

UVA LaCross Institute for Ethical AI in Business

2026 Fellowships in AI Research (FAIR) Program

Summary

The UVA Darden LaCross Institute for Ethical Artificial Intelligence in Business (LaCross AI Institute) is requesting proposals for multidisciplinary research fellowships focused on ethical AI in business. Proposed projects may focus on any related topic; however, preference will be given to those that address the 2026 topics of interest listed below.

All UVA faculty are eligible to submit proposals and serve as primary investigators, however preference will be given to proposed projects that include one or more faculty affiliated with UVA Darden. Practitioners or outside experts may serve as co-investigators, and project teams must include student researchers currently at UVA or newly hired for these roles.

The fellowships will cover faculty and student-centric research activities for a period of 12-24 months up to a total of \$100,000. Funding restrictions apply. Proposed projects must produce academic-quality output that is suitable for dissemination and useful in pursuit of follow-on research funding.

Applications are due January 9, 2026. Recipients of the 2026 Fellowships will be announced in January 2026.

Several information sessions will be scheduled for individuals who are interested in learning more about the program and the 2026 topics of interest. Please see the LaCross AI Institute website for details.

To request a 1x1 information session, please contact fair@arden.virginia.edu.

Information about the 2026 FAIR Program is also available on the [2026 Fellowships](#) page on the [LaCross AI Institute](#) website.

2026 Fellowships in AI Research (FAIR) Program

The UVA Darden LaCross AI Institute invites applications from UVA faculty for the 2026 Fellowships in AI Research (FAIR) Program. 2026 Fellowships are expected to be awarded in January 2026.

The LaCross AI Institute was established in 2025 with the mission to make the world a better place through the responsible use of AI in business by developing leaders who can manage AI businesses and solutions, guided by ethics, values, and the advancement of human well-being. As part of this mission, a key emphasis is on collaboration across disciplines, including to advance academic research and knowledge creation on timely and important topics in ethical AI in business where such collaboration may accelerate progress or lead to novel approaches and solutions.

The Fellowships in AI Research program, which originally launched under the Darden-Data Science Collaboratory (DCADS) in the fall of 2023, is now organized by the LaCross AI Institute. It is the Institute's primary vehicle to pursue and support collaboration in research. It is designed to support scholars, practitioners and UVA students who are, or intend to be, engaged in research that has beneficial practical outcomes and provides the foundation for substantive future work. The FAIR Program is structured to provide initial funding for work that is conducted within the University of Virginia, as a collaboration among UVA faculty, staff and students, representing multiple disciplines. The program is also open to others in Virginia provided the work is led by UVA affiliated principal investigator.

We invite all applications covering the broad spectrum of topics related to ethical AI in business. However, for 2026, we will give preference to proposals that align with one of the following topics of interest:

- **Bias and Misinformation:** exploring algorithms and data-intensive business practices that promote truthful and reliable information creation and use in business and in society using AI.
- **Analytical Leadership:** leading and managing individuals, teams, and organizations amidst the near ubiquity of data and technology that enable the use or misuse AI, including organization structures and management approaches, performance measurement and evaluation, optimal worker/work alignment, agents and AI - human teaming, workforce and societal impacts, value realization, and more.
- **Human ↔ AI Performance:** Understanding and enhancing human performance – in sports, work, and life - using AI and machine learning, and evaluating and advancing AI performance using insights and understanding from the study of performance improvement in humans.
- **Data Privacy & Ethical AI:** Understanding the role of data privacy and data ethics in the development and deployment of ethical AI, and developing tools and management approaches that ensure these prominent considerations are addressed.
- **Value Chain of Ethical AI:** Exploring the business and ethical issues that arise in the system of interrelated stakeholders, businesses and capabilities that comprise AI – including data, models, applications, management, outcomes, and the infrastructure and people that enable them - as well as the potential solutions and value that a systems perspective may unlock.

Additional information for each of these focus topics is available on the website.

