



From President Tim Sands: Maintain vigilance and commitment this spring

To the university community,

Our spring semester is officially underway! To our students, faculty, and staff, new or returning, on campus or virtual, we're glad to have our community together again as we continue this unique academic year. I appreciate your ongoing resilience and determination – it will serve us well as we make progress toward our “next normal” campus experience.

Thanks to our innovative faculty and staff, we continue to enhance the day-to-day campus experience for our students. Our new Field House provides opportunities for recreational sports with friends, and the dome beside Cowgill Hall can safely host in-person classes in an outdoor setting. Student Affairs is launching a new POD registration process that will provide more opportunities to study and to socialize with friends. Our division of Student Affairs is working to deliver a great campus experience that aligns with public health guidelines and the New River Health District/Virginia Department of Health's vaccination program. Watch for the student updates sent to you three times a week throughout the semester and check the Ready site at <https://ready.vt.edu/>.

While balancing caregiving responsibilities and telecommuting challenges, our faculty and staff continue to serve our community. Our essential workers who are on-site every day keep our campus operational. Vaccine protocol and distribution through the NRV Health District has allowed nearly 400 employees to be vaccinated thus far with several hundred more scheduled for vaccinations this week, all as part of the 1b priority group as defined by the department of health. We are moving forward.

If we maintain our vigilance and commitment, we can cautiously anticipate an increasing number of in-person experiences both in and out of the classroom. And I'm hopeful we will once again be able to gather for events. For a more thorough discussion of our progress and plans for the future, I invite you to watch my 2020-21 State of the University Address at <https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2021/01/unirel-stateoftheuniversity.html>.

Our success this semester depends on each one of us. Continue wearing a mask and maintaining

physical distance, even after vaccines are administered. Take care of yourselves and each other. We've all worked hard to get this far, so let's make it count as we look forward to reclaiming the active campus we know and love.

Be committed. Be well.

Tim Sands, President

COVID-19 vaccine now available to those 65 years and older

Editor's note: This notice was distributed via email to all Virginia Tech retirees ages 65 and older who reside in the New River Valley and maintain an active vt.edu email address.

The New River Valley Health District has announced that COVID-19 vaccine distribution has expanded to people classified in the 1b group (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/#phase1b>), including people who are 65 years of age or older.

As a partner with the New River Task Force and in an effort to support the health and wellness of our community, we wanted to ensure you were aware of this information.

You may register to receive the vaccine from the New River Valley Health District by going to www.nrvroadtowellness.com and clicking on the COVID-19 vaccine information banner at the top of the webpage.

If you live in Virginia, but outside of the New River Valley, you may submit a pre-registration form (<https://redcap.vdh.virginia.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=JTNHTXYW74>) to the Virginia Department of Health. Once completed, you must wait to receive a phone call from the local health district to schedule an appointment for a vaccine.

If you live outside of Virginia, vaccine distribution varies state by state; contact your local health department for more information.

Residents of Virginia can visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/> for the latest COVID-19 vaccine information, frequently asked questions, and more from the Virginia Department of Health. If you have additional questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, contact the Virginia Department of Health hotline at 877-ASK-VDH3 (877-275-8343).

Virginia Tech employees donate more than \$404,000 to charity

In the middle of a pandemic, employees rallied together to exceed the university's 2020 Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) goal of \$370,000 by more than \$34,000.

The campaign to raise money for charities across the commonwealth ended Dec. 11, 2020.

In a mostly virtual environment, senior management areas changed up the way they typically raised money. Fundraisers historically held in person and in the office were creatively switched from bake sales, potlucks, and contests to credit card fund giving, online bingo, and various virtual contests.

Made up of Virginia Tech employees from the university's senior management areas, the steering team sets an annual campaign goal. From that goal, senior management goals are then set based on their size and recent history of giving. Many areas not only met, but exceeded their goal in 2020, including College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Natural Resources and Environment, College of Science, Dean of Libraries, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Business Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer, Vice President of Human Resources, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Vice President for Research and Innovation, and Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

"Virginia Tech employees' generous contributions to the CVC reflect our collective commitment to our motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve). Their donations will provide essential resources to those who have experienced significant challenges during this past year," said Laura Sands, this year's honorary campaign chair. "Their positive impact on others is yet another reason I am so proud to be a Hokie."

Since 2010, Virginia Tech employees have donated more than \$3.1 million to local charities in the New River Valley and across the commonwealth. Having finished his second year as CVC steering team chair, while very different from the prior year due to the pandemic, Edward Lener said he was deeply humbled to see the generosity of his fellow Virginia Tech employees in 2020, who really stepped up to help meet the needs in our community and beyond during a difficult time.

"We had to restructure and redesign many of our traditional CVC events for this campaign, and it was great to see the creativity shown by our volunteers. I especially enjoyed hosting a weekly charity spotlight series featuring representatives from many of our local charitable organizations and enabling them to share with viewers the important work they do."

CVC donations have gone to approximately 1,000 participating charities, ranging from health and human services to animal welfare; from environmental conservation to medical research, and everything in between.

As the sponsoring department for CVC, Vice President for Human Resources Bryan Garey said, "It is truly remarkable seeing employees come together to support our local communities during a trying time. Once again Virginia Tech rose to the challenge to help those in need."

Now accepting nominations for several annual awards

Each year, the university offers multiple award programs to recognize employees for their commitment to the university and community, new ideas, and teamwork.

Nominations are being accepted for the McComas Staff Leadership Award, President's Award for Excellence, Staff Career Achievement Award. All nominations are due Monday, Feb. 15 at 5 p.m. and must be submitted electronically.

See below for more information and nomination guidelines on each award.

McComas Staff Leadership Award: Sponsored by the Division of Human Resources and the Commission for Staff Policies and Affairs, this award recognizes non-student wage and staff employees who regularly demonstrate the behaviors of a strong leader in support of the goals of the university, college, senior management area, or department
Visit: <https://www.hr.vt.edu/our-workplace/awards-recognition/awards/mccomas-staff-leadership.html>

President's Award for Excellence: Sponsored by the Office of the President and the Division of Human Resources, this award recognizes outstanding contributions and excellent performance of salaried classified and university staff employees. Visit: <https://www.hr.vt.edu/our-workplace/awards-recognition/awards/presidents-award.html>

Staff Career Achievement Award: This award recognizes the contributions of retiring staff members who retired the previous year and who distinguished themselves through exemplary performance and service during their career
Visit: <https://www.hr.vt.edu/our-workplace/awards-recognition/awards/staff-career-achievement.html>

Please consider nominating a deserving employee for one of the above awards. The Feb. 15 deadline will approach us fast, so be sure to get your nomination in soon!