



Dean, Virginia Tech Honors College Leadership Profile

August 2024



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Virginia Tech seeks a collaborative and visionary leader with a deep commitment to advancing innovation in undergraduate education to serve as the next dean of the Virginia Tech Honors College. Reporting to the executive vice president and provost, the dean serves as the principal academic and administrative officer of the college and an institutional leader in advancing the goals of Virginia Tech. Applications, inquiries, and nominations are invited.

Virginia Tech's main campus is in Blacksburg, Virginia, which is consistently ranked among the country's best places to live. In addition, Virginia Tech has facilities across the state and around the globe, including a strong presence in the Washington, D.C. metro area that is expanding rapidly with the new [Innovation Campus](#) in Alexandria, Virginia slated to open in 2025. As the Commonwealth of Virginia's most comprehensive university and a leading research institution, Virginia Tech offers about 110 undergraduate majors and more than 120 master's and doctoral degree programs to more than 38,000 students and manages a research portfolio of close to \$600 million. The university fulfills its role as a land-grant institution by fostering a collaborative environment that integrates technology into all disciplines, so that the Virginia Tech community can serve as a force for positive change around the Commonwealth, the country, and the world. Through experiential learning, future-focused research, and an inclusive, spirited culture, Virginia Tech strives to accomplish the charge of its motto *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

The Virginia Tech Honors College seeks to inspire and facilitate an extraordinary undergraduate education for a diverse student body of exceptional motivation. Utilizing a flexible curricular framework with a strategic array of experiences, opportunities, and facilities, the Honors College pioneers progressive, innovative approaches to undergraduate education that can be scaled up across the university. The Honors College enrolls approximately 1,700 students who are taught by a dedicated team of Collegiate Faculty, Professors of Practice, and Affiliated Faculty distinguished by their transdisciplinary vision, research achievements, and commitment to excellence in undergraduate teaching. Students in the Honors College work toward the Honors Laureate Diploma, a flexible course of study plan featuring unique and transformative learning opportunities that emphasize collaborative discovery and experiential learning. The Honors Minor in Collaborative Discovery is an optional minor that offers a curated approach to completing the Honors Laureate Diploma requirements. Since transitioning from a program to a college in 2016, the Honors College has transformed its curriculum and teaching methods to focus on transdisciplinarity through studio pedagogy, research methods, and experiential learning including community engagement and service-learning. This approach offers students the concepts, capacities, and experiences they will need to thrive in the 21st century workplace and civic sphere.

The new dean has an exceptional opportunity to have a positive and constructive impact in charting the future of the Honors College, grounded in a commitment to outstanding undergraduate teaching and research in the context of a vibrantly collaborative and transdisciplinary environment. They will fulfill the college's vision of serving as a testbed for innovation in education and maintaining the current trajectory as a platform to propagate this innovation across the university. Within this broader vision, the dean will ensure an ongoing commitment to an exceptional student experience. Supporting the success of, and fostering a sense of belonging among, the Honors College students, faculty, and staff are top priorities. The new dean will champion inclusive excellence, including recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented faculty, staff, and student body. The incoming dean will also work collaboratively with the provost, academic deans, and other university leaders to align the Honors College with the university's goals and aspirations. The incoming dean will build relationships across the campus to promote, advocate for, and expand transdisciplinary, experiential undergraduate education and research across the university. Working closely with Advancement Division colleagues, the dean will develop, lead, and support the college's fundraising and external relations activities, and ensure high visibility for the Honors College. The Virginia Tech community seeks a dean who will be a highly engaged and accessible leader.

The next dean must have a record of scholarly achievement appropriate for a tenured appointment at the level of full professor in a department within the university. They must have a steadfast commitment to innovation in undergraduate education in the context of a comprehensive research environment and must have a track record of advancing inclusive excellence. The new dean must have a record of administrative leadership and demonstrate the administrative, fiscal, and operational acumen required to manage a distinctive program in the context of a large, complex institution. The dean should demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities and exceptional interpersonal, collaboration, and communication skills. Additionally, the dean should demonstrate the potential and desire to forge strong relationships and engage donors, alumni, and others in enhancing philanthropic support for the college.

