Subject: Policy on Authorized Closings

1. Purpose 1
2. Policy 2
2.1 Authorized Closings 2
2.1.1 Office or Department Closings for Safety or Health Risk 2
2.1.2 Weekend and Holiday Operations and Events 3
2.2 Determination of Emergency Personnel 3
2.3 Compensation 4
2.3.1 Salaried Personnel 4
2.3.2 Wage Personnel 7
2.4 Transportation Difficulties (No Agency Closing) 7
2.5 Policy Exception 7
3. Procedures 7
3.1 Communication Plan - Authorized Closing for Inclement Weather 7
3.1.1 Official Communications Channels 7
3.1.2 Supervisor and Employee Responsibilities 7
3.1.3 Supervisor Assistance to Employees 8
3.1.4 Employee Communication with Supervisors 8
3.1.5 If the Employee Has No Leave Balances to Cover Missed Hours 8
3.2 On-Campus 8
3.2.1 All-day Closing or Delayed Opening 8
3.2.2 Early Closing 8
3.2.3 Weekend Closings 9
3.2.4 Re-opening the University 9
3.2.5 Lunch Breaks 9
3.3 Off-Campus and Satellite Campuses 9
3.3.1 Extension Facilities 9
3.3.2 Satellite Campuses - Research, Continuing Education, and Other Facilities 9
3.3.3 Off-Campus Classes 9
3.4 Emergency Notification 9
3.4.1 Class Schedule During a *Shelter In Place* or *Secure in Place* Alert 9
3.4.2 Blacksburg Transit Operation During *Shelter In Place* or *Secure in Place* Alert 9
4. Definitions 10
5. References 10
6. Approval and Revisions 11

1. Purpose

This policy defines the process followed when the university is affected by inclement weather, natural disasters, emergencies and other conditions that may cause operations to be suspended or curtailed. It addresses announcements of closings and how employees are to charge time off.

This policy is formulated under the authority delegated to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and will be applied independent of decisions by other state agencies.

The provisions of this policy apply to all university employees.

2. Policy

It is the policy of Virginia Tech to operate in accordance with its approved university calendar and to maintain full operations unless specifically closed by the Vice President for Administration in consultation with the Executive Vice President and Provost. All authorized closings resulting from inclement weather, natural disasters, or emergency conditions will be announced through the Communication Plan described in this policy.

Teaching faculty are expected to meet all regularly scheduled classes unless an authorized closing has been announced. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to contact the department and to follow departmental procedures if they are unable to meet their class when the university is officially open. See Section 9.6.2 of the Faculty Handbook (http://www.provost.vt.edu/facultyhandbook/faculty_handbook.html).

2.1 Authorized Closings

When the university is affected by inclement weather, a natural disaster, or other emergency, classes may be cancelled or operations of the university officially suspended. Such authorized closings may be for an entire or partial day/shift. Non-emergency personnel are not required to work during an authorized closing. Such periods of leave should be reported as Authorized Closing (AC). Decisions to close will be made as follows:

1. **The Blacksburg Campus and Facilities in the Immediate Blacksburg Area (Excluding Off-Campus Extension)**
   The decision to close all university operations on the Blacksburg campus and facilities in the immediate Blacksburg area will be made by the Vice President for Administration or, in his absence, the Executive Vice President and Provost, making the announcement in accordance with the Communication Plan.

   A detailed procedure will be maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Administration and will be reviewed annually with the appropriate university personnel. If current and projected weather conditions indicate the potential exists for a delayed opening, cancellation of classes, or closing of the university, the Virginia Tech Police Shift Commander will contact the Vice President for Administration and initiate the internal procedure.

   If the university is closed, classes are cancelled.

2. **Extension Facilities (Off-Campus)**
   Decisions to close off-campus extension facilities will be made by the district and unit directors for their respective areas.

3. **Satellite Campuses - Research, Continuing Education, and Other Facilities (Off-Campus)**
   The facility director, and/or designee, will make decisions to close operations at any satellite research and continuing education facilities which are not located on the main campus in Blacksburg.

When authorized closings occur for emergencies other than inclement weather, or natural disaster, *emergency personnel* will be designated on a case-by-case basis. Employees will be compensated as documented below.

2.1.1 Office or Department Closings for Safety or Health Risk

If a department head believes that an office or department should be closed because of safety or health risks, Environmental Health and Safety should be contacted for a recommendation. A recommendation to close an office should be forwarded to the appropriate dean or vice president for approval. After normal work hours, supervisors should inform the on-duty shift commander in the Virginia Tech Police Department of safety/health risks that may necessitate the closing of an office or department. The Police Department will initiate the appropriate internal standard operating procedures to evaluate the situation. If it is determined that the office should be closed, employees will be

compensated for those hours of closing. For any other situations, contact Human Resources to determine the appropriate course of action.

