

## Committee Minutes

### ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 24, 2025

**Committee Members Present:** Nancy Dye (chair), Sandy Davis, William Holtzman\*, Donald Horsley, Letitia Long, J. Pearson, Jeanne Stosser

*\*One Board member participated remotely from Florida while on vacation in accordance with Code of Virginia §2.2-3708.3(B). A quorum was physically present.*

**Board Members Present:** Ed Baine (rector), David Calhoun, Anna James, Starlette Johnson, Ryan McCarthy, Jim Miller, John Rocovich

**Constituent Representatives Present:** Janice Austin (A/P faculty representative), Leslie Orellana (undergraduate student representative), Rachel Miles (faculty representative), William Poland (graduate and professional student representative).

**Guests:** Lisa Abbott, Zackaria Al-Husainawi, Simon Allen, Lauren Augustine, Ella Aussey, William Babb, Bradley Babcock, Lauren Bach, James Bailey, Callan Bartel, Kenneth Belcher, Lisa Belden, Laura Belmonte, Haley Bennett, Ashleigh Bingham, Harrison Blythe, Michael Borowski, Stephanie Brady, James Bridgeforth, David Brunisma, Rebecca Caldwell, Julie Carlson, Gregory Carter, Kaitlin Carter, Caleb Charpentier, Shayan Choudhry, Megan Christle, Kimberly Clark, Cyril Clarke, Emma Clevinger, Lance Collins, Al Cooper, Reeve Cordice, Catherine Cotrupi, Paige Crane, Thomas Crawford, Chandler Crean, Rachel Dalton, Kairavi Dandekar, Jessica Davis, Meaghan Dee, Benjamin D'Elia, Michelle Deramo, Andrew Dolbin-MacNab, Holli Drewry, Jared Duffy, Cedric Dunham Iii, Kevin Dye, Corey Earles, Jeffrey Earley, Eric Earnhart, Matthew Ebert, Alexander Efird, Abbey Erwin, Juan Espinoza, Ronald Fricker, Michael Friedlander, Ian Friend, Rachel Gabriele, Cliff Gaines, Jennifer Gallagher, Bryan Garey, , Edward Gitre, Martha Glass, April Goode, Ellington Graves, Rebekah Gunn, Andrew Gunsch, Gia Ha, Nina Ha, Allison Hagee, Chelsea Haines, Brandon Hall, Silke Hauf, Janet Hilder, Timothy Hodge, Rachel Holloway, Elizabeth Hooper, Kristen Houston, Bailey Howell, Cyndi Hutchison, Alexis Isaac, Elizabeth Jamison, Robin Jones, Thomas Jones, Maryam Kamran, Eric Kaufman, Frances Keene, Nicholas Kocz, Meghan Kuhn, Sharon Kurek, Katherine Lafon, Ashley Leduc, Walter Lee, Kimberly Loeffert, Madeleine Macdougall, Meghan Madel, Robert Mann, Sarah Margolis, Sandra Martin, Elizabeth McClanahan, Megan McHenry, Steven McKnight, Nancy Meacham, Jessica Meltsner, Joseph Merola, Mallory Miller, Joseph Mills, Laurel Miner, Jeffrey Mitchell, Ronnie Mondal, Mike Mulhare, John Nuckols, Shane Justin Nuuhiwa, Kelly Oaks, Kim O'Rourke, Marilyn Ortega, Stephanie Overton, Sarah Ovink, Mark Owczarski, Anna Gabrielle Patarinski, Jamie Penven, Charles Phlegar, Alexandra Pirkle, Lauren Pollard, Jonathan Porter, Courtney Powell, Menah Pratt, Kathryn Rappold, Patricia Raun, Ashley Reed, Susanna Rinehart, Daniel Robertson, Tanya Rogers, Julia Ross, Karen Sanders, Tim Sands, Saonee Sarker, Ryan Saunders, Glenda Scales, Kiera Schneiderman, Orlando Schwery, Amy Sebring, Rohsaan Settle, Brennan Shepard, Damira Shields, Oliver Shuey, Mark Sikes, Christine Smith, Jaida Smith, Maya Snyder, Tristan Southerland, Richard Sparks, Michael Staples, Michael Stowe, Emma Stubbe, Dan Sui, Aimee Surprenant, Don Taylor, Dwyn

Taylor, Johnathan Taylor, John Clark Teglas, Alexander Thomas, Cathryn Thomas, Crasha Townsend, Timberly Tran, Mary Trigiani, Josef Uyeda, Jose Vargas-Muniz, Peggy Vilardo, Heather Wagoner, Haleigh Wallace, Bevelee Watford, Jennifer Wayne, Shauna Webb, Melinda West, Sarah Wickwire, Stacey Wilkerson, Lisa Wilkes, Iyaira Williams, Wendi Williams, Tiffany Willis, Paul Winistorfer, Christopher Wise, Christopher Yianilos

*\*Note: All guests who attended this committee meeting are reflected in the above list; however, this meeting immediately followed the open session of the Finance and Resource Management Committee, so the list above may include some guests who attended that meeting but did not stay for the entirety of the ARSA committee meeting.*

## **OPEN SESSION**

**1. Welcome.** N. Dye, chair of the committee, welcomed attendees to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 3:53 pm.

### **2. Review and Approval of Open Session Agenda.**

**3. Consent Agenda Items.** Approval of November 19, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes; Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Description of Administrative Support for University Distinguished Professors; Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Description of Clinical Faculty Ranks; Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Ethics of Intimate Relationships Involving Faculty; Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Promotion and Tenure and Related Appeals; Resolution for Closure of Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management.

**The committee voted unanimously to approve the Open Session Agenda as presented including approval of all Consent Agenda items.**

**4. Resolution to Approve Bachelor of Science Degree Designation in Geography.** Tom Crawford, chair of the Department of Geography, provided an overview of a proposed new B.S. degree designation in Geography to complement the existing B.A. degree in Geography. The B.S. designation offers a more scientific specialization for students with courses in mathematics, geographic information systems (GIS), programming, and remote sensing that will prepare them to be competitive for positions in fields such as cartography and GIS analysis.

**The committee voted unanimously to approve the Bachelor of Science Degree Designation in Geography.**

### **5. Provost's Update.**

#### **Recruitment of Senior Leaders**

C. Clarke, executive vice president and provost, provided updates to the committee on several senior searches. The search for the new dean of the Honors College is complete and Dr. Becky Bott-Knutson will be joining Virginia Tech on July 1. Dr. Bott-Knutson is an animal scientist and academic leader, currently serving as Dean of the Honors College at South Dakota State University. With Paul Winistorfer's retirement

approaching, the search for the next dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment is also well underway, with on-campus finalist interviews beginning next week.

### **Academic Resource Alignment**

Dr. Clarke provided the committee with an update on the Academic Resource Alignment project, an overview and discussion of which occurred at the BOV retreat in August 2024. The goal of the project is to review all academic programs and to develop preliminary recommendations for sunseting, redirecting, or strengthening programs in alignment with Virginia Tech's scope of responsibility aligned with its land grant mission as well as its prioritized areas of distinction, with attention given to student interest, career success, strategic relevance.

The committee was appointed, chaired by the provost and includes college leaders (deans, associate deans, department heads) and faculty senate representatives, with support from an administrative team and an organizational excellence advisor. The specific charge given to the committee was to identify meaningful criteria to enable quantitative and qualitative assessment of courses and academic programs; conduct a preliminary university-wide review of all courses and programs to identify those requiring in-depth analysis in consultation with academic departments and deans; make recommendations, based on the evaluative criteria, regarding courses and programs that should be discontinued, realigned, or strengthened; work with Academic Resource Management to estimate financial impact of recommendations, to include personnel expenses and impact on PIBB allocations; make recommendations for a routinized process of review and recommendation for ongoing assessment of academic resource alignment.

To date, good progress is being made. Meaningful quantitative data have been identified and compiled across all academic departments, including degrees conferred; student credit hours per instructional FTE; student credit hours; enrollment; cost and revenue. The outcome of the quantitative analysis is that a number of programs have been identified for further in-depth review involving academic stakeholder input. This review will be mostly qualitative in nature and place the initial data sets in the context of each departments strategy and growth potential. External comment will also be solicited to ensure that programs are aligned with stakeholder interests. Committee recommendations are due in May 2025.

**6. Overview of Promotion and Tenure Process.** R. Fricker, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, provided an overview of the promotion and tenure process, situating it within the broader context of why tenure exists and what it enables. Tenure serves as a cornerstone of academic excellence, fulfilling several vital functions and developing world-class scholars who will drive Virginia Tech towards Global Distinction. Every R1 university offers tenure, so it is key to maintaining institutional competitiveness by attracting and retaining top scholars. Tenure also safeguards academic freedom, allowing faculty to pursue research without external interference, and fosters a stable intellectual workforce capable of making long-term contributions to their fields. These principles directly align with Virginia Tech's commitment to excellence and its global distinction aspirations.

Dr. Fricker underscored that faculty are subject to continuous and rigorous evaluation. Internally, faculty have annual merit-based performance reviews. Pre-tenure faculty undergo additional formal assessments in their second and fourth years to ensure they are making adequate progress toward tenure. Even after tenure is granted, faculty are reviewed three to five years after promotion. Externally, given the competitive nature of academia, faculty must consistently demonstrate excellence through peer-reviewed publications, external research funding, and recognition via prestigious awards and honors.

Tenure-track faculty are evaluated for promotion and tenure within the framework of the university's tripartite mission: scholarship, teaching, and service. Candidates compile a detailed dossier, often exceeding 100 pages, that documents their academic career in its entirety—including publications, grants, courses taught, and student mentorship. At least four external reviewers who are distinguished experts in the candidate's field provide independent assessments of the faculty member's scholarship.

Dr. Fricker underscored that faculty are subject to continuous and rigorous evaluation. It begins at the department level, where faculty committees and department heads conduct initial reviews. The case then advances to the college level, where deans and committees undertake further assessments before forwarding dossiers to the university level. Chaired by the provost, the university-wide committee evaluates all cases for tenure and/or promotion. Ultimately, the provost and president make final determinations, presenting recommended candidates to the Board of Visitors for approval in June.

To illustrate the value of tenure, Dr. Fricker highlighted two compelling examples. Dr. Marc Edwards, a professor of environmental and water resources engineering, joined Virginia Tech in 1997 and is widely recognized for his pioneering work exposing lead contamination in drinking water. His early research in Washington, D.C., uncovered dangerously high lead levels in municipal water supplies—a discovery that led to significant resistance from regulatory agencies, including attempts to cut his funding and suppress his findings. Yet, tenure protected his ability to persist in his research, ultimately prompting a congressional inquiry and driving national policy changes. Dr. Edwards' career exemplifies how tenure safeguards academic freedom, ensuring that faculty can pursue research even when the findings are initially unpopular.

A second example is Dr. Linsey Marr, a professor of civil and environmental engineering who joined Virginia Tech in 2003. Initially focusing on the interaction between engineered nanomaterials and the atmosphere, she later expanded her research to investigate airborne pathogens. For years, she studied the aerosol transmission of viruses such as influenza—an area of research that remained niche and underappreciated until the COVID-19 pandemic. At that critical moment, her work fundamentally reshaped public health guidelines, shifting the scientific consensus on how the virus spread. Dr. Marr's career demonstrates how tenure enables faculty to pursue research that may not have immediate economic returns but can ultimately lead to groundbreaking societal impact.

These examples demonstrate that tenure is not merely a professional milestone—it is a long-term investment in world-class faculty, fostering the kind of transformative research

that defines Virginia Tech's academic reputation. Recognizing the importance of this investment, the university approaches the promotion and tenure process with the utmost diligence.

## **7. Update on Residential Well-Being Model and Living Learning Communities.**

Frances Keene, Vice President for Student Affairs, provided the committee with an update on the residential well-being model and Living Learning Programs (LLPs) at Virginia Tech. Like many universities, Virginia Tech has a commitment to housing students on campus and also has a longstanding commitment to housing first-year students. The university's educational goals are best accomplished when students' academic endeavors are integrated with a thoughtfully constructed, supportive, social environment, equipping them with skills to be prepared for life and the workforce after graduation. Living on-campus and providing thoughtful academic, social and well-being programs in residence halls is recognized as a significant factor for positively influencing student academic and social outcomes. Recent research demonstrates positive outcomes for first-generation low-income students who live on campus, including a significantly higher sense of belonging, a more welcoming perception of campus, and higher resilience. Research also shows positive academic outcomes like higher GPAs and retention rates for residential students compared to their peers who do not live on-campus.

In today's environment, investing in students' mental health is critical to their academic and personal success. For many years, Virginia Tech has participated in the national Healthy Minds study. In 2023-2024, 75% of students nationally reported academic impairment due to mental health concerns. In response to the very real concerns about student mental health, Virginia Tech created Residential Well-Being (RWB), a new staffing and programmatic approach for residential living based on public health principles. RWB is connected with multiple Student Affairs departments including Hokie Wellness, Cook Counseling Center, and the Dean of Students Office, bringing resources and programming to students when they need it, where they live.

Over the last three years, the residential well-being model has been studied through various methods, including a six-week residential experience survey, which can be compared with several national assessments. Virginia Tech students living on campus have reported a higher sense of well-being than the national average (Health Minds Study, 2023-4), and there has been a 16% reduction in loneliness since the model's launch in 2021. Virginia Tech students living on campus have also reported a higher sense of belonging than the national average (National College Health Assessment, Fall 2023).

While every student living on campus benefits from the work of RWB, Living-learning programs (LLP) are selected *by students*, and feature purposeful integration of their academic and co-curricular experiences. Each living-learning program offers unique academic and social programming, structured peer mentorship, and faculty leadership. There are well-documented academic benefits for students in living-learning programs, including higher grade point averages for LLP participants compared to their non-LLP peers, increased retention, and increased degree attainment. Looking at Virginia Tech academic data, students in LLPs have a higher first-semester GPA (3.23) than their non-

LLP peers (3.17). For example, Galileo and Hypatia LLPs house engineering students. One of their goals is to support first-year student academic success. In 2023-2024, Hypatia had an overall GPA of 3.31 and Galileo had an overall GPA of 3.29, compared to a lower non-LLP GPA of 3.25. Additionally, first-year LLP students have a 93% retention rate compared to first-year students who live off campus (81%). Transfer students have a 93% retention rate compared to 90% for non-LLP transfer students (2023). The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, a signature leadership development program at Virginia Tech, highlights the best practice of living-learning programs and has been the longest standing LLP at the university. Virginia Tech is recognized nationally for living-learning programs ranking in the top 17 of learning community programs in the United States for the past four years.

As an illustrative example of the impact of LLPs: Daisy Yates, a senior from Richmond and member of the Honors College, decided to live in the Honors Residential Commons (HRC), a living-learning program that has undergraduate and graduate students from all Virginia Tech colleges, as well as a live-in faculty principal. In the HRC, Daisy met her Residential Well-Being student leader, and several upper division students who then connected her to other students but more importantly, to opportunities that were available to her that she did not know existed. She was encouraged to participate in leadership development programs and has since become a leader and mentor to a new group of first years. Daisy has encouraged these students to develop leadership skills, to get involved on campus, and to connect with their academic interests.

**8. Discussion of “Principles Guiding Virginia Tech’s Policies and Practices” (discussion draft).** C. Clarke and T. Sands shared a draft document of principles the university may use in making decisions moving forward. Not to be confused with the Principles of Community, this is instead a conceptual framework to guide responses to the Dear Colleague Letter and other changes in state and federal law and adapt to the changing environment for higher education.

The principles document confirms Virginia Tech’s commitment to the necessity of a diverse learning environment and an inclusive community in which all students and employees can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Similar interest in these principles was expressed by the Virginia Governor in his 2022 Executive Order creating a Chief Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion Officer. That Executive Order stated: “Yet, we acknowledge that too many of our citizens have not received the equal opportunity they deserve, and we recognize that diversity when genuinely embraced strengthens our Commonwealth. Every Virginian deserves dignity and respect, deserves the opportunity to pursue their dreams and deserves inclusion in the Virginia family.” This sentiment was also expressed in the first two Whereas statements included in a resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) that will be considered by the board later in their meeting.

The university has complied with the law, as confirmed by oversight by the Office of Civil Rights Compliance (OCR). With the exception of the rescinding of Executive Order 11246 (1965) relating to affirmative action, the law has not changed, and is unlikely to change

until the federal courts complete their deliberation and/or Congress acts. Nevertheless, the Dear Colleague Letter from OCR represents an interpretation of law that must be carefully considered, because failure to follow the guidance could place the university in jeopardy. This concern falls well within the responsibility of the BOV and university leadership.

In addition to confirming that Virginia Tech does not discriminate for, or against, any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, or national origin, these guidelines include two principles that seek to confirm core commitments of the university – freedom of expression and assembly, subject to time, manner and place and academic freedom. The latter includes the freedom to pursue scholarly interests across broad topic areas relevant to a faculty member's disciplinary assignment and freedom of students to pursue lines of study in accordance with their interest.

Two other principles address requirements that are anticipated to be of particular interest to the OCR – that the university will not require as a condition of admission, employment, promotion or advancement, that a student or an employee undergo training, education, coursework, or other pedagogy involving DEI and that there will be no requirement as a condition of admission, employment, promotion or advancement the signing of or assent to a statement, code of conduct, work, program, or plan, or similar device involving DEI.

In addition to these areas of consideration, the university acknowledges that deliberation and guidance is needed to determine whether a fairly large number of programs, events and functions may need to be retained in their current form, revised or discontinued. To that end, a consultant has been engaged to guide the university.

