

### Now accepting nominations for several annual awards

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

Nominations are now being accepted for four of these awards – the President’s Award for Excellence, Governor’s Award, Staff Career Achievement Award, and McComas Staff Leadership Award. All nominations for these awards are due Friday, Feb. 15 at 5 p.m. and must be submitted electronically.

For more information and nomination guidelines, visit [bit.ly/2TTR4fQ](http://bit.ly/2TTR4fQ).

### LCI offering free foreign language classes for faculty and staff

The Language and Culture Institute is offering free foreign language conversation classes for all Virginia Tech faculty and staff. Classes offered include: Chinese, Spanish, German, and French.

Participation is free, though course books must be purchased separately. For more information, visit [bit.ly/2QSukuQ](http://bit.ly/2QSukuQ).

### Wide range of alternative commuting options available for Virginia Tech employees

Free trips on Blacksburg Transit, monthly savings on Smart Way bus passes, and reduced fees for carpooling passes are just some of the alternative commuting benefits all Virginia Tech employees can take advantage of with their Hokie Passports.

Virginia Tech offers a variety of alternative transportation options that can help employees who commute save time, money, and reduce their carbon footprint.

**Blacksburg Transit:** Employees who live in Blacksburg or Christiansburg can take advantage of Blacksburg Transit (BT). The service is free to all employees who present their Hokie Passport upon boarding.

**Smart Way and Smart Way Express:** The Smart Way bus is a commuter service that provides transportation between Squires Student Center and the Roanoke Valley for \$4 each way.

**Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute shuttle:** Employees that travel to and from the university’s main campus in Blacksburg and the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute (VTCRI) campus in Roanoke can do so by riding the VTCRI shuttle free of charge.

The shuttle is available on a first-come, first-served basis to anyone with a valid ID from Virginia Tech, Carilion Clinic, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute, or Jefferson College of Health Sciences.

**Small group commuting options:** For employees who prefer riding with a smaller group of coworkers, carpooling and vanpooling commuting options are also available. This allows employees to share a ride and share the cost with other employees.

**Bike, Bus, and Walk Program:** The Bike, Bus, and Walk program is available to Virginia Tech faculty and staff who use alternative transportation methods as their primary means of commuting to campus, including riding Blacksburg Transit or the Smart Way bus, bicycling, and/or walking. Bike, Bus, and Walk semester permits are \$30 and year permits are \$60.

**Bike Share:** Employees are also encouraged to take advantage of bike share for getting to and from campus. There are currently 75 bikes in circulation in the Roam NRV network, with 12 stations located across Blacksburg and Christiansburg.

For more information on alternative commuting visit [bit.ly/2HeEqGR](http://bit.ly/2HeEqGR) or email [gettingaround@vt.edu](mailto:gettingaround@vt.edu).

### Registration open for professional development workshops

Registration opened Jan. 7 for spring Professional Development courses.

The spring calendar lists workshop offerings and dates and can be found at [bit.ly/2Rf7zGu](http://bit.ly/2Rf7zGu). Full workshop details are also available.

Sessions fill up quickly and space is limited. To attend a workshop, register online at [bit.ly/2RzN3jm](https://bit.ly/2RzN3jm).

In addition, changes to the certificate program will be announced this spring.

For more information, contact the Division of Human Resources at [hr@vt.edu](mailto:hr@vt.edu) or 540-231-5100.

## Voluntary retirement plan contribution limits for 2019

Virginia Tech employees have many retirement plan options, including voluntary plans such as the university's Deferred Savings Program (the "403(b) Plan") and the Commonwealth of Virginia's Deferred Compensation Plan (the "457(b) Plan").

All Virginia Tech employees are eligible to participate in one or both of these voluntary plans, which provide additional ways to save money toward retirement. Contributions can be made through pre-tax or after-tax (also called "Roth") payroll deductions. Employee contributions and any applicable matching employer contributions in your 403(b) and 457(b) Plan are immediately 100 percent vested.

Below are the 2019 IRS maximum annual limits for contributions to a 403(b) Plan and a 457(b) Plan:

- Under age 50: \$19,000 (increased from \$18,500 in 2018)
- Age 50 or older: \$25,000 (increased from \$24,500 in 2018)

For more information about Virginia Tech's retirement plan options, contact Human Resources Service Center at 540-231-9331.

## Join Hokie Wellness for Spring Semester Walking Wednesday kick-off Jan. 23

Walking Wednesdays resume Jan. 23. Members of the Hokie Wellness team will be in the lobby of War Memorial Hall at 11:45 a.m. to hand out tracking cards.

Hokies are encouraged to join a friend for a 30-minute walk around campus or town every Wednesday at lunch time. Stop by the Hokie Wellness table in War Memorial each week to have the tracking card validated. Designated gym space in War Memorial Hall will be available for walking.

Complete nine walks this semester, get your card stamped, and earn one entry into a drawing for a Yeti Roadie 20 cooler. Complete 12 walks and earn two entries for the drawing. Complete all 16 walks and earn three entries into the drawing. The tracking card must be returned on May 8,

the last Wednesday to be eligible for the drawing. (Please note that due to regulations and policy, the winner will be taxed through payroll for the value of the cooler.)

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

## Hokie Live Well spring program encourages participation in wellness activities

Hokies Live Well is a program for Virginia Tech employees that encourages participation in wellness activities throughout the semester. The Hokies Live Well program includes the following categories: move well, eat well, relax well, and be well. Participants who complete 12 different activities, a minimum of three from each category, will receive a free Hokies Live Well cooling towel.

The Hokies Live Well spring program begins Jan. 21. To participate:

- Register for Hokies Live Well at [bit.ly/2AKwt6v](https://bit.ly/2AKwt6v).
- Print out the Hokies Live Well tracking log at [bit.ly/2DdcWNP](https://bit.ly/2DdcWNP).
- Get started living well by participating in or attending activities listed on the tracking log.
- Turn in your tracking log at the North End Center (Suite 2300) on April 25 from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. or April 26 from 12 – 5 p.m. Extended campus participants should email their tracking log to [hokiewellness@vt.edu](mailto:hokiewellness@vt.edu) by April 26. Logs must be received by these dates in order to receive incentive.
- The cooling towel can be picked up at the Hokie Wellness table at Staff Appreciation Day on Wednesday, May 22. The cooling towel will be mailed to off-campus participants.

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