

ARTS & SCIENCES RESEARCH

ANNUAL REPORT / 2024-2025



UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

ARTS & SCIENCES

WHERE DISCOVERY EXPANDS

Redefining Research Excellence in Arts & Sciences

THIS IS A DEFINING MOMENT for research in the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Across disciplines and divisions, A&S researchers are erasing disciplinary boundaries — expanding the frontiers of knowledge, deepening our understanding of humanity and the natural world, and leading the charge to respond to urgent global and societal challenges. From the mysteries of the cosmos to the implications of artificial intelligence, from the biological roots of cognition to the dynamics of migration and memory, Arts & Sciences research programs cover a vast, diverse spectrum and anchor UVA's research ecosystem.

Following the launch of a comprehensive strategic planning process during the 2024–2025 academic year, Arts & Sciences committed \$25 million to reshape the landscape of research — expanding infrastructure, strengthening capacity and building for the future.

Our investment — bold, faculty-led, and future-focused — is already yielding powerful results: more external funding, stronger proposal pipelines, deeper collaborations and greater visibility for our work and our people.

We are not backing down from our commitment. This report demonstrates how we're turning strategy into sustained impact and implementing a new vision for excellence in discovery, scholarship and creative work in Arts & Sciences.

We are building strength in key interdisciplinary areas, including philosophy and neuroscience, astronomy and ethical astrobiology, media studies and artificial intelligence, arts and environmental resilience. These efforts reflect a belief that the liberal arts and sciences are not only foundational to knowledge — they represent the engine of discovery at a research university.

It began in 2024, when the College unveiled a Strategic Research Plan that is as inclusive as it is ambitious. It affirms our belief that research development, graduate education, creative activity and interdisciplinary collaboration are inseparable — and that they can only truly thrive when fully supported. That's why our investment also includes new seed grants, expanded staffing, and flexible support for faculty across career stages and divisions.



New Cabell Hall, home to UVA Arts & Sciences, overlooking the Rotunda as viewed from the South Lawn.

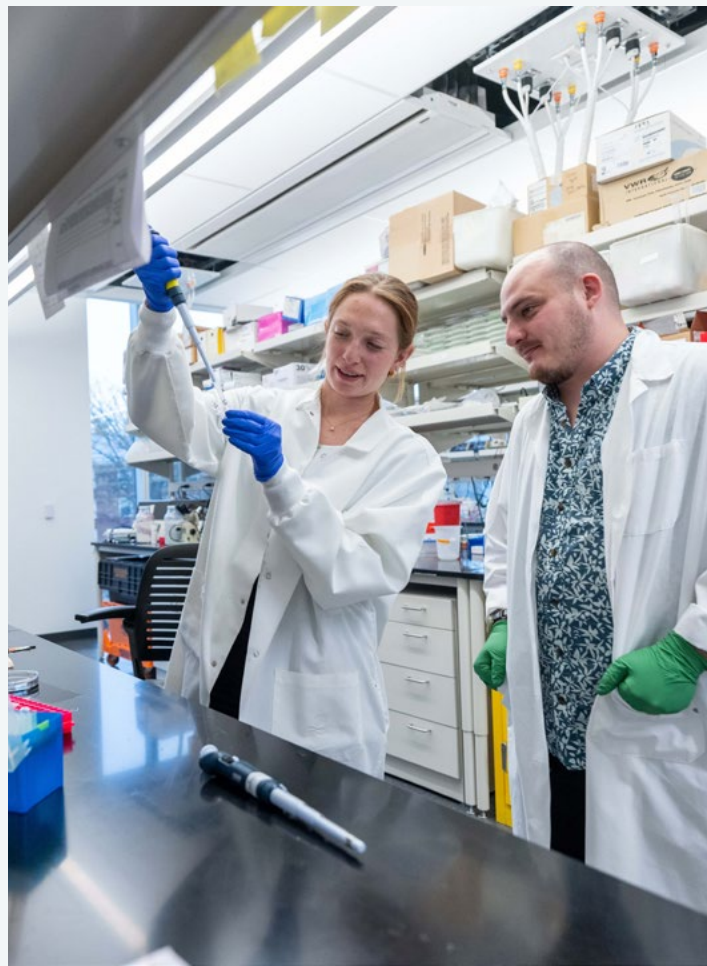
Viewed through numbers alone, Arts & Sciences leads UVA in research participation:

612 tenure-track and tenured faculty
1,321 graduate student researchers
149 professional research staff
18 academic general research faculty
Thousands of undergraduate student researchers

These numbers represent not just scale but potential. They reflect a community of inquiry that is unusually rich in collaboration and cross-pollination — one that contributes mightily to every pan-University initiative and collaborates with every school across Grounds.

