



**Handbook for
Student Representatives
to the
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**

2025-26

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Summary of Responsibilities of Student Representatives

BOV Meetings

- Attend all open-session meetings of the full Board and applicable committee meetings fully prepared and appropriately attired. Always arrive on time and remain until the end of the meeting.
- Review all Board materials thoroughly prior to each meeting.
- Deliver a concise (**five minutes or less**) constituent report at each full Board meeting. Send a written copy of the report electronically to Kim O'Rourke (orourkek@vt.edu) at least three days prior to the meeting to enable BOV members to review beforehand. It will be posted subsequently with meeting minutes and available to the public.

University Service

- Attend meetings of the President's Advisory Group.
- Facilitate student lunches with the President and other senior administrators.
- Attend University Council meetings as a voting member.
- (Graduate and Professional Representative) Serve as executive committee member and attend meetings of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate.
- (Undergraduate Representative) Serve as cabinet member and attend meetings of the Undergraduate Student Senate (USS). Senate meetings are on select Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm; Cabinet meetings are on Thursdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Role requirements may be found at https://uss.vt.edu/bylaws/article_IV.html.
- (Undergraduate Representative) Volunteer to serve on the Senior Class Gift Committee organized by the Alumni Association.
- Participate in the Order of the Gavel.
- Participate in the Core Leadership Advisory Group convened by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- Serve on task forces or committees as appointed.
- Attend social functions as invited, appropriately attired. Assume that guests are not included unless the invitation explicitly includes a guest.

Communications

- Function as a liaison between constituent groups on the Blacksburg campus and other locations, members of the Board, and university administrators.
- Maintain cooperative relationship with Undergraduate Student Senate and Graduate and Professional Student Senate, as well as with any comparable organization that may be created for professional students.
- Contact the Vice President for Marketing and Communications (540-231-5396) before responding to any media inquiries.

Resources

- The Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance/Board Secretary will provide up to \$500 per year to each BOV Student Representative for pre-approved expenditures.

Professionalism

- Take the responsibilities of the Student Representative position seriously and bring honor and dignity to the position.
- Respond promptly to telephone calls, e-mail notes, and text messages from administrators and their staff, Board members, and constituents.

Selection and Transition of Successor

- Work with the Vice President for Policy and Governance/Board Secretary to update application and publicity materials, hold information sessions and one-on-one meetings with potential applicants, and develop procedures for selection of three undergraduate student and three graduate finalists to interview with the BOV Selection Committee via Zoom prior to the BOV's March/April meeting.
- Prepare successor to transition into the Student Representative role successfully.

Accommodation of Special Needs

- Student Representatives to the BOV who have special dietary needs or require accommodations for other special needs should inform the Secretary to the Board as soon as possible to ensure those needs are met (orourkek@vt.edu).

Overview of the Board of Visitors

The role of the Board is to set high-level policy for the university. The administration of the university is responsible for day-to-day operations.

Purpose and Responsibilities

The purpose of the Board of Visitors (Board) is to serve as the governing authority for Virginia Tech. The most important responsibility of the Board is to ensure that the University's educational and research programs meet the evolving needs of Virginia's citizens to the fullest extent possible within the law and the statutory mission of the institution. Some examples of responsibilities of the Board, as set forth in state statutes or as developed through tradition and practice, include:

- Appoint the President of the University.
- Approve appointments and salaries of the faculty and other personnel.
- Establish fees, tuition, and other charges to be paid by students.
- Review and approve the University's budgets and financial management strategies.
- Review and approve proposed academic degree programs and provide general oversight of the academic programs of the University.
- Review and approve the establishment of new colleges.
- Represent the University to citizens and officers of the Commonwealth of Virginia, especially in clarifying the purpose and mission of the University.
- Approve promotions, grants of tenure, and employment of individuals.
- Approve the naming of buildings and other major facilities on campus.
- Review and approve real property transactions.
- Review and approve policies pertaining to student life and discipline.

The Board of Visitors consists of six working committees: Academic, Research, and Student Affairs; Athletics; Buildings and Grounds; Compliance, Audit, and Risk; Finance and Resource Management; and Governance and Administration. Five committee Chairs, as well as the Rector and Vice Rector of the Board, serve as the Executive Committee.

For a complete description of the Board's purpose and responsibilities, visit <http://www.bov.vt.edu> and click on "Bylaws of the Board of Visitors."

