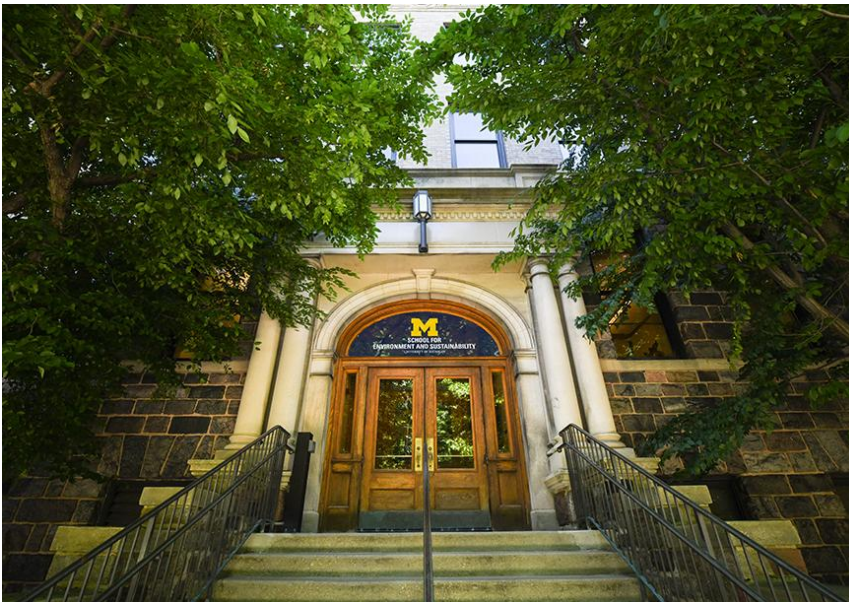


## Position and Candidate Specification



University of Michigan

### Dean, School for Environment and Sustainability



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## ABOUT THE SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The [School for Environment and Sustainability](#) (SEAS) is the University of Michigan's interdisciplinary hub for environmental research, education, and engagement, focused on advancing solutions to complex global sustainability challenges through the integration of science, policy, and practice. Founded in 1927 as the School of Forestry and Conservation, SEAS has evolved into a graduate-focused school with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary scholarship and real-world impact. Today, SEAS brings together internationally recognized faculty and practitioners who work across a range of areas, including environmental justice, environmental policy and planning, ecosystem science and management, behavior, education, and communication, geospatial data sciences, sustainable systems, landscape architecture, and sustainability and development, supported by extensive research activity, cross-campus collaboration, and engagement with communities and partners. The school distinguishes itself through its integration of research, teaching, and applied engagement, its broad portfolio of specialized graduate programs, a large [interdisciplinary undergraduate program](#), and its longstanding commitment to preparing leaders equipped to address the most pressing climate, conservation, and sustainability challenges that the world faces today.

## THE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The next Dean of SEAS will guide the school into a period of significant opportunity for expanded impact. SEAS is a global leader in sustainability and environmental education and research, as well as one of the University of Michigan's most distinctive and mission-driven schools dedicated to making a difference in the world. With a compelling blend of interdisciplinary strength, a deeply held commitment to environmental justice, a culture of innovation, collegiality, and shared purpose, and a proven ability to translate research into real-world impact, SEAS is poised to have an outsized impact at a moment when leadership in sustainability and environmental inquiry is more important than ever before. Further, the next Dean will have the opportunity to leverage the breadth of the University's exceptional educational and research enterprises and expansive sustainability ecosystem, ensuring that SEAS is both a leader and a sought-after collaborator and partner across a range of disciplines and contexts.

While the next Dean will be tasked with navigating a period of transition marked by financial and enrollment pressures, shifts in federal funding, and evolving student and workforce expectations, there is a clear call for a leader who can harness SEAS' intellectual breadth and institutional positioning to articulate a compelling value proposition for the future of the school. The next Dean must balance near-term operational discipline, including resource allocation, enrollment strategy, and program evolution, with longer-term opportunities to expand philanthropic support, enhance student outcomes, and build more cohesive structures across programs, centers, and campus partnerships. Ultimately, this is an opportunity to lead an exceptional and distinguished school forward at a critical moment, preserving its core strengths while advancing a forward-looking vision that elevates its impact both within the University of Michigan and across the global sustainability landscape.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reports to              | Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Direct reports          | Assistant Dean<br>Associate Dean, Academic Affairs<br>Associate Dean, Research and Engagement<br>Chief Administrative Officer<br>Director, Climate Action Engagement<br>Director, Community Impact and Engagement<br>Director, Program in the Environment<br>Executive Director, Communications, Marketing, and Outreach<br>Executive Director, Development and Alumni Relations<br>Faculty Liaison, Community Impact and Engagement (2)<br>Directors of various <a href="#">centers and institutes</a> |
| Other key relationships | Deans of the University's other 18 <a href="#">schools and colleges</a><br>Vice President, Research and Innovation<br>Associate Vice President, Campus Sustainability<br>Vice Provost, Sustainability<br>Director, Graham Sustainability Institute                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT DEAN

