

Monday, July 7, 2014 -- Volume 11, Number 1

## Open letter from Virginia Tech President Timothy Sands

*The following is an open letter to the Virginia Tech community sent on June 30 from President Timothy Sands.*  
To the Virginia Tech Community,

I would like to announce a significant change in our approach to inclusion and diversity- a change to the organizational structure that reflects a greater emphasis on accountability, a clearer commitment to centrality of purpose, and an affirmation of the values expressed in the "Principles of Community." Starting this fall, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) and the position of Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion will be replaced by the President's Inclusion and Diversity Executive Council and an advisor to the president who will also serve as a vice provost for inclusion. Many of the programs currently implemented by ODI will be reconstituted within existing university organizations.

The decision to move in this direction was based on the unanimous recommendations of a task force that was appointed by President Steger during the fall of 2013. This new structure is adapted from best practices at other universities and will be designed to ensure that university leadership and representatives take personal and collective responsibility for inclusive excellence. We must start with the recognition that we are preparing the next generation to live and work in an increasingly diverse local and global environment, where the ability to engage with people from a wide range of experiences will be among the critical skills needed to live a rich and productive life of service. A commitment to inclusion as an integral and inseparable element of institutional excellence is becoming a requisite characteristic for attracting and retaining talent, for assembling world-class research teams, and for fulfilling our engagement mission.

I have asked Senior Vice President and Provost Mark McNamee to work with the university community to implement this new model of shared responsibility and accountability. David Travis, currently the Director of Special Projects in ODI, has agreed to serve as the president's advisor and interim vice provost. He will assist Provost McNamee as we initiate the transition to a decentralized model. Details about the timeline and the new model will be provided in forthcoming communications.

After more than 15 years of diversity work, including almost four years at Virginia Tech, Dr. William Lewis will be serving the institution in a different capacity, as the Alumni Relations Fellow.

A new organizational model is simply a scaffold. Success in distinguishing Virginia Tech as the exemplar for the modern land-grant research university will only come with the efforts of every student, staff and faculty member to advance a bold and reinvigorated inclusion agenda. I look forward to leading our renewed commitment to inclusive excellence and I invite you to join me.

Timothy D. Sands  
President

## University staff eligible for merit-based pay increase, classified staff given option to convert

All university staff who were hired by July 25 and have successfully completed a probationary review/evaluation by October 1 (and have received a developing, strong, or model rating) are eligible for a merit-based pay increase this fall.

Under the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005, Virginia Tech does not have the authority to establish a merit process for classified staff. As such, classified staff members who would like to be eligible have the option to convert. Eligible classified staff who would like to participate in the merit process must convert to university staff between July 15 and August 31. Information about the conversion process is available at [www.hr.vt.edu/compensation/compmtg/2014\\_staff\\_merit\\_pay\\_increase/index.html](http://www.hr.vt.edu/compensation/compmtg/2014_staff_merit_pay_increase/index.html).

The increase will be effective November 25 and employees will see the additional funds included in their December 16 paycheck. The program will be based on 2.25 percent of the eligible university staff payroll. Senior management in the colleges and vice presidential areas will determine what percentage increase each employee receives of the available funding. The process is designed to provide supervisors with the flexibility to recognize individual performance by differentiating pay increases and rewarding performance.

To assist employees in making informed decisions, the Department of Human Resources will host a series of informational meetings during the conversion period. An informational meeting schedule, frequently asked questions and information about eligibility and conversion is available at [www.hr.vt.edu/compensation/compmtg/2014\\_staff\\_merit\\_pay\\_increase/index.html](http://www.hr.vt.edu/compensation/compmtg/2014_staff_merit_pay_increase/index.html).

For more information, contact the Department of Human Resources at 540-231-9331.

## Parking permits on sale July 7

Parking permits for 2014-15 go on sale July 7. Faculty, staff, and students can purchase permits for a semester or for the academic year.

Buy your permit online at <http://parking.vt.edu/permits.asp> to avoid long lines at the office. To purchase online you must use Visa, MasterCard or payroll deduction. If you purchase your permit online you will only be eligible to do pre-tax payroll deduction. Post-tax must be done in person.

To purchase a permit in person visit the Parking and Transportation Office, 605 Research Center Drive.

30-year employees can fill out the permit form and mail it to Parking and Transportation, 605 Research Center Dr. Blacksburg, Virginia 24060 or bring it in person.

For more information, contact Parking and Transportation at 540-231-3200.

## Congratulations to the 2013-14 Staff Employees of the Week

The Department of Human Resources would like to congratulate the 2013-14 Virginia Tech Staff Employees of the Week. The Staff Employee of the Week program recognizes staff who consistently demonstrate their commitment to Virginia Tech through their dedication to performing their job at the highest levels.