Fellowship Details

The fellowship will support a research project in ethical artificial intelligence of significance to scholars and practitioners in business. The ideal project is aligned with one of the above topics and involves

collaboration among multiple disciplines to address a problem or opportunity in a novel way. The intent is to highlight disciplines, develop or apply methods, and pursue approaches to ethical AI that may be unfamiliar or inaccessible in the individual disciplines that conduct research in ethical artificial intelligence. The goal of the FAIR Program is to produce output that demonstrates the efficacy of such collaboration in identifying novel solutions and unique pathways for continued future research.

Fellow Responsibilities

Fellowships proposals may include UVA and non-UVA faculty as Faculty Fellows, current and new UVA students as Student Fellows, and non-academic practitioners and other experts as Practitioner Fellows. Proposed projects must be led by a member of the UVA faculty serving as Principal Investigator.

Fellows will join and have recognized standing as part of the UVA Darden community, and potentially others across UVA, during the Fellowship.

The primary activities of the Fellows will be those research-related activities that are necessary for completion of the proposed project, including as originally defined and as subsequently modified by agreement during the Fellowship.

Secondary activities may include participation in seminars, classes, meetings, etc. with faculty, students and staff at UVA Darden, UVA Data Science, and in the UVA community at large, including at other UVA schools and units that are usefully related to the proposed project.

Faculty Fellows will be responsible for overseeing the work of others involved in the proposed project, including Post-doctoral Fellows, Student Fellows (doctoral or graduate students, NOT including undergraduate), Practitioner Fellows (individuals from business or other experts, etc.) and associated research staff (e.g., research assistants or support) who may be hired using Fellowship funds.

Fellows are not expected to be in residence at UVA on a continuous basis, but will be expected to spend 2-3 periods in Charlottesville during the duration of the Fellowship. During the rest of the Fellowship, they must be accessible remotely as necessary to ensure the successful completion of the proposed project. Additional residency in the Charlottesville, Virginia area may be proposed, but Fellowship funding is not available to cover further residency-related expenses.

Fellows are expected to complete the activities and produce the outputs as agreed upon in the project proposal.

Fellows will be required to present their work and/or conduct public and private workshops and participate in related events to further disseminate their work. These may include virtual and/or in-person engagements. Fellows should identify themselves as recipients of the UVA LaCross AI Institute Fellowship in AI Research (FAIR) Program during the timeframe of the fellowship. Fellows should identify their work within this program as supported by the UVA LaCross AI Institute Fellowship in AI Research (FAIR) Program or other language as appropriate to the setting.

Fellows are expected to be aware of and to adhere to UVA policies and guidelines that are relevant to their work as Fellows of the LaCross AI Institute.

Project Guidelines

The proposed project must be led by a UVA faculty member. Additional team members may be affiliated with other academic institutions and/or businesses with a presence in Virginia.

Proposed projects must be new work and not previously completed or published.

Project outputs should include, at a minimum, a paper, article, presentation or other document that is suitable for dissemination to a scholarly audience, such as through a peer-reviewed journal in artificial intelligence, ethics, data science, or business, or another venue as proposed and agreed.

Work is expected to be sufficient in quality and other respects so as to be useful in subsequent proposals for funding from public or private sources.

Duration

FAIR Fellowships are generally 18 months in duration, but the duration may be modified to fit the timeline of a proposed project. A timeline is required as part of the proposal. All proposed activities and outputs are expected to be completed during the duration of the Fellowship.

Compensation

The funds for the fellowships are provided by the LaCross AI Institute. Each fellowship will include a maximum of \$100,000 in total funding. Of this amount, \$75,000 must be used for student-related expenses, including funding Student Fellows such as existing or new student researchers (post-doc, phd, masters), covering student travel, conference fees, etc and providing necessary resources such as data, software, training, compute, storage, etc. In addition, applicable fringe will also be covered. The remaining \$25,000 can be used for any project-related expense at the Principal Investigator's discretion. All funds must be utilized as described in the submitted and accepted fellowship proposal.

