

REPORT OF THE AUGUST 24, 2020, INFORMATION SESSION

An information session (open session) for the Board of Visitors was held on Monday, August 24, 2020, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. in Latham Ballroom A/B in The Inn at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. There were no action items, and there was no public comment period. Earlier in the day, the board toured the university's facilities in Roanoke, including a tour of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC (FBRI) led by Michael Friedlander, Vice President for Health Sciences and Technology and Executive Director of FBRI, and a tour of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) led by Lee Learman, Dean of the VTCSOM.

The Information Session agenda included:

- Presentation on Innovation Campus developments by Brandy Salmon, Associate Vice President for Innovation and Partnerships. Lance Collins, the new Vice President and Executive Director of the Innovation Campus, was introduced and made brief comments.
- Presentation on planning for the Sesquicentennial Celebration by Rosemary Blieszner, Alumni Distinguished Professor, Senior Fellow, and co-chair of the Sesquicentennial Planning Committee. The planning committee is comprised of faculty, students, and staff. She invited ideas for the celebration from the Board members.
- Presentation on the new Title IX regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education and effective August 14, 2020, by Kelly Oaks, Assistant Vice President for Equity and Accessibility, and Katie Polidoro, Title IX Coordinator. On August 13, 2020, the Board's Executive Committee approved policy changes necessitated by the new regulations. Tomorrow, August 25, 2020, the full Board will have an opportunity to ratify the Executive Committee's actions of August 13, 2020. The university's Title IX Coordinator is leading a work group to develop an informal resolution process that is expected to be finalized by spring 2021.
- Kay Heidbreder, University Legal Counsel, spoke briefly about the legal environment for members of the Board of Visitors. She reminded board members of the requirement to complete Conflict of Interest training and called attention to the video available to board members on the Freedom of Information Act:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50oddl3nUe0&feature=youtu.be>
- Constituent reports were delivered by Camellia Pastore (undergraduate student rep) and Sabrina Sturgeon (graduate student rep). Due to time constraints, the reports by Eric Kaufman (faculty rep) and Tamarah Smith (staff rep) will be delivered at the full board meeting tomorrow afternoon (August 25),

*(Copies of the presentations and reports are filed
with the permanent minutes and attached.)*



INNOVATION CAMPUS

Board of Visitors Update | August 2020



Lance Collins

Vice President and Executive Director



Already at work!



Recently Achieved Milestones

- City Council approval for Comprehensive District Design (CDD), Pump Station DSUP, and Infrastructure DSP (Development Site Plan) - June 20th
- Land closing recorded - June 29th
- DSUP (Development Special Use Permit) verification of completeness submissions for entire district – July 23rd

Future Milestones

- Planning commission approval of Infrastructure Site Plan – October 6th
- City Council hearing for DSUP for Buildings - October 17th
- City Council hearing for Potomac Yard Park and Pump Station - December 12th
- Final Stage 2 approvals – January 2021

- Innovation Campus Start-Up Space in Potomac Yard expected occupancy on target for late September 2020
- Innovation Building lease expected occupancy late 2023
- Falls Church facility will serve as temporary instruction location starting Fall 2020



This is a really exciting and this is a big step. It's exciting to see a vision come to reality here. I think what's before us is, quite honestly in some cases, even better than I imagined we would ultimately get to.

The environmental sustainability component is something we will be reading about and talking about for years to come. We have an opportunity to do some amazing transformational things."

-- Mayor Justin Wilson

PHASE 1



PHASE 1

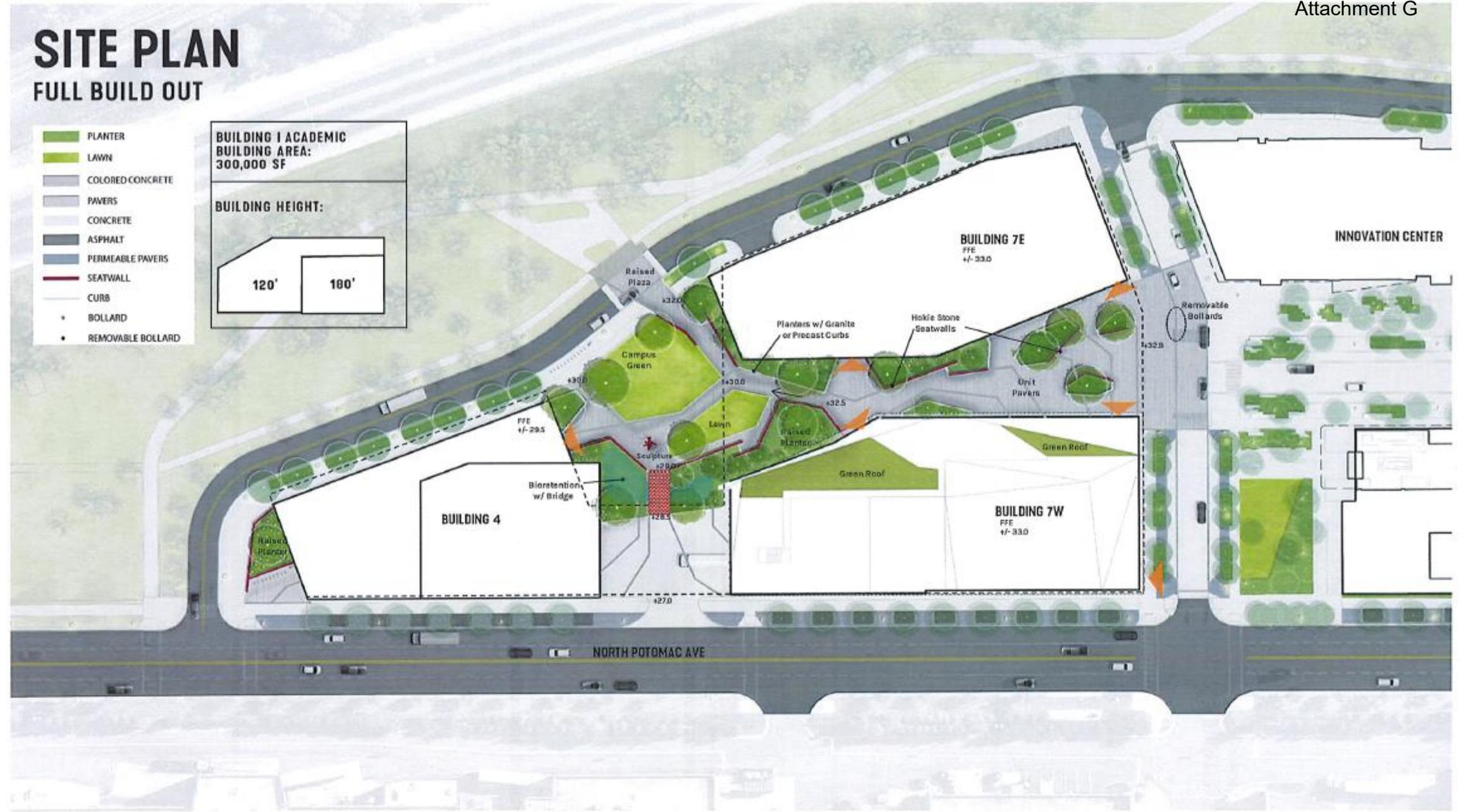
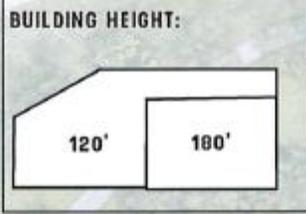