- July 8: **Mark Helms**, Facilities Services
- July 22: **Theresa Hoyle**, University Relations
- Aug. 5: **Geno Iannaccone**, Dept. of Chemistry
- Aug. 19: **Rebecca Moore**, Dept. of Human Resources
- Sept. 2: **Leisa Osborne**, Dept. of Philosophy
- Sept. 16: **Alex Parrish**, Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science
- Sept. 30: **Teresa Price**, College of Science
- Oct. 14: **Tonya Pruitt**, Dept. of Statistics
- Oct. 28: **Kimberly Ramond**, Dept. of Psychology
- Nov. 11: **David Sciarretta**, Facilities Services
- Nov. 25: **Lawrence Sewell**, Dept. of Mathematics
- Dec. 9: **Brian Squibb**, College of Architecture and Urban Studies
- Jan. 13: **Joyce Vest**, Dept. of Industrial and Systems Engineering
- Jan. 27: **Diane Walker-Green**, Dept. of Physics
- Feb. 10: **Kim Waterman**, Dept. of Food Science and Technology
- Feb. 24: **Julie Wesel**, Hokie Passport Services
- March 10: **Kelly Woodward**, Services for Students with Disabilities
- March 24: **Priscilla Wright**, Graduate School
- April 2: **Caroline Velasquez**, Dept. of Human Resources
- April 7: **Marie Teany**, Facilities Services
- May 12: **Mary Ramsey**, Facilities Services
- May 26: **Kim Martin**, Facilities Services
- June 9: **Drema Moser**, Facilities Services
- June 23: **Brian Stanford**, Division of Student Affairs

To read about each employee or to download the 2013-14 flyer, visit [www.hr.vt.edu/eow](http://www.hr.vt.edu/eow).

For more information, contact Laura Neff-Henderson at 540-231-7643.

## New optional benefit offered to help employees with legal expenses

Legal Resources is a new optional benefit being offered to eligible Virginia Tech employees that protects employees, spouses, and dependent children (up to age 19 or 23 if enrolled as a full-time student) from paying the high cost of attorney fees associated with everyday life events. The plan offers comprehensive legal coverage on a broad range of services for \$16.50 per month via payroll deduction (\$8.25 per pay period). Legal Resources covers 100 percent of the attorney fees for fully covered legal services, including:

- Family law matters | uncontested divorce
- General advice and consultation
- Criminal matters
- Will and estate planning
- Traffic violations
- Civil actions
- Preparation and review of routine legal documents
- Real estate

- Consumer relations and credit protection
- Identity theft

Additional covered services are provided at a 25 percent discount under the expanded coverage benefit. This includes pre-existing legal matters and any legal need not fully covered or listed under exclusions. Parents of policy holders are also eligible for discounts on legal services.

Current employees who wish to enroll must do so online ([www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/Legal\\_Resources/index.html](http://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/Legal_Resources/index.html)) between Aug. 15 - Sept. 15. The plan will be effective Oct. 1. For more information contact the Human Resources Service Center at 540-231-9331.

## Tips for recycling at Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech recycles all plastic containers No. 1-7; glass bottles; all mixed paper; cardboard; aluminum, steel, and tin cans.

### Academic and administrative building recycling

Recycling bins are located in centralized office areas. Office and office suite occupants are responsible for disposing of individually generated materials in centrally located recycling bins for mixed paper and containers. Cardboard recycling is available on a limited basis in these buildings.

### Big Belly trash containers

More than 100 of the Big Belly containers have been installed around campus. One side of the container is for recycling all plastic, metal, and glass items. The other side is for waste such as food wrappers, food waste, and Styrofoam. Paper recycling is currently only available inside buildings.

For a detailed list of recyclable material, visit [www.facilities.vt.edu/sustainability/recycle/materials.asp](http://www.facilities.vt.edu/sustainability/recycle/materials.asp). For more information, contact Denny Cochrane at 540-231-5184.

## Learn a foreign language through University Libraries resources

The Language Resource Center, located on the second floor of Newman Library in room 2010, offers computer stations equipped with Rosetta Stone software. For a list of available language programs, visit the Language Resource Center website at [www.lib.vt.edu/tour/floor2/languagecenter.html](http://www.lib.vt.edu/tour/floor2/languagecenter.html).

The Language Resource Center requires card access, so you must use a valid Hokie Passport to enter. If you do not have a Hokie Passport card, please visit the reference desk on the second floor to request access.

The University Libraries also provide access to many different foreign language learning materials, including Mango for Libraries, a service offering online, self-paced, conversational language-learning courses.

For more information, contact the Newman Library circulation at 540-231-6170.

**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.**