Membership

The Board is composed of fourteen members. Thirteen members are appointed by the Governor and are subject to confirmation by the state Senate. The fourteenth member is the President of the Board of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and serves as an ex-officio member. Three of the fourteen members may reside outside of Virginia, and at least six of the thirteen members appointed by the governor are required to be alumni or alumnae of the University. The term of office for a member is four years, and the individual is eligible to be reappointed for one successive four-year term. The Board has three officers: Rector, Vice Rector, and Secretary.

In addition to the fourteen members, five key constituent groups (Faculty, Administrative and Professional Faculty, Graduate and Professional Students, Staff, and Undergraduate Students) have non-voting representatives to the Board who attend open-session meetings, provide constituent reports at each regular Board meeting, and serve in an advisory capacity.

Meetings

Meetings are traditionally held in August, November, March/April, and June. In addition, the Board holds an annual day-long retreat, typically preceding the August meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Governor or any three members of the Board. All Board members must be notified of meetings regardless of how called. By statute, the Board must meet in Blacksburg, Virginia, at least once a year.

Quarterly board meetings are typically held over two days. Full Board meetings are customarily held on the second day of the quarterly meetings at 1:15 p.m. in the Torgersen Hall Boardroom (Torgersen 2100) or The Inn at VirginiaTech, and typically last between two and four hours. Committees meet the day before or the morning of each full Board meeting.

All meetings of the Board and its committees are subject to requirements of the state's Freedom of Information (FOIA) statutes and are open to the public and the press. Public notice is required of all meetings and copies of the minutes are available to the public via the Board's website (<http://www.bov.vt.edu>).

Meetings of the full Board or Board committees often include "closed" sessions. Only those matters allowed under FOIA may be discussed in closed session. These sessions involve only the fourteen members of the Board and executive officers of the university. Representatives of the five constituent groups are not present for closed-session meetings.

Role and Responsibilities of Student Representatives

Overview of the Student Representative Position

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as a Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. Though the term of service is limited – one year beginning on July 1 – this leadership position carries significant responsibilities. Student Representatives are given a unique perspective of the university's governance structure, financial and administrative operations, strategic initiatives, and decision-making at the highest level. With this privileged insight comes an obligation to integrate individual and collective student perspectives into the long-term, strategic goals of the university.

Student Representatives are expected to demonstrate a number of qualities that bring honor and dignity to the position. These include: a genuine desire to serve others; a commitment to personal and professional ethics; a desire to work cooperatively and collaboratively with others; a clear understanding of the university governance structure; an understanding of issues students on the Blacksburg campus and at other locations are facing;; an ability to communicate clearly and openly; an ability to engage in rational discourse to convey student viewpoints as appropriate; and an understanding of and personal commitment to advancing long-range, strategic goals.

BOV Meetings

BOV Committees – To enable the Undergraduate Student Representative and the Graduate and Professional Student Representative to be exposed to the work of all committees during their one-year tenure and to have the flexibility to visit any committee that has agenda item(s) of particular interest, the student representatives are not appointed to specific committees. Rather, the students should review the two-day meeting schedule and the agendas of the standing committees to decide which committee meetings to attend.

Materials – Meeting materials are posted on the BOV portal 10 days prior to each meeting), and instructions on how to access meeting materials are provided prior to the first meeting of the academic year. These materials include agendas and supporting documents for information sessions, committee meetings, and full Board meetings. Each committee provides a briefing report that describes the items on its agenda. Materials must be reviewed carefully before each meeting. Any questions should be directed to the appropriate contact person (Attachment A).

Quarterly Constituent Reports – Both Student Representatives are expected to provide a written report at each full Board meeting regarding issues, concerns, and accomplishments of the respective student body they represent. The reports must be concise, contain contextual or background information when appropriate, and be able to be delivered verbally in **five minutes or less**. Student Representatives should rehearse quarterly reports to ensure a professional and effective presentation. A written copy must be submitted electronically to ourkek@vt.edu at least three days prior to the meeting to provide ample time for the Board members to review the report and consider questions they may want to pose.

These reports, as well as those presented by the faculty, A/P faculty, and staff representatives, are posted subsequently on the Board of Visitors website and available to the public.

