



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Associate Vice President, Health Sciences

Leadership Profile

Summer 2026



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Executive Summary

[Michigan State University](#) (MSU) seeks a collaborative, interdisciplinary, and visionary leader to serve as the next Associate Vice President for Health Sciences (AVPHS) in the Office of Research Innovation. Applications, nominations, and expressions of interest are invited.

Michigan State is the nation's premier land-grant university and one of the top research universities in the world. As a member of both the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Big Ten Academic Alliance, MSU is nationally recognized for its academic excellence, impactful research, and global outreach. It is also known for its Spartan grit and resilience. MSU is stronger because of its community, which includes more than 51,000 students, 5,600 faculty and staff, and a network of over half a million living alumni who are extremely loyal supporters and cheerleaders for the university. In 2025, Michigan State had \$992M in research expenditures and was ranked #1 nationally in Department of Energy expenditures. Two major capital projects are also underway – the [Plant and Environmental Sciences Building](#) and the [Leinweber Center for Engineering and Digital Innovation](#) – both of which will significantly expand MSU's research capabilities.

MSU is advancing a bold vision for the future of health sciences through the [One Team, One Health](#) initiative. As health care and education evolve, MSU sees the growing value of adopting a One Health approach that recognizes the interconnected health of people, animals, and the environment. By harnessing Michigan State's land-grant mission, the institution is uniquely positioned to address the world's biggest challenges through this integrated approach. By leveraging their strengths in biobehavioral research, their statewide Extension network, and their clinical partners across the state, MSU has a unique opportunity to build a healthier future.

MSU seeks an AVPHS to serve as the university's senior integrator and collaborative leader for Health Sciences research and provide executive leadership for research integration across the Health Sciences enterprise. The AVPHS will align translational and One Team, One Health research priorities with shared research infrastructure, federal funding strategies, and interface with major health-system partnerships.

Operating through influence, facilitation, and consensus-driven leadership, the AVPHS connects colleges, centers, institutes, core facilities, and external partners - including Henry Ford Health, and Corewell Health - to ensure MSU's health research strategy is coherent, executable, and nationally competitive. The AVPHS will also build deeper collaboration with the Van Andel Institute to support biomedical research efforts and science education. Along with these partners, the AVPHS will drive the design, development, and execution of large team funding opportunities in health from both federal and non-federal funding sources. The AVPHS will promote cross-unit collaborations, implement institutional research decisions, and represent MSU externally to elevate the reputation and stature of the university. MSU's health sciences research enterprise operates through a networked partnership-based model that emphasizes shared governance, collaboration, and integration across academic units and external partners.

The successful candidate will hold a terminal degree (Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.V.M., or equivalent), be a tenured full professor or possess equivalent senior academic standing, and demonstrate a sustained record of NIH or comparable federal research funding. This individual will bring significant experience in central research administration, such as leadership in an Office of Research and Innovation, health sciences administration, academic deanship, or center/institute leadership.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Associate Vice President, Health Sciences

The Associate Vice President, Health Sciences reports to Shashank Priya, Vice President for Research and Innovation, and will join his [senior leadership team](#) of six fellow Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents.

The role and responsibilities of the next AVPHS are outlined below.

Institutional Research Strategy & Integration

- Align university-wide strategy for Health Sciences research, translational science, and interdisciplinary initiatives. Develop a partnership-focused strategic plan that supports researchers' interests and long-term vision.
- Support MSU researchers to facilitate competitiveness for NIH and other funding, particularly center grants.
- Collaborate with deans, chairs, and center directors to address cross-unit research challenges and implement institution-wide health initiatives, ensuring effective coordination and progress across the university's research enterprise.
- Translate institutional research priorities into actionable, fundable portfolios that increase national competitiveness and reduce risk.
- Serve as a connector and facilitator across academic units to ensure research strategy is coherent, aligned, and executable within MSU's shared governance environment.

One Team, One Health Research Network Leadership

- Provide executive research partnership-oriented leadership for MSU's Health Sciences and the One Team, One Health Research Network, integrating human health, animal health, and environmental health across MSU colleges.
- Translate the One Team, One Health vision into operational research programs, shared infrastructure priorities, and large-scale funding strategies.
- Ensure the network functions as a cohesive research platform, aligned with MSU's research priorities.

External Health Partnerships & Research Alliances

- Supports and coordinates MSU's research with health systems, federal agencies (NIH, ARPA-H, DoD), foundations, and industry partners.
- Facilitate research integration associated with major health-system alliances, including Henry Ford Health, Corewell Health, and the Van Andel Institute by aligning investigators, infrastructure, and funding strategies.
- Represent MSU in national forums related to specific research areas of interest to the partnership, translational science, research infrastructure, and health sciences in general.
- Enable connections across partnerships to maximize synergies with MSU's One Team, One Health research platform.