**9. Motion to Begin Closed Session.** J. Stosser made a motion for the committee to enter into closed session to discuss the appointment of faculty members to emerita or emeritus status, the appointment of faculty members to endowed chairs, professorships, or fellowships, the reappointment of faculty members to endowed chairs, professorships, and fellowships, the appointment of faculty members to Alumni Distinguished Professor, the appointment of faculty members to University Distinguished Professor, the approval of faculty appointments with tenure, the approval of faculty appointments with tenure-to-title, the approval of faculty research leaves, individual faculty performance and salaries and personnel changes, legal issues related to Federal and state law; and consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual and probable litigation, pursuant to section 2.2-3711(A)(1)(7), Code of Virginia, as amended. The motion was seconded by D. Horsley, and the committee voted unanimously to enter closed session.

**10. Motion to End Closed Session.** D. Horsely made a motion to end closed session, confirming that Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee convened in closed session pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provision of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act, certifying that the closed session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law, and certifying that to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempt from open session requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed session to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed, or

considered by the Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors. The motion was seconded by J. Pearson, and the committee voted unanimously to end the closed session.

**11. Report of Closed Session Items.** The committee reconvened in open session at 6:12pm. In Closed Session, the committee considered 19 appointments to emerita or emeritus status, 5 appointments to endowed chairs, professorships, or fellowships, one appointment to University Distinguished Professor, one appointment to Alumni Distinguished Professor, two appointments with tenure, two appointments with tenure-to-title, 90 faculty research leaves, and reviewed individual faculty performance, salaries, personnel changes, and consulted with legal counsel on legal issues pertaining to Federal and state law and matters pertaining to actual and probable litigation.

**12. Resolution Regarding the Presidential Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** The committee considered a resolution regarding actions the university will take in response to guidance from the United States Department of Education and the U.S. Attorney General to assure full compliance with the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other federal civil rights laws.

S. Davis made a motion to amend the resolution, which was seconded by a committee member and was approved unanimously by the committee.

**The committee then unanimously approved the resolution as amended.**

**13. Closing Remarks and Adjourn.** N. Dye offered brief remarks. The meeting concluded at 6:28 pm.



## Open Session Agenda

### ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 24, 2025

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Reporting Responsibility</u>
1. <b>Welcome</b>	N. Dye
2. <b>Review and Approve Open Session Agenda</b>	N. Dye
3. <b>Consent Agenda</b>	N. Dye
a. Approval of November 19, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes	
* b. Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Description of Administrative Support for University Distinguished Professors	
* c. Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Description of Clinical Faculty Ranks	
* d. Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Ethics of Intimate Relationships Involving Faculty	
* e. Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Promotion and Tenure and Related Appeals	
* f. Resolution for Closure of Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management	
* 4. <b>Resolution to Approve Bachelor of Science Degree Designation in Geography</b>	T. Crawford
5. <b>Provost's Update and Discussion</b>	C. Clarke
6. <b>Overview of Promotion &amp; Tenure Process</b>	R. Fricker
7. <b>Update on Residential Well-Being Model and Living Learning Communities</b>	F. Keene
8. <b>Discussion of "Principles Guiding Virginia Tech's Policies and Practices" (discussion draft)</b>	T. Sands C. Clarke
9. <b>Motion to Begin Closed Session</b>	N. Dye

\* Requires Full Board Approval

# Discusses Enterprise Risk Management topic(s)

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| <b>10. Motion to End Closed Session</b>  | N. Dye |
| <b>11. Report of Closed Session Action Items</b>   | N. Dye |
| <b>* 12. Resolution Regarding the Presidential Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b> | N. Dye |
| <b>13. Closing Remarks and Adjourn</b>   | N. Dye |

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\* Requires Full Board Approval

# Discusses Enterprise Risk Management topic(s)

**Closed Session Agenda**  
**ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**March 24, 2025**

<b><u>Agenda Item</u></b>	<b><u>Reporting Responsibility</u></b>
* 1. Resolution to Approve Appointments to Emeritus/a Status (19)	R. Fricker
* 2. Resolution to Approve Appointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, or Fellowships (15)	R. Fricker
* 3. Resolution to Approve Reappointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, or Fellowships (2)	R. Fricker
* 4. Resolution to Approve Appointments to University Distinguished Professor (1)	R. Fricker
* 5. Resolution to Approve Appointments to Alumni Distinguished Professor (1)	R. Fricker
* 6. Resolution to Approve Appointments with Tenure (2)	R. Fricker
* 7. Resolution to Approve Appointments with Tenure-to-Title (2)	R. Fricker
* 8. Resolution to Approve Faculty Research Leaves (90)	R. Fricker
9. Personnel Changes Report <i>(voted on by Finance and Resource Management Committee)</i>	R. Fricker

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\*Requires Full Board Approval

## Committee Minutes

### ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

November 19, 2024

**Committee Members Present:** Nancy Dye (chair), Sandy Davis\*, William Holtzman, Donald Horsley, J. Pearson, Jeanne Stosser

*\*One Board member participated remotely from her home for medical reasons in accordance with Code of Virginia §2.2-3708.3(B). A quorum was physically present.*

**Board Members Present:** Ed Baine (rector)

**Constituent Representatives Present:** Janice Austin (A/P faculty representative), Leslie Orellana (undergraduate student representative), William Poland (graduate and professional student representative).

**Guests:** Lauren Augustine, Eric Brooks, Cyril Clarke, Lance Collins, Al Cooper, Debbie Day, Juan Espinoza, Mario Ferruzzi, Ron Fricker, Rachel Gabriele, Ellington Graves, Chelsea Haines, Dee Harris, Kay Heidbreder, Bill Huckle, Cyndi Hutchison, France Keene, Gerard Lawson, Lu Liu, Kevin McGuire, Mallory Miller, April Myers, Justin Noble, Mark Owczarski, Sharon Pitt, Karen Roberto, Tina Savla, Tim Sands, Stephen Schoenholtz, Mark Sikes, Dee Dee Somervell, Rick Sparks, Dan Sui, Aimee Surprenant, Don Taylor, Jon Clark Teglas, Mary Trigani, Peggy Vilardo

### **OPEN SESSION**

**Report of Closed Session Items.** In Closed Session, the committee considered 22 appointments to emerita or emeritus status, one appointment to an endowed chair, professorship, or fellowship, five reappointments to endowed chairs, professorships, or fellowships, five appointments with tenure, and reviewed individual salaries and personnel changes.

**1. Welcome.** N. Dye, chair of the committee, welcomed attendees to the meeting and acknowledged the new members to the Board.

**2. Review and Approval of Open Session Agenda.**

**3. Consent Agenda Items.** Approval of August 27, 2024, Meeting Minutes, a Resolution to Approve Appointments and Reappointments to the Virginia Coal Research and Development Advisory Board, and Resolution to Discontinue Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program in Systems Biology.

**The committee voted unanimously to approve the Open Session Agenda as presented including approval of all Consent Agenda items.**

**4. Resolution to Approve a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Water Resources.** K. McGuire, professor and director of the Virginia Water Resources

Research Center, presented a proposal for a new degree program in Water Resources. This degree program will prepare students to protect, analyze, and improve water quality, watershed ecosystems, and water resources. The Graduate School will administer this degree program, however, faculty across three colleges will collaborate and teach in the program: College of Natural Resources and Environment (Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation and Department of Geography), College of Science (Department of Geosciences), and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (School of Plant and Environmental Science).

**The committee voted unanimously to approve the Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Water Resources.**

**5. Resolution to Approve a Master of Arts in Education (M.A.Ed.) degree program in Reading and Literacy Education.** G. Lawson, professor and interim director of the School of Education, presented a proposal for a new degree program in Reading and Literacy Education. The establishment of the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) Reading and Literacy Education will prepare students to assess students' reading ability and apply evidence-based instructional interventions to improve reading proficiency to diverse populations of students in grades K-8. This degree program will also address the teacher shortage in Virginia as it is designed to meet the Virginia Department of Education requirements for the reading specialist endorsement area.

**The committee voted unanimously to approve the Master of Arts in Education (M.A.Ed.) degree program in Reading and Literacy Education.**

**Committee member Jeanne Stosser joined the meeting.**

**6. Provost's Update.** C. Clarke, executive vice president and provost, provided updates to the committee on several senior searches. The search for the new dean of the Honors College is underway, with three finalists expected to come to campus in the next few weeks. With the announcement of Paul Winistorfer's retirement at the end of the academic year, a search for a new dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment has just launched. Current practice is to include external members in search committees in collaboration with Alumni Relations. Dr. Clarke also introduced Dr. Mario Ferruzzi, the new dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

### **Academic Resource Alignment**

Dr. Clarke provided the committee with an update on this President's Council project related to reinvestment. The project is designed to assess the degree to which programs of study are currently aligned with student needs and demand as well as industry and employer needs and expectations. Expected outcomes include the identification of courses and programs that may need to be reshaped or discontinued because they no longer meet the strategic interests of the university or its stakeholders. A committee has been appointed and charged to work with academic colleges to conduct a review of every course and degree program in both the undergraduate and graduate curricula, to include analyses of outcomes such as:

- Enrollment per FTE

- Graduation success (4 year/6 year)
- Annual degrees awarded
- Post-graduation placement
- Evidence of engagement in best practices in teaching and learning
- Strategic importance—university and stakeholder input

The project is being supported by the Organizational Excellence unit in the President's Office. A report, including recommendations will be submitted by the end of the 2024-25 academic year.

