

**Board of Visitors Constituent Report**  
**Seyi Olusina, Undergraduate Representative**  
**November 6, 2017**

Good afternoon Rector Treacy, President Sands, members of the board, administration, and distinguished guests.

I was told at the beginning of this school year that this year would be one of the busiest for the student representative. It truly has been a busy year so far but I am grateful for the opportunity to help guide Virginia Tech through these transitions and changes.

Our last time together I told you all I was working on the first annual Corps Day. It was a great success with a really good turnout from elementary kids and their families, along with some college students. Ted Faulkner and Dining Services brought out a food truck for people to buy food from and the Corp had a lot of different activities for everyone, including the military obstacle course. We were able to raise some money for The Wounded Warrior Project and a lot of people got to interact with the Corps in ways they never would have before. The Corps has committed to making this an annual program and planning for next year's event will begin in spring.

There has been a lot of changes also since the last time we met. The biggest change that has gotten the most attention is the new brand. When it was first released it was met with a lot of negative feedback by students, faculty, alumni and the public. After some time though people have started to see it as a positive change and have come to understand why it is necessary. The pushback that is still being received that I also agree with is the wording associated with the new logo. It has come off to a lot of people as a lot of fluff to try to sweeten a change that a lot of people at first would not like. The other issue that students especially have is with the "Claim your Role" line. This line has appeared in a lot of places and from talking to other Board Members and Administrators it was portrayed to us that this line would not be so public. No one wants to be told to claim their role so the hope is that with time this will be phased out and become a more behind the scene statement. Another change that has brought concern to students is Provost Rikakis stepping down. With so much change going on with the brand and reshaping of some positions in the President's office students are unsure in the stability of the University. Through these changes myself and the SGA president have encouraged students to be patient and believe in the University and the direction we are going in.

One issue that has become a serious problem for students is the GTA who teaches in the English department who identifies as a white nationalist. Students feel unsafe knowing that he is still employed here and has not been removed like they have requested. Actions have been put into motion and the process of investigation has been started but many students group like the Jewish Student Union, Muslim Student Union, the Black Organization Council and others are still concerned.

An update about some other things going on is a luncheon that I held 3 weeks ago for students to meet and talk with Presidents Sand, Dr. Perillo, and the Provost. Students brought up concerns about needing more counselors, integrating fraternities and sororities more into campus, having adequate spaces for cultural centers and the lack of communications from administration to students. A lot of good conversation was had that I hope leads to future collaborations. Another update is that I am helping the Alumni Association look into creating a training program to help student groups learn about the importance of philanthropy. We are hoping that this will help create a culture where students want to give back to the University which will help us as we aim to increase our alumni giving. I am very excited to be a part of this because it will also tie into the Senior Class Giving program which is gaining a lot of traction as we continue to prepare to launch.

This year has definitely kept me busy so far but I am growing and learning a lot. I am working with the Division of Student Affairs to create the application for next year's undergraduate representative which will launch next semester, but no this does not mean you can start asking if this is my last meeting. Thank you all for your time and your constant dedication to helping guide our university as we continue to improve. On behalf of the students I thank you for your support.

Constituency Report  
Brett R. Netto  
Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
November 5, 2017

Good afternoon Rector Treacy, President Sands, distinguished members of the Board, administration, and guests. There have been several things that have occurred since my last report.

I would like to begin by thanking the President's Office for the wonderful opportunity to introduce President Sands during his State of the University Address at the end of September. I am delighted that he really enjoyed my shoes. In fact, I am wearing those shoes today.

My report for this meeting will mostly involve topics that concern the Master Plan. However, before I get to those points I would like to report that the Graduate Student Assembly passed the changes to the University Council bylaws that will allow all constituency bodies to review all resolutions from all commissions in the governance structure and provide feedback if warranted.

The LGBTQ+ community at Virginia Tech has voiced concerns in regards to all-gender restrooms, accessibility to these restrooms by students, and the locations of these restrooms on campus. Some transgender students must walk 15 minutes to access some of these designated restrooms. Other locations of all-gender restrooms are locked via a key code and students are not given access to this key code. A possible solution to this could be some sort of central repository regarding the locations of the all-gender restrooms on campus and the access codes (if needed) to be shared with the LGBTQ+ community. There was concern from transgender students regarding name change forms needing departmental signatures, but the Graduate School now directly handles this without needing departmental approval. The LGBTQ+ community also expressed concern about the inability to enter preferred pronouns in Banner, which is being handled by Dr. Luisa Havens in the Provost's Office.

You have now seen Sasaki's update related to the Master Plan for Virginia Tech. The Disabilities Alliance Caucus (DAC), in which many graduate students are stakeholders of, worries that the Master Plan does not truly present "an ethos of being more inclusive, both of the people within and the land on which we reside." The DAC has asked the following to be considered as a part of the Master Plan moving forward: 1) Sasaki to take a more active role in ensuring that the Master Plan truly aligns with their stated ethos of inclusion and Universal Design 2) Sasaki to hire a consultant well-versed in Universal Design, accessibility, and the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance to work with them on this project 3) Said consultant to be able to veto design choices if they do not comply with ADA standards, and allow their input on any design which may violate the ethos of Universal Design, so that Architects in future planning stages are made aware of the goals and desires of the University toward this ethos. ADA standards are the minimum but Virginia Tech can always go above and beyond these standards to make sure we are committed to Inclusive VT and inventing the future.

