



**DEAN  
STAMPS SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
ANN ARBOR**

**THE SEARCH**

The University of Michigan (U-M), a premier research university, seeks a collaborative and entrepreneurial leader to serve as the dean of the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design (Stamps). This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead a distinguished school as it charts a course for its future. With the creative dexterity offered by its interdisciplinary curriculum and the academic rigor and breadth of opportunity provided by a world-class university, Stamps is well positioned to prepare its students for careers as impactful leaders in society. Working in a dynamic environment, the next dean will find passionate, committed colleagues, proud of their school's history and eager to advance Stamps' mission.

The Stamps School of Art & Design, ranked number eight nationally by *U.S. News and World Report*, has a long history of training artists and creators of the highest caliber. Stamps is distinctive among art schools in offering a single interdisciplinary major in Art and Design at the undergraduate level, leading to BFA, BA, and joint BFA degrees with other U-M schools and colleges. Graduate programs include the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) and Master of Design (MDes) in Integrative Design. The mission of the Stamps School is to be an internationally recognized leader in interdisciplinary art and design education, grounded in research, practice, creative excellence, and community engagement – to prepare the next generation of globally competent creative professionals who will responsibly engage and collaborate in a wide variety of fields and cultural contexts to address the challenges of the present times. The next dean will need to embrace and embody this mission while guiding Stamps as it embarks on its next chapter.

As the leader of Stamps, the dean will be expected to develop, implement, and effectively communicate a strategic plan and promote collaboration both within the school and across the university. Mirroring the University of Michigan's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, the dean of Stamps will continue to develop, devise, and implement strategic DEI and anti-racism policies and foster an environment of inclusion and belonging for students, faculty, and staff. As an advocate for Stamps and the broader art & design field, the dean will enthusiastically and compellingly tell the story of the school and generate wide-ranging philanthropic support to accommodate the school's growth and goals of expansion. The successful candidate will be an artist, designer, scholar, or arts professional with a record of collaborative, inspiring, and engaging leadership.

The University of Michigan has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

The University of Michigan has a long and distinguished history. It 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 education, scholarship, and research. The university sustains top programs in the arts and humanities, social sciences, biomedical sciences, business, law, and engineering, and is the home of one of the largest and most distinguished academic medical centers in the world. The main campus is located in Ann Arbor, 35 miles southwest of Detroit, with regional campuses located in Dearborn and Flint. Today, the university has one of the largest alumni networks, with over 640,000 total alumni around the globe.

The university has grown to include 19 schools and colleges on the Ann Arbor campus covering the liberal arts and sciences as well as most professions. The Fall 2021 enrollment of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students surpassed 50,000 for the first time in the university's history. Based on the Fall 2020 count, the university has 3,202 tenured or tenure-track faculty. Lecturers, clinical faculty, research professors, librarians, and archivists add 4,465 to the Ann Arbor campus academic staff.

U-M has a total FY2022 budget of \$10.7 billion which includes operating revenues from state appropriation, tuition, research grants and contracts, gifts, and other sources reaching \$4.7 billion for the Ann Arbor campus, with the Michigan Medicine revenues adding \$5.7 billion. In addition, the university has an endowment for FY21 of just over \$17 billion, among the largest in the nation.

U-M has ranked No. 1 in research volume among public universities for nine consecutive years, with total research expenditures at over \$1.62 billion for the fiscal year 2020. No other public university spends more on research, which makes it possible for undergraduate students to engage in hands-on research experiences.

### **The University of Michigan Arts Initiative**

To demonstrate U-M's commitment to the arts and highlight its value to the broader community, President Schlissel developed the [Arts Initiative](#). Currently in its second year, the Initiative seeks to illuminate and expand human connections, inspire collaborative creativity, and build a more just and equitable world through the arts. The Initiative will make the arts central to the university's identity and mission. Goals of the Initiative include enhancing students' creative capacities to solve problems; increasing understanding of humans and the human experience; catalyzing innovation, discovery, and insights, especially through multidisciplinary faculty research; and increasing U-M's engagement with the public through the arts.