For situations when the work environment is unpleasant, but does not pose identifiable health/ safety hazards, supervisors may authorize employees to use their accrued leave. Supervisors may also consider temporarily reassigning the employees to other work areas; or allowing employees to work at an alternate work site Policy 4325, Alternate Work Site and Telework Policy (http://www.policies.vt.edu/4325.pdf), or modifying the work schedule under Policy 4300, Hours of Work (http://www.policies.vt.edu/4300.pdf), if it can be done reasonably.

2.1.2 Weekend and Holiday Operations and Events

It is not the university's practice to make a centralized decision about cancellation of operations or events *on weekends or holidays when there are no classes* and administrative offices are closed.

If inclement weather occurs on weekends or holidays, each event sponsor has the responsibility for cancelling or rescheduling the event and communicating the change. In consultation with senior management, department heads or directors have the authority to close departmental operations.

Offices should monitor the weather and road conditions, consider the safety of employees and program participants. After normal work hours, the on-duty shift commander in the Virginia Tech Police Department should be contacted to discuss relevant safety risks. If it is determined that the office/event should be closed/cancelled, employees will be compensated for those hours of closing in accordance with this policy.

2.2 Determination of Emergency Personnel

It is the responsibility of administration to inform employees designated as *emergency personnel* that they are required to work during authorized closings.

1. Departments shall notify employees annually prior to the winter season, when specific storm activity is anticipated, or when it can be predetermined that for certain types of emergencies these employees' services will be necessary.
2. During the employment interview, applicants should be informed if the position is designated as *emergency personnel*. Offer letters should include the emergency designation (Sample Letters of Offer, http://www.apps.hr.vt.edu/hr/forms/) for wage and salaried positions.
3. Occasionally *non-emergency* personnel may become *emergency* and vice versa. Administrators shall give employees reasonable notice regarding changes in their status. Changes in status will normally be made by the department head.
4. Emergency employees who do not report to work for an authorized closing are subject to disciplinary action up to and including separation from employment, unless they are on pre-approved scheduled leave.
5. For large scale emergencies, all employees in senior management positions (Senior Administrative Officers, Deans, Vice Presidents, Department Chairs, Directors, and equivalent positions), as well as leadership/management positions such as laboratory and facility managers, student service and support managers, are considered *emergency personnel*.

There are many positions on campus that qualify for *emergency personnel* designation based upon on-going projects and/or work priorities at the time. For example, during school sessions most dining services employees would be considered essential to the operations of the university. In the event of an emergency closing during the summer months, fewer food service staff may be designated as *emergency personnel*. In an administrative unit, such as the university Payroll Office, all employees would not normally be designated as *emergency personnel*. However, during payroll *close out*, that designation may change to ensure payroll deadlines are met.

2.3 Compensation

2.3.1 Salaried Personnel

	Non-Emergency Salaried Personnel	**Emergency Salaried Personnel**
All Day Closings	1. … absent because of an authorized all-day closing will be paid for those hours. To qualify for payment, employees must work or be on pre-approved leave the scheduled work day before and the scheduled workday after the closing. Pre-approved leave is defined as *leave that is approved prior to the time it is to be taken; therefore, it must be approved prior to the emergency condition that resulted in the authorized closing*. 2. …who report to work during an all-day closing as a result of not having heard the closing announcement or who choose to work during the authorized closing shall not normally receive compensatory leave, except in extenuating circumstances when the department head designates the employee as *emergency personnel*. Therefore, non-emergency personnel who work without the permission of the department head during periods of authorized closing shall not be credited with compensatory leave.	1. **…**must report to or remain at work as scheduled during authorized closings. They will be credited with authorized closing leave for the hours worked to be used at a later time. Authorized closing leave must be used within 12 months of the date earned; once lapsed, it may not be used as leave or be paid out. 2. **…**who are non-exempt under the *Fair Labor Standards Act* and work over 40 hours in the work week will be eligible for overtime payment. 3. **…**who are exempt under the *Fair Labor Standards Act* are <u>not</u> eligible for overtime payment or compensatory time for the hours worked over 40 in a work week. 4. …who do not report to or remain at work as scheduled must charge time missed to accrued leave balances, or leave-without-pay, as appropriate and are subject to disciplinary action (see 2.2 #4).
Early Closing or Late Opening	1. …must be on pre-approved leave or work all or part of the work schedule not affected by the authorized closing to qualify for authorized closing leave accrual. Pre-approved leave is defined as *leave that is approved prior to the time it is to be taken; therefore, approved prior to the emergency condition that resulted in the authorized closing.* 2. …who leave work prior to the announcement of an early closing may not charge the difference in time to authorized closing leave described in this policy. Hours covered by the authorized closing should be charged to Authorized Closing (AC). The difference in time must be charged to accrued leave, or leave-without-pay, as appropriate. 3. …who work during periods of authorized closing without approval of the department head shall not be credited with authorized closing leave.	