Respectfully,



Brett R. Netto

**Staff Senate Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**November 6, 2017**  
**Presented by Robert Sebek, Staff Senate President**

Good afternoon Rector Treacy, members of the Board of Visitors, President Sands, administrators and distinguished guests. It is an honor to present to you updates from staff at Virginia Tech.

I'd like to begin by noting Staff Senate's leadership's appreciation of President Sands' statement on staff participation in shared governance this past September, which discussed the importance of staff's inclusion in commissions and committees and reaffirmed that these activities should be considered part of an employee's job duties. The Staff Senate is continuing to increase participation, welcoming new senators from the divisions of Student Affairs and Human Resources. We are reaching out to other underrepresented units on campus to start staff associations that will elect new senators for these areas.

Staff Senate is also reviewing constitutions and policies for University Council, commissions, and committees to find any barriers to virtual participation by members located at our satellite campuses. We are hoping to see involvement of staff in the National Capital Region soon, and are planning on bringing staff at the Roanoke campus into our fold this coming summer.

Staff Senate and the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs have received multiple updates on the continuing reorganization of the Division of Human Resources from Dr. Lisa Wilkes. She is proving to be a valuable partner as we work to update policies affecting staff by providing the data and resources we need to investigate issues and research solutions.

Staff leadership is currently considering changes to leave policies, including the winter closing and authorized closings outside of regular business hours, and staff committees are working on updates to the Staff Career Achievement Award. We expect to have resolutions to present to University Council before the end of the academic year.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Sebek  
President, Staff Senate

**Faculty Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**November 6, 2017**

Hans Robinson, President—VT Faculty Senate

Good afternoon Rector Treacy, President Sands, members of the Board, Provost Clarke, and all others gathered here today.

In my September constituency report, I devoted significant time to urging the administration to make communication with the university community in general and the faculty in particular a high priority for this academic year. I am very happy to report that the quality and frequency of communications between the administration and the Faculty Senate has taken a big step forwards in the two months since that report. In particular, I would like to commend Dr. Rikakis for partnering with us in a series of conversations between himself and small groups of faculty senators, where we have tackled issues of importance to us. Dr. Clarke has already agreed to continue these conversations, which I also find very encouraging. In addition, when President Sands visited the Faculty Senate earlier this week, he stated that he will recommit himself to clearly communicating the reasons for and goals of the various initiatives being implemented at the University. I very much look forward to working to sustain this increased engagement into the future.

Because there is no doubt this work is vitally needed. As part of our communications effort since the beginning of the semester, the Faculty Senate cabinet has engaged in numerous conversations with faculty, department heads, and deans, and the picture that has emerged is one of deep strain and worry among large segments of the university community. If we are to reverse this on more than a temporary basis, one-time changes to organizational charts are not going to be enough. The very real and deep-seated concerns that exist among faculty and department heads need to be addressed head-on in a thoughtful and systematic manner that involves all stakeholders, and this is work that is going to take substantial effort and an extended time to complete.

Luckily, we are already making good progress. The first topic we have chosen to tackle is Promotion and Tenure at Virginia Tech, which in large part defines the relationship of the faculty to the university, and therefore is of great importance to us. I believe most of my colleagues share my view that respectful and thoughtful deliberation and a commitment to fairness at all levels have long been hallmarks of Promotion and Tenure at our institution. Lately, though, the outcomes of a few cases have raised questions in the minds of some as to whether the letter or spirit of this long-established process has not been violated, and this has begun to undermine confidence in the process and lead to considerable anxiety among many of our pre-tenure faculty.

Here, I would again like to thank Dr. Rikakis for his commitment to transparency and to a fair and nurturing Tenure process, which has helped lead us to a point where we have a way forward that I believe will restore full confidence in the Promotion and Tenure process, both in the short and long term. To achieve long-term stability and confidence, the Commission on Faculty Affairs has established a stakeholder committee that will take a top-to-bottom look at all policies

and procedures associated with Promotion and Tenure to ensure that expectations on the process, policy documents, and actual practice are all aligned and clearly spelled out. While this is ongoing, minimal amendments to the Faculty Handbook will be adopted to ensure that the events that have, at a minimum, been perceived as irregular, are unlikely to be repeated.

When President Sands visited the Faculty Senate, he also touched on the importance of faculty involvement and indicated openness to the possibility of expanding it. I want to thank him for valuing the faculty in this way, and also state for the record that we are ready and willing to take on a fuller role in shaping the university in matters that fall within our expertise. I look forward to collaborating with the administration to find ways to achieve this.

Valuing the faculty also means compensating us appropriately, and I know that it has long been the administration's goal to reach the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile in faculty salary among our peer institutions. I applaud this ambition, but I would also like to urge the administration to look beyond simple averages and tackle the issue of salary compression and inversion, where many Virginia Tech mid-career and senior faculty lag significantly behind their junior colleagues in compensation, even when accounting for actual performance. This is a matter not only of equity, but also—since our salaries are public—of faculty morale.

I would like to conclude on a note of optimism. It is undeniable that we have been through some rocky times lately, and that much work still needs to be done before the sailing will be entirely smooth. But at the same time, faculty interest in the future of the University and engagement with the issues that face us are at a high point. Similarly, the communications channels between faculty and administrators are more open than they have been in a long time. If we can capitalize on this, I believe our future is bright.

Thank you.