Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis is pleased to announce the search for the inaugural Chair of the newly-created Department of Statistics and Data Science. This leader will have the opportunity to develop a distinctive vision and strategic direction for both research and education in the new department that reflect the emerging opportunities at the intersection of statistics and data science. Beyond being the expected strong scholar with a robust record of grant-funded research, this individual will be a dynamic and innovative leader with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and have the international stature to attract and persuade the most innovative thinkers of the day to join in the co-creation of this new venture.

The New Department

The initiative to form a new department is the outcome of the most recent Arts & Sciences strategic plan and intersects significantly with emerging priorities from the University strategic planning process and its focus on Digital Transformation. The new department will provide a foundation for ambitious and innovative work informed by rigorous data analytics across a range of disciplinary areas, filling a vital niche in the current academic landscape that leverages the emerging opportunities of computational and data science as well as Washington University’s deep strength in the social sciences.

Washington University already has a number of tenure-line and teaching-track faculty members working in statistics and related disciplines. Research in this area is supported by annual awards from agencies such as NSF, NIH, DOE, and USDA, and faculty have been recognized by receipt of many prestigious awards including the NSF CAREER Award. Undergraduate and graduate interest in courses and degree offerings is robust and steadily increasing.

The framework of the plan to build the department, which will be led by the inaugural chair, is to begin by recruiting a cohort of statisticians with strong interest in applications who would be fully based in the department and an equal sized cadre of faculty who would be jointly hired with other units. Many in this latter group would have their joint appointments with the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), while others would be jointly appointed with other units in Arts & Sciences or other schools at the University. CSE has already demonstrated keen interest in this domain as evidenced by their initial collaboration five years ago with the social sciences that led to the formation of the Division for Computational and Data Sciences (DCDS) PhD program. Recruiting would likely happen in clusters of ~5 per year.
over a period of at least four years. Arts & Sciences would also invite existing faculty with appropriate expertise in Mathematics & Statistics, Computer Science & Engineering, Biostatistics, and other departments to have full or joint appointments in this new department.

Critical to the success of this department will be the strong collaboration between Arts & Sciences and McKelvey Engineering and the opportunities this partnership provides. The DCDS doctoral program, which currently is funded by McKelvey and managed by CSE, could be reconfigured as a partnership between these two departments. In addition, the TRIADS initiative, which figures both in the Arts & Sciences and University strategic plans, brings a powerful set of interdisciplinary faculty heavily invested in the success of the new department. Both of these programs will contribute to and benefit enormously – both academically and reputationally – from the statistical and data science foundations provided by the new department.

The School

Arts & Sciences has approximately 420 tenure-track faculty, 180 teaching-track faculty, 4,600 undergraduate students, and 1,600 full-time graduate students. The school covers a wide range of disciplines across its 24 departments in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, and it houses 12 interdepartmental programs and 8 research centers. In FY 2022, research awards to Arts & Sciences investigators totaled $47 million.

Dean Feng Sheng Hu, who was appointed in July 2020, oversees all aspects of the operations and programs in Arts & Sciences, including strategic planning and implementation; research, creative practice, and innovation; faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion; diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives; budget and resource planning; communications and marketing; alumni relations and advancement; facilities and capital planning; information technology services; and the appointments of the vice deans of faculty affairs, faculty development and diversity, research, undergraduate affairs, and graduate education.

Dean Hu is widely recognized for his innovative, interdisciplinary research on long-term ecosystem dynamics in relation to climate change. Prior to his appointment at Washington University in St. Louis, Dean Hu was a longtime leader and faculty member at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. From 2017–20, he served as the Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Previously, as associate dean for life and physical sciences, he worked with science departments to promote research, teaching, innovation, and public service. He was head of and a professor in the Department of Plant Biology and was the Ralph E. Grim Professor of Geology. Dean Hu was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2008, and has been named a Packard Fellow in Science and Engineering, a University Scholar of the University of Illinois, a Fulbright Scholar, and a Fellow of the Ecological Society of America.
In his time at the University, Dean Hu has worked with the faculty, staff, and students to launch a new strategic plan, revised the leadership structure of the school, pursued an ambitious faculty hiring strategy including a cluster hiring program for Digital Transformation, created funding opportunities to advance research, and spearheaded new construction projects including additional spaces for research and teaching as well as a new 120,000 sq ft building to be built at the center of the campus.

**The Position**

The inaugural Chair will lead the effort to build a world-class department with outstanding data scientists who will transform the university intellectual community not only through their own activities and achievements but also through synergistic collaborations with existing faculty and departments across Arts & Sciences, as well as the McKelvey School of Engineering, the world-renowned School of Medicine, and other Schools across campus.

The Chair, who will be appointed a tenured member of the department, is expected to serve for an initial term of five years with the opportunity for reappointment. The Chair is expected to be a role model and provide leadership in all matters of department policy, structure, and function including strategic planning, appointments, promotions, instruction, mentorship, research, and administration and will conduct research, publish in peer-reviewed journals, teach relevant courses, advise students, and participate in university and national service. The Chair is expected to cultivate a supportive and collegial nurturing environment for faculty, staff, and students to achieve the highest possible level of excellence in research, teaching, and learning.

The Chair will work with and inspire the SDS faculty, staff, and students to fulfill the following opportunities:

- **Sustain and shape a shared vision:** This is not simply an opportunity to lead a department but an opportunity to shape it from the ground up. The ideal candidate will be a distinguished scholar with a compelling intellectual vision to create a department for the 21st century and someone with the professional profile to attract and persuade the best thought leaders of the day to join in the co-creation of this new venture. Fundamental to this task will be to identify what elements of Statistics and Data Science align with other strengths at WashU and can be the basis by which to make the department truly distinctive in the context of the rapidly expanding academic landscape of Data Science.

