



Dean, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics Position Description

Overview

The University of Houston (UH) requests nominations and applications for the Dean, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM).

The next Dean will be an engaging and charismatic leader among the faculty, a strong advocate for the teaching and research mission of the College, a preeminent university citizen, and an energetic and conscientious administrator with an eye on budgets and spending. Most of all, the candidate should be familiar with evolving challenges that face students and faculty alike in higher education, science, mathematics, and other related fields. The successful candidate will be an energetic and visionary leader who can make a difference in the future of the College and play a lead role in supporting and strengthening UH's position as a Tier One research university.

The University

Founded in 1927 and currently led by President [Renu Khator](#), the [University of Houston](#) is the largest public research university in Houston and one of the largest universities in Texas offering undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. Located in Houston's historic [Third Ward](#) and dedicated to serving as an impactful partner within its community, UH is the oldest of the four [UH System](#) universities and recognized as an R1 institution by the Carnegie Foundation for its very high level of research activity and home to a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. With a University footprint that encompasses its main campus in Houston and significant instructional sites in [Katy](#) and [Sugar Land](#) that further UH's learning, research, and community engagement endeavors, the University is home to more than 3,000 tenured, tenure-track, instructional, clinical and research faculty. Distinguished faculty members include Guggenheim Fellows, a Pulitzer Prize winner, Tony Award winners, and 22 members of the National Academies of Science and Engineering. As a complement to its traditional academic offerings, UH's institutional presence also extends well beyond its campuses and into its students' communities through thriving [extended education](#) and [online](#) programs.

Emblematic of its commitment to fostering a university environment dedicated to the success of students from diverse backgrounds, UH is proudly designated as a Hispanic-serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving (AANAPISI) institution. In Fall 2024, UH enrolled approximately 47,800 students in more than 280 undergraduate and graduate academic programs with approximately 8,400 students housed in nine residential communities. With more than 500 registered student organizations and 17 NCAA Division 1 intercollegiate sports teams, campus life at UH is vibrant and engaging. UH's student body is one of the most diverse in the country and is very international in composition with students from more than 130 nations. Students choose from 116 bachelor's programs and 160 graduate and professional programs housed in 16 academic colleges and schools and an interdisciplinary Honors College. UH's programs are nationally recognized, including 17 ranked among the top 50 in the country.

With more than \$230 million in research expenditures in FY 2023, UH's research enterprise includes eleven national research centers, over 25 university research centers and institutes, and the [Presidential Frontier Faculty program](#) to hire 100 university-wide integrated interdisciplinary faculty. As an institution that ranks amongst the top 100 global universities for patents, UH fosters

a research environment that enables scholars to explore emerging areas and work more effectively with industry, other research organizations, and the community. An academically diverse university, UH is creating powerful hubs of creativity where teams of researchers from a wide range of disciplines collaborate across traditional boundaries to bring research knowledge to bear on issues of intellectual, scientific, social, economic, environmental and cultural importance.

At the University of Houston, we not only dream big dreams, we also collaborate to achieve them. Building on a trajectory of accelerated research activity, the University is focused on doubling research expenditures by increasing NSF-reported research expenditures to \$400 million annually over the next five years. New faculty will join a university with a growing number of nationally funded research centers and an aggressive agenda to leverage science to make a transformative impact locally, nationally, and across the globe.

Exemplifying its commitment to improving the lives of those it serves, UH awards more than 11,000 degrees annually, and has nearly 306,900 alumni, many of whom live and work in Texas. Moreover, UH is a member of the [Texas Medical Center](#), whose member institutions strive to advance patient care, research, and education in Houston and the founding partner of the [Houston GPS](#) initiative driven by a coalition of community colleges and universities dedicated to closing equity gaps in student success.

UH Strategic Plan – “*Together, We Rise. Together, We Soar.*”

UH’s bold plan for the future, “[Together, We Rise. Together, We Soar](#)” pursues the University’s vision to build a top 50 public university by pursuing five over-arching goals:

- Goal 1 – Student Success: Provide a top tier, inclusive educational experience to all.
- Goal 2 – Nationally Competitive Research: Build a research powerhouse that impacts our region and the world.
- Goal 3 – Social Responsibility: Serve as an exemplar for equitable and inclusive community engagement.
- Goal 4 – Nationally Relevant Athletics: Build a competitive athletics program.
- Goal 5 – Competitive Funding: Build a sustainable funding base to support vision and goals.

