



President
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA

THE SEARCH

Virginia Tech, one of the nation's leading public research universities, seeks a visionary and dynamic leader to serve as its next president. At a pivotal moment in its trajectory, Virginia Tech is poised to expand its national prominence, deepen its research impact, and further define the role of a modern land-grant university in addressing society's most complex challenges. The university has enjoyed a sustained period of growth this century to develop into an institution not only indispensable to the Commonwealth of Virginia, but vital to the prosperity of the nation and capable of impacting the world through its work advancing knowledge, educating leaders, and serving society through its motto, *Ut Prosim* ("That I May Serve"). In just the past decade, the university experienced a 30 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment, 200 percent increase in applications, 70 percent increase in extramural research expenditures, and 185 percent increase in the university's endowment. Virginia Tech recently surpassed the goals of the largest fundraising campaign in university history, raising more than \$2 billion. Virginia Tech has expanded its footprint and its impact across the Commonwealth with the opening of Academic Building One, an 11-story facility in Alexandria that is home to the Institute for Advanced Learning (IAC) and programs and partnerships that will advance research, education, and outreach as part of Virginia Tech's emerging innovation network and serve as the nexus for a broad [Washington, D.C. metropolitan strategy](#). The university has significantly advanced a robust and growing [Health Sciences and Technology Campus](#) in Roanoke through its partnership with Carilion Clinic to create the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and with the founding of the [Fralin Biomedical Research Institute](#) (FBRI). These initiatives resulted in Virginia Tech's economic impact in Roanoke more than doubling from \$214 million in 2017 to \$475 million in 2025. Virginia Tech was also recently selected as a co-leader of a [Department of Energy national lab in Newport News](#).

Founded in 1872 as a land grant university, Virginia Tech serves more than 38,000 students including 8,000 graduate and professional students across nine colleges and offers more than 280 undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs. It is the commonwealth's largest and most comprehensive university, with an operating budget of \$2.5 billion, an endowment of \$2.4 billion, and a rapidly growing

research enterprise of just over \$700 million—placing it among the top 6 percent of universities in the nation. Widely recognized for its academic excellence, collaborative culture, commitment to service, exceptional student experience, and athletic distinction, Virginia Tech consistently ranks among the top-25 public universities in the nation. It is also distinguished as one of only three universities with an active [Corps of Cadets](#) with a mission to produce ethical leaders within a “civilian” lifestyle on campus.

Virginia Tech has built a national reputation for integrating teaching, research, and engagement in service to the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond. This legacy continues to shape key institutional priorities such as [Virginia Tech Advantage](#), a university-wide commitment to ensure financial accessibility and student success, as well as [Virginia Tech Global Distinction](#), an initiative to elevate the university’s national and international standing through scholarly excellence, faculty distinction, and high-impact research. Together, these efforts reflect a broader ambition: to expand opportunity while advancing discovery that improves the human condition.

The next president of Virginia Tech will capitalize on this momentum and the opportunities to lead this complex, multi-campus institution. The president will be expected to articulate and execute a bold vision that advances Virginia Tech’s position among the world’s leading public research universities. Key priorities include advancing academic and research excellence, championing the university’s land-grant mission, supporting competitive and principled athletics, expanding the impact of Virginia Tech on the commonwealth and beyond, and leading comprehensive fundraising efforts. Virginia Tech seeks a leader with experience, judgment, and credibility to inspire and guide a complex public institution with high aspirations and deliver results aligned with its mission.

Virginia Tech has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important search. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech’s 2,600-acre main campus in Blacksburg, a town located 38 miles southwest of Roanoke in Virginia’s New River Valley, anchors a broad and expanding institutional footprint across Virginia and around the globe. The university has a presence in every Virginia county through its Virginia Cooperative Extension agents. In addition to its expansion in Roanoke and Northern Virginia, Virginia Tech’s presence includes 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 university’s global presence includes a robust set of programs and partnerships with more than 80 universities spanning Europe, South America, and Asia. This distributed model enables Virginia Tech to operate as both a deeply rooted and globally engaged institution.

Through experiential learning, future-focused research, and a highly collaborative culture, Virginia Tech engages students and faculty in hands-on discovery, advancing knowledge that addresses the challenges of tomorrow, and fostering an academic community where every individual feels a sense of shared

purpose. The university seeks to advance discoveries and cultivate leaders whose ideas and actions reshape society, redefine possibility, and chart a better future for the world. Virginia Tech is consistently recognized for its academic strength, value, and outcomes. In the 2026 U.S. News & World Report rankings, the university was tied for No. 21 among top public universities and No. 51 overall among national universities. Virginia Tech's more than 2,500 faculty members are recognized leaders across disciplines, earning competitive grants and honors while advancing teaching and discovery. Their work spans engineering innovation, agricultural advancement, public policy, health sciences, and the humanities. Virginia Tech is home to approximately 3,400 staff members, who play a critical role in university operations, student support, and research administration.

