

## **President's Remarks**

### **Full Board Meeting Mon 1:15 PM Latham A/B – Open Session – March 22, 2021**

Before I offer my prepared remarks, I'd like to share that we announced this morning that the first vaccination clinics specifically for Virginia Tech employees will be held on March 30, 31 and April 1 at Radford's Dedmon Center. The New River Health District expects to have 1,500 doses ready. There will be subsequent clinics on the Virginia Tech campus, but this is a great opportunity if you are a Virginia Tech employee who has not yet been vaccinated.

When we last met in November, we were approaching the end of a challenging fall semester. We reflected on the progress we had made in managing the pandemic. Today, we are in much the same position, having weathered a surge in positive cases among students on and off campus in the early spring, followed by sustained improvement leading to this week's numbers of a daily average of 7 positive cases, a positivity rate that is now below 2 percent, and on-campus quarantine and isolation occupation of fewer than 50, down from a peak of 200 students. The difference between November 2020 and March 2021 is in the hope that we now have that vaccines will help us prevent another surge, provided variants and pandemic complacency don't prolong this extraordinary global tragedy.

While we cautiously and hopefully approach the end of this pandemic, it is not too early to thank the incredible people that allowed us to protect the most vulnerable, maintain quality to the degree possible in everything we do, and still stay within our available resources. At the risk of leaving someone out, I'd like to specifically thank the people in following front-line units:

Schiffert Health Center  
Housing and Residential Life, including RAs  
Dining Services  
Recreational Sports  
Hokie Wellness  
Cook Counseling  
The Dean of Students Office  
Corps of Cadets  
Housekeeping  
Athletics  
Emergency Management  
Mail Services

And of course, our faculty, staff and graduate students who have been teaching, performing research and engaging our communities in person throughout the pandemic.

The people in these units went to extraordinary lengths to deal directly with the pandemic, in many cases working in high-contact roles to ensure the continuity of our operations and the health and safety of everyone. Of course, there is no unit at Virginia Tech that was not impacted, even if their work was done virtually.

In addition to our employees, I thank our students, who have shown incredible resilience during this sustained event. We are all looking forward to a return to a new normal, where we are back in community in shared spaces, but with lessons learned that will allow us to be even more inclusive and engaging in everything we do.

Despite the pandemic and the associated economic challenges, the University has never been stronger. I will share some highlights in a moment, but I must include one significant caveat: The majority of our students and employees were able to muddle through the last twelve

months with inconveniences and interruptions, but nothing so severe as to lose hope for a full return to some version of “normal.” For many others in our community, loved ones were lost, family members lost jobs, and academic aspirations were dashed, at least in the short term.

Had it not been for direct federal and state aid, our financial situation would have been much more challenging. The CARES Act and the December 2020 stimulus yielded \$19M in direct aid that we have been able to distribute to about 9,000 students. In addition, these federal programs provided \$29M in one-time resources that helped to resolve pandemic-related shortfalls in several of our units that were hardest hit, especially the auxiliaries. The State has also provided support, including \$4M in one-time resources for FY21. Along with debt restructuring, one-time health insurance relief, and a waiver for indirect cost assessments, flexibility from the state is helping us resolve \$63M in one-time net impact in our auxiliaries.

The American Rescue Plan is expected to provide another \$24M to Virginia Tech to help with the pandemic impact this spring, along with \$24M in direct aid for students. In the General Assembly session, we received \$4M in base funding and another \$4.9M in one-time funding for FY22. We also received construction authorization for the long-needed Undergraduate Science Lab building, healthy support for Cooperative Extension, along with several of our priorities. Compared to peer institutions around the country, we are very fortunate.

I'd like to thank the BOV for the careful deliberations around tuition rates. It is a difficult balance to preserve the quality of our academic programs while maintaining a level of affordability that ensures access for low-and middle-income Virginians. I think that balance has been struck with the approved tuition and fee plan. With budget cuts this year of 3-5%, reduced hiring and curtailed spending, our academic and supporting units have been forced to tighten belts at a time when

enrollment is growing. Although this year has been extraordinary, the constraints on spending have been in place since the last recession. In the last five years, tuition rates for in-state students have increased at rates below consumer-price-index inflation. The plan that you just approved will ensure that we will have kept tuition rate growth below inflation for a six-year period. Combined with Funds for the Future, increases in need-based aid, and reduced time-to-degree (now below 4 years), a Virginia Tech education is an even better value than it was five years ago.

Despite the challenges of the past year, we are incredibly optimistic for the future. One reason for optimism is the growing demand for a Virginia Tech degree. You heard that we received over 42,000 applications for freshman admission in the upcoming fall. This is 36% greater than the prior year, and more than twice as many applications as received for Fall 2014. The applicant pool is academically strong and much more diverse than any previous pool. We saw a 75% increase in applicants from those identifying as Black or African American, along with substantial increases in almost every category of underserved and underrepresented minority students.

