

SUMMARY

Emeritus/Emerita Faculty Resolutions (10)

August 27, 2024

The title of emeritus or emerita is conferred on retired Virginia Tech faculty members, as defined in chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook, who have made exemplary contributions to the university and are recommended to the Board of Visitors for approval by the provost and president.

The following faculty members are recommended for emeritus or emerita designation at Virginia Tech.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (1)

Mary Marchant	Professor Emerita of Agricultural and Applied Economics
---------------	---

College of Engineering (6)

Thomas Brandon	Professor Emeritus of Civil and Environmental Engineering
----------------	---

Alexander Leonessa	Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering
--------------------	--

Luke Lester	Roanoke Electric Steel Professor Emeritus
-------------	---

Cameron Patterson	Associate Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering
-------------------	--

Joseph Tront	Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering
--------------	---

Bevlee Watford	Professor Emerita of Engineering Education, Associate Dean Emerita of the College of Engineering, and Executive Director Emerita of the Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity
----------------	--

College of Veterinary Medicine (2)

Linda Dahlgren	Professor Emerita of Large Animal Surgery
----------------	---

Dan Sponenberg	Professor Emeritus of Pathology
----------------	---------------------------------

Administration (1)

Kenneth E. Miller	Vice President for Finance and University Treasurer Emeritus
-------------------	---

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITA STATUS

WHEREAS, Mary Marchant, Ph.D. first came to Virginia Tech (VT) in 2006 to serve as associate dean and director of academic programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) and a full-time faculty member in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. Her academic career spans 34 years—17 at VT and 17 at the University of Kentucky (UK).

WHEREAS, she authored over 80 articles in over 20 different refereed journals and publications, one sole-authored book, seven edited journal volumes and conference proceedings; and built a research/teaching program funded by more than \$4.5M in grants and external funding, including highly competitive national grants--two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural and Food Research Initiative grants and five USDA National Research Initiative grants; and

WHEREAS, she brought national visibility to Virginia Tech through her award-winning research on U.S.-China agricultural trade including national awards from the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA), where co-editors Marchant and Wang received the 2019 AAEA Quality of Communication Award for their “U.S.-China Trade Dispute and Potential Impacts on Agriculture” 2018 *Choices* theme issue. More recently, co-authors Grant, Arita, Emlinger, Sydow and Marchant received the 2021 AAEA Outstanding *Choices* Article Award. Marchant served as co-editor of the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* and also received a Fulbright Distinguished Chair (Italy), AAEA Teaching Award, and the Southern Agricultural Economics Association Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, as CALS associate dean she promoted the scholarship of teaching and learning by sponsoring college teaching mini-grants, hosting innovative teaching workshops and providing additional financial support for faculty to develop national teaching grant proposals. She and her team promoted the use of innovative teaching methods including student engagement, active learning, critical thinking skills, undergraduate research, service learning, experiential activities, international experiences, and internships; enhanced college diversity efforts and STEM projects; worked with departments to award a record number of scholarships; and provided support for enrollment growth in the college; and

WHEREAS, she made early contributions to diversity at the national level within her discipline, through her book *Achieving Diversity: The Status and Progress of Women & African Americans in the Agricultural Economics Profession*, a series of national AAEA workshops, and numerous refereed journal articles. While at VT, Marchant served as principal investigator for the Food and Agricultural Information System (FAEIS), a nationwide database of student enrollment and degrees awarded by gender and race in agriculture and related sciences for over 200 higher education institutions. Under her leadership, her team distributed 60 FAEIS newsletters to over 1,800 national leaders in agriculture, of which 26 focused on diversity; and

WHEREAS, over her career, Marchant taught 16 different courses at VT and UK to

nearly 3,000 students. Her teaching philosophy sought to enhance students' academic success and professional development. For undergraduates, this meant incorporating classroom activities that highlight in demand workforce skills, including communication and teamwork. For graduate students, this meant working with students to publish papers in academic journals and present results at scholarly conferences. She co-authored articles with 34 students on 47 peer-reviewed publications, including 31 journal articles, and over 60 presentations at professional meetings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Mary Marchant for her distinguished service to the university with the title of Professor Emerita of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Mary Marchant, Ph.D. for emerita status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 38 years, Thomas L. Brandon, Ph.D. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Charles E. Via, Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the College of Engineering; and

