

October 10, 2007

Dear Faculty & Staff Colleagues:

I hope you enjoyed some benefits from the mid-semester class break on Monday. As we move through the semester, I remain impressed by the energy, compassionate dedication, and commitment to quality of our faculty, staff, and students. In this letter, I want to provide a brief update on several key issues: budget, VT ENGAGE, and ongoing recovery support. You should be receiving additional information from multiple sources regarding most of these items.

Budget: Based on the latest information from the Commonwealth, we are planning for a 2.5% budget reduction this year (07-08) at the college/administrative unit level with major reliance on one-time savings. We have identified resources centrally to minimize the impact on program units. Next year (08-09) we are planning for a 3.5% decrease in base budgets. The University Libraries and the Police Department will not be assigned budget reductions in either year. After discussion among the deans, vice provosts, vice presidents, and department heads, we are providing units with as much flexibility as possible within some key guidelines summarized below:

1. We will NOT be using the Alternative Severance Option (ASO) as a strategy.
2. November salary increases will be fully implemented.
3. Untenured, tenure-track (and continuing appointment) faculty will not be terminated for budgetary reasons.
4. The university is focusing significant attention on restructuring flexibility to keep the reduction at the 3.5% level.
5. The strategic plan will be a key factor in evaluating the reduction plans.

Specific guidelines and precise budget targets have been distributed to the senior management areas with plans for 2008-09 due by November 2. We will keep you updated on the emerging strategies for handling this challenging budget situation.

VT ENGAGE: October 16 is the launch date for VT ENGAGE with a Kickoff Event on the Drillfield from 4-7 PM. All members of the Virginia Tech community are being challenged to pledge and perform at least 10 hours of community service between Oct. 16, 2007 and the end of the spring semester in order to reach a total goal of 300,000 service hours for this academic year.

In addition, the Virginia Tech alumni have decided to match this goal and will perform 300,000 hours of service. Members of the community and family and friends of Virginia Tech from around the globe are also invited to participate in VT ENGAGE. This year we will perform our 600,000+ service hours in honor of those lost April 16th and the commitment to service they demonstrated within their communities worldwide. At the Kickoff Event, you can explore the many volunteer opportunities available in the New

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River Valley and beyond. The Kickoff Event will feature music, festive food and games, brief speeches, and 75+ exhibitors representing non-profit, community, and student service organizations.

You can pledge your service hours at the Kickoff Event or on-line at the VT ENGAGE website beginning Oct. 16. Go to: www.engage.vt.edu. VT ENGAGE is a powerful demonstration of our *Ut Prosim* motto.

Recovery and Self Care: Six months after a traumatic event is a time when post-traumatic stress is very evident. Recent tragedies evoke the heightened sensitivity we feel. Normal stress associated with exams and project deadlines will probably be felt more intensely. All of us continue to approach the healing and recovery process in very different, highly personal ways. Now more than ever we have an opportunity to build upon our shared community strength to help one another.

The families and individuals most directly affected by the tragedy remain foremost in our minds and hearts and we continue to do the very best we can to offer assistance. We are also continuing to offer and host programs and support for individuals and groups throughout the university community. We are encouraging and expecting managers at all levels to enable faculty, staff, and students to take full advantage of counseling, educational programs, and other opportunities for personal well being through flexible scheduling and other reasonable accommodations. Individuals who seek and receive assistance have the full support of the administration, and I am personally committed to helping our faculty, staff, and students in the recovery process. Investments now in good health and self-care will provide benefits for all of us over the long term.

Some Final Comments: I welcome advice and feedback about any issues in this letter or about any other issues. I value the collective wisdom and compassionate thoughts of everyone at Virginia Tech, and I look forward to working with you to make sustained progress. We have the opportunity to learn as much as we can from our tragedy and to move forward with confidence, respect, reverence, and strength.

Best wishes for the weeks ahead.



Mark McNamee
University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs