VIRGINIA TECH

Head, Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law

Leadership Profile

November 2026



WittKieffer

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved. This document contains proprietary and confidential information belonging to WittKieffer. It is intended only for the addressee. Any unauthorized disclosure, copying, or distribution is strictly prohibited without written consent.

Executive Summary

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) seeks a distinguished scholar, collaborative leader, and strategic thinker to serve as the next Head of the Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law within the Pamplin College of Business (Pamplin). This is an exceptional opportunity to lead one of the College's largest and most visible academic departments at a time of significant momentum, investment, and opportunity. The next Department Head will join a nationally recognized business school and an R1 research university committed to academic excellence, innovation, and service through its enduring motto, *Ut Prosim* ("That I May Serve"). Applications, inquiries, and nominations are invited.

The Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law is well positioned to play a central role in shaping the future of business education, research, and industry engagement. The Department is the largest academic unit in the Pamplin College of Business by enrollment, serving over 1500 undergraduate students and offering a growing portfolio of undergraduate, doctoral, and emerging master's-level programs. Long recognized for academic quality and student outcomes, the Department was an early adopter in experiential learning, helping to pioneer programs that continue to distinguish student experience and contribute to exceptional career outcomes. The Department benefits from strong enrollment demand, a highly engaged Finance Advisory Board, extensive alumni and employer networks, and a culture that values both scholarly excellence and student success.

The next Department Head will assume leadership at a particularly consequential moment. Significant recent and planned faculty hiring, growing interest in graduate education, and continued investment in experiential learning create a rare opportunity to help define the Department's future trajectory. Working closely with faculty, staff, students, alumni, advisory board members, and college leadership, the next Department Head will articulate a compelling vision that positions the Department for continued distinction while fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, and shared purpose. The successful leader will guide efforts to strengthen research prominence, support faculty development, advance innovative and future-focused curricula, expand interdisciplinary partnerships, and ensure that programs remain responsive to evolving trends in finance, technology, artificial intelligence, analytics, and FinTech.

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished educator and research scholar with the credentials to merit appointment as a tenured professor, have a demonstrated record of academic leadership, and a proven collaborative leadership style grounded in shared governance and relationship building. Equally important, the next Department Head will possess the strategic vision, operational acumen, and an enterprise mindset necessary to lead a large, complex department while contributing meaningfully to the broader success of the Pamplin College of Business and Virginia Tech. By advancing research excellence, cultivating talent, strengthening external partnerships, and preparing students for leadership in a rapidly changing profession, the next Department Head will help shape the future of one of Virginia Tech's most prominent academic units and elevate its impact across the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

To apply, submit a nomination, or express personal interest in the position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy section at the end of this document.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Reporting directly to the Dean of the Pamplin College of Business, the Head of the Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law is the chief academic officer and serves as the Department's chief spokesperson. The Department Head serves on the College's senior leadership team and works closely with College administration, providing leadership for faculty, staff, and students. This is an exceptional opportunity for an entrepreneurial leader to build on significant institutional momentum at a university experiencing enrollment growth and student demand that outpaces many of its peers. The opportunity is further enhanced by a college whose growth is exceeding that of the broader university, and a department that continues to expand its influence, enrollment, and impact within a rapidly evolving business education landscape. The next Department Head will be well positioned to help shape and advance the future directions of the Department at a leading public research university.

Among the immediate opportunities and goals for the next Department Head are the following:

- **Elevate Research and Scholarly Impact**
  A central priority for the next Department Head will be advancing the Department's research enterprise and strengthening its position among leading finance programs, elevating the Department's visibility and reputation within the discipline. With accomplished faculty, strong institutional support, and recent investments in faculty hiring, the Department is well positioned to build on an already solid foundation.

  Working collaboratively with faculty, the Department Head will support a culture of high-impact scholarship, including publication in top finance journals, faculty development, and early-career faculty support via meaningful informal mentorship.