### **Virginia Tech Global Distinction Steering Committee**

Virginia Tech has two high-level goals: Virginia Tech Advantage and Global Distinction. The latter is very focused on attracting and retaining top talent. After completing its first phase of review and analysis in support of advancing the university's global distinction, the committee has been charged to complete its work specifically to:

- review and, as necessary, update the Global Distinction goal, currently expressed as commitment to "build on faculty strengths and advance the university's reputational standing by investing in and growing high-impact research and creative expression";
- identify a prioritized portfolio of programs and initiatives that have the highest potential for establishing areas of eminence;
- draft detailed investment and growth strategies for each recommended area from both university and philanthropic sources; and
- recommend long-term strategies to support sustainable growth and global recognition of Virginia Tech's areas of eminence.

Examples of current programs and areas recognized to meet this goal include the following:

- Thematic and investment institutes
- Destination 2.0 program
- Resourcing of research-based doctoral programs
- Research infrastructure, such as facilities (laboratory, animal care, etc.), grant management, compliance, resourcing of center grant applications, etc.

Faculty and other university constituent groups engaged include a University Mission Initiative (these are defined as major initiatives that involve every part of the university) focused of resourcing research-based doctoral education, and the Global Distinction Feedback and Implementation Subcommittee, chaired by the president of the Faculty Senate and comprised as that body sees fit to support next steps.

A report, including recommendations, will be submitted by May 1, 2025.

Dr. Clarke closed with two uplifting examples of *Ut Prosim* after Hurricane Helene:

**The Center for Leadership and Service Learning – facilitate by VT Engage:**

- Twenty-one Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff provided assistance to a flood-affected community in Giles County, specifically at Eggleston Springs Campground. They helped residents and business owners recover by clearing debris, moving furniture, clearing collapsed structures, and more.

### **Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets**

- Senior cadet leaders canceled the fall half of the Caldwell March, a rite of passage for first-year cadets, just three days before the event in favor of helping neighboring communities with hurricane cleanup efforts. Approximately 540 cadets, along with approximately one dozen staff from the Corps and ROTC, served Giles County residents collectively and individually. Volunteers provided debris pick-up with a concentration along roadways and public property in the floodplain, loaded emergency supplies for distribution by emergency services workers, moved displaced porches/decks to their original locations, and demolished ruined decks/porches.

**7. Global Distinction: Whole Health Consortium.** K. Roberto, University Distinguished Professor and executive director of the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment and T. Savla, professor in Human Development & Family Sciences will provide an overview of the Whole Health Consortium, a transdisciplinary approach to investigating equitable health and wellness solutions that supports people and their communities to pursue meaningful lives.

The Whole Health Consortium at Virginia Tech was established in 2023 with support from the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE) and the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI). It aims to pioneer a comprehensive approach to health and well-being that integrates molecular, behavioral, social, environmental, and societal influences. The consortium focuses on proactive disease prevention and enhancing the well-being of people and their communities through cutting-edge, transdisciplinary, community-engaged research. The consortium now has 130 members working together towards a common goal.

In the last year with the support of ISCE and the Office of Research and Innovation, the consortium has had several notable achievements. They hosted the inaugural annual conference with 125 attendees including faculty, healthcare leaders from Carilion and the Salem Veterans Administration, and community partners from a wide array of organizations. The consortium funded four innovative projects focused on mental health through their Transdisciplinary Team Seed Grants. They plan to support six additional teams in the coming year with support from Carilion Clinic. The consortium has also organized networking events including two Think Tank Meetings with researchers from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and USDA-funded researchers at Virginia Tech.

Going forward, and benefitting from a recently awarded Destination Areas (DA) 2.0 Phase I Planning Grant, the consortium plans to establish infrastructure to support their continued work, including:

- the establishment of a research operations support team to help remove administrative hurdles to grant applications and management.

- The appointment of a research-community liaison to strengthen connections with grassroots organizations and communities in collaboration with Extension colleagues.
- Collaboration with the Sanghani Center to bring on a health analytics data scientist to focus on collecting and curating data across consortium projects and provide a data reservoir for consortium members.

Dr. Savla highlighted the diverse learning opportunities the consortium has begun offering, among other initiatives, campus-based opportunities for undergraduate students through the Integrative Health and Wellness minor, and collaboration with graduate students in the Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health (TBMH) program.

**8. Closing Remarks and Adjourn.** N. Dye offered brief remarks. The meeting concluded at 9:43 am.





# Overview of the Promotion & Tenure Process

**Ron Fricker**

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Academic Research, and Student Affairs Committee

Board of Visitors

March 24, 2025

“ Both Virginia Tech Advantage and Virginia Tech Global Distinction share one important principle. Our strength is in our community and our people. Faculty, staff, and students are the university’s most important asset. ”

- Tim Sands, 7 Feb 2024

World-Class Faculty → Global Distinction

# Why Tenure?

“Academic freedom is essential to create and disseminate knowledge with the mission of improving the quality of life and the human condition within the Commonwealth of Virginia and throughout the world..” \*



Tenure is an essential institutional commitment designed to cultivate a faculty whose scholarship advances knowledge in ways that may take decades to materialize.

# Standard: Excellence Across Tripartite Academic Mission



## SCHOLARSHIP

Knowledge discovery,  
 including research,  
 creative activities, and  
 Extension



## TEACHING

Knowledge transfer,  
 including classes,  
 laboratories, clinical  
 practice, and advising



## SERVICE

Knowledge application,  
 including for the public  
 good via community  
 engagement

# Faculty Performance Reviews: It's Not Just Once and Done

## Evaluations Are Frequent

- All faculty evaluated annually for merit
- Pre-tenure faculty evaluated in second and fourth years for progress towards tenure
- Faculty teaching both peer reviewed and student reviewed
- Post-tenure evaluated 3-5 years after promotion for progress towards professor

## It's a Competitive Business

- Faculty publications are nearly all peer reviewed
- Faculty grants are almost all competitively awarded
- Honorifics are highly competitive
  - *Faculty success requires the continual demonstration of scholarly merit*
  - *Faculty must consistently engage and persuade peers of the significance, rigor, and impact of their work*

