



# Assistant Vice President, Architecture, Engineering and Construction

Leadership Profile

May 2026



## Executive Summary

The University of Michigan seeks a collaborative, mission-driven executive to serve as Assistant Vice President, Architecture, Engineering & Construction (AVP) within Facilities and Operations. This is an exciting opportunity to lead one of the nation's most consequential campus planning, design, and construction portfolios and advance projects that directly enable the University of Michigan's academic, research, healthcare, athletic, and student life missions.

The University of Michigan is a top public research university with global impact and deep public purpose. Its Ann Arbor campus is home to a breadth of highly specialized facilities and infrastructure—research laboratories, clinical and healthcare environments, classrooms and learning spaces, residence halls, athletics venues, museums, and public spaces—supported by extensive utility and distribution systems. The institution's scale and complexity require an Architecture, Engineering, and Construction leader who can translate mission needs into executable plans and successfully build outcomes.

The AVP is the University's senior leader responsible for planning, designing, and constructing campus facilities and associated infrastructure. The AVP sets direction and drives execution across the capital program, ensuring projects deliver value through quality, safety, sustainability, schedule reliability, and fiscal discipline. Additionally, the AVP brings executive-level leadership experience guiding multidisciplinary teams and delivering large-scale projects within complex institutions. The role requires strong governance, sound judgment, and the ability to operate effectively with senior leadership, academic and operational partners, external consultants/contractors, and regulatory agencies.

University of Michigan's division of Architecture, Engineering, and Construction manages an active capital portfolio of approximately \$4 billion, with an annual cash flow of approximately \$450 million, spanning new construction, major renovations, infrastructure renewal, and strategic upgrades across a highly dynamic campus environment. The AVP provides strategic and operational leadership to an organization of approximately 200 staff, including skilled trades, and champions a safety-first culture grounded in Facilities and Operations values of proactivity, collaboration, respect, and solutions-based thinking.

The successful candidate will bring senior leadership experience overseeing large, multidisciplinary design and construction organizations and capital programs of significant scale and complexity, with a proven record of delivering major new construction and renovation projects, including work in occupied and mission-critical environments. They will offer deep expertise in project controls, governance, procurement, contracting, and risk management, along with the ability to lead through others, develop leaders, and foster a culture of accountability, collaboration, and service. In addition, the individual will demonstrate strong stakeholder management skills and executive presence, communicating complex technical and financial topics with clarity, and a clear commitment to safety, quality, sustainability, and operational excellence, supported by experience navigating regulatory requirements and working effectively with external agencies in complex institutional settings.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy on page 10.

# Role of the Assistant Vice President, Architecture, Engineering and Construction

## Key Responsibilities

### Strategic Leadership & Long-Range Planning

- Oversee campus planning, major capital projects, renovations, and infrastructure improvements in alignment with the university's long-term priorities.
- Continue to align AEC planning and execution with the *Look to Michigan* strategic vision, the Campus Plan, university missions, and Facilities & Operations priorities.
- Provide strategic oversight and executive-level guidance on planning, design, construction, and infrastructure investments to support informed decision-making by Facilities and Operations leadership.
- Lead integrated planning efforts that balance campus growth, stewardship of existing assets, sustainability, operational resilience, and responsible use of university resources.
- Provide thought leadership and decision support to Facilities and Operations executive leadership.

### Executive Management & Culture

- Lead through subordinate directors and managers across architecture, engineering, construction, and project delivery functions.
- Maintain a high-performing, inclusive, customer-focused organization with clear expectations, strong accountability, and a commitment to service.
- Support professional development, coaching, and succession planning; manage organizational change and continuous improvement.

### Capital Program & Project Delivery Oversight

- Oversee the full project lifecycle: feasibility, programming, design, construction, commissioning, closeout, and post-occupancy evaluation/learning.
- Ensure projects are delivered on time, within budget, and in alignment with university standards, safety and quality expectations, and user needs.
- Drive effective decision-making to resolve issues related to constructability, phasing, logistics, scope definition, and operational impacts in occupied spaces.
- Ensure Architecture, Engineering, and Construction activities comply with applicable Regental processes, approvals, policies, and reporting requirements for capital planning and project delivery.

### Delivery Methods & Procurement

- Select and manage project delivery approaches—including traditional and alternative delivery methods—to optimize cost, schedule, quality, and risk outcomes.
- Oversee procurement of professional services and construction partners; strengthen repeatable practices that promote fairness, transparency, and performance.

### Stakeholder Engagement & Communications

- Serve as a primary liaison to academic leadership, Michigan Medicine, athletics, research units, student life, and administrative partners.
- Communicate clearly and credibly with stakeholders; ensure project goals, constraints, and decisions are transparent and well-documented.
- Represent Architecture, Engineering, and Construction in executive committees and governance structures, including Capital Council and other key forums.

### Fiscal Stewardship & Resource Allocation

- Provide stewardship of the multi-year capital portfolio; allocate resources and manage expenditures within budget limitations.
- Maintain ongoing cost discipline and financial stewardship by using relevant benchmarks, applying sound financial controls, and promoting responsible, transparent use of university resources.
- Partner on holistic financial, operational, and staffing analysis, bringing systems thinking and long-range perspective.

### Standards, Compliance, Safety & Risk

- Champion a safety-first culture across all Architecture, Engineering, and Construction activities; set expectations and drive leading-indicator performance in coordination with the Environment, Health & Safety department.
- Ensure compliance with applicable codes, standards, and university policies; represent the University with State and Federal agencies regarding regulatory compliance as needed.
- Identify, assess, and mitigate risks across delivery methodologies, contracts, schedule, safety, cost, and quality.

### Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship

- Embed sustainability, energy efficiency, and environmental stewardship into planning, design, construction, and renovation practices.
- Promote solutions that improve building performance and reduce lifecycle costs while meeting stakeholder needs.
- Oversee the implementation of new sustainability-focused design guidelines to support consistent application of university standards.
- Proactively identify, evaluate, and advance emerging sustainability opportunities, practices, and technologies that support university goals, reduce environmental impact, and strengthen long-term campus resilience.

### Contracting & Vendor/Consultant Performance

- Negotiate, execute, and oversee contracts for architectural, engineering, and construction services.
- Monitor vendor/contractor performance; enforce contractual obligations; drive continuous improvement in partner outcomes.
- Work in collaboration with the Office of the General Counsel to develop terms and conditions as needed and incorporate developments in the construction industry.

## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Reporting directly to the Vice President for Facilities and Operations, the Assistant Vice President, Architecture, Engineering and Construction provides leadership on the following critical issues, among others:

- Advancing a safety-first culture and consistent risk management across all project types and delivery methods, with proactive identification, escalation, and mitigation of risk from planning through closeout.
- Maintaining predictability and transparency through existing strong project controls (scope, schedule, cost, quality) and clear stakeholder communications, including consistent reporting and disciplined change control.
- Ensuring design and construction outcomes support long-term operations, maintainability, and lifecycle value, through early operations engagement, strong commissioning, and reliable turnover practices.
- Accelerating integration of sustainability, energy efficiency, resilience, and environmental stewardship into planning and delivery, by embedding performance expectations in design criteria and project execution.
- Building organizational capacity through workforce development, succession planning, and high-performing team norms, including coaching, professional development, and an ownership mentality across the team.
- Leveraging market knowledge and procurement strategy to optimize consultant/contractor performance and strengthen partnerships, through clear scopes, fair selection, and active performance management.
- Collaborating as needed with other university departments on select alternative delivery projects.
- Reinforcing policies, procedures, and measurable objectives that support consistent delivery, including objectives, goals, and KPIs that drive adherence to project management standards.

# Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

## Special Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

The ideal candidate will have:

- Senior leader with experience overseeing large, multidisciplinary design and construction organizations and capital programs of significant scale and complexity, with disciplined delivery against agreed scope, budget, schedule, and quality.
- Proven record delivering major new construction and renovation projects, including work in occupied and mission-critical environments, with sound judgment in balancing tradeoffs to achieve the best overall project outcome.
- Deep expertise in project controls, governance, procurement, contracting, and risk management, including establishing repeatable standards and proactively identifying, communicating, and mitigating key risks.
- Ability to lead through others, develop leaders, and build high-performing teams grounded in accountability, collaboration, professional development, and a consistent service ethic.
- Strong stakeholder management skills and executive presence, with excellent written and verbal communication skills that translate complex technical and financial topics for diverse audiences.
- Demonstrated commitment to safety, quality, sustainability, and operational excellence, ensuring outcomes support long-term maintainability, durability, energy efficiency, and lifecycle value.
- Experience navigating regulatory requirements and external agencies in complex institutional environments, including effective coordination with authorities having jurisdiction to support timely approvals and delivery.

## Minimum Qualifications (Mandatory)

- Bachelor's degree. A Bachelor's degree or advanced degree in Construction Management, Architecture, Engineering, or other design-related disciplines from an accredited institution is desirable.
- 10+ years of construction management experience gained through a combination of general construction and development execution with a proven track record of providing excellent customer service to internal and external clientele.
- 10+ years of progressively responsible management experience with both projects and professional staff. Ownership mentality and management style over all aspects of a project to ensure its success, combined with successful management of multiple project teams delivering a range of capital projects (from \$5 million to \$500 million+).
- Minimum of five years of experience leading a comparable organization or function in a senior leadership capacity.

# About the University of Michigan

## Overview

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. Throughout its history, it has maintained the highest standards 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 U.S. News and World Report ranks more than 100 of U-M's graduate programs in the top ten. With more than 67,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students on three campuses, the University's breadth and scale of intellectual strength are something that few public or private institutions can match. Its research expenditures – \$2.04 billion in 2024 – consistently place it among the nation's leading universities.

U-M is one of the state's largest employers, with more than 57,000 employees, and is consistently ranked as one of the state's best employers by Forbes. The Ann Arbor campus draws an exceptional student body from in-state, national, and global sources, attracting a record 109,000 first-year applicants for fall 2025. Its athletic teams have produced Olympians and regularly compete for national championships, winning 59 in their collective history. U-M has more than 682,000 living alumni worldwide, whose generosity and philanthropy are sources of great pride for the University. Sharing its name with U-M's strategic vision, the University has launched the "Look to Michigan" campaign with a fundraising goal of \$7 billion to impact key global challenges — the largest advancement effort in U-M history and the largest known campaign goal of any public university. U-M's endowment now stands at more than \$19 billion, placing it among a very small set of institutions that are as highly endowed.

## Mission

The mission of the University of Michigan is to serve the people of Michigan and the world through preeminence in creating, communicating, preserving, and applying knowledge, art, and academic values, and in developing leaders and citizens who will challenge the present and enrich the future.

## Strategic Vision: Look to Michigan

In April 2024, after a year of gathering input from the campus community, the University released its strategic vision for the next 10 years and pledged to be the defining public university. This roadmap calls upon all of U-M to leverage its interdisciplinarity and excellence at scale to educate learners, advance society, and make groundbreaking discoveries to impact the greatest challenges facing humanity. The vision incorporates strategic planning efforts across the institution, including the UM-Ann Arbor, UM-Dearborn, UM-Flint, and Michigan Medicine campuses.

To fully realize its vision as the defining public university, U-M will pursue excellence at scale in four key impact areas:

### Life-Changing Education

U-M views access to education as a key stepping stone to active citizenship, societal contribution, and personal fulfillment. As a public institution, U-M will work to expand access by addressing affordability and student success for individuals from all backgrounds, while also leading the way in transforming educational models.

## Human Health and Well-Being

Health and well-being are fundamental human rights. With this principle in mind, U-M aspires to become a model of excellence in meeting the public health challenges facing society and addressing the needs within U-M campus communities.

## Democracy, Civic and Global Engagement

U-M promotes democratic ideals, such as freedom of expression, civil engagement, equal protection, and respect across differences. Its campuses are abuzz each day with individuals from all regions of the globe, each bringing unique experiences, perspectives, and values to the University community.

