

Faculty Affairs

2025-30 STRATEGIC PLAN



FROM THE VICE PROVOST FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS FACULTY AND THE UNIVERSITY

Dear Colleagues,

With a deep sense of purpose and responsibility, I am pleased to share with you the strategic plan for Faculty Affairs. At the heart of our work is a clear and enduring mission: to support faculty success and empower faculty excellence. This mission is not just a statement, it is the guiding principle that shapes our priorities, informs our decisions, and serves as the foundation for everything we do in the Office of Faculty Affairs.

As Virginia Tech navigates the evolving landscape of higher education and pursues its aspirations for global distinction, it is essential that we cultivate an environment in which faculty can thrive professionally, personally, and collectively. This strategic plan affirms that commitment. It offers a purposeful roadmap to enhance faculty development, foster a culture of innovation in teaching and research, and ensure that our faculty are supported at every stage of their careers.

This plan is the product of collaboration and reflection, enriched by the insights, expertise, and aspirations of colleagues from across the university. It identifies key priorities and outlines actionable steps that will guide our efforts in the years ahead. As you review the plan, we welcome your feedback and ideas on how we might strengthen our approach and better serve the faculty community.

I am confident that, together, we can continue to cultivate and expand a vibrant academic culture rooted in collaboration, innovation, and excellence, building on the strong foundation we already share. The dedication, creativity, and impact of Virginia Tech faculty are the very cornerstone of university's success, and the very reason this office exists. I look forward to our continued collaboration as we bring this strategic vision to life.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to excellence and for all that you contribute to our academic community.

Warmest regards,



Ronald D. Fricker, Jr.
Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
and Professor of Statistics

October 6, 2025



The heart and the soul of a university are its faculty. Faculty are the architects of knowledge, intellectual pioneers who, through their relentless curiosity and rigor, drive the pursuit of truth. As scholars at the forefront of cutting-edge research and innovation, they push the boundaries of human understanding, expanding what is known and imagined. Whether probing the origins of the universe, exploring the intricacies of the human condition, or designing solutions to real-world problems, faculty are the engines of discovery. Through their dedicated inquiry and commitment to the creation of knowledge, they contribute profoundly to the advancement of their disciplines and bring transformative insights to the world's most pressing challenges.

Faculty are also passionate educators and inspiring mentors. They do not simply transmit facts; they kindle the flames of curiosity and imagination in their students. In classrooms, studios, laboratories, and field sites, they encourage students to question, to explore boldly, and to engage deeply. With unwavering commitment, faculty use their expertise, creativity, and care to cultivate critical thinking, intellectual resilience, and a genuine love for lifelong learning. Their mentorship shapes not just academic growth, but personal development, preparing students to navigate an ever-evolving, complex world with wisdom and integrity. This transformative educational experience equips students to become thoughtful, informed, and compassionate citizens and leaders in every walk of life.

Beyond the classroom and research lab, faculty serve as leaders, collaborators, and innovators within the university community and far beyond it. They engage in interdisciplinary work that fosters a vibrant intellectual ecosystem, one in which ideas intersect, evolve, and give rise to new possibilities. Faculty shape the academic enterprise itself, playing vital roles in governance, planning, and strategic initiatives that ensure the university remains forward-looking and aligned with its core values and mission. Their leadership is critical to sustaining the university as a dynamic, responsive institution of higher learning.

Faculty also enrich the cultural and civic life of the local community, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the global society. Through outreach, public scholarship, and service, they extend the reach of the university into the world, translating knowledge into action and building partnerships that matter. Their work in communities—whether in schools, governments, nonprofits, or industry—demonstrates the university's public mission and exemplifies a spirit of civic engagement, ethical responsibility, and social contribution.

In the grand tapestry that is academia, faculty are the master weavers, threading together strands of inquiry, teaching, and service to create a legacy of wisdom and understanding that transcends generations. They are not only stewards of knowledge but also catalysts for positive change, shaping a more just, thoughtful, and enlightened future. Through their work, faculty inspire and empower the next generation of thinkers, creators, and leaders, leaving an indelible mark on society and the world.



ABOUT FACULTY AFFAIRS Core Values

Faculty Affairs, housed within the Office of the Provost, is composed of a dedicated and highly skilled team of professionals committed to fostering a university culture that champions faculty excellence, professional success, and personal well-being. Recognizing that faculty are the cornerstone of Virginia Tech's academic enterprise, our mission is to provide the comprehensive support and resources necessary for faculty to flourish as educators, scholars, and leaders. We “support faculty success and empower faculty excellence.”

Our commitment to faculty is realized through a multitude of programs and initiatives designed to recruit, retain, and support them at every stage of their careers. From work-life liaisons and the dual career program to mentoring grants and writing retreats, our offerings are tailored to enhance faculty development, promote academic productivity, and support professional fulfillment. These efforts not only advance research and enrich teaching but also help faculty cultivate a healthy work-life balance—an essential ingredient for long-term satisfaction and institutional vitality.

Faculty Affairs also plays a central role in stewarding the promotion and tenure process. We are committed to ensuring that this process is clear, fair, and aligned with the university's highest standards of excellence. In partnership with colleges and departments, we help faculty navigate key career milestones, understand expectations, and prepare compelling dossiers that reflect the depth and impact of their work.

Collaboration is at the heart of all we do. Faculty Affairs partners closely with colleges, departments, and other university units to understand the distinct needs of faculty across disciplines. By listening attentively and responding thoughtfully, we tailor our support to reflect the varied contexts in which faculty work. Our goal is to ensure that every faculty member feels recognized, supported, and positioned for success.

In all of this, Faculty Affairs contributes to a broader institutional vision—one in which faculty thrive, scholarship flourishes, and the university's mission of excellence in teaching, discovery, and community engagement is fully realized. For a detailed overview of Faculty Affairs' core functions, please see Appendix A.

Achieving Virginia Tech's global distinction aspirations requires an accomplished, successful, world-class faculty. Faculty Affairs' role is in helping faculty realize their full potential.

VISION. The faculty of Virginia Tech is a flourishing community of world-class scholars dedicated to advancing knowledge and transforming lives.

MISSION. We cultivate a university environment and culture that promotes the excellence, professional success, and personal well-being of Virginia Tech faculty.

CORE VALUES. We are supportive, proactive, and collaborative. We empower excellence, support success, embrace individuality, and we advocate for faculty.