- **Lead and Unify Department around an Innovative Vision for the Future**
  The next Department Head will have the opportunity to shape the future direction of the largest department within the Pamplin College of Business, and one of the largest and most visible academic programs at Virginia Tech. Building on strong enrollment growth and significant institutional investment, the Department Head will work with faculty, staff, students, the Finance Advisory Board, and college leadership to articulate and advance the Department's strategic priorities. This work will require aligning departmental priorities with the broader strategic ambitions of the Pamplin College of Business and Virginia Tech. The successful leader will build consensus around shared priorities and create momentum for meaningful, sustained progress over time.

  The Department Head will also play an important role in advancing Pamplin's strategic priorities, working closely with fellow department heads, college leadership, and partners across Virginia Tech to identify opportunities for collaboration, interdisciplinary initiatives, and shared impact. Equally important, the next Department Head will be charged with preserving and strengthening the Department's longstanding culture of collegiality, shared governance, and mutual respect. The successful leader will foster an inclusive environment in which faculty, staff, and students feel heard, valued, and invested in the Department's collective success.

- **Advance Academic Innovation Across Programs**
  The next Department Head will have the opportunity to build on the Department's strong foundation while helping define its future trajectory. As the finance profession evolves, the Department will benefit from a leader who can guide thoughtful innovation in curriculum, pedagogy, and student preparation to ensure graduates are well positioned for long-term success.

  Working collaboratively with faculty, the Department Head will champion excellence in teaching, support ongoing curricular innovation, and broaden experiential learning opportunities through internships, competitions, industry partnerships, and applied projects. The successful leader will help ensure that programs remain academically rigorous, professionally relevant, and aligned with the changing needs of students, employers, and the broader finance profession.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

The Department Head will also provide strategic leadership for the Department's expanding graduate portfolio, including the successful launch and development of new master's-level programming, continued evaluation and advancement of the Ph.D. program, and participation in the College's Executive Ph.D. program.

Beyond the Department, the next Department Head will be expected to strengthen partnerships across Pamplin and Virginia Tech, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and advancing initiatives that enhance the Department's impact, reputation, and contributions to the University's broader mission.

- **Recruit, Develop, and Position the Next Generation of Faculty**
  With multiple faculty searches underway and additional opportunities anticipated through retirements and growth, the next Department Head will have a rare opportunity to shape the future composition of the Department. Strategic faculty hiring will be among the most important levers for advancing the Department's aspirations in research, teaching, student success, and industry engagement.

  The Department Head will lead efforts to recruit, retain, mentor, and develop outstanding faculty across tenured, tenure-track, and professor of practice appointments. The next Department Head will foster an already thriving environment in which these complementary faculty groups are equally valued, effectively supported, and aligned around a shared vision for the Department's future.

- **Expand Industry Partnerships and Enhance External Engagement**
  The Department enjoys strong connections with alumni, employers, donors, and an exceptionally engaged Finance Advisory Board. The next Department Head will serve as a key ambassador for the Department and help leverage these relationships to advance its academic and strategic priorities.

  Working in partnership with college leadership, the Department Head will strengthen industry partnerships, support student career pathways and experiential learning opportunities, engage alumni and advisory board members, and help position the Department for continued growth and impact. Emerging opportunities associated with Virginia Tech's growth in Northern Virginia and the College's commitment to industry engagement provide a promising platform for the Department's continued advancement.

- **Manage Growth, Resources, and Departmental Complexity**
  Strong student demand, continued program growth, and an evolving faculty profile present both significant opportunities and increasing complexity for the Department. The next Department Head will provide the strategic and operational leadership necessary to align enrollment, faculty and staff capacity, space, and other resources with the Department's academic priorities and long-term aspirations.

