



Dean

A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

THE SEARCH

The University of Michigan, one of the world's leading public research universities, invites applications and nominations for the next dean of the A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning (Taubman College). This person will have the opportunity to lead an influential college at a moment when the disciplines of architecture and urban planning are being shaped by technological transformation, climate change, and shifting global development patterns.

Taubman College occupies a powerful position as a design and planning school embedded in a university of exceptional scale and resources, with direct engagement in the Great Lakes region and in the dynamic urban context of Detroit, as well as nationally and internationally. Taubman College maintains core programs in architecture and urban and regional planning that anchor its reputation, and has recently built momentum with its urban technology degrees, which will also expand the College's presence in Detroit. Taubman College provides opportunities for interdisciplinarity, agility, and close faculty-student engagement within the context of the University of Michigan's access to research infrastructure and cross-campus collaboration.

The next dean will sharpen Taubman College's identity in an increasingly competitive global landscape. They will leverage the College's unique assets to increase recognition by prospective students, faculty, and partners, and build upon the College's position as a leading voice shaping the future of the built environment. The dean must navigate shifting enrollment dynamics while building financial resilience and deepening both internal cohesion and external partnerships. The successful candidate will bring credibility in scholarship and practice and will provide decisive leadership in a complex academic environment. They will be energized by the opportunity to shape a college with significant potential to contribute solutions to the urgent challenges facing the built environment today.

The University of Michigan has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. A list of the qualifications and characteristics desired, as well as instructions for submitting applications and inquiries, can be found at the conclusion of this document.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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 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 is 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

U-M 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.

U-M 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 the 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

U-M'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 provide an opportunity for students to cheer on the Wolverines playing on any of the 29 varsity sports teams. U-M has the largest football stadium in the country, known as The Big House. It brings U-M 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 U-M 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.

A. ALFRED TAUBMAN COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING

Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, one of the University's 19 schools and colleges, [traces its roots](#) to the early 20th century, when U-M was among the first universities in the United States to offer a formal degree in architecture. Today, the College shapes education, research, and design in pursuit of a more beautiful, inclusive, sustainable, and just world, fostering a collaborative culture that is infused with energy, experimentation, and interdisciplinary pursuits. Within renowned programs in Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning, the College offers undergraduate, professional, post-professional, and doctoral degrees in architecture, urban design, advanced design and construction, urban and regional planning, and urban technology. The College also offers graduate certificates in healthy cities and real estate development. Taubman currently has a total of 760 students, 110 faculty, and 60 staff members. Current enrollment numbers are 430 undergraduate students, 300 graduate students, and 25 graduate Ph.D. students

Located in Ann Arbor, with a global scope of impact, Taubman College maintains strong ties to the Great Lakes region, the East and West Coasts, and international partners. The College also has a deep connection to Detroit through faculty research, studios, civic partnerships, and an emerging collaboration with the [University of Michigan Center for Innovation](#) (UMCI). Taubman College is a key partner in university-wide programs, such as the [U-M Arts Initiative](#).

Leveraging its setting within a leading research university, the College has a vital and internationally visible culture of research, experimentation, scholarship, and creative practice, resulting in a distinguished record of publication, exhibition, and community and industry impact. Opportunities for support include university-level initiatives such as [Bold Challenges](#), arts initiative grants for [faculty](#) and [student](#) research, and a range of [college-level incentives and funding](#). Taubman College students benefit from the College and University's research infrastructure, as faculty bring new knowledge and ideas into their teaching through their research, and students are often employed by faculty as research assistants. Students and

faculty also have access to additional research funding, such as the [Arts-Integrated Grant Program](#), which strengthens the research ecosystem by incentivizing creative work across the institution.

Academic Programs

Architecture

Characterized by both its breadth and depth of expertise, the Architecture program at Taubman College is committed to the idea that architectural education in the 21st century can build upon a plurality of foundations, diverse ideas, experiences, histories, methodologies, and technical and conceptual capacities. At a time when architecture is increasingly confronted by changing social, technological, and environmental contexts, the architecture program prepares students for their futures by cultivating a dynamic educational environment where assumptions are challenged, ideas are debated, and emergent design methods are forged. The program is rooted in a rich tradition of experimentation and material prototyping, while approaching architecture as a practice that is deeply rooted in local environments, communities, and cultures. The degrees offered in the architecture program are the B.S. in Architecture, the NAAB-accredited Master of Architecture, the Master of Urban Design, the Ph.D. in Architecture, and an M.S. in Advanced Design and Construction, which is currently being relaunched. A spirit of exploration is central to the program's identity, exemplified by its vital, collaborative studio culture.