Faculty Affairs' core values are founded on the university core values of knowledge and innovation, opportunity and affordability, and excellence and integrity, and they flow from Virginia Tech's motto: Ut Prosim.

FACULTY AFFAIRS' STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Faculty Affairs at Virginia Tech is dedicated to advancing the institution's mission through a comprehensive focus on four strategic priorities, each designed to elevate the faculty experience and institutional excellence. Each strategic priority has three associated goals and multiple objectives organized into current activities, near-term, long-term and “blue sky” to guide implementation.

As detailed in the ensuing pages, Faculty Affairs' four strategic priorities are as follows.

Virginia Tech will be national and global leader in:

1. Recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining a world-class faculty.

Recruiting and retaining top-tier faculty is essential for maintaining the university's competitive edge in research, teaching, and service. A world-class faculty contributes to Virginia Tech's national and global reputation by producing cutting-edge research, fostering innovation, and providing transformative educational experiences for students.

2. Advancing academic excellence via faculty development, professional growth, and recognition.

Investing in faculty development and professional growth is crucial to maintaining high standards of academic excellence. By providing ongoing opportunities for faculty to enhance their skills, pursue their scholarly interests, and develop their leadership potential, Virginia Tech supports a vibrant academic community that is innovative and forward-thinking.

3. Cultivating a campus environment that prioritizes faculty satisfaction, well-being, and work-life balance.

Creating a supportive and healthy work environment for faculty is vital for their long-term success and well-being. A focus on faculty satisfaction, well-being, and work-life balance fosters retention, productivity, and engagement and when faculty can balance their professional and personal responsibilities, they are more likely to contribute their best work.

4. Fostering an engaged academic community that values and respects all faculty.

A respectful and engaged academic community—one that values all faculty—is essential to creating an environment where faculty can thrive. Such a community fosters collaboration, encourages innovation, and strengthens the university's ability to lead in research, education, and service on both national and global stages.

These strategic priorities aim to enhance the overall effectiveness and well-being of the faculty, while also fostering a dynamic, collaborative climate grounded in academic excellence. By recruiting, promoting, and retaining world-class faculty; advancing their scholarly impact and work-life balance; supporting their professional growth and recognition; and cultivating a community where all faculty are respected and supported—these priorities will strengthen both individual and collective success. In doing so, they will elevate Virginia Tech's academic distinction and further the university's aspirations for global leadership.

Strategic Priority 1:

Recruit, Hire, Promote, and Retain a World-class Faculty.

- > **GOAL 1:** Enhance Virginia Tech's ability to attract and hire the best faculty from around the world.
- > **GOAL 2:** Administer and support promotion and tenure processes that are rigorous, fair, and transparent.
- > **GOAL 3:** Maximize faculty retention by ensuring compensation practices are competitive and retention actions are timely and effective.

GOAL 1: Enhance Virginia Tech's ability to attract and hire the best faculty from around the world.

- > **Current Objectives**
 - Continue to Execute Key Programs Critical for Successful Faculty Recruiting. Work closely with colleges to sustain and strengthen initiatives such as the Dual Career program and the Work-Life Liaisons program, ensuring they effectively support faculty recruitment.
 - Implement Improved Faculty Search Process Resources. With the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Prevention Education (CRCPE) and Human Resources (HR), develop and implement faculty-specific search committee charge training materials, including a new on-line training module and a T&R Faculty Search Guide to serve as a resource for search committees.
- > **Near-term Objectives**
 - Review and Enhance faculty Recruiting Resources. In close consultation with departments and colleges, systematically assess current recruiting practices and resources, identify compliance opportunities and challenges, and redesign or reframe programs as needed to better support recruiting world-class faculty.
 - Monitor and Improve Faculty Recruiting and Retention Success. Develop methods and then a dashboard to monitor faculty recruiting and retention effectiveness trends, both overall and by each faculty series, as well as by college and department. Analyze recruitment data to identify opportunities to enhance hiring practices and success.
- > **Long-term Objectives**
 - Strengthen Faculty Candidate Vetting. Strengthen faculty hiring procedures by implementing a process for the disclosure and careful review of candidates' prior employment records in order to ensure informed, responsible hiring decisions that uphold the highest standards of integrity, while fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for our community.
 - Increase Resources for Key Recruiting Programs. Expand the Dual Career program to cover all T&R faculty series, including expanding bridge funding support. Create a new fully-complaint Future Faculty Development Program and

a new mid-career Target of Opportunity program; identify resources to implement them.

- Expand Faculty Recruiting Pathways. In coordination with the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) Postdoctoral Office, continue to develop and expand the Presidential Postdoc Fellowship Program as a pipeline for recruiting new faculty.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Create a Virtual Faculty Recruitment Platform. Develop a cutting-edge platform that provides immersive experiences for prospective faculty, including virtual campus tours, with information important to and useful for attracting candidates.
- Launch a Prestigious Faculty Fellowship Program. Create prestigious university-level endowed professorships to attract renowned and highly distinguished scholars in disciplines strategically important to Virginia Tech.

GOAL 2: Administer and support promotion and tenure processes that are rigorous, fair, and transparent.

> Current Objectives

- Continue and Expand Key P&T Programs. In close collaboration with colleges, continue to execute key programs that support the promotion and tenure process, including extend the probationary period (tenure clock extension) policies, completion of departmental and college expectations documents, a variety of P&T workshops, and extensive communications about process.
- Ensure promotion and tenure policies are current and aligned with Virginia Tech's academic and land-grant mission. In coordination with shared governance, regularly review promotion and tenure (P&T) expectations and procedures to ensure they remain fair, equitable, and responsive to changing circumstances such as shifts in federal research funding. Provide faculty, committees, and academic leaders with updated guidance, templates, and resources to support consistent, transparent, and mission-aligned P&T processes.

> Near-term Objectives

- Clarify Expectations for Non-Tenure Track Faculty. In coordination with the Commission on Faculty Affairs, beginning with the collegiate faculty series, clarify hiring and promotion expectations as described in the Faculty Handbook for non-tenure track faculty series.
- Expand P&T Training Opportunities and Offerings. Offer workshops and training for faculty and promotion and tenure committee members on best practices, including bringing the Michigan CRLT Players to campus at least every other year. Implement workshops for junior faculty to help demystify the P&T process and provide strategies for compiling effective dossiers and writing impactful candidate statements.
- Provide Centralized Access to Promotion and Tenure Guidelines. Develop and maintain a secure, centralized database of departmental and college-level

promotion and tenure expectations documents, accessible behind a firewall, to support transparency, consistency, and ease of reference for faculty and administrators.