# Promotion & Tenure “By the Numbers”

83

Average number of annual promotion and/or tenure cases over past 10 years

$\geq 4$

Number of external expert reviewers for each P&T case

100

Number of pages in a typical P&T dossier

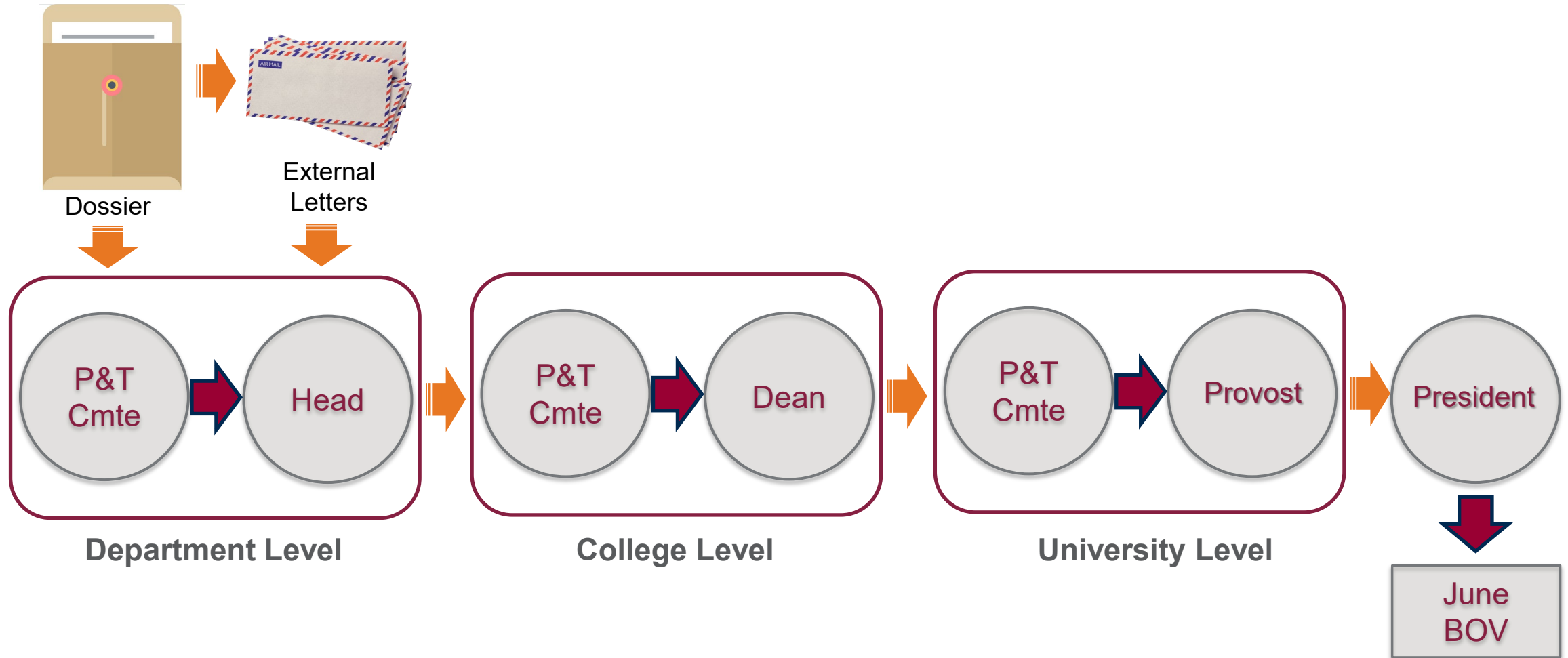
30-50

Number of VT personnel independently reviewing each P&T case

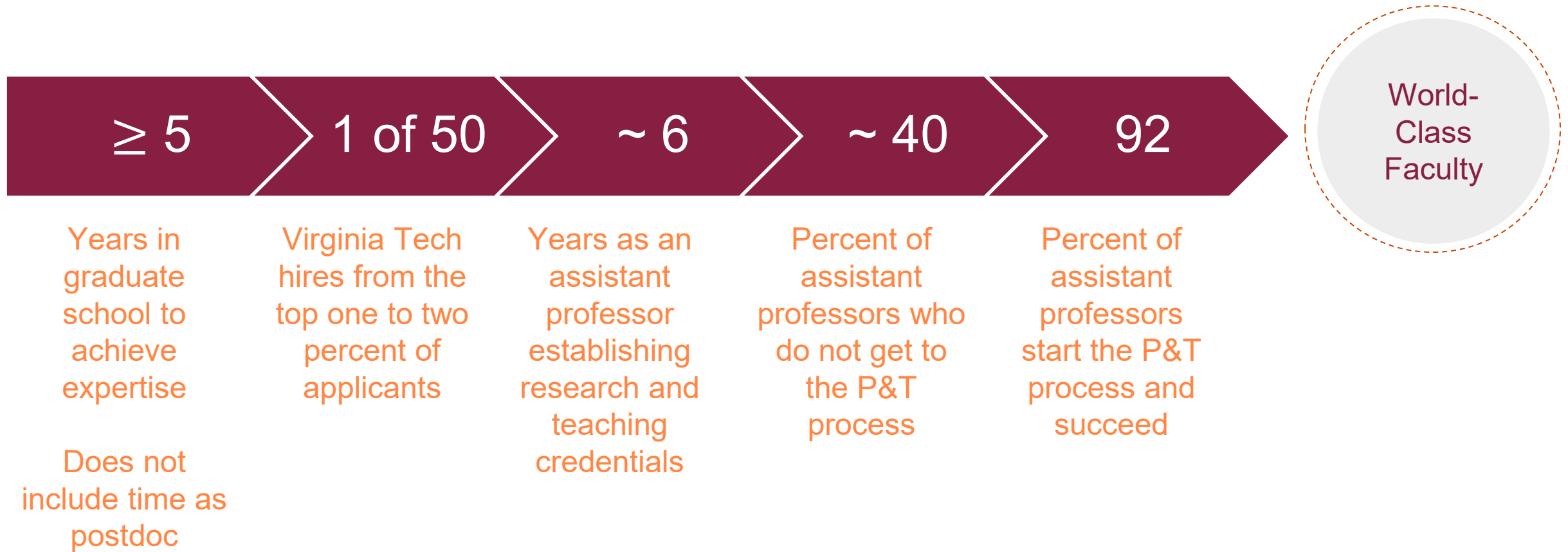
12-18

Number of months it takes for a case to go through the P&T process

# Evaluation Process for Promotion & Tenure

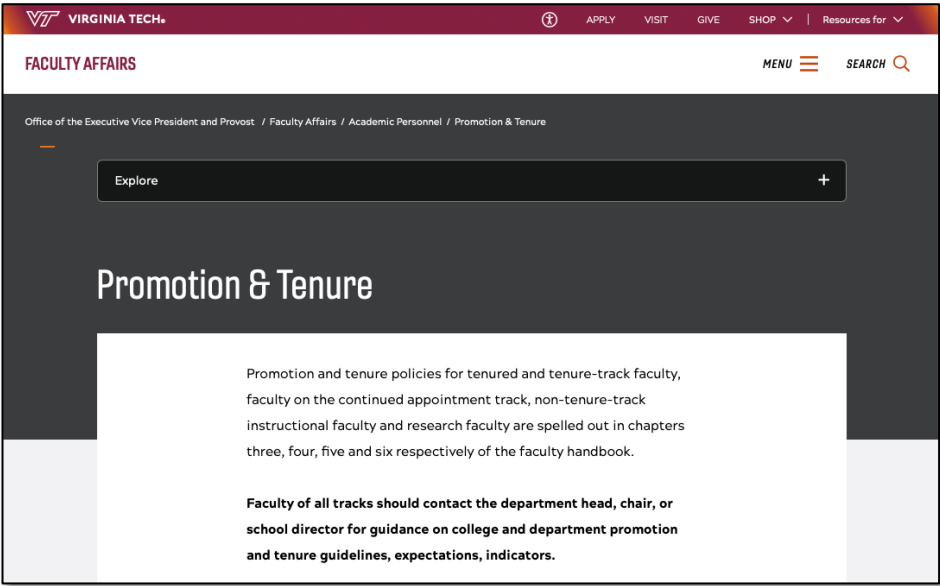
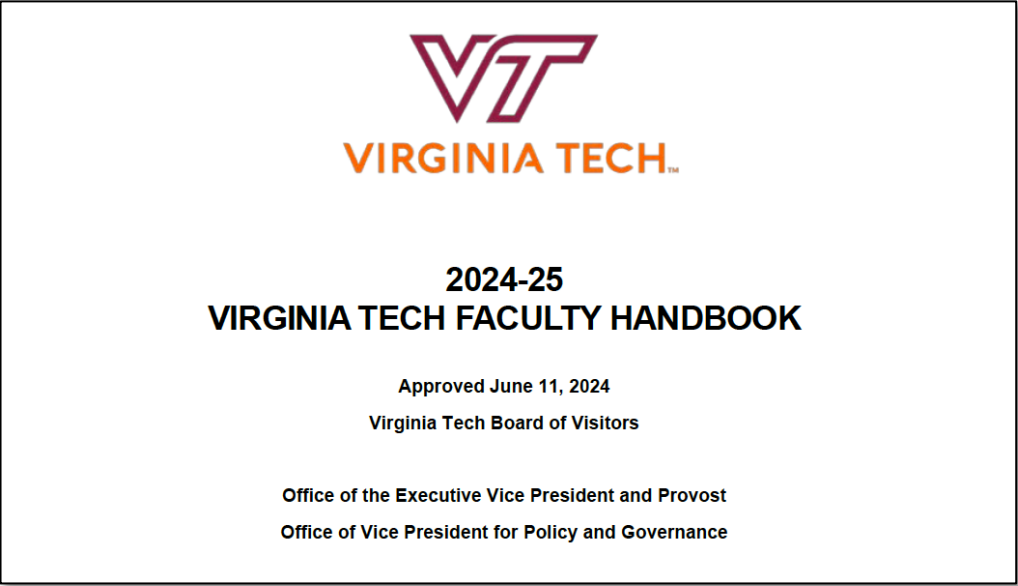