Urban and Regional Planning

A diverse and innovative community of approximately 40 faculty carry out research and teach in three degree programs and three certificates in the Urban and Regional Planning program, educating students to be change-oriented leaders in the planning profession, urban policy, and academia. The PAB-accredited Master of Urban and Regional Planning (M.U.R.P.) is consistently ranked among the top planning programs in the country, positioning graduates for careers across a range of topics and contexts. The PhD in Urban and Regional Planning is an interdisciplinary degree that prepares scholars for careers in academia and policy. Several certificates are also offered at the graduate level in Healthy Cities and a fast-growing real estate academic portfolio that includes a newly launched undergraduate minor in Real Estate and an established graduate certificate in Real Estate Development. The B.S. in Urban Technology, launched in 2021, is the first undergraduate program of its kind in the United States, preparing students to design and govern the data-rich cities of the future. Building on the growing interest in the Urban Technology program, Taubman College has developed a Master of Urban Technology degree, set to launch in Fall 2027. The master's degree will be among the first programs housed at the [University of Michigan Center for Innovation](#) (UMCI) in Detroit.

Budget

The dean oversees an annual budget of approximately \$34M and manages financial decisions in partnership with the finance and advancement teams, as well as the program chairs and executive committee members. The [U-M Budget Model](#) is a hybrid system of responsibility center budgeting, incremental budgeting, and centralized/initiative budgeting. The funding source consists of general fund

allocation and endowment distributions. The endowment is currently valued at approximately \$152M, and 90% of the distribution is used for scholarships, with a small portion allocated to lectures and travel.

Facilities

Taubman College shares a 72,000 square foot facility with the Stamps College of Art and Design on the University's North Campus. Opened in 1974, the Art and Architecture Building features a range of [studio and classroom spaces](#), galleries, conference rooms, labs, and offices. In 2017, Taubman College opened a new 36,000 square foot wing that added studios, collaboration rooms, and a 5,700 square foot commons. Additional facilities include the [Digital Fabrication and Robotics Lab \(FABLab\)](#), the [Taubman Visualization Lab \(TVLab\)](#), and the newly renovated [Liberty Research Annex](#) in downtown Ann Arbor. Taubman and Stamps are now partnering on a major capital project to expand and improve the art and architecture facilities, and the two deans will help lead that effort over the next five years.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The dean is Taubman College's executive and academic leader. The role includes setting a clear and inspiring direction for the College and its role in the University, working with program chairs and faculty to oversee academic programs and policies, protecting the College's long-term financial health, and leading advancement and fundraising. The dean also represents the College within the University and with national and international communities in architecture and urban and regional planning.

As chief executive and academic officer for Taubman College, the dean reports to the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. The dean advocates for Taubman College and for the value of architecture, design, and urban planning scholarship, research, and creative practice. University of Michigan deans operate within a collaborative and entrepreneurial culture and are granted significant autonomy and responsibility to work with their respective faculty and staff to establish a strategic vision for their unit and to generate the resources to support that vision. The dean meets with the provost and other deans bi-monthly in the Academic Program Group and regularly meets one-on-one with the provost.

The dean's direct reports are the associate dean of academic initiatives, associate dean of research and creative practice, chair of architecture, chair of urban planning, climate futures faculty director, executive director of enrollment management, chief financial officer, assistant dean for advancement, executive workflow manager, and chief of staff. The dean is also advised by an executive committee of four elected faculty members. The committee meets twice each month to review College rules, the budget, tenure and promotion cases, and new hiring initiatives.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

The incoming dean of Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning will be charged with addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Articulate and elevate a clear and compelling College identity

Taubman College is well-positioned to define a cohesive and compelling narrative, reinforce its leadership in architecture and urban planning, and increase visibility, rankings, and recruitment. Internally, the dean will be responsible for developing and implementing a clear strategic vision and plan. This includes collaborating with faculty, staff, and students to discern and communicate the key aspects that distinguish Taubman amongst its peers. The dean will also bring the insight and capacity to guide Taubman College in response to the ever-changing social, economic, cultural, and technological contexts, including the integration of AI and other emerging technologies, and addressing both the tactical uses and the ethical practices and guidance that enable students, faculty, and staff to be thoughtful consumers of technology. The dean will invest in effective communication and connections across programs and disciplines while continuing to play a leadership role at the University level. They will be effective in sharing the story of the College, the value of its disciplines, and its impact on external stakeholders at the University level, and with external community, academic, and industry circles.

Strengthen Taubman College's academic portfolio and enrollment

The dean will shape the evolution of Taubman's academic portfolio by strengthening core programs and encouraging innovation in ways that strategically position the College for long-term sustainability. The next dean will be an effective champion for the unique value that Taubman College contributes in both academic research and creative practice, as well as for its ability to have a positive environmental and social impact. In partnership with faculty, staff, and students, the dean will support the ongoing development and delivery of curriculum and programs, encourage activities that strengthen connections across disciplines, and promote best practices in teaching and learning. Like many of its peers, Taubman has experienced shifts in demand, with international graduate enrollment declining and undergraduate and domestic demand increasing. Working collaboratively with recruitment and admissions, financial aid, and the chairs, the dean will be strategic in managing enrollment dynamics, driving undergraduate and graduate recruitment, and ensuring that resources are allocated to support student retention and success.

Increase financial sustainability

The dean will enhance Taubman College's financial strength by aligning the College budget with changing enrollment dynamics and working closely with University advancement, the College's development staff, and faculty to develop compelling, effective opportunities to attract support from a wide range of sources. The dean is responsible for aligning resources with strategic priorities, enhancing fiscal stability, and partnering effectively with University leadership to secure long-term support for the College. The dean will build upon existing fundraising activities stewarded by the University's advancement team, identifying and cultivating new strategic funding opportunities and delivering a compelling message for support of academic programs, scholarships, fellowships, and facilities.

Build internal connection and collaboration

With architecture and urban planning as its two core programs, Taubman College presents an opportunity for the incoming dean to build greater alignment across disciplines, faculty, and research initiatives, supporting its longstanding degree offerings and strategically exploring emerging areas. The dean will invest in a culture of collaboration across programs and among faculty, deepen shared governance and transparent communication, and foster an environment where faculty, staff, and students are engaged in substantive ways. The dean will join a college with dedicated faculty and exceptional staff who contribute to the vision, culture, and successful day-to-day administration of the College. The incoming dean will be an effective people manager who is skilled at facilitating deliberation while providing clarity and decisiveness in implementing the College's vision and direction.

Position Taubman College centrally in the University and grow its external reputation and engagement

Taubman College benefits from distinguished faculty, innovative labs and centers, major research partnerships, and interdisciplinary opportunities across the University of Michigan. The dean will build productive relationships with central administration, peer deans, faculty leaders, staff, students, alumni, and external partners, continuing to advocate for Taubman College and elevate its reputation and visibility as a valuable contributor at the University level.

The dean is also the external champion of the College, shining a light on the value and impact of a Taubman education for prospective and current students, faculty, funders, and other stakeholders. This individual will be an inspiring and visible presence in both the University community and in national and international architecture and urban planning discourse. The dean will place significant focus on external engagement and on successfully positioning the Taubman College nationally and globally. The dean will continue to develop partnerships and relationships with employers to create internship opportunities and build career pipelines for the College's graduates, and will invest in alumni relations, including through the alumni council and dean's advisory board. They will also be actively engaged in discourse around architecture and planning, improving external perception, rankings, and industry connections to strengthen the College's identity and reputation.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring leadership experience in administration, academia, and/or professional practice; an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of leading a top public university; broad knowledge of disciplines impacting the built environment; and support for Taubman College's core programs and diverse degrees. The dean will also demonstrate a commitment to strategies and programs that attract and support diverse students, faculty, and staff. To be eligible, candidates must possess qualifications commensurate with a full professor (with tenure) at the University of Michigan.

While no individual candidate will possess all the desired qualifications, prospective candidates should present a strong and compelling combination of the following relevant professional experiences and leadership achievements:

- Strategic thinker with the ability to articulate a clear and compelling future for Taubman College and align academic priorities with broader institutional goals
- Experience leading in complex academic settings, including budgetary oversight, personnel, enrollment management, and strategic initiatives
- Proven capacity for fundraising, development, and external engagement
- Commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and creative practice; experience supporting and making visible the accomplishments of a diverse faculty body
- Experience fostering interdisciplinary collaboration at the College and University levels, and cultivating partnerships with industry, government, and community stakeholders
- Ability to recruit, retain, and support high-caliber faculty, staff, and students
- Commitment to the values of integrity, equity, respect, as well as diversity and inclusion in leadership, hiring, and student experience
- A professional degree in architecture, urban planning, or urban design, or an earned doctoral or equivalent terminal degree in a relevant field
- A distinguished record of scholarship, research, or professional practice appropriate for appointment at the rank of full professor in architecture, urban planning, and/or related disciplines

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The University of Michigan has engaged the firm Isaacson, Miller to manage this search process. Interested candidates must submit a letter of interest and a current resume or curriculum vitae to be considered for the position. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-michigan-taubman-college-architecture-and-urban-planning/dean>

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