> Long-term Objectives

- Establish a Process for Benchmarking P&T Standards. Establish a systematic and ongoing process for benchmarking Virginia Tech's promotion and tenure standards against those of top global universities, including identifying emerging best practices, assessing alignment with institutional goals, and integrating enhancements that strengthen faculty success, competitiveness, and the university's standing.
- Phase Out COVID P&T Modifications. By 2028, begin phasing out adaptations to the P&T process explicitly focused to COVID-19. Consider including a broader research impacts statement that allows candidates to discuss a variety of impacts, including long-term COVID impacts and research funding impacts.
- Implement a System that Streamlines the Creation and Distribution of P&T Dossiers. Explore and evaluate alternatives to our current P&T dossier system. Implement a new on-line system to streamline the creation and distribution of P&T dossiers, and that would facilitate the review of dossiers by committees.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Develop Multi-Dimensional Faculty Evaluation Framework. Develop and adopt a holistic framework for annual evaluations and promotion and tenure that recognizes non-traditional scholarly contributions, such as entrepreneurial activities, community-engaged scholarship, and scholarship not amenable to traditional measures as equally impactful to traditional scholarly metrics, and that supports and encourages interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

GOAL 3: Maximize faculty retention by ensuring compensation practices are competitive and retention actions are timely and effective.

> Current Objectives

- Continue Merit-based Compensation Programs. In close collaboration with colleges, continue to implement faculty raise programs, as authorized by the legislature and governor, using merit-based performance criteria. And, as authorized by the university, continue to implement an annual National Distinction merit program to recognize faculty with exemplary academic achievements.
- Continue Faculty Retention Bridge Program. In close collaboration with colleges, continue to offer retention-based salary cost sharing for tenure-track faculty. Continue to advocate for increases in the amount of funding the Provost Office contributes to faculty retention packages and continue to support preemptive retention actions as appropriate.
- Continue to Provide Faculty Salary Benchmarking Information. Maintain subscriptions to Oklahoma State Salary Study and CUPA-HR salary data for use by university and college leadership. Maintain and provide access to University

Data Commons site with comparative data displays. Analyze market compensation data to address disparities as needed.

> Near-term Objectives

- Support the Instructor Workload and Compensation Task Force. Provide support for CFA resolution 2023-24C, Resolution to Form a Task Force to Study Instructor Workloads and Salaries.
- Design Faculty Exit Survey and Develop Infrastructure. Develop a comprehensive framework for conducting T&R faculty exit surveys, including survey instruments, interview protocols, and data management systems, to gather meaningful feedback from departing faculty about their experiences at Virginia Tech.

> Long-term Objectives

- Ensure Salary Competitiveness. Collaborate with university leadership to ensure faculty salaries remain competitive with peer institutions in support of Virginia Tech's Strategic Plan goal to "Achieve progress in competitive faculty salaries towards 50th percentile of top 20 Research (R1) Public Land-Grant Universities by 2024."
- Implement Faculty Exit Survey Process. Launch and maintain a structured process for administering T&R faculty exit surveys, analyzing results, and using the findings to inform policies and practices aimed at improving faculty retention and the overall faculty experience.
- Develop and Offer Training to Mitigate Faculty Retention Losses. Develop and implement comprehensive training programs, workshops, and other training materials for leaders to identify early warning signs of faculty retention risks and provide them with effective strategies, resources, and tools to address these challenges proactively and consistently.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Establish and Support Customizable Retention Packages. Explore and design flexible, forward-thinking retention packages tailored to individual faculty needs. These may include personalized professional development funds, collaborative research opportunities, family and relocation support, or other creative incentives that reflect the university's commitment to retaining top talent through innovative and responsive solutions.



Strategic Priority 2:

Advance Academic Excellence via Faculty Development, Professional Growth, and Recognition.

- > **GOAL 1:** Provide faculty with comprehensive programming resources and opportunities to enhance academic and scholarly skills.
- > **GOAL 2:** Support faculty professional growth by providing targeted resources and programs that foster career advancement and excellence.
- > **GOAL 3:** Elevate faculty recognition by establishing programs and infrastructure to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding achievements.

GOAL 1: Provide faculty with comprehensive programming resources and opportunities to enhance academic and scholarly skills.

- > **Current Objectives**
 - **Sustain and Enhance Faculty Development Programming.** Sustain and enhance Faculty Affairs programming that support faculty in developing academic and scholarly skills, including writing retreats, faculty writing group grants, mid-career mentoring summits, and mentoring grants.
 - **Continue to Advocate for Streamlined Administrative Processes.** To help faculty maximally focus on academic excellence and scholarly success, continue to advocate for supporting resources, policies, and procedures that reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, simplify compliance requirements, and eliminate unproductive bureaucratic obstacles.
- > **Near-term Objectives**
 - **Expand Collaborative Faculty Development Programming.** Partner with other administrative units to deliver comprehensive programming that supports faculty in their scholarly and teaching skill development needs, including: grant-writing workshops and research compliance training with ORI; workshops and resources to enhance teaching effectiveness, pedagogical innovation, and integration of technology-driven practices in the classroom with CETL and TLOS; and, mentorship programs for faculty to strengthen graduate student advising skills with the Graduate School.
 - **Educate the Community on Academic Freedom and Free Expression.** In partnership with the Faculty Senate, develop faculty-focused programming—such as speaker series, campus dialogues, and workshops—that deepens understanding of academic freedom and freedom of expression as foundational principles of higher education. These efforts will highlight their essential role in advancing research and teaching, foster thoughtful engagement across the academic community, and build public trust in the university’s mission.
 - **Develop Enhanced Communications Skills Programming.** Establish a comprehensive suite of workshops, coaching sessions, and resources to help faculty improve their communication skills across varied contexts, including areas such as public speaking, science communication, media engagement, and

collaborative dialogue. In collaboration with ORI, continue sponsoring the Nutshell Talks for faculty by the Center for Communicating Science.

