

[View this email in your browser](#)

OIA connect

HOME EDITION

Guru Ghosh hosting online town hall on Friday

Guru Ghosh, vice president for Outreach and International Affairs, will host an online town hall for all OIA employees starting at 11 a.m., Friday, April 3. He will share the latest university news regarding the COVID-19 emergency, discuss the impact on OIA, and answer your questions.

After Guru speaks, he will answer questions submitted by participants through Zoom.

Please join the webinar at the following link: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/593514669>

Hokies step up to deliver meals to school students



Schools are closed across the commonwealth, but each day they are delivering meals to students via school bus — some with Hokies on board to lend a hand.

Graduate student **Kelsey Altizer**, who is working on her master's in counselor education through the [Virginia Tech Roanoke Center](#), was interning at William Byrd High School in Roanoke County when its doors closed. She wanted a new way “to fill the void” left by no longer having contact with students. She quickly raised her hand when Roanoke City Public Schools asked for volunteers to help deliver meals.

“I initially had some worry about the health risks, but in the end I felt it was more a benefit for me to help while I was still healthy. Somebody needed to help,” Altizer said. “I knew for many households in the city, a meal could really make a difference.”

Altizer, who also works as a graduate assistant for [TRIO Programs](#), was one of at least four counselor education graduate students to step forward.

[Read more...](#)

NEWS TO USE

Latest from Virginia Tech

- **ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS:** In response to the governor's [“stay-at-home” directive](#) issued Monday, President Tim Sands has announced that by Friday, April 3, university operations will transition from the “reduced operations” level to the “essential operations” designation. [Read more...](#)
 - **NEW VT VP:** Frank Shushok Jr. named [vice president for Student Affairs](#).
 - **STAYING ACTIVE:** Rec Sports is offering [live group exercise classes](#) to Hokies everywhere. Choose from HIIT, pilates, cardio dance, core, and more!
 - **STAY INFORMED:** Remember, you can find the latest information from the university on its [COVID-19 webpage](#).
-

AROUND OIA

A new face at IPM

In April, **Anamika Sharma** will be joining the [IPM Innovation Lab](#) team at the Center for International Research, Education, and Development as a research associate. Sharma is an entomologist and insect ecologist. She most recently conducted her postdoctoral research at Montana State University, where she



studied insect pests and the effectiveness of bio-pesticides, among other subjects. She will be assisting the IPM Innovation Lab with a number of activities including conducting research on invasive pests, assisting host-country partners in scientific writing, composing reports, and preparing exhibits.



There's a new doctor in the Economic Development house

The [Office of Economic Development's Neda Moayerian](#) (above with committee chair Max Stephenson) defended her dissertation in the planning, governance, and globalization program in the School of Public and International Affairs on March 19. Her dissertation was titled “Exploring the Connections Between Community Cultural Development and Sustainable Tourism in Central Appalachia.” Moayerian will be starting a postdoctoral research position jointly sponsored by the Office of Economic Development and the Institute for Policy and Governance.

[Read about Moayerian's work in distressed regions of Southwest Virginia...](#)



The show goes on (online) at Reynolds Homestead

Though the doors of the [Reynolds Homestead](#) are temporarily closed, people can still see the works in the 5th Annual Student Art Show in an [online video](#).

The show featured 253 works by 158 students from 13 different schools (and home-schoolers) in Virginia and North Carolina.

"Normally, we have a people's choice award and visitors to the show could vote on their favorite artwork," said Director **Julie Walters Steele**. "Since we had to close the exhibit, **Beth Ford** and **Lisa Martin** posted 44 pieces of art by seniors [on Facebook](#) – and set up a system for people to vote for their favorite. This has been a great way to engage the community and to recognize our seniors who will not have the opportunity to showcase their work."

50 YEARS: Leading up to its 50th anniversary celebration, the Reynolds Homestead is collecting stories about the impact it has had on individuals' lives and its community. Share your story and experiences at bit.ly/RH50years.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Engage in ... Mindfulness

In the wake of ever-changing coronavirus updates and our new schedules working from home, many of us are also fighting increased stress and anxiety. Whether it's dealing with at-risk family members or patients; worrying about an uncertain economic future; trying to juggle work, keeping kids occupied or homeschooling; or simply adjusting to social distancing, stress can easily pile up and negatively impact you — both physically and mentally.