### **University Leadership**

**Mark S. Schlissel, M.D., Ph.D.**, is the 14th president of the University of Michigan and the first physician-scientist to lead the institution. Since beginning as president in July 2014, he has launched initiatives including Academic Innovation; Biosciences; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Poverty Solutions; and Precision Health. As part of his commitment to college affordability, President Schlissel announced the Go Blue Guarantee in June 2017, a financial aid program that provides up to four years of free undergraduate tuition to in-state students from families in Michigan making \$65,000 or less.

**Susan M. Collins, Ph.D.**, is provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan. She joined the Michigan faculty in 2007, serving as the Joan and Sanford Weill Dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy until 2017 and becoming the provost in 2020. An international macroeconomist, she is the Edward M. Gramlich Collegiate Professor of Public Policy as well as professor of economics in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. During the first year of her provostship, she has overseen continuation of the academic mission in the context of the pandemic. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to social issues and diversity, equity, and inclusion by launching a portfolio of initiatives related to anti-racism.

## **STAMPS SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN**

The territorial act of 1817 asserted that U-M would be a place for the arts. Arts programs developed in several units across campus, but the main arts department branched off from the College of Architecture in 1974 to become an autonomous school. In the early 2000s, under the leadership of Dean Bryan Rogers, the School shifted to embrace transdisciplinary learning, research, and practice, and eliminated the silos common in many creative practices. 2012 marked a new era for the college when the school received a generous donation of \$32.5 million dollars from 1966 alumna, Penny W. Stamps (1944-2018) and her husband E. Roe Stamps. To honor their remarkable gift to the school and their vision in establishing the Roman J. Witt Visiting Artists Program, the Stamps Gallery and the U-M wide Stamps Scholars program, and the [Penny W. Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series](#), the Board of Regents unanimously voted to name the school the Stamps School of Art and Design. Guna Nadarajan assumed the role of dean in 2012 to lead the newly named school.

As leaders in curricular innovation, Stamps was one of the first art and design schools in the world to institute a transdisciplinary curriculum of self-directed study for undergraduate students. Undergraduates have the option of pursuing a BA in Art & Design, BFA in Art & Design, BFA in Interarts Performance, or a dual/joint degree. There are no specific majors in the undergraduate program, which allows students to explore various media and practices. The school is driven by inquiry-based research practices that lead to conceptual choices that could be traditional or might blur the lines between media. Socially engaged creative practice course-work and a strong focus on arts research are vital hallmarks of the Stamps undergraduate experience. Stamps' highly-ranked graduate programs are a Master of Design (MDes) in Integrative Design and an MFA in Art. The MDes program is a project-based graduate program where students master design research methodologies through hands-on, real-world projects that address important societal issues. The [MFA](#) is a transdisciplinary, research-based graduate program designed for those artists whose creative projects encompass studio-based investigations, as well as inquiry in fields of knowledge outside the traditional scope of art practice.

Research and creative practice are highly valued and supported at U-M and are a core component of the U-M mission. In 2018, an associate dean for research, creative work, and strategic initiatives position was created at the Stamps School in order to elevate the rich and diverse work of Stamps students and faculty. The incoming dean will continue to support Stamps in elevating the extraordinary and unique scholarship and creative production of Stamps faculty and students. Learn more about research and creative work at Stamps [here](#).

Students work closely with 32 renowned full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty together with 17 adjunct and associate faculty and 39 lecturers, all of whom are accomplished professional artists or designers. The tenured faculty and executive leadership team are responsible for decision-making on policy, hiring, and curricular matters. In addition, Stamps has approximately 50 staff who serve the school

in numerous important roles as well as lecturers who take on service work in addition to their teaching load.

Over the last five years, the school's overall enrollment has risen by 25 percent. Undergraduate enrollment has grown during this period from a fall headcount of 550 to 686 and graduate enrollment has increased from 19 to 24.

### **Financial Resources and Advancement**

Stamps gross revenue sources total \$27.6 million; its endowment has a market value in excess of \$52 million. Both the endowment and general fund budget have grown significantly in recent years.

The "Find Your Passion" Campaign, Stamps' companion to the U-M Victors for Michigan Campaign and completed in 2018, exceeded its fundraising goal of \$28 million to support student scholarships, new classroom spaces, off-campus study, faculty support, and other critical needs. The school usually raises around \$1 million a year in annual giving. The school hopes to expand its fundraising efforts and seeks a dean who will elevate the importance of development internally, develop fundraising priorities and prioritize management of key relationships, especially when U-M embarks on its next capital campaign.

