



UNIVERSITY
of
VIRGINIA

Elcan Jefferson Scholars Foundation
Distinguished Professorship in Artificial Intelligence
Position Description



The Opportunity

The College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at the University of Virginia seeks an eminent scholar whose research and teaching center the development, use and implications of Artificial Intelligence, or whose work meaningfully engages AI technologies such as large language models. Disciplinary affiliation is open, and the successful candidate will be appointed in the relevant department of Arts & Sciences. We are particularly interested in scholars working in the following areas:

AI and Climate – the development and application of AI to the study of Earth's climate, including climate modeling and prediction; water scarcity and/or extreme weather forecasting; and impacts on ecosystems, agriculture, and food security.

AI and Computational Humanities – critical engagement with large language models and computational methods to address humanistic concerns such as aesthetics, identity, ethics, and justice; explore the impacts of AI on art, history, literature, and culture, including machine translation in archival and literary studies; and contribute to UVA's institutional strengths in the digital humanities (DH).

AI, Mind and Language – the role and nature of human language in generative AI, from training data to conversational interfaces; the relationship of AI to the mind, including how AI informs our understanding of creativity, intelligence, and language and how it can be used to study human cognition; the instrumentalization of human language and the impacts of AI on linguistic communities, including linguistic diversity and low-resource languages in a global context; computational cognitive science; and issues of AI access, disability, and inclusion.

AI and Ethics – the role of AI in ethical decision-making, including general AI models of moral inquiry and reasoning and applied questions about the use of AI in highly sensitive ethical contexts such as medicine and warfare; and the broader ethical impacts of AI on human society, including algorithmic bias, the future of work, and the impact of AI on youth.

UVA AI Initiatives

AI-related research is taking place in all twelve of UVA's schools. To support researchers, practitioners, and students working within and beyond disciplinary boundaries, the University has established a collaborative and dynamic network of labs, initiatives, and institutes engaged in cutting edge work related to AI. This network includes the AI-Powered Astronomy Institute, the LaCross Institute for Ethical Artificial Intelligence in Business, the Digital Technology for Democracy Lab, the National Security Data and Policy Institute, and the Biocomplexity Institute and Initiative.

The University has also accelerated its hiring in AI. This year, the Provost's office announced the allocation of 10 endowed chairs for strategic hiring in Artificial Intelligence. Several of these new hires will be housed in the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Jefferson Scholars Distinguished Professorships

For more than four decades, the Jefferson Scholars Foundation has served a mission to identify, attract, and nurture individuals of extraordinary intellectual range and depth who aim to enhance the University community.

In 2012, the Foundation underscored this mission by launching the Jefferson Scholars Foundation Distinguished Professorship Program. Designed to help UVA attract the world's most outstanding professors, the Distinguished Professorship Program supports nationally and internationally recognized scholars and leaders in their fields, known for their superior abilities as both classroom teachers and innovative researchers. Having secured approximately \$195 million to support this effort, the Foundation has been able to attract outstanding talent to the College of Arts & Sciences, the School of Education and Human Development, the Darden School of Business, the Law School, the McIntire School of Commerce, and the School of Medicine.

Chairholders are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to teaching and to participate actively in the Foundation's community by serving on Foundation selection committees, attending Foundation events, and helping the Foundation recruit Scholars and Fellows.

The University and the Foundation expect the holders of the Professorships to be:

- Nationally and internationally recognized scholars and leaders
- Superior classroom teachers who are eager to engage with students
- Dynamic lecturers
- Leading-edge researchers in their fields
- Willing to participate actively in the Foundation community by serving on selection committees, attending Foundation events, and helping the Foundation recruit Scholars and Fellows
- Individuals whose presence on the faculty will help attract other outstanding colleagues to UVA
- Individuals who embrace interdisciplinary collaboration and recognize its value to the creation of new knowledge
- Active in, and involved citizens of, the University community

To view the current Jefferson Scholars Distinguished Professors, please visit <https://www.jeffersonscholars.org/faculty-support/distinguished-professorships>.

Qualifications

The holder of an endowed chair is receiving one of the most prestigious honors that can be bestowed on a University of Virginia faculty member. The highest levels of performance, and national and international recognition of that performance, are inherent guidelines for appointment of a chair holder. The institutional expectation of unquestionable excellence means that the person is deemed to have achieved the highest stature and exemplary accomplishment in a discipline or area of research as judged by an independent assessment of his or her peers. In certain instances, accomplishment may be judged on the basis of distinguished work for which there is peer consensus of superior achievement whether in teaching, service or in accomplishments which lie beyond strictly academic endeavors. Excellence should be evidenced by several years of outstanding performance based on national and international standards.

