

# NEWS & INFORMATION

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## Countdown to graduation: All you need to know about this spring's commencement ceremonies

Family and friends of Virginia Tech graduating students are finalizing plans to travel to Roanoke, Fairfax, or Blacksburg to attend one or more of the university's commencement ceremonies.

Approximately 30,000 friends and family members are expected to travel to Blacksburg for commencement ceremonies on Friday, May 15 and Saturday, May 16. This year, the University Commencement ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. in Lane Stadium with the student procession starting at 8:40 a.m. Gates to the stadium will open at 7 a.m. to allow guests ample time to find seating.

The Graduate School Commencement ceremony will follow at noon inside Cassell Coliseum and 28 more college and departmental ceremonies will be held across campus starting at 4 p.m. Friday afternoon and will continue through Saturday afternoon.

Virginia Tech will offer live streaming video of both the Graduate School Commencement and University Commencement ceremonies from [www.vt.edu](http://www.vt.edu).

Approximately 1,300 friends and family members of graduates will stay in university residence halls that are within walking distance to all ceremony venues during their two- or three-day visit.

Blacksburg native and Google Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt will deliver the keynote address at the University Commencement ceremony. Approximately 33 associate's degree candidates from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and 4,611 bachelor's degree candidates will be honored during the ceremony.

This year, 1,778 graduating seniors will complete their baccalaureate degree programs with honors, having achieved an accumulative grade point average of at least a 3.4 on a 4.0 scale.

As it was last year, this year's most popular major among graduating seniors is mechanical engineering. The next four most popular majors: biological sciences; human nutrition, foods and exercise; industrial and systems engineering; and psychology.

At a ceremony to be held at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 15 in Burruss Hall Auditorium, the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets will honor 208 students graduating from its program. At the same ceremony, 71 students will be commissioned into the U.S. Army, 42 will be commissioned into the U.S. Air Force, 17 will be commissioned into the U.S. Navy, and eight will commission into the U.S. Marine Corps.

Bachelor's degrees to be awarded to students from each of Virginia Tech's seven undergraduate colleges:

- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: 512
- College of Architecture and Urban Studies: 268
- College of Engineering: 1,374
- College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences: 780

- College of Natural Resources and Environment: 167
- Pamplin College of Business: 748
- College of Science: 762

Ansley Abraham, founding director of the Southern Regional Education Board's State Doctoral Scholars Program, will speak to the students, family, and friends attending the Graduate School Commencement ceremony. Approximately 1,454 students will be honored at that ceremony – 1,006 master's degree candidates, 27 education specialist degree candidates, 24 Ed.D. candidates, 118 advanced graduate certificate candidates, and 279 Ph.D. candidates.

In addition, 95 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree candidates are expected to represent the 32nd graduating class of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. The veterinary college's convocation will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, May 15 in the Commonwealth Ballroom of Squires Student Center.

Virginia Tech's 35th National Capital Region commencement ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 17, at the George Mason University Center for the Arts in Fairfax, Virginia, Paul Singh, managing director and general partner at 1776, a Washington D.C.-based global business incubator and seed fund, will give the keynote address to approximately 200 National Capital Region graduates and their guests. Virginia Tech President Timothy Sands will preside over the two Blacksburg ceremonies and the National Capital Region event.

In the event of inclement weather, the University Commencement ceremony in Lane Stadium may be delayed. If heavy rain or dangerous conditions prevail, the university may cancel the ceremony. Once a decision has been made, details will be posted at [www.vt.edu](http://www.vt.edu).

## Blacksburg campus to open late on May 15

The Spring University Commencement Ceremony will take place 9 a.m., Friday, May 15 in Lane Stadium. Last year, the large influx of graduates and their families at about the same time our normal workday begins created significant congestion on the southern end of campus and along major arterial roadways.

Accordingly, the president has approved late opening for all university offices in Blacksburg to begin at 10 a.m. on May 15. Certain offices must be open for commencement or for operational reasons. Thus, supervisors should use judgment and staff appropriately.

University employees coming to work are cautioned that traffic is normally heavy before and after the commencement events along Southgate Drive, Spring Drive, and Washington Street. Cassel Coliseum and South End Zone lots are closed or restricted. Please adjust your travel and parking plans accordingly.

See [www.vt.edu/commencement](http://www.vt.edu/commencement) for further information.

## 2015 Commencement parking and shuttle information May 15-17

The following parking changes and shuttle schedule will be implemented to support the families and guests of our graduating students.

