

**Board of Visitors Constituent Report**  
**Morgan Sykes, Undergraduate Representative**  
**March 21, 2016**

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, President Sands, members of the board, administration, and distinguished guests. Thank you again for allowing me this opportunity to share with you updates regarding the undergraduate student body at Virginia Tech.

Since we last met in November, I have had the opportunity to host and attend three student lunches with President Sands, Provost Rikakis, Dr. Perillo, and Dr. Holloway. These lunches provide students with a chance to ask senior-level administration thought provoking questions regarding university wide initiatives, while also allowing administrators and myself to learn more about the campus climate through the lens of undergraduates. Students have sparked dialogue about Beyond Boundaries, destination areas, enrollment growth and the challenges it presents, parking and transportation concerns, and InclusiveVT.

The university is continuing to embrace and explore President Sands' initiative of InclusiveVT. Countless events are being planned and held to facilitate and encourage dialogue surrounding the importance of diversity and inclusion. Highlighting only a few, BOC hosted a successful State of the Black Union in November inviting attendants to speak to a panel of university administrators, faculty, and students about the campus climate and this discussion resulted in an Inclusion and Diversity Summit. The president of Alpha Phi Alpha and member of Order of the Gavel, Devin Vandike, invited me to speak on behalf of the university about InclusiveVT efforts during Inclusive Alpha Week. Inspired by their passion, College Mentors for Kids, a nonprofit that brings local elementary students to Virginia Tech, reached out to Devin and other members of Alpha Phi Alpha to help with an activity emphasizing the importance of inclusion and diversity on campus and in the surrounding community. In response to several controversial speakers coming to the area, the IEC (Intercultural Engagement Center) was active in provided gathering spaces for community planning allowing students to collaborate, communicate, and support one another in solidarity. Finally, as we saw in her presentation yesterday, Virginia Tech is lucky to welcome Dr. Pratt-Clarke and in just six weeks her efforts have been greatly noticed and appreciated by the undergraduate community.

With the excitement of enrollment growth comes concerns about our current campus infrastructure plans to accommodate a greater number of students. In addition to the increased demands on campus housing and dining, more students and student organizations are competing for meeting space and technology resources. I'd like to thank Ms. Gina Tamburro and Ms. Heather Wagoner with Student Engagement and Campus Life for recognizing these concerns and actively working with campus leaders to offer solutions

and alternatives for space. As we continue to emphasize the importance of a strong co-curricular transcript, we must understand that those types of outside the classroom learning cannot flourish without sufficient space.

Parking and transportation continues to be a hotly contested topic among undergraduates, but the third stakeholder meeting for the master plan offered helpful insight to the future plans for campus development. I'd like to thank Mr. Steve Mouras and his team for inviting feedback from undergraduates and taking their ideas and concerns into account when creating the final parking and transportation master plan. I'd also like to thank Dr. Lisa Wilkes and Ms. Jeri Baker for their continued help this semester in regards to parking initiatives. Together, we have created a pilot program beginning next fall that will allow Resident Advisors to purchase a parking pass designated to only RAs providing them easier access to their vehicles in hopes to better accommodate the needs of upperclassman, student leaders living on campus.

Since our last meeting, undergraduate and graduate students worked closely with the Faculty Senate to create a joint resolution designating a task force to examine the shared governance structure. This collaboration created an effective compromise for this shared governance pilot program and we look forward to the formal recommendations put forth by the task force next year. Additionally, I'd like to commend Dr. Holloway and Dr. Orr for their extensive work with the revamp of the undergraduate honor system. Undergraduate opinion was included in these modifications and the newly revised system was well received by many groups. This newly passed system will maintain a high level of academic integrity while resolving infractions more swiftly and providing an educational component. In February, over 100 student leaders traveled to the state capital with the Student Government Association to participate in Hokie Day. These students lobbied to state delegates and senators emphasizing the need for state funding of public universities. In addition, I'd like to thank President Sands, Mr. Dwight Shelton, and government relations for their extensive work with the state government debating the tuition increases for 2016-2017. As students, we sincerely appreciate the efforts of the administration to maintain the affordability and accessibility of Virginia Tech.

