

Cyril Clarke focused on opportunities, impacts as interim provost

Eight thousand miles separate Cyril Clarke's hometown of Johannesburg, South Africa, and the campus of Virginia Tech. Another 4,000 miles mark his higher education journey between universities in Louisiana, Oklahoma, Oregon, and finally Blacksburg, Virginia.

But it's the 1-mile path from the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine to Burruss Hall that could represent one of Clarke's biggest and most impactful moves for Virginia Tech.

"There are a number of very exciting and important initiatives being advanced at Virginia Tech and we have an opportunity to develop them into significant areas of distinction," says Clarke. "I believe my colleagues across the campus share in a commitment to developing these initiatives, and the common interest we have in seeing them succeed is the main reason I've accepted this role."

Clarke is the new Interim executive vice president and provost for Virginia Tech, serving as chief academic officer and lead for the institution's academic enterprise. In this role, he will work closely with President Tim Sands, college deans, and administrators to advance Virginia Tech's cross-disciplinary initiatives, which are designed to position Virginia Tech as a 21st-century global land-grant university.

"President Sands has a vision to elevate and advance Virginia Tech around these major strategic initiatives," explained Clarke. "My role is to support and strengthen this vision and to help facilitate the further development of these initiatives, making them work for the entire university."

Clarke replaced Thanassis Rikakis, who stepped down as executive vice president and provost in October. Clarke, who had served as the dean of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine since 2013, will continue the pursuit of many of the strategic designs created by Rikakis and Sands, including Beyond Boundaries, Destination Areas, and the Partnership for an Incentive-Based Budget (PIBB).

"Through these initiatives, we have significant opportunities to create impacts beyond the Blacksburg campus and to build programs and partnerships in Roanoke and the National Capital Region," said Clarke. "I've been a strong supporter of these visions and recognize the amazing creativity that my predecessor brought to developing these programs."

"These initiatives are directly connected to how we want to elevate the reputation and contributions of our institution and differentiate Virginia Tech from its peers."

From his first day in his new role, Clarke knew that one of his most pressing needs would be to help the campus community better understand the importance of the

Destination Areas to the future of Virginia Tech. Although much has been accomplished in bringing together talented people to advance these areas, he emphasized that Destination Areas are not designed to be all encompassing.

"Destination Areas (DAs) are essentially centers of excellence for Virginia Tech," explains Clarke. "However, they do not capture all of the creativity, all of the innovation, and certainly not all of the aspirations of the entire university. We have to offer those within the university community who are not directly engaged in the DAs the opportunity to develop their own passions and areas of interest."

"We need these areas to evolve over time and in such a way that we can identify other opportunities and ideas that perhaps develop into new initiatives that can work alongside or even become future Destination Areas."

Clarke has also recognized the need to effectively communicate and engage with faculty across the campus, especially as it relates to critical processes, such as the PIBB model and promotion and tenure.

"Over the past few weeks, I have spent almost all my time having in-person conversations with a variety of campus groups and individuals, listening to their ideas and concerns to identify some of the challenges as they see them," said Clarke. "I am working to be sure that we are clearly communicating our goals so that we can provide a sense of assurance that we are moving forward in a manner that will benefit the campus community and the institution. I would not have taken on this role if I didn't believe that we could be successful in doing that."

Working closely with the campus community to build strategic areas of excellence that are distinctive, relevant, effective, and sustainable is where Clarke expects a large part of his focus to be as Virginia Tech moves toward the new year. Listening to the perspectives and experiences of people across the university is how he will forge his path and serve his constituents as interim executive vice president and provost.

"Through conversations and collaborations with the people who are impacting the various academic areas of the campus, I look forward to facilitating efforts by faculty to identify compelling ideas and connect them in ways that advance the university's commitment to excellence and public service."

