

NEWS & INFORMATION

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2015 -- Volume 12, Number 17



Parking information for Nov. 21 football game vs. North Carolina

The following parking and traffic changes will be in place for the Nov. 21 home football game. Vehicles must be removed from these lots and roads or are subject to being towed.

Friday, November 20

The following lots and roads will be restricted to no parking after 5 p.m. All vehicles must be removed from these lots and roads by 10 p.m.:

- Litton-Reaves/Wallace Lots (located off Washington Street and Duck Pond Drive)
- Coliseum Lot (located off Washington Street and Spring Road)
- Jamerson Lot (behind the Jamerson Center)
- Stadium Lot
- Chicken Hill
- Track/Field House Lot (on Beamer Way)
- Vet-Medicine Lot (north-side only)
- Health and Safety Lot (located off Research Center Drive)
- Food Sciences Lot
- Maintenance Lot (located off Southgate Drive)
- Engel/Cheatham Lot
- Price Hall Lot
- Davidson Lot
- Smithfield Lot (located off Smithfield Road)
- Architecture Annex-Media Lot
- Lower Stanger Lot
- Rec Field Lot (off Research Center Drive)
- Wright House Lot
- Hahn Lot
- Duck Pond Drive Lot (the cage) only the commuter/graduate interior section at the south end of the lot near Vet-Med
- Spring Road
- Duck Pond - Overflow Lot (located off Oak Lane)
- Perry Street Lot #3
- Basketball Practice Facility and Extension lot
- VTES/University Library Storage Facility lots
- Washington Street (parallel spaces from West Campus Drive to Kent Street)
- West Stadium Lot (small lot adjacent to the stadium)

For more information, contact Parking and Transportation at 540-231-3200.

A message to the community from President Sands on Nov. 13

I thought I'd take a moment on this crisp fall day - about one year from my installation as president - to reflect on the progress we have made over the past year, the challenges ahead, and the efforts underway to realize the full potential of this great institution.

Higher education has entered a transitional phase. Local and national economies are experiencing churn and uncertainty, many elements of higher education are under scrutiny and a growing number of universities are experiencing public

displays of tension and conflict. Looking out over the landscape, there is no place I'd rather be than Virginia Tech. On Tuesday night I was proud to stand with over 1000 students in support of our Muslim community members who had been subjected to an intolerable threat. The Hokie Nation came together in solidarity. It heartened me to see this demonstration of what it means to be a Hokie. To support each other and not allow such an incident to define us, but use it as an opportunity to seek solutions and to learn.

You can sense the energy on campus every day, both in and outside the classroom. We are in the midst of an uncommon transition. Long-tenured, highly valued members of the Hokie Nation's leadership team are retiring from their active roles with our sincere thanks and appreciation. A new team is taking shape, including Provost Thanassis Rikakis, Vice President for Advancement Charlie Phlegar, Senior Associate VP for University Relations Tracy Vosburgh, and Senior Associate VP for Alumni Relations Matt Winston. This week we also announced the appointment of Menah Pratt-Clarke as Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity and Vice President for Strategic Affairs. As they join and collaborate with the other fine members of our team, we can feel our momentum growing. Virginia Tech is barreling ahead into a bright future.

A few months ago, we welcomed our largest and most diverse incoming first-year class, numbering 6,270. I know some were rightly concerned that we retain academic integrity as we grow the undergraduate classes. I'm pleased to report that this new class is as academically qualified as any previous class. 438 members of the class of 2019 are international students representing 40 countries. 4,209 are in-state students, up from 3,770 last year. Thirteen percent of the members of the current first-year class identify as underrepresented minority students and 15 percent of entering students this year are the first in their immediate families to go to college. Although the student body is steadily becoming more diverse, we have much work to do in recruiting and retaining faculty and staff with whom our students can identify. Virginia Tech's research enterprise continues to grow in impact and scale. With over \$500M in annual research expenditures, we are now ranked #38 in the country. In the past decade, we have passed 14 of our peer institutions, and no institution has passed us. Our early embrace of interdisciplinary research and the outstanding faculty and graduate student scholars we have recruited and retained account for much of this sustained momentum.

Speaking of rankings, Virginia Tech and our academic programs continue to be rated by the established surveys among the best in the nation. In the past few years, however, a bevy of new analyses focused on financial return-on-investment and societal impact have emerged. Those familiar with Virginia Tech's mission will not be surprised to learn that our institution shines in measures of value. The U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard cited Virginia Tech among one of fifteen public institutions with both high graduation rates and high alumni salaries. Virginia Tech was ranked first among public universities with 20,000+ undergraduates in "value added" by the Brookings Institution.

Among public and private land grant institutions we ranked third, behind MIT and Cornell.

Despite these high marks, we all know that financial ROI does not by itself describe the full impact of a college education. I encourage you to read the Gallup report (www.vtnews.vt.edu/documents/2015-08-gallup.pdf). Our engagement with them has allowed us, for the first time, to relate the experiences of our alumni at Virginia Tech to their engagement in the workplace and well-being in the dimensions of financial, physical, social, community, and purpose. We learned from this survey that Hokies thrive in these five dimensions at rates that are markedly higher than those of college graduates in general. By a wide margin, Hokies are also emotionally attached to their alma mater to a higher degree (42 percent) than the national average (18 percent). The results validate that we are a special community that serves its students well in preparing them for the future. The report also presented us with some challenges and opportunities I am eager to address. We can do more to promote guided experiential learning and mentorship, as these elements associate strongly with well-being and engagement. We also can (and will) do more to engage our devoted alumni, whose giving rate to their alma mater is a low 9 percent, a striking contrast to our strong alumni attachment rate of 42 percent.