> Long-term Objectives

- Create a Centralized Faculty Development Portal. Develop a curated and comprehensive online platform that aggregates professional skill development offerings from all administrative units across campus. This "one-stop shop" would allow faculty to easily explore and access opportunities for academic and scholarly skill-building, such as workshops, training sessions, mentoring programs, and leadership development initiatives.
- Establish a Cross-College Faculty Fellows Program. In collaboration with colleges, create a skill-building fellowship program that immerses faculty in rotational roles across different colleges with a focus on developing competencies such as cross-disciplinary collaboration, leadership, and problem-solving to foster growth in areas like strategic decision-making, resource management, and collaborative research.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Develop Customizable Faculty Skill Development Programs. Create a flexible framework of modular resources and training opportunities that faculty can tailor to their individual career goals that would include options for enhancing interdisciplinary research capabilities, advancing public engagement and communications skills, and other academic and scholarly proficiencies.

GOAL 2: Support faculty professional growth by providing targeted resources and programs that foster career advancement and excellence.

> Current Objectives

- Continue Faculty Career Advancement Programming. Sustain and enhance Faculty Affairs programming that supports faculty professional growth and career advancement, including but not limited to tenure and promotion workshops, leadership development programs, the You've Got Tenure, Now What? program, faculty recognition initiatives, faculty development grants, and the annual faculty mentoring forum.
- Expand Faculty Affairs Fellow Program. Strategically cultivate opportunities for faculty to gain hands-on administrative and academic leadership experience by increasing the number of fellowship positions, broadening the scope of projects fellows can undertake, and enhancing engagement with senior academic leaders to support faculty in developing leadership skills and institutional knowledge.

> Near-term Objectives

- Facilitate Early Career Faculty Professional Programming. Implement a seminar series specifically tailored to early career faculty, introducing them to campus resources and professional development opportunities, helping new faculty build connections, and offering workshops focused on demystifying the P&T process and providing strategies for compiling effective dossiers tailored to university standards.

- Implement Additional Career Programming for Mid-Career Faculty. Building on the recently launched You've Got Tenure, Now What? program, create additional programs that address the unique needs of mid-career faculty. This might include interactive workshops on translating academic work into impactful public scholarship, leadership programming, and perhaps internal faculty exchange programs that provide short-term placements in other departments to encourage cross-disciplinary innovation.
- > Long-term Objectives
 - Establish a Mid-Career Faculty Mentoring Program. Work with colleges to develop mentorship initiatives for mid-career faculty. Develop a suite of workshops, networking opportunities, and resources aimed at preparing mid-career faculty for roles such as advancement in rank or preparation for administrative roles such as department head, associate dean, or other leadership positions.
 - Develop a Mid-Career Faculty Mentoring Grant Program. In addition to the mentoring program above, provide targeted funding to mid-career faculty seeking to explore new directions in their academic careers. Via individualized mentoring plans, faculty would be able to explore professional aspirations, such as transitioning into leadership roles, pursuing interdisciplinary research, or enhancing their teaching portfolio.
- > Blue Sky Objectives
 - Create Global Scholar Exchange Programs. Create international exchange opportunities for faculty to collaborate with top institutions worldwide, enriching scholarly expertise and strengthening Virginia Tech's global network.
 - Establish a Senior Faculty Professional Development Program. Develop programming to support senior faculty in navigating late career professional needs, issues, and challenges. Initiatives would provide opportunities to explore legacy-building, strategies for sustaining scholarly engagement, and mentoring the next generation. Such programming would strive to foster strategic planning, personal well-being, and continued professional fulfillment.

GOAL 3: Elevate faculty recognition by establishing programs and infrastructure to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding achievements.

- > Current Objectives
 - Develop and Enhance Support for Recognizing Faculty Achievements. Continue to host annual events such as Promotion and Tenure receptions to honor faculty milestones and contributions, collaborate with administrative partners such as ORI to promote and recognize faculty achievements, and highlight faculty awards through universitywide communications, including newsletters, social media, and press releases.
 - Establish Prestigious Awards Support Function. Within the Office of Faculty Affairs, establish a capability to enhance Virginia Tech's capacity to identify, nominate, and support faculty for prestigious external awards and honors, including collaborating with institutes to extend their awards support capabilities

and working with colleges and departments to foster a culture of promoting faculty for external awards.

- Provide Support to and for UDPs and ADPs. On behalf of the president and provost, manage processes that support University Distinguished Professors (UDPs) and Alumni Distinguished Professors (ADPs), including the nomination and selection process for new UDPs and ADPs, and the merit process. Provide ad hoc support to ADPs and UDPs as needs arise.

> Near-term Objectives

- Expand Policies that Support and Incentivize Prestigious External Awards. Continue to create and promote policies that incentivize and support faculty achievement and facilitate faculty external engagement and recognition, such as the use of special leaves to allow faculty to accept prestigious fellowships.
- Develop New Endowed Awards to Celebrate Faculty Achievements. In collaboration with university Advancement and administrative partners such as CETL and ORI, create new endowed awards, like the Lutz Eminent Scholar Awards, to celebrate faculty accomplishments in teaching, research, and service and to prepare and promote faculty for prestigious external awards.

> Long-term Objectives

- Increase Faculty Recognition Through Prestigious Honors and Awards. Expand the number of faculty receiving highly prestigious accolades, including membership in the National Academies, fellowships in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and discipline-specific honors, as well as broader recognition in international and interdisciplinary awards, such as Guggenheim Fellowships and MacArthur Fellowships.
- Establish a Virginia Tech Faculty Hall of Fame. Create a prestigious Faculty Hall of Fame to honor retired faculty for extraordinary contributions to teaching, research, service, and outreach and whose research and scholarship have brought global recognition to Virginia Tech. Featuring a physical and virtual exhibit, the Hall of Fame will inspire current and future faculty while fostering a culture of scholarly excellence through annual inductions and celebrations.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Virginia Tech Faculty Impact Chronicles. Launch a multimedia storytelling initiative, the Faculty Impact Chronicles, to celebrate faculty achievements through professional documentary-style videos, podcasts, and interactive web features. These stories would be shared globally through partnerships with national media outlets, museums, and cultural institutions, showcasing Virginia Tech's faculty as thought leaders in shaping the future of society and science.

Strategic Priority 3:

Cultivate a Campus Environment that Prioritizes Faculty Satisfaction, Well-Being, and Work-Life Balance.

- > **GOAL 1:** Enhance faculty professional satisfaction and potential by advocating for faculty initiative and agency.
- > **GOAL 2:** Promote the well-being of faculty by fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes mental, physical, and emotional health.
- > **GOAL 3:** Direct and advocate for supportive policies, resources, and programs that help faculty manage their professional and personal responsibilities.