SITE PLAN

FULL BUILD OUT

- PLANTER
- LAWN
- COLORED CONCRETE
- PAVERS
- CONCRETE
- ASPHALT
- PERMEABLE PAVERS
- SEATWALL
- CURB
- BOLLARD
- REMOVABLE BOLLARD

BUILDING 1 ACADEMIC
BUILDING AREA:
300,000 SF



SITE PLAN

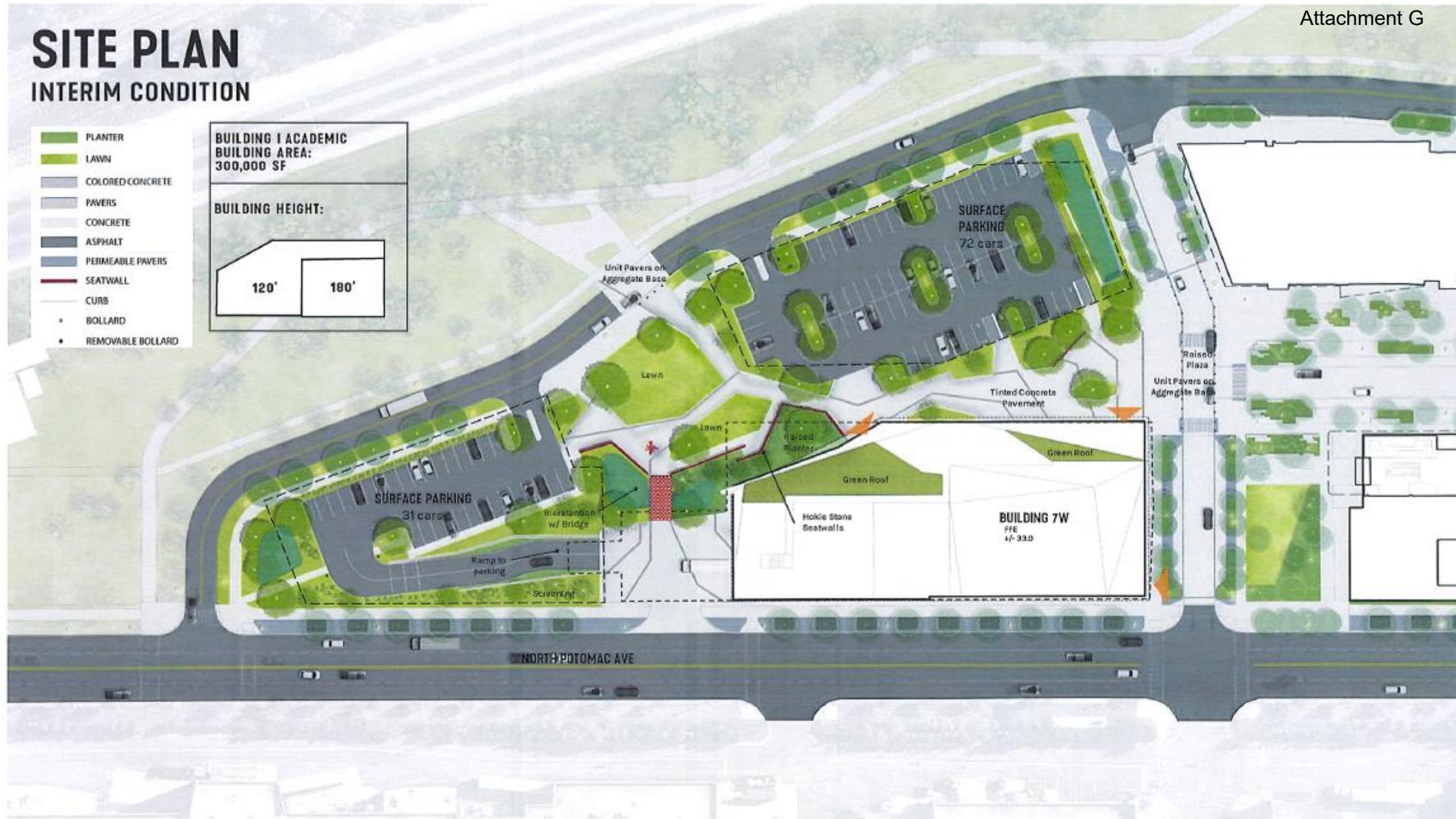
INTERIM CONDITION

- PLANTER
- LAWN
- COLORED CONCRETE
- PAVERS
- CONCRETE
- ASPHALT
- PERMEABLE PAVERS
- SEATWALL
- CURB
- BOLLARD
- REMOVABLE BOLLARD

