

## SUMMARY

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

**November 14, 2022**

Each college has formal procedures for the nomination and appointment to endowed chairs, professorships, and fellowships that include review by a college honorifics committee or promotion and tenure committee.

After review by the appropriate college committee the college dean makes recommendations for approval by the provost and the Board of Visitors. Such an appointment may continue through the active career of the professor at the university, unless it is relinquished in favor of some other honored or administrative appointment or unless the appointment has specific term limitations that may be renewable.

The following faculty members are recommended for endowed chairs, professorships, or fellowships at Virginia Tech.

#### **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (1)**

Olga Isengildina Massa	John B. and Kristi L. Rowsell Professorship
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#### **College of Engineering (3)**

Alireza Haghghat	Robert E. Hord, Jr. Mechanical Engineering Professorship
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Rolf Mueller	Raymond E. and Shirley B. Lynn Professorship of Mechanical Engineering
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Emily Sarver	Stonie Barker Professorship of Mining and Minerals Engineering
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#### **College of Veterinary Medicine (1)**

Audrey Ruple	Dorothy A. & Richard G. Metcalf Professor of Veterinary Medical Informatics
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#### **Pamplin College of Business (1)**

Jeffrey Pittman	Curling Professorship in Accounting and Information Systems
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**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**John B. and Kristi L. Rowsell Professorship**

The John B. and Kristi L. Rowsell Professorship was established by John and Kristi Rowsell, prominent alumni of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. The principal goal of this professorship is to support the faculty leadership for and activities of the Commodity Investing by Students (COINS) program in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

In concurrence with recommendations of the college honorifics committee, the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics honorifics committee, and the department head Dr. Matthew T. Holt, Dean Alan Grant nominates Dr. Olga Isengildina Massa for appointment to the John B. and Kristi L. Rowsell Professorship.

Dr. Isengildina Massa is a professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. She joined the department as an associate professor in 2015 and was promoted to full professor in 2021. She earned her Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Mississippi State University in 2000. Dr. Isengildina Massa has built an internationally renowned program that examines commodity market price dynamics, evaluates forecasting performance of USDA and private firms, develops innovative forecasting approaches, and proposes effective price risk management strategies. Her expertise is demonstrated in 36 publications in prestigious journals, 77 conference proceedings and presentations, 19 research reports, three book chapters, and 15 invited presentations.

She carried out multiple cooperative agreements to assist USDA in assessing and improving their forecasts and participated in a National Academies of Sciences panel to develop new forecasting methods for USDA crop estimates. She is a recognized leader in her field, serving as a co-editor of a Southern Agricultural Economics Association journal and co-chairing the NCCC-134 committee on applied commodity price analysis, forecasting, and market risk management.

Dr. Isengildina Massa provides outstanding leadership for the highly visible Commodity Investing by Students (COINS) program. Under her leadership, the program has grown from 14 to over 40 students with a larger portfolio (\$1.4M) that includes 15 commodities in the agricultural, energy, and metals sectors. This distinctive investment group attracts students from across campus, which allows them to build on and hone their cross-disciplinary skills in the common goal of commodity investing. In addition to advising and mentoring students, she emphasizes industry partnerships and networking opportunities. Taken together, these professional development efforts have resulted in 100 percent student placement at graduation, with most students landing in select, well- paid positions in leading agribusiness, financial, and investment firms. In 2020, she received Virginia Tech's Award for Excellence in Career Advising based on her efforts to connect COINS students with future employers and better prepare them for their careers.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Olga Isengildina Massa be appointed as The John B. and Kristi L. Rowsell Professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for a five-year term effective January 1, 2023 with a salary supplement and operating funds provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

November 14, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**Robert E. Hord, Jr. Mechanical Engineering Professorship**

The Robert E. Hord, Jr. Professorship in Mechanical Engineering was established by a generous gift from Robert E. Hord, Jr.'s (ME '41) estate. This professorship supports an outstanding professor within the Department of Mechanical Engineering for a renewable term of five years. Dean Julie Ross nominates Dr. Alireza Haghighat for this professorship in concurrence with the recommendations of the Mechanical Engineering Honorifics Committee and the department head of Mechanical Engineering, Dr. Azim Eskandarian.

Dr. Haghighat is an internationally known researcher, educator, and leader in the field of nuclear science and engineering. During the past 33 years, he has been making significant contributions in the area of particle transport methods and their application in nuclear power, nuclear security, and nuclear medicine. He has been mentoring an outstanding group of Ph.D. students who are making important contributions to the society, and has spearheaded the establishment of the VT Nuclear Engineering Program and the promotion of advanced nuclear technology for carbon-free electricity generation in Virginia and beyond.

