

## RECOMMENDATION FOR SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENT

### Recommendation

President Kimberly Espy recommends the appointment of Dr. Ezemenari Obasi as Vice President for Research. This appointment is effective February 1, 2024.

### Background

Dr. Obasi comes to Wayne State University from the University of Houston, where he served as associate vice president for research administration. He is the founder and director of University of Houston's HEALTH Research Institute, which was established in 2016. His leadership has propelled this institute into one of the top-ranked institutes at the University of Houston. Under his guidance, the institute established the Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention, funded by the NIH/NIMHD, and made profound strides in health equity initiatives, especially within Black and Latino/a communities.

Dr. Obasi also served as a key figure in advancing the University of Houston's health and medical sciences, leading team science initiatives that advanced novel interdisciplinary collaborations aimed at addressing urgent societal challenges. His work included development of transformational research policies that incentivized grant productivity, streamlined grant administration and developed other initiatives that led to a 2.5 fold increase in federal research funding.

Dr. Obasi's research, which has attracted more than \$35 million in grants, including \$19 million as the primary investigator, focuses on advancing health equity science and the neurobiology of stress. This expertise aligns seamlessly with Wayne State's mission, particularly as the university expands its commitment to public health research and education. In his current role, he has promoted the growth of sponsored research and he has a strong and successful record of bringing faculty together in transdisciplinary teams. The University of Houston has doubled its expenditures and improved its institutional rank from #140 to #113 over the last decade.

Dr. Obasi brings a wealth of experience as a faculty leader at the unit, college and university levels, and an impressive track record of success in health research addressing disparities in urban communities.