This report shines a light on the role of Arts & Sciences as the intellectual powerhouse at the core of UVA's research ecosystem. It highlights a growing roster of awards, honors, hires, partnerships and ideas — and reaffirms our commitment to supporting the people who make that possible.

Looking ahead, our ambition is clear:



By 2030, Arts & Sciences will garner national and international recognition for research excellence and academic innovation across all its divisions.

Advancing this goal strengthens every part of our academic mission. It helps attract and retain world-class faculty by fostering a vibrant, well-supported environment for discovery and scholarly impact. It expands opportunities for **graduate** and **undergraduate** students to engage directly in the creation of new knowledge — enhancing mentorship, experiential learning and career preparation. And it cultivates a **dynamic academic community** where the boundaries between research and teaching are porous and where learning is enriched by active inquiry.

The momentum is real. The opportunity is now. We invite you to read on and see what's possible when a research mission is as ambitious and interconnected as the people who pursue it.

RESEARCH IN ACTION

TACKLING CHALLENGES IN A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINES

Across Arts & Sciences, the collaborative opportunities for creative, interdisciplinary research underscore the potential for groundbreaking discoveries and innovative solutions pursued by our faculty, graduate students and research staff. Never has it been more essential to create and nourish an environment where the tools of economics and environmental science can be harnessed to work in unison, where astronomers and chemists thrive alongside sociologists, and where musicologists and historians train new generations as they deepen our understanding of the natural world and human society. Here are just a few of the A&S researchers whose visionary work is shaping the future and expanding the frontiers of knowledge across disciplines.



ILLUMINATING HIGH-STAKES CHALLENGES IN HEALTH AND POLICY THROUGH SOCIAL SCIENCES

Natalie Aviles (Sociology) explores how cancer research is shaped by politics, institutions and public values. In her new book, *An Ungovernable Foe*, she traces 70 years of government-funded cancer research to ask a bold question: What happens when scientific ambition meets public mission? Her work shows how even the most technical fields are influenced by social choices — and why understanding those dynamics matter.



CONNECTING SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

Jonathan Colmer (Economics) explores how the environment and government policies affect people's quality of life and who is most at risk from natural disasters. A recipient of a NSF CAREER Award, he leads the Environmental Inequality Lab, which uses data to better predict where and who will be affected by rising temperatures, storms and pollution. His recent piece in *Nature* and *UVA Today* feature highlight his mission to make research useful for communities and decision-makers alike.



SPARKING CURIOSITY ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Ilse Cleeves (Astronomy) combines astronomy, chemistry and physics to study how planetary systems form and evolve. From high-energy stellar events to the role of gas and ice in shaping new worlds, her research sheds light on the multifaceted conditions that give rise to planets. A leader in the fields of astrochemistry and astrophysics, Cleeves is also helping to launch a new era of space discovery — using artificial intelligence and cross-disciplinary collaboration to explore the universe in new ways. She serves on the leadership team of UVA's Interconnected Cosmos Initiative and contributes to CosmicAI, a national project that integrates powerful computer models with telescope data. Together, these efforts are building tools that extend well beyond astronomy, enabling breakthroughs in a variety of fields. Her work demonstrates how curiosity-driven research can spark innovation on a global scale.



MAKING SENSE OF A CHANGING WORLD AND FUELING DISCOVERY THROUGH THE ARTS

Nicole Mitchell Gantt (Music) brings imagination and activism together through music and storytelling. A celebrated flutist, composer and professor, Gantt's recent book, *The Mandorla Letters: for the Hopeful*, blends personal reflection, science fiction and cultural critique to explore the challenges of our times through an optimistic lens. The former Guggenheim Fellow's work asks bold questions and invites readers and listeners to dream of new futures.



USING LIBERAL ARTS INSIGHTS TO ADVISE POLICY IN A TIME OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Anton Korinek (Economics) asks urgent questions about how artificial intelligence will shape our future. An economist who works at the intersection of technology, labor and democracy, Korinek advises international organizations and policymakers on how to prepare for the economic changes transformative AI could bring. Named to Vox's 2024 "Future Perfect 50" list of changemakers, his research is helping leaders around the world make informed, ethical decisions.



