Ms/Mr XYZ

Address 1

Address 2

City, State, ZIP

January 12th, 2018

**Inaugural “Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium” on the Political Economy of Financial Technologies**

Dear XYZ,

We are writing on behalf of the Virginia Tech Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience to invite you to participate in our inaugural “Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium” on the Political Economy of Financial Technologies. For this first event we will focus on the blockchain, which has the potential to both disrupt the financial industry as well as to enhance the resilience of the financial system. Our focus will be on the political, economic, and social impacts of the blockchain. Our goal is to bring together entrepreneurs, academic experts, and policy makers to discuss and debate this underexplored area. Your research indicates that you have both an interest in, and excellent insights into, this topic. It would be a great honor to have you participate in the meeting.

The meeting will be at the Virginia Tech main campus in Blacksburg, Virginia on Friday, April 20th, 2018 and will bring together local entrepreneurs, academic experts and policy-makers in a half-day conference, with two keynote speeches and two panels involving entrepreneurs, scholars, and regulators.

For your information we have included a supplemental document that can help you better understand the event and our overall mission. In addition to identifying key perspectives on the possible implications of the blockchain technology, our goal for the initial “Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium” is to help provide key inputs from different perspectives that inform entrepreneurs and scholars on the current debates about innovation and regulatory challenges. We would be delighted and honored to have you participate as a featured speaker.

We look forward to hearing from you and welcome any questions that you may have about the symposium or the Global Forum.

Sincerely,

XY



*Inaugural “Blacksburg Symposium” on the Political Economy of Financial Technologies*

**The Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium**

Disruption, Digitization, and Resilience

20th April 2018

Location: Goodwin Hall, Virginia Tech

*If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.*

Il Gattopardo by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

The blockchain technology, and its most prominent application, the digital currency Bitcoin, are challenging the relationship between trust and authority. In many large communities and organizations, generating trust often requires a central authority figure, such a government. With the advent of this technology, trust can be achieved in a decentralized manner. There is thus an increasing need to address the economic, social, and political implications of this technology. With the inaugural “Blacksburg Symposium” on the political economy of financial technologies, we seek to foster a dialogue among entrepreneurs, policymakers, and academics to determine the emerging questions, problems, and dilemmas created by the blockchain technology.

Home to a diverse group of tech entrepreneurs, a top tier research institution with international experts in computer science, engineering, and political economy and a strong link between the university and business communities, Blacksburg, Virginia has witnessed the development of many blockchains, cryptocurrencies, and related applications. Situated within this singular community, the Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience of Virgina Tech is hosting the first “Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium” with the goal of exploring today’s socio-economic and regulatory challenges emerging around the blockchain, and how this new technology could both disrupt the status quo and enhance the resilience of financial and political systems.

The event will be divided into three main components: a welcoming dinner, a one-day conference involving local blockchain entrepreneurs, policymakers, and academics, and a student-led “idea-based” hackathon.

AGENDA (tentative):

**Thursday April 19th 2018 (for invitees only)**

5.30pm – 6.30pm Welcome reception and gathering

6.30pm – 9.30pm VIP dinner

**Friday April 20th 2018**

8:00 – 8:15 Welcome and introduction by Global Forum

8:15 – 9:00 **Keynote speech 1**: *Dr. Charles Clancy,* VT Hume Center

9: 00 – 9: 15 Break

9:15 – 10:45 **Panel 1**: Blockchain and Finance

This panel will explore the implications of the blockchain for the financial system and it will focus on aspects such as digital money, distributed ledgers, and new regulatory challenges.

Moderator: Dr. Michael Moehler

Daniel Notestein & Peter Menegay – blocktrades.us and SynaptiCAD

+ academic scholars

+ regulators/policymakers

10:45 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 11.45 **Keynote speech 2:** *Dr. John Schindler*, Federal Reserve Board Governors

11:45 – 12:30 Lunch

12:30 – 2:00 **Panel 2**: Blockchain and the State

This panel will explore the implications of the blockchain for the public operation of the State and it will focus on aspects such as digital identity and public registries.

Moderator: Dr. Naren Ramakrishnan

Manu Sporny, digital bazaar

Dr. Charles Clancy, VT Hume Center

+ academic scholars

+ regulators/policymakers

2:00 – 2:15 Concluding Remarks, Hackathon award ceremony



Virginia Tech pushes the boundaries of knowledge by taking a hands-on, transdisciplinary approach to preparing students to be leaders and problem-solvers. As the commonwealth’s most comprehensive university and its leading research institution, Virginia Tech offers about 280 undergraduate and graduate degree programs to more than 34,000 students and manages a research portfolio of more than $502 million. The university fulfills its role as a land-grant by fostering a collaborative environment that integrates technology into all disciplines, so that the Virginia Tech community can serve as a force for positive change around the commonwealth, the country, and the world. Through experiential learning, future-focused research, and an inclusive, spirited culture, Virginia Tech strives to accomplish the charge of its motto Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).



The Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience brings together university researchers and partner organizations to facilitate conversations about patterns and processes of urbanization and regional development, with a special emphasis on the long-term resilience of places and communities. The particular focus of the Forum is the evolutionary and transformational resilience of cities and the way that places adapt – or not – to flows of capital, people, resources, and ideas.

The Forum facilitates interdisciplinary research into the political economy of resilience and organizes workshops and conferences that bring together scholars and practitioners with significantly different perspectives and responsibilities. The Forum also has a mission to engage a broader public toward an understanding of cities, urbanization, and regional development.

The Forum’s research initiatives focus on how the relationships among markets, institutions and the state are challenged by the scale and complexity of contemporary socio-economic processes that are spatially highly uneven. From the process of urbanization to regional imbalances in the flow of goods, labor and capital, the path-dependent trajectories of urban and regional resilience are inextricably linked to the increasingly financialized character of the global economy.