Virginia Tech's long-term direction is guided by its strategic framework, [*The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*](#), which reflects its land-grant mission and global aspirations. The plan is organized around four central priorities: advancing regional, national, and global impact; elevating the university's distinctive service-oriented culture; becoming a destination for top talent; and ensuring institutional excellence. Through these priorities, the university seeks to expand research and innovation, strengthen inclusive access and student success, and deepen partnerships that improve communities across the commonwealth and beyond. Building on this foundation, Virginia Tech recently launched a new strategic planning cycle to further its "Beyond Boundaries" vision, focusing on the future of learning, research, and engagement while reinforcing its role as a global leader among land-grant universities committed to service and impact.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

Advance Virginia Tech's research enterprise to top-tier national prominence

With more than \$700 million in annual research expenditures, Virginia Tech is among the top tier of federally funded public research universities. Over the past decade, the institution has demonstrated particular strength in engineering, computing, national security, and applied sciences as the percentage of federal funding in its research portfolio has grown. This momentum is reflected in signature platforms such as the [*National Security Institute*](#), the [*Institute for Advanced Computing*](#), and its recent designation by the U.S. Department of Energy to lead a joint venture with Jefferson Lab in Newport News. The establishment of the Health Sciences and Technology Campus in Roanoke has also allowed the university to establish a foothold in medical research. A 2024 National Science Foundation report ranked Virginia Tech second in the nation in percentage funding growth from the Department of Health and Human Services, driven primarily by the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute. With established capabilities in areas of critical importance to the nation, Virginia Tech has the opportunity to align its research agenda with federal and state funding priorities while expanding relationships with corporate partners.

These efforts create an exciting platform for Virginia Tech to develop the impact and scale of its research to advance from its current status as a top-tier research university to a national leader in multiple areas of global importance. This will require the next president to make strategic investments in a competitive and changing environment for research funding and foster connections across a sprawling research

enterprise by leveraging its [institutes and centers](#) to pursue strategic cross-disciplinary opportunities. The next president will ensure that Virginia Tech's research strengths are clearly articulated and recognized externally. They will play a central role in aligning incentives, strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, and ensuring that research priorities are pursued cohesively rather than in isolation. Continued investment in faculty talent, graduate education, and research infrastructure will remain essential, as will the expansion of partnerships with federal agencies and industry partners to advance Virginia Tech's position among the leading public research universities.

Leverage Virginia Tech's statewide presence as a defining institutional differentiator

To fully realize the potential of Virginia Tech's presence across the commonwealth, the president must lead a concerted effort to connect resources and people across all physical locations in the state: from the main campus and the [Corporate Research Center](#) in Blacksburg, to the Health Science and Technology Campus in Roanoke, across its 11 Agricultural Research and Extension Centers, to advanced manufacturing facilities in Southside, to its new partnerships with Jefferson Lab and [Children's National Hospital](#), and especially to Northern Virginia and the greater Washington D.C. area, including [Academic Building One](#) in Alexandria.

The Alexandria campus, anchored by Academic Building One, represents one of the most strategically significant assets in the university's portfolio and a transformational opportunity for the next phase of institutional advancement. Situated in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region, the campus places the university in direct proximity to policy and decision-makers, funders, and industry partners shaping national priorities. The approximately one million-square-foot development has its roots in the Commonwealth of Virginia's investment in the university as part of its successful bid to attract [Amazon's HQ2](#) to northern Virginia. Graduate programs are expanding, faculty are in place, and research partnerships are taking shape in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data science. Few public universities operate at this scale within such a strategically important global market. At the same time, stakeholders recognize that the campus's long-term role and full contribution to the university's trajectory remain to be fully defined.

While Virginia Tech's economic impact is felt across Virginia, its position as an economic anchor for Southwest Virginia makes it a key player in the revitalization of the [Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor](#) and a leader in the development of opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships and growth that will bring jobs, investments, and a better quality of life to hundreds of thousands of people across the region. The president will need to prioritize coordination across these efforts, ensuring that institutional investments translate into sustained partnerships, technology transfer, workforce development, and measurable economic impact.