CHANGING HOW WE SEE THE PAST—AND PRESENT

Deborah McDowell (African American & African Studies, English) and her team are opening new doors to history with the Julian Bond Papers Project. Supported by a \$2.04 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, and before that, \$550,000 from the National Historical Publications & Records Commission, this groundbreaking effort is preserving and sharing the legacy of one of the most important voices in the modern American Civil Rights Movement. At the same time, McDowell and her team are training a new generation of researchers in digital tools and public storytelling.



LEADING BREAKTHROUGHS THAT MATTER

Huiyuan Zhu (Chemistry, Chemical Engineering) is designing tiny materials with big impacts. Her research creates next-generation nanocrystals, thin films and electrodes that can speed up chemical reactions for cleaner energy and environmental remediation technologies. Recognized as a Kavli Fellow — one of the nation's top early-career honors — and supported by the NSF, Department of Energy, American Chemical Society, Sloan Foundation, the Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation, industry partners and our own UVA A&S seed funding, Zhu is advancing science with real-world applications.

OVERVIEW

MISSION STATEMENT

The Arts & Sciences research team facilitates research, scholarship and creative activities within the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences by providing collaborative support, research development and administrative services, and technical expertise to A&S researchers and staff.

“One of the most astonishing things about Arts & Sciences is the excellence across our academic divisions. From astrochemistry to jazz, from history to epigenetics, our faculty lead research and creative activity that has impact and defines the leading edges of discovery.”

— CHRISTA ACAMPORA, DEAN, COLLEGE AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

RESEARCH IS BOTH a driver and a unifier across A&S: it enriches the undergraduate experience by embedding students in discovery and inquiry, strengthens graduate education by supporting cutting-edge scholarship, and serves as a magnet for recruiting and retaining top-tier faculty. A comprehensive research strategy also fuels academic innovation, ensuring that A&S remains at the forefront of addressing society’s grand challenges while fostering a culture of belonging through shared intellectual purpose.

The past year has brought significant growth in how we support, promote, and celebrate faculty research. We launched a comprehensive Strategic Research Plan designed to enhance services for scholars across all departments and disciplines. This includes:

- **A new research development team** to help faculty identify opportunities and submit competitive proposals for sponsored funding.
- **A fully built-out research administration team** providing seamless support throughout the entire grant lifecycle.
- **Academic leadership** dedicated to advancing research, scholarship and creative activities in Arts & Sciences with the creation of the associate dean of research position.
- **Strengthened communications efforts** to elevate and share the successes of our researchers, scholars and artists.



Old Cabell Hall, home to the Department of Music and Arts & Sciences’ music library.

Our [newly launched website](#) captures this momentum and reflects our mission: to serve and champion research in Arts & Sciences. It stands as a visible expression of our growing commitment to recognizing and communicating the extraordinary intellectual contributions of our faculty.

This year’s achievements demonstrate that research in Arts & Sciences is not just thriving — it is being aggressively supported, strategically developed, and nationally recognized. **This isn’t growth by chance — it’s the outcome of a coordinated, strategic push to elevate and expand our research mission.**

HIGHLIGHTS

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The past year has brought remarkable achievements across the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, reflecting the extraordinary strength and ambition of our departments and faculty. From prestigious national awards to new members of elite scholarly societies, the scope of recognition spans disciplines and career stages — highlighting the vibrancy and excellence of research, scholarship and creative activity in Arts & Sciences.

These awards not only recognize individual brilliance but also affirm the College's culture of innovation, impact, and scholarship.

— NEW MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ACADEMIES & SOCIETIES

This year, our faculty continued to gain national distinction through election to premier academic societies:

- Three new inductees to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences
- Two new inductees to the National Academy of Sciences

Cumulatively, our faculty now includes:

- 26 members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences
- Six members of the National Academy of Sciences
- 17 fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science

These honors reflect a deep bench of scholarly leadership across the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.



Congratulations to A&S's newest national academy and society members! Clockwise from top left: Scott Doney (NAS), Nicole Mitchell Gantt (AAAS), Ray Keller (NAS, AAAS), Roger Chevalier (AAAS).

OUR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE ISN'T
CONCENTRATED IN ONE AREA — IT'S
A FULL-SPECTRUM STRENGTH.