	Non-Emergency Salaried Personnel	**Emergency Salaried Personnel**
Alternate Work Schedules (as defined in Policy 4300, Hours of Work (http://www.policies.vt.edu/4300.pdf) and the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management Hours of Work, Policy 1.25 (http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/hrpolicy/web/pol1_25.html)	1. **…*for an all-day closing,*** will be paid for the authorized closing for the hours they are scheduled to work that day. An alternate schedule could be comprised of more/less than eight hours in a work day; therefore, the employee will receive pay for their entire schedule for an all-day closing. 2. …***for a partial-day closing***, shall receive authorized closing leave for the portion of their shift during which the university was officially closed. 3. **…**whose scheduled day off falls on a day when Virginia Tech operations are closed, will not be credited with compensatory leave.	1. …will receive authorized closing leave for the portion of the normal schedule worked during the authorized closing that day. 2. …whose scheduled day off falls on a day when Virginia Tech operations are closed, will not be credited with compensatory leave.
First Day of Appointment	1. …***for full-day closing***, will receive pay for that day and the day will be designated as their beginning work date if he/she works the entire day following the authorized closing. 2. …***for a partial-day closing***, must report to work for the hours of their scheduled shift the university is open, but shall receive authorized closing leave for the portion of their shift during which the university was officially closed.	…date of appointment remains the same, however if the employee does not report to work, the supervisor may require the employee to use leave or leave without pay as appropriate.
Effective Date of Resignation	…whose resignations are effective on the day of an ***all-day closing*** may not qualify for payment and the separation date may be subject to change.	…whose resignations are effective on the day of an all-day closing, and who do not report for work, may not qualify for payment and the separation date may be subject to change.
On Leave	…who are on approved leave with pay on an all-day authorized closing will not be charged leave for the day. Instead, the time will be recorded as an Authorized Closing (AC).	

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Non-Emergency Salaried Personnel</th><th>Emergency Salaried Personnel</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Holidays</td><td colspan="2">Virginia Tech typically observes certain holidays by closing, such as Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, The Day After Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Independence Day and Memorial Day.

The university is open on the other designated staff holidays, such as Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Lee-Jackson Day, and President's Day because classes are in session. If an authorized closing is announced on one of these designated staff holidays, the following rules apply:</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. …who work the authorized closing on a holiday will:
• be paid for regular hours worked,
• earn compensatory leave for the holiday (no more than 8 hours), if they are normally eligible, and
• not earn authorized closing compensatory leave unless designated as emergency personnel by the department head.

2. …who do not work the authorized closing on a holiday will:
• be paid regular hours based on the authorized closing, and
• earn compensatory leave for the holiday (no more than 8 hours), if they are normally eligible.</td><td>1. …who work the authorized closing on a holiday will:
• be paid for regular hours worked;
• earn compensatory leave for the holiday (no more than 8 hours), if they are normally eligible;
• earn authorized closing compensatory leave for time worked; and
• if non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act, be compensated at time and a half for hours worked over 40 in the workweek.

2. …who do not work will:
• be paid regular pay for the holiday, and
• not earn authorized closing leave.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">All compensatory holiday leave and authorized closing leave must be used within 12 months of the date earned (once lapsed it is no longer eligible to be used or paid out).

In cases where an employee is on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) immediately prior to or after a holiday, he/she is not eligible to earn the holiday and as a result would be on LWOP for an authorized closing that falls on a holiday.</td></tr>
</table>

2.3.2 Wage Personnel

2.3.2.1 Wage employees designated as *emergency personnel* should report during an authorized closing, and will be paid for the hours worked during periods of authorized closings. No compensatory leave will be accrued by wage employees.

2.3.2.2 Wage employees who are not designated as *emergency personnel* should not report during an authorized closing unless the department head designates them as *emergency personnel* at the time of closing as described in section 2.2.