Faculty selected for each Professorship must meet the University's minimum criteria for an eminent scholar professorship. In addition, the University will attempt to identify candidates who meet the following criteria desired by the Jefferson Scholars Foundation and its benefactors:

- National and international recognition as scholar and leader;
- Demonstrated excellence as a teacher;
- Strong commitment to interdisciplinary collaborations; and
- Willingness to participate actively in the Jefferson Scholars Foundation community.



About The University of Virginia

Mission

The University of Virginia is a public institution of higher learning guided by a founding vision of discovery, innovation, and development of the full potential of talented students from all walks of life.

We are defined by:

- Our enduring commitment to a vibrant and unique residential learning environment marked by the free and collegial exchange of ideas;
- Our unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community bound together by distinctive foundational values of honor, integrity, trust, and respect; and
- Our universal dedication to excellence and affordable access.

Strategic Plan

In January of 1819, the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly chartered what would become the University of Virginia. For two hundred years, the University has served Virginia, the nation, and the world by educating responsible citizen-leaders; advancing, preserving, and disseminating knowledge; and providing world-class patient care. These responsibilities are enduring and will continue to inspire our efforts.

Building on this history, our aim is to be the best public university in 2030, and one of the very best in the world, whether public or private. We believe that the way to achieve this goal is by being both great and good, as described in the [2030 Plan vision statement](#). The goals described in this document constitute our concrete definition of what we mean by a great and good university. The initiatives represent *some* of the efforts we will make to achieve our goals.

With those thoughts in mind, we hope you are excited and inspired by what follows. You can read The 2030 Plan at <https://strategicplan.virginia.edu/>.



The College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences (A&S)

The College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences remains the historical and intellectual foundation of the University of Virginia. The largest of UVA's 12 schools, A&S offers more than 50 undergraduate degrees and concentrations and 29 graduate degree programs. It educates 70% of all the University's undergraduate students (conferring upwards of 2,500 degrees each year), trains a quarter of the graduate students, appoints 60% of the tenure-track faculty and houses the core disciplines upon which UVA's academic reputation is built.

Consistent with UVA's 2030 plan, A&S has defined four strategic priorities to build on the unique strengths and advance the distinctive mission of the College.

- Deliver an undergraduate experience second to none
- Transform graduate education and training by focusing on graduate excellence and the resources to support it
- Recruit, advance, and re-recruit extraordinary faculty and staff talent
- Develop and implement a strategic research plan for A&S and fuel academic innovation

To read more about A&S's four priorities and signal intention, please click [HERE](#).



Charlottesville

Located in Central Virginia just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and 100 miles south of Washington, D.C., Charlottesville offers stunning natural beauty, a thriving art, music, and food culture, and an ever-growing list of things to do. In the span of a single day, you can hike part of the Appalachian trail, attend a concert, enjoy a memorable meal at one of Charlottesville's many celebrated restaurants (we rank among the nation's top 15 places with the most restaurants per capita), stroll the historic Downtown Mall, explore Monticello, tour the Fralin Museum, visit the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, or enjoy world-class wineries in some of the most beautiful landscapes on the East Coast. Whatever you do, Charlottesville brings together the best of many worlds, offering the livability and community of a small city with the amenities and cultural attractions of a metropolis. For more information visit <https://www.visitcharlottesville.org/>.

BY THE NUMBERS

#3

Happiest City in U.S., 2017
National Geographic and Gallup

#10

Top Ten College Towns, 2018
Livability

#5

U.S. community for well-being, Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

Beyond being an exceptional city in its own right, Charlottesville is also conveniently located two hours south of the nation's capital by car and just over one hour from Richmond, VA, to the east. The Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway can be reached with a 30-minute drive from Grounds.



Nomination & Application Process

Compensation

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

How to Apply

Jeremy Duff & Lauren McCaghren with Greenwood Asher & Associates® is assisting The University of Virginia (UVA) in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Inquiries, nominations, and application materials should be directed to Greenwood Asher & Associates. Application materials should include:

- › Cover letter of interest that includes a summary of your research plans, your administrative experience, your teaching interests and experience.
- › A curriculum vitae

We strongly encourage submitting application materials as PDF attachments. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. Review of applications is expected to begin on February 14, 2025 and will continue until the position is filled. For full consideration, applications should be received by February 14, 2025. UVA will only consider complete applications. The university will perform background checks on all new hires prior to employment.

Please direct inquiries, nominations, and application materials to:

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