### **Facilities**

In 1952, the university purchased an 800-acre plot of farmland to build an extension of the school known as North Campus. Situated approximately 2.5 miles away from the central campus, North Campus is a distinct yet integrated part of the university that houses a library, a recreational building, public art exhibits, and five schools: the School of Music, Theatre & Dance; the College of Engineering; the School of Information; the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning; and the Stamps School of Art & Design.

Stamps' main facility, the Art & Architecture building, is 76,000 square feet and houses well-equipped [studios and labs](#), offices, classrooms, and a 180-seat auditorium. With some of the best studio spaces in the country, Stamps has the tools and support needed to create work in clay, fibers, metals, painting, drawing, photography, print-making, sculpture, wood working, rapid prototyping, and video production. The school's 19 studios are spaces for U-M and Stamps students to experiment with media, hone their skills, and create. The school also maintains a 24,000 square foot facility off-campus for faculty and graduate student studios. With the help of Penny Stamps' generous donation, the school established a gallery in her name in 2017. Located in downtown Ann Arbor, the [Stamps Gallery](#)'s mission is to deepen the understanding of contemporary art and design practices that spark action and conversation.

A notable upgrade to Stamps' facilities was the 2018 renovation project on Work Commons, the school's open, collaborative studio space, which added a second floor and 5,901 square feet. An opportunity for the next dean will be to identify and develop additional space to bring the Stamps community together, including studio, office and gallery space for all of its faculty.

## **THE ROLE OF THE DEAN**

Reporting directly to the provost as the chief executive and academic officer for the school, the dean will chart the course for the future of Stamps. The dean will be responsible for strategic planning, fundraising efforts, budget management, faculty leadership and support, the promotion and tenure process, curriculum development and evaluation, enrollment management, and DEI initiatives. The dean serves as an ambassador for the school and will translate and communicate the value of Stamps and the broader arts and design field to various stakeholders across the campus and larger community. They will also serve as a motivating leader who can focus on internal matters, community building, and support for faculty, staff, and students.

The administrative leadership model at the University of Michigan is decentralized in that the deans of the schools and colleges have significant autonomy in terms of their vision, activities and budgets. In broad terms, the university's budgeting model is "activity-based," so that increases in certain activities lead to automatic flows of resources and costs to the units that do the work and obtain the revenue. In addition, U-M central administration provides a great deal of support for campus-wide activities and intellectual initiatives that cut across the schools and colleges. While the decentralized structure of U-M and the activity-based budgeting model give each dean significant autonomy to create and execute their vision, they are expected to collaborate with the provost, their faculty and staff, and the other deans, all of whom bring a diverse range of expertise, talents, and leadership to U-M.

The dean's office executive leadership and staff currently include the following:

- Associate dean for academic programs
- Associate dean for research and creative work
- Chief administrative officer
- Director of communications and marketing
- Director of development and alumni relations
- Assistant dean for undergraduate admissions and student services

A group of four rotating tenured faculty members are elected to serve two-year positions on an executive committee that reports directly to the dean. The committee is used in an advisory capacity to provide input on curricular, policy, and promotion decisions. The next dean will continue to actively seek input from all faculty, draw on their expertise, and encourage transparency in decision-making processes.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN**

The charge for the incoming dean of the Stamps School of Art & Design is to provide strategic, inclusive, and collaborative leadership while meeting the high standards of excellence expected of a world-renowned art and design school. The dean will enthusiastically guide the Stamps community through this next chapter as they develop a unified vision for the school. Supporting the success of every Stamps student, faculty, and staff member during their time at the school, the next dean will engage effectively with the following opportunities and challenges:

### ***Lead the creation and implementation of a strategic plan for Stamps***

The dean will lead Stamps to identify a set of goals and shared values that will guide the work and mission of the school. There is opportunity for the dean to collaborate with key stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students to develop a forward-thinking vision and set strategic goals that will continue to enhance the school's stature and reputation. The dean will be eager to actively listen and incorporate

input from all Stamps community members at all levels of instruction or administration, all of whom are passionate about improving the school and its distinctive programs.

