

**Board of Visitors Constituent Report**  
**Morgan Sykes, Undergraduate Representative**  
**June 6, 2016**

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, President Sands, distinguished members of the Board, administration, and guests. It is hard to believe that my year serving along side of you is coming to a close. I am honored to be able to report to this group one last time, and this time as an alumnus. I'm also enjoying the irony of presenting my last undergraduate report as a brand new graduate student!

Our undergraduate students have been very busy since our last meeting. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Blacksburg surprised us with a snowstorm, but that didn't keep students from participating in The Big Event. This year The Big Event recruited 9,200 volunteers and completed 1,102 jobs! Later that month, Virginia Tech students raised 585, 915 dollars for the American Cancer Society in the nation's largest Collegiate Relay for Life. At the end of each school year, it is always remarkable to reflect on our students' dedication to Ut Prosim.

I would like to give special thanks those who participated in the spring commencement ceremony where the Class of 2016 became the newest alumni of Virginia Tech. Hearing Dr. Marc Edwards and Dr. Mono Hanna-Attisha speak about their dedication to lifelong service was moving to say the least. With role models like them to follow, it is no wonder why our students so deeply embrace the motto of Ut Prosim. It was surreal to be a part of such a special event celebrating the successes of over 6,000 former undergraduates. I know we will each always be proud to be alumni of Virginia Tech.

Additionally, The Class of 2016 was incredibly lucky to gain a special graduate as Irving Peddrew, the first African American student to attend Virginia Tech, was granted an honorary degree. I am so proud of this university recognizing its faults of the past and taking action to right these wrongs. InclusiveVT initiatives continue to exemplify Virginia Tech's commitment to inclusion and diversity. During the Black Alumni Reunion Weekend, The Black Cultural Center celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have come a long way in 25 years, but we still have a ways to go. I look forward to the progressive future of this university with the guidance of dedicated administration, faculty, and student leaders.

Reflecting upon this past year, I am proud of the development of this position. It is my hope that each year the influence of this position will continue to grow and serve as a resource for undergraduate students. As the year progressed, I felt this position became a broker of relationships dedicated to forging connections and synergies between different facets of the university to spark dialogue and generate common solutions.

An example of these collaborations occurred this semester as I worked closely with students deeply impacted by a study abroad experience. They were upset that the program was dissolved and wanted to discuss ways for this program to be resurrected or the creation of a similar high impact study abroad. By using this position as a resource, these students were able to connect with members of the administration to gain a better understanding of why the program was not renewed. Even though it is unlikely that their specific program will be offered again any time soon, the experiences and passion that these students gained from the program should not be ignored. As we move to produce global citizens, I hope that these students' influence can be incorporated as we develop plans for international study. Similar types of rich, meaningful, global service can truly change lives and I hope in the future these types of opportunities will be readily available and affordable to undergraduate students.

As the university continues to transform and evolve, it is of extreme importance to solicit and embrace student feedback. During this meeting we have discussed the meaning and expectations of the VT Shaped Student. I want to emphasize to this group the necessity of including student input and conceptualization as this model continues to develop. In order to be successful, this model must connect with be understood by current and future students.

With the help of Dr. Perillo and Mohammed, this month we plan to create a better way for the members of the William Preston Society to communicate and network. I believe this will be an extremely helpful tool for current BOV representatives to collaborate with other current and former Board members. Not only will this system help develop the student representative positions, but also strengthen the networks of the William Preston Society as a whole.

One final development I'd like to highlight is the creation of a "BOV Training Packet" covering topics such as University Governance, Publicity and Communication for this position, Selection Process Operation Manual, etc. It is my hope that these digital files will serve as an informational guideline for future representatives and may help speed up the challenging learning curve of this prestigious position.

At this time, I will conclude my report by introducing the next undergraduate representative, Gabriel Cohen. Gabe is a rising senior mechanical engineering major from Atlanta, Georgia. This will be his final year as a consumer sector analyst for the equity investment group, SEED. Gabe will pursue his senior design as a member of the hybrid-electric vehicle team, trying to turn a Chevy Camaro into a hybrid-electric vehicle. Outside of school he will be spending his summer out in Seattle, Washington hiking and camping as well as exploring the city while interning for Boeing, and he hopes to pursue a career in management consulting. Next year, he is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities as the Undergraduate representative and hopes to create a more informed student body as well as help foster communication between current students and alumni.

