



Chair
Department of Economics
College of Arts and Science
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN

THE SEARCH

The Department of Economics at Vanderbilt University (Vanderbilt) seeks a visionary and dedicated scholar and administrative leader to serve as its next Department Chair. The Chair will prioritize academic excellence and will be an essential driver of discovery, teaching, and impact at the Department, College, and University level.

Part of the College of Arts and Science (A&S), the Department of Economics is home to one of the largest undergraduate major programs at the University, strong masters and Ph.D. programs, and a dedicated faculty 37 strong. The Chair will foster and enhance the research mission of the Department, and will be a vital leader in defining and advancing the Department's work. Working with faculty colleagues, the Chair will lead a visioning process and play a critical role in facilitating strategic, cross-campus collaborations. As a dynamic mentor and intellectual leader, the Chair will support the growth and development of both faculty and students.

The successful candidate will be an economist with a distinguished research record. They will be by nature a collaborator and communicator, with a record of administrative leadership experience, and display a passion for elevating the work of individuals, teams, and units with whom they work.

Vanderbilt has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

The Department of Economics at Vanderbilt is among the leading departments of economic study in the country. Home to one of the most popular undergraduate majors, a rigorous and rewarding M.A. program, and a strong Ph.D. program, the Department represents the best of the teaching and research mission at Vanderbilt.

Home to 750 undergraduate students, the Department of Economics embodies Vanderbilt's strength in undergraduate education. In addition to a standard major and minor in economics, the Department offers a major in economics and history jointly with the Department of History and a minor in political economy jointly with the Department of Political Science. Enrollment has grown significantly over the last five years, and projections for the coming years remain strong.

Originally a summer institute for international students, the M.A. program, also known as the Graduate Program in Economic Development (GDEP), maintains its international character. With a cohort of just 25-30 students yearly, the program's alumni network represents 136 countries.

The PhD program accepts 8-12 students per year and places students in a variety of academic and government institutions, international organizations, and private sector firms.

The Department is home to a vibrant 37-member faculty. With strengths in applied microeconomics, econometrics, economic history, and international economics, it is a diverse faculty especially well-suited to addressing policy issues of global import. Faculty regularly publish in top journals, are recipients of major grants, including from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, and are associated with leading economic research groups including the National Bureau of Economic Research and several Federal Reserve Banks. Faculty are committed members of the community, dedicated to both teaching and research.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Among the opportunities and challenges the next Chair will be expected to tackle are the following:

Develop a strategic vision

The next Chair must advance a bold and galvanizing vision for the Department, capitalizing on this strategic moment and continuing the evolution of Economics at Vanderbilt. The Chair will look to define and capitalize on the historical and current strengths of the Department, apprehend emerging needs, and identify strategic areas of excellence and avenues for strategic growth. The Chair will demonstrate future-state thinking, preparing the Department for long-term excellence, demonstrating and cultivating a spirit of boldness and a culture of innovation.

Successful enactment will see the Department have an intentional internal and external identity and reputation of distinction.

Foster research excellence

The Chair will be both a guide and catalyst that promotes exemplary research within the department. They will ensure that standards of excellence are known and maintained, that faculty are connected with resources to facilitate such research, and that opportunities and strengths are known and capitalized upon.

Maintain excellence in teaching

With one of the largest undergraduate populations at Vanderbilt, the Department bears a significant teaching load, a responsibility it takes seriously. The Chair will maintain and strengthen a culture of excellence in teaching throughout the Department that embodies the best of the Vanderbilt mission to serve undergraduate students.

Recruit, retain, and advance faculty

The Chair will lead a faculty of top quality. The Chair must set the tone for excellence and prioritize investments in people through attention to faculty hiring, retention, mentorship, and development that meet the highest academic standards. They will nurture a culture that is supportive, prioritizes well-being, and provides opportunities for professional growth. The Chair will be the principal advocate for the Department, marshalling resources to support further investment in recruitment, retention, and faculty development, and enthusiastically promoting the good work of faculty in the Department both internally and externally.

Grow and enhance connectivity across the Department, College, and University

The Chair will foster a new level of interdisciplinary work in the Department and ensure that Economics is a department that embraces collaboration across the College of Arts and Science and the University at Large. They will work to identify opportunities for external collaboration and provide structure and support where needed.

Promote organizational excellence across the Department

The Chair will join a Department that has a high standard for operational excellence and a strong culture, and will work to ensure that the Department functions at a high level to the benefit of students, faculty, and staff. They will ensure that leadership is prevalent throughout the unit, and that members of the Department develop leadership skills and participate in college and university-level governance. They will promote a culture of belonging, collegiality, and collaboration that values the well-being of its community. The Chair will prioritize transparency

and clarity in decision making, and place a high value on communication throughout the Department.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications, experiences, and characteristics:

- An earned doctorate or terminal degree. A record of scholarship appropriate for leadership of a distinguished department at a major university, with an appointment as tenured full professor.
- A track record of organizational leadership evincing a commitment to the collective good.
- Demonstrated success communicating and implementing new ideas collaboratively. Clear evidence of ability to translate strategy into action. Intellectual curiosity and informed engagement.
- A nuanced understanding of the field of economics and ability support faculty and guide promotion and tenure processes.
- A commitment to academic excellence; a dedicated to teaching and commitment to liberal arts education at the undergraduate and graduate level; a proven mentor and passion for supporting the work of others.
- Excellent communication skills, oral and written: ability to articulate decisions consistently and clearly, with tact and diplomacy.