Constituent Report Preparation (important) – Student Representatives are encouraged to consult with appropriate administrators regarding their planned quarterly report topics for the purpose of gathering information or verifying facts. Such discussions help to ensure that the student is fully informed when presenting topics to the board and also help the administrator to anticipate and prepare for questions the board might ask. However, to be clear, Student Representatives are not required to have their quarterly report to the board reviewed or pre-approved by any administrator (or anyone else).

University Service

President's Advisory Group - Meetings of this group are scheduled approximately monthly, and Student Representatives should attend if at all possible. Substitutes are not permitted. The group consists generally of the President, the two Student Representatives to the Board of Visitors, the presidents of the Undergraduate Student Senate and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, the current and immediate past presidents of the Faculty Senate and the Staff Senate, a University Distinguished Professor, and others the President may invite. As the name suggests, the President has formed this group to act in a confidential advisory capacity to discuss ideas about new initiatives, seek input on issues, etc. Any member of the group may bring forward agenda items, and it is expected that the discussion will not be shared with anyone outside the group. These meetings are scheduled by the President's Office (elliott1@vt.edu).

Luncheons with the President – The President's staff may ask the Student Representatives to facilitate occasional student luncheons with the President. These luncheons provide an opportunity for students to meet and discuss pertinent issues with the President. The President's Office (elliott1@vt.edu) will assist with coordinating dates and locations.

University Council – By virtue of position, the Undergraduate and Graduate/Professional Student Representatives to the Board are voting members of University Council. University Council, with a few exceptions, meets the first and third Mondays of each month during the academic year. Additional information can be found at www.governance.vt.edu.

Attend University Commission Meetings - The Undergraduate Representative is highly encouraged to attend the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs meetings to stay abreast of resolution proposals and proceedings, as well as other undergraduate concerns that may be discussed. Likewise, the Graduate and Professional Student is highly encouraged to attend the Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs meetings.

Core Leadership Advisory Group – By virtue of position, the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Representatives to the Board are members of the Core Leadership Advisory Group that is convened by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The other members of this group are the President of the Undergraduate Student Senate, the President of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, the Chair of the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs, and the Chair of the Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs.

Order of the Gavel – By virtue of position, the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Representatives to the Board are members of the Order of the Gavel, an undergraduate and graduate leadership honor society coordinated by the Vice President for Student Affairs. Additional information can be found at <https://gobblerconnect.vt.edu/organization/orderofthegavel>.

ad hoc Work Groups – The President, Provost, or Chief Operating Officer may ask one or both Student Representatives to serve on specific task forces or committees. These groups typically are composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and a select group of students.

Meeting Proxies – Due to the significant number of meetings Student Representatives are asked to attend, proxies can be appointed for certain meetings. Proxies should not be appointed for any meetings involving members of the Board of Visitors. Always consult with the office organizing the meeting before sending a proxy.

Communications

Administrators – Regular interaction with university administrators is critical to the success of a Student Representative, and it is essential for Student Representatives to maintain open lines of communication and constructive dialog. These communications are important for both gathering information and developing positive relationships with those involved in the decision-making processes at the university. Maintaining an open dialogue is also an essential piece of keeping administrators well informed about the needs of students.

Positions that are directly involved with Student Representatives, and that may be beneficial to contact, include:

- President of the University
- Secretary to the Board/Vice President for Policy and Governance
- Manager of BOV Operations, Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance
- Executive Vice President and Provost
- Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
- Dean of the Graduate School
- Vice President for Finance
- College Deans
- Other Student, Faculty, A/P Faculty, and Staff Representatives to the Board of Visitors

Constituents – Student Representatives are responsible for keeping the general student population informed about activities and actions of the Board, and for bringing student concerns and issues to the attention of the Board. Open and frequent communication between student groups and Student Representatives is essential to establishing collaborative working relationships and identifying mutual strategic goals. These communications can be facilitated through writing articles for the *Collegiate Times*, holding student forums or discussion groups (in collaboration with the Undergraduate Student Senate and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate when appropriate), providing information online through various social media formats, sharing personal experiences with students and Board members, and attending various organizational meetings. (Refer to Policy 1030 on Social Media, <https://policies.vt.edu/assets/1030.pdf>)

Positions that are relevant to the Student Representatives, and that may be beneficial to contact, include:

- Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and ExperienceVT
- Deputy Director of the Undergraduate Student Senate
- President of the Undergraduate Student Senate
- Director of Student Services for the Graduate School
- President of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate
- Chair of the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs
- Chair of the Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs
- Leaders of other student organizations
- Student organizations at Virginia Tech facilities beyond Blacksburg
- Members of the student body

Media

In the event a Student Representative is contacted by a member of the media, the student should contact the Vice President for Marketing and Communications (540-231-5396) or the Senior Director of Marketing and Communications (540-231-2611). Administrators in these positions will provide helpful hints for responding to any media inquiries.

