



October 2015

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## Chapter Team

[Debbie Day](#)

[Greg Fansler](#)

[Kelly Griffin](#)

[Gwen Harrington](#)

[Jack Hutcheson](#)

[Katie Marquis](#)

[Jordan McCauley](#)

[Ginny Ritenour](#), Editor

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## Don't Forget

You are REQUIRED to have a Virginia Tech PID (vt.edu email address) to access the Chapter Forms database.

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The Chapter Newsletter is a communications tool between the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and its chapters.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to your chapter liaison. If you have problems viewing the newsletter, please contact [Ginny Ritenour](#), Chapter Program Coordinator.

## Dear Chapter Volunteers,

We had an excellent turnout for our Chapter Officers Forum last month, with 114 participants from 47 chapters. The chapter volunteers represented chapters from all over the country; those who traveled the furthest were from San Diego and Seattle! Thanks to all who attended. We were also honored to have several National Alumni Association Board Members with us:

- Morgan Blackwood from the National Capital Region Chapter
- Lisa Carter Ellison from the Chicago Chapter
- Jerome Fowlkes from the National Capital Region Chapter
- Tom Hughes from the NC Triad Chapter
- Mike Kender from the New York City & New River Valley Chapters
- Mark Lawrence from the Roanoke Valley Chapter
- Carole Pratt from the New River Valley Chapter
- Susan Bull Ryan from the Fredericksburg Chapter
- Karen Torgersen from the New River Valley Chapter
- Matt Winston from the Athens, GA Chapter
- Justin Yalung from the New River Valley Chapter

We presented 38 Outstanding Chapter Awards and 12 Superlative Awards to deserving chapters around the country. All of the award winners are listed on page 4.

In one of the highlights of the weekend, more than 50 scholarship students joined us for an *Ut Prosim* community service lunch, where we were treated to an update from Donna Ratcliffe, Director of Career Services at Virginia Tech, and participated in a clothing drive for [Career Outfitters](#).

The holidays are quickly approaching; you should have your holiday party and bowl watching party scheduled and your postcard mailer request submitted (email requests will still be processed with 5 business day turnaround). See page 8 for more holiday deadlines and notices.

Happy Fall!

Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations

## 2015 Chapter Officers Forum Highlights

Our annual fall Chapter Officers Forum took place September 5-7, 2015 at the Holtzman Alumni Center.

Our agenda was centered around our theme of “Hokie Nation Networking” and we had many enlightening discussions regarding alumni networking opportunities and chapter programs. We kicked off the weekend on Saturday with tours of the new Vet Med facilities and the Human and Biosciences Building and opened Sunday with a dynamic presentation on the “The Art of Business” by Greg Justice, Associate Professor of Performance at the Virginia School of Performing Arts. We were joined by chapter scholarship recipients for lunch and enjoyed a presentation from Donna Ratcliffe, Director of Career Services. We spent the afternoon sharing ideas for chapter programs through breakout roundtable discussions and chapter officer panels.

We have posted materials from the Forum on our [Chapter Resources webpage](#) and encourage you to look over them and share with your volunteers. There are also pictures from the weekend posted on our [Flickr site](#). Please contact your chapter liaison or [Ginny Ritenour](#) if you have any questions regarding this information.

The highlight of this event is always our annual Chapter Awards Banquet and this year’s was no exception. Our theme for Sunday evening’s celebration was “A Toast to Tom,” celebrating Tom Tillar’s career at Virginia Tech and in alumni relations. Following greetings from President Tim Sands, Vice President of Advancement Charlie Phlegar, and National Alumni Board of Directors President Carole Pratt, our awards presentation highlighted the very best of our chapters’ accomplishments. We also enjoyed spending time mingling with university administrators and other guests. A complete list of award winners can be found on page 4, as well as on [our website](#).

On Monday morning, we concluded the weekend with an update from Kristan Cole, Licensing and Trademarks Director, and a chapter officer speed networking session, followed by a pre-game tailgate with our Student Alumni Associates.