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, applications, and nominations may be sent in confidence to:

Katie Rockman, Partner
Andy Marshall, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/vanderbilt-university-college-arts-and-science/chair-department-economics>

Vanderbilt University strives to create an environment where individuals feel valued, understood and integral to our collective success, upholding high standards of professionalism and our beliefs of belonging, collaboration, self-direction and growth. Vanderbilt University is an equal-opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran, or any other characteristic protected

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

The [College of Arts and Science \(A&S\)](#) is fundamental and critical to the University. It constitutes the liberal arts core of one of the world's preeminent research institutions and strengthens the whole of Vanderbilt's education and research endeavors through interdisciplinary exploration, critical analysis, and curiosity across boundaries. It is itself uniquely powerful for its connection to and position within the same whole. Fully realized, A&S exemplifies the best of modern higher education and the value of the liberal arts.

The College's distinction among arts and science units at other institutions is twofold. First, it is scaled perfectly for substantive collaboration: notably, in contrast to what obtains elsewhere, the College has substantive pedagogical and research ties to all of the schools and colleges including undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. It is frequently said that arts and sciences are the "intellectual heart" of a research university; at Vanderbilt, A&S is both the heart and the connective tissue.

Second, the College operates from a position of fundamental health as well as openness to experimentation. The College boasts an exceptionally collegial culture. Faculty across departments support one another, and the environment fosters collaboration and a spirit of shared enterprise. In that spirit, the College has engaged in a multi-year process examining and reconsidering the core curriculum, resulting in the new [A&S College Core](#) launching in the fall of 2025.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt University, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is one of the top research universities in the nation. Created from an initial \$1 million gift from Cornelius Vanderbilt, who envisioned a place that would "contribute to strengthening the ties that should exist between all sections of our common country," the University is situated on a 330-acre campus near the thriving city center. Vanderbilt employs almost 7,000 faculty and staff, and serves more than 13,000 students across 10 schools and colleges. The College of Connected Computing, Vanderbilt's 11th college, will enroll its first students in the fall 2026 semester.

Vanderbilt offers undergraduate programs in the liberal arts and science, education and human development, engineering, and music, as well as a full range of graduate and professional degrees. Its strength in the liberal arts—combined with nationally recognized programs in business, creative writing, divinity, education, engineering, law, medicine, music, and nursing—prepares its graduates for lives of impact, discovery, creativity, and service. Over the last 15 years, Vanderbilt has achieved an astonishing record of success in recruiting the very best students, with the undergraduate admit rate going from 33 percent to 5.1 percent. Vanderbilt continues to

expand its reach globally, pursuing bold proposals to advance scholarship, reputation, and impact, to deepen student experience, and to recruit on a global scale.

To be at Vanderbilt is to live, learn, and work in a generative and inclusive environment. Instilling a deep sense of belonging is a core value at the institution. The University's leadership is committed to pursuing new and innovative approaches and investing resources to strengthen belonging for everyone at the institution. Identity, equity, diversity, and inclusion are priorities across the campus.

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees. Vanderbilt is a member of the Association of American Universities.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Daniel Diermeier is the ninth chancellor of Vanderbilt University. He joined Vanderbilt in 2020, after serving as Provost at the University of Chicago and, before that, Dean of the Harris School of Public Policy at Chicago. Earlier in his career, he was on the faculty of Stanford University and Northwestern University.

An internationally renowned scholar of political science and managerial leadership, Diermeier has launched several ambitious initiatives at Vanderbilt, including Destination Vanderbilt; a bold commitment to recruit and hire stellar faculty at an increased rate; Dialog Vanderbilt, an intentional effort to consistently advance and more deeply imbed the university's long-held values of free expression, civil discourse and institutional neutrality across campus and beyond; and The Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy, which seeks to elevate evidence-based reasoning in the national conversation. During his tenure the University has also launched Vandy United, a \$300 million fundraising campaign focused on Vanderbilt student-athletes, athletics programs, and Commodore fans, the largest undertaking of its kind in the University's history.

A first-generation college graduate, Diermeier earned a PhD in political science from the University of Rochester. He holds master's degrees in political science from the University of Rochester and the University of Munich, and also earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Southern California. In 2013 he was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as a political scientist and game theorist.

C. Cybele Raver serves as the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Vanderbilt University. An esteemed developmental psychologist whose leadership has spanned research, academic, and administrative settings, Raver oversees all faculty, staff, programs, and initiatives for Vanderbilt's 10 schools and colleges. Raver is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and is the Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Psychology and Human Development at Peabody College.

Before her tenure at Vanderbilt, she was deputy provost at New York University. She has held faculty positions at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy and Cornell University's Department of Human Development. Throughout her career, she has received prestigious awards from the American Psychological Association and the William T. Grant Foundation, and has been granted support from the MacArthur Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation, in which she garnered more than \$24 million in funding.