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

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Reporting directly to the executive vice president and provost, the dean has responsibility for providing academic leadership and administrative management for all programs within the Honors College and for the college's future direction, planning, outreach efforts, and fundraising. As a member of the university's academic leadership team, the dean works in collaboration with the provost and a talented team of deans and other executive officers to implement the university's mission and is an active leader both within the Virginia Tech and greater communities.

In leading the Honors College, the new dean will prioritize the following objectives.

Provide visionary leadership and innovation in Honors education

- **Inspire and execute a dynamic vision:** Continue to lead and embody the Honors College's cutting-edge vision, aligning with Virginia Tech's commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge. Leverage the university's motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), as a driving force for positive change.
- **Champion innovation in undergraduate education:** Position the Honors College as a national leader in innovative teaching, research, and experiential learning. Collaborate with faculty, university leaders, and academic partners to develop and scale progressive approaches to undergraduate education, ensuring their integration across the university and curriculum.
- **Enhance and evolve the curriculum:** Build upon and refine the Honors College's distinctive curriculum and innovative structure, respecting its successful foundations while driving continuous improvement and adaptation.
- **Promote experiential and transdisciplinary learning:** Maintain a commitment to exceptional honors education by prioritizing experiential learning through real-world projects with industry, non-profits, and community partners, fostering a transdisciplinary approach.
- **Articulate a forward-looking vision:** Develop and communicate a compelling vision for the future of undergraduate education, positioning the VT Honors College as a leader in addressing evolving labor market demands and national needs. Provide insights and guidance on national and regional trends in honors education to ensure alignment with university goals.
- **Engage in the national dialogue on educational innovation:** Contribute to the broader national conversation about the future of undergraduate education, positioning the Virginia Tech Honors College at the forefront of educational innovation and transformation.

Foster inclusive excellence and build community

- **Cultivate a collaborative and inclusive culture:** Ensure a positive, collegial, and highly collaborative work environment that embraces openness, transparency, and diversity of thought. Promote an atmosphere of belonging where all faculty, staff, and students feel welcomed, valued, and included.
- **Advance inclusive excellence:** Develop and implement strategies to promote inclusive excellence across the Honors College, ensuring equitable access and opportunities for all members of the college community. Champion initiatives that address disparities and support an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are integrated into all aspects of academic and community life.
- **Recruit and retain diverse talent:** Actively recruit and retain a diverse and talented Honors College faculty, staff, and student body. Understand and address the unique needs of Collegiate Faculty, Professors of Practice, and Affiliated Faculty, fostering their commitment to and full engagement with the Honors College through trust, recognition, and flexibility.
- **Support faculty excellence and visibility:** Empower faculty to develop national visibility in their research areas, including the scholarship of teaching and learning. Encourage contributions to both disciplinary and transdisciplinary research, enhancing faculty's content knowledge, collaboration capacity, and classroom credibility.
- **Enhance the student experience:** Ensure that students receive an exceptional honors education focused on experiential learning, undergraduate research, and collaborative real-world problem-solving. Leverage transdisciplinary approaches to build on students' disciplinary knowledge.
- **Strengthen community connections and leadership:** Provide visible, accessible, and engaged leadership that reinforces the strong community within the Honors College. Maintain and enhance ties with student affairs through the living-learning communities, fostering leadership and service skills while building lasting social connections.



Enhance the visibility and engagement of the Honors College

- **Enhance the visibility of the Honors College:** Communicate the mission and achievements of the Honors College to the university community, emphasizing its unique strengths. Promote the accomplishments of its students and faculty across campus and on a national level to further elevate its profile.
- **Strengthen donor engagement and support:** Develop and inspire a strong base of donor support by participating in fundraising, donor relations, and alumni activities in collaboration with university leadership. Work to secure the necessary resources to support a robust advancement program that benefits the Honors College.
- **Engage the campus community in innovative pedagogy:** Actively involve affiliate faculty and the wider campus community in the Honors College's mission as an incubator and testbed for innovative teaching methods. Secure resources to support collaborative efforts that advance cutting-edge pedagogy, ensuring that the college remains at the forefront of educational innovation and contributes to the broader academic environment.



