

# STUDENT AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



Student Affairs marks another year of progress, innovation, and impact across student services, operational excellence, and institutional alignment. Through the devoted efforts of more than 1,100 faculty, staff, and wage employees and of more than 3000 student employees, the division continues to advance the university's mission and enrich the student experience. A summary of this report follows.

Service updates include Dining Services' launch of Perry Place at Hitt Hall, generating \$10.3M in revenue, alongside three new concepts to improve the student dining experience. Sustainability efforts eliminated 34,904 compostable containers and diverted 9,643 pounds of food to Campus Kitchen.

In support of Virginia Tech Advantage, the Dean of Students Office awarded \$212,684 in emergency grants to 209 students. Facilities and Operations completed \$7.9M in summer projects. VT Engage mobilized 5,000+ volunteers and supported civic engagement and food recovery.

Customer satisfaction remained high across departments, with Cranwell International Center advancing timely immigration services for 5,500+ students. Dining Services earned regional awards for marketing and a national award for sustainability. Facilities and Operations reported 87% satisfaction with work orders and began using AI for feedback analysis.

Operational efficiency improved through streamlined hiring, IT upgrades, and data integration. Cook Counseling earned 10-year APA reaccreditation and reduced wait times. Hokie Wellness expanded belonging programming, contributing to a 16% drop in student report of loneliness.

Innovations included compensation alignments for 225+ employees, national recognition for fraternity/sorority councils. Living-Learning Programs hosted 2,000+ events, and Schiffert Health Center expanded experiential learning collaborations. Student Engagement launched the Chillfield mobile engagement unit and supported Policy 5000 implementation.

Student Affairs raised over \$581,000 on Giving Day and established new endowed funds and scholarships, reinforcing its commitment to student well-being and institutional excellence.

These accomplishments reflect Student Affairs' strategic priorities, aligned in unwavering commitment to student well-being, institutional excellence, and the university's motto, Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).



Frances B. Keene, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs

# Key Accomplishments

## Services and Program Utilization

Dining Services expanded its capacity to create welcoming community dining experiences for students with several exciting new concepts and the launch of a cutting-edge dining facility. Perry Place at Hitt Hall debuted in August 2024 and quickly proved its popularity with 993,415 transactions and \$10.3 million in revenue during its first year. Corner '24 was introduced in the Squires Food Court inside the Squires Student Center, featuring a Starbucks kiosk as a major highlight. Ducky's opened its doors for a soft opening on November 2024, bringing bubble tea and convenient grab-and-go options to campus, and was celebrated with a grand opening event in January 2025. In March 2025, Choolaah, an Indian barbecue concept, launched in Hokie Grill at Owens Dining Center, generating \$494,086 in just ten weeks — an over 80% revenue increase compared to its predecessor, with 98,184 items sold.

Dining Services made significant strides in sustainability and food recovery. Through the implementation of reusable to-go containers, the department successfully eliminated the use of over 34,904 compostable clamshells. The return rate for these reusable containers surged from 2% in FY 24 to 95% in FY 25 — a 4,600% increase. Additionally, Dining Services diverted 9,643 pounds of unserved food to Campus Kitchen, reinforcing its commitment to reduce food waste and support community food security initiatives. These efforts reflect ongoing innovation in sustainable dining and community engagement.

Student Affairs Facilities and Operations completed \$7.9M in summer 2024 projects and is on track to complete over \$12M in summer 2025 projects addressing the needs of housing, dining, and student centers through maintenance reserve and operating budgets. These projects were delivered on time, and the coordination of the projects with end-of-project cleaning reduced the effort needed by our housekeeping staff in preparing for opening.

This past academic year, the Dean of Students office provided 209 students with grants from the Student Emergency Fund; this is an increase of 22% from AY 2023-2024. Additionally, the Dean of Students office was able to provide those 209 students with a combined amount of \$212,684 in grants. This represents a 28% increase (\$47,696) from AY 2023-2024.

VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning continues to lead in facilitating learning and civic engagement experiences that advance community priorities, contribute to student development, and embody *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve). VT Engage provided experiential learning, community engagement, and service-learning opportunities including The Big Event — which completed over 800 projects with over 5,000 volunteers, and Alternative Breaks — which supported students in traveling to three states and the Dominican Republic to complete service projects. VT Engage supported civic engagement and student development, registering or updating registrations for 865 voters, initiating 45 new members into the Omicron Delta Kappa National Honor Society, and diverting over 27,750 pounds of food through Campus Kitchen of VT.

In addition, VT Engage advanced our efforts around constructive dialogues with Perspectives: 1,148 VT learners used Perspectives, with a completion rate of 61%. 80% reported satisfaction with the program, and 77% said they practice skills they learned in the program.

War Memorial Hall reopened in early fall 2024, restoring access to a second pool on campus. This expansion doubled our lifeguard team, resulting in recruitment and onboarding of 84 wage employees, primarily upper-class students. War Memorial Hall and McComas Pools welcomed a total of 40,852 visitors. Just under \$2M of the recreational student fee (auxiliary budget) returned to students through wages to Recreational Sports' 700+ student employees.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) has continued to strategically evaluate ways to enhance the student experience for those requiring accommodations. In collaboration with Presidential Organizational Excellence, Student Affairs leadership developed a comprehensive report outlining a series of recommendations and actionable next steps. This report will be an essential tool in ensuring quality customer service and operational efficiencies. Through the generosity of a donor, Werth Testing Center has undergone a thoughtful refresh and reorganization to create a more welcoming and efficient environment for students.

## Customer Satisfaction

Cranwell International Center established a robust immigration updates page that has served as a model for many other institutions, balancing regulatory education and care. Despite a significant increase in demand for services with now over 5,500 serviced, Cranwell International Center has worked tirelessly to maintain their advertised processing times, with an average e-form taking 4.2 business days, a 40% reduction from AY 2023-24.

Dining earned both regional and national acclaim for their outstanding achievements. The Dining Services Marketing team received multiple honors at the American Advertising Federation (AAF) Roanoke ADDY Awards, including two Golds, one Silver, the Judge's Choice Award, and the Best of Print Award for their creative campaigns that increased student engagement in community-building experiences. Their commitment to sustainability was also recognized with the Gold NACUFS Sustainability Award for Sustainable Procurement. Additionally, Ashley Foster, assistant director of Culinary Nutrition and Risk Management, was honored with an Illuminating Excellence Award for supporting institutional-scale public health through nutritional information management.

New Student and Family Programs provided excellent experiences for participants in summer admitted student visits. In summer 2024, of the 838 students who visited, 96% reported that the visit was a valuable college transition experience. 97% of the 1,425 family members who attended reported that they learned something new and felt more prepared to support their students.

Student Affairs Facilities and Operations continues to earn strong marks for service delivery — over 87% of students and 95% of faculty/staff report satisfaction with timeliness, and nearly 88% of students are satisfied with the quality of work. The unit has begun leveraging AI to analyze feedback across all work order areas to better understand trends and continuously improve. Nearly 75% of open-ended comments were positive or neutral, highlighting the impact of timely, thorough service.

Through the generous donation of Robbie Werth and the Werth family, the Werth Testing Center is now equipped with new, ergonomically and universally designed desks and chairs that will better accommodate students with disabilities who utilize the WTC. This donation from the Werth family has profoundly improved the quality of the student experience through the SSD office and helps set a standard for inclusivity and accessibility across campus.

## Operational Efficiency

The Student Affairs Central Administration departments advanced divisional priorities to increase administrative efficiency and effectiveness. SA Communications informed and engaged the Virginia Tech community of parents, students, and employees with more than 4,000 completed communications projects, an increase of more than 50% over AY 2023-24. Assessment, Evaluation, and Data Strategy (AEDS) engaged the division through strategic conversations with senior leaders to advance the mission of Student Affairs. AEDS will continue to support the division through cross-departmental joint initiatives to coordinate survey planning, streamline program review cycles, and develop data dashboards that will inform effective decision-making.

