



## Open letter to the Virginia Tech community: University suspending participation in all activities in Italy

As Virginia Tech continues to closely monitor and assess the outbreak of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) worldwide, and its potential impact on university programs and other activities our community members are engaged in, the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff remains our primary concern.

Because of the continued growth in the number of COVID-19 cases in Italy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a "Warning Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel" for Italy earlier this afternoon. Given this development, and in accordance with Policy 1070, Virginia Tech is suspending participation in all activities in Italy.

The university will re-evaluate its programs in Canton Ticino, Switzerland, and decisions regarding those programs will be made in consultation with our on-site staff and cantonal officials. Currently, there are no CDC, COVID-19 related advisories for Switzerland. In Canton Ticino, all colleges and universities are open and holding classes.

Students, faculty, and staff participating in exchange programs, study abroad opportunities through other agencies and institutions, research, internships, conferences, competitions, or other university-supported travel in Italy are strongly urged to return immediately. We recommend students follow guidance from their host institution and host nation and remind all travelers of the health recommendations from the Schiffert Health Center.

Concerns for the safety, well-being, and free movement of the students, faculty, and staff in these programs guided this difficult decision. The university believes this is absolutely essential to reduce the potential risk of our students being unable to leave the region due to containment efforts. As needed, we will work directly with students, faculty, and staff to facilitate their safe return.

Impacted individuals will undoubtedly have many questions and concerns. Virginia Tech is committed to offer its full support and assistance to mitigate the academic impact of this decision and related issues.

In addition, Virginia Tech will continue to aid and support other students and faculty who are abroad elsewhere or seek to travel abroad in the future. With spring break approaching, we recognize that many of our international students and scholars may be unable to travel home as they may have planned.

The university is committed to support those who may face these emerging challenges.

Virginia Tech's four faculty-led, spring break programs traveling to low-risk nations (Ireland, Iceland, Ecuador, and Peru-Argentina) are proceeding as planned. The CDC has not indicated COVID-19 risk to travelers in these countries.

Summer programs that include travel in CDC Warning Level 2 nations are being asked to prepare alternate plans to avoid travel to those countries. For restrictions regarding inbound travel from CDC Warning Level 3 countries, refer to the travel restriction website. Departments will be responsible for communicating the information on this site to their students, faculty, staff, and visiting scholars.

We continue to encourage our community to take precautions and exercise good health practices. To learn more about preventive health practices, and to receive university updates on the impact of COVID-19 outbreak, please continue to monitor our COVID-19 website at: <https://vt.edu/flu/2019Coronavirus.html>

The health and safety of Hokies is of the utmost priority. Virginia Tech officials are closely monitoring the situation. At this time, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Virginia Tech.

## 2019-20 annual notice on rights and responsibilities of the Virginia Tech community

In an effort to ensure new employees and students who join Virginia Tech after September receive this important notice, we have reissued the 2019-20 annual notice on rights and responsibilities of the Virginia Tech community. This notice was republished with the following changes:

- Notice title updated to include 2019-20, encompassing the academic year.
- Updated Division of Student Affairs leadership information.
- Added a link to the university's recently approved Drug and Alcohol Awareness Program (DAAPP).

If you need a paper copy of the notice, please see your supervisor.

## You count here in the 2020 Census

Want to help make sure there are enough seats on the bus? How about helping secure the resources needed to keep the roads they run on smooth, as well as library shelves filled with books and first

responders equipped to save lives?

These are exactly the types of public services influenced by the U.S. census — the nation's decennial (once every 10 years) headcount — which will soon give Hokies the opportunity to help shape the future of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, and beyond.

This spring, the entire Virginia Tech community, including undergraduate, graduate, and international students, as well as employees, will be counted where they reside on April 1, 2020. Every person, no matter their age or citizenship status, should be counted.

All employees are encouraged to take the census and will be counted where they live. Postcards with instructions for how to respond online, by phone, or by mail will be mailed March 12-20, 2020. Households should only file one report.

Still have questions? Visit our 2020 Census Frequently Asked Questions page at: [https://vt.edu/content/vt\\_edu/en/census/faqs.html](https://vt.edu/content/vt_edu/en/census/faqs.html).

## The Division of Motor Vehicles returns to Virginia Tech in March

DMV Connect will return to campus, Thursday, March 26, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in room 2420 at the North End Center. Space will be available to work should there be a wait.

DMV Connect can provide the REAL ID. Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, Virginians will need a REAL ID compliant driver's license or ID card - or another federally approved form of identification, such as a U.S. passport or some military IDs - to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal facility.

All applicants for a REAL ID compliant credential must apply in-person, and pay a \$10 one-time REAL ID surcharge in addition to standard renewal or replacement fees. Driver's licenses and ID cards may be renewed up to one year before expiration. Learn more: [https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#real\\_id.asp](https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#real_id.asp).

For more information, contact Hokie Wellness at [hokiewellness@vt.edu](mailto:hokiewellness@vt.edu) or 540-231-8878.

## Report concerns to the Hokie Hotline

Virginia Tech is committed to the highest standards of moral, legal, and ethical behavior by its employees and administrators.

The University Policy 1040, Reporting and Investigating Suspected Fraudulent Activities, can be found at <https://policies.vt.edu/1040.pdf>.

To help ensure an ethical work environment, all members of the university should report any suspected wrongdoing (i.e., fraud, waste, abuse, noncompliance). We encourage you to submit concerns via the Hokie Hotline, which allows for confidential and anonymous reporting.

Alternatively, you can contact members of the Office of Audit, Risk, and Compliance: Ryan Hamilton ([ryhamilt@vt.edu](mailto:ryhamilt@vt.edu) and 540-231-2530) or Sharon Kurek ([kurek@vt.edu](mailto:kurek@vt.edu) and 540-231-7496).

## Hokie Wellness to host Virginia 529 for information session

Hokie Wellness is offering an information session facilitated by Virginia 529 on Wednesday, March 25, from 12:15-1:15 p.m. in room 2470. Attendees will learn about saving for future higher education expenses for 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.

Register: [https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3sFLqnD5Vp4Wv9H](https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3sFLqnD5Vp4Wv9H). More information, contact Hokie Wellness at [hokiewellness@vt.edu](mailto:hokiewellness@vt.edu) or 540-231-8878.

## University records system to include identity options for chosen name, personal pronoun

Virginia Tech recognizes that members of our university community may use names other than their legal names. Additionally, for some, chosen names and personal pronouns represent a very important and salient part of their identity. For this reason, it is essential that the university's records system acknowledge and manage this information as inclusively and accurately as possible.

Through a campus-wide working group, Virginia Tech has established new procedures whereby students can choose to indicate their personal pronouns, chosen names, and gender identification in university records systems (Banner). By implementing this practice, Virginia Tech joins over 255 universities that enable students to list their chosen name on campus records and documents.

Effective March 3, a new module will be available in the HokieSPA and OneCampus to collect information regarding students' chosen names. Virginia Tech employees will also have the ability to enter their chosen name and to voluntarily opt to indicate their personal pronoun and gender identification. Like student selections, employee personal pronouns and gender identifications will not display publicly.

Information on this update is available at <https://www.inclusive.vt.edu/names-pronouns.html>. The ability to communicate chosen name and identity through personal pronouns and gender is an important part of our Principles of Community and the inclusive practices that have been shown to increase students' and employee's sense of belonging and improve their perception of the university. Questions or feedback, email [inclusivevt@vt.edu](mailto:inclusivevt@vt.edu).

**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.

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