Join the Office of Engagement in a free webinar to learn how the Power of



Now can help.

Join certified coach **Melinda Hill**, who is part of the [TRIO Programs](#) advisor team, to learn how to use hope and meditation to tap into your strengths and build capacity for the future. Hill will discuss how to be an agent of hope and how to take your present setting and turn it into a future vision.

When: 10 a.m., Thursday, April 2

Where: [By Zoom, Meeting ID: 700 815 958](#)

Anti-Asian Panic and the Pandemic: A Virtual Teach-In

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an intensification of anti-Asian rhetoric and recorded discrimination in the U.S. and elsewhere. A student-organized virtual teach-in will shed light on how to critically engage with anti-Asian discourse and what kinds of collective and individual strategies Asians and Asian Americans (and allies) can do for our communities during these exceptional and precarious times. Invited speakers include faculty and students from the humanities and sciences at Virginia Tech.

When: 4-5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 2

Where: [By Zoom, Meeting ID: 304 608 745](#)

Hokie Wellness offering virtual resiliency workshops for employees

New work environments, increased anxiety, and shifting responsibilities due to changes brought on by COVID-19 cause us to have to adapt to new stressors. Often when we're stressed and feeling strong emotions in the workplace (or in our new work environments), we don't think or react as rationally as we would like. Many of us experience patterns of thinking, or "mind traps," that can be ineffective and even irrational sometimes. We can shift these reactions by learning more about how our thoughts, feelings, and actions all connect.

Hokie Wellness will be offering "Resiliency in the Workplace: Learning to Press Pause" via Zoom. In this workshop open to all employees, we will cover how we can press pause in the heat of the moment, consider how to react to life stressors in a productive way, and recognize when we're starting to fall into these common mind traps.

- 9:30-10:45 a.m., Monday, April 6, [Register here](#)

- 4-5:15 p.m., Monday, April 13, [Register here](#)

Virginia Tech experts answer your COVID-19 questions

University experts in public health, vaccines, consumer economics, and psychology will take part in a live webinar to answer questions about COVID-19.

The webinar is open to the public, but RSVPs are encouraged to help with planning.

When: Noon, Tuesday, April 7

[More information...](#)

NAME THIS NEWSLETTER

Let's see your creativity! Send us your suggestions for what we should call this new newsletter. Email your suggestions to richm@vt.edu.

