

NEWS & INFORMATION

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Boundaries and Destination Areas Town Hall Meeting

The following is an open letter to Virginia Tech employees from Thanassis Rikakis, executive vice president and provost on Mar. 25.

Please join President Sands, Provost Rikakis, Vice Provost Holloway, Vice Presidents DePauw, Mayer, Perillo and members of the Beyond Boundaries Steering Committee for a town hall update on the Beyond Boundaries initiative and outcomes. Speakers also will address the first set of Destination Areas—a beginning component of implementing the Beyond Boundaries vision.

Beyond Boundaries and Destination Areas Town Hall Meeting

- Monday, April 4
- 12-1:00 p.m.
- Squires Commonwealth Ballroom
- For event details and to participate by WebEx, visit www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/events.html

You may find preliminary presentations of both Beyond Boundaries outcomes (www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/assets/beyond-boundaries-presentation-bov.pdf) and Destination Areas online (www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/assets/destination-areas-presentation-bov.pdf). Faculty members presented this material to the Board of Visitors on March 20 and will again share the content with external experts at a forum in the National Capital Region on March 31. View the complete National Capital Region forum program at www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/assets/marcheventprogram.pdf. We will share evolved versions of these outcomes at the April 4th town hall.

Following the town hall in early April, there will be two rounds of faculty workshops on each selected Destination Area. At the conclusion of the workshops in May, faculty interested in participating in each area will be invited to form the Destination Areas faculty cluster. Faculty who wish to participate will need to have the support of their department heads/chairs for such participation. Two year plans for each Destination Area (including research goals, curriculum development, faculty hiring plans, and space and start-up needs) will then be developed by faculty members of each cluster and relevant department chairs and deans.

The Beyond Boundaries incubator will serve as another mechanism to implement the university's long-range vision. Beginning in August, we will solicit proposals from faculty to further develop and realize Beyond Boundaries goals. Proposals will be internally reviewed, externally vetted, and funded on an annual basis.

The Vice President for Research and Innovation will present the key concepts of the incubator as well as its operating principals at a town hall on May 9.

Thank you for your continued interest and excellent work in developing these exciting initiatives.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia approves School of Neuroscience

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) approved this week the Virginia Tech School of Neuroscience, effective fall 2016.

To be housed in the Virginia Tech College of Science and headed by neuroscientist Harald Sontheimer, the school was approved in November 2015 by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

SCHEV approved a bachelor's of science in neuroscience in 2014, when the program was based in the College of Science's Academy of Integrated Science. The bachelor's and future graduate degrees will now be housed in the School of Neuroscience. The school promises to be a unique program in the nation, one that will study disorders of the brain, such as Alzheimer's disease and traumatic brain injury, and the mind itself, including decision-making, behavior, and creativity.

The incoming recruiting class will number roughly 150 students.

Students and faculty in the proposed school will explore how the mind works, including decision-making, the origins of biases, ethics, and creativity. Classes will span the entire university, touching on behavior economics, ethical decisions in business, consumer behavior, lifespan development, and courts and law.

Although Virginia Tech already has about 75 faculty and research scientists working on neuroscience research, J. Michael Bowers joined the College of Science as the neuroscience program's first-full time faculty member in December. A second faculty member, associate professor Sarah Clinton, was hired earlier this year. An expected roster of eight faculty members will be in house by August.

By 2017, the number of faculty could be at 15, said Sontheimer, holder of the I.D. Wilson Chair in the College of Science and director of the Glial Biology in Health, Disease, and Cancer Center at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute.

A major in neuroscience was first considered in 2003 with the formation of the College of Science under the leadership of founding dean Chang. Interest in a full neuroscience program grew with the launch of the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute in 2010 under the leadership of Michael Friedlander, vice president for health sciences and technology at Virginia Tech and executive director of the institute.

The school is expected to have educational, research, and administrative space at a renovated Sandy Hall. Students also will participate in neuroscience research already ongoing at Virginia Tech Carilion and on the Blacksburg campus. The neuroscience school also will provide opportunity for undergraduate neuroscience students to become involved with biomedical neuroscience research in the recently launched Health Sciences and Technology Innovation District in Roanoke.

Community asked to take Commuter Survey

Students and employees are being asked to participate in the second biennial Commuter Survey before April 4. Survey results will be used to shape the future of the alternative transportation program at Virginia Tech. To take the survey, visit

https://viriniatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9RmEIVGYUvFXyct.