  Working closely with faculty, staff, and college leadership, the Department Head will advocate effectively for departmental needs while making thoughtful and transparent decisions about resources. The successful leader will bring clarity and structure to a complex academic enterprise, balancing day-to-day operational demands with responsible growth and sustained excellence. Given the breadth of the Department's activities and areas of expertise, the next Department Head will embrace a collaborative and distributed approach, leveraging the talents of the faculty, staff, and students to advance priorities related to curriculum, student success, placement, fundraising, and external engagement. The successful candidate will foster a shared ownership in the Department's continued success.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business seeks a Head of the Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law who possesses broad intellectual insights, top-tier scholarly credentials, and the leadership and managerial capacity to oversee Pamplin's largest department (by enrollment). The ideal candidate is collaborative and visionary, with a demonstrated commitment to students and student success. The successful candidate will bring the following background, skills, and qualities:

- **Academic Distinction:** An earned doctorate in Finance or a closely related discipline; an outstanding record of scholarship, including publication in top-tier finance or finance-related journals; and national or international recognition sufficient for appointment as a tenured Professor at Virginia Tech.
- **Strategic Vision:** The ability to articulate a compelling vision for the Department's future and translate that vision into clear priorities aligned with Pamplin and Virginia Tech, while anticipating changes in finance, technology, AI, FinTech, and industry expectations.
- **Academic and Administrative Leadership:** Meaningful leadership experience in an academic environment, with demonstrated capacity for strategic planning, organizational leadership, budget and resource management, and the day-to-day administration of a large and complex department.
- **Research and Teaching Excellence:** A commitment to advancing research excellence while valuing the complementary contributions of scholarship, teaching, service, advising, experiential learning, career preparation, and student success; a deep knowledge of the internal and external mechanisms required to sustain and expand a top-tier research program.
- **Forward Thinking:** The ability to discern future trends and capitalize on them for the benefit of Virginia Tech, the College, and the Department; the ability to envision, create, and capitalize on novel opportunities, especially as new trends emerge; an eye toward innovation and creativity in problem solving to further advance a cohesive identity and future for the Department.
- **Talent Development:** A demonstrated commitment to recruiting, retaining, mentoring, and developing outstanding faculty and staff; the ability to set clear expectations, foster accountability, empower others with meaningful autonomy, and cultivate the next generation of academic and organizational leaders.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** A leadership style grounded in shared governance, faculty and staff engagement, and respect for differing perspectives, coupled with the confidence and judgment to make difficult decisions and move the Department forward.
- **Relationship Building:** The interpersonal agility to build trust and communicate effectively with faculty, staff, students, university leaders, alumni, donors, advisory board members, and industry partners; the ability to foster candid dialogue and navigate differing priorities.
- **External Engagement:** A record of meaningful engagement with academic and professional organizations, alumni, industry partners, advisory boards, donors, and other external stakeholders to enhance the Department's visibility, partnerships, and support; the ability to navigate the political landscape of higher education in Virginia and Virginia Tech's various statewide stakeholders.
- **Enterprise Mindset:** The ability to advocate effectively for the Department while maintaining a broader commitment to the collective success of Pamplin and Virginia Tech and contributing constructively to college-wide strategy and governance.
- **Integrity and Adaptability:** A transparent, trustworthy, approachable, and resilient leadership style characterized by sound judgment, fairness, attentive listening, and a willingness to engage hands-on when needed; a positive, empowering, and can-do approach.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

About Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Overview

Virginia Tech is the Commonwealth of Virginia's most comprehensive university and a leading R1 research institution, offering more than 280 undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs to over 38,000 students across nine colleges. Managing a research portfolio approaching $600 million, the University advances knowledge and discovery that address pressing challenges across the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

Founded as a land-grant institution in 1872, Virginia Tech is deeply committed to accessible education, public service, and research that improves the human condition. This legacy continues to shape the institution's work today through Virginia Tech Advantage—a university-wide commitment to expanding access, affordability, and student success—and Virginia Tech Global Distinction, an ambitious effort to elevate the University's national and international profile through scholarly excellence, faculty distinction, and transformative interdisciplinary research.

