

Dean Of The Year: Scott Beardsley Of UVA's Darden School Of Business

BY: JOHN A. BYRNE ON DECEMBER 14, 2020 | [0 COMMENTS](#) 1,855 VIEWS



For a long list of extraordinary achievements during his six years in the job. UVA Darden Dean Scott Beardsley is the Dean of the Year for 2020

Back pain could have cost him the job.

During the final stretch of a long and drawn-out search to find a new dean for the University of Virginia's [Darden School of Business](#), Scott Beardsley had to make his way to Charlottesville yet again from his home in Belgium for still more interviews. But on this day, after nearly weekly trips across the Atlantic from his home in Belgium, the tall and lanky senior partner of McKinsey & Co. was feeling out of sorts.

Beardsley had severely aggravated his lower back. As he stood before the school's faculty for a final round lookover, spasms of pain shot through his back. He managed to stay on his feet throughout his presentation but when he took questions from the professors Beardsley sat on a corner of a table to ease the pain. He would later learn that a lot of the people who

were assessing his fitness for the job wondered whether he had the stamina for its grueling demands.

THE ONLY 'NONTRADITIONAL' DEAN OF A TOP 20 BUSINESS SCHOOL

“What did it say about my readiness for a demanding job that I didn’t seem to have the stamina to stand up for an hour?” he mused. “The faux pas was all the worse because at Darden, more than most schools, we pride ourselves on high-energy classroom experiences. Faculty never sit down, choosing to roam the room working the case method interactive discussion. At the root of the concern was whether a nontraditional candidate like me fully understand the legendary Darden classroom culture and could have a commanding presence.”

As fate would have it, Beardsley passed the test. Six years into his deanship of Darden, there is no doubt about his stamina, his command, or his extraordinary achievements in the job. The only “nontraditional” dean of a top 20 business school who is not an academic, Beardsley has expertly led Darden through two major crises: a widely publicized white supremacist march in Charlottesville that caused applications to tank and this year’s horrific pandemic that has caused the biggest disruption to life in this generation. He has led admission innovations that challenged the dominance of standardized testing and opened the doors to more diverse candidates than ever before.

Yet those accomplishments hardly tell the story of how this former strategy consultant who had no previous connection to the University of Virginia or its business school has made an enduring mark on the institution he has led for just six years. Beardsley launched the most ambitious fundraising campaign in the school’s history, a \$400 million initiative, that has already brought in the single largest gift, \$68 million from Frank Sands Sr. who graduated with his MBA from Darden in 1963. The campaign has funded the creation of 23 new faculty chairs, though an important focus of his fundraising efforts have been student scholarships and financial aid. Beardsley, who wants to make Darden’s MBA experience the most affordable of any elite business school, has raised money for 82 new scholarships.

A COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN & FUTURE DARDEN’S OBSESSION WITH TEACHING EXCELLENCE

He has expanded the school’s presence in Washington, D.C., metro area in a new 40,000 square-foot space in with classrooms, meeting facilities, office and academic space. Today, more than 400 students now study at Darden in the D.C. area. And he is about to transform

Darden's grounds as well with a new inn and conference center for executive education students, the first major building project at the school in the last 20 years. Early in 2021, Beardsley will break ground on what will be a 199-room hotel, state of the art lifelong learning facilities, and an arboretum and botanical gardens.

Yet, his commitment to maintain and further the school's obsession with teaching excellence along with Darden's reputation for providing the best MBA education experience in the U.S., an accolade awarded Darden for nine consecutive years by *The Economist*, may very well be his most important contribution as a leader.

Thank goodness the faculty didn't judge him harshly for leaning on a table when his back was, in his own words, "killing me." For his stellar leadership through one of the most turbulent periods in higher education, for the compassion he has shown to anxiety-ridden applicants and students, for his vision to strengthen and expand Darden's standing among the best business schools in the world, *Poets&Quants* has named Scott Beardsley the Dean of the Year.

THE SECOND LEADER OF DARDEN'S SCHOOL OF BUSINESS TO EARN THE DEAN OF THE YEAR HONOR

Beardsley is the tenth dean to earn this honor, earned in the past by the leaders of Harvard Business School, the Yale School of Management, Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, Dartmouth College's Tuck School of Business, the University of Washington's Foster School of Business, Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, and IE Business School in Spain. Darden is also the only school to have gained the distinction of having two of its deans gain the honor. Robert Bruner, who led Darden from 2005 to 2015, was *Poets&Quants'* first Dean of the Year in 2011.

Unlike all the others before him, however, he is the only dean who did not follow the well-traveled scholarly, tenure-track path toward academic administrative roles that lead to a deanship. Instead, Beardsley reinvented himself after more than a quarter-century with McKinsey & Co., the firm he joined in New York as an associate in 1989 with his newly minted MBA from MIT Sloan. Those 72-hour workweeks would fuel the strategy consultant's rise to principal in 1996, senior partner in 2000, leader of its strategy practice in 2004, head of leadership development efforts in 2010, and election to the firm's prestigious Shareholders' Council.



Darden Dean Scott Beardsley joins a stellar roster of Dean of the Year honorees who include IE Business School's Santiago Iñiguez (top left), Indiana University Kelley School of Business' Idie Kesner, Yale's 'Ted' Snyder, Kellogg's Sally Blount, Harvard's Nitin Nohria, Foster School of Business' Jim Jiambalvo, Dartmouth Tuck's Paul Danos, Toronto Rotman's Roger Martin, and Beardsley's predecessor at Darden, Robert Bruner.

Dean	Year	School	University
<u>Idie Kesner</u>	2019	Kelley School of Business	Indiana University
<u>Jim Jiambalvo</u>	2018	Foster School of Business	University of Washington
<u>Sally Blount</u>	2017	Kellogg School of Management	Northwestern University
<u>Santiago Iñiguez</u>	2016	IE Business School	IE University/td>
<u>Edward 'Ted' Snyder</u>	2015	Yale School of Management	Yale University
<u>Paul Danos</u>	2014	Tuck School of Business	Dartmouth College

<u>Roger Martin</u>	2013	Rotman School of Management	University of Toronto
<u>Nitin Nohria</u>	2012	Harvard Business School	Harvard University
<u>Robert Bruner</u>	2011	Darden School of Business	University of Virginia



After being introduced to faculty and students at First Coffee, Beardsley regaled people with a story of how GE's Jack Welch dove into his lap

COMMUTING FROM BELGIUM TO PHILADELPHIA TO EARN HIS DOCTORATE

With McKinsey's mandatory retirement age of 60 looming not that far off, Beardsley found himself thinking about a second act. Taking one of his three sons, Philip, on the obligatory round of campus visits and immersing himself in the numerous rankings, Beardsley turned himself into "a walking encyclopedia on the topic of American college and university admissions."

Those tours would ultimately persuade him, at first uncertainly, to pursue a leadership role in higher education. On something of a lark, he tossed in his CV for the job of president at Dartmouth College in 2012. But with an electrical engineering degree from Tufts University and his Sloan MBA, he lacked a doctorate considered a prerequisite for the job. Then, a year later, while maintaining his grueling role at McKinsey, Beardsley enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania's Executive Doctorate for Higher Education Management and began a monthly commute to Philadelphia from Belgium for the next two years.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, he chose to do his dissertation on nontraditional leaders in higher education, a project that would lead to the publication of a book, *Higher Calling: The Rise of Nontraditional Leaders in Academia*. On Christmas Eve of 2014, after surviving his earlier meeting with the faculty, Beardsley signed his contract to become dean of the Darden School with a start date of Aug. 1, 2015.

'SCOTT HAS DONE A DEEP COMPREHENSIVE MCKINSEY STUDY OF DARDEN'

To say that Beardsley threw himself into the job would be an understatement. "Unlike most deans, Scott has done a deep comprehensive McKinsey study of Darden," says Michael Woodfolk, president of the Darden School Foundation and the school's chief fundraiser. "As part of that study, he has looked at what are the strong arteries that flow to the heart of the school. One of those arteries is the student experience, and he has been determined to make sure it remains the best there is."

By the end of his first year, Beardsley had interviewed all 70 plus faculty members in one-on-one meetings that ranged from one to four hours each. He made 75 speeches, racked up 100,000 frequent flier miles traveling throughout the U.S., to Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa to meet with alumni and donors, and entertained half of the school's students in his own home, one of the ten Pavilions on The Lawn of the university, the historic center of Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village, amidst students and other faculty. He and his wife, the French-born Claire DuFournet, live in Pavilion I on the north end of the site, opposite the Rotunda, the signature building of the University of Virginia.

They have completely embraced university life. Since becoming dean, Beardsley has created and taught three courses himself, including CEO Leadership in the 21st Century, and taught them in the first-floor dining room of his home or, on occasion, in the cellar, which in pre-Civil War day housed the slaves of the professors who lived upstairs. Claire hosts homemade chocolate crepe parties for Lawnies on snow days, and the two of them

have been known to even join in an occasional snowball fight on The Lawn. From day one, the new dean of the business school made it a point to make the rounds to meet the students who are his neighbors.

A STRONG BELIEVER IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Scott Beardsley on the doorstep of his home at Pavilion 1

Alex Gregorio was a history major in his senior year at UVA when he moved into the Pavilion next door. “I was talking with some friends on a warm August morning and all of a sudden this guy walks up in a suit, knocks on my door, and says, ‘Hi, I’m Scott. I just want to introduce myself. I am your neighbor. My wife and I would like to have you over for dinner sometime.’ I was very much star struck. He was a senior partner at McKinsey and the dean. It was the most chill, down-to-earth interaction you could have.” Gregorio since returned to UVA for both a law degree and an MBA and will graduate next year.

“In order for Scott to feel completely fulfilled,” notes Woodfolk of the Darden Foundation, “he has to immerse himself in the experience. That is why he lives on the Lawn. That is why he has embraced teaching. Scott wants to do his seminars and be in the classroom. It’s not enough for someone to tell him first hand what the students are thinking. He wants to be in it. He wants to be so immersed in it. He’s saying that ‘even though I didn’t grow up here,

even though I didn't graduate from UVA, I am going to take a bath in this whole UVA and business school experience."

Education has come naturally to Beardsley, in part because he comes from a family of educators but also because of the role education has played in his own life. "Education," he says, "allowed a kid born in a small town in Maine who grew up in Alaska to live an amazing life. I never would have had those opportunities were it not for education."

'MY OVERARCHING FEELING IS JUST ONE OF GRATITUDE'

The most challenging part of the transition was "getting to know everybody and to understand how things were done. The first year everything is new and you have to figure out the Darden way. A lot of people told me that the hardest part was to win over the faculty. They told me that would be impossible. At Darden, I feel blessed that the faculty is an amazing group of people and once I got to know them we were able to accomplish a lot of great things together. I feel very grateful to them. It was Cicero who said that gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all the others. My overarching feeling is just one of gratitude."

Like any really good consultant, he is, at heart, a listener, a trait that has no doubt won over the school's professors. But Beardsley is also very much a person of action. Sands Sr. says his \$68 million gift to the school honored his commitment to higher education and his belief in lifelong learning, passions he shares with Beardsley. But ultimately, Sands says the gift underlines his belief in the school's leadership. "In the final analysis," says Sands, "you've got to get things done and you've got to do that through people. Scott gets things done."

"Scott recognizes that decisions have to be made and good ideas have to be sourced," says Greg Fairchild, a long-time faculty member at Darden who also serves as associate dean for Washington, D.C. area initiatives. "He allows the discussion but in the end, a decision will be made and not all will agree. Some think he lets it go longer than he should while others think that he pulls the trigger too quickly."