Resources

The Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance/Board Secretary will provide up to \$500 per year to each BOV Student Representative for pre-approved expenditures. Expenditures that are not pre-approved will be considered the responsibility of the student.

Excused Absences from Class

Please contact the Secretary to the Board (orourkek@vt.edu) should you need to provide an instructor with documentation for class absences due to meetings of the Board or other activities in which you are participating in your official capacity as Student Representative to the Board of Visitors.

Parking Privileges

Student Representatives have three options for parking at the Blacksburg campus and other Virginia Tech Facilities:

- a. Purchase a student parking permit.
- b. Obtain a Special Use (SU) parking permit. To obtain the SU permit, the Student Representative must first purchase a non-discounted student parking permit and then contact Parking Services.
- c. Purchase a faculty/staff parking permit at the regular F/S price.

Please see policy 5120 for more detailed information.

(<https://policies.vt.edu/assets/5120.pdf>).

Professionalism

Effective Interaction – Student input is greatly encouraged and, when presented professionally, very well received by members of the Board. In all interactions, Student Representatives should be cognizant of the fact that it is generally more effective to adopt a collaborative rather than adversarial approach to issues.

Administrators and Board members typically communicate by telephone or e-mail. It is imperative to check for e-mail and voicemail messages frequently and reply promptly.

Social Activities – Student Representatives to the Board are invited to a number of social functions, including dinners for the Board of Visitors and viewing football games in the President's Box. Student Representatives are expected to attend such functions unaccompanied unless explicitly invited to bring a guest and are expected to be appropriately attired (see below).

Decorum – Attending high-level social functions is a privilege of the Student Representative position. Alcoholic beverages are often served at these functions, and while a Student Representative of legal drinking age may consume an alcoholic beverage, it is discouraged. Overindulgence would be inappropriate as well as a negative reflection on the entire student body.

Attire – Student Representatives are expected to wear professional business attire to all functions, though business casual attire may be worn for football games. The Secretary to the Board will answer any questions regarding appropriate attire (orourkek@vt.edu).

Selection and Transition of Successor

Student Representative Selection Process – Students interested in being a Student Representative to the Board of Visitors must submit an application at: <http://bov.vt.edu>. Candidates are evaluated on leadership involvement, academic record, ability to work with administrators and faculty, and ability to represent a broad range of student interests. The selection of student representative is based on merit.

The current Student Representatives work with the Vice President for Policy and Governance/Board Secretary to update application and publicity materials, hold information sessions and one-on-one meetings with potential applicants, and develop procedures for selection of three undergraduate student and three graduate finalists to interview with the BOV Selection Committee at the BOV's March meeting.

During the selection process, current Student Representatives serve as members of committees to review application materials, interview prospective Student Representatives, and select finalists for interviews with the Selection Committee of the Board of Visitors. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.bov.vt.edu>.

End-of-Term Transition – Due to the limited duration of a Student Representative's term, the position requires a commitment to assist with transitioning to the next Student Representative. Current Student Representatives should provide their successors with guidance on how to be successful in representing the student body to the Board of Visitors. This includes educating the new representatives about requirements of the position, important contacts at the university, and ongoing student issues.

Previous Student Representatives

In 1983, the Board of Visitors approved that an undergraduate student be allowed to participate on the Board. In 1995, the Board approved the addition of the graduate and professional student representative.