— MAJOR AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

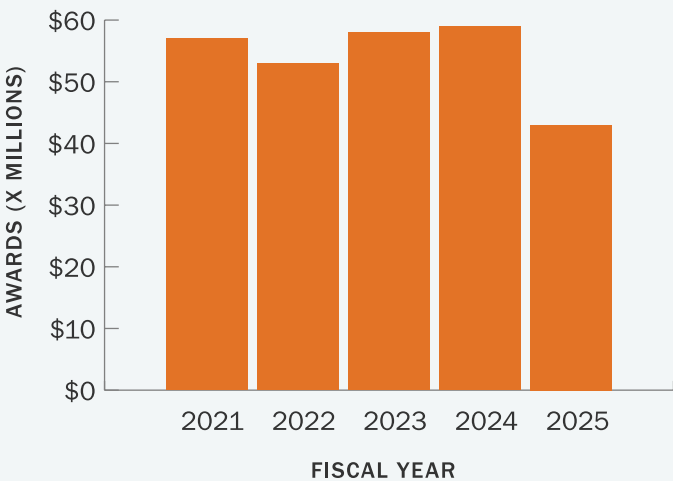
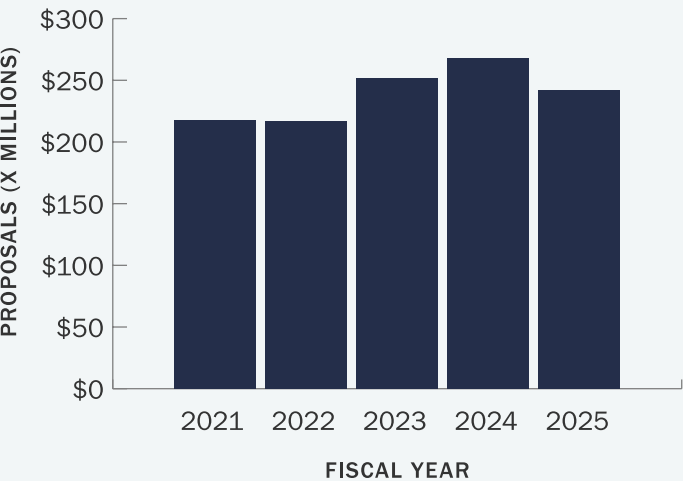
In just the last year, our faculty earned some of the nation's most competitive honors:

- Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers
- Five NSF CAREER Awards
- Guggenheim Fellowship
- Kavli Frontiers of Science Fellow
- American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship
- National Humanities Center Fellowship Award

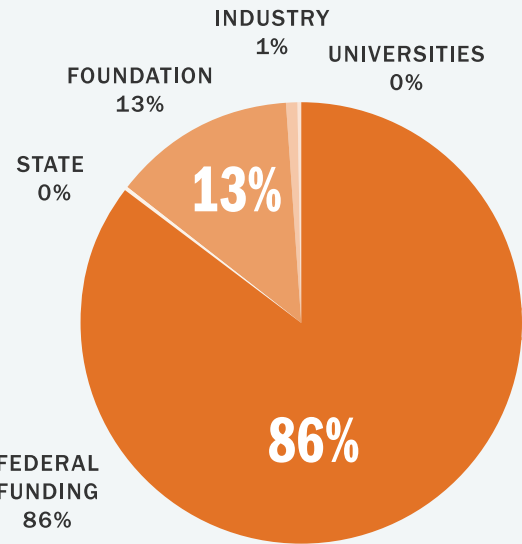
II. RESEARCH GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS

Success can also be seen in the performance of our departments, which stand out relative to our peers as well as the external funds garnered to support our research. The following graphs and tables illustrate how our faculty are expanding the research enterprise in Arts & Sciences through increased engagement with sponsored programs and outstanding performance at the national level.

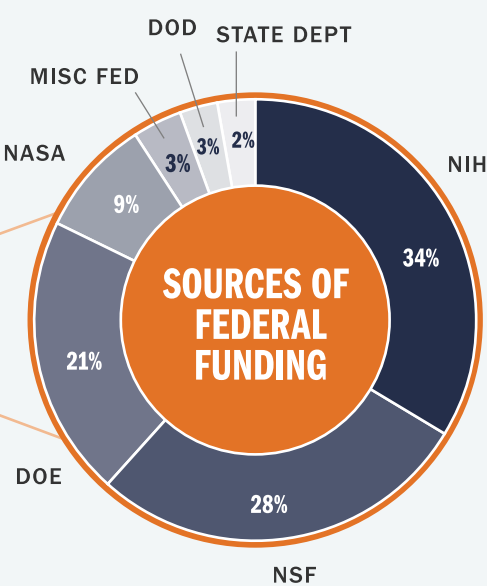
5-YEAR TRENDS FOR PROPOSAL DOLLARS AND AWARD DOLLARS



AWARDS RECEIVED BY SOURCE



FEDERAL AWARDS RECEIVED BY AGENCY



DEPARTMENT DISTINCTION

The following tables from *Academic Analytics* show A&S departments ranking in the 80th percentile or above nationally, based on measures such as publications, citations, awards and grant activity. These achievements underscore the national leadership of our departments in both scholarly productivity and impact.