Dr. Haghighat has secured more than \$4M during his tenure at Virginia Tech, with his total funding during the past 33 years being more than \$12M. He has published over 280 papers, delivered 116 invited talks internationally, and has graduated 45 graduate students including 19 Ph.D. students. Dr. Haghighat is an active member of the American Nuclear Society (ANS) and has served in several leadership positions including chair of NEDHO (Nuclear Engineering Department Heads Organization), chair of MCD (Mathematics and Computation Division), chair of RPD (Reactor physics Division), co-chair of Computational Medical Physics Working Group, and chair of the ANS 19.10 standard Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Alireza Haghighat be appointed as the Robert E. Hord, Jr. Professor of Mechanical Engineering for a period of five years effective November 10, 2022, with a salary supplement and operating expenses as provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

November 14, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP****Raymond E. and Shirley B. Lynn Professorship of Mechanical Engineering**

The Raymond E. and Shirley B. Lynn Endowed Chair in Mechanical Engineering was established with a generous gift from the Shirley B. Lynn estate to provide support for a chaired professorship in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech. The professorship is to be awarded to an outstanding professor within the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Dean Julie Ross nominates Dr. Rolf Mueller for this professorship in concurrence with the recommendations of the Mechanical Engineering Honorifics Committee and the department head of Mechanical Engineering, Dr. Azim Eskandarian.

Dr. Mueller's research has generated numerous novel principles for sensing in complex natural environments. His research has resulted in new fundamental insights into biological sensing. For example, his research was able to demonstrate that bats carry out a complex nonlinear transformation of the incoming echoes using Doppler patterns created by fast, non-rigid motions of their own ears. There was no parallel to this phenomenon in sensory physiology and this work was published in the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in 2019.

Dr. Mueller's achievements is also reflected in his research grants totaling \$11.8M, with a personal share of \$9.7M, including millions of dollars of funding from the Office of Naval Research's Multidisciplinary University Research Initiatives (ONR MURI) program and the National Science Foundation's (NSF) International Research Experiences for Students program. He has led VT's portion of an ongoing ONR MURI that works with partners at Brown University, Johns Hopkins University, and Texas A&M University. His work on biomimetic robotic sonar has been supported continuously by NAVSEA (Naval Engineering Education Center) since 2014. In addition, he has been able to secure funding and infrastructure support from diverse sources such as NSF, ONR, the Army Research Office, NASA, IBM and Microsoft.

Dr. Mueller has graduated 43 Ph.D. and master's students and is currently supervising ten graduate students. He has co-authored 125 peer-reviewed journal and conference papers, five book chapters, and made more than 200 presentations including many invited and keynote talks. He has fostered a strong international program with China and received the prestigious Taishan endowed professorship from Shandong University in 2009.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Rolf Mueller be appointed as the Raymond E. and Shirley B. Lynn Professor of Mechanical Engineering for a period of five years effective November 10, 2022, with a salary supplement and operating expenses as provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

November 14, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**Stonie Barker Professorship of Mining and Minerals Engineering**

The Stonie Barker Professorship in Mining and Minerals Engineering was established in 1987 with gifts to the department in honor of Stonie Barker (Mining Engineering, class of 1951). The creation of this professorship provides support for the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering, and the professorship was held by Dr. Michael Karmis for many years until his retirement in 2021. On the recommendation of the College of Engineering Honorifics Committee, Dean Julie Ross nominates Dr. Emily A. Sarver for appointment to the Stonie Barker Professorship.

Dr. Sarver has been a faculty member in the Mining and Minerals Engineering Department since 2011 and has excelled in research, scholarship, and teaching. Dr. Sarver has been the Principal Investigator on more than 15 projects with a personal share of nearly \$5M in funding from federal agencies, industry, and private sources. Her research team has focused on improving the safety and health of mine workers and has been supported by two grants in excess of \$1M from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. This work has resulted in over 50 peer-reviewed journal publications and more than 100 conference presentations.