GOAL 1: Enhance faculty professional satisfaction and potential by advocating for faculty initiative and agency.

- > **Current Objectives**
 - **Proactively Advocate for Faculty Needs and Priorities.** Proactively represent and advocate for the unique needs of Virginia Tech faculty by advancing university policies that support flexibility, adaptability, and faculty agency. Through sustained engagement and collaboration, align individual faculty goals and contributions with the university's broader aspirations for academic excellence and global distinction.
 - **Support Faculty Success Through Issue Resolution.** Establish and maintain Faculty Affairs as a trusted resource for addressing faculty concerns by providing confidential consultation, guidance, and support to both faculty and academic leaders. Promote a respectful and supportive work environment by facilitating effective resolution strategies and ensuring that faculty voices are heard and valued.
- > **Near-term Objectives**
 - **Ensure Timely, Effective Conflict Resolution for Faculty.** In coordination with the Faculty Senate and the Commission on Faculty Affairs, implement the updated reconciliation process now housed within Faculty Affairs. Ensure timely, effective conflict resolution and promote a fair, transparent, and supportive academic environment for all faculty.
 - **Provide Support to Faculty Navigating the Grievance Processes.** Assist faculty in navigating the grievance processes, offering assistance that ensures fairness, transparency, and adherence to university policies. Collaborate with academic leaders, department heads, and the Faculty Senate to streamline grievance procedures, foster open communication, and promote timely resolutions.
- > **Long-term Objectives**
 - **Foster a Culture of Innovation and Flexibility.** Lead efforts to cultivate a universitywide culture that prioritizes innovation and flexibility, ensuring faculty feel empowered to take risks, explore new academic endeavors, and push the

boundaries of traditional scholarship while contributing to Virginia Tech's goals for global distinction.

- Promote Faculty Autonomy in Career and Professional Development. Create workshops and support systems that empower faculty to take ownership of their career development, including leadership opportunities, research collaborations, and involvement in academic governance, fostering a culture of self-directed growth.

GOAL 2: Promote the well-being of faculty by fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes mental, physical, and emotional health.

> Current Objectives

- Continue and Expand Programs Supporting Faculty Well-Being. In close partnership with colleges and administrative units, continue to execute and enhance programs that promote faculty well-being, including work-life liaisons, the modified duties program; paid parental leave and FMLA policies; tenure clock extensions, part-time employment, and voluntary transition retirement programs. Strengthen communications about these programs to ensure all faculty are aware of the resources.
- Communicate Best Practices for Faculty Work-Life Balance. Develop and communicate best practices for faculty work-life balance such as limiting meetings to core business hours. Additionally, provide clear guidance on the use of leave policies so faculty understand their options for family, medical, and personal needs. Collaborate with academic leaders to integrate these practices into department-level operations and foster a culture that prioritizes faculty well-being.

> Near-term Objectives

- Promote Workload Equity and Transparency: Collaborate with faculty and departmental leadership to develop and implement strategies that ensure fair distribution of workload responsibilities, such as teaching, research, and service. Advocate for policies that promote transparency in workload assignments and foster an environment where faculty can thrive in their roles without excessive or unequal burdens.
- Develop Next Steps from Work-Life Study. Leverage the insights from the recent Work-Life Study to design and implement innovative programming that addresses identified challenges and opportunities related to faculty well-being, including targeted workshops on time management and resilience and initiatives that encourage community-building and peer support.

> Long-term Objectives

- Expand Access to and Utilization of Wellness Resources. Partner with Hokie Wellness to provide workshops and resources focused on stress management, mindfulness, and work-life balance. Working with Human Resources and the Benefits Committee, advocate for health and wellness programs tailored for faculty, such as fitness memberships, mental health support, and nutrition counseling.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Implement Digital Detox Programming. In alignment with campus digital wellness initiatives for students, develop and implement institutionalize universitywide digital detox programming for faculty, where non-essential emails, meetings, and administrative tasks are paused for some period to allow uninterrupted focus on teaching, research, or personal well-being. Faculty would have access to workshops on mindfulness, productivity, and managing digital overload during these periods.
- Establish a Comprehensive Faculty Wellness Facility. Establish a centralized, comprehensive faculty wellness facility that addresses mental, physical, and emotional health through tailored resources, services, and initiatives, including faculty-specific mental health support, stress management workshops, peer support groups, and holistic well-being assessments.

GOAL 3: Direct and advocate for supportive policies, resources, and programs that help faculty manage their professional and personal responsibilities.

> Current Objectives

- Expand the Dependent Travel Care Program. Expand the piloted Dependent Travel Care Program, which assists faculty in managing caregiving responsibilities while engaging in professional travel, to faculty in all colleges. Launch a centralized program beginning in academic year 2025-26 to reduce the burden on the colleges and to facilitate program expansion.
- Strategically Align Women's Center. Enhance the impact of the Women's Center by aligning its programs and resources to strategically support faculty, staff, and student success. Ensure the Women's Center is positioned to offer targeted resources and foster a campus environment where all individuals thrive personally and professionally.

> Near-term Objectives

- Expand Childcare Options and Capacity. Collaborate with campus partners and external providers to expand childcare options and capacity to meet the needs of faculty and their families. This includes expanding partnerships with local childcare providers, advocating for flexible childcare arrangements, such as drop-in or emergency care, and providing resources to help faculty identify and access quality childcare services in the community.
- Implement Recommendations to Support Tenure-track Faculty. Advance the recommendations from the comprehensive study on the challenges faced by tenure-track women faculty at Virginia Tech that will benefit all faculty. Focus on addressing barriers that impact research, professional development, productivity, and career advancement, with the goal of fostering a more supportive, balanced, and fair academic environment.

> Long-term Objectives

- Develop Support Systems for Faculty Work-Life Integration. Develop comprehensive support systems that help faculty manage their professional and personal responsibilities, including but not limited to, work-life balance, parental

and family leave, caregiving responsibilities, and flexible work arrangements. Continuously evaluate and adjust to meet the evolving needs of faculty and to support their success and well-being, ensuring that Virginia Tech remains a model institution for faculty work-life integration.

- Ensure Faculty Support Policies Are Responsive to a Wide Range of Needs. Collaborate with university leadership and faculty organizations to ensure that work-life balance policies are responsive to the wide range of needs faculty experience across career stages, disciplines, and personal circumstances. Advocate for policy enhancements—such as expanded leave options and increased support for caregiving responsibilities—that address the practical challenges faculty may face in balancing their professional and personal lives.



