

Position and Candidate Specification



University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Chair, Department of Ophthalmology

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About the Organization

Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO

The University at Buffalo (UB) is one of two flagship campuses in the State University of New York (SUNY) system and is its largest and most comprehensive research university. An R1 institution, UB was also among the first public universities in the Northeast and the first SUNY school to join the Association of American Universities (AAU) when it was admitted in 1989. The University is a major employer and economic driver regionally and across New York State. With \$250 million in federally funded research today, the University aims to double this number by FY2030. Growing research is at the center of UB's push to join the ranks of the top 25 public research universities. UB is also in the midst of a transformational hiring initiative that will bring at least 180 new tenure-track faculty members to campus in the next two years.

The University at Buffalo is home to a robust health sciences campus including the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, the School of Dental Medicine, the School of Public Health and Health Professions, the School of Nursing, and the School of Social Work.

Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

As a leading public medical school in New York State, the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (Jacobs School) has been consistently recognized for producing high quality doctors and researchers who are committed to serving the people of Western New York and creating a healthier society. As a flagship SUNY system, UB is a popular destination for New York residents seeking a medical degree, with over 80% of graduates choosing to stay in the state to practice medicine after graduation.

Education

The Jacobs School offers a broad array of education options from undergraduate programs to postdoctoral training. After years of planning, the Jacobs School's new curriculum, "Well Beyond", goes into effect July 2024. The new curriculum integrates five core pillars: foundational sciences, clinical sciences, health systems science, medical humanities, and scientific literacy and inquiry.

Research

As the research engine for UB, the Jacobs School accounts for 36 percent of research expenditure for the University. In 2023, the Jacobs School achieved \$74 million in awards with 177 new grants. A \$4 million investment from UB will boost age-related research and provide seed funding for new interdisciplinary projects. Jacobs School faculty authored or co-authored 755 peer-reviewed publications in 2023.

Clinical

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- Kaleida Health: For more than 165 years, Kaleida Health has been providing quality care to the communities comprising the eight counties of Western New York. Kaleida comprises five hospitals and is a major teaching affiliate of the University at Buffalo. Kaleida Health is comprised of the following:
 - Buffalo General Medical Center and Gates Vascular Institute - Located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Buffalo General Medical Center has 484 beds and offers a wide spectrum of clinical inpatient and outpatient treatment programs.
 - Oishei Children's Hospital - 197 bed regional center for comprehensive and state-of-the-art pediatric, neonatal, perinatal and obstetrical services in Western New York and beyond.
 - Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital - 265 bed community hospital
 - Olean General Hospital - 186 bed community hospital
 - Bradford regional Medical Center - 50 bed community hospital
- Erie County Medical Center - 583-bed medical center is one of the area's leading health care providers. It serves as a regional center for trauma, head and neck, burns, behavioral health, rehabilitation and kidney care.
- Buffalo VA Medical Center - 100-bed, 1.4 million-square-foot facility provides medical, surgical, mental health, long term and outpatient care.
- Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center - The only comprehensive cancer center designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Upstate New York, and one of only four NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers in all of New York. In the past year, Roswell Park teams cared for more than 46,000 patients.
- Catholic Health - Formed in 1998 under four religious sponsors, Catholic Health in Buffalo, NY is a non-profit healthcare system that provides care to Western New Yorkers across a network of hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies, physician practices, and other community-based ministries.

With 630+ physicians, UBMD Physicians Group is the largest multi-specialty group in western New York. The practice plan has 61 offices and 92 specialties and sees more than 490,000 unique patient visits annually through more than 850,000 patient visits.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Community engagement is at the heart of the Jacobs School's mission as identified in its strategic plan. It is integral to building strong academic partnerships, fostering trust, and equipping the community with the resources they need to succeed. One of the school's primary missions is to increase the diversity of both the student body and the faculty. This is essential to creating a pathway for the future of medicine. It is important that community leaders view the Jacobs School as a partner. Health care is part of the community; the Jacobs School is more than just a building with students, it is a gateway to support and grow community partnerships and improve the health of the region.

The Jacobs school is working to create an inclusive community and tackle health disparities through unique partnerships, research, and special events. Among these in the last year were the annual Igniting Hope Conference, the Social Justice Fellowship Research Symposium, the Beyond the Knife endowed lectureship, the inaugural LGBTQIA+ Education and Inclusivity in Health Care event, and Western New York's first Reproductive Justice Conference.

KEY JACOBS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES FACTS

- 630+ faculty members practice with UBMD and see 490,000+ patients annually
- 850+ resident and fellows
- Involved in 300+ clinical trials
- \$21.7M CTSA grant
- \$74M in research funding (177+ grants) in 2023
- MD-PhD program, established in 1982 with 113 alumni currently supporting four trainees per year.
- Recently revised and innovative medical curriculum for the 2024 academic year.

Department of Ophthalmology

The Department of Ophthalmology, headquartered at the Ira G. Ross Eye Institute, is committed to achieving the highest standards in education, research, and patient care, with the overarching goal of advancing the field of ophthalmology and providing outstanding care for the region. The Department's mission centers on the preservation of sight through excellence in these core areas.

Comprising highly skilled ophthalmologists and professional staff, the Department provides a comprehensive range of medical and surgical management for both routine and complex eye disorders. Specialized services include cornea and external disease, neuro-ophthalmology, oculoplastic surgery, ophthalmic pathology, pediatric ophthalmology, glaucoma, and retina and vitreous disorders. Medical residents and fellows receive training under the close supervision of experienced faculty physicians, ensuring a solid foundation in both clinical practice and advanced ophthalmic techniques.

The primary mission of the Department includes the clinical and surgical training of physicians, research and development in ophthalmology, and the provision of high-quality tertiary eye care to the people of Western New York. To fulfill this mission, the Department comprises 31 faculty members, including a core group of fellowship-trained, full-time clinical faculty and research scientists, supplemented by a dedicated group of volunteer faculty. In the clinics, as well as in laboratories on the University at Buffalo campus, dedicated researchers work to provide new knowledge that will eventually lead to advances in patient care.

The Department of Ophthalmology is committed to an inclusive and respectful environment as demonstrated by its commitment to recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students, delivery of quality patient care for diverse populations, and implementation of research to reduce health disparities.

Clinical Care at Ira G. Ross Eye Institute

The Department of Ophthalmology is headquartered at The Ira G. Ross Eye Institute (the Institute), a world-class center of excellence for eye and vision care and research. The institute serves over 61,000 patients each year, addressing the loss of vision due to health issues, disease, or injury. Unlike other eye care providers, the Institute places a strong emphasis on education for both patients and healthcare professionals. As the only university-affiliated vision care practice in Western New York, it collaborates with University at Buffalo students to ensure access to the latest information and advancements in eye care technologies.

The Institute's team of ophthalmologists and vision care experts offers a comprehensive range of medical and surgical services, addressing various conditions from routine eye care to complex cases. By employing state-of-the-art technologies and innovative techniques, the Ross Eye Institute enhances patient outcomes and quality of

care. The mission of the Ross Eye Institute is to provide excellent patient vision care, promote community and medical education, and encourage high-impact research.

Ross physicians and staff provide routine vision care in addition to treating the most severe vision and eye problems. Physicians treat all medical and surgical diseases of the eye:

- Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
- Amblyopia (lazy eye)
- Astigmatism
- Cataracts
- Comprehensive Eye Care
- Cornea
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Dry Eye
- Electrophysiology Testing
- Eye Infections & Inflammation
- Genetic Eye Conditions
- Glaucoma
- Hyperopia (farsightedness)
- Myopia (nearsightedness)
- Ocular Pathology
- Optometry
- Orthoptics
- Pediatric Eye Care & Conditions
- Plastic Surgery
- Refractive Surgery
- Retina Vitreous Surgery
- Retinal Diseases (Inherited, Retinitis & Vitreoretinal Diseases)
- Strabismus (crossed eyes)

Ross Eye Institute has 3 locations in the Buffalo–Niagara Falls metropolitan area: Buffalo, Amherst, and Orchard Park.

Education

The Department of Ophthalmology offers a four-year residency program that equips trainees with the necessary skills for a successful career in ophthalmology. The residency program currently has a total of nine residents enrolled.

The Department also houses the Orthoptic Program, which is fully accredited by the American Orthoptic Council. This two-year course of study provides rigorous training, allowing graduates to earn a Certificate of Completion and qualify for national board examinations.

Research

The Department of Ophthalmology has secured more than \$16 million in research funding over the past five years. In 2024, the Department ranked 38th in NIH funding among 65 ophthalmology programs in the U.S. Key funding sources include the NIH, the VA, private institutions, and industry sponsors.

The Department's research programs are continuously expanding, focusing on groundbreaking studies in areas such as gene therapy and structural biology. The Vision Research Center, part of the Ira G. Ross Eye Institute, is committed to excellence in research, medical education, and healthcare. This center focuses on developing sight-preserving treatments for conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma, aiming to reduce visual impairment and enhance the quality of life for individuals of all ages.

The Department is supported by nine dedicated research faculty who work collaboratively with scientists from multiple universities and participate in partnerships with domestic and international private research institutes and pharmaceutical companies. Additionally, the Department engages in partnerships through the SUNY Eye Institute, a consortium aimed at advancing eye research.

Position Summary

Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

The Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences is seeking an academic ophthalmologist with unique vision, enthusiasm, and experience for the position of Chair of Ophthalmology (the Chair). The Chair will be responsible for ensuring excellence in the department's educational, scientific, and clinical programs while overseeing overall operations and strategic direction. In this pivotal role, the Chair will enhance the department's clinical mission by increasing patient volumes, promoting coordinated care, and driving ambulatory growth, all while maintaining high standards in educational and scientific initiatives. This is an opportunity to shape the clinical landscape and expand the research enterprise, building on the department's history of research success and enhancing its reputation for quality and innovation. This position offers an exciting opportunity to elevate the standard of care and redefine the future of ophthalmology in western New York.

As part of the University at Buffalo's initiative to recruit 180 new tenure-track faculty members, the new Chair will have a significant impact on both departmental and university-wide goals. The ideal candidate will be a clinically active leader with a strong background in program building and a proven track record in administration, financial management, clinical leadership, research, education, and community engagement.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to Allison Brashear, M.D., M.B.A., Vice President for Health Sciences and Dean, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Direct reports Department Faculty and Staff

Other key relationships Basic Science and Clinical Department Chairs
Institute and Center Leaders
Partner Health System Leadership
Jacobs School Leadership
Faculty, students, and staff
Donors, community leaders, patients, families

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide visionary and innovative leadership to lead the Department into its next phase of growth and development with the aim of achieving superior clinical, research, and academic programs.
- Work closely and collaboratively with Jacobs School leadership to build, grow, and integrate areas of acknowledged clinical excellence with outstanding outcomes and patient satisfaction; expand clinical programs to provide appropriate access to care and reduce patient backlog.
- Collaborate with other department, center, and institute leaders to maintain, build, and strengthen joint clinical, research, and academic programs.
- Assure delivery of excellent clinical education and advanced training to medical students, graduate students, residents, and postdoctoral fellows.

- Define and lead the Department's research strategy to build upon and enhance the existing culture of scientific success. Recruit and support principal investigators and faculty to secure NIH funding and explore other federal sources such as PCORI and DOD, while expanding foundation and industry-funded clinical trials in alignment with departmental research priorities. Ensure targeted investments in research activities that promote excellence within the Department and support collaborative research efforts at the University at Buffalo and throughout the region.
- Supervise, prepare, implement, and monitor the Department budget that encompasses all funding sources and ensures compliance with grant, legislative, and institutional guidelines.
- Expand the access to ophthalmologic services across western NY and build a robust ophthalmology practice plan
- Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding faculty and staff to support Department activities. Ensure an atmosphere of support and development for all contributors and help create succession plans for individual faculty, while ensuring strategic personnel planning for the Department.
- Provide leadership in enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion and promote cultural competence within all aspects of the Department and university.
- Require ethical medical and financial practices across the Department. Support compliance activities as necessary.
- Partner with the Dean's office to cultivate philanthropic support.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A comprehensive and relevant strategic direction for the Department.
- A strengthened and unified Department, supported by the recruitment of top talent into open positions and optimized performance of the existing team.
- A clear promotion and advancement of the Department's tripartite mission reflected in every interaction, decision, and initiative.
- An inclusive Department that fosters a diverse and supportive environment.
- Increased clinical volumes driven by thorough analysis and evaluation of opportunities for growth.
- Enhanced research and clinical collaborations with other departments at UB, resulting in strengthened interdisciplinary partnerships.