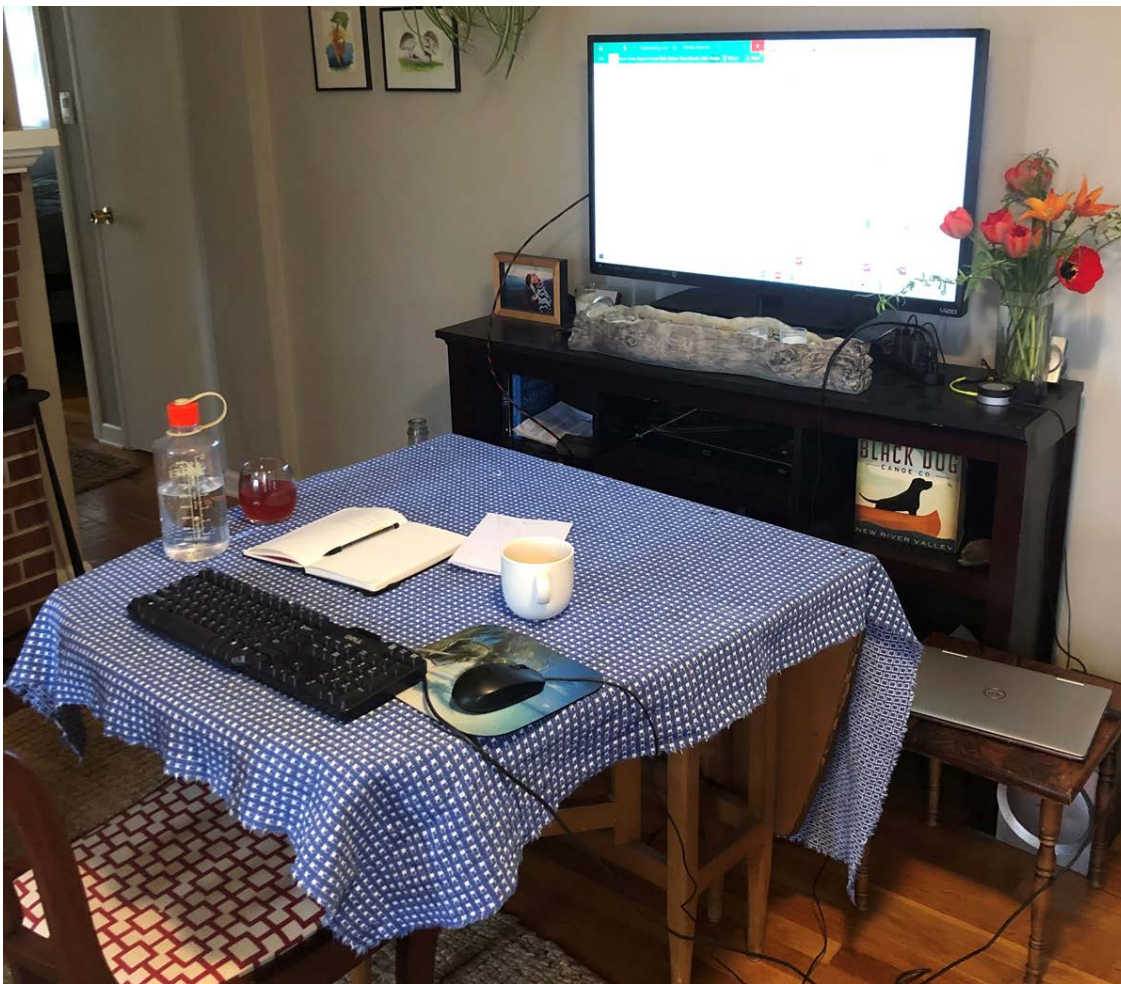
LIFE AT HOME



Two "apprentices" — Sarah and Biscuit — keep TRIO Programs Director **Fran Clark** company.



OIA graduate assistant **Lia Kelinsky-Jones'** new office view features Benson (above). "I can only keep him off my lap if the window is open for him to hang out in. Thankfully, we've been having nice days lately, which make it possible," she says. Lia's work view, though, has gotten more unusual. "Both my wife and I work from home now, which means we share an office. Today she needed the office alone, and I set up our kitchen table (below) with our television in the living room. It's actually not bad. ... The fresh-cut flowers from the garden and triple beverages (water, kombucha, and coffee) really help keep up morale."



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.

TIPS & TRICKS

Forward calls from your office phone

Virginia Tech [Network Infrastructure & Services](#) is offering a number of services designed to "improve the experience for employees working remotely."

Go to the [NI&S website](#) and use their templates to request any of the following services:

- **Call forwarding:** Forward your office phone number to your home or cellphone number, so that all incoming calls to your office phone only ring on your home phone or cellphone.
- **Mobility:** Have your office phone and cellphone linked together, so you can answer incoming calls on either.
- **Voicemail notification:** The voicemail system can notify you via email and/or text message when you have a new voicemail.
- **Unified messaging:** Use your email application to manage your voicemail inbox, so you can listen to and manage voicemail messages the same way you read and manage email.

Temporarily unmute yourself on Zoom

To briefly unmute yourself during a Zoom meeting in order to say something like, “Yes, I am paying attention,” just hold down the space bar. It works like a walkie-talkie button, keeping your line open as long as you're pressing it. Release the space bar, and you go back to being muted.

If the space bar trick doesn't work, go back into the audio settings and check the box for “Press and hold SPACE key to temporarily unmute.”

Dos and don'ts of videoconferencing etiquette

In this brave new world of videoconferencing, there are things we can all do to help video chats go more smoothly.

