

December 11, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

As we prepare for a well-deserved holiday break, I want to provide you with some updates on key issues.

1. The Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign is entering its last week and I want to thank everyone for the increased number of contributions. From November 30 through December 10, the number of contributors increased from 405 to 667 and 12 of the 24 senior management areas are now above the goal of 10% participation, including 1 of the 8 colleges. I encourage everyone who has not yet had a chance to make a contribution or a pledge to join the effort to help the charitable organizations of your choice. The link for online participation is <http://www.cvc.hr.vt.edu/>.
2. President Steger, Vice President Shelton, and I have made some key decisions about how best to handle this year's 15% budget reduction imposed by the Commonwealth in September. (This 15% was offset with stimulus funds down to about 8%.) We are still evaluating a comprehensive plan for implementing the 15% reduction that will continue into 2010 and beyond. Since Governor Kaine's final budget (to be released December 18) and the actions of Governor-elect Bob McDonnell and the General Assembly may have an impact on the 2010-11 budget, we will await further action before finalizing next year's budget. Based on the prudent efforts of the Budget Office to conserve resources and plan ahead for budget challenges, we have been able to mitigate the impact of the massive reduction in state funding this year. We have been able to avoid a mid-year tuition increase since we feel it is important (to the extent possible) to allow our students and their families to plan ahead on an annual basis for the costs of education. We will impose a one-time reduction of 1% on the academic colleges and a one-time reduction of 2% on all other administrative units. The one exception will be the University Libraries, which will not receive a reduction this year. The funds made available through the stimulus funding have been very helpful in enabling us to minimize the full impact of the reductions this fiscal year. For example, we have been able to save jobs and to move ahead with some much-needed instructional space renovation projects, thus creating some new jobs. Our ongoing plans for the ASO program and other budget strategies will be key elements of our 2010-11 (and beyond) strategy.
3. With respect to the Alternative Severance Option, we are getting a good response that will enable us to plan for the ongoing budget reductions. In response to a number of questions, we are assuring faculty who are considering applying for the ASO that they are eligible to continue service as chairs of dissertation committees. Status as a dissertation chair does not imply a commitment to future employment.
4. Dr. Mike Kelly has completed his assignment to lead the effort to do a selective mid-term review of the 2006-2012 University Strategic Plan. I am currently reviewing the report and my office is evaluating the financial implications of the proposed adjustments. The report will be released to the university community as soon as possible. I appreciate the broad participation of so many of you in developing the report and commenting on the draft version.
5. Throughout these challenging times, I continue to be impressed by the dedication and success of our faculty, students, and staff. We are maintaining and enhancing programs of exceptional quality, and we are continuing to receive recognition in the form of awards, rankings, and public recognition for our state, national, and international efforts. The commitment to service in the spirit of "Ut Prosim" remains a hallmark of the Virginia Tech Community. We will continue to build upon our successes as we strengthen our commitment to inclusive excellence. I want to say "thank you" to each one of you for your contributions. I hope you will take time over the holidays for rest and renewal as we prepare ourselves for the new challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

Mark G. McNamee

Senior Vice President and Provost

*Invent the Future*