## Climate Action, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice

U-M is uniquely positioned to lead the effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change through groundbreaking research, education, campus operations, and creative programming designed to increase resilience and minimize avoidable impacts.

## U-M's Flagship Campus: Ann Arbor

The University of Michigan has also commenced an inclusive planning process to realize the future of the Ann Arbor physical campus: Campus Plan 2050. By aligning with the strategic vision framework, the campus plan outlines significant changes, including an innovation district, an on-campus hotel and conference center, an automated transit system, and upgrades to key facilities. In concert with campus planning, the U-M community has made ambitious, multifaceted progress in recent years toward becoming carbon neutral, advancing climate action through innovative operations, valuable partnerships, applied research, campus involvement, and sustainable investments.

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 52,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

A community of nearly 11,000 students lives in Ann Arbor campus housing. Students enjoy a variety of green spaces, recreation and parks, and study areas throughout campus, as well as a wide range of clubs, organizations, fraternities, and sororities. Big Ten athletics offers students the opportunity to cheer on the Wolverines in 29 varsity sports. U-M is known for having the largest football stadium in the country, known as "The Big House," with an official capacity of 107,601. 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. Detroit Metropolitan 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, and spots where locals can be found kayaking, snowshoeing, and biking when they are not attending a U-M athletic event.

## Leadership

### Domenico Grasso, Ph.D., President



President Domenico Grasso began his tenure on May 8, 2025. President Grasso is an accomplished environmental engineer; his research focuses on molecular-scale processes that govern the ultimate fate of contaminants in the environment and the development of new techniques to reduce risks to human health and natural resources. Prior to stepping into the presidency at U-M, Dr. Grasso served as chancellor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and, before this appointment, served as provost of the University of Delaware, vice president for research and dean of the Graduate College at the University of Vermont, was the Rosemary Bradford Hewlett Professor and founding director of the Picker Engineering Program at Smith College. He holds engineering degrees from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (B.Sc.), Purdue University (M.S.), and the University of Michigan (Ph.D.).

### Bobby Hewlett, Interim Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer



Bobby Hewlett serves as the University of Michigan president's chief financial advisor and principal strategist, currently acting as interim executive vice president and CFO since November 2025, and leads a wide-ranging portfolio that includes finance, investments, enterprise risk management, facilities and campus operations, sustainability, human resources, and shared services. With more than 14 years at U-M, he most recently served as vice president for finance, overseeing accounting, procurement, treasury, financial planning, and risk management, and previously was controller for Michigan Medicine, managing financial operations across the health system and medical school. Earlier in his career, he worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers in financial reporting, tax, and transactions. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration and accounting from the Ross School of Business, is a Michigan CPA, and completed the GE Healthcare/Health Management Academy Finance Fellowship.

### Kimberly Kiernan, Vice President for Facilities and Operations



Kimberly Kiernan manages the University of Michigan's extensive physical infrastructure, which includes over 38 million square feet of space on the Ann Arbor campus. She is responsible for a wide range of sophisticated and complex academic, research, and clinical facilities, including environmental stewardship and regulatory compliance. She provides leadership and strategic direction for an organization of approximately 1,700 employees across the following groups: Architecture, Engineering, and Construction, Custodial & Grounds Services; Environment, Health & Safety; Logistics, Transportation & Parking; Maintenance Services; Operational Support; and Utilities. Over the course of her career at the university, Kiernan has held roles in the Provost's Office, University Library, and School of Kinesiology. Since joining Facilities & Operations in 2007, she has held progressively responsible positions focused on aligning operations with institutional goals and optimizing service delivery. Kiernan received her undergraduate degree in English and Communications from the University of Michigan and earned a Master of Business Administration in Accounting from Eastern Michigan University.

## The Ann Arbor Community



*Liberty Street is home to two iconic art-house theaters and many local shops and restaurants*

The vibrant and active city of Ann Arbor is consistently rated as one of the nation's top college towns. In addition to being the hometown of a world-class university, Ann Arbor is home to many high-tech research companies and charming neighborhoods with a rich mix of cultures. Downtown Detroit – with its eclectic mix of entertainment and professional sports – is less than an hour's drive away, and Detroit Metro Airport offers a nearby gateway to the globe as a hub for Delta Airlines.