- **Develop a clear and compelling vision for the future** together with the SEAS community that guides decision-making, aligns stakeholders, and reinforces its distinct role within the broader University ecosystem and sustainability landscape.
- Advance **excellence across education, research, and impact**, further strengthening SEAS' position as a leading environmental and sustainability school and sustaining top-tier research while delivering an exceptional student experience and meaningful societal impact.
- Evolve and **foster innovation in SEAS' academic portfolio** to meet changing student expectations, workforce needs, and emerging areas of environmental and sustainability practice.
- Continue to develop a **cohesive and transparent culture of communication within SEAS**, ensuring that faculty, students, and staff are united by a shared sense of purpose and feel supported by leadership.
- Ensure that SEAS continues to **operate from a position of financial strength**, supporting sustained enrollment, developing an increasingly diversified mix of revenue sources and research funding, and exercising disciplined resource allocation that enables investment in strategic priorities.

- Expand the reach of SEAS' **fundraising and philanthropic engagement** to support the School's aspirations and future goals of increased impact and growth.
- Reinforce and advance SEAS' positioning as a **premier collaborator and partner-of-choice** with the University of Michigan's robust ecosystem of sustainability efforts and initiatives.
- **Elevate the institutional narrative of SEAS**, effectively leveraging the school's distinctive character and commitment to environmental justice, interdisciplinary scholarship, and societal impact to articulate a compelling value proposition that strengthens faculty recruitment, enrollment growth, and broader visibility.
- **Leverage and strengthen SEAS' distinct assets and place-based opportunities**, including Saginaw Forest, Stinchfield Woods, and other environmentally focused [properties and facilities](#) across the University, both within SEAS and in partnership with other units.
- **Strengthen and expand opportunities for external engagement** that lead to real-world impact and respond to pressing societal needs.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Ideal candidates will demonstrate many of the following professional qualifications and experiences:

- An **outstanding and distinguished record of academic achievement** in sustainability, environmental studies, or a relevant field, with scholarly standing commensurate with a tenured appointment as a full professor within SEAS.
- A track **record of success as an effective administrator and faculty leader**, with management and budgetary oversight experience in a complex academic and/or research organization.
- The **capacity to collaborate and partner** effectively across the breadth of the University.
- The ability to **listen and communicate transparently** across a broad range of stakeholders and constituents, with demonstrated experience engaging with faculty governance.
- A deep and **unwavering commitment to the University of Michigan's core values** of integrity, respect, inclusion, equity, diversity, and innovation.
- The ability to serve as a **compelling representative and spokesperson** for SEAS, with the communication and interpersonal skills required to act as an **effective and engaging fundraiser** to secure philanthropic support from a variety of sources.

## CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

### Strategic Vision and Change Management

Lead committed and diverse constituencies to ever-higher levels of achievement and contribute to SEAS' overall excellence by:

- Leading the development of a compelling, forward-looking vision for the School and serving as a strategic thinker who understands the challenges facing institutions of higher education and can effectively and thoughtfully lead through change.
- Providing opportunities to innovate within SEAS' educational and research missions, strengthening the school's capacity to address critical environmental challenges, and providing a transformative educational experience.
- Understanding the challenges and opportunities facing each of the programs and units that comprise SEAS, demonstrating strong financial and operational acumen, and appropriately balancing resources and attention across the School.

## Institutional Representation

As the key spokesperson and chief advocate for SEAS, the Dean must build relationships with a range of internal and external constituencies by:

- Serving as a committed University citizen and willing collaborator with fellow Deans, the Provost, the President, other University leaders, and faculty in promoting the University's educational and research missions.
- Energetically representing SEAS to alumni and other internal and external constituencies in support of development activities in partnership with the development team, school faculty, and University of Michigan leaders.
- Working in close partnership with key sustainability-focused leaders across the breadth of the University of Michigan to ensure that SEAS is seen as an exceptional collaborator and partner-of-choice in relevant efforts and initiatives.

## Inclusive and Values-Centered Leadership

In a mission- and values-driven context, the Dean will build consensus and support for strategic priorities and initiatives by:

- Serving as the intellectual leader of SEAS, setting a high bar for the quality and impact of the faculty, and displaying the highest aspirations in advancing the educational, research, and engagement missions of SEAS.
- Supporting the University of Michigan's core values of integrity, respect, inclusion, equity, diversity, and innovation through visible, vocal, and proactive leadership.
- Mentoring and supporting the development of the School's faculty, students, and staff.
- Setting clear goals and advancing a culture that celebrates positive change and experimentation, engaging people through the distinct identity and character of SEAS.

## OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Collaborative and relationship-oriented, with the inclination to work across disciplines, programs, and units; a connector.
- An exceptional communicator, with a commitment to transparency and the willingness to engage directly across the range of the SEAS community.
- A visible, accessible leader who is present within the School, is perceived as approachable, and is actively engaged with faculty, students, and staff.
- The ability to bring together a diverse, interdisciplinary community and foster a sense of shared purpose.
- High EQ; leads with humility, listens carefully, and operates in a collegial, inclusive manner.
- Demonstrates the highest level of personal and professional integrity.