Houston, Texas

Houston is one of the world’s great global cities, the nation’s fourth largest, and home to one of the youngest, fastest growing, and most diverse populations in the country. Nearly one-in-four residents are foreign born and more than 145 languages are spoken. Reflective of its position as the Energy Capital of the World and a hub for global trade, Houston is home to 38 of the nation’s 85 publicly traded oil and gas exploration and production firms – including 10 of the top 25. In addition, Houston is at the vanguard of the clean energy revolution and continues to grow with the energy transition. Houston is also home to the Texas Medical Center, the world’s largest medical complex by several measures: number of hospitals, number of physicians, square footage and patient volume. Houston is a thriving hub of digital tech talent, with 9,100 tech related firms, including more than 1,000 venture-backed startups, plus an aerospace community that is flourishing because of a close partnership between NASA and private space companies transforming its connection to space exploration.

With an incredibly rich quality of life, winning sports teams, world-renowned cuisine, one of the largest collections of top-rated museums and cultural activities in the nation, and a low cost of living in addition to no state income tax—Houston is truly a great place to call home.

The College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

The College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM), nearing its 50th anniversary, is committed to excellence in teaching, research, and social impact by leveraging its accomplishments and expertise on behalf of the University and the region. NSM is one of seventeen colleges at UH and consists of six departments that include Biology and Biochemistry, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Mathematics, and Physics. The College employs 214 tenured and tenure-track faculty. During 2021-2024, nine NSM faculty have won NSF or DOE CAREER awards. NSM has four National Academy of Sciences members and one National Academy of Engineering member. Additionally, NSM has seven National Academy of Inventors Fellows and three Senior Members. Among NSM faculty are many fellows of national and international societies, Fulbright Scholars, and winners of national and international awards and honors. NSM also has a number of research centers and institutes that foster interdisciplinary research across the College and broader University. The Fall 2024 enrollment of 6,247 science majors included 5,206 undergraduates, 140 post-baccalaureate, and 901 graduate students. The College currently has annual research expenditures of \$31 million. In addition to faculty achievements, NSM is proud of the recognition its students receive, including recent DOE Graduate Student Research Awards (2023 and 2024), 11 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) awards between 2019-2024, and several Fulbright Study/Research Grants and English Teaching Awards (6 and 8, respectively, from 2020-2024). Moreover, NSM students have earned Goldwater Scholarships in 2021 and 2024, continuing a strong tradition of success in this prestigious program. To support these achievements, NSM offers robust student development programs such as the STEM Excellence Program (SEP) and the TC Energy Summer Scholars Academy, both of which provide resources to foster academic growth across all majors. Additionally, the teachHOUSTON initiative trains future STEM teachers for grades 7-12, and community-based programs like STEM RISE and RESET in STEM encourage high school students in the Third Ward to pursue STEM careers, further strengthening the STEM pipeline.

Additional information on each department in NSM can be found at:

- [Biology and Biochemistry](#)
- [Chemistry](#)
- [Computer Science](#)
- [Earth and Atmospheric Sciences](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Physics](#)

Additional information on NSM can also be found on the College's website, <https://uh.edu/nsm/> .

Position Summary

As chief academic and administrative officer of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Dean is responsible for providing energetic, visionary and effective leadership in the following areas:

- **Leadership and Strategic Planning:** These responsibilities include directing and overseeing the programs of the College as well as developing the strategic directions of the College in concert with the University's Strategic Plan. The Dean articulates the long-range vision, specific strategies, and detailed administrative and fiscal provisions to ensure the continued excellence of the College faculty and its teaching and research programs. To implement strategies, the Dean works closely with the University's executive leadership and with the other Deans on multidisciplinary hiring, and on research and teaching programs. A successful candidate would need to promote the University and NSM and actively participate in hands-on management and open decision-making.

- Faculty Appointments: The Dean of NSM is responsible for the recruitment, appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure of faculty in the College. The Dean works through the established appointment, promotion, and tenure process of the College and is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the entire process. The Dean works with the faculty to implement long-range, recruiting plans for NSM formulated with the approval of the Provost. The Dean is responsible for meeting or exceeding the University's recruiting objectives with respect to the quality and representativeness of the faculty.
- Budgetary and Administrative Oversight: The Dean is responsible for overseeing the College's budget according to the University's financial guidelines. The Dean is expected to work closely and collaboratively with the Provost's Office in developing a budget for the graduate and undergraduate programs. In addition, the Dean is responsible for coordinating the activities of chairs of six departments, NSM faculty, associate/assistant Deans, and staff. The Dean provides necessary resources to facilitate extramurally funded research to support faculty research activities and graduate training.

