

Remarks made during the BOV Information Session
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Thank you Mr. Rector; and good afternoon, members of Virginia Tech's Board of Visitors, administration, students, staff and faculty, and the representatives of the Institute.

This is my last report as President of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Representative to the Board. It has been an honor to serve in this role and to participate in the work of this distinguished board. I continue to be impressed and encouraged by your commitment to listen, respond and act in partnership with the university community. Most significantly, it has been a privilege to represent this extraordinary, diverse and hardworking faculty. As I rotate into the role of "past president", I am happy to report that we are finally in the process of determining an office space with minimal staff support for the senate, and in the beginning stages of exploration in creating a faculty club. The office and staff support will go a long way toward facilitating senate functionality, and a faculty club will provide a means of developing intellectual community amongst our faculty. Parenthetically, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the faculty at our spring graduate and undergraduate commencement ceremonies.

In my first report to this board in August of last year, I spoke of the value of effective and clear communication, of transparency and collaboration. I believe we are moving forward in this regard – a belief reflected in many of the agenda items before the board today – and that our institution is stronger because of it. I hope we will continue to practice intentional and thoughtful inclusion in all we do. This takes strong leadership at all levels, particularly as we implement the updated strategic plan.

Strong leadership recognizes the need to release and empower the insight, creativity and intellectual energy of all members of the institution. This means paying attention to who needs to be at the table at any given time. The quality of our programs and outcomes will be directly related to the quality and depth of our process. Our Strategic Plan, our updated statement of our Core Values, and our Principles of Community will all serve to guide us in making Virginia Tech a responsive and dynamic community of *learning, discovery and engagement*. The faculty is encouraged by the "renaming" of these three areas, because the new terminology recognizes the inherent interconnectivity in these three areas of scholarship.

As an institution, we are becoming more sophisticated in our developing understanding of what it "commitment to an inclusive and diverse community" means. But clearly, we need to continue to be vigilant. We must recognize the "diversity" and "multiculturalism" mean all of us. Until every member of our community feels safe, respected and able to realize his or her full potential, we have work to do.

Increasingly, our work together has been marked by responsiveness, action, and partnership. For example, the revisions to our tenure clock extensions policy, and the new modified duties policy, are actions emerging from faculty survey and focus group data. There are other issues being discussed in university governance – the clarity, transparency and integrity of our tenure and promotion policies and

procedures, for example. The update to the strategic plan also reflects this dynamic of dialogue and collaboration.

Another area with potential for responsive innovation and internal partnerships is the emerging University Center for Undergraduate Education and VT Pathways for Learning. There is great excitement and energy across the campus about this initiative. New partnerships are being forged between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, students and faculty.

My greatest concern for our future has to do with resources – human, financial and structural. Our ongoing struggle for adequate financial resources to carry out our vision presents a significant challenge. The greatest innovations and initiatives can rapidly turn into seemingly empty promises and dreams unfulfilled. This can lead to cynicism and disbelief that what we say is going to happen is actually going to happen. Our limited resources present us with a particular responsibility. We must ensure – just like any institution – that our budget, our choices as to what we spend our money on, reflects our values and priorities. Provost McNamee has continually referred to the critical necessity of grounding our strategic plan in a realistic picture of available resources.

Let me conclude by introducing, *in absentia*, the next President of the Faculty Senate. Kerry Redican, professor in the School of Education, will join you in the fall. Like I did, he has served this year as Vice President of the Senate, and Chair of the Commission on Faculty Affairs. I know that Kerry will represent the faculty with great distinction.

For myself, I look forward to seeing all of you in the fall in my new capacity as Assistant Provost for Liberal Education and University Studies, and as part of the leadership of the new University Center for Undergraduate Education. I want to thank all the members of this board, the administrative staff of this board, and everyone in the President's and Provost's offices for the opportunity to serve with you. The time between August and June goes by fast. I have learned an enormous amount.

Thank you.