Arts & Humanities Division

SRI Research Index %	Department
98	Art
83	Classics
95	Creative Writing
83	English
93	Music
83	Religious Studies

Note: Data includes all departments with a scholarly research index (SRI) >80% nationally; SRI is a measure of faculty research productivity (*Academic analytics*, 3/17/25 data)

Social Sciences Division

SRI Research Index %	Department
92	History
82	Media Studies
88	Politics
99	Sociology

Sciences Division

SRI Research Index %	Department
84	Biology
91	Chemistry
88	Environmental Sciences
82	Math
84	Psychology

COMMERCIALIZATION SUCCESS



Even our philosophy faculty are translating their ideas into the marketplace—proof that creativity and impact aren’t limited by discipline. Zac Irving’s (Philosophy) research on why so many good ideas pop into your head in the shower led to a partnership with Lush, a British cosmetics company.

Read more: [The Media Swarmed to His Shower Study. Now Comes a Major Partnership](#)



Graduate students in A&S aren’t just learning — they’re launching. This is discovery with real-world reach. Chemistry graduate student duo Rachelle Turiello and Renna Nouwairi, with help from the UVA Licensing & Ventures Group, created Avant Genomics to market their innovative product to process liquid biopsy samples used to help detect cancers.

Read more: [Female Founders Drive Tech Company’s Relentless Rise](#)

IMPACT

A STRONGER RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

This year, our impact was defined by intentional growth, targeted investment and a renewed commitment to serving faculty at every stage of their research journey. Through strategic initiatives and expanded support systems, the Arts & Sciences Research Team is strengthening the foundation for research excellence across the College. In the following sections, we highlight four key areas where our investments have made a measurable difference: **strategic investment, research development, pre- and post-award administration and research communications.**

I. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

— OVERVIEW

The College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences has committed \$25 million over five years to strengthen research, scholarship, and creative activity across all divisions. **This is one of the most significant investments in A&S research in our history — and it's already reshaping what's possible.** This historic investment supports not only faculty and their projects directly but also the staff, infrastructure and processes that make sustained research excellence possible.

These investments were shaped by a faculty-led advisory committee and an inclusive, school-wide consultation process during the 2023–2024 academic year. The result was a [Strategic Research Plan](#) that outlines new funding models, expanded services, and the development of focal Areas of Excellence to build long-term capacity and national prominence in key fields.

— KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

A&S is turning vision into action through targeted programs, increased funding and expanded support systems that empower faculty at every stage of their research journey. These highlights showcase how strategic investment is fueling excellence across all divisions.

- **Baseline Research Funding Increase:** Tenure-track faculty in the Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities now receive \$4,000 in annual research support — a fourfold increase in baseline funding.
- **New Seed Funding Programs:** Faculty across all divisions now have access to new seed grants:
 - ▷ Up to \$50,000 for faculty in the Sciences
 - ▷ Up to \$20,000 for faculty in the Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities
 - ▷ Support for developing center-scale grant proposals across divisions
- **Dean's Research Fellows Program:** A new limited-term program recognizes mid-career faculty whose work demonstrates exceptional innovation and the potential to transform their fields.
- **Expanded Research Team to Provide Support:**
 - ▷ Two new hires in research development
 - ▷ Increased research communication, and graphics and illustration support for proposals and publications
 - ▷ New A&S director for pre-award administration
- **Direct Faculty Support:**
 - ▷ Greater salary support to supplement prestigious external awards
 - ▷ Flexible teaching schedules to accommodate demanding periods in research and creative projects
- **Graduate Education Expansion in the Sciences**
- **Support for Technical Staff for Shared Equipment**
- **Upgrades to the Gilmer Hall vivarium to meet the needs of our expanding faculty**
- **Cross-School Strategic Hires:** As part of pan-University initiatives in Brain & Neuroscience, Environmental Resilience and Green Energy, A&S welcomed four new faculty this year, for a total of nine.

II. RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

— OVERVIEW

To complement strategic investments in faculty and infrastructure, the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences launched a dedicated research development team to proactively support faculty research at every stage.

