

# NEWS & INFORMATION

Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2015 -- Volume 12, Number 7



## Board of Visitors advances research facilities, data center expansion

At the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors meeting held on August 31 at the Virginia Tech Research Center — Arlington, members reviewed designs of three proposed agricultural buildings that will support research and animal instruction programs within the dairy and animal science programs.

The first of the three buildings will be a two-story, 10,900-gross-square foot metabolic research laboratory adjacent to the new dairy science complex at Kentland Farm. The second is a 4,500-gross-square foot building to be used as an applied reproduction facility to be located near the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine complex. The third, an 8,600 gross-square foot bovine Extension, teaching, and research facility, will be built on Plantation Road to provide classrooms and animal holding space supporting animal science instruction and research.

A comprehensive story on these three new facilities will be published next Tuesday in Virginia Tech News.

In other business, the board approved a resolution to expand the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute Data Center. The \$5.9 million project will provide building and infrastructure upgrades to establish a new high-performance data center within the institute. Currently, the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute's two existing data centers are operating at full capacity and cannot support the additional computing requirements necessary to expand the institute's sponsored research activity.

The board also authorized the university to submit several budget initiatives for inclusion in the state's 2016-18 executive budget proposal. Among the initiatives included are those to support access for Virginia undergraduate residents, to enhance STEM-H degree production, support faculty startup packages, enhance student advising, and increase graduate enrollment in strategic areas.

The board also approved the 2016-2022 Capital Outlay Plan which identifies more than \$1 billion in university capital building project priorities over the next six years.

The Academic Affairs Committee received an update on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) fifth-year interim report. Thanassis Rikakis, who became the university's executive vice president and provost earlier in the month, met with and reported to the committee for the first time since coming to Virginia Tech.

The next full Virginia Tech Board of Visitors meeting will be held Nov. 8 and 9 in Blacksburg. More information on the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors may be found online at [www.bov.vt.edu](http://www.bov.vt.edu).

## Board of Visitors approves design of new dairy and animal science facilities

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors approved the proposed design for the second phase of the new Dairy Science Complex. Phase II builds upon the new state-of-the-art research

facilities and provides additional space for world-class research, teaching, and Virginia Cooperative Extension initiatives in dairy and animal sciences.

The \$7.6 million facility will include an applied reproductive physiology facility adjacent to the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, an intensive metabolic research facility at the Kentland Farm complex, and a bovine extension, teaching and research facility on Plantation Road.

The new additions reinforce Virginia Tech's top-notch dairy science program and contributes to the university's land-grant mission to serve as a resource for residents of the commonwealth.

The move from the former dairy complex on Southgate Road was prompted by the expansion of the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport, the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, and a new U.S. Route 460 interchange.

Much like Phase I, the commitment to sustainability is evident in Phase II, with architectural details such as a bi-level roof structure and open metal slat walls which promote better natural ventilation without expending energy.

Scientists working at the new complex will collaborate with partners in the Department of Dairy Science, the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, the Agricultural Technology Program, the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, and with colleagues from industry and universities across the United States.

The facilities will allow the study of basic and applied science and technology, the interfacing of science and production agriculture, and the dissemination of new information on animal nutrition, physiology, lactation, genetics, reproduction, infectious disease, immunology, and the business of dairy enterprise management. Studies also include nutritional and management approaches to minimize environmental impacts of dairy farm operations and the study of mechanisms involved in control of disease and the improvement of milk quality.

This first phase of construction was funded by Virginia Tech with nongeneral funds. The project was completed in the summer of 2015 and the cows were relocated in August.

Construction on Phase II is expected to start in 2016.

Some of the features of Phase I included a double-12 parallel milking parlor with a computerized milk-monitoring system, a freestall barn where the 228 milking cows are housed, a modern waste management system, a special needs heifer barn, and a pre-weaned calf facility.

## Fall Wellness Series offers wellness prevention options for employees

Get a jump start on weaving wellness into your life this fall with the first Fall Wellness Series hosted by Hokie Wellness. The series, sponsored by LewisGale Hospital, will offer a variety of wellness sessions starting in September and running through November with sessions being held in the North End Center and via WebEx.

Sessions, selected based upon employee feedback from the 2014 Hokie Wellness Needs and Interest survey, include:

- Diabetes prevention and management
- Question, persuade, refer (QPR) suicide prevention gatekeeper training
- Women's preventive health
- Men's preventive health
- Building and preserving your financial health
- Work life harmony

Online registration is required. For more information, contact Hokie Wellness at 540-231-9331.

## Community invited to share feedback about trial Drillfield materials

Beginning Monday, Sept. 14, members of the Virginia Tech community will have the opportunity to share their opinions about 14 different materials being tested on two paths on the Drillfield. The materials are being considered for permanent installation in the future.