- **Provide leadership for critical academic decisions:** The Chair will be asked to provide leadership for and build consensus around critical academic issues, including faculty hiring within the department, the nature and extent of interdisciplinary programs, the configuration of curricular offerings, and enrollment across academic areas.

- **Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion:** Diversity is key to academic innovation and institutional strength. The Chair will need to foster and sustain efforts to enhance
diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst faculty, staff, and students in alignment with the University mission.

- **Provide leadership for undergraduate education:** Washington University has invested for over two decades in improving the co-curricular and life experience of undergraduates. The Chair needs to sustain and augment existing efforts to provide students with an academic experience of the highest caliber.

- **Foster excellence in graduate education:** The Chair must work with the faculty to support and nurture graduate and doctoral programs of the greatest national and international distinction with transformational research outcomes.

- **Manage resources to ensure a strong financial future:** The Chair must continue to manage resources wisely, maintaining sound budgetary controls and principled resource allocation.

- **Build collaboration across units:** There continue to be important opportunities for collaboration across the departments within Arts & Sciences, amongst other Schools within the University including the McKelvey School of Engineering and the School of Medicine, and through transdisciplinary initiatives (e.g. the Division for Computational and Data Sciences and TRIADS); the Chair should foster curiosity and dialogue throughout the campus community, strengthen existing collaborations, seek out new opportunities and facilitate their exploration and establishment, effectively leveraging the excellence in the University’s other Schools.

- **Increase resources through fundraising:** Fundraising at Washington University has always had a strong focus on the Schools led by the Deans. With a greater emphasis on collaboration across schools, there is a greater role for University leaders whose programs reach across School traditional boundaries. Department chairs will play an increasing role in supporting their Deans and others in fundraising especially for resources aimed at the specific departments.

**The Individual**

Ideal candidates will have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- **Academic stature:** Distinguished academic accomplishments, commensurate with appointment at the rank of professor, and appropriate to the leadership of a department with a tradition of excellence in research, teaching, and service;

- **Academic leadership:** Proven ability in fostering continued excellence of research and educational programs, and demonstrated commitment to mentorship and collegiality;
• **Collaborative skill**: Experience in fostering collaborations, bringing people and entities together, creating synergies within and across joint initiatives;

• **Financial acumen**: Experience in financial management of budgets involving personnel, facilities, and programmatic resources;

• **Effective communication**: Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills, and the ability to communicate effectively with faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Diversity and inclusion are core values at Washington University. Candidates should have a demonstrated commitment to creating inclusive environments that embrace differences in gender, race, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation and/or philosophy.

**The University**

Washington University in St. Louis is a global leader in research and education with approximately 14,740 full-time students divided evenly between undergraduate and graduate/professional programs. The University has 4,000 full- and part-time faculty members and more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in annual research expenditures. Founded in 1853, the University is an independent, Research 1 institution. The University’s undergraduate program is currently ranked 15th overall by U.S. News and World Report and the School of Medicine is ranked fourth nationally in NIH funding. Washington University attracts students and faculty from all 50 states and more than 100 countries.

The University is organized into seven academic units: Arts & Sciences, the McKelvey School of Engineering, the School of Medicine, the Olin Business School, the Brown School of Social Work, the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, and the School of Law. The most recent University capital campaign surpassed $3.3 billion and University leaders have just unveiled a new strategic plan for the next decade. With the inauguration of Chancellor Andrew Martin in 2019, the University has already acted on its WashU Pledge to the Missouri-Illinois region by committing resources to provide educational access for students regardless of background, to provide affordable and just healthcare through the BJC Healthcare System, and to commit to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion with the founding of the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Equity. The University’s endowment stands currently at $15.3 billion. Total sponsored research in FY2021 was $879.3 million, including $628 million in federal contracts and grants.

**The City**

Greater St. Louis is the 19th-largest metropolitan area in the United States with a population of approximately 3 million. Thanks in large part to Washington University, other regional universities, and key Fortune 500 corporations, St. Louis is a national hub for critical research and business development, especially in the fields of medicine, biotechnology, and science. The University is an active partner in growing St. Louis as an innovation and start-up hub, recently
helping to create the new [Cortex Innovation Community](#). The University’s Danforth Campus is located seven miles west of downtown St. Louis and is surrounded by a number of vibrant neighborhoods, such as University City’s Delmar Loop and the [Central West End](#), named one of the American Planning Association’s best neighborhoods in the country. Consistently ranked among the nation's best places to live and raise a family, the St. Louis region offers affordable neighborhoods and high-quality schools, in addition to all the amenities of a major city. The city provides numerous opportunities to enjoy professional sports, attend cultural events, and participate in a wide range of recreational activities, including the world-renowned St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. Bordering the University campus is Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the U.S., and home to many of the region’s major cultural institutions including the St. Louis Art Museum, the Missouri History Museum, the St. Louis Science Center, and the St. Louis Zoo, all of which are free to the public.

### The Search

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Review of applications will begin December 5, 2022 and continue until the position is filled. Candidates should provide a curriculum vitae, a letter of application including a description of their research program and highlighting administrative acumen and leadership experience, and the names and contact information of at least three references. *References will not be contacted without prior knowledge and approval of the candidates.*

Materials should be sent electronically via e-mail to [sds-search@wustl.edu](mailto:sds-search@wustl.edu). Documents that must be mailed may be sent to Ebba Segerberg, Arts & Sciences, Washington University in St Louis, St .Louis, MO 63130.

Washington University in St. Louis is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Washington University welcomes difference on our campus in the form of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, geography, socioeconomic status, age, politics, religion, philosophy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and veteran status. All applicants who share this goal are encouraged to apply.