1. **Mute your microphone.** If it's not your turn to speak during the meeting, keep your microphone muted (lower-left corner of your screen). Background noises can be very distracting. Also try to avoid acknowledgement sounds such as “Uh huh” or “oh yeah.” It will make Zoom shift to your face instead of the person speaking.
2. **Raise your hand.** If you want to speak, physically raise your hand or use the “raise hand” feature usually available at the bottom center of your screen. To ask questions in a large group, use the chat function.
3. **Think about your actions on camera.** Always remember that everyone can see you. Exaggerated movements are distracting. Stay still and be attentive. *And please, no eating.* A drink is fine, but scarfing down a sandwich is too much. If you just can't wait, cut your video by clicking on the Stop Video button at lower left.
4. **Talk to the camera, not the screen.** Our tendency is to look at the person on the screen or ourselves while we talk. Instead, position your webcam and monitor at eye level and look at the camera when you speak.
5. **Give some thought to your background.** Aim for a background that is bland and boring. Zoom's virtual background feature is an easy way to eliminate background distractions when you have to meet in a messy or busy location. You can even [download a Virginia Tech background](#) to look like you are on the Drillfield or at other locations around campus.
6. **Find your light.** Don't sit directly in front of a window or other bright light source; otherwise, all the audience sees is a shadowy figure. Experiment with moving lamps and your camera until you can see your brightly lit face on the screen.

#HokiesStayHome

Many people are turning to social media to urge others to stay home — and show off what they're doing to pass the time. Virginia Tech recommends adding the hashtag #HokiesStayHome to

these posts.

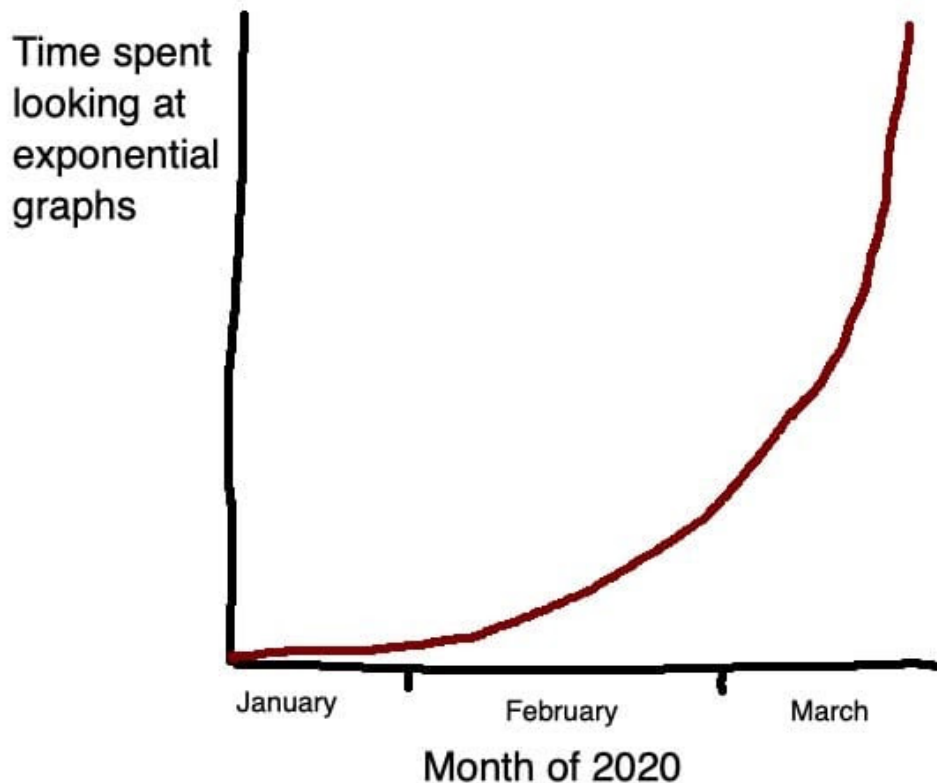
Susan Gill, director of new media, writes: "This is both a command to reinforce staying home to reduce the spread, as well as a shoutout for our community members who are being excellent at staying home and reducing the spread."

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

SEND US YOUR STORIES

We hope this newsletter will be a way for us all in OIA to stay connected during these uncertain times. In coming issues, we hope to spotlight more 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.

Copyright © 2020 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. All rights reserved.