The University of Michigan has a long and distinguished history dedicated to public service and engagement. The University was founded in 1817, 20 years before the territory became a state and 45 years before the Morrill Act of 1862 established the modern, public land-grant University system. It was one of the first public universities in the nation, and throughout its over 200-year history, it has maintained the highest levels of distinction in education, scholarship, and research while remaining broadly accessible to a range of students.

The University combines a scale that exceeds all but a handful of American universities, with a level of scholarly excellence that is equally rare. It consistently ranks among the top three U.S. public universities, and with over 68,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students on three campuses, the breadth and scale of intellectual strength are something that few public or private institutions can match. Its \$2.1 billion in research and development activity leads all but one of America's public universities and is fourth in the nation among all universities.

University of Michigan is one of the state's largest employers, with 55,000 employees. The Ann Arbor campus draws an exceptional student body, in-state, nationally, and globally, attracting over 109,000 undergraduate applicants annually in recent years. Its athletic teams produce Olympians and win national championships with great regularity. It has 710,000 loyal and committed alumni, whose generosity is a source of pride for the University, as well as its philanthropic success.

University of Michigan launched the \$7 billion Look to Michigan campaign in 2024, following up on the highly successful Victors for Michigan campaign that raised \$5.3 billion. The Look to Michigan campaign priorities align with the University's Look to Michigan vision and Campus Plan 2050 (described below), supporting the future of the University in its mission to serve the public good. Specific priority areas include support for life-changing education; health and well-being; democracy, civic, and global engagement; and sustainability and climate action. The endowment now stands at more than \$21 billion, placing Michigan among a very small set of institutions that are as highly endowed.

The University of Michigan recently engaged in an inclusive planning process to realize the future of the Ann Arbor physical campus, Campus Plan 2050. Through this strategic visioning process, the University is actively working to define how it will evolve in the coming years and how the campus' physical spaces and places should be designed to support the University's mission and vision. Aligned with the Campus Plan 2050, the University is also charting a pathway to meet its commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2040. The University is making ambitious, multifaceted progress—advancing climate action through innovative operations, community partnerships, applied research, campus involvement, and sustainable investments.

## **University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Campus**

University of Michigan's flagship campus in Ann Arbor includes more than 3,200 tenured and tenure-track faculty; nearly 5,300 additional academic personnel; and more than 53,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

Nearly 11,500 students live in the Ann Arbor campus housing. Student life takes advantage of the many green spaces, recreational areas, and study spaces found throughout campus, as well as the many clubs, organizations, fraternities, and sororities. Big Ten athletics provides an opportunity for students to cheer on the Wolverines playing on any of the 29 varsity sports teams. University of Michigan is known for having the largest football stadium in the country, known as The Big House. It brings University of Michigan students, alumni, and Ann Arbor community members together throughout the season.

Ann Arbor is widely recognized as one of the best college towns in America, and the area boasts exceptional scenery, arts, culture, and industry. The Detroit airport is easily accessible for travel. In and around Ann Arbor, there are plenty of sites to explore, as well as scenic strolls along the Huron River or spots where locals can be found kayaking, snowshoeing, and biking when they aren't attending a University of Michigan athletic event.

### **Academic Affairs Leadership**

Dr. Laurie McCauley serves as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan, one of the world's leading public research universities and a global center of education, research, creativity, and public impact.

As the University's chief academic officer, Provost McCauley works closely with the Deans of Michigan's 19 schools and colleges to advance academic excellence, support scholarship and discovery, and position the University to address the most consequential challenges facing society. She is deeply committed to creating the conditions in which academic leaders, faculty, staff, and students can do their most ambitious and meaningful work.

Provost McCauley has led the development and implementation of Look to Michigan, the University of Michigan's strategic vision for the future, in partnership with U-M's other two executive vice presidents. During her time as provost, she has strengthened institutional leadership in undergraduate education, sustainability and climate action, and access and opportunity.

As members of the University's academic leadership team, Deans, vice provosts, and directors are entrusted with shaping the future of their disciplines, fostering intellectual communities of distinction, advancing research and creative practice, and preparing the next generation of leaders and citizens. Provost McCauley views the relationship between the provost and leaders in Academic Affairs as a collaborative partnership grounded in shared purpose, academic excellence, and institutional ambition.

Before her appointment as Provost, Dr. McCauley served as Dean of the School of Dentistry, where she led major investments in academic programs and facilities, championed efforts to reduce student debt, and oversaw a \$142 million expansion and renovation of the school's clinical and educational spaces.

A distinguished scholar and educator, Provost McCauley is the William K. and Mary Anne Najjar Professor of Periodontics in the School of Dentistry and professor of pathology in the Medical School. She joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1992 and has maintained an active National Institutes of Health-funded research program for more than 30 years. Among her accolades are membership in the National Academy of



Medicine, fellowship in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Distinguished leadership awards from multiple professional organizations.

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## **THE SEARCH PROCESS**

The University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability is eager to receive input to help identify and attract a diverse pool of talented candidates. To that end, the Search Committee welcomes your comments, inquiries, applications, and nominations, which may be submitted via email with supporting materials to: [UMSEASDean@SpencerStuart.com](mailto:UMSEASDean@SpencerStuart.com).