WHEREAS, he made significant contributions to the field of civil engineering through his work in the general area of geotechnical engineering, and in the specific areas of laboratory testing of soil for geotechnical engineering properties, slope stability, and soil strength; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, he developed and taught undergraduate and graduate courses, including undergraduate geotechnical engineering and graduate-level courses in advanced soil testing for engineering purposes, seepage and earth structures, and soil behavior; and

WHEREAS, throughout his long career he taught thousands of civil engineering students in many areas of geotechnical engineering and advised numerous graduate students through their M.S. and Ph.D. research work; and

WHEREAS, through his leadership as director and through his technical expertise and dedication he significantly contributed to the establishment of the W.C. English Geotechnical Research Laboratory, which is recognized one of the premier geotechnical research laboratories in the USA; and,

WHEREAS, he contributed to the service missions of the department, college, university and profession including the development of the Center for Geotechnical Practice and Research as a successful industry affiliates program; and,

WHEREAS, he exemplified the *Ut Prosim* spirit of Virginia Tech through his membership in the Interagency Performance Evaluation Taskforce, which conducted the main investigation of the failure of the flood control system in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, and through his engineering analysis and contributions to the final taskforce report.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Thomas L. Brandon for his distinguished service to the university with the title Professor Emeritus of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Thomas L. Brandon Ph.D., P.E., for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 15 years, Alexander Leonessa, Ph.D. has faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of Mechanical Engineering beginning as an assistant professor, then as an associate professor, and finally as a professor; and

WHEREAS, he has made significant contributions to control theory and robotics; autonomous ground, aerial, surface and underwater vehicles; humanoids and rehabilitation robotics; exoskeletons; and human-robot interaction, publishing 51 refereed journal articles, 91 peer-reviewed conference proceedings, one book, three book chapters, one patent; and

WHEREAS, he has ably served the department, college, university, and profession as a member, chair/co-chair, and officer of numerous committees, boards, panels, and conference sessions; served as associate department head for strategic initiatives; and served as a program director at the National Science Foundation; and

WHEREAS, he has directed a leading research group in the areas of robotics and autonomous vehicles resulting in 40 externally funded research projects and over \$26M of total external research funding; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, he has taught a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate courses ranging across the mechanical engineering curriculum, placing strong emphasis on standards and student learning; and

WHEREAS, he has advised 32 students on master's theses and 17 on doctoral dissertations and helped them develop successful careers in both academic and industrial settings; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Alexander Leonessa for his distinguished service to the university with the title Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Alexander Leonessa, Ph.D. for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 11 years, Luke F. Lester, Ph.D. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member, the Roanoke Electric Steel Professor, and department head in the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) in the College of Engineering; and

WHEREAS, he has upheld Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in his teaching, research and service responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, he made significant contributions to the department and college through his leadership as department head, diversifying the department and increasing the number of women faculty threefold; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, research expenditures increased by \$30M. ECE is now ranked number four nationally in electrical and electronic engineering according to the U.S News and World Report 2023 Best Global Universities rankings. Based on the most recent data, ECE has also risen four places over the past decade to the number eight spot in the National Science Foundation (NSF) Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey for research expenditures in electrical, electronic and communications engineering. ECE's current \$67.4M of research expenditures is an all-time high for the department and represents 11.4% of the university's total.

WHEREAS, under his leadership, student success increased, undergraduates have attained record four-year and five-year graduation rates, and the department's undergraduate enrollment has grown to over 1,000 students, the four-year graduation rate has increased, and the number of B.S. degrees granted in the department has doubled; and

WHEREAS, he led the effort to completely redesign the undergraduate curriculum as principal investigator of a highly competitive six-year NSF Revolutionizing Engineering Departments (RED) grant. The groundbreaking new curriculum offers twelve new majors, an individualized secondary focus, a two-semester industry sponsored capstone experience, and a completely overhauled sophomore year. Under his leadership, the ECE curriculum has been transformed from two narrowly focused degree programs into a program that recruits and retains a wider pool of students and prepares them to be holistic "T-shaped" professionals for a broader range of careers; and

WHEREAS, he served as president of the Southeast ECE Department Heads Association and hosted the annual meeting of the heads in Blacksburg and served as co-chair of the VT Department Heads Executive Council; and