SA Human Resources (SA-HR) equipped the division with essential tools to recruit, hire, support, and retain employees in a highly productive, collaborative, and mission-driven workplace environment through the implementation of cross-departmental, modular training initiatives and the revision of departmental hiring and onboarding processes. SA-HR successfully reduced the average time from job posting to hire by 19.6%, achieving a new 49-day average hiring period. SA-HR conducted 150+ “stay interviews” this past year — providing critical insight into employee sentiment for the areas of Dining Services, Facilities/Operations, and Hokie Wellness.

SA Information Technology (SA-IT) successfully led the division through substantial changes to the Microsoft 365 platform and Windows 11 upgrades, ensuring minimal disruption while transitioning and protecting more than 1,800 digital assets. SA-IT continues to modernize the Student Affairs technology infrastructure while strengthening security and maximizing opportunities for real-time data integration into divisional assets.

SA Finance and Planning supported the opening of Perry Place, creating, reviewing, and processing over 600 smallware requests, the addition of an estimated 1500 menu items, and the incorporation of the largest-ever on-campus Grubhub installation in the Perry Place Chick-Fil-A. SA Finance and Planning also oversaw an overall point-of-sale system increase of 23% — a result of a cross-campus increase in dining microtransactions, the opening of eight new revenue centers in Perry Place, and the creation of three additional new revenue centers (Corner 25, Ducky’s, and Viva Too).

Student Engagement and Campus Life collaborated with university partners to launch a comprehensive administrative strategy for Policy 5000 with the goal of providing institution-wide operational support to scheduling and partner offices who have responsibility for the administration of the policy. The work includes extensive trainings and resources, clarification and simplification of practices and systems, centralized IT solution deployment, coalition building and on-going collaboration to best position the institution for success.

Student Affairs collaborated with several stakeholders, including the Virginia Tech Police Department, Emergency Management, Faculty Affairs, the Graduate School, and Human Resources, to develop and train a Campus Engagement Team. This team responds to disruptions of activities or events on university real property that may constitute violations of university policies, such as Policy 5000.

In Fall 2023, Cook Counseling hosted Site Visitors from the American Psychological Association for reaccreditation of the Doctoral Psychology Internship program. In November 2024, Cook Counseling was awarded full reaccreditation status by APA for the training

program in the maximum increment of 10 years. In Spring 2025, the Doctoral Internship program was successful in filling all three of the open internship positions in Phase 1 of the national match with top ranking candidates.

Students receiving counseling services through Cook Counseling were seen for an average of 7.7 sessions in comparison to the national average for counseling centers of 5.7. This is directly related to the reduction in wait times between triage, intake, and first counseling appointment.

In Hokie Wellness, The Connection Project (TCP) initiative aims to help students increase their sense of belonging and improve social connections, while reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. TCP also provides students with the opportunity to learn how to become peer facilitators. In total, 18 facilitators were trained during the academic year, allowing for 16 TCP groups, with 149 unique participants. Overall, TCP saw a 239% increase in the number of touchpoints, with 508 touchpoints in 2023-2024 and 1,726 in 2024-2025.

Student Engagement and Campus Life Student Organization Development team has embarked on multiple collaborative projects, such as clarifying the Virginia Tech Foundation transfer process, expanding educational resources and working with academic partners to identify organizations with close relationships to departments, with the end goal of supporting student organizations' ability to navigate campus policies and processes more smoothly and in alignment with policy.

### **Innovation and Improvement**

In response to persistent staffing shortages, high turnover, and employee concerns about compensation, the HR department in Student Affairs conducted a comprehensive analysis of all faculty and staff payrates. This effort revealed that a significant number of employees were below expected compensation benchmarks, contributing to dissatisfaction, burnout, and attrition. This analysis supported a budget request to adjust compensation for 225+ employees to bring salaries into alignment, stabilize the workforce, improve retention, and begin reversing the cycle of vacancy and burnout.