The next president will have the opportunity to translate this physical and geographic presence into sustained academic and institutional advantage. This will require clarifying the strategic purpose and growth trajectory of initiatives across the state and their role in graduate education, research expansion, and industry engagement. Ensuring strong alignment with the Blacksburg campus as well as Virginia Tech's

other assets across the commonwealth will be essential to avoid fragmentation and to reinforce a unified institutional identity. The president will also need to strengthen relationships with federal agencies, corporate partners, and regional stakeholders, positioning Virginia Tech as a preferred partner in high-impact research and workforce development initiatives.

Expand academic medicine and health sciences as a core pillar of the research enterprise

Virginia Tech has built a distinctive and rapidly evolving academic health enterprise anchored by the Virginia Tech-Carilion partnership, which unites the university's strengths in engineering, data science, and bioinformatics with Carilion Clinic's clinical and educational capabilities. This collaboration has produced a fully-integrated ecosystem that includes the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, both central components of the [Health Sciences and Technology Campus](#) in Roanoke. Recent milestones, including the School of Medicine welcoming its largest class in history, underscore the growing scale and national competitiveness of this enterprise. At the same time, the expansion of research partnerships with Children's National Hospital in both Roanoke and Washington, D.C., is extending Virginia Tech's reach in pediatric health, translational science, and clinical research. Together, these efforts advance research aimed at improving patient outcomes and addressing major health challenges, while preparing physician-scientists and interdisciplinary researchers. The partnership model enables close collaboration between scientists and clinicians, accelerating the movement of discoveries from laboratory to bedside and reinforcing Virginia Tech's role as a critical contributor to health innovation across the commonwealth and beyond.

The next president has a significant opportunity to build on this strong foundation by deepening interdisciplinary research, expanding clinical partnerships, scaling commercialization pathways that position Virginia Tech as a national hub for biomedical innovation, and growing the medical school. Strategic investments in emerging areas such as neurotechnology, oncology therapeutics, and medical devices, supported by state initiatives like [Project VITAL](#) and the continued growth of FBRI, are already strengthening the region's biotechnology ecosystem and driving economic development. The growing partnership with Children's National Hospital in Washington D.C. further enhances opportunities to connect clinical expertise with Virginia Tech's strengths in data, engineering, and translational science across multiple locations. By advancing initiatives such as the Smart Health Care Hub and fostering collaborations that span medicine, engineering, and human-centered design, Virginia Tech is well-positioned to more fully integrate health sciences into its broader innovation network. The next president will play a critical role in aligning institutional priorities with these opportunities, ensuring that academic medicine and health sciences remain a central pillar of research, innovation, and societal impact.

Become a national model for 21st-century land-grant impact

Virginia Tech stands at a pivotal moment in its evolution as a leading land-grant university, with a distinctive opportunity to define and set the stage nationally for what 21st-century impact looks like. With deep roots in service and a national and global research profile, the university is uniquely positioned to extend its reach by advancing economic development, strengthening communities, and translating

discovery into meaningful societal outcomes. Its integrated network of campuses, extension programs, and industry partnerships provides a powerful platform for innovation, workforce development, and public engagement.

Virginia Tech is one of only six officially designated Senior Military Colleges (SMC) in the United States, which honors the history and distinction of the Corps of Cadets and its important role in the culture of the university and preparation of citizens who are equipped to lead and trusted to serve in the spirit of Ut Prosim. The next president will have the opportunity to amplify and align these assets, ensuring that Virginia Tech's research, teaching, and outreach efforts collectively serve as a model for how modern land-grant institutions can drive inclusive growth and solve complex challenges. At the same time, realizing this ambition will require clear strategic focus and sustained leadership.

The next president must navigate the increasing expectations placed on public research universities to expand access, elevate research competitiveness, and demonstrate tangible impact while preserving the university's core mission and culture. This includes strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, deepening engagement with partners across the commonwealth and beyond, and ensuring that innovation translates into measurable benefits for society. Successfully balancing these opportunities and challenges will position Virginia Tech not only to lead among its peers but to emerge as a national exemplar of land-grant excellence.

Navigate a rapidly evolving athletics landscape

The next President of Virginia Tech will need to approach athletics not as a standalone enterprise, but as a highly visible component of a broader strategy for institutional ambition, brand elevation, and resource prioritization. [Athletics at Virginia Tech](#) reflects the institution's culture of service and is deeply embedded in [Hokie](#) Nation, a passionate fan base, with long-standing traditions, and a history of highly competitive teams across 22 varsity sports. Since joining the ACC in July 2004, Virginia Tech has won 39 ACC Championships and produced 23 individual national champions. In Spring 2026, Virginia Tech Athletics set records for overall term GPA (3.42) and all teams had semester and cumulative GPAs of 3.00 or higher.