BUILDING I ACADEMIC
BUILDING AREA:
300,000 SF

BUILDING HEIGHT:

120' 180'



SOUTHWEST VIEW



WEST STOREFRONT

Attachment G



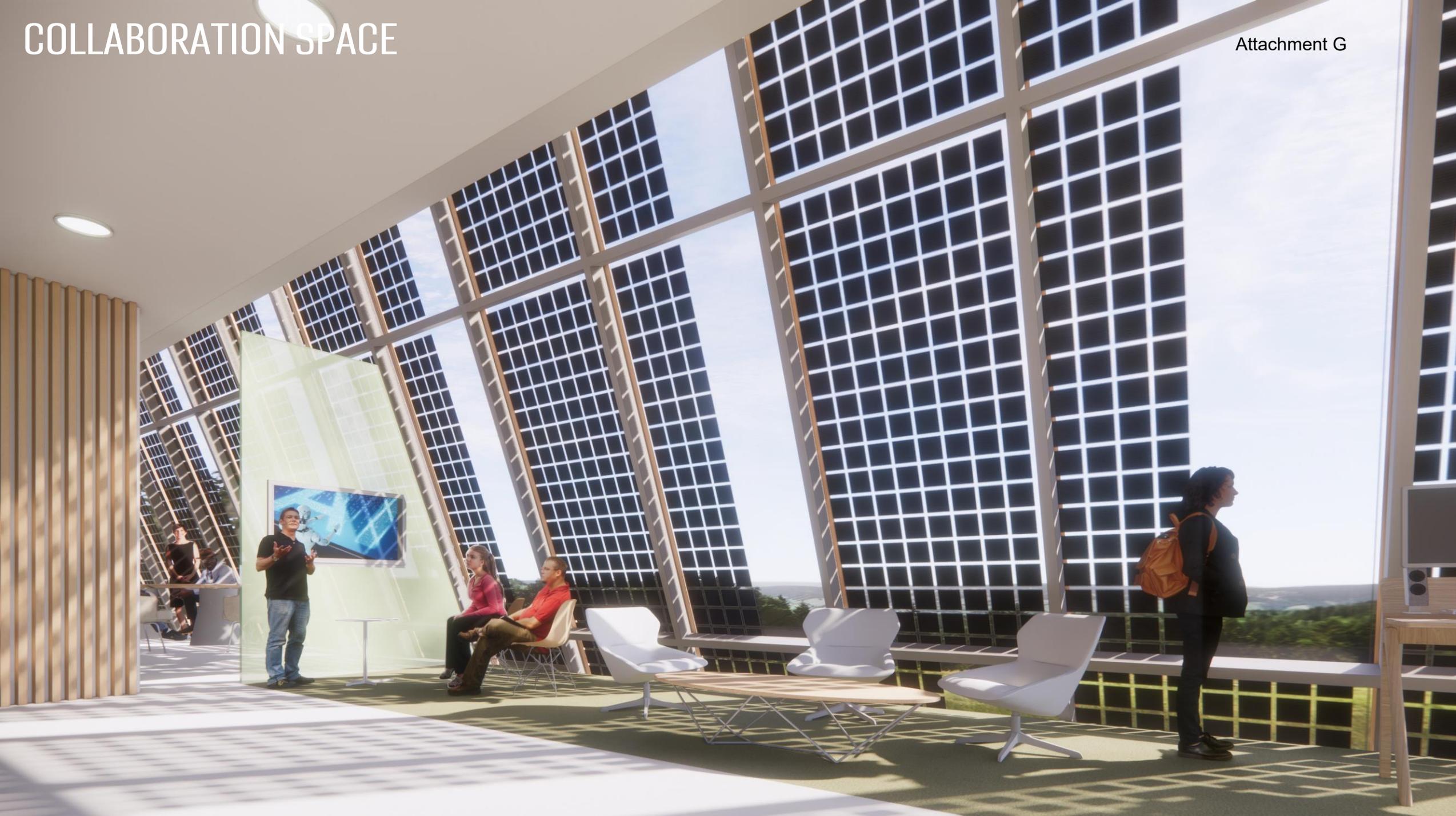
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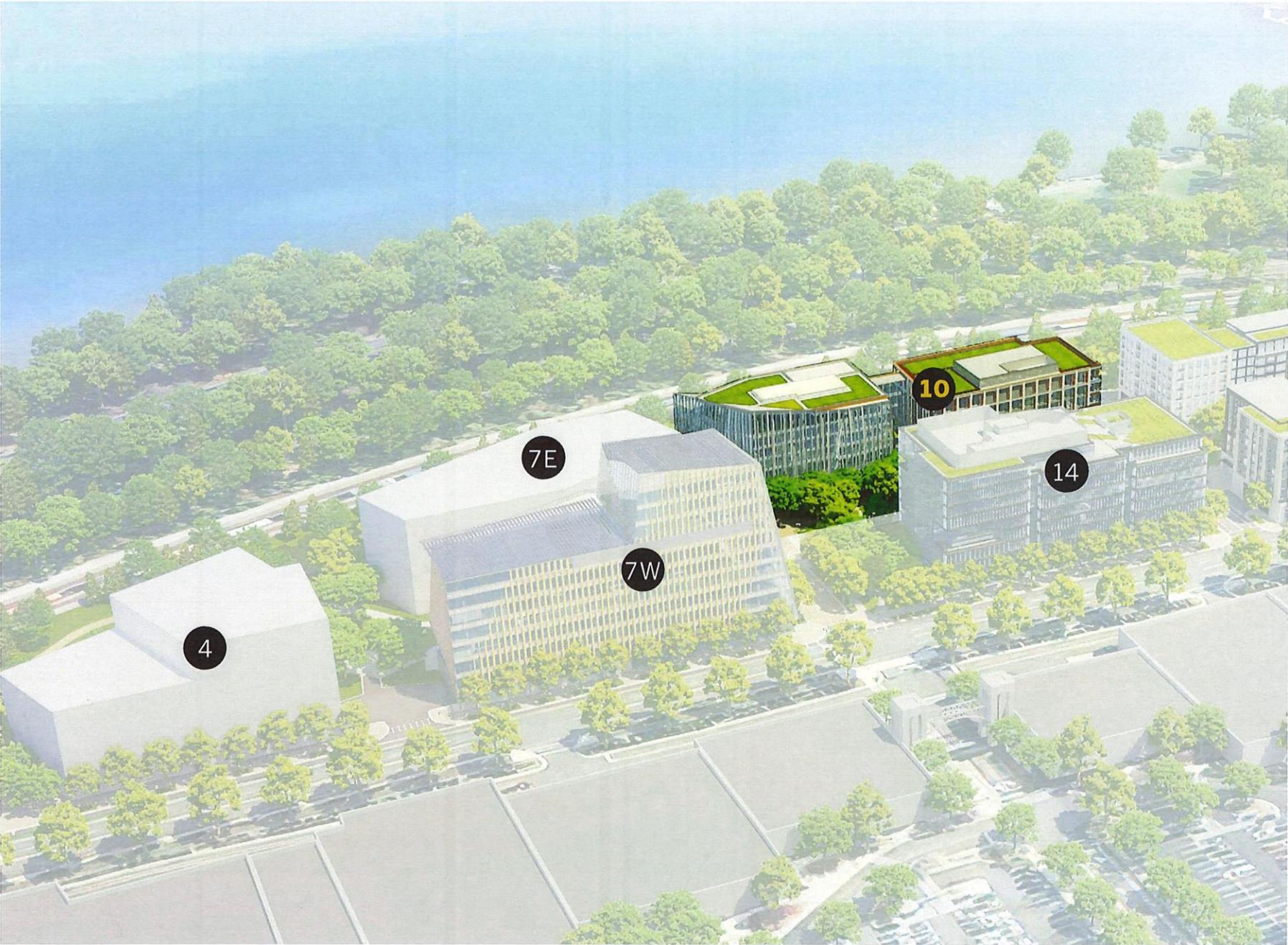
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COLLABORATION SPACE