Henry Ford Health + MSU Partnership

- Serve as MSU's executive research partner for the Henry Ford Health + MSU partnership, ensuring alignment of strategy, research priorities, and operational execution.
- Facilitate and sustain integrated research programs based upon the available technical strengths, translational science, clinical research, and population health
- Engage with agencies such as ARPA-H, NIH, DoD and various federally funded centers and institutes to co-create programs that align with the assets available within the partnership. Demonstrate success through creation of funded activities.
- Partner with HFH+MSU and HFH on leading the development and execution of joint research strategy, planning, implementation and performance, including coordination of leadership teams, faculty engagement, and joint investment strategies.
- Drive collaborative problem-solving and change management to identify and remove cross-institutional barriers related to research operations, appointments, onboarding, space, compliance, and sponsored programs, working through existing leadership structures rather than direct authority
- Represent MSU research interests in high-level partnership forums with Henry Ford Health, federal agencies, foundations, and other strategic collaborators.
- Facilitate collaborations and synergistic intersections between Henry Ford Health and the One Team One Health Network.
- Advance and streamline enhance researchers' access to participant recruitment opportunities and health record data.
- Advocate for HFH+MSU and HFH with MSU leadership, deans, and faculty, as needed, to advance the mission, goals, and culture of the partnership.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Advancing the One Health Vision

The Associate Vice President for Health Sciences will play a central leadership role in advancing Michigan State University's One Health vision, a Presidentially sponsored initiative that reflects MSU's distinctive strengths across human, animal, plant, and environmental health. The AVPHS will be charged with translating this ambitious, multidisciplinary concept into an integrated, high-functioning research enterprise—enabling collaboration without centralization, honoring disciplinary excellence while lowering barriers to cross-campus and cross-sector engagement. A key expectation is to make it meaningfully easier for faculty to form teams, develop proposals, and advance research programs across colleges, institutes, and external partners.

Partnership and Statewide Impact

The AVPHS will serve as a key architect and ambassador for MSU's expanding health sciences partnerships, advancing a shared mission of discovery, innovation, and public impact across the state.

Through its partnership with Henry Ford Health, MSU gains access to a network of more than 30 hospitals, a robust clinical trials infrastructure, and deep translational science capabilities. MSU and Henry Ford Health are co-developing a major health sciences research facility in Detroit, designed to anchor their joint research enterprise and accelerate translational impact. Located on the Henry Ford Health campus, the building will support collaborative research in cancer, neuroscience, immunology, and infectious diseases, with a particular focus on addressing health disparities and inequities.

The partnership with Corewell Health is critical to expanding MSU's presence and impact in Grand Rapids and West Michigan. Corewell provides a powerful platform for advancing MSU priorities in women's and female health, population and community health, pediatric health, and precision medicine, as well as for launching new programs, faculty collaborations, and shared infrastructure that strengthen MSU's long-term regional footprint.

The AVP will be expected to accelerate these partnerships in ways that generate shared value, deepen trust, and create measurable outcomes—serving as a connector among faculty, health system leaders, industry partners, and communities statewide.

Accelerating Interdisciplinary and Team-Based Research

The AVP will lead efforts to reimagine and scale team science at MSU, fostering collaboration across basic, translational, and clinical research domains. This includes strengthening faculty development and training pipelines, supporting interdisciplinary ideation and proposal development, and advancing large, multi-investigator initiatives aligned with federal and foundation funding priorities. The AVPHS will be expected to navigate a challenging and evolving funding environment with creativity and strategic focus, positioning MSU to grow its presence and competitiveness—particularly in NIH- and DoD-aligned research—while sustaining momentum across a broad portfolio of sponsors.

Leadership Profile and Institutional Citizenship

MSU seeks an AVP Health Sciences who is a master communicator, builder of trust, and skilled convener, capable of rallying diverse stakeholders around a common vision. The successful candidate will bring experience leading complex teams of faculty and staff, sensitivity to different organizational cultures, and an ability to balance internal leadership with strong external engagement. This is a role for an action-oriented, curious, and energetic leader—someone who brings positive momentum, operates with transparency, and understands how to align people, resources, and strategy in service of MSU's land-grant mission and commitment to impact.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Required Qualifications

- Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.V.M., or equivalent terminal degree.
- Tenured full professor or equivalent senior academic standing.
- Record of sustained NIH or equivalent federal research funding.
- Record of successful administrative role in academia, government or industry.
- Prior service in research administration (e.g., ORI leadership, Assistant/Associate Dean, center/institute leadership, health sciences leadership, and/or NIH/governmental agencies).
- Experience working across colleges, centers, and external partners in complex academic environments.
- Exceptional relationship-development skills to build trust, lead through influence in a consensus-driven partnership, and align diverse stakeholders across MSU, Henry Ford Health, Corewell Health and One Health networks to deliver shared research strategy and outcomes.