# Outcome: World-Class Faculty





# Governing Documents



# Why Tenure?



Dr. Marc Edwards



Dr. Linsey Marr





STUDENT AFFAIRS  
VIRGINIA TECH



# ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

The Value of On-Campus Living

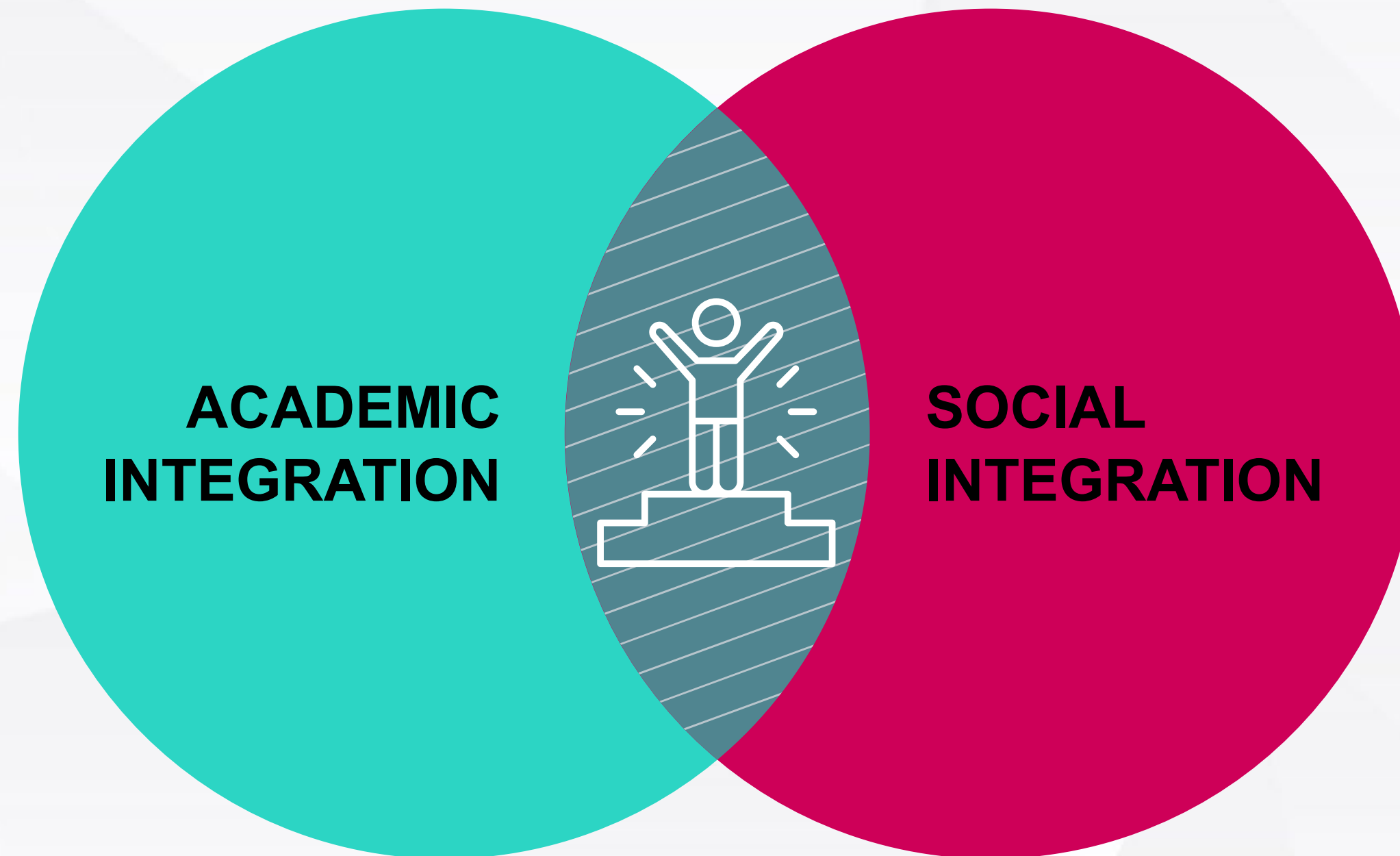
**Dr. Frances Keene**  
Vice President for Student Affairs

Academic Research, and Student Affairs Committee  
Board of Visitors  
March 24, 2025

# THE POWER OF LIVING ON CAMPUS

## *Creating Environments for Student Success*

Education is achieved through a blending of the curricular and co-curricular experiences.





# THE POWER OF LIVING ON CAMPUS

## *The Benefits*

Living on campus is valuable to students — its benefits go well-beyond just having a place for students to call “home.”

- ✓ **Enhanced Learning:** Supports & enhances classroom learning
- ✓ **Community:** Builds meaningful peer relationships
- ✓ **Well-being:** Offers support services for stress management
- ✓ **Engagement:** Encourages participation in campus activities

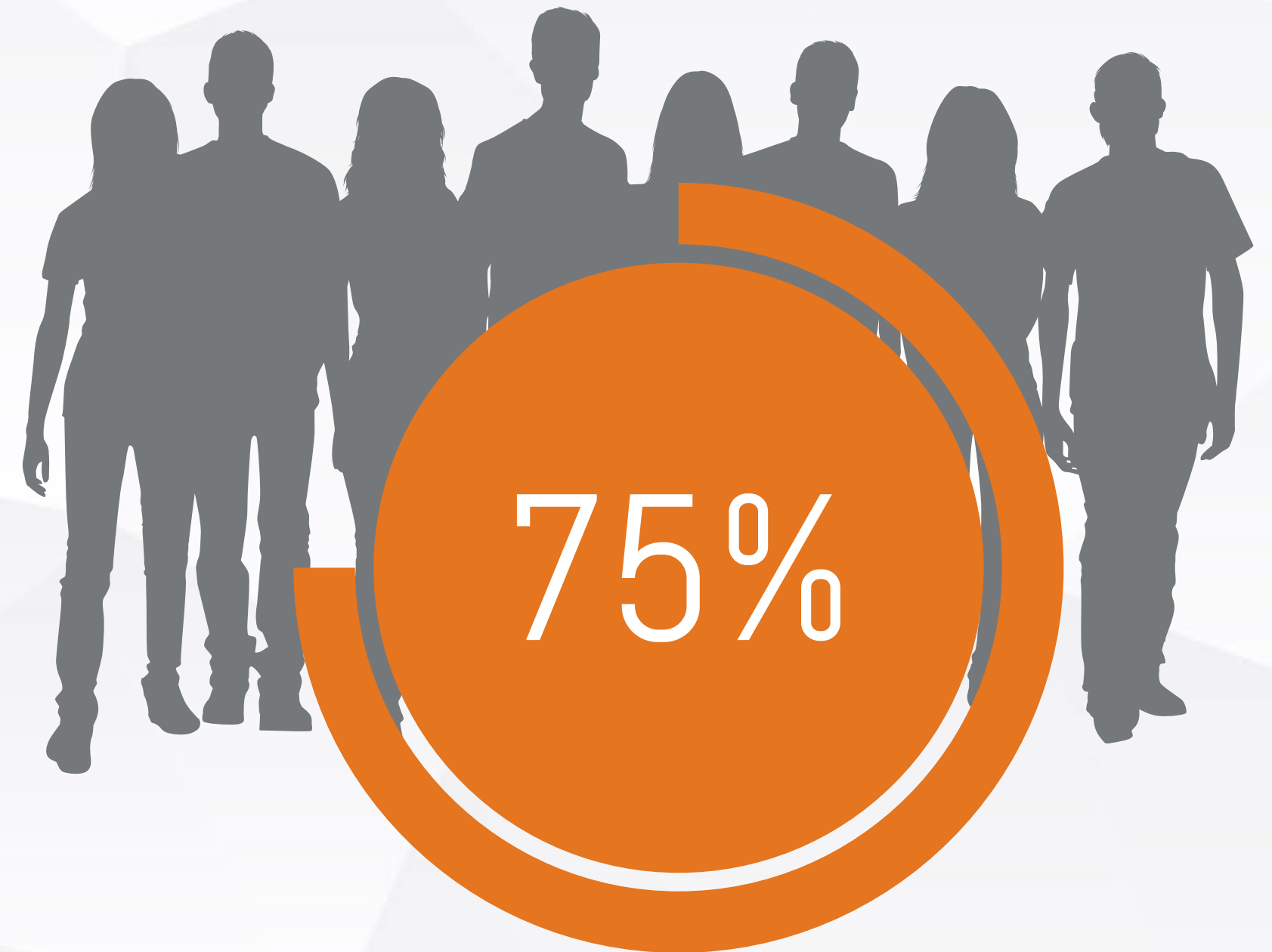


# THE POWER OF LIVING ON CAMPUS

*Healthy Minds Data 2023-24*

## INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH IS CRITICAL

- ✓ 75% of students report academic impairment due to mental health concerns
- ✓ Students with untreated depression are 2x more likely to drop out of college





# TRANSFORMING ON-CAMPUS LIVING

## *Residential Well-being*

Three priorities:

- ✓ **Student Success & Well-being**
- ✓ **ExperienceVT**
- ✓ **Strong connection to the Hokie Nation**

Our model aims to:

- ✓ **Increase Engagement**
- ✓ **Increase Overall Well-being**
- ✓ **Decrease Loneliness**