All four of Fraternity and Sorority Life's governing councils were honored with national awards for outstanding service, impact, and accountability over the 2024-25 academic year. The Interfraternity Council (IFC) was awarded Outstanding IFC in recognition of operational excellence and positive impact, as well as an Outstanding Community Impact award by the North American Interfraternity Conference. The Panhellenic Council received the Excellence Award from the National Panhellenic Conference. The Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values recognized the Panhellenic Council with the Three Star Council Compass Award for Accountability, as well as the National Pan-Hellenic Council with the Three Star Council Compass Award for Education and the Three Star Council Compass Award for Collaboration. Two students from the Mu Epsilon Delta chapter (United Council of Fraternities & Sororities) won first place in the Order of Omega Case Study Competition.

Our Residential Well-being 6-week survey showed the following key findings: Loneliness decreased by 16% over 3 years; Sense of Belonging rose from 69% in 2021 to 81% in 2024; Psychological Well-Being improved from 34% in 2021 to 51% in 2024. This data is encouraging that our model is making a positive impact.

Hokie Wellness had 2,968 financial wellness touchpoints, including a new partnership with VT Athletics to present to student-athletes on the benefits of budgeting and managing the money.

that comes with NIL agreements. A second new partnership with Cranwell International Center introduced American banking to all incoming international students. In total, the program increased to 1,323 touchpoints from 517 the previous academic year.

Hokie Wellness and The Corps of Cadets worked together to improve the resiliency of our cadets through extensive implementation of educational programming on mental health, sexual health, and substance misuse and prevention.

The Office of Living-Learning Programs supported more than 2000 events among the 26 different communities during the Academic Year, with more than 38,000 recorded student swipe-ins across all events.

In 2024, the Commonwealth of Virginia passed HB700 which requires each public institution of higher education to identify at least one employee to serve as a point of contact for each enrolled student who was in foster care or in the custody of the Department of Social Services to provide support and guidance as they attend the university. Phillip Hernandez de Wright, Assistant Dean of Students, serves as Virginia Tech's identified point of contact. His outreach included identifying former foster youth, providing donated gift bags to students who came into the office, and participating in a statewide meeting in March for HB700 points of contact and the Great Expectations Conference this past summer in Richmond, Virginia.

Schiffert Health Center continues to grow experiential learning opportunities for students interested in the medical field. 86 students participated in three experiential learning programs: the Student Observation/Shadow Program; the Student Clinical Assistant Program; and the Student Nursing Training Program, which provides site training for nursing programs from other Virginia institutions.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) and SA-IT team coordinated the planning and implementation of the camera system for SSD testing centers, ensuring alignment with accessibility, privacy, and operational requirements.

Student Engagement and Campus Life unveiled an innovative approach to student engagement, the Chillfield. The Chillfield launched in November and conducted 18 outreach events, including two in Roanoke and one at the Institute for Advanced Computing, engaging more than 1,300 individual participants. Collaborations with 10 student organizations and departments since late fall and a presentation at NASPA Region III Conference in Savannah, GA garnered an invitation to present at the NASPA National Conference in Kansas City.

Giving to the Hokie Family Annual fund in FY 25 totaled \$69,562 (from \$56,235 in FY 24) and the VPSA Priority Fund totaled \$38,546. Student Affairs raised \$135,725 for Giving Day FY 25 (from \$55,582 in FY 24) and including Rec Sports and Students Orgs we totaled \$581,028. We exceeded our \$50,000 Alumni Advisory Council Giving Day Challenge with 96% participation, up from 82% in FY 24. We also exceeded our \$25,000 Parent Advisory Council Giving Day Challenge with 100% participation, up from 79% in FY 24. The Christina Goodwin Endowed Fund was established to support student mental health and wellbeing services through Cook Counseling. The first Table Tennis scholarship was founded and awarded to an incoming student. The official unveiling of the Mossberg Table Tennis Zone was held at a celebration at War Memorial Hall.