Guided by its motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), Virginia Tech embraces a culture of collaboration, service, and engagement. The University's land-grant heritage remains central to its identity, inspiring programs and partnerships that translate research into real-world impact, support communities across the Commonwealth, and prepare graduates to lead in an increasingly interconnected world.

The main campus in Blacksburg spans 2,600 acres, with 235 buildings, cutting-edge research facilities, and a regional airport. The campus is widely recognized for its academic quality, collaborative community, and exceptional student experience, consistently ranking among the top public universities in the United States.

Virginia Tech also maintains a broad geographic footprint, extending its academic and research mission across Virginia and around the globe. This includes a rapidly growing presence in the Washington, D.C. metro area; the Health Sciences and Technology Campus in Roanoke; research and extension facilities throughout the state; and international sites in Europe and other locations that support global research, education, and outreach.

Through its integrated mission of education, research, and engagement, and through bold initiatives such as Virginia Tech Advantage and Virginia Tech Global Distinction, the University is uniquely positioned to shape the future of higher education, contribute to economic and societal progress, and fulfill its enduring commitment to service.

Additional Information

To learn more about Virginia Tech, see the following links:

- Virginia Tech Website
- Facts about Virginia Tech
- University Strategic Plan

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved



About the Pamplin College of Business

The Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech is a highly regarded, AACSB-accredited public business school serving almost 6,000 undergraduate students and approximately 700 graduate students across a comprehensive portfolio of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs.

Pamplin's educational approach reflects a forward-looking, STEM-informed model of business education that integrates AI, analytics, and experiential learning to prepare future-ready leaders. Across disciplines, students engage in applied coursework, industry-sponsored projects, internships, and hands-on learning opportunities that connect academic concepts to practical challenges and emerging business needs.

Distinct Disciplines. Shared Purpose.

The College's academic portfolio spans seven departments, bringing together deep disciplinary expertise, rigorous scholarship, applied learning, and strong industry connections to prepare students for meaningful leadership and shape the future of business.

- Accounting and Information Systems
- Blackwood Department of Real Estate
- Business Information Technology
- Finance, Insurance, and Business Law
- Howard Feiertag Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management
- Management
- Marketing

Built for Innovation. Designed for Impact.

Pamplin's facilities span two primary locations, Blacksburg and Northern Virginia, supporting a unified One Pamplin experience across programs, geographies, and stages of the student journey. This dual-campus presence expands opportunities for industry engagement, experiential learning, and academic offerings responsive to evolving workforce needs.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

Across its facilities, Pamplin is creating environments designed for how business is taught, learned, and practiced today, with spaces that support:

- **Active, student-centered learning** through flexible classroom environments
- **Collaboration and teamwork** through spaces designed for interaction and discussion
- **Technology-enabled instruction** that enhances interactive coursework
- **Real-world problem-solving** that reflects modern business environments

Looking ahead, Pamplin is making a significant investment in the future of business education through the New Business Building (NBB), slated to open in Fall 2027. Designed as a hub for experiential learning, collaboration, and innovation, the NBB represents a transformative opportunity to enhance the student experience, deepen corporate and industry partnerships, and create new avenues for philanthropic engagement and long-term impact.

Next-Gen Business Education

Pamplin's strategic plan sets a forward-looking course for the College as a pioneering, world-class business school that harnesses business as a force for positive change. Grounded in a mission to provide a next-generation, STEM-based business education, conduct rigorous and relevant research, and create meaningful societal impact, the plan is organized around five priorities: undergraduate academic excellence, graduate academic excellence, research excellence, Ph.D. education, and organizational excellence.

Central to this vision is the development of innovative, agile, and career-ready graduates. Pamplin is advancing a model of business education that integrates digital literacy, analytics, and real-world experience throughout the student journey. Pamplin recently launched a fully revised undergraduate education program named Pamplin+ with required AI coursework and transformative experiences, and a collaborative approach to learning.