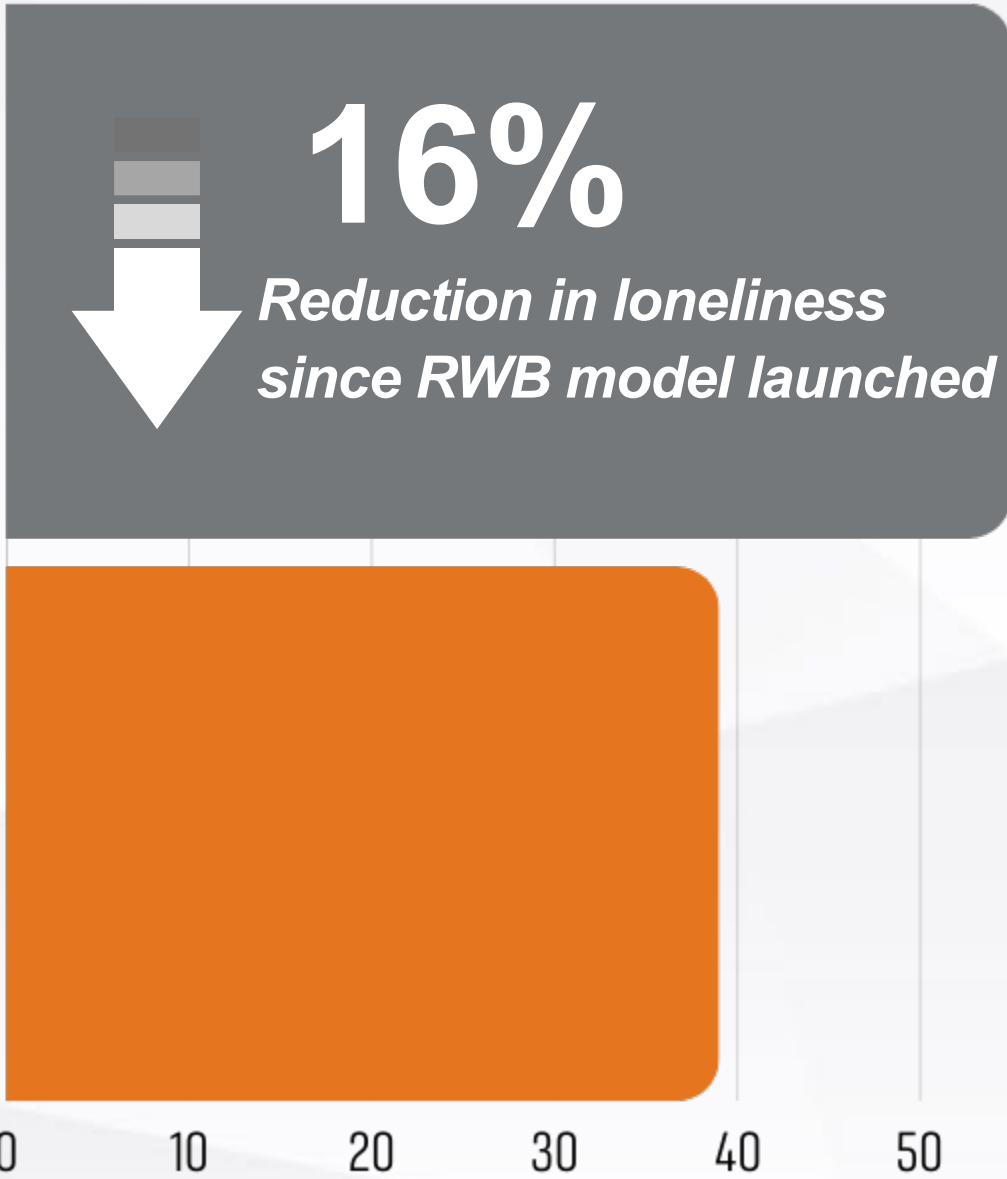


# TRANSFORMING ON-CAMPUS LIVING

## Residential Well-being's Impact

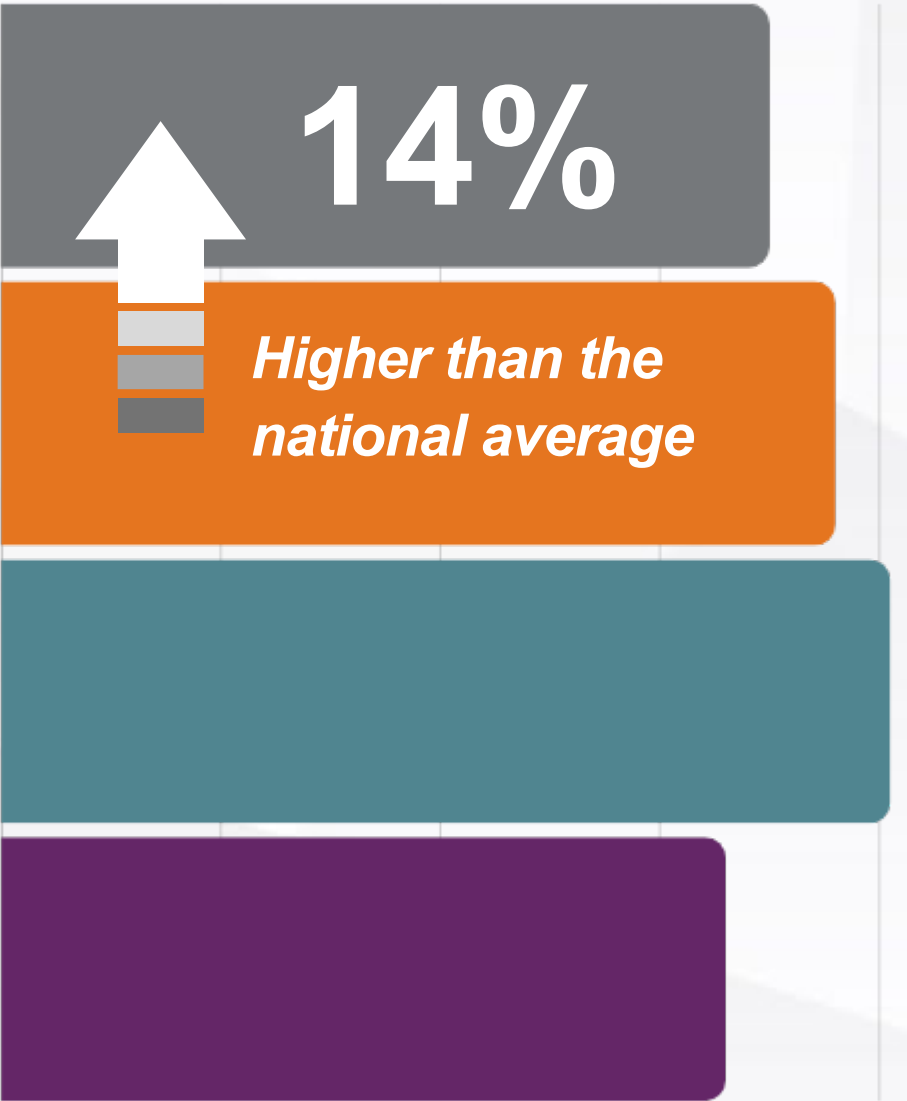
### ON LONELINESS

2021 2024



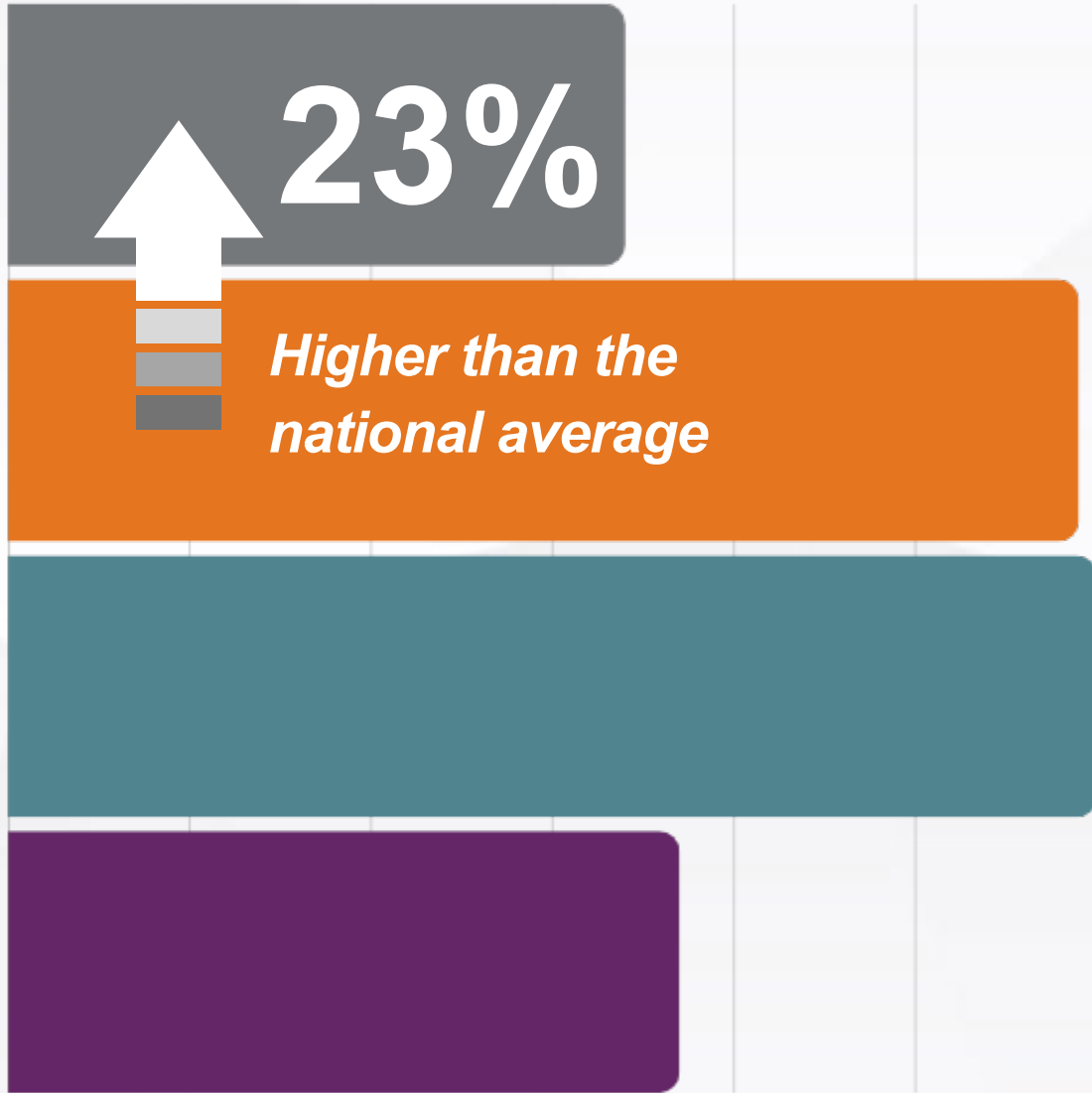
### ON ENGAGEMENT

2021 2022 2023 National Average



### ON WELL-BEING

2021 2022 2023 National Average



# THRIVING IN & OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

## *Living-Learning Programs*

Living-Learning Programs provide students with the opportunity to thrive both in and out of the classroom in a learning environment that becomes home.