*Greg Justice presents “The Art of Business,” tips for using acting techniques in business and personal networking*



*Laura Bostic, Triangle Chapter treasurer, visits with chapter scholarship recipient at Ut Proxim luncheon*



*Chapter officers participate in a panel discussion on Succession Planning & Volunteer Management*



*Tim Sands, University President, welcomes chapter officers and university administration to the 2015 Annual Meeting and Chapter Awards Presentation in Latham Ballroom at the Inn at Virginia Tech*



*Gold Level Outstanding Chapter Award Winners with Tom Tillar, Vice President for Alumni Relations (back left), and Charlie Phlegar, Vice President for Advancement (back right)*



*Charlie Phlegar, Vice President for Advancement, visits with chapter officers at the Sunday evening reception*



*Charlotte Chapter officers celebrate their Gold Outstanding Chapter status in our Chapter Officers Forum photo booth*



*Tim Sands, University President, and Dr. Laura Sands take advantage of a photo opportunity with Chris Jennings, Jina Gaines, Katie Petti, and Brynn Charlton from the Tidewater Chapter*



*Tom Hughes, NC Triad Chapter secretary and past president, and member of the Alumni Association National Board of Directors, presents a gift to Tom Tillar on behalf of the alumni chapters*

# Chapter Awards Announced at Chapter Officers Forum

## Outstanding Chapter Awards

### BRONZE

Columbia  
Dallas/Fort Worth  
East Tennessee  
Emporia/Roanoke Rapids  
Grand Strand/Myrtle  
Beach  
Rockbridge  
San Diego  
South Florida  
The Villages

### SILVER

Central Pennsylvania  
Charleston  
Chicago  
Jacksonville  
Kentuckiana  
NC Triad  
North Alabama  
Seattle  
Tampa Bay  
Williamsburg

### GOLD

Alleghany Highlands  
Atlanta  
Baltimore  
Central Florida  
Charlotte  
Denver  
First State  
Fredericksburg  
Middle Tennessee  
Minnesota  
National Capital Region  
New River Valley  
Palmetto  
Richmond  
Roanoke Valley  
San Antonio  
Shenandoah  
Southwest Virginia  
Tidewater



*Tom Tillar, Vice President for Alumni Relations, accepts a gift from our alumni chapters: a weekend at the luxury Primland Resort, and expresses his thanks to our alumni leaders for their support throughout his career*

### **Outstanding Chapter Event:**

First State Chapter, Spring Fling Speaker Event and Gourmet Farm-to-Table Dinner

### **Outstanding Chapter Community Service Project:**

Williamsburg Chapter, The Big Event 2015

### **Outstanding Chapter Golf Tournament:**

Southwest Virginia Chapter, The Bow Tie Classic

### **Outstanding Chapter Fundraising Event:**

Prince William Chapter, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual VT Alumni Golf Tournament

### **Outstanding Chapter Networking Event:**

Tidewater Chapter, Tidewater Hokie Business Network (Re)Launch Event

### **Outstanding Chapter Marketing:**

Richmond Chapter

### **Innovation Award:**

North Alabama Chapter, VT vs. Ohio State Under the Stars

### **Broadening Alumni Engagement Award:**

Denver Chapter, Young Alumni Stranahan's Distillery Tour

### **Most Improved Chapter:**

Southwest Virginia Chapter

### **Outstanding New Chapter:**

Augusta/Massanutten Chapters Collaboration

### **Outstanding Chapter Volunteer:**

Richard Ruckman '81, Shenandoah Chapter

### **Outstanding Chapter Officer:**

Amy Zielenbach '98, Tampa Bay Chapter



*Debbie Day, Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations, and Mildred Johnson, Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Director of Undergraduate Admissions, greeted our chapter officers with Hokie Spirit!*

# Chapter Event Highlight: First State Chapter, Spring Fling Speaker Event & Gourmet Farm-to-Table Dinner

The First State Chapter hosted their annual speaker event on Saturday, May 30, 2015, featuring Desiree Reed-Francois, Executive Associate Athletics Director of Virginia Tech. Desiree gave an engaging and dynamic talk on the current state of Virginia Tech Athletics, her vision for the future, and upcoming changes in and around Blacksburg.