'ALL YOU TOUCH AND ALL YOU SEE IS ALL YOUR LIFE WILL EVER BE'

People who work with Beardsley invariably describe him as thoughtful, at times philosophical, earnest, compassionate, and competitive. "He can seem very serious," says his wife Claire. "But you haven't seen him play Elvis as he did during Christmas for a McKinsey party at our house years ago. He's got more energy than anybody I know. He is

always on, and he is very generous with his time and giving his own energy to people. Whatever he chooses to do, he chooses it for a reason and he puts a lot of passion into it.”

Fairchild notes that Beardsley, an avid tennis player, has a reputation as a guy who plays to win. “A couple of people who have played on a court with him will say, ‘Oh, that guy. He will go for the jugular. He is very hard to beat. He will bring you the game full on. He is going to be vicious so you have to be ready to play.’”

If you were to ask Beardsley for a core principle he follows, he might say it is best summed up by a lyric from Breathe on Pink Floyd’s epic work, *The Dark Side of the Moon*.

All you touch and all you see is all your life will ever be.

“It is one of my favorite quotes from music,” explains Beardsley. “Because I think life is a lot about finding ways to touch others’ lives in a positive way; that is how we live.”

Beardsley is an unabashed fan of the English rock band and on some afternoons can be seen playing air guitar with eyes closed, emulating David Gilmour’s solo, as the tune blasts from the pair of speaker towers in his living room.



An artist's rendering of the new Darden Inn for which the school will break ground in early 2021

‘I WANT SOMEONE LEADING ADMISSIONS WHO HAS A HEART’

He lives that memorable Pink Floyd line, investing heavily in the senior leadership team he has built at Darden. “He is known to write performance reviews that are two to three pages

in length and then spend two to three hours giving feedback to us,” says Dawna Clarke, executive director of admissions at Darden. “To take the time to write an evaluation like that is remarkable. It makes people feel valued, and it is a tangible example of how caring he is. I have never worked for anyone who more highly screens for values and collaboration,” adds Clarke, who has worked for nine business school deans over a lengthy career in admissions.

Beardsley’s initial meeting with Clarke in 2016 was to last all of one hour at his vacation home in Maine. “We talked for four hours,” recalls Clarke. “One of the things he said to me is, ‘I want someone leading admissions who has a heart.’ That priority really resonated with me because it was clear he himself has a big heart. I was so struck by his energy and warmth and felt I really wanted to be part of this.”

It would be a fortuitous pairing. Clarke, the former head of admissions at Dartmouth College’s Tuck School of Business, had strong ideas about the overreliance of business schools on standardized tests for admissions. When the pandemic struck, Beardsley was made sure Darden was among the earliest business schools to get out ahead of the calamity. He was the first dean to recognize that the pandemic and the recession it would cause would open the doors to a flood of new MBA candidates, some newly unemployed, others who saw their opportunities for advance scuttled by the downturn and the health crisis.

A 364% JUMP IN ROUND THREE APPLICATIONS TO DARDEN’S MBA PROGRAM

In late March, Darden not only became one of the first schools in the world to extend its application deadlines and put into effect a more flexible admissions policy, but it would also push out its final deadline by more than three months to July 15th. Darden began to accept undergraduate entrance exam scores on the SAT and ACT in lieu of a GMAT or GRE. The school even opened the door to consider CPA, CFA, and other certifications as evidence of a candidate’s academic merit, along with scores on the LSAT, MCAT, and Executive Assessment. Then, in June of this year, Beardsley announced that Darden would make MBA admissions test-optional for this coming admissions cycle.

“We have just come off one of the most robust job markets of the post-World War II era and now there is a greater degree of uncertainty for some people,” Beardsley said at the time. “Maybe now is a good time to go back to school. I think an MBA will be a very strong option for many people who are unsure of what will happen in the next few years. For some

people, the opportunity costs of attending school have just dropped. So we want to be able to be here for some of those outstanding people.”