Living-Learning Program students have been shown to have:

- ✓ Higher GPAs than their non-LLP peers
- ✓ Fewer conduct referrals than non-LLP residents
- ✓ Higher rates of mentorship by faculty and peers



# THRIVING IN & OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

## *Living-Learning Programs Academic Impact*

### FIRST-YEAR GPA



Students in LLPs have a higher **GPA** for their first year compared to their peers at 3.17

### FIRST-YEAR RETENTION



93% retention rate for first-year LLP students compared to off-campus students (81%)

### TRANSFER RETENTION



93% retention rate for transfer LLP students compared to non-LLP peers (90%)

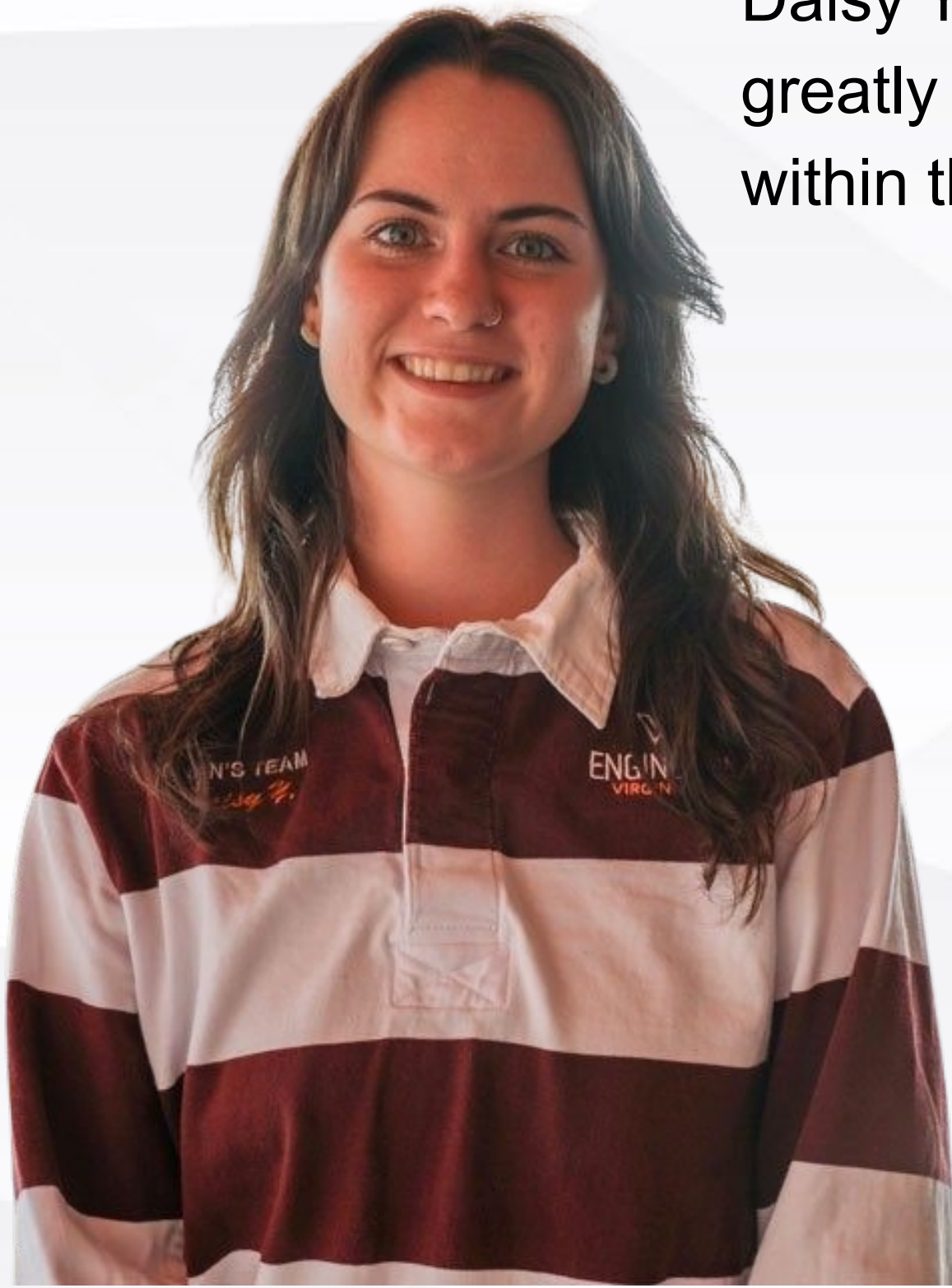


# A STUDENT STORY

## *Meet Daisy Yates from the Honors Residential Commons*

Daisy Yates, a senior civil engineering student at Virginia Tech, benefited greatly from her Living Learning program and the supportive community within the Honors Residential Commons (HRC). She credits the HRC with:

- ✓ **Engagement & Support:** She quickly connected with other students who helped her integrate into the community and discover new opportunities.
- ✓ **Encouragement & Opportunities:** Participated in programs and developed leadership skills through various academic and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ **Becoming a Mentor:** Inspired her to become a Residential Well-Being Student leader, where she mentors first-year students.



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## DISCUSSION OF “PRINCIPLES GUIDING VIRGINIA TECH’S POLICIES AND PRACTICES” (discussion draft)

**Preamble:** Virginia Tech’s administration will continue its long-standing commitment to complying with all applicable anti-discrimination laws. Based on its record of responses to Office of Civil Rights (OCR) investigations and outcomes of investigations, it is confident that such compliance has been achieved.

The university recognizes that the [“Dear Colleague Letter”](#) (DCL) issued by the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights on February 14, 2025, while not possessing the force of law, now offers interpretations of law that could result in outcomes of OCR investigations that are inconsistent with those conducted in the past. Considering the possibility that further clarification through the legal process may be drawn out over months or years, Virginia Tech has with due diligence been reviewing its policies and practices through the lens of the DCL and preceding Executive Orders. To guide this review, the following draft principles are presented to the Board of Visitors for discussion in the open session of ARSA on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **Principles guiding Virginia Tech’s policies and practices (discussion draft):**

- Virginia Tech affirms the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, including the right to **freedom of speech and peaceful freedom of assembly** consistent with reasonable time, place and manner rules. The First Amendment requires the university to protect the expression of ideas and opinions, including those that people may find controversial, disagreeable, or offensive. It also protects the right of people to gather together to express, promote, pursue and defend their opinions.
- **Academic freedom, free expression, and open inquiry** are core principles of higher education. Academic freedom enables scholars to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish within an area of expertise without interference or penalty. Academic freedom is essential to create and disseminate knowledge with the mission of improving the quality of life and the human condition within the Commonwealth of Virginia and throughout the world. Virginia Tech must ensure that all members of the university community can ask questions, listen to others, and learn through exposure to a range of ideas from a diverse community of scholars.
- In accordance with federal laws, Virginia Tech **does not discriminate** for or against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, or national origin.
- **Virginia Tech will not require** as a condition of admission, employment, promotion or advancement, that **a student or an employee undergo training, education, coursework, or other pedagogy**, that asserts that a particular race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, or national origin, disability, or veteran status, or individuals who identify as such, are inherently or systemically superior or inferior, oppressive or oppressed, or privileged or unprivileged.
- **Virginia Tech will not require** as a condition of admission, employment, promotion or advancement the **signing of or assent to a statement, code of conduct, work**

**program, or plan, or similar device** that requires assent by the student or employee that a particular race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, or national origin, disability, or veteran status, or individuals who identify as such, are inherently or systemically superior or inferior, oppressive or oppressed, or privileged or unprivileged.

- In furtherance of these principles, Virginia Tech reaffirms its commitment to the Virginia Tech **Principles of Community** as adopted by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.