The position of Chair requires a dynamic, passionate, and capable physician with accomplishments across the spectrum of program leadership. Candidates should hold or be eligible for promotion to the academic rank of professor and licensed or eligible for medical licensure in New York. Qualified candidates will be selected from a pool reflecting defined diversity, broadly defined.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Academic Leadership

Service as a chair, vice chair, division chief, or in a similar executive role with a record of developing clinical and scholastic programs, advancing the careers and achievement of faculty and staff, and leading the educational activities of students, residents, and fellows.

Clinical Operations Management

Success managing complex clinical programs focused on access, quality, patient satisfaction, and support of faculty and staff; financial understanding of clinical operations within a complex academic medical center is desirable.

Personal Scholarship and Work in Support of Others

A record of superior academic accomplishments as reflected in publications, research funding, and national and international society service; personal scholarship should meet the requirements for UB faculty appointment at the professor level. Demonstrated contributions to research success, including a record of successful scientific mentorship, is expected.

National and International Service

Visibility, leadership, and positive reputation in applicable societies and associations.

M.D. Degree and Board Certification in Ophthalmology

Additional degrees are considered additive and highly desirable.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Collaborating and Influencing

The next Chair will note the importance of building strong relationships in UB's multi-stakeholder environment and will position the Department as a major contributor within the overall institution and external community by:

- Seeking to broaden the Department's academic impact and maximizing activity with university, school, and health partners.
- Creating or contributing to interdisciplinary initiatives in support of the clinical mission.
- Demonstrating emotional intelligence and modeling integrity, honesty, and a spirit of contribution to the overall enterprise.

- Leveraging opportunities to build external relationships that will expand the scale, scope, and influence of the Department and contributions to the communities served by UB.

Strategic Vision

The successful candidate must possess vision and the requisite leadership skills to build and develop a nationally acclaimed department for UB. They will demonstrate this through:

- A strong and impassioned vision for building excellence in all aspects of the mission and an ability to translate broad strategies into clear, specific objectives and plans.
- An understanding of and appreciation for current trends in the field of ophthalmology and the implications this has for the successful academic department.
- A commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the institution.

Leading People

The incoming Chair should possess the requisite leadership skills to take a well-performing department to the next level of academic and clinical excellence. The Chair will demonstrate an ability to build and lead cohesive, high-performing teams focused on achieving optimal quality and outcomes across patient care, education, and research by:

- Demonstrating an understanding of current trends in ophthalmology and the implications for all elements of UB's institutional offerings.
- Establishing metrics-based performance goals for individuals, divisions, and other units.
- Reviewing the Department's vision, plans, and activities and adjusting to meet the expectations of academic and clinical partners and institutional goals.

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Experienced and self-confident, yet humble, professional with superior interpersonal skills who enjoys working with colleagues at all levels of the organization.
- Strong communicator with a commitment to transparency and collaborative decision making.
- Ability to build consensus and inspire the best in others.
- Highly collaborative with a record of developing and implementing innovative solutions to complex problems.
- Impeccable integrity, principles, and personal and professional values.
- Strong team player with the enthusiasm to lead with influence and work in a highly matrixed environment.
- Builder of trust, credibility, and support for leaders and staff across UB.

FOR CANDIDATES

The executive search firm Spencer Stuart has been retained to assist in this recruitment. Flip Jaeger and Shannon Yeatman of Spencer Stuart are lead consultants on the search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited and should be submitted to search team member Christian Myers, at chmyers@spencerstuart.com.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE SPENCER STUART TEAM:

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