The result: Darden saw a remarkable 364% jump in MBA applications for its extended round three. The increase drove a 25% jump in total applications for the 2019-2020 admissions season to roughly 2,730 from 2,283 for 2018-2019 for the 338 classroom seats in Darden’s full-time MBA program. To provide applicants even greater flexibility, he began a January intake for candidates who weren’t quite ready to start the school’s hybrid format in the fall. Next month, 60 new MBA students will arrive to take advantage of that opportunity for the first time. Meantime, MBA applications through the school’s round one deadline are up another 30%.

DROOLING ON THE VERBAL ANSWER SHEET AS A TEENAGER IN ALASKA



Dean Beardsley

Those bold moves have been informed by Beardsley’s personal experience and his concern that standardized tests have been over-indexed by business schools. When he was a senior in high school and sat for the SAT exam in Anchorage, Alaska, Beardsley says he got through the math part of the exam and then fell sound asleep. “I drooled on the verbal answer sheet,” he recalls. “I got a very bad score on the English section because it was all blank. And I was one of the top students in the school. I often thought should your whole life be linked to a standardized test? In my case, it wasn’t.”

Just as critically, however, Beardsley is deeply concerned that the tests can be inherently unfair. He points out that prospective students from low-income families are less able to pay for prep classes or tutors who can **cost up to \$500 an hour** or can take time off from work to study for the exam. Students who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, born to uneducated parents, tend to score lower regardless of whether they are tutored or not.

“If you look at the data for the SAT and ACT by ethnic group, it is absolutely shocking,” he says. “It shows that underrepresented minorities score between one to two standard deviations below the average. If you Google standardized tests and racism, it is very well documented. I don’t want to reward only people who spend tons of money or have tons of time studying for standardized tests. We appreciate the people who have gone through all those hoops as well. But there are many indicators of success. If you graduated with the highest honors in engineering from Carnegie Mellon, I don’t need a GMAT to tell me you can do the math in an MBA program.”

‘I AM ALWAYS ASKING MYSELF WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP SOMEBODY?’

While he and Clarke have talked about the overreliance of the GMAT and GRE for admissions when they first met in Maine in 2016, COVID and its hardships made it the right time for the move. “When the pandemic initially hit, I went to Scott and said I think we should extend some flexibility to our R3 candidates because test centers were closing down,” says Clarke. “It was Scott who said we should accept SAT and ACT scores and extend the deadline into July. He is data-driven and we are in the process of gathering data to look at alternative factors that correlate with success at Darden. Scott invested in the research and that allowed him to pivot to test flexibility and a test waiver.”

It was a bold and courageous move, but it was an inclusive one, too. “He is deeply personally committed to diversity, equity and inclusion,” adds Clarke. “At a time when all leaders should be looking at policies, this change is highly relevant to what is going on in society in looking at policies of systematic racism. Going test flexible and offering a test waiver is an inclusive way to evaluate candidates. He was very committed to ensuring that Darden was highly sensitive to the predicament our admits were facing during a global pandemic and in particular to our international students. He conceived of the January start date to accommodate students who would benefit from an alternative in the wake of visa issues.”

Beardsley starts from a simple premise that goes back to that Pink Floyd lyric. “I am always asking myself what can we do to help somebody? It was clear to me that students couldn’t take a test. A lot of testing centers were closed and we had been questioning just how important are the tests, anyway. Should your whole life be determined by a test score? Or can we innovate here? Is there something we could do? COVID is the greatest health crisis in the last 100 years. We had never seen anything like this. You have to be compassionate to people and be willing to adjust. You have to understand that when your context changes, you need to change, too. I felt we really needed to adapt to the circumstances and be thoughtful, caring, and compassionate but fair while still upholding our own values of merit.”