***Foster a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment at Stamps***

In 2015, President Schlissel launched a five-year [Strategic Plan](#) to evaluate and advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at U-M. The Plan spans 50 units and includes nearly 2,500 action items across the various schools and colleges with a goal of ensuring that faculty, staff, and students from a range of backgrounds are supported, embraced, and respected as full members of the U-M community. Stamps commissioned its own DEI Planning Committee to create a strategic plan for DEI that prioritizes measurable actions and accountability. With an increasingly diverse student body, the dean must embody U-M's and Stamps' commitment to these principles. The dean will lead by example and help foster an environment of inclusion by supporting efforts to retain and hire a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students; securing resources for DEI-related programming and pedagogy; and regularly assessing and improving the school climate around these issues. The dean will also be committed to infusing anti-racism principles and practices into all aspects of their work.

***Build and optimize resources while broadening philanthropic engagement***

The dean will be charged with bolstering Stamps' fundraising to meet the resource needs of the school, including space needs and facility renovation, program development and innovation, student support, and an eventual capital campaign. This will mean dedicated efforts in developing new relationships and cultivating meaningful connections with Stamps alumni and external supporters as well as advocating within the university for resources that are essential to fulfillment of the school's strategic goals. The dean will also be charged with optimizing current resource allocation in a way that centers student success and community building, such as common areas for community gatherings or increased exhibition and studio/workspace for students.

***Strategically recruit and retain faculty; support faculty research and creative practice***

The dean will work with faculty to support and promote outstanding research and high standards of scholarly and artistic excellence. They will champion faculty in seeking internal and external funding to support both disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and teaching. The incoming dean will have the opportunity to hire a number of tenure-track faculty over the next few years to add to the depth and breadth of the stellar faculty at Stamps and will find ways to enhance the roles of lecturer faculty members. The dean will harness the expertise, talent, and passion of the entire faculty body; they will listen to and uplift the range of perspectives the faculty bring, including the perspectives of lecturers and adjunct professors; and they will foster an environment of respect, transparency, and collaboration with the faculty.

***Encourage and exemplify collaboration internally and externally***

Stamps and U-M deeply value interdisciplinary learning and collaboration as pillars of academic excellence. The dean will identify, improve, and promote methods of collaboration, particularly in creating curricular and programmatic connections with other schools and colleges. They will find themselves situated in a community of deans across north campus who are all eager to create, innovate, and grow as a collective. There is a particular opportunity to play a significant role in the development of the university's new Arts Initiative. Within the school there is also a priority for the incoming dean to

incentivize collaboration, resource sharing, and teamwork amongst professors and lecturers, staff, and students.

## **PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AND PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- Deep respect for the traditions, history, and unique nature of Stamps coupled with a distinct vision for its future;
- The ability to work cooperatively and effectively with administrators, faculty, students, staff, and other external constituencies; an appreciation and understanding of the need for collaboration and synergy among all these groups to make critical decisions on academic priorities and the allocation of resources by seeking input from community members at every level and in all roles;
- Excellent communication skills; the ability to compellingly communicate Stamps' story and the importance of art and design in society to various stakeholders including alumni, parents, and donors;
- A profound artistic and creative sensibility and sensitivity; ability to serve as Stamps' ambassador and to appreciate and communicate the value of diverse scholarly productivity found in the arts, creative fields, and at Stamps, specifically;
- A demonstrated commitment to DEI and anti-racism practices; experience leading and engaging diverse teams with an appreciation for the range of perspectives they bring;
- An administrative leader with experience in successful strategic hiring and team building;
- A proven track record of exemplary relationship-building, fundraising, and managing large resource/capital projects. An ability to engage with donors, alumni, the national arts community, and other strategic external partners;
- Experience developing and nurturing relationships and partnerships across a variety of disciplines and with outside partners;
- A compassionate, inspiring leader who possesses emotional intelligence and can foster an environment that values respect, collegiality, and open communication;
- A terminal degree in a related discipline is preferred with experience that meets the qualifications for tenure within the Stamps School of Art & Design.

## **TO APPLY**

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be directed with confidence to:

Sheryl Ash, Partner  
Benjamin Tobin, Partner  
Rediat Mersha, Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
263 Summer Street  
Boston, MA 02210  
[www.imsearch.com/8119](http://www.imsearch.com/8119)

**Electronic submission is strongly encouraged**

*The University of Michigan is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer dedicated to the goal of building a culturally diverse and pluralistic university community committed to teaching and working in a multicultural environment. Potential applicants who share this goal are encouraged to apply.*