Further, Dr. Sarver has been a well-prepared and effective teacher with student teaching evaluations that routinely exceed the university and college averages. Additionally, she has mentored more than 20 graduate students to successful completion of their degrees as well as guiding more than 20 undergraduates in research projects. In recognition of her teaching and research effectiveness, Dr. Sarver was awarded the Research and Educational Excellence Award by the Health and Safety Division of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration in 2017.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Emily A. Sarver be appointed to the Stonie Barker Professorship in Mining and Minerals Engineering for a renewable period of 5 years, effective November 10, 2022, with a salary supplement and operating budget as provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

November 14, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP****Dorothy A. & Richard G. Metcalf Professor of Veterinary Medical Informatics**

The Dorothy A. and Richard G. Metcalf endowed professorship was established in 1999 with a gift from the Metcalf Foundation, Mrs. Dorothy A. Metcalf, trustee of the Metcalf Foundation was a longtime friend and supporter of the college. She recognized the need for the college to look constantly forward to changes in society and in the field of Veterinary Medicine in order to prepare students to be leaders in the profession and successfully react to new developments and opportunities. The intention of this professorship is to recognize and reward a faculty member who supports new information technology that will help advance the development, teaching, and distribution of veterinary medicine and research information. Dean M. Daniel Givens nominates Dr. Audrey Ruple for this appointment.

Dr. Audrey Ruple joined the Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine in 2021 as an associate professor with tenure in Quantitative Epidemiology, Informatics, and the application and development of the discipline, have been integral parts of Dr. Ruple's research portfolio, including advanced computing and data sciences, the fundamental research tools utilized in her lab. Her research projects are critically dependent on the application of informatics to veterinary medicine, and increasingly to One Health issues impacting our society. This is evidenced by Dr. Ruple's work as Co-I and member of the Executive Operations Team of the Dog Aging Project, the largest prospective project on animal health ever undertaken. She has also been involved with Fetch Forward, an innovative approach to veterinary insurance data analytics. She has worked on prognostic genetic, epigenetic, and metadata indicators in veterinary oncology, and has a number of publications related to informatics and veterinary big data, including a recent publication about work with the Dog Aging Project in *Nature*; and

Dr. Ruple's international reputation in this area is evidenced by invitations to speak at both veterinary and technology conferences. Appointment to this endowed professorship would benefit her research program by advancing the science of natural language processing (NLP) in veterinary informatics, supporting collaborations with cognate programs and large-scale primary practice-based data analytic programs, and by attracting and supporting short-term sabbaticals at Virginia Tech for visiting leaders and domain experts in informatics. This provides an opportunity to build on the college's reputation as an international hub for veterinary informatics.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Audrey Ruple be appointed the Dorothy A. & Richard G. Metcalf Professor of Veterinary Medical Informatics, effective August 23, 2022 with support provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

November 14, 2022

**ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP**  
**Curling Visiting Professorship in Accounting and Information Systems**

The Curling Professorship in Accounting and Information Systems was established in 2013 to provide support for the Pamplin College of Business to attract and retain eminent scholars in the field of accounting. The Department of Accounting and Information Systems has recommended that the professorship be awarded to visiting professor Jeffrey A. Pittman. The departmental Honorifics Committee and the College Honorifics and Awards Committee endorsed this nomination, as did Interim Dean Roberta Russell.

Dr. Pittman received his Ph.D. in Accountancy from the University of Waterloo in 2001. He joined the faculty at Memorial University (Canada) as an assistant professor in 2001. He was promoted to associate professor in 2003 and to professor in 2009. He has held a number of visiting scholar positions around the world, including at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (2006-2008) and the University of Illinois (2015-2016). He joined the faculty in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems as a visiting professor from 2017-2020 before returning in 2021 as a visiting professor in 2021.

Dr. Pittman's research examines a wide range of questions related to auditing practice, tax policy and the influence of board of director social networks on stock price risk. Dr. Pittman is a highly productive elite scholar. Based upon the most recent six-year period (2014-2020), he is tied for fifth most productive accounting researcher worldwide. He is ranked the sixth most productive researcher over the most recent 12-year period. His work is highly influential and his mentoring of our junior faculty and doctoral students is systematically raising research productivity across the Department of Accounting and Information Systems and raising the national profile of the department and college.

Dr. Pittman's teaching contributions are exceptional. He is an award-winning instructor who is a strong contributor to graduate education. He receives strong evaluations of teaching effectiveness from his students. Given his accomplishments, Professor Jeffrey A. Pittman is fully deserving of this professorship.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Dr. Jeffrey A. Pittman be appointed Curling Visiting Professor in Accounting and Information Systems effective August 10, 2022, with a salary supplement as provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

November 14, 2022