The evening combined the speaker event with an opportunity to enjoy a gourmet farm-to-table meal hosted by Hokie alumni at their beautiful "Obisquahassit" organic black garlic farm in Pennsville, New Jersey. Alumni Pat and Lisa Lloyd own "Obis One," New Jersey's oldest working farm and one of the oldest residences in the United States, dating to 1670. They generously treated guests with Hokie Hospitality in their open air pavilion under the stars.

The meal also featured Hokie spirit, with young, inspiring student chefs and servers supervised by professional chefs (also alumni) Kip Poole and Matt Vaughan. Kip and Matt lead the non-profit Crop Foundation, which provides high school students with scholarships, internships, and the opportunity to work with accomplished chefs, farmers, and restauranteurs.

This speaker event and dinner were truly unique and represented Hokies helping Hokies helping future Hokies!

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association was pleased to award this event the 2015 Outstanding Chapter Event Award at this year's Chapter Officers Forum Awards Banquet.



*Steve Cason, First State Chapter President, accepts the Outstanding Chapter Event Award, presented by Tom Tillar, Vice President for Alumni Relations, Carole Pratt, President, National Board of Directors and Charlie Phlegar, Vice President for Advancement*

## Chapter Volunteer Highlight: Outstanding Chapter Officer Amy Zielenbach '98, Tampa Bay Chapter

Amy Zielenbach moved to Tampa shortly after graduating from Virginia Tech in 1998. She received her Master's degree from South Florida in 2005 and began to attend alumni events in the area. She became the Treasurer of the Tampa Bay Chapter in 2008. As Treasurer, Amy set-up online banking for the chapter and helped organize a speaker event at a museum in downtown Tampa with Dr. Bud Robertson.

Amy was elected Chapter President in 2009 and served in that role for two years, organizing bowling competitions between VT and UVA alumni and planning a wine event with John Boyer at the Dali Museum.

In early 2011, Amy moved back to her home state of New Jersey and attended numerous alumni events with the New York City and New Jersey



*Amy poses with Patty Perillo, Vice President for Student Affairs, at a recent Tampa Bay Chapter event*

Chapters. She served as Secretary for the New Jersey Chapter, still continuing to help coordinate programs in Tampa. Amy moved back to Tampa in 2012 and immediately reengaged with the local Hokies. She helped the current officers organize their year-end reporting and was reelected President, serving in that role ever since.

Phil Winters '78, long-time Tampa Bay Chapter volunteer, said, "Our chapter was very sorry to see Amy move back to New Jersey. We are thrilled to have her back in Tampa. Her people skills and enthusiasm helped engage new 'orange and maroon blood' – of all ages – in the chapter activities from HokieBird Fights Hunger to football watching parties at Lee Roy Selmon's!"

Amy has attended every Chapter Officers Forum since 2009. She is extremely passionate about Virginia Tech and has the ability to get things done and in a humble and collaborate fashion. She has been a resource to other chapter officers across the country, making herself available to answer questions and offer suggestions to new officers and volunteers.

The Outstanding Chapter Officer is nominated and selected by the chapter team; we appreciate all Amy does as a true ambassador for the Virginia Tech alumni Association. Please join us in congratulating Amy on this prestigious award!



*Amy Zielenbach, Tampa Bay Chapter President, accepts the Outstanding Chapter Officer Award, presented by Tom Tillar, Vice President for Alumni Relations, Carole Pratt, President, National Board of Directors and Charlie Phlegar, Vice President for Advancement*



## Career Resources Available for Virginia Tech Alumni

By [Nancy Brittle](#), Alumni Career Resources Director

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association provides many different resources for alumni who are job seeking, interested in a new career, developing their skills, or looking for professional networking opportunities.

Are you currently:

**Thinking about a Career change?**

**Looking for a Job?**

**Interested in developing management skills in your current job?**

**Thinking about retirement?**

If you answered **yes** to any of the above, we invite you to take advantage of the career resources available to you (and at no charge!)