I'd also like to congratulate our Accreditation team (Don Taylor, Kris Bush, Catherine Amelink, Kim Filer, Kim Daniloski, and Rachel Holloway) for their tireless work toward assuring that Virginia Tech's a 10-yr. reaffirmation cycle is successful. We just completed the virtual site visit, and I'm pleased to report that it went very, very well. There was excitement over our Quality Enhancement Plan - Bridge Experiences – that is integrating experiential learning into our degree programs, and the visiting committee was impressed with the deep engagement of BOV members in the process. We will have more to report later this year when the SACSCOC Board meets to vote on the reaffirmation of our accreditation.

And thank you for supporting our landmark update to our Climate Action Commitment. This commitment will ensure that Virginia Tech remains a leader in addressing the climate crisis for years to come.

We are also optimistic when it comes to our research and innovation enterprise. Despite a slow-down in expenditures last spring and into the fall, we set a record of \$340M in expenditures from extramural sources for FY20. The number of awards and the size of those awards is up markedly. It will take some time to regain the full momentum that we had as we entered the pandemic, but there are so many bright spots, from the Innovation Campus in Alexandria, to the VTC partnership in Roanoke, to the pediatric cancer partnership in DC with Children's National Hospital and JLABs, as well as a wide range of growing programs in Blacksburg.

And our student-athletes participating in winter sports are having what I believe will prove to be our best winter season ever. We had both basketball teams play in the NCAA tournaments for the first time. Indoor track & field placed 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> for women and men, respectively at the NAAs, and the men won claimed the ACC indoor championship. Wrestling won the ACC dual-meet crown, and the women's swimming and diving team placed 21st at the NAAs.

I'd like to conclude by honoring two of our university and community leaders who are retiring <<note: John was honored in a committee meeting>>.

### Kevin Foust

- Kevin Foust has devoted over 37 years to law enforcement. His career started with 24-years in the FBI, during which he notably served as the unit chief for the Osama Bin Laden Unit in the

Counter-terrorism Division, as well as supervisory senior resident for Southwest Virginia.

- Kevin joined Virginia Tech's Police Department in 2011 as the Deputy Chief and Assistant Director of Security. In this role he managed university facilities across the state, as well as overseas, and also led the administration division responsible for communication, community outreach, security, and the Safe Ride Program.
- In 2014 he was named Chief of Police and Director of Campus Security, after serving in an interim position following his predecessor's retirement.
- During his tenure as Chief, Kevin was awarded the Alfred C. Payne Service Award for his collaboration with the Blacksburg Police Department in establishing the No Hokie Left Behind Program. Additionally, Virginia Tech was named a Crime Prevention Campus by the Virginia Criminal Justice Service Board under his leadership, making us the fourth university in Virginia to earn this designation.
- Kevin was then promoted to Associate Vice President for Safety and Security in 2019, a role that oversees the VTPD, Emergency Management, Environmental Health and Safety, and the VT Rescue Squad.
- Throughout his time here at the university, Kevin has advanced the safety, security, and preparedness culture through his commitment to institutional excellence, continued partnerships

with the region, town, and university, and his enduring commitment to Ut Prosim.

- Kevin Foust's expertise and experiences in law enforcement and intelligence are still sought out by peers both nationally and internationally, and we at the university have been lucky to have him.
- Kevin, thank you for your service to Virginia Tech.

#### Dr. John Dooley

- Dr. John Dooley has dedicated almost 40 years to Virginia Tech and its surrounding communities. During those years, he not only worked at the university, but also earned both his master's and doctorate from Virginia Tech while doing so, completing his research on the land-grant university system.
- A native West Virginian and first-generation college graduate on his father's side, Dr. Dooley began his long running career in Higher Education when he was hired by his alma mater, what is now Alderson Broadduss University, after earning a bachelor's in elementary education.
- He first joined Virginia Tech in 1982 as the Director of the Northern Virginia 4-H Center, where he not only went on to become Executive Director, but also worked diligently to launch Camp Fantastic, one of the first of its kind summer camps for children diagnosed with cancer.

- He went on to serve as Associate Provost for Outreach and then Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs, where he promoted international education and increased the number of students studying abroad. He was instrumental in the Virginia Tech, India, project and renovating the Steger Center for International Scholarship in Switzerland. During that time, he also aided economic growth in Southern Virginia with his work on the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research.
- In 2012, John was named CEO of the Virginia Tech Foundation. Thanks to his leadership, the University endowment has doubled to \$1.3 billion, university assets have increased to \$2.2 billion, and university real estate will reach over two million square feet upon completion of those projects started during his tenure.
- Dr. Dooley's leadership has also aided in significant economic growth in local communities, such as that seen with the university's partnership with Carilion Clinic, which has created an emerging economy of health services and technology in Roanoke. He was also an integral part of the group that worked to get Amazon Headquarters in Virginia. Outside of the university, he has also made a difference to the communities by working to widen interstate 81 to relieve traffic congestion for those traveling from Roanoke to Blacksburg while serving on the Board of GO Virginia Region II.
- A true example of Ut Prosim, Dr. John Dooley has made a significant impact on the university and worked tirelessly to further its land grant mission, as well as served his local

communities, and for that we wish to thank him for his service to Virginia Tech.