	<u>UNDERGRADUATE</u>	<u>GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL</u>
1983-1984	James E. Stroh	
1984-1985	Daniel T. Goulson	
1985-1986	Todd Dale	
1986-1987	Tracey Beck	
1987-1988	Carol S. Irvine	
1988-1989	Leslie Glatz	
1989-1990	Alan C. Singleton	
1990-1991	Katie Heil	
1991-1992	Ginger Heimenz	
1992-1993	Robert Morgan	
1993-1994	Scot Trexler	
1994-1995	Kevin W. LeClair	
1995-1996	Sarah B. Dotti	Dan W. Waddill
1996-1997	Robert Moser	Christopher Bunin
1997-1998	Krista Johnston	Michael Herndon
1998-1999	Andrew Bishop	Roxene Thompson
1999-2000	Darin Oduyoye	Elaine Humphrey
2000-2001	Sarah Airey	Stephanie Scheer
2001-2002	James Disney	Gunnar Lucko
2002-2003	Brian Montgomery	Christian Rieser
2003-2004	Allan Bradley	Myrna Callison
2004-2005	Melinda Cep	Marcus Ly
2005-2006	Jennifer Jessie	Navin Manjooran
2006-2007	Gregory Sagstetter	Ennis McCrery
2007-2008	Ryan Smith	Brennan Shepard
2008-2009	Arlane Gordon-Bray	Lindsay Barker
2009-2010	Kristina Hartman	Rebecca French
2010-2011	Shane McCarty	Deepu George
2011-2012	Matthew Banfield	Michelle McLeese
2012-2013	Nick Onopa	Robyn Jones
2013-2014	Erica Wood	Nick Warrington
2014-2015	Austin Larrowe	Ashley Francis
2015-2016	Morgan Sykes	Mohammed Seyam
2016-2017	Gabe Cohen	Tara Reel
2017-2018	Seyi Olusina	Brett Netto
2018-2019	Rachel Iwicki	Lorenzo Amani
2019-2020	Madelynn Todd	Ryan King
2020-2021	Camellia Pastore	Sabrina Sturgeon
2021-2022	Paolo Fermin	Phil Miskovic
2022-2023	Jamal Ross	Anna Buhle
2023-2024	William Storey	Emily Tirrell
2024-2025	Leslie Orellana	William Poland
2025-2026	Thomas Feely	Katherine Drinkwater Gregg

ATTACHMENT A (Key Contacts)

Committee	Administrator	Committee Chair
BOV Portal	<p>Al Cooper, Director Business & Management Systems President's Office 406 Burruss Hall gecooper@vt.edu</p> <p>Lisa Royal, BOV Operations Mgr. Office of VP for Policy & Governance 319 Burruss Hall lroyal@vt.edu, 540-231-1358</p>	
Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee	<p>Cyril Clarke Executive VP and Provost 210 Burruss Hall provost@vt.edu</p> <p>Assistant: Shannon Lawrence shlawrence@vt.edu, 540-231-6123</p>	<p>Nancy Dye</p> <p>Contact: Kim O'Rourke orourkek@vt.edu 540-231-6232</p>
Athletics Committee	<p>Whit Babcock Director of Athletics Merryman Center hokiead@vt.edu</p> <p>Assistant: Carmela Smith casmith@vt.edu, 540-231-3977</p>	<p>J. Pearson</p> <p>Contact: Kim O'Rourke orourkek@vt.edu 540-231-6232</p>
Buildings and Grounds Committee	<p>Dwyn Taylor Vice President for Facilities Sterrett Center, 230 Sterrett Drive dwynt@vt.edu</p> <p>Assistant: Jon Clark Teglas jcteglas@vt.edu, 540-231-6291</p>	<p>Jeanne Stosser</p> <p>Contact: Kim O'Rourke orourkek@vt.edu 540-231-6232</p>
Compliance, Audit, and Risk Committee	<p>Sharon Kurek, Exec Director Audit, Risk, and Compliance 328 North End Center kurek@vt.edu</p> <p>Assistant: Rebecca Halsey rthalsey@vt.edu, 540-231-5883</p>	<p>Ryan McCarthy</p> <p>Contact: Kim O'Rourke orourkek@vt.edu 540-231-6232</p>
Finance and Resource Management Committee	<p>Simon Allen Vice President for Finance & Chief Financial Officer 220 Gilbert Street, Suite 5100 vpfcfo@vt.edu</p> <p>Assistant: Diane Bonsall dbonsall@vt.edu, 540-231-2977</p>	<p>Jim Miller</p> <p>Contact: Kim O'Rourke orourkek@vt.edu 540-231-6232</p>

<p>Governance and Administration Committee</p>	<p>Kim O'Rourke VP for Policy and Governance 319 Burruss Hall orourke@vt.edu</p> <p>Assistant: Lori Rose lorib90@vt.edu, 540-231-9512</p>	<p>Sandy Davis</p> <p>Contact: Kim O'Rourke orourke@vt.edu 540-231-6232</p>
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