



UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

Director, RNA Institute,
College of Arts and Sciences

Position Description



THE RNA INSTITUTE
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY



Greenwood/Asher & Associates, Inc.

Executive Search, Consulting and Training

The Opportunity

The University at Albany SUNY (UAlbany) invites applications and nominations for the position of Director of [The RNA Institute](#). Reporting to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Director is expected to take the lead in shaping the future of the Institute, articulating a vision that defines its standard of excellence and the directions of its growth.

The Institute, housed within the [Life Sciences Research Building](#), is comprised of more than 30 faculty affiliated with the Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biomedical Sciences. Of these, 7 junior and 3 senior faculty were specifically recruited to build The RNA Institute. Additionally, 2 research faculty and 5 staff members are employees of the Institute, which serves as a resource for basic research and technology discovery with applications to biotechnology, disease models and interventions. This focus has led to research strengths in RNA modified nucleoside analysis in structure and function, catalytic RNA, molecular dynamics simulation of RNA structure and interactions, RNA based determinants of gene regulation, RNA-linked components of disease etiology and disease progression and RNA based therapeutics. Additionally, the RNA focus has resulted in the development of engineered tools, analytics, materials and methods with 15 patents pending.

About the Institute

The RNA Institute is part of the Life Sciences initiative within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) at the University at Albany, SUNY. The Institute employs researchers, technicians, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.



With a mission of moving RNA research forward and developing innovative technology, the RNA Institute opened in June 2010. In 2013, The RNA Institute and some of the research laboratories moved into a new 15,000 square-foot wing of the Life Sciences Research Building on the main UAlbany campus. Outfitting the space was financed with a \$5.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health and \$2 million from the state. Another \$2 million in state funds paid for equipment.

Just the Facts

UAlbany

Enrollment

- *Total Enrollment: 17,373*
- *Undergraduate Enrollment: 13,139*
- *Graduate Enrollment: 4,234*
- *48% Male / 52% Female*

Student-to-Faculty Ratio

- *18:1*

Faculty, Staff, and Administration

- *Instructional faculty: 1,200+*
- *Full-time faculty: 700*
- *Part-time faculty: 650*
- *Full-time staff and administration: 870*



The facility was designed with connecting labs and glass-walled offices to allow researchers to work together freely. There are five labs, each of which is 1,000 square feet. One of those labs is reserved for public-private partnerships aimed at developing instruments to improve RNA research.

Also on site is a [computational facility](#) with \$100,000 worth of equipment donated by Dell, which allows for three-dimensional views of RNA molecules, and an advanced [instrumentation facility](#) that contains sophisticated analytic equipment. All lab benches are mobile, allowing the rooms to be reconfigured in a matter of minutes.

The RNA Institute offers resources for small, medium, and large biomedical businesses to spur the development of start-up companies, new R&D centers, and related business operations in New York State through public-private partnerships. In collaboration with the University's School of Business, The RNA Institute offers researchers tools and strategies to assess the marketplace and successfully develop and commercialize intellectual property.

Collaboration among RNA Institute faculty is the norm. Additionally, research collaborations with other laboratories extend beyond the campus, nationally and internationally. There are also corporate partnerships, some supported by federal funds through the STTR mechanism.

RNA-Institute Mission

Moving RNA research forward.

At The RNA Institute, we focus on developing tools and analytics for basic RNA science and for advancing RNA therapeutics and diagnostics. We disseminate these tools and technologies through collaborations with researchers in a breadth of disciplines and disease focuses, critical to human health. As a molecule, RNA is ephemeral and challenging, yet the rewards it could yield are invaluable. We endeavor to overcome these obstacles by developing the technologies for RNA science and enabling the development of novel RNA therapies that precede and regulate protein synthesis. Utilizing our first-rate scientific staff, extensive array of advanced equipment, public-private partnership know-how, and emphasis on mentorship, we are poised to achieve these goals.

About the University



Located in New York's capital city, the University at Albany offers its more than 17,000 students, 25% of whom are in graduate or professional programs, the expansive opportunities of a major research university and an environment designed to foster success. UAlbany students choose from 120 undergraduate majors and minors and more than 125 graduate programs.

Many of these programs are nationally ranked, among them criminal justice, information and technology management (Informatics), public administration, social welfare, public health, clinical psychology and sociology.

In every area of study, students are instructed by faculty who are distinguished scholars and teachers - many actively engaged in cutting-edge research that contributes profoundly to the public good. As mentors, they provide numerous undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, inspiring students to advance their skills and aspirations.



Students take advantage of more than 600 study abroad opportunities in more than 50 countries through UAlbany and SUNY's networks. These are valuable opportunities for young scholars to enhance their education, increase independence and self-awareness, and gain international experience that prepares them for today's global marketplace.

