



Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 311b

To: Virginia Tech Faculty, Staff, and Students

From: Timothy D. Sands

Date: May 17, 2021

Subject: **Recognition of Juneteenth at Virginia Tech – recognized on June 18, 2021**

The Juneteenth celebration recognizes the significance of June 19, 1865, the day the last enslaved Americans learned that they had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been signed more than two years earlier. While Juneteenth marked the end of slavery, it was only the beginning of a long, arduous struggle for freedom and equality by African-Americans that continues to this day.

The 2021 General Assembly established Juneteenth as a holiday for state employees (§2.2-3300, *Code of Virginia*, as amended). This year, the state will observe Juneteenth on Friday, June 18, 2021. The General Assembly's action applies to classified staff and Virginia Tech's university staff. The purpose of this presidential policy memorandum is to extend the 2021 observation of Juneteenth to include all Virginia Tech employees and students.

Therefore, Virginia Tech will observe Juneteenth on Friday, June 18, 2021. The university will be closed, and classes will be cancelled on this date. This will be a paid holiday for all eligible faculty and staff.

This commemoration of Juneteenth offers an opportunity for us to educate ourselves about our history, listen to and learn from others, and, most importantly, determine what actions Virginia Tech can take to create a community that is free of hate, violence, and racism as envisioned by our Principles of Community.

To continue the commemoration of Juneteenth at Virginia Tech beyond June 2021 as a paid holiday extended to all eligible faculty and staff on which the university would be closed and classes cancelled would require a formal resolution to be brought forward through the university governance system following the normal process.

This policy will expire on June 19, 2021.

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