Driving through the new "Diverging Diamond" on U.S. Route 460

The new interchange on U.S. Route 460 near Southgate Drive is open. Remember, when driving through the interchange, drivers will travel temporarily to the left side of the road. Drivers should:

- Proceed through the traffic signal at the entrance to the interchange and follow their lane to the opposite side of the roadway.
- Pay close attention and follow signs and pavement markings that will guide them through the interchange.
- Be patient with other drivers in the area.

Resources for drivers, including graphics and videos, are available on VDOT's website at www.virginiadot.org/VTGateway.

Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign ends Today!

With the end of the year, comes the end of this year's Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign **today!** Thank you to everyone who has given in support of this year's campaign and the more than 1,000 charities that will benefit from your generosity.

If you haven't donated yet, but would like to, there's still time! Donating is easy and is tax deductible! You can also direct your donation to specific charities that you care most about.

Simply visit the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign web page, www.cvc.hr.vt.edu, for more information then make your donation through payroll deduction or paper pledge form using the resources on the webpage.

Hokies face Oklahoma State on Dec. 28 at the Camping Bowl

The Hokies will face off against Oklahoma State on **Dec. 28 at 5:15 p.m. at the Camping World Stadium in Orlando, FL** so be sure to tune in! Tickets are on sale now. Tickets are on sale now; visit www.hokietickets.com to purchase tickets.

Annual tax document mailings: Update your address by Jan. 5

The HR Service Center and Commonwealth of Virginia are getting ready for the annual mailing of tax documents, including employee W2s and IRS 1095-C forms. All tax documents will be available electronically or will be mailed to your home address of record by Jan. 31.

We encourage all faculty and staff to review their address and update it, if necessary, by Friday, Jan. 5. While some may access their W2s electronically, the state is **required** to mail IRS Form 1095-C, which provides information regarding any employer-provided health insurance coverage – or offers of coverage, to your home address of record.

To update your address, log in to Hokie Spa and select "Update Address(es) and Phone(s)." If you have questions, contact the HR Service Center at 540-231-9331.

2018 Hokie Wellness Health and Benefits Fair Reminders

All employees are encouraged to attend the 2018 Hokie Wellness Health and Benefits Fair on **Wednesday, Jan. 10, from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at McComas Hall.** The event is free and employees are encouraged to bring their Hokie Passport to check-in. Supervisors of employees are strongly

encouraged to allow eligible employees in their respective areas to participate for a minimum of two hours in this year's event.

If you would like to help at the fair, volunteers are needed at the check-in table, to monitor the demonstration area, manage the chair massage check-in, and more for two-hour shifts during the day. Interested employees should contact Hokie Wellness no later than Friday, Jan. 5. Contact information is below.

In addition during the fair, Hokie Wellness will be hosting an American Red Cross Bloodmobile from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Cassell Coliseum parking lot. To donate blood, please register online using your smartphone or home computer at www.redcross.org/give-blood. On the American Red Cross website, scroll down until the Jan. 10, Virginia Tech Hokie Wellness drive appears. Click in the box area, then choose an appointment time. Either sign in or create an account to complete the registration process. If employees do not have a computer or smartphone, contact Hokie Wellness for registration help. Contact information is below.

Contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu or 540-231-8878!

Scholarship Central deadline extended to Jan. 22

The deadline to apply for Virginia Tech Scholarships through Scholarship Central has been extended to **Jan. 22**. Visit www.finaid.vt.edu for more information.

2018 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration slated for Jan. 15 to 28

Hidden Figures: Community Practice of MLK is the theme of Virginia Tech's 2018 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, which will be held Jan. 15 through 28. Keynote speaker for the series of events is stand-up comic and television host Kamau Bell who will present **An Evening with Kamau Bell of United Shades of America** on Wednesday, Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. in the Moss Arts Center's Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre. Visit www.cc.vt.edu/awareness/mlk for a complete list of events. All events are free and open to the public.

Winter closing schedule reminder

As a reminder, employees will need to use three leave days for the 2017 Winter Closing. To view the schedule, visit the Holiday and Winter Closing Schedule page at www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave/holiday-closing-schedule.

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 540-231-4387.