This semester my student advisory board gained two members, Summer Caton and Ryan Hopkins. Through his work with New Student and Family Programs, Ryan has provided the group with updates on the new student experience. As an Honors Ambassador, Summer has informed us about the future transition of the Honors program into an Honors College. While assessing the strengths and weaknesses of various other Honor Colleges, our program is working on curriculum development and creating signature programs to provide students with increased opportunity for more interdisciplinary education. I am

grateful to work with such dedicated and talented student leaders and I appreciate their service to this position and the university.

I enjoyed recruiting applicants for the next student representative positions to serve on the BOV. Through this process I met with many students and was able to share information about the Board, its mission and goals, and the role of student representatives. I'd like to thank my selection committee for their assistance in narrowing down applicants and I've created an extensive training manual for the transition process. I look forward to meeting weekly with the next representative to begin preparation for their role with the Board of Visitors.

Lastly, I wanted to congratulate Buzz Williams and the basketball teams for their success and growth this winter. Cassel Coliseum erupted with Hokie Spirit as Buzz lead the Hokies to a 20-win season and an invitation to the NIT tournament. Virginia Tech Athletics continues to bring students together and these recent successes have re-established a sense of optimism for the future of Hokie sports!

Thank you again for your time and if there is anything you'd like for me to further elaborate on, please feel free to contact me!

## Constituency Report

Mohammed Seyam,  
Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

March 21, 2016

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, President Sands, distinguished members of the board, administration, and guests. My last report was on November, so, please forgive me running through this report and skipping some details, in order to cover 4 months of grad student work around campus.

This week is the Graduate Education Week at Virginia Tech, which is organized by the Graduate School, and which has several events that aim at getting grad students and their families to spend some fun time together. The Graduate Students Assembly (GSA) is getting ready for its annual graduate research symposium on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, with the tagline of “Beyond Boundaries, Across Disciplines”. GSA is actually busy preparing for other big events to take place on the upcoming weeks, and the one thing I’d like to mention about the leadership of GSA this year is that they are doing a great job in publicizing the role of GSA, and in approaching students and getting them to participate in events and engage in conversations about our graduate community. Speaking of students’ engagement, students from Roanoke were participating in our meetings this year, and they raised some concerns about transportation and access to campus services, and I look forward to the leadership of the new Health Science and Technology innovation district to consider these issues while planning for the expansion.

On February, a number of graduate students participated in the annual Hokie Day in Richmond. We also had two graduate students among the planning team for the annual ACC advocacy day last week in Washington DC. Having graduate students participating in such events reflects how keen they are to serve the Hokie Nation, whenever they “can” do!

In trying to address how grad students “can” be more active and engaged with community, Dean DePauw has started a conversation on “Thriving in grad school”. This conversation is happening in GLC hallways and meeting rooms, Breakfast and Lunches with the Dean, and on Twitter! This conversation is a result of graduate students asking all the time about “Work-life balance” in grad school. I want to make it clear that when they say “life”, they mean health, family, wellness, sports,

student activities, and sleep! Things that “normal” people have in their lives! One important factor affecting this work-life balance is funding (yes, money!)

Since I’m talking money, I want to thank Mr. Dwight Shelton and his team for their efforts in working on this year’s budget, and for their proposal of 2% increase in the compensation for graduate assistants. As shown on the budget report, Virginia Tech is doing a good job in covering most of the health insurance costs for graduate assistants. I do understand that the budget office cannot make everyone happy, but the compensation for graduate assistantships still comes up every now and then as a major issue for graduate students. It will definitely help them “thrive” if they can afford “fair” living conditions. And, speaking of tuition and fees, one objective of the “Beyond Boundaries” initiative is for Virginia Tech to be a “global land-grant institution”, which means we’ll be competing not only with schools around us in Virginia or the east coast, but we are actually competing with schools of the other states and from all over the world. Virginia Tech has around 3500 international students from more than 100 countries, which is the largest international student enrollment of any institution in Virginia, with a significant economic impact of around \$90 million in expenditures. If we want to attract more international students, we need to make sure that our tuition and fees can be competitive, and we also need to ensure that our environment is ready for them by being more welcoming and inclusive.

