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OIA connect

HOME EDITION

MESSAGE FROM GURU

We're in this together

Dear colleagues,

It's difficult not to feel unmoored during these strangest of days. Over the past few weeks, our lives have been turned upside down by the impact of the coronavirus. We all – everyone at Virginia Tech, across the commonwealth, and around the world – are in uncharted territory. Now, more than ever, is a time to focus on your health and your loved ones.

As we determine our course forward, I want you all to know that the leadership of OIA and of the university are committed to making sure you have the information, resources, and support you need. Please share any questions or concerns you have with your supervisor, and we will do our best to promptly address them. The important work we do will go on.

Through this newsletter, we want share news, offer tips for our current work situations, and hopefully provide a bit of levity. I encourage you to share details about how you're coping, as well as stories about co-workers who in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* are going above and beyond.

It is crucial that, even though we are separated, we stay in touch with each other and offer each other support. As Hokies, we remain a close family, regardless of where we are.

Your health, safety, and well-being remain our primary concerns. I appreciate everything you do for OIA every day and thank you for your service and commitment to our university.



NEWS TO USE

Latest from Virginia Tech

- **GUIDANCE FROM HR:** Bryan Garey, vice president for human resources, told HR leaders across the university this week that all units should plan for 8-10 weeks of these work conditions, and that there is currently no intention for the university to go into authorized closing status. He said Virginia Tech will remain operational. Jane Swan reports: "I am heartened by the ongoing and apparent commitment to all employees, and to keeping them as whole as possible." [Read Bryan Garey's message.](#)
- **GLOBAL EDUCATION MESSAGE:** "The ongoing global health crisis recognizes no borders and highlights how very connected we all are. Just as our social distancing at home is driven by concern for our community, so our discontinuation of programs abroad reflects our recognition of global concerns and in no way signifies our withdrawal from international engagement writ large." [Read more from Global Education Director Theresa Johansson.](#)
- **ONLINE CLASSES:** Virginia Tech classes resumed Monday with online delivery and remote instruction for all academic programs and courses. Undergraduates may continue with A/F grading options or choose a [new credit/noncredit grade system](#) for spring 2020 only.
- **PRESTON'S TAKEOUT:** Looking for something different for lunch? Preston's is now offering [special takeout menus](#). Select breakfast, lunch, and dinner items can be ordered for pickup seven days a week.
- **STAY INFORMED:** Remember, you can find the latest information from the university on its [COVID-19 webpage](#).

NAME THIS NEWSLETTER

Let's see your creativity! Send us your suggestions for what we should call this

new newsletter. Email your snappy suggestions to richm@vt.edu.

OIS HELP

Outreach Information Systems remains open for business! OIS employees will continue to provide technical assistance to all OIA user groups. Any technology-related questions or concerns should be sent to ois@vt.edu.

Beware of online scams

Note that with many of us spending more time than usual online, there has been a notable increase in the number of COVID-19-related phishing emails and malicious fake websites.

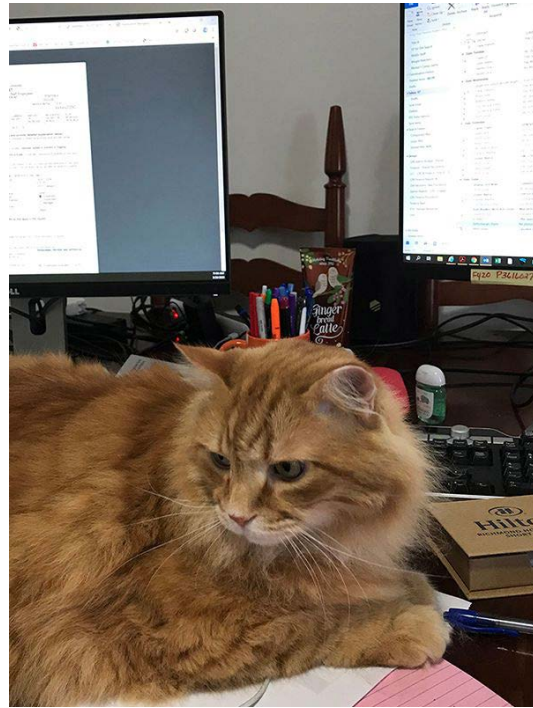
Everyone should continue to:

- Handle secure data the same way you always would.
- Be cautious when surfing the web.
- Scrutinize your emails and phone calls.

In short, says OIS Director Scott Farmer: "Keep calm and carry on" with a helping of "don't let your guard down." If you have any questions about cybersecurity, contact OIS at ois@vt.edu.

Virginia Tech's IT Security Office has [more information and tips](#) to help recognize and avoid falling victim to phishing attempts.

LIFE AT HOME



Clockwise from top left: Jane Swan's kitty assistant, Curry; Hokie the cat helps Nancy Gruber with her paperwork; Arlo is worn out from a long day working from home with owner John Provo; Cooper didn't concur with Robyn Smyth's request to get off her keyboard. Do you have furry "office" assistants keeping you company while you work? Send their photos or photos of your new "office view" to richm@vt.edu.

5 ways to make working at home easier

Working from home is a big adjustment. Having children, pets, or both underfoot, or dealing with isolation if you live alone, brings a whole new set of challenges to the workday. Here are five tips to help make the switch.

