

David Jan Skorton, MD

David J. Skorton, MD, is president and CEO of the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges), a not-for-profit association representing all 154 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools, nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC also represents more than 173,000 full-time faculty members, 89,000 medical students, 129,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

Dr. Skorton began his leadership of the AAMC in July 2019 after a distinguished career in government, higher education, and medicine.

Before joining the AAMC, Dr. Skorton served as the 13th secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, where he oversaw 19 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers, and education programs. Key accomplishments during his tenure include the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall, the completion of a \$1.88 billion campaign to support high-priority initiatives, and the development of a bold strategic plan, which included goals to reach one billion people annually by 2022 through a “digital first” strategy and to convene national conversations on issues critical to the United States. He also diversified the Smithsonian’s leadership, with women and people of color accounting for 69% of new hires at the director level or above during his tenure, including the first female director of the National Air and Space Museum and the first woman to be named director of the National Museum of American History. The Smithsonian’s American Women’s History Initiative also was created during his tenure, as well as plans for the first Latino Gallery on the National Mall.

Dr. Skorton served as president of Cornell University from 2006 to 2015. Under his leadership, the university won an international competition to establish a technology campus (a joint academic venture between Cornell and the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology) in New York City, New York, and completed the largest capital campaign in Cornell’s history. He also made student, faculty, and staff mental health a priority during his tenure, and was recognized by the university naming the Skorton Center for Health Initiatives related to student well-being.

Dr. Skorton also served as president of the University of Iowa from 2003 to 2006. As a member of its faculty for 26 years, he specialized in the treatment of adolescents and adults with congenital heart disease and pioneered cardiac imaging and computer image processing techniques. He also was co-director and co-founder of the university’s Adolescent and Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic.

Throughout his career, Dr. Skorton has focused on issues of diversity and inclusion. A nationally recognized supporter of the arts and humanities, as well as an accomplished jazz musician and composer, Dr. Skorton believes that many of society's thorniest problems can only be solved by combining the sciences, social sciences, and the arts and humanities. He has published two major texts and hundreds of original research articles, reviews, opinion pieces, and book chapters on topics ranging from cardiac imaging and image processing to higher education to other broad issues of national concern.

A distinguished professor at Georgetown University, Dr. Skorton also is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, as well as a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He served on the AAMC Board of Directors from 2010 to 2013 and was the charter president of the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc., the first group organized specifically to accredit human research protection programs. In addition, Dr. Skorton has held leadership positions with the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine, and the American Society of Echocardiography, and been honored with local, regional, and national awards that recognize his service to medicine, higher education, and international relations.

Dr. Skorton received his bachelor's degree in psychology from Northwestern University and his medical degree from Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and completed his medical residency and fellowship in cardiology at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he also was chief medical resident.

He is married to Robin Davisson, PhD, an internationally recognized cardiovascular disease investigator who is a professor of molecular physiology at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and Weill Cornell Medicine, as well as a professor of medicine at Georgetown University. An award-winning scientist and mentor, Dr. Davisson is also an emerging visual artist.