

Xinde (Cinder) Zhang, Ph.D.

Contact Information

- Mitch Daniels School of Business
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Profile

Award-winning finance professor, curriculum architect, and pioneer in AI-integrated finance education. Creator of the DRIVER Framework—Discover & Design, Represent, Implement, Validate, Evolve, Reflect—which develops students into structured thinkers, data-driven analysts, and ethical AI collaborators. Currently drafting new-generation textbooks to transform how finance students learn in the AI era. Combines expertise in finance, computer science, and education technology to scale high-impact learning environments. Founded and led the Financial Analytics program (130+ students) and mentored students into roles at top firms including Goldman Sachs, State Street, MasterCard, EY, JPMorgan, and Walmart Global Tech.

Strategic Leadership

- **Program Innovation:** Created the first-of-its-kind Financial Analytics program integrating AI/ML in the region
- **Student Success:** Built frameworks for mentorship, industry networking, and experiential learning
- **Technology Integration:** Designed learning platforms using Python, LLMs, and custom AI agents

Research and Teaching Interests

LLMs and Finance, Financial technology innovation, AI applications in finance, cognitive learning design, system thinking, platform-based education, investment modeling

Awards

- University of Arkansas Teaching Innovation Award, 2025
- FMA Innovation in Teaching Award, Runner-Up, 2022
- Best Paper Awards, Semi-Finalists, Financial Management Association, 2015 & 2018

Academic Positions

- **Purdue University** (*starting Aug 2025*) Faculty, Finance Department

- **University of Arkansas** Teaching Associate Professor, 2022–2025 Visiting Professor, 2020–2022
- **Valdosta State University** Assistant Professor of Finance, 2019–2020
- **Our Lady of the Lake University** Assistant Professor / Program Lead, 2016–2019
- **Shanghai University of Finance and Economics** Assistant Professor, 2010–2016

Other Positions Held

- **Tsinghua University, PBC School of Finance, Beijing, China**
Associate Research Professor, 2014–2015
- **Columbia Business School, Columbia University, New York, NY**
The Chazen Visiting Scholar, 2013–2014 The Chazen Visiting Scholar, 2013–2014

Education

- **Ph.D. in Finance**, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2010
- **M.S. in Mathematics**, Youngstown State University
- **B.S. in Software & Computer Science**, Jilin University

Publications (Selected)

- Zhang, X. (2024). *Overcoming Barriers to Teaching Machine Learning in Finance*. *Advances in Financial Education*. (Accepted)
- King, T.H., Piao, T., Zhang, X. (2022). *Putable Bonds and Information Asymmetry*. *Journal of Fixed Income*.
- Zhang, H., Wang, Z., Zhang, X. (2020). *Fire Sales and Liquidity*. *JFQA*.
- Tan, Y., Tian, X., Zhang, X., Zhao, H. (2020). *Privatization and Innovation*. *Journal of Corporate Finance*.
- Zhang, X. and Zhou, S. (2018). *Bond Covenants and Institutional Blockholding*. *Journal of Banking and Finance*.
- Lee, K., Mirchandani, D., and Zhang, X. (2010). *An Investigation of Industry Impacts on the Institutionalization of Corporate Websites*. *The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*.

Books in Progress

- *DRIVER: Financial Management* — A revolutionary approach to financial management education that fully integrates Python implementation and AI collaboration. Teaches students to systematically solve finance problems through the DRIVER Framework: Discover, Represent, Implement, Validate, Evolve, Reflect. [Read Book](#)

- *DRIVER: Financial Modeling* — Equips students with modern data and modeling skills using AI-augmented methods. Blends rigorous problem-solving with Python implementation to prepare students for technical demands in finance careers. [Read Book](#)
- *DRIVER: Essentials of Investment* — Bridges investment theory with practice via Robinhood integration, hands-on portfolio tools, and systematic thinking. Reinforces concepts like optimization and valuation through AI collaboration. [Read Book](#)

Research in Progress

- *The Rise of Generative AI in Financial Analysis*, with A. Francis
- *Loan Syndication and Bond Mutual Fund Information Flow*, with H. Zhang

Talks and Workshops

- “Transforming Finance Education with Generative AI,” FEA Annual Meeting, 2024
- “Fostering Visual Learning and Problem Solving in Finance,” San Antonio, 2024

Courses Taught (Selected)

- **AI-Integrated Curriculum:**
 - Financial Data Analytics I & II (ML, RAG, AI agents)
 - Financial Programming with Python