Speaking of that, I’ve talked in my November’s report about finding ways to ensure that we speak a language that can be understood by students coming from different countries. Thanks to Savita Sharma, a large group of Virginia Tech staff gathered to explore the documents and webpages that may need to be edited, summarized, or re-written to be more readable – and useful – for both international and domestic students. After I met with this group, the scope of my initial initiative has broadened to be about changing the language that we speak with when we talk to students in general, and new students in particular, both domestic and international. As a result of this group’s work, and with students’ input, we now have a repository of documents that we think need to be enhanced. The one small change I can see happening now is that members of Virginia Tech faculty and staff started to realize that we need to keep in mind how a new student, coming from an American high school, college, or from another country, will need very clear and concise information on what, when, and how to do something. The graduate school has already started the process of changing the language used on their documents and webpages, and I’m expecting other

university units to follow. I want to thank Kim Linkous for her efforts in facilitating the group meetings and communications.

I also want to update you on two concerns I've raised on my last report. First, health insurance, and more specifically dental insurance. The office of risk management is exploring options with the insurance company for including dental coverage as part of the health insurance plan. I'm looking forward to providing some good news about this on my next report!

Second, child care. As President Sands just mentioned, Dr. John Dooley has been working on the Alliance for Better Childcare Strategies (ABCs) initiative. A board of 17 community members has recently been formed to work on this, collaborating with the New River Community College, Town of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Virginia Tech (among others). I also look forward to providing more details on the steps that this board plans to take in the near future.

I finally want to thank my fellow graduate students who volunteered to serve on the selection committee for the new graduate student representative to the board, and I look forward to welcoming and working with the new graduate representative.

Thank you!

Staff Senate Constituency Report  
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
March 21, 2016  
Presented by Dan Cook, Staff Senate President

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, members of the Board of Visitors, President Sands, administrators and distinguished guests: once again I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about events in the recent months with regard to Virginia Tech's staff.

Some highlights from previous Staff Senate meetings would include: a presentation with Ms. Katherine Keeney about the Beyond Boundaries Project where she explained that the group was looking into the future of our university and has identified 4 areas of focus – envisioning the campus of the future, advancing the global land-grant institution and discovering new funding models. We also hosted Drs. Rami Dalloul, Montasir Abbas and Hans Robinson from the Faculty Senate. A friendly conversation took place on how to deal with strained relations (both real and perceived) between faculty and staff members. This has been an ongoing discussion between the two senates and the combined hope is to open a channel to deal with issues before they escalate. We will continue to update you on any progress on this front. Most recently we had a discussion with Ms. Liz Howard where she introduced the Local Knowledge Survey Project. It is hoped that through this survey that the project would have a deep pool of local folks with a varied knowledge of topics from which they could tap into to further the cause and hopefully help out with next years meeting of the Appalachian Studies Association to be hosted here on the Va Tech campus. We have also been lucky enough to pull Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, the new Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity and Vice President for Strategic Affairs, away from her very busy schedule and come to speak with the Staff Senate. Dr. Pratt-Clarke shared her vision of Inclusive VT with the senate and entertained a number of questions.

The Staff Senate has been busy with the McComas Leadership Seminar to be held on April 6<sup>th</sup> at the Inn at Virginia Tech. There has been a great deal of interest in the seminar this year and we filled the available slots within 24 hours. It promises to be a great event this year with such presenters and speakers as Dr. Menah Pratt-Clark, Dr. Scott Geller, Ms. Yohna Chambers and our very own Frank Beamer. The keynote this year will be delivered by Charles Phlegar, the Vice President for Advancement.

On a closing note, the staff would like to express its gratitude to the administration and beyond for all the efforts that went into securing the significant amount of financial support and goodwill bestowed upon Virginia Tech by the General Assembly. We are pleased that after several recessions there is an uptick in the funding coming to the university. As one would expect, the staff are excited about the three percent raise that goes into effect in November.

As always, I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Board on behalf of the staff of Virginia Tech and welcome any questions or comments that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dan Cook  
President, Staff Senate



**Faculty Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**March 20-21, 2016**

Rami Dalloul, President-VT Faculty Senate

Good afternoon Rector Petrino, President Sands, Provost Rikakis, members of the Board of Visitors, and distinguished guests.

Despite the Holidays and Winter break, the Faculty Senate has had a busy time since our last Board meeting in November. We have worked with student groups, staff, and administration on a number of faculty and academic affairs as well as with the administration on initiatives for future development.

