

Undergraduate Student Constituency Report
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
June 5, 2017

Presented by Gabe Cohen, Undergraduate Student Representative

Good afternoon Rector Chapman, President Sands, members of the Board, administration, and other distinguished guests. Most students are completed with college after they finish their last exam and when they receive their diploma. I still had one more paper to write on the state of student life at Virginia Tech and I am very fortunate to be sharing this with you all today.

In the short two months since we last met, Students have been hard at work making an impact both in our community and around the world. April is one of the busiest months of the school year and 2017 was no exception. Our commitment to Ut Prosim is as strong as ever with over 8,000 students helping to complete over 1,100 projects in the local community for the Big Event this year. Relay for Life at Virginia Tech kept its strong streak alive of the hosting the largest collegiate Relay for Life, by raising \$500,000 for the American Cancer Society.

This year also marked the 10 year anniversary of April 16th, 2007. Many of you had the opportunity to join us in remembrance over the weekend for a variety of events from a nighttime vigil to the 3.2 for 32 run. We also welcomed such guests as Senator Tim Kaine who was Governor of Virginia in 2007.

On May 12th, Virginia Tech welcomed its newest alumni with the class of 2017 as we listened to Regina Dugan and Sheryl Sandberg deliver the spring commencement address. Regina spoke of how her time at Virginia Tech taught her to dream big take advantage of opportunities. She taught us that sitting back and being passive about the future is not an option. Sheryl Sandberg talked about resilience but not just about resilience in oneself but the collective resilience of a community. I look forward to seeing the ways in which the class of 2017 shapes this world.

One of the highlights of my semester was hosting a student luncheon with President Sands, Provost Rikaks, Dr. Perillo, and Dr. Holloway. Seyi and I invited 15 students to engage in meaningful conversation about the future of this university. We touched on topics such as university growth, the future of education, our competitive climate, alumni relations and much more. These luncheons provide an avenue for students to bring issues directly to senior administrators and lead to concrete action items.

In late April the first message made for students through my initiative was sent over Canvas, expanding the potential for how students and the administration can communicate. This is a big step forward for the university and will lead to a more informed student body. This could not have happened without the work and effort of everyone in Technology Enhanced Learnings and online services, as well as the Division of Student Affairs Communications Department.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally introduce Seyi Olusina. He was selected in April as the next Undergraduate Representative to the Board and is an outstanding Hokie. Seyi is a senior studying Human Nutrition Food and Exercise from Beaverdam, Virginia. He is part of Dr. Frank

Shushok's Student Life Council and a member of the Student Alumni Associates. He has always cared about the growth of the University as demonstrated by his involvement in the O'Shaughnessy Renovation Committee. Seyi has also spent a lot of time engaging in conversations about race relations on campus and spent a semester working for and updating the Black Cultural Center.

Seyi has been hard at work over the past two months preparing for his term by frequently participating in informal training sessions, shadowing me at meetings, getting to know administrators, and working on his own initiatives. I am very proud of the drive and determination that Seyi has shown since April and would like to share one of the projects he has been developing. Through our student luncheons and other interactions on campus, Seyi and I have become increasingly aware of the separation that still exists between the Corps of Cadets and civilian students. Seyi has been meeting with key stakeholders to create a "Corps Day." The event would include a mix of physical activities and historical information. Through this, we hope for others to gain a deeper appreciation for the Corps and to erase the separation between the Corps members and civilians. This will build a more united student body who understands and respects each other. Tara and I have worked exceptionally well together this year to further develop the scope and duties of this position. I am confident that Brett and Seyi are going to do a great job representing the interests of students and keeping people engaged.

This year has drastically changed the way I view higher education as well as governance, and I know Virginia Tech is headed in the right direction. I have gained a better understanding for the types of experiences students have on campus and the different paths that we all choose to take. The work you all conduct in this room has a lasting impact that will affect Hokies long after your terms have ended and I cannot stress enough how critical it is for students to be involved in these decisions. The success of initiatives such as Beyond Boundaries and Destination Areas is built on convincing current and future students that we offer an education they could not possibly receive elsewhere.

I want to conclude by thanking all of the board members. You have shown a strong commitment to improving this university and the lives of current and future students. The decisions you make over the next few years and the questions you ask are going to shape how this university grows and develops. Please know that I will always be willing to serve this community in any way that I can and I look forward to seeing all that you accomplish.

Constituency Report

Tara D. Reel

Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

June 4, 2017

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

I would like to start by introducing the incoming graduate student representative, Brett Netto. Brett is a PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech working on his PhD in Planning, Governance and Globalization. Brett is the definition of servant leadership having served ten-years in law enforcement prior to his return to pursue higher education. I have known Brett through his activities at the university. Many of these efforts included improving graduate student life for so many. He continued this past year as vice president to the Graduate Student Assembly. He most recently participated in Dean DePauw's task force examining academic bullying. I have no doubt that he will serve the Board and the larger graduate student community with the same work ethic and commitment I have observed through the years.

I do want to briefly comment on why the work regarding academic bullying is important. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) defines academic bullying as "behavior at colleges and universities that tend 'to threaten, to intimidate, to humiliate or to isolate members of the working university environment to undermine reputation or job performance. It occurs frequently, and very often those who work in these environments are unaware of it." Bullying can be present anywhere a power dynamic exists. I know this work has only just begun, but I want to thank outgoing Faculty Senate President Monty Abbas for encouraging the discussion to happen at Faculty Senate between the Dean and faculty members. It is my understanding there are faculty members who have already started working on this issue. I hope that Brett will have many updates for you in the coming year.

My term this year included a focus on student health and providing outreach to our graduate students on other campuses. Soon the health and wellness room will return to the Graduate Life Center. This effort became a collaboration with the Graduate School, Cook Counseling, and Hokie Wellness. I appreciate every person who has and will continue to work on this effort. Our sleep deprived graduate students are excited about a potential napping pod that will be housed in this room.

I worked with our Roanoke students at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute starting in the fall semester when they brought an issue forward regarding paying comprehensive student fees for services but they experienced limited access to campus due to extended work hours. The Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs representatives met with the students on their campus to discuss their needs. I am happy to report there is work ongoing to provide a space for them along with possible counseling services. Working with these students gave me an opportunity to illustrate the day in the life of a graduate student. Being a graduate student requires a great deal of resiliency and sacrifice on our part and we rely on support from others. That is why we must work toward creating healthy environments and reasonable expectations so students can thrive and not just survive.

In closing, I want to pass along wishes and appreciation since this is my last report. To the administrators, I encourage you to continue to shape our future leaders here every single day in every interaction. Please continue to inspire, engage, and, most importantly, listen. You never know where we may be someday - sitting at this Board table or even sitting in the White House.

It has been one of my greatest honors to have this seat at the table with all of you. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to have this seat that not only allowed my voice to be heard but that of countless others.

Ut Prosim,

Tara D. Reel

Staff Senate Constituency Report
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
June 5, 2017
Presented by Alex Parrish, Staff Senate President

Good afternoon Rector Chapman, members of the Board of Visitors, President Sands, administrators and distinguished guests:

Since last we spoke, Staff Senate has successfully completed its largest undertaking of the year: The McComas Leadership Seminar. This annual event, established in honor of former Virginia Tech President James D. McComas, challenges staff to increase their leadership capacity in the spirit of *Ut Prosim*. This was especially true this year, as the theme of the day was, "Servant Leadership." Luminaries from around the campus were invited to speak, rendering a real all-star lineup. Wanda Dean, Patty Perillo, Sid Roy, Megan Seibel, Buzz Williams, and keynote Thanassis Rikakis brought insights from their own experience to help staff on their own journeys. We offer special thanks to Ross Meacham, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the day.

Another highly anticipated annual event is Staff Appreciation Day. Margie Murray and a team of volunteers have truly created a work of art in the execution of this massive undertaking. This year, we coordinated our communication efforts with the President's Office to inform staff of a move from the traditional location, the Rector Field House, to the Owens Dining Hall. The new site was a fantastic choice, in no small part because Owens is air-conditioned. Thousands of staff enjoyed a day of great food, tours, games, and giveaways. Margie roped in many of the president's staff to help with games, even recruiting her IT staff to run the horseshoe tournament. Glory does come in many forms.

This will be my last turn at the table, having accepted a new position which carries me away from the ranks of staff and into to the classification of Administrative Faculty. My successor is Robert Sebek, who I am pleased to report has far more experience in shared governance than I. Robert is a collections technology specialist at the library.

Sitting at the governance table with all of you has been a joy. Being from basketball-loving Kentucky, probably the biggest bragging point I take from this experience is, "I hung out with a guy who played in the NBA," but there are many high points from this past year. To be chosen by my peers, given this seat for a season and made a participant in this incredible collaborative, has been one of my great honors.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Parrish
President, Staff Senate

Faculty Constituency Report
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors June 4-5, 2017

Monty Abbas, President-VT Faculty Senate

Good afternoon Rector Chapman, President Sands, members of the Board, and all esteemed guests. I am honored to represent the Virginia Tech Faculty in delivering my fourth and final report to the BOV today, with updates on activities that we have been working on.

I am happy to see that you are all working hard to address faculty concerns, including salaries and compensation, and the consideration for a faculty club that can foster a collaborative and collegial environment as we move into a transdisciplinary future.

During the last two months and after my last report, the Faculty Senate completed several important tasks, including:

- Working with the Provost, the Faculty Senate had a joint meeting with department heads to discuss national/international benchmarking for departments and how separate that is from faculty review and promotion decisions. It was clear during the meeting that department heads' understanding and commitment to this new initiative is crucial to its success.
- The faculty senate passed a Resolution on Free Enquiry, emphasizing the role of scholarship, whether that is coupled with funding or not.
- The Faculty Senate passed a Resolution on Faculty Inclusion and Access to Opportunities, emphasizing access to university resources and relations for all.
- The Faculty Senate passed the Principles for the creation and implementation of a performance-based budget at Virginia Tech, emphasizing the need for faculty inclusion in the process and the need for reviewing administrative decisions. This is especially important at the departmental level.

We have also started a conversation with Dean DePauw on the Anti-bullying Initiatives. We will follow up on these resolutions and principles in the Fall semester, and we look forward to working with our administration on seeing them through implementation. I am sure Hans Robinson, my successor, will be excited with all the work on his plate. Hans Robinson is a very capable man—An Associate Professor in the Physics department, an alum of Boston University, a man of integrity, and a fellow musician. With my predecessor (Rami)'s research on poultry, and mine on transportation, we will work with Hans on removing physical barriers to chicken not crossing the road towards destination areas.

As I look back and reflect on all the work we have done this year, I feel privileged to represent the faculty at Virginia Tech and work with all of you. I want to sincerely thank you all for the very inspiring and rich experience and learning opportunities this year. Thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you today.

Sincerely,

Monty Abbas