Strategic Priority 4:

Foster an Engaged Academic Community that Values and Respects all Faculty.

- > **GOAL 1:** Facilitate community building by providing networking opportunities for cross-unit and cross-disciplinary interactions.
- > **GOAL 2:** Provide opportunities to develop leadership, management, and communication skills that support the faculty experience.
- > **GOAL 3:** Represent faculty perspectives in university decision-making at all levels.

GOAL 1: Facilitate community building by providing networking opportunities for cross-unit and cross-disciplinary interactions.

- > **Current Objectives**
 - Continue and Expand Programs Supporting Faculty Community. In close collaboration with colleges and administrative units, continue to implement and enhance programs that foster faculty connections and a sense of community, such as the New Faculty Welcome and Pop-up Faculty Clubs, to provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary networking and foster meaningful interactions among faculty.
 - Build Faculty Community by Celebrating Faculty Achievements. In close collaboration with colleges and administrative units, continue to execute and expand events that honor and celebrate faculty achievements and milestones, such as the Promotion and Tenure Reception, ORI's Celebrating Scholarly Excellence, CETL's Exemplary Department Awards, and the Academies of Faculty Leadership and Service.
- > **Near-term Objectives**
 - Establish Recurring Faculty Networking Lunches. Launch and sustain periodic faculty lunches at D2 as a relaxed and accessible opportunity for faculty across disciplines to connect, exchange ideas, and build community. These informal gatherings will serve to strengthen collegial relationships, foster cross-departmental collaboration, and expand the sense of faculty community at Virginia Tech.
 - Establish a Policy for Registered Faculty Organizations. Develop and implement a university policy to formally support the creation and operation of professionally focused Registered Faculty Organizations (RFOs). Once the policy is in place, expand the number and scope of RFOs to offer faculty meaningful opportunities for networking, community-building, and the advancement of their professional goals.
- > **Long-term Objectives**
 - Strengthen the Long-Term Infrastructure for Faculty Community-Building. Build on existing efforts to foster faculty connection by developing a sustained, universitywide framework for community-building initiatives. As part of this effort, implement a centralized platform—modeled on GobblerConnect—

that allows faculty to easily publicize, discover, and share events and opportunities of interest across departments and colleges.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Establish a Dedicated Faculty Commons. Design and create a state-of-the-art Faculty Commons, a physical space exclusively dedicated to fostering faculty community and cross-disciplinary collaboration. This dynamic hub will provide a welcoming environment for faculty to connect, share ideas, and engage in both formal and informal interactions. Equipped with meeting rooms, lounges, dining facilities, and event spaces, the Faculty Commons will serve as a venue for networking events, collaborative workshops, and other professional and social opportunities.

GOAL 2: Provide opportunities to develop leadership, management, and communication skills that support the faculty experience.

> Current Objectives

- Continue Programs Supporting Faculty Leadership Development. In partnership with colleges and administrative units, continue to execute and enhance programs that develop academic leaders and managers, including the New Department Head Orientation program, the ACC Academic Leader Program, and the Leading in Place program, as well as managing academic senior leader reviews and recruitment efforts for the provost.
- Continue to Provide Specialized Senior Leadership Support. Continue to offer tailored support to senior academic leaders by serving as a trusted advisor on matters related to faculty affairs, leadership development, and university policies. Provide external services to enhance leadership effectiveness, consult on strategic planning issues, and offer targeted resources to address complex challenges. Assist senior leaders with team cohesion and the selection, management, and development of their direct reports.

> Near-term Objectives

- Establish a Faculty Senate Orientation and Leadership Program. Establish a comprehensive Faculty Senate Orientation and Leadership Program designed to provide Faculty Senators and other governance representatives with the essential tools to effectively fulfill their roles and advance shared governance at Virginia Tech, including an orientation to the university's governance structures and the roles and responsibilities of senators, as well as leadership development focusing on skills specific to the governance context, and effective conflict resolution, communication, and collaborative decision-making.
- Expand the Provost Leadership Development Program Offerings. In addition to the existing New Department Heads Orientation and Leading in Place programs, expand the Provost Leadership Development Program by introducing developing and implementing a range of leadership programs aimed at emerging and mid-career faculty, as well as seasoned academic leaders, that focus on essential skills such as strategic planning, conflict management, effective teams, and faculty mentorship.

> Long-term Objectives

- Enhance High Impact Skills for Academic Leaders. Design and deliver targeted programs and resources to build leadership competencies among academic leaders, including department heads, college deans, and other faculty in leadership roles. Focus areas include effective communication, engaging public speaking, conflict management, transparent decision-making, coaching, and active listening.
- Build a Community of Practice for Virginia Tech Leaders. Create opportunities for leaders to connect and learn from each other to deepen their understanding of best practices in leadership and foster community collaboration so that leaders can gain and offer support and learn best practices.

> Blue Sky Objectives

- Create a Nationally Recognized Faculty Leadership Academy. Position Virginia Tech as a leader in faculty development by creating a nationally recognized leadership academy that trains faculty to take on prominent roles within and beyond academia. The Academy will include critical topics such as transformative leadership, institutional change management, public-private partnerships, and global academic leadership, developing faculty leaders who are prepared for academia's challenges and opportunities in the 21st century.

GOAL 3: Represent faculty perspectives in university decision-making at all levels.

> Current Objectives

- Continue Programming in Support of Shared Governance. Provide comprehensive support for faculty representation in university decision-making at all levels. This includes ongoing support for and collaboration with the Department Head Council, the Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) and Faculty Senate, and direct assistance to Faculty Senate officers in their leadership roles. Additionally, coordinate with the Council of College Deans and support the Academic, Research and Student Affairs committee of the Board of Visitors.
- Serve as Trusted Partner and Communications Conduit. Continue to serve as a key liaison between faculty and university leadership by actively engaging with individual faculty members, the Faculty Senate, university commissions, and academic leaders to ensure faculty voices are meaningfully included in critical institutional decisions. Facilitate and ensure open, transparent, and ongoing communication channels to gather faculty perspectives and ensure these viewpoints are communicated effectively.

> Near-term Objectives

- Conduct the Next COACHE Survey in Academic Year 2025–26. Conduct the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey during the 2025–26 academic year (and every three years thereafter) to provide faculty with an anonymous and structured platform to express their thoughts and opinions on various aspects of their experience, including satisfaction with university leadership, operations, resources, and workplace climate. The insights gathered will be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement,

ensuring that faculty voices directly inform institutional priorities and strategic initiatives.

