

March 21, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

As we move from our non-winter into our promising springtime, I want to provide you with an update on current and future events and opportunities.

The long range planning committee completed its work and generated a visionary document that will guide our development during the next 6-10 years. Although the document may yet receive some additional adjustments, it should provide a solid foundation upon which colleges, institutes, administrative units, and others can create specific strategic plans that will guide our teaching, research, outreach, and administrative efforts. We have made remarkable progress during the past 10 years, and the new plans will take full advantage of our ongoing investments. I encourage faculty, staff, and students to continue to monitor progress and contribute to the next phases of strategic planning and implementation. The latest plan can be found at <http://www.longrangeplan.vt.edu/>.

The delay at the state level in approving the biennial budget will affect our plans to develop the 2012-13 university budget, including tuition and fee adjustments. As noted in earlier communications, the Governor's budget and the recommendations of the House and Senate committees are supportive of higher education. It appears that the budget situation will be resolved soon so that we can make good decisions as quickly as possible.

We are in high season for faculty recruitments, and the departments are very encouraged by the quality and success of their recruiting efforts. We have more than 100 faculty positions under recruitment this year across all the colleges, and we expect to see a significant net growth in faculty numbers. We also have several key administrative positions open and we anticipate that we will have strong pools of applicants. Three finalists for the Vice President for Student Affairs position will be visiting campus in early April (see the candidates' information at http://www.provost.vt.edu/searches/vp_student_affairs/vp_student_affairs_search.php) and searches for the Vice President for Information Technology, Dean of the Pamplin College of Business, and Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs will be underway within the year. We have been fortunate to have strong, stable leadership in the above positions (*totaling more than 60 years!*), but change is an inevitable part of university life.

In a few weeks, we will be observing the fifth anniversary of the April 16 tragedy. The schedule of events for the April 14-16 period can be found at <http://www.weremember.vt.edu/>. This year will be the first time we are again holding classes on April 16. The planning group that was convened several years ago to make recommendations about ongoing commemorations supported April 16, 2012, as the day to begin our transition back to a regular class schedule. Our students and faculty who lost their lives on April 16, 2007, shared a passion for education, and one way we can honor their memories is by re-dedicating ourselves to the privilege of teaching and learning in our laboratories and classrooms. We are arranging for a number of pre-April 16 workshops through CIDER for staff and faculty who would like to learn or talk about issues that may arise as we enter this new phase of our remembrance activities. April

Invent the Future

9 from 3:30-5:00 and April 10 from 10:00-11:30 in Hillcrest are the dates and times. CIDER will be sending out more specific information soon. We will also have additional counseling opportunities available during the days surrounding April 16.

In February, I traveled to Europe with John Dooley and Guru Ghosh to visit three of our international academic programs. At our Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA) in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, I visited with the 30 Presidential Honors' Scholars and the 30 architecture students who are there for the spring semester. The energy level, academic dedication, and enthusiasm of the students are inspiring. I also visited our mechanical engineering students who are spending their senior year at the Technical University of Darmstadt (TUD) earning a dual degree from both Virginia Tech and TUD. The students have adapted well to Germany and are mastering language and culture along with their engineering studies. All the students studying abroad recognize the value of a global experience. We also visited the University of Trento in Italy, one of our emerging international partners. It was a whirlwind set of visits.

Only six weeks of classes remain and I know that the pace will continue to accelerate as we all try to accomplish as much as possible before commencement. I recently learned that I will have the honor of being the keynote speaker at the Graduate School Commencement ceremony. As I begin to make preparations, I welcome your thoughts and advice about key messages. I am excited to be sharing the day's events with Michelle Obama and Mark Warner.

You may recall that I shared a story about my friend and classmate Roger O'Dell in my last letter. I am saddened to report that Roger passed away peacefully at home on March 23 surrounded by family after a courageous battle with leukemia. Roger's zest for life leaves a lasting impression on all who knew him. Please continue to think about self-care and consider taking action to enhance your well-being. Over the past two months, I took the initiative to alter my food choices and I am a lighter, even healthier individual.

We all appreciate your ongoing hard work and your dedication to our students and their continued success. We want you to be with us for a long time.

Best wishes,



Mark G. McNamee
Senior Vice President and Provost