Attachment G





BLOCK 10
NW CORNER | AERIAL VIEW



| VIEW FROM EAST REED



BLOCK 10
NE CORNER | VIEW FROM PARK



BLOCK 10
SE CORNER | VIEW FROM PARK



Undergraduate

- Projections indicate we are well above expected degree targets

Graduate

- CS and ECE had exceptional recruiting cycles
- Projections indicated great progress toward expected degree targets
- Many have decided to accept our offer to defer to either Spring and/or Fall 2021
- Final enrollment numbers available post census

Fully executed agreements:

- Christopher Newport University (CSA MEng)
- Christopher Newport University (CPE MEng)
- Radford University (CSA MEng)
- Several others pending



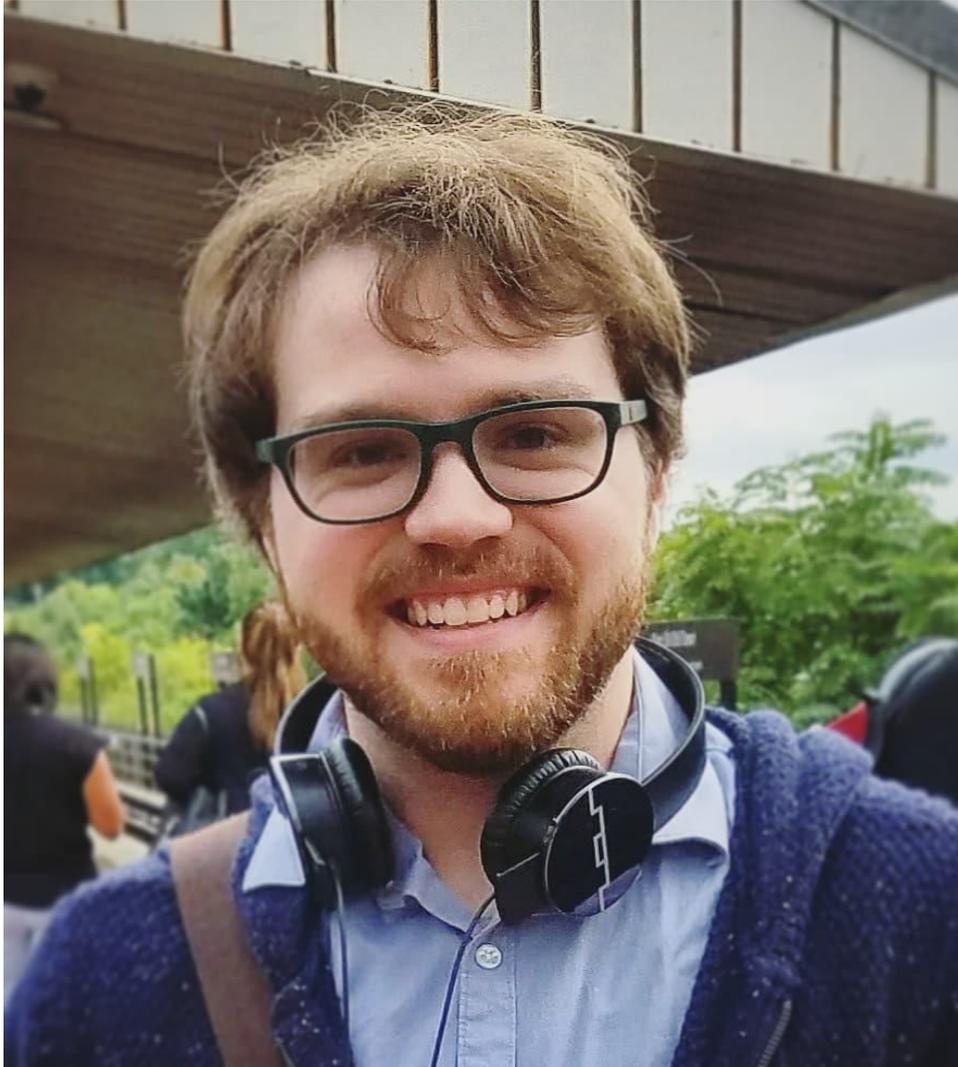
RADFORD
UNIVERSITY

Accelerated Masters Undergraduate/Graduate Program

Virginia-resident students who are not on an assistantship, are enrolled full-time as graduate students in an accelerated 4+1 masters program in an eligible graduate degree will receive \$5,000 per term (fall, spring, and summer only) for up to three terms, provided those terms are completed between summer 2020 and summer 2022.