In addition to budgetary oversight, other principal areas of administrative responsibility for the candidate would include: the allocation of academic facilities, planning for future academic facilities' needs, making non-faculty staffing decisions within the context of the University-wide policies and procedures, and developing collaborative teaching and research programs with other UH colleges and divisions, as well as with five, Houston-based Texas Medical Center institutions. Finally, the Dean is responsible for the establishment of effective internal cost controls within the College.

- Stewardship and Development: The Dean plays a pivotal role in representing the needs of UH to important external constituents and donors – on regional, national, and international levels. The Dean has primary responsibility for articulating the philanthropic aspirations of NSM in conjunction with the long-range plans of the University. The Dean works collaboratively with the President's leadership team and other academic leaders across campus in planning University-wide, as well as NSM-specific, fundraising priorities and goals. The Dean engages proactively with the University's development staff in executing those plans, including, but not limited to, NSM's chairs, development liaisons, and volunteer advisory boards. In addition, the Dean plays a critical role in ensuring that donations are well stewarded, address needs within the College, are in accordance with donor expectations, and communicated fully and in a timely manner in line with UH development policies and procedures.
- Multidisciplinary Partnerships: The Dean is responsible for managing the College's engagement in cross-campus, multidisciplinary partnerships that significantly increase opportunities for innovation and employment of UH graduates in a range of fields that include the Houston-based medical and energy industries. NSM's depth of expertise, along with targeted initiatives in health, energy, and computing and dedicated University-wide research centers (e.g., [Texas Center for Superconductivity at UH \(TcSUH\)](#) and [HPE Data Science Institute](#)), allows UH graduates to gain broad skillsets that can be applied to any industry and complement any professional interest. By blending research with education in a variety of disciplines, the College is leading this interdisciplinary effort to meet the challenges of the technologically-driven job market in the Houston area and beyond. Research is a key component of the College's continuous growth. NSM faculty and students are engaging in a number of interdisciplinary/intradisciplinary activities with other colleges including engineering, pharmacy, optometry, medicine, business, liberal arts and social sciences, education, and the honors college.

Qualifications

UH's next Dean of NSM will play an important role in the future growth of NSM as well as ensuring the College's support of UH's standing as a Tier One university and its vision as a premiere international research university. The successful candidate will possess a distinguished record of academic service, superior interpersonal and management skills, and a demonstrated commitment to UH's mission, vision, and students. In addition, leading candidates should:

- Have an outstanding record of scholarly achievement and international reputation in the broader sciences community, commensurate with appointment as full professor in one of the departments in the College;
- Possess the ability to serve as an engaging fundraiser and advocate on behalf of NSM at the local, national, and international levels; the next Dean will be tasked with further developing the College's external relationships to not only increase donations, but stimulate productive partnerships with external constituencies;
- Be a seasoned, decisive leader and diplomat with strong organizational and consensus-building skills, integrity, and the ability to inspire and lead faculty with diverse interests;
- Have a commitment to providing students with a high-quality educational experience and aggressively addressing issues related to student success;
- Demonstrate a commitment to assessment and accountability measures that will help to guide and enhance strategic planning goals in accordance with UH's Strategic Plan to appropriately track the College and University's national competitiveness;
- Facilitate and execute the University's Strategic Plan to insure a reasonable and sustained growth for UH;
- Have proven people skills and be a highly effective listener and communicator with both academic and non-academic audiences;
- Have demonstrated ability to build multidisciplinary programs and to create an internationally-focused and outwardly-looking educational environment for students;
- Bring innovative and entrepreneurial thought to the Dean position and serve as a catalyst for new and compelling academic and research initiatives in the College with the potential to expand on existing College strengths in the energy and health areas;
- Have an outward-facing perspective with a commitment to develop partnerships and exchange programs with other academic groups in Texas and around the world;
- Be adept at fiscal management, both in establishing budgets and implementing them; and
- Share the commitment by UH to innovation, collaboration, and resilience, to the personal and educational enrichment of its faculty, staff, and students, and to have a passion for the College's role in ensuring student graduation and post-graduate job success.

Application/Nomination Process

The Search Committee invites letters of nomination (self-nomination encouraged), applications (with a letter of interest, a complete CV, and a list of at least five references that includes contact information), or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting UH. Review of materials will begin immediately and continue until an appointment is made. For full consideration, please submit applications by **January** 14, 2025. Applications received after this date may be considered at the discretion of the committee and/or hiring authority. Nominations can be submitted to Search Committee Co-Chairs Dean Pradeep Sharma and Dr. Amy Sater or through the electronic nomination portal via the link below.

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[Submit a Nomination](#)

***The University of Houston is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.
Minorities, women, veterans and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.
The University of Houston is responsive to the needs of dual career couples.***