Athletics play a significant role in alumni engagement, student experience, and philanthropic support. In a rapidly shifting national landscape, defined by conference realignment, Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) dynamics, and escalating financial expectations, the president must bring decisiveness and political acuity, setting clear parameters for investment while aligning athletics with the university's land-grant mission and innovation agenda. Virginia Tech has committed to a \$229 million "[Invest to Win](#)" strategy to remain competitive at the highest levels of Division I athletics, alongside a rapidly expanding operating budget approaching \$200 million and growing expectations for revenue generation and donor participation. A recent [\\$75 million gift](#)—the largest in university history—will support "Invest to Win" and [Hokie Ventures](#), a newly formed, affiliated nonprofit designed to make Virginia Tech's athletic department more agile and competitive.

The president must establish clear parameters for investment while ensuring athletics aligns with academic priorities and long-term institutional sustainability. This includes managing new financial models (including expanded scholarships and escalating costs), overseeing emerging enterprise structures such as Hokie Ventures and maintaining accountability for significant institutional and philanthropic investments. Ultimately, athletics serves as both a unifying force and a lever for institutional momentum, enhancing national visibility, strengthening recruitment across students and faculty, and deepening alumni affinity. The next president must bring strategic vision, financial discipline, and a sophisticated understanding of Division I athletics to harness that potential while ensuring it advances Virginia Tech's mission.

Strengthen and sustain the university's financial model

The university's FY27 operating budget totals approximately \$2.5 billion across all funds, reflecting its scale and the breadth of its academic, research, and auxiliary enterprises. Years of good financial stewardship, record-breaking fundraising, a \$2.4 billion endowment, and enrollment growth have created a strong financial foundation that allows Virginia Tech to pursue strategic opportunities to advance its mission. At the same time, Virginia Tech's financial model has shifted materially over time. State appropriations account for approximately 19.5 percent of the total operating budget, underscoring the university's reliance on tuition, research activity, and other non-state revenue streams. Ensuring the university's financial model is sufficiently aligned and scalable to support its strategic ambitions, while prioritizing Virginia Tech's commitment to providing an affordable and accessible education will be a key responsibility of the next president.

The next president will also be responsible for steering the university's bold five-year plan for strategic investments related to student access, research prowess, and the corresponding physical and intellectual infrastructure (VT Advantage, Global Distinction, and Enabling Infrastructure). Achieving this vision will require addressing enrollment strategy, tuition policy, research growth, and state and federal support. Recent budget planning reflects both opportunity and risk: tuition and fee revenue continues to grow modestly, while federal research funding is projected cautiously, given uncertainty in the external funding landscape. The next president will need to make deliberate decisions about where to concentrate investment and where to reallocate existing resources to support Virginia Tech's next phase of growth.

Lead with a student-centered model for access and success on campus and beyond

Virginia Tech's scale, distinctive culture, and commitment to service create a strong foundation for delivering an exceptional student experience across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The university received a record 57,700 [first-year applicants for Fall 2025](#), but demographic pressures, the rising cost of education, and a competitive landscape present challenges to ensure students choose Virginia Tech. Through initiatives such as Virginia Tech Advantage and a deeply embedded ethos of experiential learning and community engagement, the university has demonstrated a commitment to supporting and preparing students to succeed. The increasing diversity of student needs, rising expectations for career outcomes, and the complexity of navigating a large, multi-campus, research-

intensive environment present both an opportunity and an imperative for more integrated approaches to student support.

The next president must be a strong communicator who can effectively define and articulate the strengths of a Virginia Tech education and work to anticipate changing student expectations and employer needs to continue to build a cohesive, data-informed, and student-centered network that spans academic advising, mental health and well-being, career preparation, experiential learning, and inclusive campus life. This will require thoughtful alignment across colleges, campuses, and administrative units to ensure that all students understand and can access the full breadth of Virginia Tech's resources and opportunities available to them. Strengthening pathways for student success, improving persistence and completion outcomes, and ensuring that the university's mission is fully realized in the lived experience of students will be central to this effort. Achieving this vision will position Virginia Tech not only as the university of choice but as a national leader in delivering a holistic, future-ready student experience.

Deepen partnerships with government and policymakers

The president must serve as a trusted and effective ambassador for Virginia Tech with policymakers and public leaders throughout the commonwealth and in Washington, D.C. As a land-grant institution with deep roots in service, Virginia Tech plays a critical role in advancing the state's economic development, national defense capabilities, and workforce pipeline. Continued success will require a politically astute leader who can navigate Virginia's complex and bipartisan environment, maintain strong relationships across the executive and legislative branches, and advocate for resources that support the university's mission. By strengthening ties with government agencies, expanding public-private partnerships, and clearly articulating Virginia Tech's contributions to the economy and society, the next president can elevate the university's influence while reinforcing its identity as a pragmatic, solutions-oriented institution committed to serving the commonwealth and the nation.