WHEREAS, he served as editor-in-chief of the *IEEE Journal of Selected Topics in Quantum Electronics*, one of the most prestigious journals in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Photonics Society

WHEREAS, he advised numerous students on master's and doctoral dissertations and helped them develop successful careers in both academic and industrial settings; and

WHEREAS, he provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, college, and the university through dedicated service on numerous committees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Luke F. Lester for his distinguished service to the university with the title Roanoke Electric Steel Professor Emeritus.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Luke F. Lester, Ph.D. for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 20 years, Cameron D. Patterson, Ph.D. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the College of Engineering; and

WHEREAS, he has upheld Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in his teaching, research and service responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, he made significant contributions to software-defined hardware through his work in configurable, high performance and heterogeneous computing for embedded and autonomous systems, as well as run-time verification; and

WHEREAS, he ably served the community as an Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Program Evaluator; and

WHEREAS, he supported sophomore curriculum and computer engineering senior design revisions; and

WHEREAS, he taught a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate courses ranging across the computer engineering curriculum, placing strong emphasis on standards and student learning; and

WHEREAS, he advised numerous students on master's and doctoral dissertations and helped them develop successful careers in both academic and industrial settings; and

WHEREAS, he provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, college, and university through dedicated service on numerous committees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Cameron Patterson for his distinguished service to the university with the title Associate Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Cameron D. Patterson, Ph.D. for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 45 years, Joseph G. Tront, Ph.D. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) in the College of Engineering (COE); and served as the University's Faculty Athletics Representative to the NCAA and the ACC.

WHEREAS, he has upheld Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in his teaching, research and service responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, he made significant contributions to the field of computer engineering through his work in cybersecurity focusing on network and computer security; as well as engineering education through his groundbreaking work on the use of e-ink and touch tablet PCs; and

WHEREAS, he ably served the community as a professor; and held the W.S. "Pete" White Chaired Professorship of Innovation in Engineering Education in COE; and

WHEREAS, he supported the ECE department and the COE as assistant dean of engineering for almost ten years; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, he taught a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate courses ranging across computer and electrical engineering curricula, placing strong emphasis on excellence standards and student learning; and

WHEREAS, he directed numerous students on master's and doctoral dissertations and helped them develop successful careers in academic, government and industrial settings; and

WHEREAS, he was principal or co-principal investigator on more than 50 research grants; and

WHEREAS, he authored or co-authored over 148 refereed articles, seven books, eight book chapters, and two U.S. patents; and

WHEREAS, he provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, college, and university through dedicated service on numerous committees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Joseph G. Tront for his distinguished service to the university with the title Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Joseph G. Tront, Ph.D. for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITA STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 32 years, Beville Watford, Ph.D. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, as the first person promoted to professor in the Department of Engineering Education and as an Associate Dean in the College of College of Engineering; and

WHEREAS, she has made unparalleled contributions to engineering education and diversity throughout her career at Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, as associate dean of equity and engagement, professor of engineering education, and founding executive director of the Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity (CEED), Dr. Watford's visionary leadership has revolutionized diversity and inclusion in engineering; and

WHEREAS, she established CEED in 1992 and has since garnered over \$20M for initiatives supporting underrepresented students, including peer mentoring for incoming freshmen, Hypatia and Galileo engineering living learning communities, and the transformative ASPIRE/STEP summer bridge program; and

WHEREAS, she has held prestigious positions of national leadership including president of the Women in Engineering ProActive Network (WEPAN), president of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), and is currently a distinguished member of the National Science Board; and

WHEREAS, she has received numerous awards including the Virginia Tech Black Alumni Career Achievement Award, Black Engineer of the Year, Educator Award, NAMEPA President's Award, NSBE-ExxonMobil Impact Award, American Society for Engineering Education Fellow, the ABET Claire Felbinger Diversity Award, and the prestigious WEPAN Founders Award; and

WHEREAS, her achievements epitomize an unwavering commitment to academic excellence in engineering education, to pedagogical innovation, and to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in engineering, cementing her status as a transformative and visionary figure in her field.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Beville Watford for her distinguished service to the university with the title of Professor Emerita of Engineering Education, Associate Dean Emerita of the College of Engineering, and Executive Director Emerita of the Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Beville Watford, Ph.D. for emerita professor status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITA STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 19 years, Linda Dahlgren, D.V.M., Ph.D., D.A.C.V.S. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences in the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine (VMCVM); and

