

## **November 5, 2018 BOV**

### **President's Remarks**

Fall has finally arrived, along with nature's display of Orange and Maroon. It has been a busy fall for Hokies and Virginia Tech. Our strategic plan is taking shape on the generational vision of Beyond Boundaries, and simultaneous with the Master Plan and our ambitious efforts to expand our footprint in Roanoke and the National Capital Region.

Speaking of Roanoke, the second decade of the VTC partnership began with the integration of the VTC School of Medicine in July, and the topping-off ceremony for the 139,000 sq. ft. Biomedical Research Expansion project in September. We will soon begin recruiting the 25-30 new research teams that will more than double our research capacity in Roanoke.

In the NCR, we are putting the final touches on the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative Blueprint that is due to the Virginia Research Investment Committee at the end of this month. Nearly 100 people, leaders from higher education, industry and government have come together to advise Virginia Tech on the Blueprint. With approval expected early in 2019, we will begin building the Commonwealth wide initiative that is designed to put Virginia in a leadership role in cyber security research and commercialization at the intersection of data, security and autonomy. The CCI will also link, coordinate and grow the capacity of our universities to respond to the growing need for talent in this rapidly evolving sector of our economy.

At Virginia Tech, we leverage our discoveries to impact our local, state and global communities. This fall, State Farm partnered with us through the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership and the FAA Integration Pilot Program to fly drones over areas damaged by Hurricane Florence, a first for the insurance industry. And the Kellogg Foundation recognized our Flint Water Study team with one of four Kellogg Foundation Awards for engaged scholarship. The Water Study team, known for its work in Flint, is now engaged across the country, applying rigorous scientific principles and analysis to the devastating problem of drinking water contamination.

A public land-grant research university has the obligation and core mission to ensure that its discoveries are translated into products and services. You have heard about Link and Launch. Another important aspect of this mission is to prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs. It's not just about starting companies – it is also about developing the skills and confidence in our students that are necessary for career resilience and measured risk-taking. Our answer to that challenge has been the Apex Center for Entrepreneurs, which runs out of Pamplin but engages the entire university. Just a few weeks ago, Apex was named the Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center, an honor bestowed by the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers. Congratulations to Executive Director, Derick Maggard, and his dedicated staff and Board! Last year, 1,900 students participated in Apex programs, including 109 new student-led venture teams.

Other honors garnered by Virginia Tech programs this fall include:

Engineering moving up to #13 in its national ranking by US News for our undergraduate program.

Real Estate ranking as the fifth most popular program in the US, an incredible feat given the short time that this program has been operating.

This September in L.A., Virginia Tech received the Academic Leadership Award from GEM for leadership in diversity and inclusion in STEM.

Also, INSIGHT into Diversity magazine again featured us in the November issue as a “Top College for Diversity” and a “Diversity Champion” for the third straight year.

Virginia Tech was just named among the “Best for Vets” by Military Times, our first time on this list. We are second in Virginia behind Old Dominion University.

And one of my favorites: Times Higher Education and the Wall Street Journal polled students around the country, asking students whether they would recommend their institution to others. Virginia Tech finished in the top three with James Madison and Stanford.

There are other highlights I could mention, but the bottom line is that it has been an exceptional fall for Virginia Tech, and we expect even greater news before the calendar year is up.