

Election Day added to staff holidays

Virginia State legislation has established Election Day as a holiday, falling on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November. This staff-only holiday replaces Lee Jackson Day, a staff-only holiday observed in January.

University Policy No. 4315: Guidelines on Holidays has been updated to reflect these changes at <https://policies.vt.edu/assets/4315.pdf>.

Election Day has been added to the 2020 holiday list and will be observed this year on Tuesday, Nov. 3. While the university remains open, staff members can choose to observe the holiday or work and earn compensatory time. If staff members choose to observe the holiday, please work with managers and supervisors to make sure university needs are met.

While observed this year, beginning with the 2021 calendar year, Lee Jackson Day will no longer be a staff holiday.

Information about holidays, visit the university's holiday and winter closing schedule at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave/holiday-closing-schedule.html>. For leave questions, contact the Leave Team at hrleave@vt.edu.

Caregiver Connections provides support for those working, caregiving during COVID-19

Caregiver Connections is an opportunity for Virginia Tech employees who are caregivers of children, teens, aging parents and/or family members to connect with one another around managing the demands of working and caregiving during these times of COVID-19 disruption. These networks and resources are intended to be open discussions to share current information and resources, as well as to support one another.

Juggling work and children during COVID-19
October 9 – 12 p.m.

- How do I manage my job and family with Covid?
- There is not enough time in the day. I feel like a bad parent, bad employee...
- How do I maintain this with no end in sight?
- <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83629670381>

Juggling work and caring for an aging parent, partner, or family member during COVID-19,
October 23 – 12 p.m.

- What if they get sick – how do I protect them?
- I want to protect my parents but they are struggling with isolation?

- Do I take them out? Do I let them have visitors? Do I go visit them?
- <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/86822158065>

Juggling work and raising teens during COVID-19,
November 6 – 12 p.m.

- Adolescents- Raising teens is hard enough but now we are at home together all the time. How are we going to survive?
- How to know if this is normal teenage mood swings or is this something more serious?
- How do I set up boundaries when I am teleworking?
- <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/86397767089>

Caring for Children and aging parents during COVID-19, December 4 – 12 p.m.

- My child is learning remotely and I am overwhelmed with keeping up at work, managing remote learning, and supporting my aging parents...
- There is not enough time in the day. I feel like a bad parent, bad employee, bad daughter(son)
- What do we do over the holidays and the winter??
- <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/85989372893>

For information on topics, dates, and Zoom links, visit <https://www.womenscenter.vt.edu/Caregiving.html>. Please direct questions to Christine Dennis Smith at cdennis@vt.edu.

Employee leave information/ reminders: Plan for winter closure

Leave Carry Over: Human Resources has received inquiries related to leave usage and the carry over limits given the extenuating circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic. There is no plan to increase carry over limits or to extend the Jan. 9, 2021 deadline for bringing leave balances down to or below the current applicable limits. Information related to leave limits can be found on our website at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave.html>.

Employees should work with supervisors to manage leave balances to ensure leave can be used.

Leave Use Guidelines for 2020 Thanksgiving and Winter Closure: Virginia Tech will close for the following holiday breaks:

- Thanksgiving break: The university will close at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 25, through Friday, Nov. 27, and will reopen on Monday, Nov. 30.
- Winter break: The university will close Thursday, Dec. 24, through Friday, Jan. 1, 2021 and reopen on Monday, Jan. 4, 2021.

The following days are designated holidays for eligible faculty and staff:

- Thanksgiving break: Wednesday, Nov. 25, starting at noon, through Friday, Nov. 27.
- Winter break: Thursday, Dec. 24, Friday, Dec. 25, and Friday, Jan. 1, 2021.

Employees need appropriate leave types to cover Dec. 28-31, the remaining days of winter break. For example, the typical full-time employee working eight hours Monday through Friday will need 32 hours of leave for these days. Common leave types used for this period are annual, family personal, compensatory (holiday comp, overtime comp). Sick leave usage is not applicable unless an employee has a substantiated illness or doctor's appointment.

Commonwealth of Virginia Pay and Holiday Calendars: View the 2020 and 2021 Commonwealth Pay and Holiday Calendar at <https://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/payandholidaycalendar>.

Virginia Tech Holidays for Faculty and Staff: View the guideline for all Virginia Tech holidays at <https://policies.vt.edu/assets/4315.pdf>. Holidays marked with an asterisk indicate the university is typically closed and are designated holidays for faculty on 12-month appointments.

For information about leave or holidays, visit <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave.html> or contact the HR Service Center at hrrservicecenter@vt.edu or at 540-231-9331.

Survey seeks data on balancing caregiving and work responsibilities

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Faculty Affairs, Human Resources and the Graduate School have all invited conversations through various open office hours sessions, town hall meetings, and other group meetings. One theme that has consistently come through in these conversations is that caregiving responsibilities are immensely challenging as we juggle work and family responsibilities.

While we have heard quite a number of impactful stories, well-defined problems and some creative solutions in these conversations, it is clear that additional, representative data from across the university will help our understanding of the challenges being faced, and better consider what solutions or support may be helpful.

To that end, we invite all faculty, staff, and graduate student employees to complete an anonymous survey at https://www.provost.vt.edu/content/provost_vt_edu/en/announcements/caregiving-responsibilities-survey.html about balancing caregiving and work responsibilities during this challenging time.

The survey, which will be open through Friday, October 23, should only take about 10-12 minutes to complete. Information about your experiences in this area is crucially important for us to be able to make informed decisions about possible solutions and support.

Thank you for all you are doing during this challenging time. We know that so many are juggling multiple responsibilities, and your contributions to the university right now are greatly appreciated.

With care,

Jack Finney, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
Bryan Garey, V.P. for Human Resources
Karen DePauw, V.P. and Dean of the Graduate School

Employees encouraged to support the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign

I am pleased to announce the start of the 2020 Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC). I am also honored to serve as this year's honorary CVC Chair.

This has been an extraordinary year for all of us. So many aspects of our lives have been challenged in the context of the pandemic. For some in our community, the health, financial, social, and psychological challenges of the pandemic have been difficult. In the spirit of our motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), we can make a difference by supporting organizations that provide services and support in the communities where we live and work.

My husband, Tim Sands, president of Virginia Tech, and I have been proud members of the Hokie Nation since 2014. We have had the privilege of meeting thousands of Hokies who have positively impacted our community in so many ways. As a professor, I study how services and supports can improve the health and well-being of our most vulnerable older adults. These collective experiences give me hope that, together, we will be able to meet current challenges in our communities. I encourage each of you to visit the CVC website for information on how you can help those in our areas who may need additional assistance. With approximately 1,000 charities listed, you can see how each of us can positively impact others in very important and meaningful ways.

This year's campaign runs from Oct. 1 to Dec. 11. Since 2010, Virginia Tech employees have donated more than \$3.1 million to charities in Blacksburg, the New River Valley, and across Virginia. With this amazing record of accomplishment, I am confident we will come together to not only meet, but exceed this year's goal of \$370,000.

Every dollar counts and makes a difference toward reaching our goal! It's not about how much you give. It's about the act of giving itself that makes this campaign so special each year. As charities and individuals are experiencing need and changes in their personal lives, now is the time to support and give back to those in need. To make a donation or for more information, visit the CVC website at <https://www.cvc.hr.vt.edu>.

Laura P. Sands, Ph.D.
Honorary Chair of 2020 Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign