



UNIVERSITY  
*of*  
VIRGINIA

William L. Polk Jr. and Carolyn K. Polk  
Jefferson Scholars Foundation  
Distinguished University Professorship



# The Opportunity

The College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at the University of Virginia seeks an eminent scholar for the William L. Polk Jr. and Carolyn K. Polk Jefferson Scholars Foundation Distinguished University Professorship in Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Futures. This position will draw on UVA's long-standing intellectual leadership in the study of democracy while contributing to emergent expertise in AI.

We seek a scholar whose work addresses the implications of AI for democratic institutions and/or employs the tools of AI and machine learning to enhance understanding of democratic processes and practices. Relevant expertise might include the regulation and governance of AI in media; investigative and data-based journalism on AI; misinformation and disinformation; the use of AI in the design of democratic institutions (e.g. redistricting plans) or judicial processes. Most broadly, our goal is to identify a superlative scholar whose research and teaching engage the roles of responsible AI in shaping knowledge acquisition, civic engagement, and democratic participation, with an understanding of both the promise and the limitations of AI. We particularly encourage applications from scholars whose disciplinary areas include one or more of the following: Economics, Media Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Statistics. Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

## 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, 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 new endowed chairs for strategic hiring in Artificial Intelligence. Several of these new hires will be housed in Arts & Sciences.

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# Responsibilities

University professorships hold the rank of professor and are typically reserved for faculty engaged in research and teaching that crosses school boundaries. University professors are eminent in their respective disciplines, hold the same or higher qualifications of any faculty holding an endowed professorship, and are held in the highest regard by their national and international academic peers. University professors also hold appointments as professors in department(s) and school(s) and may retain any (other) endowed professorships they may hold in addition to the title of University professor.

## The Jefferson Scholars Foundation

The William L. Polk Jr. and Carolyn K. Polk Jefferson Scholars Foundation Distinguished University Professorship is generously supported by the Jefferson Scholars Foundation endowment. The Jefferson Scholars Foundation is committed to helping UVA attract and retain exceptional faculty who are passionate about being a part of the University community. Professors who create transformative classroom experiences and who are leading-edge researchers in their fields help the Foundation fulfill its mission to attract to Grounds outstanding undergraduate and graduate students. Through the Distinguished Professorship Program, the Foundation ensures that talented teachers, researchers, and professors are recognized for their work and are able to continue making their mark on the University. To view the current Jefferson Scholars Distinguished Professors, please visit <https://www.jeffersonscholars.org/faculty-support/distinguished-professorships>.

The Jefferson Scholars Foundation also supports world-class graduate students through two fellowship programs—the Jefferson Fellowship Program and the National Fellowship Program. Jefferson Fellowships are designed to identify Ph.D. and M.B.A. candidates who demonstrate outstanding achievement and the highest promise as scholars, teachers, public servants, and business leaders in the United States and beyond. Once selected, Jefferson Fellows are charged with furthering the quality of education, intellectual life, and mission of the University through their academic pursuits and community engagement.

At the undergraduate level, the Jefferson Scholars Foundation is committed to developing leaders, scholars, and citizens for the benefit of the University and the world at-large. The

Jefferson Scholars Program and the Walentas Scholars Program cultivate outstanding undergraduate students, providing them with financial support to pursue their passions, develop their talents, and encourage their community involvement. Both programs provide generous financial packages, enrichment opportunities, and access to the JSF network of Scholars, Fellows, alumni, and volunteers.

Chairholders are nationally and internationally recognized scholars and leaders who demonstrate a strong commitment to teaching. They are leading-edge researchers in their fields as well as superior classroom teachers who are eager to engage with students. They are active and engaged citizens of the University community whose presence on the faculty help attract other outstanding colleagues to UVa. Holders of Jefferson Scholars Foundation Chairs are expected to participate actively in the Jefferson Scholar Foundation's community by serving on Foundation selection committees, attending Foundation events, and helping the Foundation recruit Scholars and Fellows.



# 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 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 Foundation's community.



# About The University of Virginia

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# 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. It serves the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world by developing responsible citizen leaders and professionals; advancing, preserving, and disseminating knowledge; and providing world-class patient care.

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 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 (A&S) 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 of the University's undergraduate students (conferring upwards of 2,500 degrees each year), trains nearly half of all doctoral 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, the College of Arts and Sciences 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 the Graduate School by focusing on graduate excellence and the resources to support it
- Recruit, advance, and re-recruit extraordinary talent
- Develop and implement a strategic research plan for A&S and fuel academic innovation

To read more about the 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, and 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/>. Beyond being an exceptional

## 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

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

# How to Apply

Jeremy Duff & Lauren McCaghren with Greenwood Asher & Associates® are 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 teaching interests
- › 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 January 20, 2025, and will continue until the position is filled. For full consideration, applications should be received by February 1, 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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