Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 311

To: Virginia Tech Faculty, Staff, and Students

From: Timothy D. Sands

Date: June 16, 2020

Subject: Recognition of Juneteenth at Virginia Tech on June 19, 2020

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.

Governor Ralph Northam today issued an executive order declaring Friday, June 19, 2020, a holiday in the Commonwealth of Virginia and announced his intent to make Juneteenth a permanent, paid state holiday.

Therefore, Virginia Tech will observe Juneteenth on June 19, 2020. 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 2020 would require a formal resolution to be brought forward through the university governance system following the normal process.

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This policy will expire on June 20, 2020.