Regular Graduate Program (MS or MEng)

Virginia-resident students who are not on an assistantship, are enrolled full-time as regular graduate students in an eligible graduate degree will receive \$3,000 per term (fall, spring, and summer only) for up to five terms, provided those terms are completed between summer 2020 and summer 2022.



Student profile

Graduate Area of Study: Master of Engineering- Computer Science

Location: Greater Washington D.C. metro area

Current Employment: Currently employed at ASIS International

Future aspirations: Cybersecurity

In response to this award, Steven said, "I've been saving for graduate school for years and was worried about how I was going to pay for it. Now, I'm sure I can not only afford it, but I will be able to graduate faster!"

Steven Barnett

VT '15 Communications,
Computer Science minor
8th Hokie in his family



Student profile

Graduate Area of Study: Master of Engineering- Computer Engineering

Location: Blacksburg

Current Employment: Graf Research (Graduate Intern in Computer Engineering)

Future aspirations: Machine Learning and Computer Vision Techniques

In response to this award, Cody said, "This scholarship is a big help in keeping on me on track to graduate in Spring 2021."

Cody Crofford

VT '14 Aerospace Engineering



New CS Faculty Profile

Dr. Ismini Lourentzou, Assistant Professor; Blacksburg
PhD (2019), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Research Scientist at IBM Research
Research area: Machine learning, Data Science

Faculty Hiring for AY 2020-21

- 7 new faculty started August 10; 3 more in Spring 2021; 2 in Fall 2021
- Based in Blacksburg to support both undergraduate and graduate program; includes 1 instructor, 2 collegiate faculty and 9 tenure track faculty.



New ECE Faculty Profile

Dr. Mary Lanzerotti, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY
Collegiate Assistant Professor; Arlington
PhD, MS, Cornell University, 1997, 1994, respectively; MPhil,
University of Cambridge (UK), 1991; AB, Harvard University, 1989

Faculty Hiring for AY 2020-21

- 8 new ECE faculty started August 10
- 5 are based in Blacksburg; 3 are based in the D.C. area
- These hires include 3 collegiate and 5 tenure track faculty.

Virginia Tech's Sesquicentennial

Presentation to the Board of Visitors
August 24, 2020

Rosemary Blieszner and Anne Khademian
Co-chairs, Sesquicentennial Planning Committee



Vision

Anticipate the Next 150 Years

- Enact the Beyond Boundaries vision.
- Honor the past, celebrate the present, forecast the future.
- Lift up strategic priorities.
- Showcase cross-cutting themes.



Engagement

Energize the Effort

- Encourage widespread involvement of the BOV, administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, friends, and external partners.
- Connect all the Virginia Tech campuses across Virginia and our centers around the globe.
- Align with Boundless Impact campaign at the midpoint.



Timeline for the Sesquicentennial Celebration



Planning Structure

Steering Committee

Senior administrators & Co-chairs

Core Team

Co-chairs, Advancement, University Relations

Work Groups

Academic, Engagement, Projects and Products

Communications, Events and Operations

Membership is representative, inclusive, and diverse

Engagement

All Virginia Tech colleges and units, campuses, and constituencies



Signature Events by Location

Blacksburg

- Official launch of the Sesquicentennial Celebration: State of the University Address. September 2021
- Ut Prosim Weekend, Cross-cutting thematic productions. April 2022

Richmond & Greater Washington, DC Area

- Events to highlight government and regional partnerships and the Innovation Campus

Roanoke

- Events to highlight research and education, access and opportunity in the Roanoke Valley



BOV

Contributions to an Impactful Celebration

- Support the vision and direction for the next 150 years.
- Share expertise and offer recommendations for topics or events.
- Encourage participation in activities, share feedback.
- And, please provide some guidance today –



BOV Feedback

In keeping with the Sesquicentennial celebration serving as a stepping-stone in continuous strategic planning and carrying the Beyond Boundaries vision into the future,

1. What will a successful celebration look like...
 - a. ...in terms of the celebratory activities themselves?
 - b. ...as a means of advancing future directions and plans?
2. What would be meaningful indicators of success to help with future planning?



Submit suggestions, Ask questions

Sesquicentennial Website:

vt.edu/150

Contact information:

- Rosemary Blieszner, rmb@vt.edu
- Anne Khademian, akhademi@vt.edu





Adapting to New Title IX Regulations at Virginia Tech

Office for Equity & Accessibility

August 4, 2020



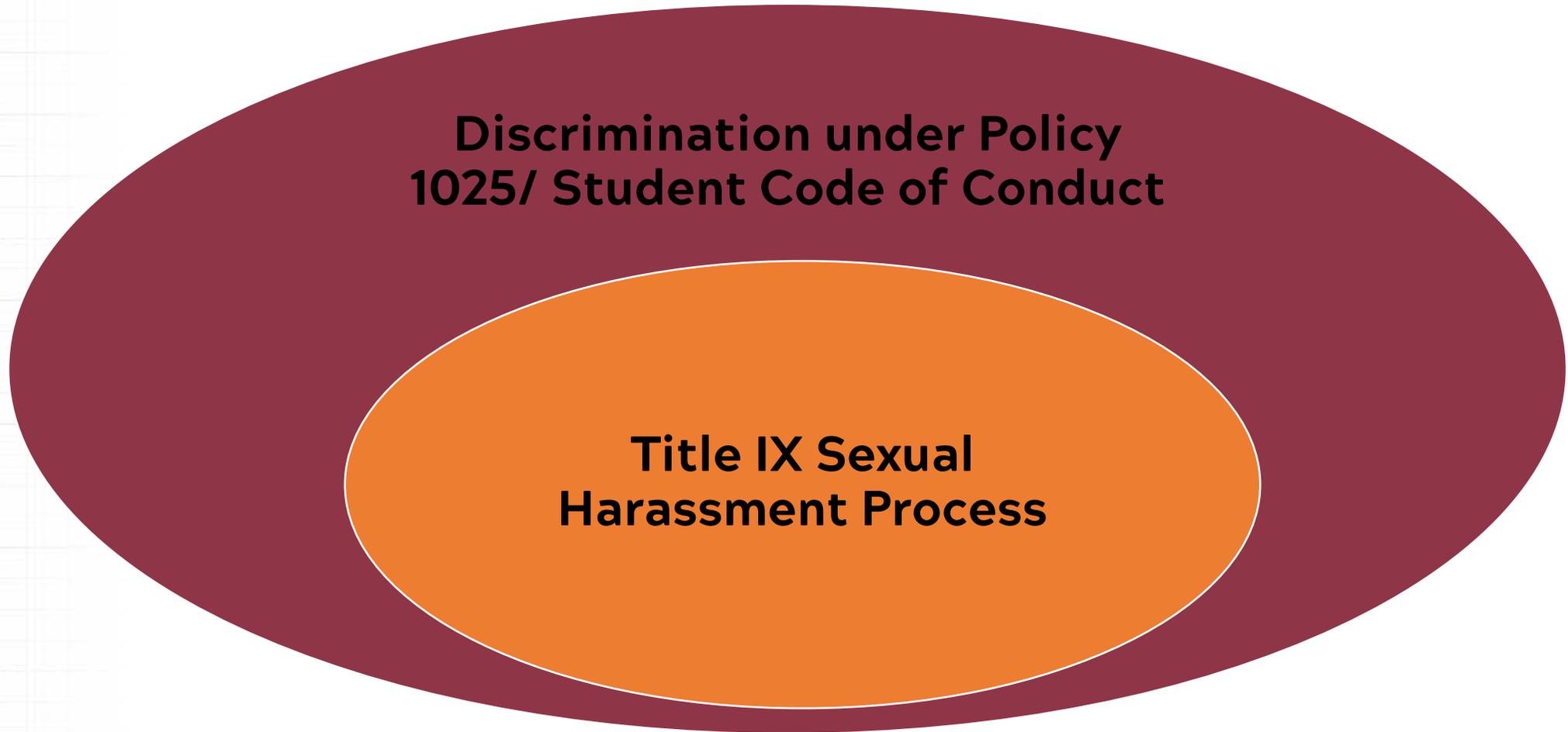
Title IX Work Group

- President Sands appointed a work group and asked for recommendations.
- The group consisted of administrators and stakeholders and has representation from:
 - Human Resources
 - Staff Senate
 - Student Government
 - Faculty Senate
 - Commission on Student Affairs
 - Commission of AP Faculty Affairs
 - Graduate Student Assembly
- Working group submitted recommendations on July 24th.

New Title IX Regulations

- In 2017, the Department of Education rescinded previous guidance on sexual harassment and misconduct. In May, DOE issued final, formal regulations.
- The new regulations include a definition of sexual harassment and detailed process that we must use to address reports of harassment and misconduct that fall under Title IX.
- Existing VT policies and procedures must change to comply with these new rules.
 - A new definition of sexual harassment and new area of jurisdiction;
 - A requirement for live hearings for both student and employee cases; and
 - A requirement for cross examination by each party's advisor.
- *The Department of Education required compliance by August 14th.*

Relationship between Policy 1025 and Title IX



Necessary Changes

- Remove Title IX sexual harassment from Policy 1025, keeping Policy 1025 in tact.
- Adopt a new, stand alone Title IX Policy that complies with the regulations.
- Clarify Responsible Employee reporting and exclude non-supervisory staff.
- Adopt grievance procedures for adjudicating student and employee matters that comply with the regulations.
- Continue to address non-Title IX sexual harassment and violence through Policy 1025 and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Ensure appropriate resources, personnel, and training for compliance.

Future Work

- Establish an informal resolution process.
- Review and update Policy 1025.
- Clarify handling of non-Title IX sexual harassment and violence.
- Ongoing assessment of new process.
- Outreach and communication to community.

Non-Title IX Sexual Harassment and Violence

- The Student Code of Conduct and Policy 1025 will apply to sexual misconduct that does not meet Title IX definitions.
 - Student Conduct may request an investigation by Equity and Accessibility Investigators and will determine proper resolution.
- The Director of Compliance may determine proper resolution, including an investigation of harassment and discrimination complaint.



Camellia Pastore
Undergraduate Representative
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
August 2020

The sentiment of the season is tension, and it is weighing on our undergraduates. Because of the pandemic and its effects, much of this revolves around the cost and value of Virginia Tech. Students understand that it is not realistic to expect tuition cuts -- however, we cannot help but feel the loss as so many campus resources are unavailable or altered. In the wake of diminishing in-person classes and the cancellation of so many Hokie traditions and social events, students are asking themselves, "why are they bringing us back?" The answer is an important one. Instead of simply replicating existing teaching methods or VT traditions, students are hoping to see technology used in new ways to further the exemplary level of teaching and uniquely personal culture that drew many of us to Tech in the first place. We are also hoping to see the university create new and exciting ways for students, and particularly freshmen, to make friends and find meaningful ways to get involved on campus.

The pandemic has hit the younger generation hardest in an emotional way. Many of us thrive off of large social gatherings, bouncing from place to place, and intimate conversations as we navigate the challenges of becoming an adult. It is not the instinct for undergraduates to return to campus only to stay in isolation, and I believe that the university needs to guide students towards safe ways to engage with others and meet new people, rather than wielding the threat of punishment over our heads. For many of us, we haven't seen our closest friends and significant others in six months -- it gets harder every day to stay inside and alone.

It's also important to remember that not all students have a family home to return to when the university goes virtual. These issues are less prevalent with undergraduates than graduate students, but they are no less important. I hope to see Virginia Tech continue to use its student emergency fund and other resources to help our students with food and housing insecurity and limited internet access.