Continue to enhance the University's financial position through sustained philanthropic support

Virginia Tech has demonstrated exceptional and sustained fundraising success, most recently through the [Boundless Impact Campaign](#), which runs until June 2027 and has raised more than \$2 billion, exceeding its goal two years ahead of schedule and engaging more than 117,000 alumni. On average, the university has raised more than \$230 million annually in new gifts and commitments in recent years and will top \$250 million this year. This success is supported by a highly engaged base of nearly 307,000 living alumni and strong participation rates, including undergraduate giving that has surpassed 20 percent for four consecutive years. Few public universities match this combination of scale, consistency, and alumni loyalty, positioning Virginia Tech well for continued philanthropic growth. The [Virginia Tech Foundation](#) orchestrates the growth and impact of Virginia Tech's assets to achieve the University's aspirations for education and research.

The next president of Virginia Tech will devote significant time and energy to strengthening relationships with alumni and donors, encouraging their continued engagement, and advancing the university's

fundraising priorities. The next president will play a central role in inspiring this community and channeling the alumni base's inherent passion into increased support. This includes leading efforts to expand initiatives such as Virginia Tech Advantage, which has raised \$105.7 million toward its \$500 million goal, and sustaining support for Global Distinction priorities, which have already attracted more than \$70.9 million in funding for faculty, graduate education, and research infrastructure. Building on this foundation, the next president will inherit substantial momentum, with clear opportunities to elevate Virginia Tech's fundraising enterprise to an even higher level.

Lead effectively in a complex organizational, governance, political, and external environment

Virginia Tech operates within a governance and political environment that is highly engaged and increasingly complex. The university benefits from an active [Board of Visitors](#), a strong and collaborative system of [shared governance](#), a matrixed organizational structure, and meaningful relationships across the Commonwealth. At the same time, expectations from state leaders, faculty, students, alumni, and external stakeholders continue to evolve. Virginia's political landscape requires leaders who can operate effectively across perspectives while maintaining institutional credibility and stability. The next President will assume a highly visible role that demands both internal leadership and external effectiveness. This includes advancing the university's priorities with state and federal partners while maintaining trust within the university community. The environment presents both opportunity and challenge, requiring careful navigation and consistent leadership.

Success will depend on balancing collaboration with decisiveness. The next president will build strong relationships while maintaining clear authority in advancing institutional priorities. Alignment with the provost and senior leadership team and ability to work effectively within a shared governance framework will be essential to ensure effective execution. The expectation is not for consensus-driven leadership alone, but for clarity, discipline, and sound judgment in decision-making. Navigating this environment effectively will be critical to sustaining institutional momentum and advancing Virginia Tech's long-term goals.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Virginia Tech seeks a bold and resilient president who demonstrates the intellect, empathy, and administrative savvy to lead one of the nation's finest institutions. The Search Committee recognizes that no single candidate will bear all the ideal qualifications, but it seeks candidates with many of the following qualities and characteristics:

- An accomplished administrative leader with a proven record overseeing financial, operational, and strategic functions;
- An exceptional communicator with the capacity to represent the university in a compelling and inspiring manner;
- Skilled in building trust and fostering meaningful relationships that unite stakeholders around a shared vision to drive impactful outcomes;

- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, with the ability to involve and align stakeholders in advancing key initiatives;
- Strong interpersonal abilities coupled with high emotional intelligence; demonstrated humility, active listening, and the ability to engage effectively with students, faculty, staff, and external leaders across business, government, and labor sectors;
- Experience managing and responding effectively to crises, while also recognizing and celebrating institutional achievements;
- Significant fundraising experience, with the ability to engage, cultivate, and steward donors, foundations, and philanthropic partners;
- A deep understanding of and appreciation for the mission and role of public land-grant research universities;
- Evidence of experience in supporting institution-wide research growth;
- A commitment to shared governance, with recognition of the distinct roles of students, faculty, staff, administration, and the governing board;
- A record of principled leadership, including the willingness to make difficult decisions and clearly articulate their rationale; and
- Distinguished academic credentials, including teaching and scholarly accomplishments appropriate for appointment at the rank of full professor at Virginia Tech.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent in confidence to Isaacson, Miller:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/virginia-tech/president>

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