# Plans and Goals for 2025-2026

## Services for Students with Disabilities Working Group

A working group focused on strengthening the partnership between Services for Students with Disabilities and Academic Affairs will be formed, co-led by new Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students, Dr. Meaghan Davidson. Goals of the workgroup are: 1) Enhance collaborative partnerships between SSD, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, academic departments, and teaching faculty; 2) Propose enhancements for the use of technology and data to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of current accommodation services; 3) Understand the current challenges and opportunities within SSD and for teaching faculty to ultimately implement universal design throughout the university; 4) Promote a campus environment that is proactive in ensuring access and success for all students and faculty; and 5) Explore universal design principles that may enhance teaching and learning while also conforming with the best practices in accessibility.

## Implementation of Off-Campus Student Support and Basic Needs

Virginia Tech enrolls approximately 35,000 students, and of those, nearly 25,000 live off campus in Blacksburg and surrounding areas. These students represent a significant portion of the university population and contribute to both campus life and the broader community. However, their experiences can differ markedly from those of students living in residence halls, often shaped by challenges related to engagement, access to resources, mental health, and basic needs.

In recognition of the unique role and needs of off-campus students, the university launched the Off-Campus Student Experience Working Group in Fall 2024. This group was charged with conducting a comprehensive assessment of the off-campus student experience and developing actionable recommendations for institutional improvement.

To understand the lived experience of Virginia Tech students, the working group analyzed data from several surveys, including the Healthy Minds Survey, the Hokie Wellness 6-Week Check-In Survey, the Cranwell International Student Survey, and the Fraternity and Sorority Experience Survey. Survey results aligned with national trends identified in the literature: students living off campus at Virginia Tech reported higher levels of loneliness, greater mental health challenges, and lower engagement with campus services than their residential peers. Additionally, students expressed a strong desire for more structured social opportunities and practical resources, including safety education, lease management training, and career-focused advising. The data suggests a clear need to improve access to support services and the university's outreach to our off-campus student population.

To respond to these challenges and create a more equitable experience for off-campus students, the working group offers the following recommendations; 1) Staffing Enhancements: Virginia Tech should establish new staff roles within the Dean of Students Office dedicated to off-campus student advocacy, case management, and community engagement, 2) Programmatic Initiatives: The university should design and launch structured orientation and transition programs for off-campus students, including a transition program for first-year students who plan to live off campus their second year, 3) Community Partnerships: Developing stronger relationships with local landlords, municipal leaders, and area businesses can help address housing quality, safety, and affordability, 4) Digital and Resource

Enhancements: The university may consider centralizing its off-campus student resources through a user-friendly digital platform.

### **Philanthropy and Stewardship to Support Virginia Tech Advantage**

Student Affairs Advancement is prioritizing fundraising and stewardship in support of Virginia Tech Advantage through enhancing The Market at Virginia Tech, the Student Emergency Fund, the Hokie Family Annual Fund, and the VPSA Priority Fund. We have a fundraising goal of \$3.5M for the coming year. New partnerships with Millstone Kitchen and Feeding Southwest Virginia will increase The Market’s capacity to provide low-cost, fresh, and locally sourced food. The Hokie Family Annual Fund fuels the student experience by supporting programs and traditions that help students feel connected and empowered through student engagement, family engagement, civic engagement, and leadership development. Our FY 26 fundraising goal for the Hokie Family Annual Fund is \$100,000. The VPSA Priority Fund is a catalyst for innovation and impact to support strategic initiatives that enhance student learning, well-being, and a sense of belonging. Our FY 26 fundraising goal for the VPSA Priority Fund is \$75,000.