Provide strategic leadership and organizational management

- **Demonstrate strategic leadership and financial expertise:** Guide the Honors College with a strong understanding of complex financial management and budgetary strategies. Collaborate with university leadership to secure stable, long-term funding that aligns with the college's strategic priorities.

- **Cultivate and empower the leadership team:** Foster a culture of collaboration and empowerment by recognizing and nurturing the strengths of the college's leadership team. Delegate effectively and support professional development, ensuring the team is equipped to contribute to the college's and university's goals.
- **Provide high-level oversight of college operations:** Strategically manage the college's key functions, ensuring alignment with broader university objectives. Focus on optimizing resources and processes to enhance the college's impact within the university and beyond.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

- A clear passion for and demonstrated commitment to outstanding undergraduate education. Experience with interdisciplinary, curricular, and pedagogical innovation and development, promotion, and adoption of new technologies and program assessment.
- The ability to develop a vision and strategic direction and support an environment that enables and empowers the college faculty and staff to succeed in accomplishing it.
- A strong commitment to student success, demonstrated by advocacy for resources to support innovative teaching, academic advising, and the student experience.
- Collaborative, transparent, inclusive, and relationship-based leadership style; experience bringing people together to solve new and complex challenges; experience supporting and encouraging the leadership of others.
- A history of administrative leadership, including personnel management, budget, and financial management, development, strategic planning, and policy formation.
- An ability to play a key role in university leadership, advocate for the college, and forge advantageous and strategic connections across the university.
- Leadership and facility in change management, with the ability to set priorities, build consensus, influence change, and inspire high levels of creativity and collegiality.
- A history of fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and thought. Broad intellectual interests and curiosity and the ability and eagerness to build effective programs and partnerships across disciplines, within and throughout academic units, the university, and the broader non-profit and corporate communities.
- Demonstrated success in recruiting and retaining a talented and diverse faculty and staff and in supporting their academic and professional aspirations.
- Demonstrated capacity to work well in a complex, collaborative, decision-making environment. Deep commitment to shared governance.
- Demonstrated understanding and commitment to Virginia Tech's land-grant mission and how the Honors College contributes to this mission.

- A personal commitment to access and demonstrated success in building a culture of the highest ethics which advances inclusive excellence.
- The capacity and drive to attract external resources to the college through fundraising initiatives of all types, including from grants and private donors; the ability to promote, advocate for, and represent the college.
- Strong oral and written communication skills; exceptional listening skills.
- Unquestioned personal integrity: ability to earn the trust of faculty, staff, and students and work effectively with the president, the provost, the other deans, and the senior leadership team; the ability to respond with resilience under pressure and through change; emotional and social intelligence.
- A terminal degree and a record in teaching, research/creative activity, and professional service to merit appointment as tenured full professor at Virginia Tech is required.



About the Honors College

The Virginia Tech Honors College seeks to inspire and facilitate an extraordinary undergraduate education for a diverse student body of exceptional motivation. Utilizing a flexible curricular framework with a strategic array of experiences, opportunities, and facilities, the college pioneers progressive, innovative approaches to undergraduate education that can be scaled up across the university.

This distinctive approach to education fosters transdisciplinary innovation, bringing together 1,700 – 1,800 students and [faculty](#) from various disciplines to address complex real-world problems. VT Honors College students gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of different fields, harness the power of collective disciplinary differences, and develop the skills needed to address the most pressing challenges of our time.

The VT Honors College prioritizes experiential learning, providing students with opportunities to apply what they have learned in practical, real-world settings. Through immersive courses and studios, students work alongside nonprofit, industry, university, and community partners to explore and respond to complex issues, whether conducting quantitative and qualitative research or engaging in hands-on projects.