I've thoroughly enjoyed working with Gabe since he was selected in March. Gabe eagerly shadowed me in various meetings and engaged in several informal training sessions that helped prepare him for his term beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. I have no doubt that he and Tara, the new graduate representative, will excellently represent the student body next year.

Serving as the Undergraduate Representative to the Board of Visitors was with out a doubt one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career. I am honored to have worked with such inspiring people across the university. Once again, I must thank my Student Advisory Board for their contributions. They made this year so much more productive and successful than I could have working alone. Thank you to all the mentors that have helped me throughout this incredible ride. The memories I have made this year will be cherished for the rest of my life.

Lastly, thank you members of the Board for your dedication to Virginia Tech. People like you are the reason Virginia Tech is continuously pushed to higher levels of excellence and I look forward to what you and the new representatives will accomplish in upcoming years. Please stay in touch and let me know if there is any way I can help in the future.

Thank you.

## Constituency Report

Mohammed Seyam,  
Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

June 6, 2016

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, President Sands, distinguished members of the board, administration, and guests.

I will start my report by acknowledging the participation of Virginia Tech administration in various grad students' activities in the last few weeks. I want to thank President Sands and Provost Rikakis for attending the last Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) meeting in April, where they answered questions from graduate students about graduate life and the future of graduate education at Virginia Tech. They also participated in the President's lunch with grad students that I was honored to organize three times this year. I want also to thank the Board of Visitors members who attended the graduate commencement ceremonies both in Blacksburg and National Capital Region (NCR). And I extend my thanks to the Board members of the Academic Affairs Committee who hosted graduate students for breakfast earlier today, with special thanks to Dr. Ellen Plummer for the support she provided during the past year while working with the Academic Affairs Committee. These opportunities for interaction among students and administration is key to making sure that Virginia Tech is on the right track.

I'd like now to provide some updates on issues that I, and other students organizations, have been working on during the past year. A few weeks ago, the risk management office was able to provide an optional dental insurance for graduate students. Although the coverage may not be satisfactory for some students, I see this as a step forward to a better situation compared to what was provided last year. I've also been in conversations with Mr. Chris Wise, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, on the possibility of having a dental clinic that provides basic services for Virginia Tech students. I've also discussed that idea with Mr. Dwight Shelton (CFO) who promised to investigate its feasibility and possible ways for implementation. On the same topic, I've also shared an ambitious idea with both Mr. Wise and Mr. Shelton, which aims at having a "family clinic" as an extension of Schiffert health center, which provides basic services to dependents of students for some add-on fees. I received positive preliminary feedback regarding the two ideas of dental and

family clinics for Virginia Tech students, and I look forward to hearing some good news about possibilities for implementation.

On the topic of child care, work is in progress for the Alliance for Better Childcare Strategies initiative (ABCs). I hope this work will soon enter the implementation phase, and that we can see options for child care provided to students next year.

The work on building a more welcoming environment for international students has evolved to be more around building a more inclusive environment at Virginia Tech for incoming students, both domestic and international. Later this month, we will be having a meeting with the group working on reviewing the language used on documents, materials, and websites to make sure that it's clear for whoever intended to be reading it.

I've also been working on raising awareness on the topics of Open Access at Virginia Tech. One idea that wasn't fully implemented this year was to have a task force to study the current state of Open at Virginia Tech as a public land-grant institute, and provide recommendations after studying the current policies in other institutes. I'm confident that this work will continue next year with coordination and support provided by the University Libraries.

I want now to introduce Tara Reel, the new Graduate Student Representative to the Board, who is not able to be here today due to her travels to Europe for a study-abroad class. Tara is a master's degree student in both urban and regional planning (MURP), and public administration (MPA) in the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA). Prior to attending Virginia Tech, she worked in local government for the City of Virginia Beach, serving as the assistant to the legislative liaison for intergovernmental relations working with government at the local, state and federal levels. At Virginia Tech, she has served as vice president of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), president and founder of the Virginia Tech student chapter of Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS) International, a field reporter for the award winning "Save Our Towns" video series, and a research assistant at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI). Tara comes with diverse fields of experience and lots of ideas that make me confident that she will do a great job representing the graduate community.