### **Housing Master Plan Framework**

Virginia Tech’s first ever On-Campus Housing Framework was contractually secured and launched in June 2025 with an anticipated completion in late fall. The OCHF will inform development of the housing program and facilities renovation and possible expansion, and it will assist in financial planning of the residential experience for the next decade or more.

### **Fully Enact Model for Dining Plans**

Dining Services, in partnership with Envision Strategies, completed a thorough evaluation of the existing dining plan structure. As part of the proposed changes, first-year students will have access to an unlimited dining plan that includes declining balance dollars and meal exchange options. Updated dining balance plans will also be rolled out for all other students, faculty, and staff. This revamped structure is designed to enhance simplicity, transparency, affordability, flexibility, overall value, and food security across the campus community.

### **Cultural and Community Centers**

Student Affairs is excited to welcome five Cultural and Community Centers (CCCs). A comprehensive internal review will be completed by January 2026, reviewing administrative practices as well as services and programming offered to the campus community.

The CCCs serve as intentional community spaces where students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to engage in identity exploration, social responsibility, and collaboration. The CCC mission aligns with Student Engagement and Campus Life, collectively bolstering the student experience through services, programming, and affirming environments.

### **Key Reinvestments**

Fall 2024 semester, Student Affairs convened the Advancing Virginia Tech Advantage Workgroup to identify ways Student Affairs could enhance the support the basic needs elements for this university-wide initiative; specifically, by enhancing the resources, capacity,

and support for student's basic needs. As a result, Student Affairs sunset the Office of Learning Partnerships and reinvested three FTES to the Basic Needs and Off-Campus Student Support area in the Dean of Students Office. By providing additional staffing support and resources for off-campus students that need access to emergency funds; food access initiatives; and off-campus transitional programming, care, and case management, we can directly support the goals of Virginia Tech Advantage.

During July 2025, the Dean of Students Office hired for a newly created Sr. Assistant Dean of Students for Basic Needs and Off-Campus Student Support position to provide leadership to these efforts. While on-campus students are often awarded emergency funds and participate in food access programs, the majority of students that need these resources are off-campus students. Reinforcing this focus area by reallocating and reinvesting resources here will reach a broader student population and support Virginia Tech Advantage. Two new Assistant Deans for Off-Campus Student Support will be hired within the next academic year to provide greater support for our off-campus students.

We reinvested a graduate assistantship role anticipated to total \$45,223 in savings. Beyond the E&G reinvestments, numerous auxiliary investments were offered and accepted and help keep our fees at a very competitive level. I expect we will continue this effort in our FY 27 budget requests in both the E&G and auxiliary requests as we strive to hit the \$25M operational commitment made by Virginia Tech's leadership over five years to achieve strategic objectives.

## Appendix: Summary Description

Comparison of key figures between AY 2023–24 and AY 2024–25:

| <b>Metric</b>  | <b>AY 2023–24</b> | <b>AY 2024–25</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Reusable container return rate                             | 2%                | 95%               | Up 93 pp      |
| Student Emergency Fund grants awarded                      | 171 students      | 209 students      | Up 22%        |
| Student Emergency Fund grant totals                        | \$164,988         | \$212,684         | Up 28%        |
| Cranwell immigration e-form processing time, business days | 7                 | 4.2               | Down 40%      |
| SA Communications projects completed                       | ~2,667            | 4,000+            | Up 50%+       |
| average hiring time (SA-HR)                                | 61 days           | 49 days           | Down 19.6%    |
| The Connection Project touchpoints (Hokie Wellness)        | 508               | 1,726             | Up 239%       |
| Financial Wellness touchpoints (Hokie Wellness)            | 517               | 1,323             | Up 156%       |
| Giving Day total raised                                    | \$55,582          | \$135,725         | Up 144%       |
| Hokie Family Annual Fund                                   | \$56,235          | \$69,562          | Up 23%        |
| Alumni Advisory Council participation rate                 | 82%               | 96%               | Up 14 pp      |
| Parent Advisory Council participation rate                 | 79%               | 100%              | Up 21 pp      |