Qualifications

For Faculty: Any full-time faculty member from the University of Virginia with any school or department and of any academic rank. Faculty in the fields of artificial intelligence, ethics, data science or business will be given preference, as will collaborations between faculty representing multiple disciplines and/or UVA units.

For Non-faculty: Experienced practitioners and other non-academic professionals with more than 10 years of experience in artificial intelligence, data science or business. UVA Darden and UVA Data Science alumni will be given preference.

FAIR Fellowship recipients must meet UVA work eligibility requirements.

Note that LaCross AI Institute leadership (e.g., Directors, etc) and members of the selection committee are not eligible to participate.

Application Instructions

Anyone may nominate candidate(s) for the 2026 FAIR Program, however nominations are optional. Direct applications from qualified individuals are encouraged.

Nomination

A nomination is not required. However, if you would like to nominate someone else for the 2026 FAIR Program, please email the following to fair@darden.virginia.edu:

1. Your name and contact information,
2. The name and contact information of the person you are nominating,

3. A short statement (500 words max.) of why you are making this nomination and what you expect the nominee will contribute if he or she is selected for this Fellowship.

A LaCross AI Institute representative will review all nominations and invite qualified individuals to submit an application for the 2026 FAIR Program.

Nomination deadline: November 30, 2025

Application

To apply for the 2026 FAIR Program, individuals must submit the following information using the Application link on the LaCross AI Institute website. Note that a nomination is not required.

1. An abbreviated CV (3-pages maximum) for each Faculty member in the project proposal,
2. A project proposal that addresses the following at a minimum (5 pages maximum)
 - a. An overview of your proposed project,
 - b. A summary of the plan, timing and approach that you intend to follow,
 - c. A preliminary list or table of the resources (e.g., students, research staff, data, computing, etc.) and associated budget that you require (note that requested budget may not exceed \$100,000 but may be less),
 - d. What type of UVA student resources (e.g., Post-doc, PhD, Masters) you intend to use,
 - e. What role, work, and other activities you expect the student(s) to perform in the project,
 - f. Outputs and end-products that you will produce,
 - g. Potential avenues to disseminate your work,
 - h. Potential opportunities to extend or expand this work using other sources of funding in the future.
 - i. Note that references are not included in the page limit and should be limited to only those that are essential for the committee to use in evaluating the proposal.
3. A personal statement that addresses the following at a minimum (1 page maximum)
 - a. Why are you a compelling candidate for the FAIR Program and a strong fit with the LaCross AI Institute?
 - b. Why do this Fellowship and the LaCross AI Institute represent a uniquely compelling opportunity for you?
 - c. How does this Fellowship support your current and potential future professional activities?

Application deadline: January 9, 2026

Successful candidates will be expected to provide a letter of support from their current school/unit/manager if requested. They may be asked for professional references prior to the final awarding of the Fellowship.

Additional Information

The **LaCross Institute for Ethical Artificial Intelligence in Business** is an institute at the University of Virginia that was formed in 2025 at the Darden School of Business. Building on Darden's history of academic leadership in business ethics and the role of business in society, the LaCross AI Institute will support efforts to establish Darden and UVA as the preeminent place in the world for research, education, practice and policy related to ethical AI in business.

The **Darden School of Business** is a top-rated global business school with a mission to improve the world by developing responsible leaders through unparalleled transformational learning experiences. Through degree and non-degree programs, delivered by the world's best faculty and bolstered by their research and ideas, we put personal purpose in motion, setting the stage for a lifetime of career advancement and impact.

The **University of Virginia** is regarded as one of the nation's finest public universities. Charlottesville is consistently ranked among the best places to live in the United States. See the UVA website for more information about the University, its Schools and units, and the surrounding Charlottesville area.

Required Statements

The University of Virginia, including the UVA Health System which represents the UVA Medical Center, Schools of Medicine and Nursing, UVA Physician's Group and the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, are fundamentally committed to the diversity of our faculty and staff. We believe diversity is excellence expressing itself through every person's perspectives and lived experiences. We are equal opportunity and affirmative action employers. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, marital status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, veteran status, and family medical or genetic information.