

Director, UAB Gregory Fleming James Cystic Fibrosis Research Center

THE OPPORTUNITY

The University of Alabama at Birmingham Heersink School of Medicine (UAB Heersink SOM) is currently seeking an energetic and innovative executive leader to serve as the next Director of the UAB Gregory Fleming James Cystic Fibrosis Research Center (UAB CFRC)*. This Director will be an outstanding academic leader with a demonstrated track record of success in the research, teaching, clinical and administrative domains. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a progressive and visionary leader to advance a well-established program at a storied institution with significant growth on the horizon.

The mission of the CFRC is to support cutting-edge research in basic science, pathophysiology, therapeutics, translational and precision medicine, clinical implementation, and genetic therapies of cystic fibrosis and related disorders in the US and around the world. A national and international leader in CF research, the UAB CFRC is ideally positioned to tackle some of the field's most emerging challenges and to continue to grow our role as leaders in the fight for the cure and control of CF regionally, nationally, and internationally. The availability of new biomedical tools for the study of CF pathophysiology, host-pathogen interactions, genetics, monitoring and treatment, along with an expanded commitment to implementing the Path to a Cure and coordination with research initiatives by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, has placed the UAB CFRC in a unique position to contribute to the ultimate cure for CF. **We seek a dynamic leader who will lead the CFRC into this exciting new era with energy, vision, and creativity.**

The Gregory Fleming James Cystic Fibrosis Research Center (CFRC) was established in 1981 at UAB as a multidisciplinary Center to study cystic fibrosis (CF) basic research and therapy. Also in 1981, the CF Foundation began an initiative for funding CF research known as the Research Development Program (RDP). The UAB Center was the first to receive RDP support from the Foundation, which now sponsors 10 such Centers in the United States. The Center has since maintained continuous CF Foundation and NIH funding, which has been supplemented by University Wide Interdisciplinary Research Center (UWIRC), endowed Chairs and other funded positions, and other important funding from the University and the State of Alabama. Clinical and translational research have been prominent components, including the notable Center for CFTR Detection, part of our highly successful Therapeutics Development Network clinical research site, a nidus for first in kind human evaluation and device development. The Center also enjoys and benefits from substantial collaboration with Southern Research, including drug discovery initiatives and state-of-the-art preclinical assessments.

Together, this support has fostered the Center's sustained legacy of advancing scientific success in CF, **which was recognized through renewal of NIDDK P30 funding (1 of only 5 Centers selected nationwide)** and RDP funding, and tangibly through our

recent move to a brand new, state-of-the-art research space (10,000 sq. ft.) on campus. Multidisciplinary collaborations across UAB and beyond--cultivated in part by the unique and cutting-edge facilities, techniques, and resources offered through the Center's 6 Cores (Cell Model and Evaluation, Animal and Preclinical Models, Clinical and Translational, Functional Assay, Gene Expression, CFTR Rat Models)--have been fundamental in driving these achievements and are a defining feature of our Center. Additional facilities are available through the greater UAB campus and through Southern Research.

The CF Care Center located at the Children's Hospital of Alabama and UAB Hospital provides state-of-the-art care for approximately 500 CF patients, generating additional partnerships across departments and specialties. Illustrating the contribution of the CFRC to the research enterprise at UAB and the CF community at large, Center members have collectively maintained over \$60M in external funding over the last 5 years, including 18 funded NIH R-grants and 33 funded CF Foundation grants, in addition to R35 and U01 awards.

General Responsibilities

The Director has overall responsibility for the CFRC, directs the Administration Core, chairs the Executive Committee, convenes the Internal and External Advisory Committees, and represents the CFRC to the University, affiliated institutions, and the public. The Director leads the Leadership Team, comprised of the Director, a Co-Director, and six Core Directors funded by our NIH P30 and CFF Research Development Program awards, to guide the strategic planning process, provide scientific leadership, advise Core Directors on scientific direction, foster our culture of training and advancement including administration of education and training activities, and monitor overall progress of the Center. The Director is ultimately responsible for final decisions regarding appointment of Core Directors and resource allocations, guided by input from the Executive Committee and recommendations of the Advisory Committees.

The Director also coordinates with key partners, including the Therapeutics Development Network Clinical Research Sites and its associated Translational Research Committee, the Pediatric and Adult CF Clinical Directors, and key Department and Division partners (i.e. Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Pediatric Pulmonology, Cell Developmental and Integrative Biology, etc.). The Director is responsible for effectively and efficiently managing the resources of the CFRC, and leading efforts to increase funding, maintain and grow space allocation to meet the needs of investigators, and procure other resources for CF-related research within the institution and related partners. Activities of the Director report directly to the Dean of the School of Medicine and the Vice President for Research.