‘FOR HIM, EVERY CRISIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY’

The school’s test-optional admissions policy, which has since been adopted by MIT Sloan, Michigan Ross, Carnegie Mellon and other business schools, does not represent a dilution of admission standards. “We are simply broadening our admissions decisions by letting people show alternative evidence that they can thrive at Darden,” insists Clarke. “It’s 2020. There are Coursera classes. There is Harvard Business School’s online CORE. There are CPAs and CFAS who apply. And we know that the interview correlates with academic success. When people apply for a test waiver, only about 22% are granted one. I feel strongly that this is a progressive approach to admissions.”

Beardsley immediately saw the crisis as an opportunity to innovate. “For him, every crisis is an opportunity,” says Woodfolk. “His feeling was going that COVID would be a bump but it was not going to impede our forward progression. God made him for crisis, You hope during a crisis that you have someone who is leading who is action-oriented and plan focused. Scott went into what is Scott mode. He began asking, ‘What are the things we must protect?’ First and foremost, that starts with the students. COVID has been a defining moment and era for the school. He worked with others to outline a plan and then there are execution marching orders. He put the most talented people together to think about this with safety being the first priority. Everything became a protocol from a lockdown of the building to getting the faculty to think about what it could mean.”

The dean gets high marks from students for the changes. “The Covid pandemic is the biggest defining event since the Great Recession if not in our lifetime,” says Alex Gregorio. “I can’t think of something that has fundamentally shook the higher education industry as much as COVID has. it didn’t surprise me that a business school with a dean like Scott would see it as a chance to hammer home that we are not just about GPAs and test scores

but are more focused on you the candidate. It made sense to lower the barriers for students to apply.”



A case discussion extends beyond the classroom at Darden

THE COVID MBA EXPERIENCE: ‘I CAN’T THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO DO IT’

He also believes the school has dealt well in converting a highly social program to remote instruction and then hybrid during the pandemic. “When the traditional model of education had to be switched online in two weeks, the school was really nimble in dealing with tough logistical questions. Over the summer to this fall the faculty have been really well prepared. Classes have been organized. I have been both on the internal side on the TA side as well as on the student side and things are working very smoothly. I can’t think of a better way to do it.”

Gregorio had taken one class with Beardsley and is set to take another, Corporate Strategic Leadership, this coming year before his graduation. What most impressed him in that first seminar with 16 students in Pavilion I was the dean’s view that learning is a two-way street. “He wants to learn from us as much as we want to learn from him,” says Gregorio. “He

really wants to engage with students and invites them to his Pavilion. It's another piece of evidence that shows he is really interested in knowing his students."

Through it all, Woodfolk says he has never seen Beardsley lose faith. "I never get a feeling from him that this is a job. Not once. On the hardest days, I've gone to talk to him ready to go negative at 6:30 at night and he will say, 'But imagine if we could do this or that. We were in a conversation once about a very large donor who could potentially fund the full master plan. After investing a lot of effort, it wasn't to be. I was saddened by that. But Scott looks at me dead in the eye and says, 'That is okay, Michael. We just have to keep fishing. There are other people out there, and we just have to find the next person. And maybe it won't be the full thing. It might be a piece of it, but we will do this. We really will.' That typifies the man. One door closes but he believes that three more will open and we just have to find them."

When Beardsley expanded the school's presence in the Washington, D.C., metro area by securing a major gift to open in 2018 a new 40,000 square foot classroom and conference space on the upper two floors of an office building, he wanted the school's name prominently featured on the building in Rosslyn, Va. "The landlord said you probably need to lease more of the building to get your name on it or it will cost you a bunch of money," recalls Greg Fairchild who helped to lead the expansion. "It was a healthy six-figure number with more than a one at the front of it. Or he said we had to lease four floors instead of two. We got that news and I said, 'Oh well, I guess it's not going to happen.'

'SCOTT JUST DIDN'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER'

"Scott just didn't take no for an answer. He wanted the university name on the building because it would add a veneer of prestige that you wouldn't otherwise have. Scott recognized that there were relationships between the property company and our donor whose offices were in the next building that was also managed by the same property company."