The varied perspectives and life experiences of a student body and faculty which represent 48 states and 96 countries provide a diversity that enriches learning at UAlbany.

The excellence of a UAlbany education is recognized by many independent sources, such as the rankings published yearly by *U.S. News and World Report*. Its great value results from the world of opportunities that is available to students at an affordable price.

About Albany

The University's location in the state capital of New York provides students with limitless opportunities for internships and public service through which they gain experience, test their skills, and prepare to launch brilliant careers. With a population of a million residents, the capital region is also a vibrant center for culture and entertainment that includes museums, music venues, restaurants, street fairs, farmers markets, and other attractions. Albany is within easy reach by car or train with the major metropolitan areas of New York City, Boston and Montreal. Close by are the Berkshires, the Catskills, Saratoga, and the Adirondack Mountains, areas famed for recreational and cultural opportunities.

Opportunities

Increasing current capacity for national leadership through:

- Establishing an epitranscriptome analysis resource. Over the last few years the biological and medical importance of RNA modifications has become strikingly apparent. The Institute has faculty working in this area and it has a significant resource in a Mass Spectroscopy Center. The new director will support the plan



to develop an international Epitranscriptomics resource, which will satisfy an enormous need for RNA modification analysis.

- Enhancing the funding profile of RNA Institute PI's. The funding profile of the Institute's junior RNA faculty is mixed, ranging from stellar to modest to yet-to-be funded. The new director will be a scientific leader who can set up a successful mentoring system for junior faculty. It is also a primary responsibility of the new director to apply for large program grants and generally improve the funding profile of Institute affiliated PI's.
- Commercializing RNA discoveries. The RNA Institute has started fostering collaborative public-private partnerships with biotechnology/drug discovery companies and has benefited from several NIH STTR applications and funds from industry and corporate partnerships. The new director will pursue this upward trajectory.
- Educating tomorrow's RNA Scientists. The campus has established a UAlbany-supported RNA Fellows training program. The new director will support the Institute's efforts to obtain future funding for this program via an NIH T32 training grant.
- Exchanging information in RNA Science. [The RNA Institute's Annual Symposia](#), now in their fourth year, bring together leading minds, including Nobel Laureates, to exchange ideas. Workshops are offered in epitranscriptomics, microRNA detection and molecular simulations of RNA. Additionally, monthly meetings of the [Hudson Valley RNA Club](#), which are supported by funds from the RNA Society, bring together researchers from UAlbany, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Wadsworth Center, Albany Medical College and undergraduate research institutions like Siena, Union and Williams Colleges.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will possess a distinguished record of academic success and a significant scholarly achievement. The successful candidate will also be an investigator with proven excellence in leadership, a commitment to develop junior faculty and an outstanding record of funded research. He or she will have demonstrated the ability to foster a climate where learning and discovery flourish. The director will show the ability to balance strong academic and intellectual leadership with effective external relationship-building and resource development, including attracting corporate support. In addition, the director would have the following:



- An earned doctorate in a discipline represented by or related to the Institute
- A demonstrated commitment to developing and promoting quality research and scholarship
- A strong commitment to fostering community/university collaboration and partnerships
- A proven record of commitment to diversity
- A demonstrated commitment to faculty development
- Proven excellence in leadership and a strong commitment to shared governance
- Proven strong communication, management and organizational skills
- The ability to articulate the Institute's vision, goals, accomplishments and needs to constituents

- An entrepreneurial, innovative and global orientation
- Proven abilities and experience in fundraising
- A record of exemplary personal and professional integrity
- Demonstrated collaborative and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

Salary

The salary is competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Applicant Review

Confidential applications and nominations will be accepted until the position is filled. Candidate screening will begin immediately. For best consideration, applications and nominations should be provided by April 7, 2017.

How to Apply

A complete application will include a letter describing relevant experiences and interest in the position; current curriculum vitae; and the names of five references with titles, mailing addresses, business/home telephone numbers, and email addresses. Applicants must address in their letter their ability to work with and instruct a culturally diverse population. Individuals who wish to nominate a candidate should submit a letter of nomination, including the name, position, address, telephone number, and email address of the nominee. Greenwood/Asher & Associates, an executive search firm, is assisting the University at Albany in the search.

Applications and letters of nominations should be submitted to:
Jan Greenwood, Betty Turner Asher, Partners, Executive Search Consultant
Greenwood/Asher & Associates, Inc.
42 Business Centre Drive, Suite 206
Miramar Beach, Florida 32550
Phone: 850-650-2277 / Fax: 850-650-2272
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For more information about the University at Albany and the RNA Institute please visit:
<http://www.albany.edu/> and <https://www.rna.albany.edu/>



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