



## 2020 Staff Appreciation Day update

Each spring, since 1993, Virginia Tech has celebrated the hard work and dedication of more than 3,400 staff and wage employees by holding a Staff Appreciation Day. The event offers a wide range of activities, lunch, music, and more that draws a large crowd of employees, vendors, and volunteers.

Because of the Governor's Executive Order 55, Temporary Stay at Home Order Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the associated public health requirements, the Office of the President and Division of Human Resources have announced this year's event has been canceled.

While this year's event will not be able to be held, we want to again thank our staff and wage employees for their dedication to our university and the campus community.

Please direct any questions to the HR Service Center at [hrrservicecenter@vt.edu](mailto:hrrservicecenter@vt.edu) or 540-231-9331.

## Open enrollment for health insurance and flexible spending accounts available through May 15

Open enrollment for state-provided health insurance and flexible spending accounts (FSA) runs through May 15. Any changes made during open enrollment will be effective July 1, 2020.

Following are the changes for the 2020-21 plan year:

- Employee premiums will change for all plans. See the "Spotlight on Your Benefits" newsletter for 2020-21 premiums. To compare the differences, view the 2019-20 premiums at [https://www.hr.vt.edu/content/dam/hr\\_vt\\_edu/benefits-perks/health/employee-premiums-2019.pdf](https://www.hr.vt.edu/content/dam/hr_vt_edu/benefits-perks/health/employee-premiums-2019.pdf).
- Age limits removed for autism spectrum disorder and related treatments and services.
- Health FSA limit increased: You may contribute up to \$2,750, an increase of \$50 from the current maximum.
- An online portal (Employee Direct - <http://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/health/open-enrollment.html>) is available for employees to enroll (or reenroll) in FSA plans and enroll in a Health Insurance plan (or make changes). NOTE the employee ID number is the Member Number from the Health Insurance Card (use only the

numbers, drop the alpha characters). If you do not know (or have access to) your ID Number, use your Social Security Number to retrieve or contact the HR Service Center.

For more information, visit the open enrollment webpage (<http://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/health/open-enrollment.html>).

No action is required for those who wish to continue the same insurance; however, flexible spending accounts for medical and dependent care and the premium rewards discount must be renewed yearly.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, employees are strongly encouraged to submit open enrollment changes through EmployeeDirect (<https://edirect.virginia.gov/EDL/Start.aspx>) the Virginia Department of Human Resources Management's (DHRM) electronic submission portal. Changes must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on May 15, 2020.

Enrollment forms and supporting documents can also be submitted to Human Resources using new digital processes (<https://vtnews.vt.edu/notices/hr-digital-processes.html>).

For employees unable to submit open enrollment changes electronically, DHRM mailed enrollment forms to home addresses of record. Paper forms should only be used if Internet access is unavailable.

Human Resources is offering Zoom information sessions for employees to review health insurance and FSA changes. Registration is not required for these sessions. Find them here: <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/health/open-enrollment/informational-meetings.html>.

Please direct any questions to the HR Service Center at [hrrservicecenter@vt.edu](mailto:hrrservicecenter@vt.edu) or 540-231-9331.

## Learn more about saving for future higher education expenses with VA 529 webinar

Hokies Wellness is offering a Virginia529 webinar for employees and their families on Thursday, May 14, from noon-1 p.m.

Before another school year ends, learn how to save for future higher education expenses for your

children, grandchildren, or yourself. Learn how to:

- Save for tuition and other higher education costs, such as housing, textbooks and more.
- Take advantage of tax-free earnings and the Virginia state tax deduction.
- And most importantly, meet savings goals.

Registration is required at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4856050683524152076>. For more information or questions, contact Hokie Wellness at [hokiewellness@vt.edu](mailto:hokiewellness@vt.edu).

## Commencement 101: Details about this year's ceremony

Virginia Tech will honor members of the Class of 2020 with an online commencement ceremony on Friday, May 15. The online ceremony begins at 6:30 p.m. and will be available on the Virginia Tech homepage (<https://vt.edu/>) and the university's commencement website (<https://vt.edu/commencement>).

Graduates and their families, friends, and loved ones are encouraged to tune in early at 6:15 p.m. to enjoy memories from classmates and see special messages.

The online ceremony will feature inspirational remarks from notable Hokies, including Miss America 2020 Camille Schirer '18, legendary defensive coordinator Bud Foster, and world-renowned poet and University Distinguished Professor Nikki Giovanni. Virginia Tech President Tim Sands and Executive Vice President and Provost Cyril Clarke will also speak and confer degrees.

All Virginia Tech campuses and students will be together, including undergraduate, master's, Ph.D., doctor of veterinary medicine, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine students, and the Corps of Cadets. Students will hear a special message from their respective deans and then hear their names called.

On Instagram and Twitter, tag your photos and videos with #HokieGrad for a chance to be featured on the commencement website. You can also submit photos for the Facebook photo album. Read more: <https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2020/05/unirel-commencement-spring20.html>.

## Staying safe at home during COVID-19

While moving classes online and working remotely may help to reduce the spread of COVID-19, it is not always the safest option for survivors of emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse. When survivors are forced to spend more time in the home or in close proximity to their abuser, an abuser can use any tool to exert control over their victim, including a global health crisis such as COVID-19.

Many employees are working from home and students are taking classes remotely now that Virginia Tech has moved to online classes and essential operations. Social distancing and staying at home are circumstances that an abuser may take advantage of to isolate and gain more control. School or work may have been the safe space and outlet for a survivor. Now no longer an option, this can be a particularly lonely, scary and potentially dangerous time.

Reach out to the resources below for support and for help to create a plan if you are:

- Isolated and/or not feeling safe – emotionally, physically, or sexually – in your home.
- Worried about a friend or family member who is not safe in their home.
- A university employee and are worried about a colleague or a student who is not safe at home.

You can get help developing a safety plan from the Women's Center at Virginia Tech or the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley. A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that includes ways to be safe while in a relationship, planning to leave, or after you leave. Having a safety plan can help you to protect yourself during this stressful and potentially dangerous time. You can develop an online safety plan here.

Be kind to yourself: COVID-19 is causing uncertainty for many people, but getting through this time while experiencing abuse can feel overwhelming. Taking time for your health and wellness can make a difference in how you feel. To learn more about how to build in self-care while staying safe please take advantage of Hokie Wellness's new Wellness at Home site at <https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/hokie-wellness-at-home.html>.

Read more and view additional resources: <https://vtnews.vt.edu/notices/hr-staying-safe-during-COVID19.html>.