Co-managed by Caitlin Charos (M.A., A.B.D.) and Trisha Dant (Ph.D.), the team plays a critical role in strengthening the College’s research ecosystem. Their work is strategic and catalytic — helping faculty identify and pursue funding opportunities, cultivate relationships with sponsors, and advance long-term research agendas.

Their services range from personalized consultations and proposal reviews to organizing targeted workshops and developing strategic-funding roadmaps.

The team collaborates closely with department chairs, the Dean’s Office, Corporate and Foundation Relations, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and other UVA units to ensure faculty are equipped for success.

— KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Since joining the College in January 2025, the research development managers have significantly increased the level of support and engagement available to A&S faculty:

- **Consulted with 100+ faculty and department leaders** to discuss research trajectories and identify funding opportunities.
- **Redesigned the A&S Research website** to include curated, discipline-specific funding lists and a new “subscribe” feature for customized funding digests.
- **Led 19 workshops and departmental sessions** to raise awareness about funding opportunities and build community engagement.
- **Developed new programming**, including “Proposal Writing in Community” summer sessions, red team reviews, and mock study sections to support major grant submissions like NIH R21s and NSF CAREER proposals.

THE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT TEAM HAS QUICKLY BECOME AN ENGINE OF STRATEGIC GUIDANCE AND FACULTY EMPOWERMENT.

This robust programming ensures that faculty — from early career to senior researchers — have access to expert guidance and peer collaboration to strengthen their proposals and diversify their funding portfolios.

SUCCESS STORY

Facing shifts in federal funding priorities, the research development team has partnered with UVA’s corporate and foundation relations team to expand faculty access to foundation funding. Their targeted approach — helping researchers craft compelling concept papers, refine pitches, and align with sponsor priorities — has led to a measurable increase in foundation-focused letters of intent and full proposals.

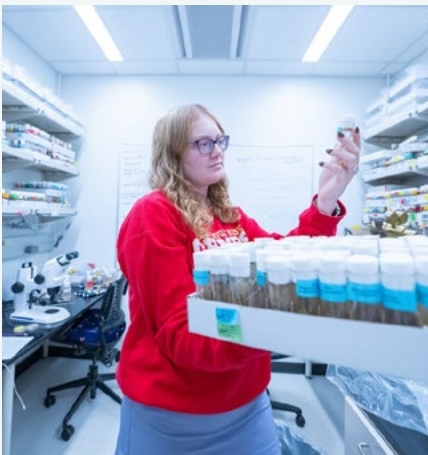


III. PRE- AND POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION

— OVERVIEW

The pre- and post-award administration team is integral to the research process at A&S, facilitating the link between research activities and outcomes throughout the grant life cycle. The team is responsive to changes in the research environment and is dedicated to quickly adapting and communicating changes to faculty.

By fostering a culture of service and engagement, the pre- and post-award administration team provides essential support to faculty and departments at every stage of the research process.



Pre-award administrators work directly with faculty from the point of proposal development to the submission of final documents, ensuring all submissions are compliant with sponsor and UVA policies. Their work includes managing proposal submissions, developing budgets, interpreting funding opportunities, and ensuring the smooth transition from proposal submission to project implementation.

Post-award administrators take over once a grant is awarded, serving as the primary contact point for faculty and departments on all matters related to grants management and research administration. Their responsibilities include reviewing and submitting post-award requests, managing subawards, overseeing financial analysis, ensuring the timely closeout of grants and non-funded agreements.

— KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The pre- and post-award administration team has focused on streamlining processes and providing high-quality, efficient support to faculty. Key achievements include:

- **Expanded staffing** to reduce the administrative burden on faculty and departments.
- **Leveraged cross-departmental knowledge** to address common pre- and post-award challenges, improving efficiency and consistency.
- **Developed quarterly grant financial tracking and monitoring reports**, distributed to PIs and department staff, which include important information on reporting requirements and sponsor approval needs.
- **Created an A&S research administration handbook** to standardize service delivery across the College, ensuring all departments receive the same high level of support.
- **Published A&S-specific pre- and post-award policies** and processes, increasing transparency, including policies on proposal submission deadlines, post-award advance accounts, and PI eligibility procedures.
- **Hosted grant orientation sessions** for faculty, department managers and directors of graduate studies to ensure all stakeholders are informed and prepared for the grant process.
- **Introduced a new award email** sent to PIs and departmental staff with key grant details, simplifying communication and tracking, as well as a new grant meeting for new PIs and complex new awards.
- **Streamlined the approval matrix** for department chairs and PIs, eliminating approval bottlenecks and improving overall efficiency in the pre- and post-award processes.
- **Collaborated with the GSAS** to improve budgeting accuracy for graduate student proposals.

SUCCESS STORY

One notable achievement in research development and pre-award support involved a limited-submission NIH T32 Training Grant. This type of grant requires significant administrative input due to the data collection and detailed reporting involved. The pre-award administrator and development manager created new toolkits, checklists and templates, reducing the administrative work and allowing the team to focus on the scientific and training aspects of the proposal. In response to a last-minute program cancellation, the research development manager advised the team on an alternative funding opportunity and guided them in modifying their proposal to be competitive for the new opportunity.

In the post-award phase, the research administration team identified project start-ups as a key area where researchers and staff needed additional support. To address this, the team developed and launched a new project kick-off meeting designed to proactively resolve common administrative issues early in the grant lifecycle. By bringing together a cross-function group of researchers and departmental staff, these meetings have facilitated a shared understanding of sponsor requirements, immediate administrative and technical needs, the project budget and support available to faculty and department staff.



Jennifer Bair, professor of sociology and senior associate dean for academic affairs for the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences (left), and her team—associate professor of sociology and director of graduate studies Adam Slez (second from left), postdoctoral researcher Kathryn Babineau (second from right) and sociology graduate student Victor Yengle (right).

IV. RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

— OVERVIEW

As of October, senior writer and research communications manager Russ Bahorsky has focused exclusively on promoting faculty research, amplifying the stories of A&S scholars and increasing the visibility of their research and creative work. This effort has resulted in a substantial increase in the publication and dissemination of research-related stories for academic and public audiences. By strategically leveraging various platforms, we've enhanced the College's reputation and fostered broader engagement with our faculty's impactful work.

— KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past year, the research communications team has made substantial progress in increasing the reach and visibility of faculty research. Key achievements include:

- **50 research stories** written and posted on the web, highlighting a wide range of faculty scholarship and discoveries.
- **27 stories about A&S faculty** featured in UVA Today, showcasing the breadth and depth of research across disciplines.
- **11 science stories** included in EurekaAlert! releases hosted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which communicates scientific discoveries to the media.

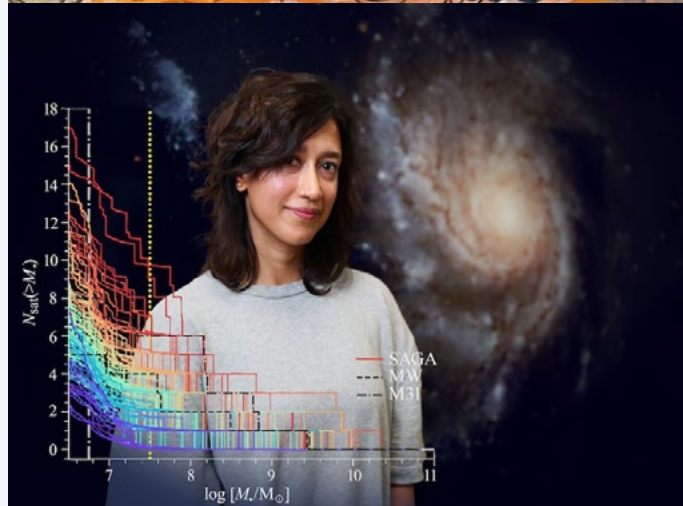
SUCCESS STORY

Another standout example of research communication success is Sally Pusede's research on air pollution inequities related to industrial swine facilities. This story not only gained significant attention within the UVA community but also resonated with broader audiences.

Pusede's research, which explores how air pollution from these facilities can be detected from space, was shared widely and received 1,687 views—underscoring the public's interest in innovative, socially relevant research.

This exposure is a testament to the power of effective communication in showcasing research that addresses critical environmental and social issues.

At right: A&S research communications covered a wide range of stories from environmental sciences professor Sally Pusede's work on environmental equity (top) to English professor Stephen Hopkins' research on Biblical apocrypha (2nd from top) to astronomer Nitya Kallivayalil's galactic survey (3rd from top) to national dissertation-award winner Katharine Daniel (bottom). Photos by Evan Kutsko and illustrations by Avery Wagner.



LOOKING AHEAD

THE HORIZON

As we look ahead to the next fiscal year, A&S remains acutely aware of the challenges posed by uncertainty around federal research funding. However, everything we've put in place allows us to be nimble and responsive in this fast-changing landscape. Our efforts over the past year have laid the groundwork for a flexible, proactive approach to navigating these challenges.

