

**SUMMARY**

**New Appointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, or Fellowships (6)**

**June 7, 2022**

**College of Engineering (3)**

Ella Atkins	Fred. D. Durham Chair in Engineering
David Ford	Vecellio Professorship of Construction and Engineering Management
Stephen Martin	W.S. Pete White Chair for Innovation in Engineering Education

**College of Science (2)**

Michael Fox	I. D. Wilson Chair
Kevin Pitts	Lay Nam Chang Dean's Chair

**Pamplin College of Business (1)**

Nancy McGehee	R.B. Pamplin Professorship in Hospitality and Tourism Management
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**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**Fred D. Durham Chair in Engineering**

The Fred D. Durham Professorship was established in 1988 through the generous gift of Fred Durham, who received a degree in civil engineering from Virginia Tech in 1921. In 1996, Durham increased his support to provide for the Fred D. Durham Chair in Engineering. In concurrence with recommendations of the Kevin T. Crofton Department of Aerospace and Ocean honorifics committee and the interim department head Dr. Robert A. Canfield, Dean Julia Ross nominates Dr. Ella Atkins for appointment as the Fred D. Durham Chair in Engineering.

Associated with some of the finest institutions in the nation in the past, Dr. Atkins will be joining Virginia Tech as the department head of the Kevin T. Crofton Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering after a nationwide search that attracted several internationally renowned applicants. Dr. Atkins was an associate professor from 2006 to 2016 and a full professor from 2016 onwards in one of the highest ranked aerospace departments in the nation, the Department of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Michigan. Before that she was an assistant professor of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Maryland, another well-regarded department. An alumna of the Aerospace Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she read for her Ph.D. in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Atkins' research area is aerospace information systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, and robotics. Dr. Atkins is considered to be a pioneer in the area of aerospace information and is the editor in chief of the *American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Journal of Aerospace Systems*. Dr. Atkins received the 2022 AIAA Intelligent Systems Award, a major career-capping award on par with the AIAA Multidisciplinary Design Optimization Award that has been won recently by Drs. Canfield and Kapania and with the AIAA Mechanics and Control of Flight Award that has been recently awarded to Dr. Mark Psiaki, Crofton Chair in Aerospace and Ocean Engineering. Dr. Atkins has served on several influential technical committees. For her contributions to aerospace information systems, she was elected as an AIAA Fellow, a highly prestigious appointment. She has published 85 journal articles, has attracted about \$300K in research funding per year, and has guided 18 Ph.D. students during her career.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Ella Atkins be awarded the Fred D. Durham Chair in Engineering for a five-year renewable term, effective August 1, 2022, with annual operating funds as provided by the endowment and the eminent scholar match, if available.

June 7, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**Vecellio Professorship of Construction Engineering and Management**

The Vecellio Professorship in Construction Engineering and Management was established in 2000 from a gift by the Vecellio Family Foundation and individual members of the Vecellio family to enhance education and research in the Charles E. Via, Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE). Dean Julia Ross has nominated Dr. David N. Ford to hold the Vecellio Professorship in Construction Engineering and Management in the CEE. The nomination is likewise recommended by the CEE department head, Dr. Mark A. Widdowson, and the CEE Honorifics Committee.

Dr. Ford is a distinguished scholar who is internationally recognized in the field of system dynamics with application to construction engineering and management of the built environment. He has made outstanding contributions to his discipline of civil engineering and introduced innovative methods from the field of system dynamics through research.

Dr. Ford is widely published with over 100 refereed papers to his credit. His papers are published in some of the most highly respected journals in his field of expertise. His scholarship has received over 5,000 citations. Over his academic career, Dr. Ford has obtained over \$6.6M in competitive external research awards.

Known as an enthusiastic teacher, Dr. Ford effectively integrates his research and applications of system dynamics into both undergraduate and graduate civil engineering classes. He is an instructor in the *System Dynamics Society* Summer School, which he co-developed in 2017. Dr. Ford has advised over 100 graduate students to degree completion at the M.S. and Ph.D. levels.

Dr. Ford has an impressive record of professional and university service. He is the associate editor for *Systems Dynamics Review*, a position that he has held since 2017. Dr. Ford served as president of the *System Dynamics Society* in 2012. Dr. Ford was a fellow in the Institute for Science Technology and Public Policy in the George H. W. Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University from 2008 until 2015.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. David N. Ford be appointed to the Vecellio Professorship in Construction Engineering and Management for a renewable period of five years, effective on August 10, 2022, with an operating budget as provided by the endowment and the eminent scholar match, if available.

