

# Town Hall: Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Machines

Executive Director Search

May 20, 2026

Hosted by Julia Kubanek and David Sherrill



# Agenda

- Introductions and Search Committee
- Committee Charge and Expectations
- Search Timeline
- Questions and Feedback



**Thank you to Professor Greg Sawicki  
for your service as Interim Executive Director of IRIM**



# IRIM's Executive Director reports to the VPIR, who in turn reports to the EVPR



**Julia Kubanek**

**Vice President for Interdisciplinary  
Research**



**Tim Lieuwen**

**Executive Vice President for Research**

# IRIM Executive Director Search Committee



**David Sherrill, Chair**  
Chemistry and  
Biochemistry and  
Executive Director of  
the Institute for Data  
Engineering and  
Science



Sonia Chernova  
Interactive  
Computing



Sam Coogan  
Electrical and  
Computer  
Engineering



Kinsey Herrin  
Mechanical  
Engineering and  
IRIM



Cynthia Jordan  
IRIM



Greg King  
Institute  
Relations



Brian Magerko  
Literature, Media  
and Communication



Harish  
Ravichandar  
Interactive  
Computing

## Non-Voting Members



Bruce Walker  
Psychology



Sean Wilson  
GTRI



Aaron Young  
Mechanical  
Engineering



Rob Kadel  
Office of VPIR



Savannah White  
Office of VPIR



Gregory Owen  
EVPR HR

# Committee Charge and Expectations

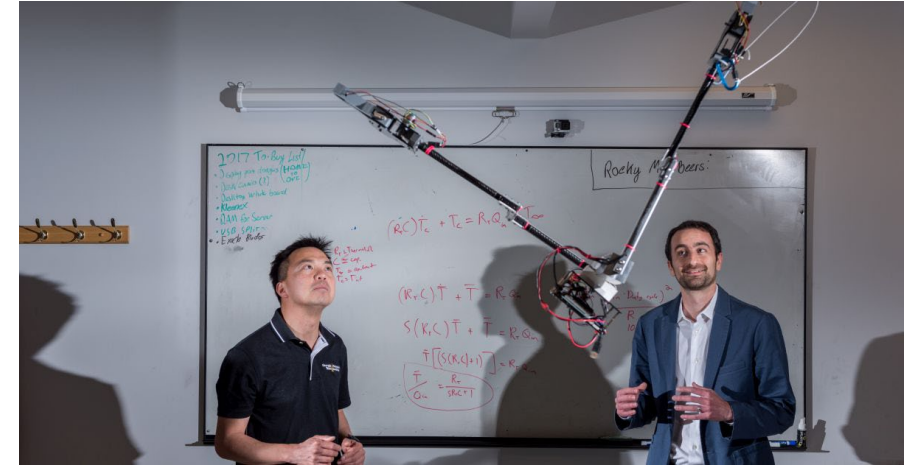
- Search will be open to both internal and external candidates
- **Charge to committee: Deliver 3-4 finalists who represent a diverse pool of experts in robotics-relevant fields**, inclusive of social sciences, design, business, computing, science, engineering, and GTRI
- Insist on a **servant-leader mindset** - someone who champions IRIM's mission, empowers colleagues across disciplines, and puts collective success first
  - **Listen** to the GT community in setting position criteria (via town hall)
  - **Be explicit in choosing criteria** re: vision, research impact, management, mentorship, education & workforce development, collaboration
  - **Craft position description** based on criteria
  - **Be deliberate & inclusive in encouraging nominations and applications**
  - **Evaluate and advance** candidates **based on criteria**
  - **Participate actively in public interviews for 3-4 finalists**

# Search Timeline and Logistics

- Announcement about search for new permanent leadership – May 2026
- Town Hall meeting – May 20th
- Release Advertisement – July-August
- Application window closes – mid-September
- Public interviews – mid-November – early December
- New IRIM Executive Director begins their appointment – early 2027
- This is an **open search** and both internal and external candidates are welcome to apply.
- We are not using a search firm.
- If you have suggestions of external candidates that we should reach out to, please pass the information along to David Sherrill, Rob Kadel, or Julia Kubanek.

# IRIM's Current Focus Areas

- Science of Robotics
- Field and Service Robotics
- Collaborative Robotics
- Biorobotics
- AI+ML in Robotics
- Ethics and Societal Impact of Robotics



In early 2025, GT Office of Strategic Consulting supported IRIM through a strategic planning exercise. Over 100 faculty, staff, and students collaborated on recommendations including these focus areas. Starting in mid-2025, the IRIM community has begun implementing the plan with support from the VPIR.

# Questions and Feedback

- How should IRIM look (focus areas, activities, impact, etc.) in the next 5,10, 20 years? What are some of the challenging problems or opportunities for the IRIM community?
- What domain expertise and leadership skills are needed to serve the IRIM community as IRIM Director?
- What internal stakeholders should IRIM engage in the future? What opportunities are there to grow the robotics community?
- What is needed for GT researchers (across colleges and GTRI) to engage external stakeholders and attract external funding?
- How can the committee best represent your interests through this process?

# Thank you for your support of the search!

## Questions, nominations, feedback? – Reach out to David or any member of the search committee

- **David Sherrill (chair)** - Regents Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Computational Science and Engineering, and Executive Director of the Institute for Data Engineering and Science
- **Sonia Chernova** - Associate Professor, Interactive Computing
- **Sam Coogan** - Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- **Kinsey Herrin** - Principal Research Scientist, Mechanical Engineering and IRIM
- **Cynthia (CJ) Jordan** - Program Manager, IRIM
- **Greg King** - Associate Vice President for Economic Development, Institute Relations
- **Brian Magerko** - Regents Professor, Literature, Media, & Communication
- **Harish Ravichandar** - Assistant Professor, Interactive Computing
- **Bruce Walker** - Professor, Psychology
- **Sean Wilson** - Senior Research Engineer, GTRI-Aerospace, Transportation & Advanced Systems Laboratory
- **Aaron Young** - Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering
- **Rob Kadel** - Executive Director, Research Program Administration, VPIR (non-voting member)
- **Savannah White** - Project Support Specialist Sr., VPIR (non-voting member)
- **Gregory Owen** - EVPR HR (non-voting member)