Preferred Qualifications

- Demonstrated success with institute/center development, NCI or NIH programs, or center-scale grants.
- Extensive experience with NIH peer review, including service on standing study sections and programmatic review panels.
- Experience working in academic medical centers, veterans' affairs, or equivalent.
- Demonstrated leadership of shared research infrastructure projects or core facilities.
- Track record of advancing translational research and external partnerships.
- Experience bridging academic research with health-system and industry partners.
- Experience in leading or organizing clinical and translation research programs.

Michigan State University

Michigan State University has been advancing the common good with uncommon will for more than 165 years.

The nation's premier land-grant university, MSU, was founded with the goal of democratizing higher education and bringing science and innovation into everyday life. Today, MSU makes an impact in communities from East Lansing to East Africa as it pushes the boundaries of discovery, expands opportunities, and advances equity to create a better, safer, and healthier world for all.

One of the world's leading public research universities and a member of the Association of American Universities, MSU offers nationally ranked and recognized academic, undergraduate research, residential college, and service-learning programs, and is a leader in study abroad among public universities.

A diverse and inclusive academic community, MSU enrolls more than 50,000 students from all 50 states and nearly 140 countries, employs nearly 2,000 tenure-system faculty members, and offers more than 400 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

An indication of MSU's excellence and impact is its selection by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science to design and establish the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams - the preeminent user facility of its type in the world. Opened in 2022, the facility provides research opportunities for scientists from around the globe, fueling breakthrough applications while developing the next generation of scientific leaders.

Mission

MSU is an inclusive, academic community known for its traditionally strong academic disciplines and professional programs, as well as its liberal arts foundation. MSU's cross- and interdisciplinary enterprises connect the sciences, humanities, and professions in practical, sustainable, and innovative ways to address society's rapidly changing needs.

As a public research-intensive, land-grant university funded in part by the state of Michigan, MSU's mission is to advance knowledge and transform lives by:

- providing outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to promising, qualified students in order to prepare them to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders;
- conducting research of the highest caliber that seeks to answer questions and create solutions in order to expand human understanding and make a positive difference, both locally and globally;
- advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world.

MSU Strategic Plan 2030

The strategic plan articulates a shared vision for MSU, shaped through an inclusive process that incorporated the input of many voices. It focuses on six major thematic areas that will guide the University's collective efforts moving forward. More information can be found here: [Overview | Strategic Plan | Michigan State University](#)

Leadership



Shashank Priya was named vice president for Research and Innovation in 2026. In this role, he oversees strategic initiatives and support for MSU's multimillion-dollar annual research programs that work to advance discovery, innovation and enduring global societal impact. He brings exceptional leadership experience as a scholar, researcher and senior administrator to MSU, along with a deep enthusiasm for fostering creativity, research excellence and innovation enterprise. He has served on the board of various national organizations including UIDP, MBOLD, Greater MSP, and MN National Security Ecosystem. He has served on the executive committees of AAU, APLU and CECE.

Prior to joining MSU, Priya served as vice president for research and innovation at the University of Minnesota in addition to serving as special advisor and founding executive director of the National Security Research Institute and as the strategic advisor to the chancellor at the University of Minnesota Duluth. His tenure was marked by record growth in research funding, expansion of industry partnerships, and a surge in startup creation. Earlier, at Pennsylvania State University, he led strategic interdisciplinary initiatives that significantly increased large-scale research funding and strengthened global research collaborations. An internationally recognized expert in materials engineering, bio-inspired systems and energy harvesting, Priya has established himself as a visionary inventor, innovation strategist and ecosystem builder whose work continues to shape both scientific progress and societal well-being.

Priya earned a doctorate in materials engineering from Pennsylvania State University, an integrated master's in engineering from the Indian Institute of Science and a bachelor's in math and physics from the University of Allahabad. He is a fellow of the American Ceramic Society and National Academy of Inventors.



East Lansing, Michigan



Michigan State is in East Lansing, a vibrant college town just three miles from Michigan's capital, Lansing, the hard-working heart of Michigan.

The area offers a multitude of things to do, see, and experience, from art galleries, concerts, and restaurants to gardens, parks, and trails. And you do not have to venture far to discover Michigan's sandy beaches, ski slopes, and metropolitan life.

As the seasons change, so does Michigan State University. From vibrant fall color to blankets of fresh snow to spring blossoms on MSU's sprawling park-like campus, you will never tire of the scenery.

Discover more about Michigan [here](#).

Learn more about East Lansing [here](#).



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Michigan State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **July 17, 2026**.

Application materials, inquires and nominations should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can also be directed to:

Jessica Herrington at jherrington@wittkieffer.com, Alana Penley apenley@wittkieffer.com and Natalie Song at nsong@wittkieffer.com.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, or protected veteran status.