WHEREAS, she has demonstrated a commitment to the Principles of Community in her work with students and colleagues; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, she taught and lectured in veterinary and graduate courses; and

WHEREAS, she directed numerous master's and doctoral students, helped them develop successful careers; and

WHEREAS, she was principal or co-principal investigator on grants researching tendon and ligament healing; and

WHEREAS, she authored or co-authored over 50 refereed journal articles, book chapters, and reviews; and

WHEREAS, she received numerous professional honors and awards, including the Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence and the VT Graduate School Outstanding Mentor Award for the VMCVM; and

WHEREAS, she provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, the college, and the university through dedicated service on numerous committees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. Linda Dahlgren for her distinguished service to the university with the title of Professor Emerita of Large Animal Surgery.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Linda Dahlgren, D.V.M, Ph.D., D.A.C.V.S. for emerita status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 42 years, D. Phillip Sponenberg, D.V.M., Ph.D., faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, he taught and lectured in veterinary and graduate courses; and

WHEREAS, he made significant contributions through clinical service in anatomic pathology and helped veterinary students develop successful careers; and

WHEREAS, he conducted research in the conservation of rare breeds of livestock; and

WHEREAS, he authored or co-authored 17 books, 33 chapters, 127 refereed papers, 82 abstracts, and 448 papers for a lay or extension audience; and

WHEREAS, he received numerous professional honors and awards, including the 2019 Alumni Award for Excellence in International Outreach at Virginia Tech and the 2022 Outstanding Faculty Award at Connect 2022; and

WHEREAS, he provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, the college, and the university through dedicated service on numerous committees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. D. Phillip Sponenberg for his distinguished service to the university with the title of Professor Emeritus of Pathology.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending D. Phillip Sponenberg, D.V.M., Ph.D., for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, Kenneth E. Miller, an alumnus of Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in accounting, returned to his alma mater in 1988 as the manager of general accounting, held various titles including university controller, and ultimately served as vice president for finance and university treasurer until his retirement in 2024; and

WHEREAS, throughout each of his roles at the university, Ken's integrity, commitment to the university's motto *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), strong leadership, stewardship, collaboration, and transparency fostered mutually beneficial and respectful relationships across the university and the Commonwealth, leading to the development of optimal solutions; and throughout his tenure, Ken was a teacher who worked to share his experiences and expertise, elevating the knowledge of others; and

WHEREAS, Ken prioritized administrative efficiencies and strengthening internal controls, supporting the university's transition to electronic accounting systems. Throughout his career, Ken led or directly supported the implementation of numerous systems and process automations, including the Financial Reporting System, Banner, HokieMart, Chrome River, Finance Transaction Review, Analysis, and Certification System (FINTRACS), Electronic Effort Reporting System, Comprehensive Rate Information System and Web Space Survey, electronic billing and payments systems for students, robotic process automation activities, and many others; and

WHEREAS, Ken played an instrumental role in guiding the university through the unprecedented financial, budgetary, and procurement challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic, with Virginia Tech emerging from this uncertain period in a strong financial position, enabling the advancement of university priorities; and

WHEREAS, in line with the university's commitment to transparency, accountability, and excellent stewardship, Ken led the implementation of comprehensive process changes in support of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements for public colleges and universities. He steered the Controller's Office through a transformation of the university's financial reporting model and implemented significant changes to reporting processes in the areas of pension liabilities and expenses, post-employment benefits liabilities and expenses, and leases; and

WHEREAS, an esteemed higher education leader in Virginia, Ken is renowned for his extensive knowledge in accounting, taxation, and finance, as well as his broad institutional knowledge of Virginia Tech and deep understanding of the higher education landscape and the commonwealth's educational culture and history. His work was significant to the analysis and implementation of the restructuring components within the state's Higher Education Restructuring Act of 2005 and the Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Visitors expresses appreciation to Kenneth E. Miller for his dedicated commitment to the values he honed as a student at Virginia Tech and his significant contributions to the regional, national,

and international success of the university, and recognizes him for his distinguished service in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) with the title Vice President for Finance and University Treasurer Emeritus.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Kenneth E. Miller for emeritus status be approved.

August 28, 2024