,000 students, 55,000 on the flagship Twin Cities campus in the heart of Minneapolis-St. Paul, the 16th largest metropolitan area in the country. A research university of exceptional breadth and depth with expansive interdisciplinary opportunities, the University of Minnesota advances education, research, and outreach across schools and colleges spanning the broad fields of liberal arts; biological sciences; dentistry; design; education and human development; food, agricultural, 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 has over 25,000 faculty and staff and 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.

UMN averages over \$1 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 14th among U.S. public universities, and its faculty and experts are considered some of the best in their respective fields. A dynamic and competitive research environment is supported by the [Office of the Vice President for Research \(OVPR\)](#) through collaborative initiatives, funding opportunities, tech commercialization, and other efforts. (See [Research Statistics](#).) 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 28% Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students and 10% international students (from nearly 150 countries); 24% of all undergraduates are first-generation students. The Twin Cities campus has been recognized nationally within the last five years for excellence in diversity and in global learning, research, and engagement.

The Twin Cities campus is located in a 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, a dynamic Black community, and significant African, 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. Since 2021, the University's Senior Advisor to the President for Indian Affairs has focused 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. UMN faculty and health experts have been influential in helping communities and policymakers address the global public health crisis. And in the summer of 2020, the University of Minnesota community was deeply affected by the murder of George Floyd by officers of the Minneapolis Police Department, with Minneapolis-St. Paul at the epicenter of protests that spread across the globe as the largest demonstration of civil rights activism in a generation.

The UMN has met the unprecedented public health and social justice challenges with resolve and a steadfast commitment to its mission and values as a foremost public research and land-grant university. The reckoning around issues of racial justice opened a larger and continuing discourse about race and equity within the University to further deepen the UMN's commitment to racial equity and social justice; to meaningful reciprocal engagement with local and global communities; and to creating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable University and society. UMN faculty and health experts have as well been influential voices in providing guidance that has helped communities and policymakers address the largest public health crisis the world has faced in a century.

Concurrently, the University completed development of a comprehensive systemwide strategic plan, [MPact 2025](#), to chart a strong course for the future. The plan reflects 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. The University's commitment to equity and diversity is prioritized in the plan, reflecting an institutional acknowledgment that systemic change is necessary and requires action at all levels of the institution.

Campus units have collaborated to develop metrics to measure progress on the plan's goals and action items. With implementation moving forward, 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;
- *MNtersections*—work inspired by Minnesota to improve people and places at world-class levels;
- *Community and Belonging*—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 also recently completed a record \$4.4 billion capital campaign, exceeding an ambitious goal. The systemwide campaign encompassed five central 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. Provost Croson came to UMN from Michigan State University, where she served as Dean of the College of Social Science.