June 7, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**W. S. "Pete" White Chair for Innovation in Engineering Education**

The W. S. "Pete" White Chair for Innovation in Engineering Education was established by the generous gift of \$500,000 by American Electric Power. The creation of this chair, in honor of Pete White (EE '48), enables Virginia Tech to generate new interest in the teaching of engineering and in improving the learning process. It is unique in its flexibility—the chair is rotated biennially to a new recipient. Dean Julia Ross has nominated Dr. Stephen Martin as the W. S. "Pete" White Chair, based on the recommendations of the College of Engineering's Honorifics Committee.

Dr. Martin came to Virginia Tech as an assistant professor in 2006 and was tenured as an associate professor in 2012. His service to the College of Engineering has been recognized with the Dean's Award for Excellence in Service in 2016 and the Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2012.

Dr. Martin has been voted Best Chemical Engineering Professor no less than three times, in 2015, 2017, and during the pandemic year of 2021, and he has contributed to new programs and course development in both hybrid, online, and international educational opportunities in his department.

Dr. Martin initiated an exchange program with the Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany, a program that over the last decade has sent the second largest group of engineering students overseas, and the largest group of any department; only the rising sophomore abroad program, which serves the general engineering population, is larger. This program has broken out of the predominant trend in which fewer than five percent of students typically gain international learning experiences during their studies.

While all faculty went to great lengths to ensure quality instruction during the pandemic, Dr. Martin epitomized the spirit of innovation in developing and delivering an online version of the Unit Operations laboratory, making it possible for 60 students to complete this major requirement on time despite the disruptions of the pandemic, what former department head Dr. David Cox called "the single most impressive feat of teaching [he had] seen in [his] 35 years at Virginia Tech".

While students in general reported struggling with hybrid and online learning in Fall 2020, Dr. Martin's students in the flipped classroom he developed for the large entry-level course Mass and Energy Balances expressed an extraordinarily positive experience due to his accessibility, support, and exceptional scaffolding of in-class learning with asynchronous materials. Dr. Martin's course also incorporated global competency modules in the course, designed to spur students' critical thinking on the contexts and ethical implications of chemical engineering work at a time when no students were able to travel.

These teaching innovations in 2020 and 2021 stand out as bright spots of adaptation during the adversity of the pandemic, but also are models for hybrid teaching, flipped classroom design, virtual and online laboratory learning, and incorporating global competency into technical courses.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Stephen Martin be appointed to the W. S. "Pete" White Chair for Innovation in Engineering Education effective for a period of two years beginning August 10, 2022, with a salary supplement and annual operating budget as provided by the endowment, and the eminent scholar match, if available.

June 7, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**I. D. Wilson Chair in the College of Science**

The I. D. Wilson Chair in the College of Science was established in 2014 by Luther and Alice Hamlett to honor I. D. Wilson, a long-time faculty member and administrator in the Department of Biology. Dr. Hamlett is a strong supporter of one of the Academy of Integrated Science, the School of Neuroscience and the Department of Biological Sciences within the College of Science.

Ron Fricker, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the College of Science, has nominated Michael A. Fox, Ph.D., to this endowed position and this nomination has been endorsed by the Honorifics Committee of the College of Science. Dr. Fox is currently the director of the School of Neuroscience and professor at Virginia Tech.

Michael Fox attended the United States Military Academy at West Point and then received a bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the College of William and Mary in 1999. He received his Ph.D. in Anatomy and Neurobiology from the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Medical Center and then undertook postdoctoral training at Harvard University. In 2007, the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology at VCU Medical Center recruited Dr. Fox back as a tenure-track assistant professor. After five years at VCU, Dr. Fox was recruited to the newly formed Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute (now called the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, or FBRI) and into the Department of Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech. In 2016, Dr. Fox created the FBRI Developmental and Translational Neurobiology Center (now the Center for Neurobiology Research, or CNR), as well as the FBRI Translational Neurobiology Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (neuroSURF) program.

Dr. Fox has received numerous awards and honors including both the Jordi Folch Pi Award and the Marian Kies awards from the American Society for Neurochemistry, the University Leadership Award from Virginia Commonwealth University, and was recently inducted into the Virginia Tech Academy of Faculty Leadership. He has served his scientific discipline in a number of ways, including as a counselor for the American Society for Neurochemistry, on several leadership committees for the Society for Neuroscience, and as a reviewer (and chair) for the National Institutes of Health study sections.

Since arriving at Virginia Tech, Dr. Fox has contributed to over \$15M in extramural research grant funding, with more than \$6M coming to his own laboratory. In addition to running his internationally recognized laboratory, Dr. Fox is a passionate mentor. Not only does he direct programs for undergraduates interested in research, several of his VT graduate students have thrived - including career transition awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), being listed as a *Forbes Top 30 Scientist Under 30*, being awarded the VT Graduate Student of the Year, being named an NIH Outstanding Scholar in Neuroscience, and being the recipient of a Research!America microgrant.

