

President's Remarks – August 2022 BOV

Since we last met in early June, the Blacksburg campus has taken a bit of a breather, and I certainly hope that our faculty, staff and students have done the same. That is not to say that the university was idle. We have never had so much construction underway at once, the research and innovation enterprise has been humming, and the world around us has been transformed by the pandemic, inflation and global conflict.

Let me start this update by welcoming our new BOV members, Brad Hobbs, David Calhoun and Sandy Cupp Davis, as well as our new constituent reps, Jamal Ross (undergraduate) and Anna Buhle (graduate and professional). Thank you for joining the Board. We ask much of you, and we appreciate your engagement and leadership.

As we gather, the new semester is now underway. We have welcomed an exceptional first-year class to Blacksburg. We anticipate that when we finalize our census in September we will have met our 2022 milestone of 40% underserved and underrepresented students in our incoming undergraduate class, including transfers. More than 20% of our incoming class identifies as an under-represented minority, up from 13% in 2017. As we discussed at the retreat, access and affordability are central to our land-grant mission, and although the door is open to more students than ever at Virginia Tech, we have work to do to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to complete a degree without excessive debt or financial burden at levels that limit their opportunity to pursue a fulfilling and impactful life and career.

Part of the solution is provided by the generous support of our donors. Fiscal Year 22 was the best year in our history for giving and engagement. New Gifts and Commitments exceeded last-year's record by 34%, coming in at \$268M. The undergraduate alumni giving rate hit our ambitious 2022 milestone of 22%, and we have now raised \$1.16B toward the recently upgraded goal of \$1.872B for the Boundless Impact Campaign. Thanks to everyone who took part in this fantastic year, and to VP Charlie Phlegar and his team for leading Hokie Nation to these spectacular results.

I am pleased with the energy at Virginia Tech around paid internships, particularly those that are transcriptable. The University Council will be taking up this opportunity as part of the first University Mission Initiative under our new system of shared governance, along with undergraduate research, project-based learning, and experiential learning in other forms. The provost and I want to see Virginia Tech able to ensure that every student who wishes to have a paid internship will have one, without extending the time to degree. Why? We know that paid internships are the best path to employment, and they reduce the debt that is incurred as a student. Internships and apprenticeships also help our students develop the skills that they will need in their life and career to complement what they are learning in their traditional curriculum.

Our students have needs beyond the academic and financial domains. In previous meetings, we have discussed our progress in fighting food insecurity, ending sexual violence, and promoting

wellness. All of that work is continuing, but I would like to highlight a new program designed to expand our reach in addressing the mental health needs of our students. This summer, we announced a partnership with TimelyMD to provide on-demand, 24-7, free tele-mental health services through TimelyCare. During the pandemic, we learned that telemedicine could effectively complement in-person services. TimelyCare is designed to do just that. We will continue to provide in-person services through Cook Counseling. TimelyCare will help fill the gaps while also augmenting our services and programs that are preventative in nature.

Our research enterprise is recovering from the pandemic constraints, and surging ahead. In FY22, we recovered the momentum we lost during the pandemic and then some. Extramural research expenditures were up over 10%, as were new awards. I will highlight one of our institutes and their progress: The recently created National Security Institute registered \$30M in total expenditures in FY22, a 40% increase over FY21. Clearly, the move to coordinate our resources in this arena is bearing fruit in an area where Virginia Tech should be the national leader. Congratulations to Executive Director Eric Patterson and his team.

Congratulations also to Athletics for ranking 33rd in the LEARFIELD Directors' Cup for the 2021-22 academic year. This is the third highest finish in our history, close behind #32 in 2020-21 and #28 in 2017-2018 (not counting the 2019-20 COVID year). Looking at four-year blocks, our average Directors' Cup ranking since 2005-06 has steadily improved from 44 to 35. This steady all-sports progress comes while the model for collegiate athletics is being challenged on several fronts. Whit Babcock and his team are putting us in progressively stronger position to determine our own destiny when the time comes. In the meantime, we are looking forward to the promise of a new football season with Coach Brent Pry at the helm. There are not many experiences that bring Hokies together like Enter Sandman in Lane. Go Hokies!