



## A message from President Tim Sands

To the Virginia Tech community,

Earlier this month, the Graduate and Professional Student Senate passed a resolution in support of the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)” movement against Israel. Opinions have been expressed in favor and in opposition to the resolution from those within the Virginia Tech community and those external to our university. As a public university, Virginia Tech strongly supports the free speech rights of members in our community as well as organizations to express their opinions, regardless of whether those views are widely shared or controversial. The successful fulfillment of our tripartite missions of discovery, teaching and learning, and engagement depends on maintaining an institutional environment that supports open and vigorous debate from every perspective on issues that span science, technology, policy, geopolitics, and every endeavor of humanity.

Those who engage in debates on controversial issues can expect to be challenged. That said, there are legal boundaries that must not be crossed, and university policies with consequences for those who violate them. Everyone in our community should be free from harassment, discrimination, and physical threats to their safety.

Within those legal and policy bounds, however, Virginia Tech goes further with our aspirational Principles of Community, advocating for “open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity and mutual respect.” That climate fosters real progress through active listening, empathy, and constructive dialogue. When respectful dialogue breaks down, the inevitable outcome is greater polarization and entrenchment. As a learning community, we have a special responsibility to model constructive and respectful debate on every issue, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable those conversations may be.

If your physical safety is threatened, we encourage you to contact the Virginia Tech Police Department. For violations of the Student Code of Conduct, you may file a report. If you believe that the university’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination has been violated, please reach out to the Office of Equity and Accessibility. Engaging in challenging debates and addressing difficult topics can be stressful, and can cause anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and sleep loss, and even concerns about safety. We do

have resources available as a university.

- Better Together
- Cook Counseling Center at 540-231-6557.
- Dean of Students Office at 540-231-3787. Referral to a campus cleric may be made through this office.
- Employee Assistance Program
  - Anthem at 855-223-9277
  - Aetna at 888-238-6232
  - Kaiser Permanente at 866-517-7042
  - Optima Health Vantage HMO at 866-846-2682
- Hokie Wellness at 540-231-2233 (students) or 540-231-8878 (employees)
- Office of Housing and Residence Life at 540-231-6205
- Women’s Center at Virginia Tech at 540-231-7806
- University Ombuds Office at 540-231-3125
- Graduate Office of the Ombudsperon at 540-231-9573

In the spirit of our Principles of Community,

Tim Sands,  
President

## Little Hokie Hand-Me-Down event scheduled for Nov. 9 and 10

The Little Hokie Hand-Me-Down event is back for its eighth year at Virginia Tech’s Blacksburg campus. Graduate students and staff members with families are welcome to visit the event at the Owens Ballroom (in Owens Hall) and “shop” for children’s clothing and other items they may need for their children on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 12-5 p.m. (graduate students only), and on Wednesday, Nov. 10, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. (graduate students and staff). The Women’s Center, Graduate and Professional Student Senate, and the Graduate School are co-sponsors of this family-focused event.

Due to public health guidelines, capacity in the ballroom is limited. Please remember also to wear a mask.

### DONATIONS

All items are donated by members of the university and Blacksburg community. Families who wish to contribute clothes and other children’s items may do so from now through Nov. 8. Bring your gently used or new items to the Women’s Center, 206 Washington St. We ask that all donated items be completely boxed or contained in plastic bags.

Organizers are looking for the following:

- Gently used clothing (baby, children's, and maternity)
- Toys (including music and DVDs) Books
- Formula (that is not expired)
- Medical supplies (breast pumps, other lactation devices)
- Strollers, car seats, high chairs
- School supplies
- Bedding (for cribs and moms!)
- Bathing and grooming supplies (bathers, unopened/unused creams, lotions, powders)
- Feeding supplies (bibs, baby bottles, food warmers)
- Baby gear (activity gyms, bassinets, play mats, baby carriers, swings)
- Diapers

On the "shopping days," Nov. 9 and 10, students are welcome to come to Owens Ballroom and "shop" for what they need on Nov. 9, noon-5 p.m. They may fill one shopping bag, which they receive at the door, with items they choose, in addition choosing from a selection of larger items, such as carseats, strollers, play sets, and more. Everything is free. Staff members and students may "shop" on Nov. 10, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Anything leftover from the Hand-Me-Down will be donated to charitable organizations in the area.

Questions? Please email Jessie Meltsner at [jmelts@exchange.vt.edu](mailto:jmelts@exchange.vt.edu).

## Child care information sessions available

Following are several upcoming child care information sessions.

### Choosing Quality Child Care Workshop

Presented by Child Care Aware of Virginia, attendees will learn the following:

- What is quality child care and how to find it.
- What to look for in a child care provider.
- How to determine what type of care would work best for your family.
- Financial assistance options for child care.

This workshop is held the first Friday of each month at 9 a.m.; the next workshops will be held on Nov. 5 and Dec. 3. To register, contact Margaret Hurst at [mbhurst@vt.edu](mailto:mbhurst@vt.edu).

### NRV Cares Lunch and Learns

In partnership with Child Care Aware of Virginia, NRV Cares offers monthly lunch and learns with varying topics. Lunch and learns are held noon – 1 p.m. via Zoom. To register, contact Margaret Hurst at [mbhurst@vt.edu](mailto:mbhurst@vt.edu).

- Nov. 18 – Thankfulness
- Dec. 16 – Surviving the holidays

Virginia Tech recognizes the growing concerns among faculty, staff, and students regarding the availability of affordable quality care and early education. The university's recently launched early childhood education initiative is working in cooperation with state and local agencies and child care providers to improve child care access and information. Watch for more information on this initiative soon.

**Virginia Tech News** is published weekly during fall and spring semester and bimonthly during the summer sessions, by the Division 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 540-231-3852.

## Reminder to employees: Plan now to use your annual leave

As a reminder, the last day to use your accrued 2021 leave is Jan. 9, 2022. While you may not have taken leave you normally would have taken this year, it's important to take time away from work for your mental health and wellness.

Remember that you'll need to cover Dec. 27–30, 2021, with appropriate leave types during the university's Winter Closing. For example, a full-time employee working eight hours Monday through Friday will need 32 hours of leave for these four days. The most common types of leave used for this period are annual, family personal, and compensatory (holiday comp, overtime comp). Sick leave is not appropriate to use for these days unless you have a documented illness or doctor's appointment during that time. (See below more information on upcoming Virginia Tech holiday breaks.)

We encourage you to work with your managers/supervisors to plan ahead and ensure you can use your leave and reduce your annual leave balance by Jan. 9, 2022.

More information about leave carryover limits for different positions is available on the HR Leave website at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave.html>. For more information on Virginia Tech holidays please refer to University Policy No. 4315: Guidelines on Holidays.

Questions about leave and leave usage? Please contact your college or department's HR representative or contact the HR Leave Team at [hrleave@vt.edu](mailto:hrleave@vt.edu).

### Upcoming holiday closings:

- Thanksgiving break: University is closed from noon on Wednesday, Nov. 24, through Friday, Nov. 26, and reopens on Monday, Nov. 29.
- Winter break: University is closed from Thursday, Dec. 23, through Friday, Dec. 31, 2021, and reopens on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022.

A full list of university holidays is available at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave/holiday-closing-schedule.html>.

Designated holidays: The following days are designated holidays for eligible faculty and staff. You do not need to use annual leave on these days.

- Thanksgiving break: Wednesday, Nov. 24, starting at noon, through Friday, Nov. 26.
- Winter break: Thursday, Dec. 23; Friday, Dec. 24; and Friday, Dec. 31.