As students, we understand that administrators can't magically read our minds and come up with exactly what we want. That's why we need to create many more opportunities for students to be involved in university decision-making and brainstorming processes. Too many announcements are made that leave our students wondering why the decision was made, who made it, and how come none of us were consulted.

When considering student involvement with the administration, it's important to think about which students we're reaching and which we're not: the majority of undergraduates at Tech go four years with only seeing administrators at orientation or graduation. Too often, administrators only interact with a select few students, giving them a distorted picture of the wide variety of student experiences. I have heard time and time again that students don't even know that they have representatives, or even worse, that they don't trust them. I understand the

irony of this, seeing as how I'm now one of those "select few" students who now has more than my fair share of influence, but I plan to counter that by inviting other students to join me. During the recent interviews for the AVP of Student Affairs, I was fortunate enough to be able to invite several of my peers who aren't as involved in students leadership to be a part of the process. Sabrina and I have also worked to expand our social media presence and create a two-way conversation with students about what happens in university governance.

To continue this effort, I hope to see administrators create opportunities for students to have their input heard and ideas implemented. These roles don't need to be all-encompassing--students are simply seeking to know that administrators are not creating a college experience without any input from college students. I think students would be very invested in playing a role in the specific areas of campus life that matter most to them, and the division of representation would also make student governance a more equitable place. Over the past few weeks, I have met with nearly every major student group that I could think of, and their observations and concerns span a wide range. These insights are invaluable as I seek to represent the undergraduate student body as accurately as possible, and I believe the administration would benefit from new perspectives as well.

This summer, inspired by a wave of Black Lives Matter protests and activism, undergraduates have been considering the role they play in their own communities. I know Virginia Tech understands this sentiment as well, and I would like to sincerely thank the Board for the recent approval of the renamed residence halls, now Hoge and Whitehurst Hall, as well as ongoing efforts to make our campus a more inclusive space.

While I am grateful, we must not forget that many of the real oppressions that occur on this campus happen behind the scenes. I recognize and applaud Virginia Tech for its genuine commitment to making the Hokie experience welcome for all, but I worry we're not doing enough. We need to be engaging our majority students and helping them understand the effect of their actions and words. We need to be educating our students to correct the misinformation or lack of information they may have learned from K-12 history classes. There is no easy fix for these sorts of nuanced behaviors, but the end result will be well worth the effort.

I'd like to end by saying a very heartfelt thank you to the Board for this opportunity of a lifetime. Virginia Tech has given so much to me, I hope that I can give at least a fraction of it back.

Camellia Pastore
Undergraduate Representative
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
August 2020

The most dreaded question of the summer is "how are you doing?" How many of us can honestly say that we're doing well? If you can name an emotion, students are feeling it, and often all of them at once. Over the past six months, we have moved back in to live in our childhood bedrooms, or stayed in Blacksburg apartments and dorms while the rest of the town grew quiet. We have celebrated at picnics with carefully spaced out blankets. We have gone to virtual office hours, waited in virtual lines, and taken virtual exams while professors watched us through our laptop cameras. We have lost jobs and found new ones as cashiers or delivery drivers. We have had surprise birthday parties on Zoom. We have watched loved ones be taken to the hospital, and later attended virtual funerals.

One topic on everyone's minds as we begin the school year is student socialization and the potential for Virginia Tech to have a spike in COVID cases like so many of our peer universities. Let me make something clear: the majority of our undergraduates understand the severity of the virus and its implications for ourselves, our classmates, and our families. However, this pandemic has forced all of us to evaluate priorities and weigh options, and many students are realizing that it is no longer sustainable to put our mental and emotional needs at the bottom of the list. When we say "this is home," we mean it: being back in Blacksburg is a large part of that home, but so is our Virginia Tech community. Without going to class, getting involved with research or clubs, hanging around campus or downtown, or spending time with old and new friends, what is the Hokie experience?

I want to let you know that we need your help. Undergraduates would like to be a part of the reason why Tech stays open through Thanksgiving, but we need to be able to learn, grow, have fun, and be challenged like we are in normal semesters. It's on all of us -- students, faculty, staff, and the administration -- to create new ways to make this happen, rather than scaring our students until they stay in isolation. It's also on all of us to have empathy and support each other through this harrowing time that is already having a major impact on my generation.

When considering student involvement with the administration, it's important to think about which students we're reaching and which we're not. Too often, administrators only interact with a select few students, giving them a distorted picture of the student experience. Most of my friends cannot name a single administrator at this school (other than President Sands). Most of my friends don't know that there is a student body president, let alone three branches of student government. When we allow this disconnect to happen, we are letting our students believe that the administration doesn't see or value them. Everyone in this room knows that's not true, but getting rid of that image involves the administration reconsidering what it means to be

welcoming to students and creating many more spaces for student input to be involved in conversations around policy and budget.

Nobel prize-winning economist Edmund Phelps researches a topic called "mass flourishing." The idea is, when a nation's citizens are all involved in its innovation, creativity, and progress, the society and everyone in it does well. In context of Virginia Tech, what I'm trying to say is that the administration doesn't have to come up with all the answers. Our students are bright and dedicated and looking to help, and especially during this crisis, we need all the ideas we can get. In recent weeks, as I've Zoomed with student leaders from most major campus organizations, I've been overwhelmed by their willingness to collaborate on advocacy issues and interest in providing more ways for their constituents to have their voices heard. I hope that as the university continues to brainstorm unconventional ways to stay connected in and out of the classroom, students will be treated as a resource rather than an afterthought.

This summer, inspired by a wave of Black Lives Matter protests and activism, undergraduates have been considering the role they play in their own communities. I know Virginia Tech understands this sentiment as well, and I would like to sincerely thank the Board for the recent approval of the renamed residence halls.

However, we must not forget that many of the real oppressions that occur on this campus happen behind the scenes. Performative actions will not affect our Black students who move into their freshman dorm only to discover that their roommate supports the Confederacy. Nor will they affect our Black students who watch their white classmates choose to work alone rather than join a group with a student of a different skin color. Nor will they affect the students who stand outside of dining halls and hand out flyers for an "Anti-PC Halloween Party" where attendees are encouraged to dress as mocking versions of marginalized groups. These are not theoretical examples. They are real events that happened to people I care about in the past few years. I recognize and applaud Virginia Tech for its genuine commitment to making the Hokie experience welcome for all, but I worry we're not doing enough. There is no easy fix for these sorts of nuanced behaviors, but the end result will be well worth the effort.