1. **Stick with your routine.** Working at home can make you lose track of

time. Staying in your normal rhythm can help you maintain a work/life balance and stave off burn out. Wake up at your normal time, take a shower and get dressed. This helps create a work mindset and maintain a steady schedule. Having clear guidelines of when to quit for the day helps you maintain a better work/life balance.

2. **Set up a work area.** Separating your work space and your leisure space can help with distractions and focus, while also making the work-life divide a little clearer. Entering your workspace will help you turn “on” at the beginning of the day and get down to work. And leaving your workspace will help you turn “off” at the end of the day and fully disengage. **Bonus tip:** Don't underestimate the importance of a good chair that you can sit in for hours every day!
3. **Do something physical.** Break up your day by taking a walk or at least standing up regularly. If you can't go outside, open your windows on a nice day. Take mini-breaks to stretch throughout the day.
4. **Put on some background music.** Working from home can be a little *too* quiet, which makes it difficult to focus. Listening to music while working can actually give you a boost in productivity, creativity, and memory retention.
5. **Do what you can to stay connected.** Working from home can get pretty lonely, especially if you are single or live alone. Make it a point to chat with colleagues each day. Don't immediately default to sending an email. If you normally would have had a face-to-face conversation, pick up the phone. Don't hesitate to reach out to a co-worker just to ask how they are doing. Don't be afraid to embrace video calling so you can see your colleagues. Help get people talking with an ice-breaker such as “What's everyone watching on TV these days?”

Send us your tips: Do you have ideas to make working from home easier? Send them to richm@vt.edu.

NAME THAT VAN!





The Steger Center in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, has a new van! Sure, Don Hempson, Jane Swan, Ian Leuschner, Bob Bodnar, Theresa Johansson, and Daniela Doninelli could've chosen a standard white VW Caravelle, or even a jaunty red one. But where's the fun in that? Instead, they secured one of the few bright (burnt?) orange, look-at-me vans in all of Switzerland. But such a sweet ride needs a sweet name! Send your suggestions to richm@vt.edu, and we'll share the best in a future newsletter.

TIPS & TRICKS

Help for your video close-up

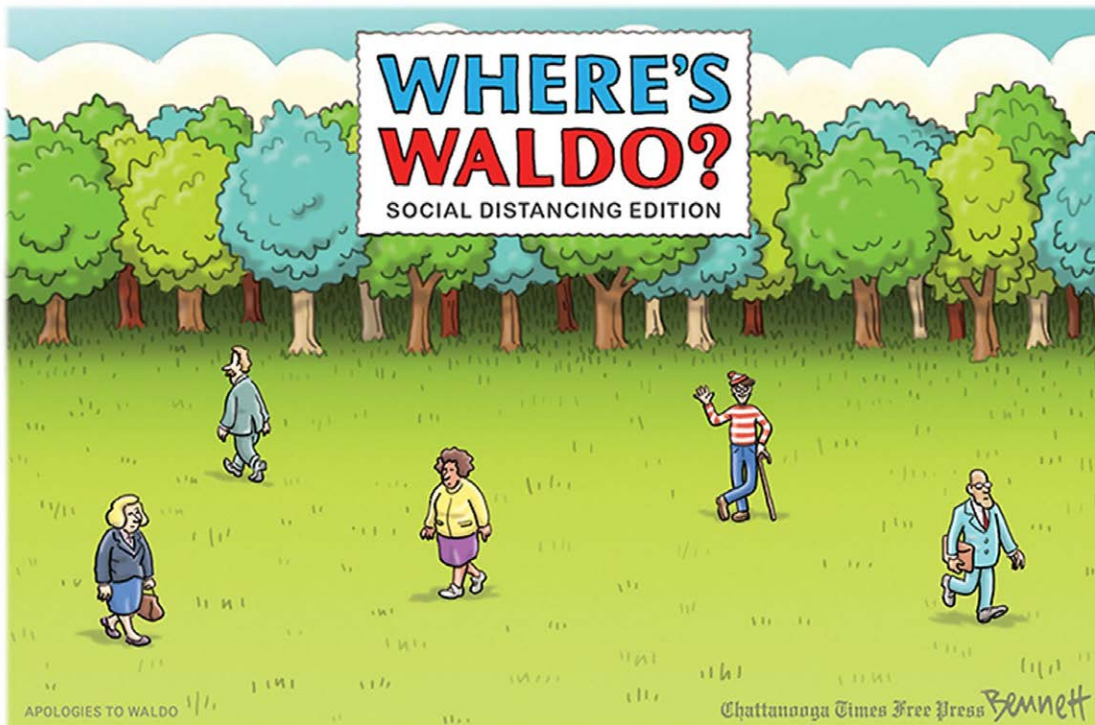
If it's one of those days where you don't think you're looking your best, Zoom has an answer: a feature called **Touch Up My Appearance**. Basically, it's a softening filter, like you'd find on Instagram or your phone's selfie camera.

To turn it on, click the up arrow next to the Video icon. Click Video Settings, and under My Video, check the box for Touch Up My Appearance. That's it!

SEND US YOUR STORIES

We hope this Outreach Now Ñ Home Edition newsletter will be a way for us all in OIA to stay connected during these uncertain times. In coming issues, we hope to spotlight some of the Hokie heroes who are making a difference and provide helpful advice for navigating the current situation. Please send us your photos, news, stories, and tips. We also want your thoughts and comments. What would you like to see in this newsletter? Send all submissions, and comments, to richm@vt.edu.

LOVES ME SOME INTERNET



OUTREACH & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

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