For more information, contact the Office of Alternative Transportation at 540-231-2116.

Be a part of National Walking Day

Employees and students are invited to join Hokie Wellness in celebrating the American Heart Association's National Walking Day on Wednesday, April 6. It is a day to challenge all Hokies to take a step to a healthier lifestyle.

Being physically active is important for maintaining overall health. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week for adults and 60 minutes per day for children and adolescents. Many individuals don't meet these standards, putting them at greater risk for heart disease, stroke, and other blood vessel diseases. But there is opportunity for change.

On April 6, join millions of Americans as they pledge to live a healthier lifestyle and get physically active.

To take part in the celebration:

- Join Hokie Wellness on a 30-minute walk around campus on Wednesday, April 6. Meet at the front steps of Burruss Hall at 12:15 p.m.
- Show support and wear sneakers to school or work on April 6.
- Start a habit of walking daily at school, work, or home.
- Visit StartWalkingNow.org and use the American Heart Association's free tips, tools, and trackers to stay motivated.

For more information, contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu, or 540-231-8878 (employees), or 540-231-2233 (students).

Learn how to make your savings last through retirement

The average life expectancy of Americans is on the rise, which means a longer retirement for most individuals. Without proper planning unanticipated costs can quickly drain retirement savings.

On Tuesday, April 26, Cary Parker, senior director with TIAA Asset Management at TIAA, will be on campus to discuss how to create a retirement income plan that can help employees mitigate risks, while achieving lifestyle and legacy goals.

Three sessions will be held at North End Center (room 2200).

- 10-11 a.m.
- 1-2 p.m.
- 4-5 p.m.

Registration is required by Apr. 25. To register, visit www.training.vt.edu, click "view by alpha" and search for "Retirement Planning Sessions: To and Through Retirement- Planning Income for a Lifetime."

For more information, contact the Human Resources Service Center at hrservicecenter@vt.edu or 540-231-9331.

CAPFA to host a Spring Speaker Series featuring Provost Rikakis

On Wednesday, April 13, the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA) will host a Spring Speaker Series featuring Thanassis Rikakis, executive vice president and provost.

Rikakis will discuss his vision of the role of administrative and

professional faculty as it relates to his long term mission.

This event is open to everyone and will be held from 4-5 p.m. in the Smithfield room of the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center.

For more information, contact Sue Volkmar at 540-231-9082.

Nominations open for Excellence in Access Awards

Help Services for Students with Disabilities recognize and thank those who go beyond compliance with procedures, and who go the extra mile to make life on campus more accessible and equitable. Nominations are open to faculty, staff, or students who promote access and inclusion on campus for students with disabilities.

To make a nomination, visit

<https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1456945605884>.

The 2016 Excellence in Access and Inclusion Awards will be given at 4 p.m. April 19 in Commonwealth Ballroom. Carolyn Shivers and Menha Pratt-Clark will speak.

For more information, visit www.ssd.vt.edu or contact Robyn Hudson at 540-231-3788.

Blacksburg campus to open at 10 a.m. May 13

Virginia Tech's spring University Commencement Ceremony is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, May 13, in Lane Stadium. The influx of graduates and their families arriving creates traffic congestion on the southern end of campus and along major arterial roadways.

To minimize congestion, President Tim Sands has approved a 10 a.m. opening for all university offices in Blacksburg on May 13. Employees who are not involved with commencement are urged not to travel to campus before the 10 a.m. opening.

Certain offices must be open for commencement or for operational reasons. Thus, supervisors should use judgment and staff appropriately.

Employees are cautioned that traffic is typically heavy before and after the commencement events along Southgate Drive, Beamer Way, and Washington Street. Cassel Coliseum and the South End Zone lots will also be closed or restricted. Employees should adjust travel and parking plans accordingly.

For more information, visit www.vt.edu/commencement.html.

Drivers needed for a research study

The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute is seeking drivers who are 20-35 or 50-65 years old, have a valid U.S. driver's license, and use a tablet or smart phone (at any time, not while driving).

Participants will drive our research vehicle on the Smart Road during daytime hours and perform secondary tasks while driving and using portable aftermarket devices.

Total participation time is one visit, lasting approximately 2 1/2 hours. This project pays \$75 for full participation.

For more information, contact 540-231-1583 or Eaglestudy@vti.vt.edu and reference "the Eagle Project".

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.