In the VT Honors College, the collective process of discovery is highly valued, where students and faculty engage in collaborative inquiry to push the boundaries of knowledge. Through critical questioning, thoughtful discussion, and the development of well-informed perspectives, students contribute to a rich network of ideas and illuminate new avenues of exploration. By embracing diverse viewpoints on complex problems, Honors students generate critical solutions and make significant contributions as 21st century workers and citizens.

Signature Programs

Honors Laureate Diploma

All Virginia Tech Honors College students work toward the completion of the Honors Laureate Diploma (HLD), which is the certification earned by completing Honors academic requirements. By completing the HLD, students have engaged in a variety of unique and transformational learning opportunities that emphasize collaborative discovery and experiential learning. HLD requirements are highly flexible and allow students to customize their Honors experience.

Honors Minor in Collaborative Discovery

The Honors Minor in Collaborative Discovery is an optional minor that offers a curated approach to Honors education. Students complete a prescribed collection of Honors College courses that allow them to progress through stages of collaborative discovery. The courses complement the work students are doing in-major while providing opportunities to converse and collaborate with students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. By completing the Honors Minor, students will automatically also complete the Honors Laureate Diploma, adding considerable value beyond their disciplinary education.

Presidential Global Scholars

The Presidential Global Scholars program (PGS) is a collaborative living-learning and research community in which ambitious Honors students work together, with award-winning faculty, and with the resources and opportunities in Europe and beyond to better understand the world and what they might accomplish in it. The purpose of PGS is to help students discover, commit to, and act upon a compelling personal interest in a pressing transcultural issue.

Calhoun Honors Discovery Program

The Calhoun Honors Discovery Program (CHDP) combines a structured disciplinary education with an open-ended, collaborative, and transdisciplinary discovery process. Students collaborate with one another across

disciplines, as well as work alongside faculty, industry, and non-profit partners. After four years of learning the process of discovery, innovation, and problem-solving, students will be prepared to face the real world. Calhoun Honors Discovery Program students will complete an Honors Collaborative Discovery Diploma (HCDD). The HCDD is limited to students in 14 participating programs that span to engineering, science, business, design arts, humanities, and policy. Only students in the 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 graduating classes may receive the HCDD in this four-year pilot program. The Calhoun Honors Discovery Program is at capacity with 140 students.

Additional Information

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

- [Virginia Tech Honors College Website](#)
- [Faculty and Staff](#)
- [Honors Colleges, Transdisciplinary Education, and Global Challenges](#), by Dean Paul Knox and Associate Dean Paul Heilker
- [The Virginia Tech Honors Minor: Mapping a guided path for students to take risks in collaborative discovery](#), by Rachael Budowle, Collegiate Assistant Professor and Community Engagement Lead, Anne-Lise Velez, Collegiate Associate Professor and Studio Lead, and Stephanie N. Lewis, Collegiate Associate Professor and Methods Lead

About Virginia Tech

As the Commonwealth of Virginia's most comprehensive university and a leading R1 research institution, [Virginia Tech](#) offers approximately 280 degree programs to more than 38,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students across the commonwealth and manages a research portfolio of close to \$600 million. The university fulfills its role as a land-grant institution by fostering a collaborative environment that integrates technology into all disciplines, so the Virginia Tech community can serve as a force for positive change around Virginia, the country, and the world. Through experiential learning, future-focused research, and an inclusive, spirited culture, Virginia Tech strives to accomplish the charge of its motto [Ut Prosim \(That I May Serve\)](#).

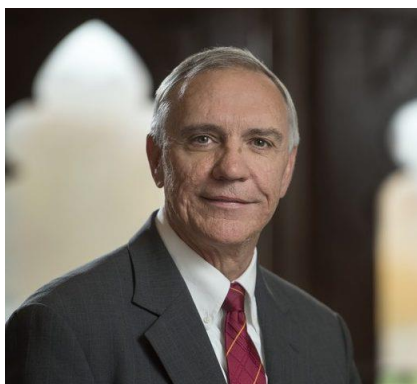
Located in Blacksburg, Virginia, the main campus includes 235 buildings, 2,600 acres of land, and an airport. Virginia Tech is consistently recognized for its value and the quality of its programs and is [ranked](#) 23rd in Top Public Schools, 54th in National Science Foundation total R&R expenditure rankings, and 47th in Best National University rankings in the United States. Virginia Tech has a significant presence across the commonwealth, including the Innovation Campus and other sites in Northern Virginia, the Health Sciences and Technology Campus in Roanoke, and sites in Newport News and Richmond; educational and research facilities across the state; a study-abroad site in Switzerland; and an 1,800-acre agriculture research farm near the main campus.