Finally, some of you already know that I'm just back from travels to Switzerland, France, and Italy as a participant in the Global Perspectives Program (GPP). This unique program is developed here

at Virginia Tech's Graduate School, and this is the 11<sup>th</sup> year for graduate students to travel to Europe to get introduced to different higher education systems. This year's theme was "Modernizing European higher education", and we will be presenting our work in collaboration with graduate students from University of Basel at the Swiss Embassy in Washington DC later this month. To be mindful of your time, I won't go into the wonderful details of this great experience. I'm just mentioning this program now for two reasons: first, I want to say "Thank you" to Dean Karen DePauw, not only for her great work planning and implementing this program, but for being such a visionary leader whose ideas are being recognized both in national and international contexts. Her work on Transformative Graduate Education is exceptional, and her passion to serve graduate students and to help them thrive in graduate school is a great asset for Virginia Tech. I'm personally thankful that I had the opportunity to work closely with her this year.

The second reason I'm sharing this experience for is related to the values of Virginia Tech. The diverse group of participants in this program is an example of how Virginia Tech should see and treat its students. The eye-opening visits to different European Universities provide an example of the great opportunities Virginia Tech can offer to its students. The collaboration between us and different student groups from other universities is an example of developing an international university. And presenting our work in venues like the Swiss Embassy shows how our work can actually impact the global community. This program, as well as many others, show what Virginia Tech is all about: diversity, equity, engagement, inclusion, social impact, and global influence.

I wanted this reflection to be the thing I'd leave you with today. Since it's my last report to the Board, I can't express how thankful I am to work with Virginia Tech graduate students, members of the Board of Visitors, and Virginia Tech Administration this year. It has been a privilege and a great honor to serve in this position. Thanks Rector Petrine and Board members for sincerely listening and responding to our thoughts and concerns. Thanks Morgan for being such a wonderful and energetic colleague throughout the year. President Sands, Provost Rikakis, Dean DePauw, and Dr. Patty Perillo, I can't thank you enough for providing such a great example of a student-oriented leadership.

Thank you!

Staff Senate Constituency Report  
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors  
June 6, 2016  
Presented by Dan Cook, Staff Senate President

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, members of the Board of Visitors, President Sands, administrators and distinguished guests: once again I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about Virginia Tech staff events since our last meeting a couple of months ago.

In April the Staff Senate hosted the Board of Visitor's own Reverend Wayne Robinson as a guest speaker. He shared with the staff how valued they are as an integral part of the successful workings of Virginia Tech. He also highlighted some of the upcoming changes and visions that the university has on the horizon. He entertained a number of questions in the end, and I think that many were pleased that he took the time and effort to come speak with them. April was also the month that the staff put on the annual McComas Leadership Seminar. The theme this year was "Leadership – no title required". This seminar was very well received; in fact all 225 available slots were filled in less than 24 hours. The seminar was filled with outstanding leaders that gave moving and informational presentations. This list included Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, Dr. Scott Geller, Rick Sparks, Yohna Chambers, the esteemed Frank Beamer and a keynote address from none other than Charles Phlegar.

May brought in the annual Staff Appreciation Day festivities. There were tours to various parts of campus, there was music, and games and lots of food. Once again this was well attended this year and the staff will look forward to the offerings of next year. In the May Staff Senate meeting we had a presentation from Ms. Rebecca Morris, the Insurance Coordinator from Human Resources. She gave a brief rundown on what staff members could expect in the upcoming year and things to be mindful of during open enrollment.