Among our most significant challenges is the one we share with nearly every public institution in the country: the gradual disinvestment by the state in the education of in-state undergraduates. Our funding from the Commonwealth per student is half what it was in 2000 on a real dollar basis. The last generation's 75-25 split in funding between the Commonwealth and the student has been reversed. The prevailing argument has been that this transformation reflects a shift in the public perception of the beneficiaries of public universities from the public good to the private good (i.e., our students). However, I think the decision to put higher education on the discretionary side of the ledger is one of budgetary expediency rather than a fundamental philosophical shift. Almost everyone understands the importance of educating the next generation to participate in our economy. Certainly, the impact of our research and engagement on the development of our regional economies has never been more evident. Although there is no evidence to suggest that these trends will be reversed, there is compelling evidence that the future of higher education will be based on deep and long-term relationships between universities, industry, and government. These cross-sector partnerships are exemplified by Virginia Tech's partnership with Carilion Clinic in Roanoke. Analogous partnerships are emerging in the National Capital Region, Hampton Roads, and Southern Virginia.

While we are well-positioned as an institution to build partnerships that will sustain Virginia Tech in the long term, the shift in funding support puts acute financial pressure on the institution, our students and their families. With a graduation rate of 83 percent and an acceptance rate of 70 percent, Virginia Tech is among the nation's leaders in access and success, yet we struggle to remain affordable for those from middle- or low-income families. About 75 percent of our in-state and 85 percent of our out-of-state undergraduate students are from families whose incomes would be among the top 40 percent in Virginia. To stay true to our historical land-grant mission we must restore a level of affordability that will allow a talented and academically prepared student from any income level to attend Virginia Tech and succeed as a student. Enhancing productivity is part of the answer. Engaging our alumni and friends is the other essential component. You will be hearing more from me in the near future about our shared obligation to lift our communities, the Commonwealth and the nation by ensuring that more first-generation and low/middle-income students have access to a Virginia Tech education - an education that is rooted in preparing each individual to serve humanity at the highest levels of their ability.

The past year brought a flurry of activity in student entrepreneurship and innovation. Our students started 56 companies in 2014. Clarity around student-owned intellectual property, the rise of the Apex Center

for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and projects such as the NSF I-Corps are releasing our talent and their spirit of *Ut Prosim* on the world. The importance of student entrepreneurship is not limited to starting companies - it is also about building the personal skills necessary for career resilience and fulfillment. We know that our students will need to adapt as our economy evolves and new jobs and careers are defined over the next several decades.

We are now at the halfway point of the period defined by the current strategic plan, "A Plan for a New Horizon." This plan is serving us well as we make decisions about the near-term. Yet, strategic plans generally do not reflect the realities of longer-term trends, nor do they facilitate discussions about aspirations for the next generation. To provide this important underpinning for future planning, we have embarked on an ambitious visioning process called "Envisioning Virginia Tech: Beyond Boundaries" (www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/). We are seeking to answer two questions as an institution and as a community: 1) If our wildest dreams for Virginia Tech are realized in a generation, what will our global 21st-century land-grant university become? 2) How will the landscape for higher education have changed in a generation? The answer to the second question requires consideration of several possible scenarios that incorporate the long-term trends in which we are already immersed. While history shows we will not be able to anticipate every important shift, we must prepare for those we can foresee if we are to become the university we envision.

In order to remain on our chosen trajectory, we will need to make adjustments. Hence, it is essential that we become a dynamic and resilient university. Provost Thanassis Rikakis has launched an effort within Beyond Boundaries that seeks to enhance the nimbleness of the academic enterprise by identifying cross-cutting themes that will define Virginia Tech as a global "destination" for faculty, staff, student, and partner talent. These themes will be less permanent than our departmental structure, and they will evolve over time. The themes will permeate all aspects of the university mission, expanding beyond the research institutes into our curricula and our relationships with communities, government, and industry partners. The provost and I will be talking more about this effort and we will continue to update and engage across the Hokie community as we progress.

While the results of Beyond Boundaries are not predetermined, there are some elements in our vision for Virginia Tech that are essential for future success. One such imperative is the need to access the broadest possible pool of talent, in Virginia, nationally, and globally. Furthermore, all of our students benefit from exposure to students, staff, and faculty with lived experiences different than their own. Institutions that ignore demographic trends and the globalization of our economies are doomed to irrelevance. Central to ensuring access to talent is creating an inclusive environment, the primary goal of the InclusiveVT initiative (www.inclusive.vt.edu/). We will be announcing milestones, principles, and resource allocations for InclusiveVT in the coming months.

When we are successful, the university we envision one generation into the future will be distinguished by its people, who will be insatiably curious, intellectually vibrant, and committed to applying their talents to the service of humanity. We can be that university.

Virginia Tech News is published weekly during fall and spring semester and bimonthly during the summer sessions, by the Department 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 540-231-7643.