The dean will join Virginia Tech at an exciting time of growth. The university's 16th president, Timothy D. Sands, who began his tenure in 2014, has led the university community in a long-term, future-focused visioning process to ensure Virginia Tech's position as a global land-grant university leader for the coming generations. This was followed by strategic planning that builds on key opportunities including defining the Virginia Tech's aspiration to global distinction and a new access and affordability program: [Virginia Tech Advantage](#).

Building on its motto, *Ut Prosim (That I May Serve)*, Virginia Tech is dedicated to [InclusiveVT](#) – an institutional and individual commitment to community and inclusive excellence. The institution seeks candidates who adopt and practice the Principles of Community, which are fundamental to the university's ongoing efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all its members. Virginia Tech actively seeks a broad spectrum of qualified candidates to join its community in preparing leaders for a diverse, global society and encourages individuals across racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, ability, international, and other identities to apply.

Leadership

Executive Vice President and Provost Cyril Clarke



A veterinarian, clinical pharmacologist, teacher, researcher, and academic leader, Dr. Cyril R. Clarke became the executive vice president and provost of Virginia Tech in January 2019, after serving in an interim capacity since November 2017.

A native of Johannesburg, South Africa, Clarke earned his professional veterinary degree from the University of Pretoria, South Africa, a Ph.D. in veterinary pharmacology from Louisiana State University, and a master's degree in higher education from Oklahoma State University. He is certified as a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Clinical Pharmacology.

Clarke's initial faculty appointment in 1987 was at Oklahoma State University, where he also served as an academic department head and as associate dean for academic affairs in the Center for Veterinary Health Sciences. Funded by corporate, state, and federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Institutes of Health, Clarke's research

focused on the interactions between antibacterial agents, animal patients, and infectious microbes. He is a recipient of the Pfizer Award for Research Excellence.

In 2007, Clarke was appointed to the position of Lois Bates Acheson Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oregon State University. During his time as dean, Clarke continued to teach pharmacology to veterinary students. In addition to receiving a Certificate of Excellence in Teaching, Clarke was honored with the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association's President's Award. He subsequently joined Virginia Tech in October 2013, as dean of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine.

Clarke has held leadership positions in several professional organizations, including the board of directors for the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges and past president of the American College of Veterinary Clinical Pharmacology. He is also a past member of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board and the AVMA Council on Education, the accrediting agency for veterinary medical education in North America.

Additional Information

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

- [Virginia Tech Website](#)
- [Facts about Virginia Tech](#)
- [University Strategic Plan](#)

Blacksburg, Virginia

Nestled on a plateau between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains, the Town of Blacksburg is part of Montgomery County in the heart of Southwest Virginia's New River Valley. Because of the town's award-winning services, reasonable cost of living, safety, moderate climate, and abundant leisure activities, Blacksburg is consistently ranked among the country's best places to live and has a nationwide reputation as a well-managed, stable, and forward-looking community. Blacksburg is located on the I-81 corridor approximately 45 minutes from Roanoke. Blacksburg is home to over 43,000 residents and is the 15th largest municipality in the State of Virginia

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 the Virginia Tech in this search. For full consideration, candidate materials should be received by October 1, 2024.

Applications, nominations, and inquiries can be directed to Suzanne Teer and Lauren Bruce-Stets at VirginiaTechHonorsDean@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 for Equity and Accessibility at 540-231-2010 or Virginia Tech, 220 Gilbert Street, Suite 5200, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

