

December 7, 2007

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues:

As we embrace the end of the semester and a welcome break, I want to provide you with my final update for 2007 with a focus on three topics: recovery and support; budget; and strategic initiatives and planning.

Recovery and Support: The faculty, students, and staff continue to focus with remarkable spirit on the academic missions of the university with a commitment to quality and a sense of purpose. I am very proud of the accomplishments of our academic community as reflected in the many awards, recognitions, and signs of success. On the surface, things look pretty normal. We all know, however, that we are continuing to move in different ways through the various stages of recovery following April 16. We are monitoring the use of various support services and we are striving to anticipate and support the stated and unstated needs of our faculty, staff, and students. Recommendations that emerged from the various review groups have either been implemented or are in an ongoing process of assessment and refinement. Our work with the families of the deceased and with the injured and others continues to evolve. My heartfelt thoughts are with the families as they prepare for the days ahead. As we enter finals week, I trust that you will continue to use the sound judgment and compassion that has enabled you to respond so well to the needs of all students.

We have received requests to provide opportunities for faculty members to meet together informally in small groups to talk about shared experiences, concerns, and feelings. We are making arrangements to reserve a centrally-located, private space for the spring semester to facilitate such meetings. Details will be provided after the first of the year.

In January, we will begin to develop the planning process for an April 16 university remembrance. We will not have classes on Wednesday, April 16, 2008, and we will enable university employees to participate in an official university event on April 16 once plans are developed. Since many of you will be preparing syllabi over the break I want to provide you with as much advance notice as possible.

Budget: Governor Kaine's biennial budget plan will be released on December 17. We will not know how his priorities affect Virginia Tech until that date. The budget scenarios that are guiding our current plans for 2007-08 and beyond are holding firm and we are in the process of evaluating the specific budget reduction plans submitted by the deans, vice presidents, vice provosts, and the president. We will be making decisions about the 2008-09 budgets as soon as possible after the first of the year. Tuition and fees for 2008-09 will be established at the March meeting of the Board of Visitors.

Strategic Initiatives and Planning: We have developed a comprehensive "scorecard" that enables us to track progress in meeting the goals of the strategic plan. The scorecard has been shared with all senior

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administrators and with the Board of Visitors and will help to guide us in evaluating progress. In light of the budget challenges, we will be reviewing the plan this spring semester to determine if any adjustments or refinements are needed.

We are continuing to work with Carilion Clinic to develop plans for a joint medical school and research institute in Roanoke. The medical school itself would be a new, not-for-profit, private organization and the research institute would be an affiliated Virginia Tech operation. We are also exploring ways to consolidate and further develop our research capabilities in the National Capital Region and we expect to announce specific plans early next year.

During the fall semester the Implementation Team created in response to the Race and the Institution Task Force Report has been meeting regularly to prioritize and operationalize the recommendations. Recommendations from the Foreign Language Task Force have been evaluated and some initial new investments have been made. The Real Estate Task Force Report has not yet been implemented pending further analysis.

Summary: I hope each of you enjoys the holiday season and takes advantage of the time for self-care and renewal. If we work together and help one another we can continue to face the challenges ahead. I welcome your feedback and advice as we welcome the arrival of a new year. Best wishes and thank you for your support this past year.



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University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs