

David J. Dean

Associate Laboratory Director
Physical Sciences Directorate
Oak Ridge National Laboratory



Dr. David J. Dean is the Associate Laboratory Director (ALD) for the Physical Sciences Directorate (PSD) at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). In his role as ALD, Dr. Dean pursues excellence across the PSD broad physical sciences portfolio, with particular emphases on quantum materials; structural materials and alloys; soft materials; nanoscience; and applications of materials and chemistry in energy and security. He leads four research divisions: Materials Science and Technology, Chemical Sciences, Physics, and the Center for Nanophase Materials Science. He believes strongly in the linking of theory, computation, and data, and in using computing both to advance physics, materials, and chemistry and to develop the science that will undergird the future of computing. He will pursue forefront research and development using the Lab's leading neutron facilities, and he envisions continuing growth in ORNL's isotope production as well as in the partnerships that advance research with those isotopes.

Dr. Dean first worked at ORNL while he was a graduate student at Vanderbilt. After earning his Ph.D. there in 1991, he took a postdoctoral fellowship at CalTech, then returned to ORNL as a Wigner Fellow in the Physics Division in 1995, where he performed world leading research on theoretical physics and nuclear astrophysics.

After 12 years as a researcher, Dr. Dean served from 2007 to 2009 as ORNL's Director of Institutional Planning. In that role, he helped to prepare ORNL's first laboratory plan for the Office of Science and gained valuable exposure to research across the Lab. Dr. Dean then served two years as Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Science at DOE. Among many contributions during his time in Washington, D.C., he wrote the science section of DOE's strategic plan and developed the fiscal year 2012 strategic initiative in exascale computing, which is now one of DOE's top priorities.

Dr. Dean returned to ORNL in 2011 as Director of the Physics Division, where he led a transition in the division's focus from a largely facility-based research program toward world-leading research in several areas of nuclear physics. He also served as manager of the Isotopes Program and helped to oversee exceptional growth in the Lab's isotope portfolio.

Dr. Dean has published extensively and is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society, and the Institute of Physics, among other honors.