The Ann Arbor area is perhaps best known for its cultural offerings and nightlife. From cutting-edge art exhibits and dozens of unique galleries to performances by legends across the performing arts, there are abundant opportunities to enjoy arts and culture throughout the community. The Ann Arbor Art Fairs envelop the campus and downtown areas with nearly 500,000 visitors over a four-day span every July. [The Ark](#) is one of the finest music clubs in the world, hosting 300 performances each year.

Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County offer a bounty of recreational opportunities for hiking, cycling, canoeing, and golfing. In the warmer months, the area offers street festivals and outdoor fairs. “Foodies” will appreciate the nearly 300 restaurants within a 20-mile radius of Ann Arbor, with options ranging from traditional Italian bistros to trendy contemporary American restaurants.

Ann Arbor is a highly educated community of 115,000 residents, with nearly two-thirds holding at least a bachelor's degree. It regularly appears on a wide range of “top ten” lists, ranking everything from the happiest places to live and the most intelligent cities to the best educational offerings for kids and top communities for venture capital investments.

Ann Arbor is home to such recognized brands as Domino's Pizza, Zingerman's Delicatessen, Toyota Technical Center, and Google AdWorks.

The University of Michigan welcomes you to learn more. [Click here.](#)

## Procedure for Candidacy

Please submit all applications, nominations, and inquiries to the search team through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by [clicking here](#). New users should select “Register Here” to create an account before proceeding. After logging in, navigate to “Open Positions,” then locate the role by entering the institution’s name and clicking the search wheel.

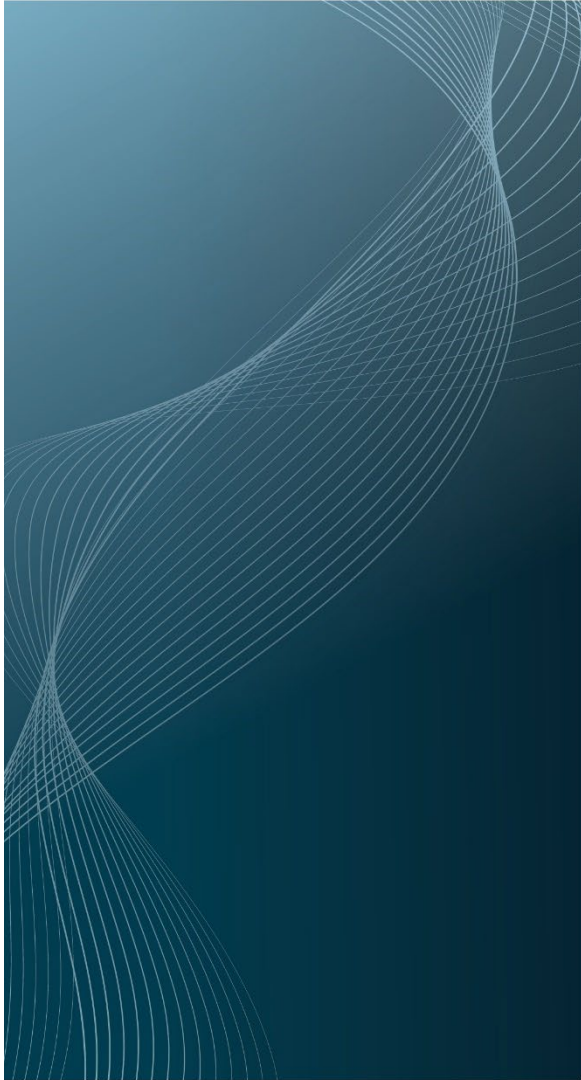
Please direct inquiries and nominations to the WittKieffer consultants assisting the University of Michigan with this recruitment:

Ben Haden and Ethan Robles  
[Erobles@wittkieffer.com](mailto:Erobles@wittkieffer.com)

*The University of Michigan values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other status protected by law.*

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