Shared Governance Update

At our last meeting, I reported on the initiative put forth by the Faculty Senate in regards to Shared Governance at Virginia Tech, a process that started about two years ago. The faculty continued conversations about their participation in governance particularly with student groups, Staff Senate and Commissions. And, under the auspices of the provost, personally, a resolution was passed by University Council allowing the faculty, through the Faculty Senate, to be directly involved with discussion of initiatives pertaining to faculty and academic affairs. We proposed a formal mechanism of consultation with the Faculty Senate to take place early on during policy formulation at the Commission level. Specifically, those Commissions that deal with issues for which the faculty have primary responsibility, that is, the Commission on Faculty Affairs, the Commission on Research, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, will consult with the Faculty Senate at the beginning of and during the process of developing resolutions.

Briefly, upon first reading at the Commission, resolutions are referred to the Faculty Senate for the purpose of providing feedback in the form of a formal recommendation, unless the Faculty Senate waives its right to do so. The Faculty Senate shall send its recommendation to the Commission in a timely fashion and be involved through direct communication with making subsequent changes to the resolution before its adoption by the Commission and sent to University Council. Then, the Commission sends the final version of the Resolution to the Faculty Senate upon approval and in turn, the Faculty Senate will send its final recommendation to University Council for consideration of said Resolution. Simultaneously, the President and Provost will be forming a task force to monitor and collect data on this new process as detailed by the student representatives. The proposed change will improve the inclusiveness of University governance, enhance the buy-in and accountability of the Faculty in areas in which they have primary responsibility, and ensure an appropriate formal role for the Faculty Senate.

UG Honor Code Revisions

As an example and even before adopting the Shared Governance Resolution, the Faculty Senate worked closely with the UG Honor System Director and Assistant Provost Dr. James Orr on the revisions of the Undergraduate Honor Code. The outcome of such timely and effective communication was incorporating changes into the Policy and Manual of the revised Code culminating in much improved policy that the Board approved earlier today.

### Pathways Implementation Plan

More recently, a Resolution was put to test in the current system. Specifically, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies engaged the Faculty Senate in regards to a Resolution for the Implementation Plan for the new Pathways curriculum. Again, through effective and timely communication, the Commission responded to faculty concerns and worked out the details of the plan that is currently in the final stages of going through governance, and I suspect will be on the Board agenda at its next meeting.

### Collegiate Professors Series

In line with the new growth initiatives by the President and Provost, the Commission on Faculty Affairs has proposed the creation of a new non-tenure track faculty category named Collegiate Professors to hire faculty at the rank of assistant, associate or full professor, with promotion potential. The goals include:

- Enhancing Virginia Tech's national and international reputation for outstanding research and scholarship, by having renowned faculty with high impact research and scholarship
- Providing high quality instruction for a growing student body via smaller class sizes, enhanced experiential learning and innovative pedagogy, and affording more teaching opportunities for all categories of faculty
- Enriching inclusivity in research and scholarship, teaching, outreach, and service by increasing diversity of faculty and students
- Offering faculty multiple ways to contribute and excel such as providing tenured/tenure-track faculty greater capacity and expectations for research, and instructional faculty greater recognition for teaching excellence.

The Faculty Senate has been closely working with the Commission on Faculty Affairs on refining a Resolution to establish this new category that will likely go through governance this Spring semester and come before the Board at the June meeting.

### Initiatives for Future Growth and Development

As you heard from the President and Provost throughout this meeting, the faculty have been fully engaged and will continue to contribute to the various major initiatives including Beyond Boundaries, Inclusive VT, and Destination Areas. The transparent process has allowed better faculty involvement in shaping the strategic direction of the University, and we expect this two-way support to continue as the University progressively moves forward into the future.

Further, on behalf of the faculty, we welcome both Drs. Menah Pratt-Clarke and Theresa Mayer, and look forward to collaborate with their groups regarding the exciting new directions they bring to the University.

Also, on behalf of the faculty, I would like to thank and congratulate the leadership of the President and Provost, Vice President Shelton, our government relations group, and Board members for helping secure 'healthy' budget allocations this year to be invested in various programs across the institution.

Last but not least, the faculty are once again appreciative to have representation on the Board of Visitors and look forward to continue sharing and discussing our progress and concerns with you at the next meeting.