**What resources are offered?**

**Consultation** with [Nancy Brittle](#), Director of Alumni Career Resources, who can review resumes, provide mock interview assistance, provide help with LinkedIn tools to enhance your networking skills, and direct you to specific resources available to your unique circumstances or career status. Call 540-552-1666 or Nancy at [nbrittle@vt.edu](mailto:nbrittle@vt.edu)

**Webinars** targeted for various alumni audiences: job seekers, managers enhancing their career development skills, and employees nearing their retirement phase of life. Conducted by specialists

in each field, the webinars offer insights into the relevant topics and are recorded for playback at your convenience.

[www.alumnicareerservices.org/virginiatech](http://www.alumnicareerservices.org/virginiatech)

**Networking** with alumni through discussions and making contacts in the Virginia Tech Alumni Group in LinkedIn. There are several alumni groups but the official Virginia Tech Alumni Group has over 33,600 members. Go to [www.alumni.vt.edu/hnn](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/hnn) and click on the 'join alumni group' tab.

**Categorized links** to career resources for every phase of your career: interviewing, resume writing, job searching, salary information, and networking [www.alumni.vt.edu/career/career-resources.html](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/career/career-resources.html).

We encourage you to share these opportunities with alumni in your area by promoting our Career Resources at your local chapter events and on social media outlets.

## Upcoming Career Webinars

November 4, 2015

[The Strategic Networker](#)

November 11, 2015

[The Power in a Link: Open Doors, Close Deals](#)

November 18, 2015

[Workout: Games, Tools & Practices to Engage People](#)

November 25, 2015

[Social Security: The Inside Story](#)

## Communications Corner: October 2015

From [Denise Crawford](#), [Matt Dowdy](#), [John Vile](#),  
and [Sherrie Whaley](#)

### Interim Communications Staff Changes



Some of you may be aware that Dave Hunt, our Director of Communications since 2010, left his position in September. Sherrie Whaley is now serving as our interim Director.

Sherrie most recently served as the Director of Communications for the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. She specializes in writing, editing, branding, social media, photography, media relations, and website management. Sherrie has previously worked in similar areas at the University of Georgia, The Ohio State University, Purdue University, and, in the 1980's, Virginia Tech.

A native of East Tennessee, Sherrie received her bachelor's degree from East Tennessee State University, and her master's and doctorate degrees from The Ohio State University. She can be reached at [srwhaley@vt.edu](mailto:srwhaley@vt.edu) or 540-231-8904.

### Holiday Schedule for Emails

Submissions received after 5 PM, Tuesday, November 17 will not be processed and sent until the week of November 30.

In December, submissions received after 5 PM, Monday, December 14 will not be processed and sent until the week of January 4.

## Communications Deadlines

**November 17 (5 PM)** – Deadline for email requests for ACC Championship Watching Parties and Events

**December 14 (5 PM)** – Deadline for email requests for Bowl Watching Parties and Events

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### Dates to Remember:

- October 31: [VT at Boston College Tailgate](#)
- November 12: [VT at Georgia Tech Tailgate](#)
- November 20-21: VT vs. North Carolina [Class of 1985 30<sup>th</sup> Reunion](#)
- November 28: [VT at Virginia Tailgate](#)
- November 15: Updated scholarship applications and letters due to our office
- November 26 (12 PM)-November 28: All university offices closed
- December 19: [Fall Commencement](#)
- December 24 (12 PM)-January 1: All university offices closed





# HOKIES on FACEBOOK



*The Central Florida Chapter hosted a bus trip and tailgate at the Virginia Tech vs. Miami football game*



*North Alabama Hokies decorated "Inside Out" Scarecrow and Hay Bale Art at the Huntsville Botanical Garden*



*The newly-formed Germany Chapter held their very first get-together at a restaurant in Kaiserslautern, Germany*



*The Palmetto Chapter gathered for a "Hokie Nation Serves" community service project at a local food pantry*



*Houston Chapter volunteers Sneed Adams and Fred Gibson host a table at a local area college fair*



*Roanoke Valley alumni enjoyed a presentation at a local brewery from Jim Wightman, an alumni chapter favorite*