The investment in our staff, processes and infrastructure has been critical in positioning us for success. For instance, our research development managers are working tirelessly to help faculty diversify their funding sources, especially in light of federal funding uncertainties. Our pre- and post-award teams are equipped to quickly respond to changes in the federal environment, providing guidance to faculty and helping them navigate new regulations and opportunities.



This strong foundation is due in no small part to the leadership of Laura Galloway, who is concluding her four-year term in the Dean's Office. During her tenure as Associate Dean for Research, she oversaw the growth and professionalization of the research team, brought the full breadth of the Arts & Sciences scholarly community under the research umbrella, led the development and implementation of the A&S Strategic Research Plan.

Her vision and commitment have helped ensure that we are well-positioned to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

As Laura often says, "In uncertain times, having the right people, processes, and a strong foundation in place is our greatest advantage. We may not know exactly what's coming, but we've given ourselves every tool we need to adapt and thrive."



STABILITY IS STRATEGY. THIS FOUNDATION GIVES US STAYING POWER,
EVEN IN A SHIFTING RESEARCH LANDSCAPE.



With this strong foundation in place, we now turn to the next chapter of leadership. We are delighted to welcome Sarah Kucenas, Owen R. Cheatham Professor of the Sciences, as the new associate dean for research.

Building on the remarkable progress achieved under Laura, Sarah is poised to expand and deepen our commitment to excellence in research by expanding research development and advocating for all research, scholarship and creative activity across Arts & Sciences.

By continuing to develop and implement a cohesive strategic research plan that fuels academic innovation, discovery, scholarship, and creative work, Sarah's leadership will ensure that our scholarly momentum remains the throughline that connects Arts & Sciences priorities and drives them forward.



With Sarah's vision and Laura's groundwork, the future of research in A&S is both expansive and aligned.

PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR

Our priorities for the upcoming year build on the momentum we’ve already created. We will continue to refine and expand the initiatives we’ve launched, ensuring that we stay ahead of the curve and remain responsive to faculty needs. Here’s how we plan to grow each area:

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT • Further diversify funding opportunities and foster relationships with new sponsors. • Expand our training offerings in collaboration with Corporate & Foundation Relations to help faculty approach both small and large foundations. • Host ideation workshops to forge new interdisciplinary connections and cultivate research teams.	RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION • Build efficiency and transparency in both the pre- and post-award phases, including developing and circulating templates to streamline proposal development and active grant management. • Work closely with departments to develop grant-related training sessions for both staff and faculty, ensuring that everyone is equipped to navigate the complex research landscape.
RESEARCH COMMUNICATION • Expand the communications team to enhance our social media presence, allowing us to bring our faculty’s work to a broader audience. • Further develop the A&S Research website to showcase faculty publications and provide a comprehensive view of the exciting research across the A&S research landscape.	STRATEGIC RESEARCH INITIATIVE • Invest in targeted areas of research excellence within A&S to elevate areas of prominence, fostering national and international recognition in these fields.

WHAT’S NEXT? More of what works — refined, expanded, and responsive to faculty needs.

“Arts & Sciences fosters a bold and visionary research culture — one that sparks curiosity and creativity, advances excellence at every level, and draws exceptional minds to our community. I am continually inspired by the remarkable ways our faculty, staff and students are pushing the boundaries of knowledge and imagination. I’m proud to champion their work and help expand our collective potential as we shape a brighter, more innovative future.”

— SARAH KUCENAS, INCOMING ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH

APPENDIX

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PEOPLE

The progress and momentum detailed in this report are made possible by the dedicated efforts of the A&S Research team. From proposal development and grant management to strategic communications and investments in faculty success, our staff bring exceptional professionalism, creativity and commitment to their work every day.

We would also like to recognize an important milestone within our team.

Rana Ganguly will retire this year. Together with John Hawley, Rana helped launch the research development function in Arts & Sciences. Among his many contributions, he led the creation of the annual NSF CAREER proposal workshop — an initiative that has helped numerous junior faculty members secure prestigious early-career awards. We are deeply grateful for Rana’s service and wish him all the best in retirement.

To learn more about our team and the individuals behind the work described in this report, we invite you to visit our website: <https://research.as.virginia.edu/meet-team>

Cover image: An aerial view of the communal promenade between New Cabell Hall and Nau Hall, representing a bridge between our storied past and bright future, where paths cross and minds meet.



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ARTS & SCIENCES

RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

<https://research.as.virginia.edu/>