To wrap up, I want to say that you all make me really proud to be a Hokie. The genuine commitment to our students and to bettering the university makes me certain that we are headed in the right direction. I am working to bring empathy, humility, and creativity to my work this year. I won't be the first or last representative with big ideas, and I have relied on the guidance and wisdom of the Board members, current and previous representatives, many administrators, and my friends and peers as I navigate advocacy in a time of uncertainty. I cannot wait to let more undergraduates see what I see, and I know that they will make you all even prouder to be a Hokie than you already are.

Helpful resources:

[Colleges are Getting Ready to Blame their Students](#)

[This Summer will Scar Young Americans for Life](#)

[Mass Flourishing: How Grassroots Innovation Created Jobs, Challenge, and Change](#)

[Dr. Paul Offit \(CNN Transcript\)](#)

Hello all. I want to start by extending my gratitude to the members of the Board of Visitors, the graduate school, and the graduate student population for entrusting me to be the graduate student representative to the Board of Visitors for the 20-21 academic year. In addition - I want to thank Dean DePauw, Maruf Hoque, Ellen Plummer, and my predecessor Ryan King, among others who have aided in swiftly transitioning me into this role during such volatile times.

I applied to be the Graduate Student Representative, because I hold an immense passion for university governance and a desire to uplift the student collegiate experience. I came with ideas I hoped to address and with the intention to always put the needs of my constituency, graduate students, before my own. As I come before you today, I hope to articulate those needs, which are amplified in the era of COVID-19. I will be articulating three points.

The first point that I wish to present is student's dissatisfaction with communication on behalf of the University. I approach this from the standpoint of my history as a communication studies scholar. Let me begin by saying, I appreciate my daily "Virginia Tech News" email and what I see come out of social media. I see student success stories and the most ground-breaking research to come from the intelligent minds of our Hokie community. It's truly inspiring. What I think students are missing is the feeling of a candid transmission of information that boasts humility - in other words, communication that acknowledges shortcomings and emphasizes reality, even when it is not pretty. This is especially important today. In times of crisis, people seek transparency and prompt communication from their leadership. Students report being notified of fee increases and jarring policy changes second-hand through social media like Twitter and Reddit before official University channels.

This has been a long-standing issue that frustrates students and perpetuates inefficiency. Perhaps what is needed is an assessment of current communication initiatives and how students perceive them? Perhaps a greater centralization of strategic communication? With media trends and expectations changing so rapidly, it is essential that we, as an institution, stay current and meet students where they are at to foster a community built on trust and respect. We are a massive enterprise with students across the state of Virginia and beyond who rely on effective strategic communication as they are navigating life choices and their education at large. An effective community is only as strong as its populace is informed.

The second point that I find important to shed light on is student concern over graduate student funding and means to perform their duties. With the fear of budget cuts at the forefront of everyone's mind, myself and my colleagues beg the question - "Will my funding or stipend be cut?" With Universities across the country returning to remote learning just weeks into the semester they are asking - "Will I have an assistantship or research to return to if we fall victim to the same course of action?" These are the questions being asked by the graduate students that are fortunate enough to have assistantships.

As decisions are being made and future budget cuts are considered I ask that you keep in mind how essential it is to not allow graduate students to bear this blow. By virtue of our positions,

many of us are dependent upon the university to sustain our opportunity at education and depend on our stipends to simply live. If I do not have an assistantship, I cannot continue my education at Virginia Tech. Consider the graduate student who resides at the Northern Virginia campus whose cost of living is nearly double what it costs to be a student in Blacksburg. Think of the graduate student supporting a family on a twenty thousand dollar per year stipend. Not to mention - graduate students have their stipends cut then the entire university research enterprise is going to come to a screeching halt.

Pragmatically, there has been a \$300/semester reduction in fees for students that live 50 miles away or have classes/research completely remote. All research credits are considered to be "in-person" even though advisors have allowed people not to come in. if this rule could be relaxed, more students could benefit from the fee reduction.

The final point that I hope to emphasize today is the current state of affairs for students living off-campus. It is no surprise that most graduate students reside off campus. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on creating a safe, well-prepared on-campus residency, but our off-campus students will bear the true brunt of the blow that COVID-19 will have. While on-campus students can expect enforced policy surrounding facial coverings, socially distanced programming, and requirement of testing upon arrival, our off-campus students do not have these luxuries or expectations. If we meet the same fate as UNC Chapel Hill and Notre Dame, off-campus residents will not have the opportunity to simply cancel their contract and move back "home".

I bring this up to frame the immense risk my constituency faces. This neglect in resources will heighten mental health concerns, risk student health, and place a financial burden on students who are already bridled with immense student debt. Policy and added reinforcement of guidelines will be necessary to keep this population safe, along with continued funding and programming to vital resources like Cook Counseling, Dean of Students, and Shiffert health. Regardless of remote or in-person learning, we must provide support to off-campus students in this trying time.

I want to conclude this report by stating once again, as my predecessors have before that we are not the same as undergraduate students. Our experience is differentiated and my predecessor articulated it best as, "Graduate students are more likely to be older, have spouses, dependents, and elder care responsibilities, and far more likely to not be in Blacksburg." Each of these are amplified by the threat of COVID-19 and as we are moving forward considering policy, funding, and safety, it would be heinous to neglect these facts.

Although my tone is critical, I am impressed with our response to opening and initiatives taken to ensure student safety at large. As I shared with a colleague recently, Virginia Tech is taking all the right action and as we move forward with hybrid in-person and remote learning. I am confident that the administration will continue doing everything in its power with the hope that we all have to retain a degree of normalcy through in-person experience.

I am eager to serve and learn in the coming year, representing the needs of the graduate student populace and to work collaboratively to find effective solutions to our trying dilemmas.