- Implement Office Hours for Faculty. Support the Faculty Senate president in hosting regular office hours to provide a direct and approachable avenue for faculty to voice concerns, seek guidance, and share ideas. The office hours will foster open communication and create opportunities to address individual or group concerns.

> Long-term Objectives

- Advocate for Faculty-Centered Policy Development and Implementation. Work closely with administrative units to advocate for policies that prioritize faculty perspectives and address faculty needs so that proposed policies are informed by faculty input and aligned with best practices in supporting faculty success. This includes fostering open communication channels between faculty and administrative units, providing data-driven insights about faculty needs, and facilitating collaborative discussions to refine policy drafts.
- Enhance Understanding of Faculty Via Administrative Unit Training. Develop and implement a training program for administrative units to deepen their understanding of faculty roles, responsibilities, and challenges. The training will provide insights into the multitude of faculty duties, including teaching, research, service, and community engagement, as well as the unique pressures and expectations they face. By fostering a greater appreciation of the faculty experience, the training will equip administrative staff with the knowledge needed to support faculty more effectively and collaboratively and will promote a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

> Blue Sky Objectives

Establish the Virginia Tech Futures Forum. Create the Virginia Tech Futures Forum, a visionary think tank composed of distinguished faculty members across ranks and disciplines to identify emerging institutional challenges and opportunities, offering innovative ideas and forward-thinking solutions to address them. The Futures Forum will contribute to shaping Virginia Tech's long-term vision and adaptability in a rapidly changing academic and societal landscape and will underscore the university's commitment to leveraging faculty expertise in addressing complex challenges and driving institutional excellence.



PUTTING THIS PLAN IN PERSPECTIVE

Faculty Affairs' Strategic Priorities Support Virginia Tech's Global Distinction Aspirations

As described in this section, Faculty Affairs' strategic plan is designed to fully align with Virginia Tech's global aspirations and strategic priorities. Our focus is on enhancing the success and professional satisfaction of faculty, where faculty who are well-supported, recognized, and empowered will enhance Virginia Tech's reputation and impact worldwide and thereby advance the university's global distinction aspirations.

The strategic priorities of Faculty Affairs are intentionally designed to advance Virginia Tech's bold aspiration for global distinction. By aligning our work with the university's broader institutional goals, we ensure that faculty are empowered to lead in research, teaching, and engagement—key drivers of Virginia Tech's impact across regional, national, and international contexts. These priorities are not peripheral to global distinction; they are foundational. When faculty are supported with the autonomy to innovate, the resources to grow, and a strong community in which to thrive, the entire institution is elevated.

Our commitment to recruiting, promoting, and retaining a world-class faculty is central to this vision. By attracting top-tier scholars and educators—and supporting their continued development and success—we build a faculty whose influence extends far beyond campus. A sustained focus on academic excellence, professional fulfillment, and work-life balance ensures that faculty remain not only engaged and productive, but inspired to pursue work that defines disciplines, shapes policy, and changes lives.

Equally important is our dedication to recognizing and celebrating faculty achievement. By amplifying the contributions of Virginia Tech's faculty on national and global stages, we reinforce the university's reputation as a place where excellence is cultivated, supported, and visible. Faculty Affairs' role is not simply to enable success, but to help convert that success into distinction.

Ultimately, Faculty Affairs is a strategic partner in Virginia Tech's pursuit of global leadership in higher education. Through our efforts to create a supportive and empowering environment for faculty, we are helping to position the university as a destination of choice for the most talented scholars and a beacon of innovation, creativity, and excellence to the world.



Faculty Affairs' Strategic Priorities Support the University's Strategic Priorities

Faculty Affairs' Strategic Priorities Are Designed to Support and Enhance Faculty Satisfaction

Faculty Affairs' strategic priorities are directly aligned with Virginia Tech's overarching strategic priorities and cross-cutting goals, creating a cohesive vision for the university's future. By emphasizing the recruitment, promotion, and retention of a world-class faculty, as well as advancing academic excellence, Faculty Affairs directly supports the university's strategic priority to "Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact." Our strategic priorities directly support for the university's crosscutting goals of elevating faculty productivity and the impact of scholarship, securing more extramural funding for research, and implementing plans for developing faculty to achieve national distinction.

Moreover, our focus on fostering a thriving academic community that supports all faculty is crucial to realizing the strategic priority of "Be A Destination For Talent." By creating a supportive and empowering atmosphere, focused on academic excellence, we not only attract top-tier talent but also retain it. This aligns with the university's crosscutting goal of fostering an environment where all individuals can thrive. Faculty Affairs' initiatives to enhance work-life balance and promote professional development are essential components in building a vibrant and welcoming academic community that stands as a testament to Virginia Tech's commitment to excellence.

Niklova and Cnossen (2020)¹ highlighted three key elements that contribute to employees finding their work meaningful: autonomy in their work processes and decisions, competence in their tasks, including the ability to learn and solve problems, and belonging to a supportive community. Faculty Affairs' strategic priorities intentionally align closely with these elements, creating an environment where faculty can thrive and find their work meaningful, a crucial factor in successful recruiting, retention, and the professional success of our faculty.

Autonomy in Work Processes and Decisions

One of the primary strategic priorities of Faculty Affairs is recruiting, promoting, and retaining a world-class faculty. Central to this priority is supporting and promoting faculty with autonomy in their work. By empowering faculty members in their research, teaching, and service activities, Virginia Tech fosters an environment that signals to faculty that their efforts and accomplishments are valued and encouraged. Minimizing unnecessary bureaucracy and unnecessary restrictions and administrative demands on faculty, as well as establishing a service-minded culture in the non-academic units that emphasizes faculty support, will help promote an expanded sense of autonomy in the faculty. This autonomy not only enhances their sense of meaning in their work but also drives productivity and creativity, contributing to the overall success of the university.

¹ Niklova, M., and Cnossen, F. (2020). What Makes Work Meaningful and Why Economists Should Care About It, *Labour Economics*, 65, Article 101847, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101847>.