The Director engages in the following activities:

- Develops and conveys a strategic vision for the UAB CFRC
- Provides guidance and scientific direction to Core and Scientific Program leaders
- Convenes and facilitates quarterly Executive Committee meetings and advisory committee meetings as needed
- Facilitates bi-annual External Scientific Advisory Board Meetings; reviews membership and extends invitations to prospective members, as needed
- Works with other faculty who engage in relevant research (for example, NIH-funded science networks with goal to advance research related or adjacent to the mission)
- Actively mentors and develops the next generation of investigators in the field of CF and related research, including administration of internal education and training programs
- Partners with pharmaceutical and biotechnology entities that also seek to advance and develop innovative therapies for people with cystic fibrosis
- Prioritizes opportunities for philanthropy and fundraising through collaboration with the UAB Development team, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and other philanthropic partners
- Represents the CFRC at research symposia and other related meetings
- Engages in community outreach, action, and advocacy on all levels (faculty, patients, community, students)
- Participates in the Council of Center Directors and Dean's Executive Committee to assure representation of CF-related research missions

Candidate Profile

The new Director will possess the following qualifications:

- Nationally and Internationally recognized researcher with a proven track record of independent, federally-funded, CF research and high impact publications in the field of cystic fibrosis and related airway diseases
- Credentials to support a UAB appointment at the Associate Professor or Professor level
- Extensive experience working with NIH
- Experience with Program Project grants and Center grants
- MD, MD/PhD or PhD degree in relevant field; understanding of the evolving cystic fibrosis clinical context is required; interest in related conditions adjacent to CF is considered a major positive

- An institutional leader; someone capable of embracing both a Center and Institutional leadership role and can take both points of view
- An agile thinker capable of navigating a complex and multifaceted campus environment
- An excellent communicator and listener with the leadership presence to unite and inspire a diverse group of faculty and staff around a clearly articulated vision
- An innovative and progressive leader who thinks “outside the box” and challenging the *status quo* for strategies to achieve growth in a changing research environment
- Commitment to enhancing diversity in CFRC membership and leadership and to advancing underrepresented minorities in the field of CF research, including potential patient participants
- Excellent leadership and management skills and experience
- Collaborative, interdisciplinary mindset, team-oriented
- A systems-thinker and an integrator
- A leader with high emotional intelligence and good interpersonal skills; someone who embodies UAB and CFRC core values and characteristics
- Contributions in scholarship and research, community advocacy, teaching and service (e.g. mentoring, recruitment, community action, research on issues related to diversity, social inequalities and social justice) that shows a commitment to diversity and equal opportunity.

THE INSTITUTION

The UAB Heersink SOM** is a multi-campus medical school with its main campus in Birmingham and three regional campuses in Huntsville, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa. With more than 1,700 full-time faculty and almost 2,000 medical and graduate students, the Heersink SOM ranks 21st nationally in NIH research funding and in the top 8 for all public institutions. Three departments within the Heersink SOM are ranked in the top 10 for NIH funding in 2021: Dermatology - #2; Microbiology - #9; Biomedical Engineering - #10.

UAB currently is experiencing major and sustained investment and growth, due to both its exceptional research faculty and its culture of collaboration. UAB, through concerted and strategic investments in its clinical and research enterprise, has undergone an amazing transformation in the past five years and has strengthened its status and reputation as a leader in medical training, biomedical discovery, innovation, and patient care.

UAB has been named the Best Large Employer by Forbes in 2021 and is ranked #4 for diversity. Driven by an intensely collaborative and entrepreneurial character, UAB is one of the leading economic engines of the State, with a nearly \$4 billion budget and a statewide economic impact exceeding \$7 billion annually. UAB is Alabama's largest employer with more than 23,000 employees; it supports more than 64,000 jobs statewide. UAB received nearly \$849 million in research grants and extramural awards for the 12-month period ending Sept. 30, 2021.

UAB is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer committed to fostering a diverse, equitable and family-friendly environment in which all faculty and staff can excel and achieve work/life balance irrespective of, race, national origin, age, genetic or family medical history, gender, faith, gender identity and expression as well as sexual orientation. UAB also encourages applications from individuals with disabilities and veterans.

UAB Heersink SOM is located in Birmingham, Alabama***. Relocation to the Birmingham area is required for this role.

TO APPLY

The UAB Heersink SOM welcomes inquiries, nominations, and applications. To receive full consideration, interested individuals should electronically submit a Curriculum Vitae, a letter of interest, and a diversity statement.

The letter of interest is a brief cover letter detailing your experience and key achievements related to this position and your thoughts on how you see yourself contributing to the programs and responsibilities described in this position specification. Statements of diversity should outline your efforts/experience at promoting diversity and inclusive excellence. Letters should be addressed to the UAB CFRC Search Committee and submitted electronically.

Materials will be reviewed immediately and will continue to be reviewed until the positions are filled. **All inquiries should be emailed to Josh Carter, Ph.D., Executive Director for Heersink SOM Strategic Leadership Recruitment at mcarter1@uab.edu.**

For a more detailed position announcement and to apply, please visit:
<https://uab.peopleadmin.com/postings/11239>

*For more information about the UAB CFRC, please visit:
<https://www.uab.edu/medicine/cysticfibrosis/>

**For more information about UAB Heersink SOM, please visit:
<https://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/>

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<https://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/about/birmingham>