Other key Pamplin priorities include:

- **Attracting exceptional talent** and strengthening Pamplin's position as a destination for undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D. students;
- **Developing distinctive, future-focused programs** that build on the College's strengths and respond to evolving business and societal needs;
- **Elevating research visibility and impact** within and beyond the University, particularly through multidisciplinary efforts addressing complex global challenges;
- **Strengthening Ph.D. education and placement** through flexible curricula, high-impact scholarship, and an engaged scholarly community;
- **Deepening internal and external partnerships** across Virginia Tech, industry, alumni, and other stakeholder communities; and
- **Advancing organizational excellence** through an enhanced employee experience, aligned resources and structures, operational efficiency, and expanded use of technology and data.

Nearly a century after its founding, Pamplin continues to reflect Virginia Tech's commitment to *Ut Prosim* ("That I May Serve"), the University's motto. Through academic rigor, experiential learning, consequential research, and a values-driven mission, the College prepares principled leaders to generate meaningful impact across industries, communities, and the global economy. Its strategic direction creates significant opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation at the intersection of business, technology, and society.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

About the Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law

The Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law is one of the largest academic units within Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business, with approximately 40 full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, Ph.D. students, and more than 1,500 undergraduate students. Finance is Pamplin's largest major by enrollment, reflecting strong and sustained student demand. Through the AACSB-accredited Pamplin College of Business, the Department provides a comprehensive, hands-on education and has earned recognition among the top 5% of U.S. finance programs and as the #1 program in Virginia for Best Colleges for Accounting and Finance.

Academic Programs and Student Experience

The Department offers a broad portfolio of undergraduate and graduate programs that provide a strong foundation in finance while evolving with the needs of the profession. Undergraduate offerings include a Finance major with four options for focused study and two specialty majors, with coursework spanning finance, analytics, modeling, accounting, and emerging financial technologies.

Distinctive and growing areas include FinTech and a CFP Board Registered Financial Planning program, complemented by Ph.D. education and developing master's-level programming. The rapidly expanding FinTech program is a particular strength, preparing students for an increasingly technology- and data-driven financial landscape.

Experiential learning is central to the student experience. Students apply classroom knowledge through industry engagement, professional development, networking, and student-managed investment programs, including:

SEED: The student-managed Endowment for Educational Development provides students with hands-on investment management experience through a long-only U.S. equities portfolio of more than $5 million on behalf of the Virginia Tech Foundation.

BASIS: A student-managed bond fund responsible for $5 million of the Virginia Tech endowment, the Bond and Securities Investing by Students offers students practical experience managing a fixed-income portfolio while seeking competitive returns for the Virginia Tech Foundation.

CREDIT: The Credit Education Investment Team is a student-run investment group managing a $2 million portfolio of 144A corporate bonds, providing students with the opportunity to analyze high-yield debt and pitch investment recommendations in an experience modeled on the private credit market.

For a full list of student organizations, visit the Department's Student Organization website.

Faculty, Research and External Engagement

The Department brings together tenured and tenure-track scholars, professors of practice, instructors, and adjunct faculty whose work spans research, teaching, and engagement. Significant recent and planned faculty recruitment reflects Pamplin's continued investment in Finance and presents an important opportunity to strengthen the Department's research trajectory, cultivate its next generation of faculty, and further elevate its academic reputation.

Grounded in Virginia Tech's *Ut Prosim* tradition, the Department's research bridges theory and practice to address consequential questions in finance and economic development. Faculty scholarship informs financial decision-making, industry practice, and public policy, with areas of inquiry spanning asset valuation, risk management, capital allocation and financing, institutional investor behavior, corporate governance, monetary policy, and the dynamics of risk in asset markets. Through this work, faculty generate insights intended to support

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

innovation, efficiency, market stability, and informed decision-making among businesses, policymakers, regulators, and investors.

The Department also benefits from strong connections with alumni, industry leaders, and an engaged Finance Advisory Board. The Board helps inform the Department's academic direction and long-term planning, advises on undergraduate and graduate curricula, strengthens student placement networks, and supports the recruitment and retention of outstanding students and faculty through scholarships, professorships, and other investments. Together, these relationships create important opportunities for experiential learning, industry-informed academic innovation, external partnership, and philanthropic engagement.

Looking Ahead

The Department enters its next chapter from a position of considerable strength, with robust enrollment, meaningful institutional investment, growing academic programs, and significant potential for continued distinction. As Pamplin advances the transformation of its curricular and co-curricular experience, including its ambition to become an AI-native business school, Finance has an important opportunity to help define what a forward-looking business education can become.

Priorities for the years ahead include thoughtfully incorporating AI, technology, analytics, FinTech, and other emerging areas of finance into teaching and research; further strengthening graduate and professional education; enhancing scholarly impact; and expanding connections with alumni and industry. Together, these opportunities provide a strong foundation for the Department to build upon its existing momentum while positioning its students, faculty, and programs for the future.

Additional information about the Department, its programs, faculty, and students is available through the Department of Finance, Insurance, and Business Law website.



© WittKieffer. All rights reserved

Leadership

Saonee Sarker | Dean, Pamplin College of Business



Saonee Sarker officially began as Dean of the Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business on July 1, 2023.

Prior to her role as Dean, Saonee (pronounced Sha-o-nee) Sarker served as a professor in the Department of Informatics in the School of Economics and Management at Lund University, Sweden. While at Lund University, she also served as a visiting professor in the Department of Management at the London School of Economics.

Previously, Dean Sarker was at the University of Virginia McIntire School of Commerce from 2013-21, where she held many roles, including senior associate dean for academic affairs, area coordinator of IT, Rolls-Royce Commonwealth Commerce Professor, and professor of IT.

At Washington State University, Sarker's 11-year tenure included service as chair of the Department of Management, Information Systems, and Entrepreneurship; the George and Carolyn Hubman Distinguished Professor in Management Information Systems; an associate professor of information systems; and Ph.D. program coordinator.

Dean Sarker brings a wealth of research experience to the Pamplin College of Business. In the past, she served as a Senior Editor for MIS Quarterly (for two terms) and for the Journal of the AIS. Among her research interests are smart infrastructure and sustainability, healthcare information technology and technostress, technology-enabled collaboration, and more.

Dean Sarker earned a bachelor's degree from Lady Brabourne College (Calcutta University), an MBA from the University of Cincinnati, and a Ph.D. from Washington State University.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved



Blacksburg, Virginia

Nestled on a plateau between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains in Virginia's New River Valley, Blacksburg is a vibrant university town consistently recognized as one of the nation's best places to live. Home to more than 43,000 residents, the town combines the energy of a major research university with the charm, safety, and connectedness of a close-knit community.

Blacksburg offers an exceptional quality of life. Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy unparalleled access to the region's natural beauty, including the Appalachian Trail, Jefferson National Forest, and an extensive network of hiking, biking, fishing, climbing, and kayaking destinations. The town's moderate climate and ready access to green spaces support year-round recreation and community activities.

Located approximately 45 minutes from Roanoke, the cultural and economic hub of Southwest Virginia, Blacksburg benefits from proximity to regional transportation, healthcare, arts, and entertainment amenities while maintaining its distinctive identity as a welcoming and intellectually stimulating place to call home. The town is also within driving distance of several major metropolitan areas, including Washington, D.C. and Charlotte, providing access to broader business, cultural, and travel opportunities.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Virginia Tech in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by January 25, 2027.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's **candidate portal**.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Cathryn Davis & Kim Migoya

VTFinanceDeptHead@wittkieffer.com

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or military status, or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees or applicants, or on any other basis protected by law.

For inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, contact the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Prevention Education at 540-231-2010 or Virginia Tech, 220 Gilbert Street, Suite 5200, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

© WittKieffer. All rights reserved