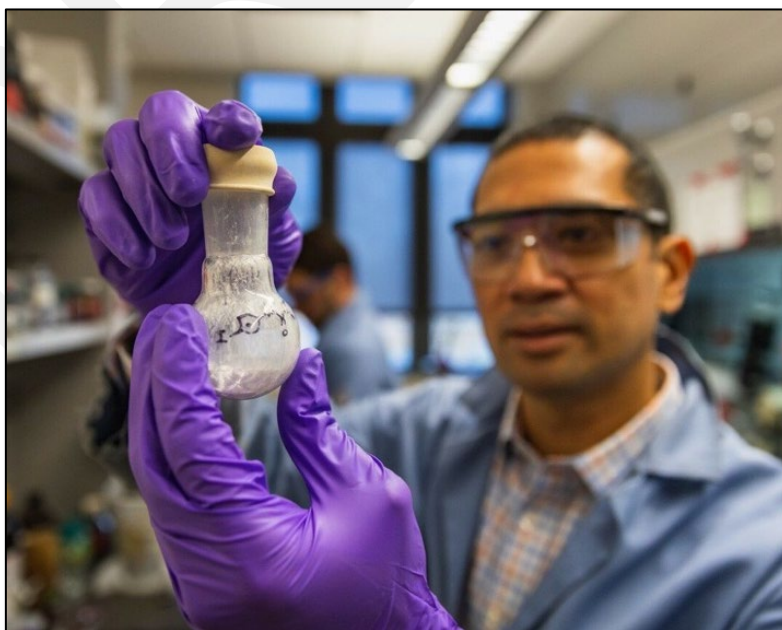
Competence and Continuous Learning

Faculty Affairs is also committed to advancing academic excellence, satisfaction, and work-life balance, which directly impacts faculty members' sense of competence. By providing ample opportunities for professional development, Virginia Tech ensures that faculty members are equipped to handle current and future challenges. Workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs are designed to help faculty learn new skills, stay updated with the latest research advancements, and solve unforeseen problems independently. Additionally, by recognizing and rewarding excellence, Virginia Tech motivates faculty to strive for higher standards in their work. This continuous learning and competence-building ensure that faculty members feel confident and capable, further enhancing the meaningfulness of their work.

Belonging to a Supportive Community

The strategic priority of fostering a thriving academic community that supports all faculty is directly aligned with the need for a supportive work environment. Virginia Tech places a strong emphasis on creating a collaborative community where faculty feel valued and supported by their colleagues and supervisors. Initiatives such as faculty mentoring programs, peer support groups, and community-building events help establish a sense of belonging among faculty members. When faculty members feel that they are part of a caring and supportive community, their work becomes more meaningful and fulfilling.

In sum, the strategic priorities articulated in this plan are intentionally aligned with the core elements that contribute to meaningful faculty work: autonomy, competence, and community. By fostering an environment where faculty are empowered in their roles, supported in their growth, and connected to a vibrant academic community, Faculty Affairs is helping to cultivate a motivated, resilient, and high-performing faculty body. These efforts not only strengthen recruitment, retention, and professional satisfaction—they also lay the foundation for the kind of academic excellence and innovation that elevates Virginia Tech on the national and global stage.



APPENDIX A: WHAT WE DO

Faculty Affairs at Virginia Tech, on behalf of and in support of the Provost, is engaged in a wide range of activities and has substantial responsibilities related to the university's faculty and academic mission. The list below briefly describes some of our responsibilities.

1. **Faculty Recruiting.** Faculty Affairs supports our academic units in their recruitment and selection of new faculty members. In conjunction with HR, Faculty Affairs is responsible for managing the policies and operational procedures to facilitate successful faculty recruiting. Faculty Affairs also manages critical programs in support of successful hiring, including the work-life liaisons program and the dual career program.
2. **Faculty Development.** Faculty Affairs supports the professional growth and career development of faculty members, including providing resources and professional development opportunities. Key programs managed by Faculty Affairs include new faculty mentoring grants, writing retreats, guidance for the peer evaluation of teaching, and mid-career mentoring initiatives. Faculty Affairs also offers several programs to assist faculty with work-life balance, including the modified duties program, tenure clock extensions, and the dependent care travel grant program.
3. **Promotion and Tenure.** Faculty affairs plays a central role in the promotion and tenure (P&T) process. This includes managing the administrative policies, including the Provost's guidance and the various dossier templates and forms, and supporting the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Faculty Affairs also manages the process for approving the award of tenure to newly hired faculty.
4. **Faculty Recognition.** Faculty Affairs supports the establishment of a culture at Virginia Tech that promotes the recognition of faculty. For example, in collaboration with the Office of Research and Innovation, Faculty Affairs is working to expand and promote the external visibility of faculty. Faculty Affairs also oversees the evaluation of faculty members by academic units, including reviewing annual merit recommendations to the Provost by senior leadership.
5. **Faculty Retention.** Faculty Affairs works closely with college deans and department heads to retain faculty in the challenging employment marketplace of higher education. This includes helping to ensure that Virginia Tech is competitive in terms of faculty compensation and benefits, has a reputation and programs that attract new faculty, has a compelling and appealing environment which retains current faculty, and has the resources to counter offers from other institutions.
6. **Senior Leader Recruiting, Development, and Evaluation.** Faculty Affairs supports the Provost in senior searches and represents the Provost in reviewing and supporting the hiring and appointment of direct reports to academic senior leaders. Faculty Affairs also manages the periodic review process for the Provost's direct reports and supports a variety of senior leader development opportunities.
7. **Conflict Resolution.** In consultation and coordination with college and department leaders and the Faculty Senate, Faculty Affairs assists in resolving disputes or conflicts among faculty members or between faculty and the administration. In this process,

Faculty Affairs works closely with academic leaders, university counsel, the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Prevention Education, the Ombudsman, and HR, as well as Faculty Senate leadership and individual faculty members, to appropriately resolve a variety of issues.

8. **University Governance.** In support of the Provost, Faculty Affairs works with the Board of Visitors, and particularly the Academic, Research, and Student Affairs (ARSA) Committee, to manage faculty personnel processes and approvals by the Board. Faculty Affairs also works closely with the Faculty Senate, the Commission on Faculty Affairs, the Department Head Executive Council, and the Council of College Deans on all manner of internal governance issues. Faculty Affairs manages the Faculty Handbook. And, in conjunction with senior leadership, University Counsel and HR, Faculty Affairs helps ensure that the university complies with relevant laws, regulations, and other standards pertaining to faculty employment.
9. **Faculty Advising.** Faculty Affairs works with individual faculty members and department and college leadership to advise on matters and policy affecting faculty.