### Parking

The Coliseum Lot will be reserved for handicapped and special-needs guests, and the graduation stage party.

The Stadium Lot will also have a portion reserved for handicap/ADA parking on Friday, May 15.

Parking for the general public will be available in the following areas:

- Track/Field House Lot
- Chicken Hill Lot
- Maintenance Lot
- Litton-Reaves Lot
- Duck Pond Lot (The Cage)

Contact Parking and Transportation at 231-3200 for more information.

### Commencement shuttles

Blacksburg Transit will provide continuous shuttle service from central campus (Drillfield area) to the Cassell Coliseum/Lane Stadium area and back again for the University Commencement Ceremony and the Graduate School Commencement Ceremony. This shuttle will run from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, May 15.

Shuttle stops:

- Corner of Main Campbell Hall/War Memorial Gym
- Eggleston Archway
- Owens parking Lot
- Kent Street/Washington Street near Miles Hall
- South Stadium Lot
- Litton Reaves Parking Lot

Paratransit service for the main ceremonies will be provided from the Coliseum parking lot on Spring Street to the South Stadium lot at the other end of Spring Street.

Additionally, Blacksburg Transit will provide a shuttle from the various parking lots to all the ceremony venues throughout the weekend and to help families staying in the residence halls.

Hours of operation:

- 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday May 15
- 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday May 16
- 8 to 11 a.m. Sunday May 17

Shuttle stops:

- Litton Reaves/Wallace Lot
- Duck Pond Lot at the intersection of Duck Pond Road and

Washington Street

- Coliseum Lot

Paratransit service for the college and departmental ceremonies will be provided from the Duck Pond "Cage" Lot, by the Coliseum to the South Stadium Lot.

## Staff Appreciation Day is May 20

On May 20, Virginia Tech will celebrate the hard work and dedication of nearly 3,500 staff members. Staff Appreciation Day will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Rector Field House. All staff and non-student wage employees are invited to participate.

This year's event will offer a wide range of activities to include campus tours, bingo, stress-relieving massages, team competitions, and more.

Supervisors are encouraged to allow all staff employees to attend for a minimum of several hours to participate in the activities and should refer to the memorandum to all faculty from President Timothy D. Sands.

For more information, contact the President's Office at 540-231-7111.

## Open Enrollment deadline is May 22

This year's open enrollment for health benefits and flexible spending accounts will take place from May 1 – 22. Changes in health insurance coverage, effective July 1 must be made during that time. In order to participate in a flexible spending account beginning July 1, employees must re-enroll during open enrollment.

Learn more about key changes to the state benefits for the 2015-16 plan year including the change in health insurance premiums at [www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/insurance/open\\_enrollment/key\\_changes/index.html](http://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/insurance/open_enrollment/key_changes/index.html).

A series of informational meetings have been scheduled at a number of Virginia Tech locations to give employees the change to talk with a human resources professional about the plan changes. Employees who do not work in Blacksburg are invited to "attend" via a WebEx webinar. Employees do not need to use leave to attend any meeting held during the workday.

For more information contact the Human Resources Service Center at 540-231-9331.

## Consider donating blood during Staff Appreciation Day festivities

In keeping with the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), Hokie Wellness will host an American Red Cross Blood Drive from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in McComas Hall during Staff Appreciation Day festivities on May 20.

Registration is required to donate blood: [www.redcrossblood.org/give/drive/driveSearchList.jsp?zipSponsor=24060](http://www.redcrossblood.org/give/drive/driveSearchList.jsp?zipSponsor=24060)

On the American Red Cross website, scroll down until the May 20 Virginia Tech Hokie Wellness drive appears. Click in the box area, then choose an appointment time. Either sign in or create an account to complete the registration process.

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For more information, contact the President's Office at 540-231-7111.

## Conversation Salons bring students, employees together to discuss inclusion

Students and employees are invited to participate in a monthly brown-bag lunch event that brings participants together to focus on a big question conversation.

The events are held on the eighteenth of every month during the academic year, or on the first workday following the 18th when it occurs on a weekend or university holiday.

The brown-bag meetings are hosted by the Department of Human Resources and give participants an opportunity to develop relationships with people who may have different viewpoints..

Participants are encouraged to bring their lunch. Drinks and dessert are provided. All sessions are scheduled in room 4380 in the North End Center, from 12 to 1 p.m.

The next session on May 18. The discussions will center on the value of inclusion and diversity in teaching and learning at Virginia Tech.

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*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.