Dr. Fox is a nationally recognized neuroscientist and an expert on the formation of neuronal circuits within the brain. Much of his research has focused on how neuronal connections are formed in the developing visual system, and specifically between the retina and the brain. More recently, he has applied his expertise and knowledge to understand how common pathogens impact the long-term maintenance of these circuits following infection.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Michael A. Fox, Ph.D. be appointed the I. D. Wilson Chair in the College of Science, effective June 10, 2022, with a salary supplement as provided by the endowment and the eminent scholar match, if available.

June 7, 2022

**ENDOWED CHAIR**  
**Lay Nam Chang Dean's Chair in the College of Science**

The members of the College of Science Roundtable established the Lay Nam Chang Dean's Chair in the College of Science in honor of Dean Lay Nam Chang who served as dean of the college for 13 years. Dr. Chang was the founding dean of the college since its establishment in 2003 when the former College of Arts and Sciences was recast to become the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the College of Science. Under Dr. Chang's leadership and administration Virginia Tech's College of Science is well positioned for continued success. Dr. Chang's leadership helped the college develop an interdisciplinary vision and create key strategic collaborations, including the development of the Academy of Integrated Science. The members of the College of Science Roundtable established this fund to honor Dr. Chang's service and provide the college with means to recruit and retain an exceptional individual in the position of dean who will maintain and enhance the outstanding quality of the college.

Dr. Kevin Pitts will serve as dean of the College of Science effective June 13, 2022. A distinguished researcher, scholar, and academic leader, Dr. Pitts currently serves as chief research officer at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and professor of Physics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UC). While at Fermilab, Pitts was charged with oversight of the laboratory's science program and worked extensively on a number of projects, including the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment and the 1995 discovery of the quark. As a faculty member at University of Illinois-UC, Dr. Pitts served as co-author on well over 600 peer-reviewed articles published in top-tier physics journals with citations in excess of 56,000. As an administrator at University of Illinois-UC, Dr. Pitts served as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education as well as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs in the College of Engineering and in the Department of Physics.

Dr. Pitts has more than 25 years of experience in academic and research settings. During this time he has earned numerous research honors and academic awards and has established an extraordinary record of service to the research community. He holds a bachelor's degree in physics and mathematics from Anderson University and both a master's degree and a doctoral degree in physics from University of Oregon, Eugene.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Kevin Pitts, Ph.D. be appointed the Lay Nam Chang Dean's Chair in the College of Science effective June 13, 2022 with a salary supplement as provided by the endowment and the eminent scholar match, if available.

June 7, 2022



**ENDOWED FACULTY PROFESSORSHIP**  
**R. B. Pamplin Professorship in Hospitality and Tourism Management**

The R. B. Pamplin Professorship in Hospitality and Tourism Management was established in 2012 to attract and retain outstanding professors in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management in the Pamplin College of Business. The Howard Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management has recommended that the R. B. Pamplin Professorship in Hospitality and Tourism Management be awarded to Professor Nancy G. McGehee. The department Honorifics Committee and the College Faculty Honorifics and Awards Committee endorsed this nomination, as did Dean Robert Sumichrast.

Professor McGehee earned her Ph.D. in Sociology in 1999 from Virginia Tech. She joined the faculty of North Carolina State University in 1999 as an assistant professor in the Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism Management. In 2001 she joined the faculty of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Virginia Tech as an assistant professor and then was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 2007 and full professor in 2013.

Professor McGehee is a productive and impactful tourism researcher. Her research interests span the field of tourism with recent emphasis in the areas of tourism advocacy and sustainable and transformative tourism. She has published 47 articles, two books, five book chapters, and 13 technical reports generating more than 7,900 Google Scholar citations. In addition, she has generated nearly \$500K in research grants, contracts and fellowships in the U.S. and abroad. She is widely recognized in her field, being named to the outstanding women in travel research by Women In Travel and Tourism International in 2017 and was recently named to serve as co-editor of the Journal of Travel Research. Her work has had significant impact on the field.

Professor McGehee is also an effective classroom instructor at all levels of instruction and has mentored and co-authored with a number of successful hospitality and tourism doctoral students. She receives high ratings for her teaching effectiveness and completed a highly successful term as head of the Howard Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Professor McGehee is an outstanding scholar and fully deserving of this professorship.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Professor Nancy G. McGehee be appointed to the R. B. Pamplin Professorship in Hospitality and Tourism Management effective July 30, 2022 for five years, with a salary supplement as provided by the endowment and the eminent scholar match, if available.

June 7, 2022