Located in the center of campus, the Drillfield is a common thoroughway for students and faculty members. The paths, which carry thousands of students daily, were never a planned feature. They evolved organically as the campus grew and students crossed the area over time. The paths often became muddy which led to significant maintenance issues.

Feedback can be shared in three ways:

- via Twitter (@drillfieldpaths)
- online at [www.vt.edu/drillfield-paths](http://www.vt.edu/drillfield-paths)
- by scanning the QR codes located adjacent to the various materials on the Drillfield

The poll will remain open through 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 25. Community members will also be asked to provide feedback in the winter and spring.

The materials, which include stabilized turf, synthetic turf, the existing asphalt, and a combination of concrete, gravel, and pavers in various colors and patterns were identified in the spring of 2015 by a university Drillfield Paths Committee assembled to identify, test, and evaluate all weather and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant solutions to enhance the green-space aesthetic and multi-use purpose of the Drillfield.

A numbered map and photos of the test materials are available on the Drillfield Paths website at [www.vt.edu/drillfield-paths/](http://www.vt.edu/drillfield-paths/).

Faculty members have been invited to submit a proposal to develop a new paving surface to be utilized on the Drillfield. Learn more about the proposal process at [www.research.vt.edu/announcements/08-12-15/proposals-sought-drillfield-walking-paths-material](http://www.research.vt.edu/announcements/08-12-15/proposals-sought-drillfield-walking-paths-material).

The committee, which included several students, is expected to make a recommendation to university officials about which materials meet the university's needs following the conclusion of the 2015-16 academic year.

The Drillfield Paths effort is part of a broader initiative supported by the Board of Visitors to develop a new master plan for the Drillfield that will preserve the beauty of the area while making it a more usable space.

## Veterans Caucus will network, advocate for student and employee veterans

A group of 12 Virginia Tech employees have formed the university's first Veterans Caucus.

The veterans who work in various faculty and staff positions at Virginia Tech first came together about a year ago to network and advocate for student and employee veterans. Virginia Tech employs more than 300 veterans and has more than 200 student veterans enrolled

in classes.

According to its newly adopted constitution, the purpose of the caucus is to:

- Improve the working, learning, and living environment for employee and student veterans;
- Advocate for the mentoring of and transitional support for veterans returning to work and/or school;
- Recommend actions to improve the recruitment and retention of employee and student veterans.

Any current Virginia Tech faculty, staff, or student veteran who has received an honorable discharge qualifies for caucus membership. Veteran family members or others interested in veterans' issues may qualify for associate membership.

The group will meet monthly and plans to spread the word of the caucus in the coming months by establishing a Web presence and attending events including the Veterans in Society Conference Nov. 12-14 at the the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

The formation of the caucus is one of many different veteran-centered initiatives that have been implemented in recent years.

-- In February 2013, Virginia Tech became the first public university in the state to become certified as a Virginia Values Veterans employer.

-- In April 2015, the U.S. Small Business Administration selected Virginia Tech to host a one-day Boots to Business entrepreneurial workshop for past and present service members and their dependents.

-- The university has consistently been recognized as a Military Friendly School.

-- In 2010, two students formed the university's first student veterans organization.

For information on membership or to provide input email the caucus at [vtvc.vt.edu](mailto:vtvc.vt.edu).

## Employees invited to learn diabetes prevention/management at Sept. 10 event

Two out of three people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke, according to the American Diabetes Association. With correct treatment and recommended lifestyle changes, many people living with diabetes are able to prevent or delay the onset of serious complications.

Employees who are interested in learning more are invited to talk with Cindy Barden, a certified diabetes educator with the Carilion New River Valley Medical Center Diabetes Management Program September 10, from 12 - 1 p.m. in the North End Center, room 2200. The presentation will also be available via WebEx. Registration is required at [www.training.vt.edu](http://www.training.vt.edu).

Barden will provide education on minimizing the risk for developing diabetes and general management for those living with diabetes. Lifestyle change and risk factor modification will be discussed in detail. A question and answer session will follow the program.

The event is part of the Hokie Wellness Fall Wellness Series, sponsored by LewisGale Hospital.

For more information contact Hokie Wellness at 540-231-9331 or the Human Resources Service Center at [hrrservicecenter@vt.edu](mailto:hrrservicecenter@vt.edu) or call 540-231-9331.

---

*Virginia Tech News* is published weekly during fall and spring semester and bimonthly during the summer sessions, by the Department of Human Resources and the Office of University Relations as a service to university employees who do not have computer access on campus. For more information, or to discuss submission of items call 540-231-7643.