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to work with and to get to know all of you over the past two years. It is will mixed emotions that I have given my last constituency report. Relieved that it is coming to a close, but sad that it will soon be over. I have learned so much and grown in so many ways by some of the experiences and opportunities that were afforded to me over the past couple of years. I wish you all the very best in your continued service to this great university, and in all that you may do. With that I would like to introduce you to the President Elect of the Staff Senate, Mr. Alex Parrish. Alex has been a member of the staff at Virginia Tech since 2008. Starting as a graphic designer for ICTAS, he later moved to the department of biomedical engineering and mechanics to become the marketing team lead. He became a staff senator in 2012 and was elected to the vice-presidency in 2014. Alex has chaired the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs for the past

two years, been active within the University Council and chaired an ad-hoc committee designed to strengthen leadership within the Staff Senate. To his credit, Alex was the recipient of a President's Award for Excellence in 2013. Originally from Kentucky, he and his wife, Heather, moved to the New River Valley eight years ago to be closer to her family. They have a daughter named Willow, who is four. I have the utmost in confidence in Mr. Parrish's ability to lead the Staff Senate and I am sure you will enjoy working with him.

As always, I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Board on behalf of the staff of Virginia Tech and welcome any questions or comments that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dan Cook  
President, Staff Senate

**Faculty Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**June 5-6, 2016**

Rami Dalloul, President-VT Faculty Senate

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, President Sands, Provost Rikakis, members of the Board of Visitors, and distinguished guests.

The Faculty Senate has had a busy year. This report from the faculty touches briefly on the many issues that have come before the Faculty Senate and governance bodies this year, and mentions some areas that would be addressed next year.

**A. The 2015-2016 Year in Review**

Shared Governance

At our previous meetings, I reported on the initiative put forth by the Faculty Senate in regards to Shared Governance at Virginia Tech. A two-year process culminated in passing a resolution early this Spring affording a new formal mechanism for early consultation with the Faculty Senate on issues for which the faculty have primary responsibility. Specifically, the Commission on Faculty Affairs, the Commission on Research, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies now consult with the Faculty Senate at the beginning of and during the process of developing their resolutions. Senate members in turn consult with their units for immediate feedback that is discussed and formulated as formal recommendations back to the commissions, as well as a final recommendation sent directly to University Council. This inclusive process has incentivized more faculty to become more engaged in governance processes allowing broader participation and resulting in enhanced formulation of resolutions. Also, the President and Provost recently formed a task force of students, staff, faculty, and administrators that will continue to collect data and further examine the structure of shared governance for potential improvement.

Undergraduate Education

The Faculty Senate engaged a number of initiatives dealing with various aspects of undergraduate education, most notably the revisions of the Undergraduate Honor Code and the implementation plan for the Pathways General Education curriculum. The timely and effective communication proved to be highly collaborative and greatly benefited the revision process, which incorporated faculty recommendations into the respective resolutions culminating in much improved documents with more comprehensive buy-ins by the campus community.

New Faculty Category -- Collegiate Professors

In line with the new growth initiatives by the administration, the Commission on faculty Affairs proposed the creation of a new non-tenure track faculty category named Collegiate Professors to hire faculty at the rank of assistant, associate or full professors. The commission fully engaged the Faculty Senate and diligently addressed numerous faculty concerns in reaching the final resolution establishing this new category. As a result, the Senate overwhelmingly endorsed the resolution that is before the Board for approval.



## **B. Issues to Address in the Coming Year**

### Salary

The faculty are pleased with the progress achieved so far with the salary issue, and look forward to continued support to reaching our target of 60th percentile of our peers over the next few years. The faculty fully recognize that salary increases must be negotiated in the context of many pressing budget needs, but we believe that more competitive salaries are crucial for retaining current faculty as well as attracting new faculty particularly as we aspire to become a Destination Area for talent.

### Grievance Procedures

In collaboration with the Provost's Office, the Faculty Senate has engaged research for potentially restructuring its committees that address faculty issues. The three committees are Reconciliation, Review, and Ethics responsible for grievances, relations with supervisors, and charges of ethical misconduct. One option is to potentially establish an Ombuds Office that would coordinate grievance panels, as well as advise faculty of options available in cases where mediation is necessary and provide consultation as appropriate. The Commission on Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Senate will be considering these issues in the fall.

### Initiatives for Advancing Virginia Tech

This year the Faculty Senate made a concerted effort in becoming more engaged and responsive to resolutions and issues moving through governance and will continue to do so as Virginia Tech moves forward with envisioning its future beyond our current boundaries. There is much excitement around the strategic growth and advancement of the university, and the faculty appreciate the opportunity to have a representative to the Board of Visitors and look forward to our continued work together.