When the new facility opened its doors, Beardsley had gotten his way. "As soon as the name went up on the building in the first week of July (in 2018), Darden alums starting texting us photos they took from airplanes they were in getting ready to land at Reagan," laughs Fairchild. "I was reminded that academics might not have been figured out a way to keep plugging to find different solutions. He pushes you and himself to keep asking for things that might not seem possible."

The health crisis reinforced Beardsley's belief that this second act in his life is the right one. "The nice thing about a crisis is that it reminds you about what matters," he says. "And what matters is the mission and staying true to your values. More than ever, COVID gives you an opportunity to change people's lives because the external context is difficult. In that context, I do believe education is an essential service to society. Society needs education and the world needs responsible leaders. I salute all the business schools out there that are continuing to operate. Every university has had to work so hard to keep the trains running. It is the basic things that matter. Education matters. Although it has been difficult, we are privileged to try to help the world be better in this way."

'YOU MAY LOSE A TENNIS MATCH 6-3 BUT IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE BEST MATCH YOU EVER PLAYED'

"I never would have predicted that the things I would have had to deal with were the tiki-torch march down the Lawn and COVID crisis," he muses. "But that is what makes leadership roles interesting. You have to operate with the hand you are dealt with and the context you are dealt with. It is one of the things I teach in my class. Your achievements are only a function of the level of obstacles you overcome. You may lose a tennis match 6-3, but it may have been the best match you ever played. So in a way, I'm grateful I've had the opportunity to do what I can do. Every crisis is an opportunity to improve yourself, to stretch yourself, to find your limits, and to see if you have a new gear."

Over the next four years of his second term, Beardsley will build on his long list of accomplishments, opening the doors to Darden's newest building and its commitment to lifelong learning. But number one on his agenda is ensuring that the student experience at Darden is never second to any other rival and maintaining the excellence in teaching for which Darden is renowned.

"At the end of the day," he says, "the strategy is about excellence and being outstanding. And there are a lot of things that go into that. I want Darden to stay the best teaching business school in the world. We are locked in on that. And we have new ways to do that with technology. I am excited about future collaborations with the University of Virginia. I am just excited about the possibilities. There is lots more to do. I feel the best is yet to come but I have a lot I need to improve upon."

Major Accomplishments Of Dean Scott Beardsley At Darden

These are some of the highlights of Dean Beardsley's six-year-long tenure as dean of the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business

Accomplishment	Details
Developed new strategy and vision for Darden	In a process involving all alumni, faculty, staff and other stakeholders, developed and attained buy-in for a bold 10-year strategy and new vision for the Darden enterprise
Built top senior leadership team	Comprised of academic leadership and administrative leadership
Safely navigated Darden through COVID in 2020	Did so with very low incidence while keeping Darden open for hybrid and in-person student experiences
Raised the caliber, quantity and quality of Darden MBA students	Academic quality of students at an all-time high. The Class of 2022 is the largest ever, with 40 Consortium fellows, a record number of women (38 percent) and August and January starts.
Led bold admissions Innovations	First top business school to introduced test flexible admissions Introduced early action and early action binding. Successfully launched Future Year Scholar Program
Continued faculty excellence	Hired 38 full-time faculty, with nearly half of the new hires non-U.S. passport holders and more than a third women. Brought in 23 new faculty chairs.
Launched most ambitious fundraising campaign	\$400 million, with \$265 million through December 2020 toward goal, plus \$54 million in matching funds and \$35 million given to other UVA Foundations on behalf of Darden, for a total impact of almost \$350 million; more endowment funds raised than during all previous campaigns combined.

Accomplishment	Details
Increased student scholarships	Added 82 new scholarships & introduced a need-based aid program called AccessDarden.
Improved diversity	Admitted most women, most under-represented minorities & most global students ever. Created senior associate dean for global diversity. Increased faculty diversity as measured by gender, race, ethnicity and citizenship to historic highs.

Source: Poets&Quants