

The title of emeritus or emerita is conferred on retired members of the Virginia Tech faculty (as defined in chapter two of the Faculty Handbook) who have made **exemplary contributions** to the university. Emeritus/a status is an honorific that should be reserved for those faculty that represent the best of Virginia Tech. The resolution provides evidence and celebration of the achievement of faculty in support of their emeritus/a nomination. This guide helps departments and schools draft impactful resolutions to be brought to senior leadership and the Board of Visitors for consideration.

Exemplary may take different forms for different types of faculty. Faculty Handbook language provides some examples to guide those considerations:

“These contributions may, for example, be demonstrated through teaching awards, leadership or extensive service in transformative university initiatives, especially impactful community engagement, or evidence of national or international distinction”.

Resolution Formatting (Word)

- 12 pt. Arial font
- 1” margins
- Single-spaced
- Semi-colon and “and” after each *Whereas* statement except the last, which ends with just a semi-colon.
- Reference [University Style Guide](#) for other formatting questions
- For best results, use [this formatting template](#).

Emeritus/Emerita resolutions are structured through a series of “*Whereas*” statements that describe the nominee’s full body of work and accomplishments. Resolutions are usually one page in length and include approximately 8-10 *Whereas* statements. Resolutions for faculty with longer tenures may include additional *Whereas* statements and extend to two pages.

The first *Whereas* statement

All resolutions begin with a relatively standard *Whereas* statement with the faculty member’s years for service, their department, and their college:

WHEREAS, for over XXX years, Jane Doe, Ph.D. faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of XXX in the College of XXX; and

Following the opening statement, the next 2-3 *Whereas* statements should generally speak to the faculty member’s contributions to teaching, research, or creative activity. Things to think about in drafting these *Whereas* statements might include:

- Describing the nominee’s teaching style, notable engagement with both undergraduate or graduate students (both in number of students, or approach to pedagogy).
- Have their graduate students gone on to be successful? What have they done?
- Any notable grants, both in the size/number of and/or impact of the research done?
- Number of and/or, impact of books, articles? Examples: is the faculty member’s book used in classrooms across the country? Are their articles highly-cited, demonstrating wide-reach and impact?
- Any notable artistic works or installations created?

Subsequent *Whereas* statements

Following the statements describing the faculty member’s contributions to teaching, research, or creative activity, additional *Whereas* statements may cover the following areas of exemplary achievement.

Academic Citizenship to the Profession:

Things to think about in drafting these *Whereas* statements might include:

- Has the nominee been engaged in notable scholarly or professional organizations (e.g., board or committee service)?
- Are there examples of mentorship or professional development offered by the nominee within their discipline (either within or outside of Virginia Tech?).

National or International Recognition:

Things to think about in drafting these *Whereas* statements might include:

- Any external awards, honors, or recognitions that demonstrate national or international distinction?
- Any internal/Virginia Tech awards, honors, or recognitions (e.g., Academy of Faculty Leadership/Service, Wine Award, XCaliber Award)?

Additional Resources

- Search [VTNews](#) for articles on the achievement of the nominee that may have been overlooked
- Check with your college’s communications team, who usually prepare a retirement announcement and may have additional background information to include in the resolution.

Leadership or Service in University Initiatives:

Things to think about in drafting these *Whereas* statements might include:

- Any major administrative improvements, system automations, or process changes the nominee led?
- Did the nominee provide leadership or guidance (formally or informally) during a significant transition, challenge, or period of uncertainty?
- Did the nominee contribute meaningfully to university governance, strategic planning, or long-term institutional priorities?

Community Engagement and Service:

Things to think about in drafting these *Whereas* statements might include:

- Did the nominee have any notable projects or initiatives that connected Virginia Tech research or teaching to the broader community or the Commonwealth?
- Any examples of how the nominee demonstrated *Ut Prosim* or supporting the Principles of Community in their work?

Other Significant Contributions (if applicable)

Any other demonstrable contributions that have had a sustained, positive, university-wide impact?

Closing out the Resolution

Each resolution ends with a *Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved* statement. While the individual *Whereas* statements provide evidence in support of the nominee for emerita/emerita appointment, the *Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved* describes the action proposed. In emeritus/emerita resolutions this statement is relatively standard:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Dr. XX XXX for their distinguished service to the university with the title XXX.

For the Board of Visitors resolution, a recommendation is also included at the bottom of the page after the *Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved* statement. This recommendation is structured as follows:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending XX XXX, Ph.D. for emeritus/emerita status be approved.

[Date of next BOV meeting]

Examples of past emeritus/emerita resolutions are included to provide additional guidance.

EXAMPLE OF TENURED FACULTY EMERITA RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITA STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 35 years, Nikki Giovanni faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences; and

WHEREAS, she has upheld Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in her teaching, research and service responsibilities, an exemplar of the university's motto *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), being recognized for this work as first the Gloria D. Smith Professor of Black Studies and, since 1999, as a University Distinguished Professor; and

WHEREAS, she made significant contributions to poetry, African American literature, and the international Black community, being awarded no fewer than 31 honorary doctorates from 31 different institutions; and

WHEREAS, she published 21 books of poetry, hundreds of poems, 12 children's books, 7 edited books, 8 books of nonfiction, along with dozens of uncollected pieces; and

WHEREAS, her work has been included in prestigious venues, like the National Civil Rights Museum and *The 100 Best African American Poems*, with her books often included on the New York Times bestseller list; and

WHEREAS, *The Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni: 1968-1998* earned an American Book Award, The Juneteenth Freedom Award, and a Literary Excellence Award; and

WHEREAS, her book *Rosa* earned Book of the Month, the Caldecott Honor Book Award, the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, the Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Best Book Award, the Best Children's Book of the Year award, and a place on the New York Times Bestseller list; and

WHEREAS, she has been honored by being named featured poet or artist, artist in residence, hall of fame inductee, or distinguished poet on no fewer than 50 occasions by 50 different organizations or universities; and

WHEREAS, she has been granted many prestigious awards throughout her career, including the Maya Angelou Lifetime Achievement Award, the Literary Lifetime Achievement Award, the 50 Great African-American Women Award, the 25 Living Legends designee, the Rosa Parks Women of Courage Award, the N.A.A.C.P. Image Award, and 6 other lifetime achievement awards; and

WHEREAS, she was honored by being presented the United States Senate Certificate of Commendation; and

WHEREAS, the success of her work led to her becoming a subject of scholarly and historical study herself, including *Nikki Giovanni* (Twayne Publishers, 1992) by Virginia Fowler, becoming the subject of a one-man show, and having her portrait and biography featured in "Robert Shetterly's Americans Who Tell the Truth"; and

WHEREAS, she so ably served the community as a leader in literacy, poetry, and justice that she has been awarded hundreds of distinguished honors and prestigious awards, having “Nikki Giovanni Days” named in several communities, and becoming an honorary citizen of or being given the keys to more than a dozen cities, in addition to being honored by city, state, and national governments; and

WHEREAS, she was named Woman of the Year by both *Ebony Magazine*, *Mademoiselle Magazine*, and *Ladies Home Journal*; and

WHEREAS, she so inspired a generation of people of color, especially young poets, that she has become an institution of American arts and letters; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, she taught a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate courses ranging across the English curriculum, placing strong emphasis on poetry, creativity, children’s literature and voice; and

WHEREAS, with dedication to the power of poetry, she created the Giovanni-Steger Poetry Prize, which is the largest annual national undergraduate poetry award in the country, awarded annually to undergraduate poets from a range of majors in a world-class ceremony; and

WHEREAS, she provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, college, and university through dedicated service on numerous committees, boards, and committees judging literary awards, visiting classes, and writing blurbs to help promote other poets’ work, earning her a service award from the Upward Bound program, a Service Award from the Virginia State Conference NAACP, and a service recognition in 2013; and

WHEREAS, through her work as a poet and social justice advocate, she brought international visibility to Virginia Tech, including serving as the voice of the university after the tragedy of April 16, 2007, including giving an impassioned convocation address, “We Are Virginia Tech” on April 17, 2007, which has become a famous rallying cry for Hokies worldwide; and

WHEREAS, her work as a poet and communicate leader has earned worldwide fame, resulting in hundreds of television, radio, and other media interviews, keynote addresses, lectures, readings, and pieces about her, with Professor Giovanni always serving as a strong ambassador for *Ut Prosim* and Virginia Tech;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Nikki Giovanni for her distinguished service to the university with the title University Distinguished Professor Emerita of English.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Nikki Giovanni for emerita status be approved.

November 14, 2022

EXAMPLE OF NON-TENURE TRACK FACULTY EMERITA RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITA STATUS

WHEREAS, for over 28 years, Carol Blum Papillon, MPH, RD, faithfully served Virginia Tech as a faculty member in the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; and

WHEREAS, she has demonstrated a commitment to the Principles of Community in her work with students, interns, alumni, and colleagues; and

WHEREAS, through her work as director of the accredited Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics, she built a nationally recognized program reputation that brought visibility to Virginia Tech, and guided over 450 individuals to develop successful careers as confident and competent leaders in the dietetics profession; and

WHEREAS, she expanded the university's reach within the Washington, D.C. metro area and throughout the Commonwealth by establishing multiple new locations of the internship program; and

WHEREAS, with dedication, she taught undergraduate and graduate courses throughout the dietetics curriculum, and, for over 25 years, managed a nutrition counseling service that provided skill development for dietetics students and services to university community members to improve their health; and

WHEREAS, she held leadership positions in professional organizations, including serving as president of the Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; and

WHEREAS, she received numerous professional honors and awards, including the Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Distinguished Dietitian Award, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Outstanding Dietetic Educator Award, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Service Award; and

WHEREAS, she provided many years of distinguished contributions to the department, college, and university through dedicated service on numerous committees, including serving as chair of the dietetics committee, where she ensured that the three accredited programs met educational standards; and

WHEREAS, she served as a committee member for master's students, and delivered multiple invited professional presentations and published articles;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors recognizes Professor Carol Blum Papillon for her distinguished service to the university with the title of Senior Instructor Emerita and Director Emerita of the Virginia Tech Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending Carol Blum Papillon, MPH, RD for emerita status be approved.

November 19, 2024

EXAMPLE OF A/P FACULTY EMERITUS RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION FOR EMERITUS STATUS

WHEREAS, an alumnus of Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in business administration, Dwight Shelton returned to his alma mater in 1979 as the Director of Internal Audit and rose through the ranks, ultimately serving as Executive Vice President for the Virginia Tech Foundation and the university's Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer, the position he held until his retirement in 2019; and

WHEREAS, throughout each of his roles at the university, Dwight's integrity, commitment to the university's motto *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), strong leadership, collaboration, and transparency fostered mutually respectful relationships with university leadership, state and federal government officials, and other constituents, which led to the development of optimal solutions; and

WHEREAS, Dwight prioritized administrative efficiencies, modernizing the controllership throughout the 1980s and 1990s, launching an overhaul of the strategic planning and budgeting process in the late 1990s, and transitioning the university from paper-based business processes to a fully electronic system, significantly improving efficiencies and strengthening internal controls; and

WHEREAS, Dwight has been the architect of innovative funding strategies that have advanced Virginia Tech's strategic goals for academic excellence, increased enrollment, access and affordability, research leadership, and campus expansion, transforming the university into a top-tier institution despite turbulent economic times and unprecedented reductions in external funding; and

WHEREAS, though Dwight's accomplishments are far too numerous to list, among his most impactful and enduring are his central role in launching the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and devising the Funds for the Future and Beyond Boundaries Scholars programs to increase access and affordability for low- and middle-income Virginia residents; and

WHEREAS, Dwight played a pivotal role in the Commonwealth of Virginia's selection in 2018 as the location of Amazon's east coast headquarters (Amazon HQ2) and the corresponding creation of Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus in Northern Virginia, as Virginia Tech's proposal was the most comprehensive and the only one to include a complete financial model. This distinction, along with Dwight's sterling reputation with state legislative and executive branch leaders, inspired broad support and was integral to the success of this proposal and the advancement of the university; and

WHEREAS, these recent accomplishments have showcased Dwight's role in economic development, bringing jobs and innovation to localities across the commonwealth. Board of Visitors member and former rector Dennis Treacy has said of Dwight's economic influence, "Higher education is one of Virginia's top economic engines, and Dwight's role in strategically strengthening and expanding the state's economic opportunities cannot be overstated. Government and business leaders past and present have great appreciation for his service and the generosity with which he shares his knowledge and expertise"; and

WHEREAS, Dwight is renowned as an astute strategist with an exemplary management style and extensive knowledge in accounting, taxation, capital construction, and finance, along with broad institutional knowledge of Virginia Tech and deep understanding of the higher education landscape and the commonwealth's educational culture and history; and

WHEREAS, an esteemed higher education leader, Dwight's expertise has been sought on major statewide initiatives and he has been recruited frequently by his peers for leadership positions in professional organizations. He played a key role in developing, planning, and evaluating the Higher Education Restructuring Act of 2005 and the Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011. He served as president of Fiscal Officers of Colleges and Universities (FOCUS), chair of the Council of State Senior Business Officers (CSSBO), and a board member of the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers (SACUBO); and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Dwight's successes as Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer and far-reaching impact on higher education in Virginia, he was awarded the 2019 Virginia CFO Award sponsored by *Virginia Business* magazine; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University expresses appreciation to M. Dwight Shelton, Jr. for his dedicated commitment to the values instilled in him as a student at Virginia Tech and his significant contributions to the regional, national, and international success of the university, and recognizes him for his distinguished service in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) with the title Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer Emeritus.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution recommending M. Dwight Shelton, Jr. for emeritus status be approved.

November 18, 2019