2.3.2.3 Wage employees are not paid for time not worked.

2.4 Transportation Difficulties (No Agency Closing)

Employees who do not report to work as scheduled must charge time missed to accrued leave, or leave without pay, as appropriate. However, supervisors may allow employees up to a maximum of one hour past the start of their normal shift to report to work during conditions of transportation difficulties.

2.5 Policy Exception

An exception to this policy may be granted by the university President, the Executive Vice President and Provost, or the Vice President for Administration, or their designee, if the conditions justify it.

3. Procedures

3.1 Communication Plan - Authorized Closing for Inclement Weather

In the fall of each year, Human Resources distributes a mailing to deans, directors and department heads instructing them to inform their *emergency personnel* of their departmental communication plan and what is expected of them in an authorized closing situation. Also included is a *Fact Sheet on Authorized Closings* relating to *emergency and non-emergency personnel* with a list of the university's authorized closing communications channels; and a blank roster sheet on which departments should list and post their *emergency personnel*.

3.1.1 Official Communications Channels

If it becomes necessary to close the Blacksburg campus because of inclement weather or an emergency, University Relations will use several communications channels to announce the decision:

The Virginia Tech Homepage (www.vt.edu)
Campus-wide e-mail from Virginia Tech News to all vt.edu accounts
Electronic message boards in classrooms
The weather/emergency hotline (540-231-6668)
VT Phone Alerts
VT Desktop Alerts

In addition, information will be sent to public media outlets as a public service, however, Virginia Tech is not responsible for misinformation reported on public media outlets.

3.1.2 Supervisor and Employee Responsibilities

Department heads should develop a communications plan for employees to follow in the event of emergency situations. In doing so, managers should anticipate the needs of essential operations, especially those of employees with alternate work schedules (i.e., shift work and weekends); organize a text/telephone tree; and share detailed instructions to ensure adequate coverage and clear communications. This is particularly important when the identification of *emergency personnel* is contingent upon the circumstances of the closing and are, thus, subject to change.

3.1.3 Supervisor Assistance to Employees

Non-emergency personnel, who anticipate transportation difficulties due to inclement weather conditions when the university is not closed, are urged to seek permission from supervisors to shorten their normal work shift through the use of accrued leave. Supervisors should make every effort to accommodate these requests.

3.1.4 Employee Communication with Supervisors

Emergency personnel should have a conversation with their supervisor, well in advance of the inclement weather season, to share information on the roads they must travel and the distance from home to work so management is aware of potential hazards, which could keep them from reaching their place of work in inclement weather situations. Employees know the conditions and the terrain they must travel to reach their work site. If they find themselves in situations where they feel their safety is compromised, they are strongly encouraged to make reasonable and rational choices when deciding to come to work or stay home. These decisions must, however, be communicated with the supervisor as soon as possible. Management reserves the right to determine whether the conditions were sufficient to warrant either not reporting to work or reporting late.

3.1.5 If the Employee Has No Leave Balances to Cover Missed Hours

Pay and leave earnings will be withheld for employees who have no leave balances to cover the time missed due to inclement weather, including leaving the workplace early, unless the supervisor can adjust the hours of work in the workweek to make up for the missed hours. Holidays are not earned if the employee's pay is docked the day before or the day after a holiday.

3.2 On-Campus

On-campus facilities are defined as those on the Blacksburg **c**ampus and in the immediate Blacksburg area (excluding off-campus Extension Offices).

3.2.1 All-day Closing or Delayed Opening

Once the decision has been made to close the university or delay opening of the university, the Vice President for Administration or, in his absence, the Executive Vice President and Provost will inform University Relations. University Relations will use the communications channels defined in section 3.1.1 to notify the university community.

In inclement weather situations, it is the responsibility of each employee to confirm if and when to report to work that day. Because the full details of university closings may not be adequately provided or described in other public media, employees are strongly advised to check the university homepage or their e-mail for detailed announcements.

3.2.2 Early Closing

There may be times when the university initially decides to open based on the information available, but deteriorating weather conditions result in an early closing. Once the decision has been made to close early, the Vice President for Administration or, in his absence, the Executive Vice President and Provost, will inform University Relations. University Relations will use the communications channels defined in section 3.1.1 to notify the university community. Employees, students, and visitors are encouraged to continue to check these communications channels for updates.

For early closings, once notified by University Relations, departmental or unit communication plans should be followed to ensure that all units have received the information about the closing and are taking steps to ensure that employees and students have been notified, including those who may be working or studying in labs, classrooms, or other areas.

3.2.3 Weekend Closings

Employees who are scheduled to work on the traditional Saturday/Sunday weekend as part of their regular work week are responsible for following their departmental plan or they must contact their supervisor. Such announcements will not normally be made through the authorized communications channels.

3.2.4 Re-opening the University

The official announcement to re-open the university will occur via the communications channels defined in section 3.1.1. The announcement will designate that the university will be open on a specific day. Because employees have various work schedules they should report at their regularly scheduled arrival time for that day.

3.2.5 Lunch Breaks

Should there be a late opening, such as, mid-day, employees should take their regularly scheduled lunch break, then report to work according to their schedule unless otherwise instructed by their supervisor.

3.3 Off-Campus and Satellite Campuses

3.3.1 Extension Facilities

District and unit directors will inform employees in their respective facilities of closing in accordance with their emergency communication plans.

3.3.2 Satellite Campuses - Research, Continuing Education, and Other Facilities

Directors of satellite campuses and outlying Agricultural Experiment Stations, and/or designees, will communicate closing decisions to employees of their respective facilities according to their emergency communication plans.

3.3.3 Off-Campus Classes

Classes held at a satellite location will be cancelled if the satellite campus is closed. Off-campus classes taught at any non-university facility around the state may be cancelled due to emergency conditions at the instructor's discretion. It is recommended that each instructor send a cancellation notice via email and have a *text/telephone-tree* established with their students in order to timely disseminate cancellation information.

3.4 Emergency Notification

VT Alert messages that merit specific definition and inclusion in university policy are those that instruct the campus to either *shelter in place or secure in place*. A shelter in place instruction will be issued to direct the campus to move indoors. A tornado warning is an example of when the campus will be directed to shelter in place. A secure in place notification will be issued when there is a threat of violence to the campus. Individuals are directed to stay/move indoors and seek a secure location. If safe to do so, allow others to seek refuge with you.

3.4.1 Class Schedule During a *Shelter In Place* or *Secure in Place* Alert

Class changes will **not** occur during a *shelter in place* or *secure in place* alert. All individuals are advised to remain where they are sheltering/securing until:

- the alert is lifted,
- otherwise directed by emergency management personnel; or,
- there is a clear threat of imminent danger posed by remaining in that location.

3.4.2 Blacksburg Transit Operation During *Shelter In Place* or *Secure in Place* Alert

The Blacksburg Transit (BT) will **not** operate on campus during a *secure in place* or during a *shelter in place* alert, including tornado warnings. BT operators may instruct passengers to evacuate the buses and enter an appropriate

campus building. Individuals who were waiting outdoors to access BT services should return to an appropriate campus building as soon as they are aware of the alert.

4. Definitions

Emergency Personnel: For the purpose of this policy, emergency personnel are those employees assigned to positions identified by their departments as necessary to the maintenance of the vital operations and services of the university. Emergency personnel are required to work when classes are cancelled and during other periods of authorized closing.

Non-Emergency Personnel: For the purpose of this policy, non-emergency personnel are those employees who are not required to report to work during authorized closings.

Pre-Approved Leave: Leave that has been requested by the employee and approved by management prior to the emergency condition that resulted in the authorized closing.

Alternate Work Schedule: A schedule that could be comprised of more/less than eight hours in a work-day, non-traditional work days (Saturdays/Sundays), and/or non-traditional work hours. Virginia Tech may implement work schedules that differ from the standard workweek (typically a Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, 40-hour per week schedule) if such schedules are deemed to promote efficient agency operations.

Responsible University Authorities: University officials assigned authority by the President to authorize emergency notifications to provide alert, warning and safety or protection instructions. A listing of these positions is contained in the Emergency Notification System Protocols.

Secure in Place: Stay or move indoors and seek a secure location; if it is safe to do so, allow others to seek refuge with you.

Shelter in Place: Make a shelter of the building that you are in, due to potentially dangerous conditions in the surrounding area.

Shift Work Schedule: Typically, a defined work schedule other than the standard 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule.

5. References

Emergency Notification System Protocols
http://www.emergency.vt.edu/programs/plans/ENSprotocol.pdf

Faculty Handbook
http://www.provost.vt.edu/facultyhandbook/faculty_handbook.html

Fair Labor Standards Act
http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf

Procedure for Delayed Opening, Early Closing or All-Day Closing Due to Weather Conditions

University Policy 4300, Hours of Work
http://www.policies.vt.edu/4300.pdf

University Policy 4320, Fair Labor Standards Act
http://www.policies.vt.edu/4320.pdf

University Policy 4325, Alternate Work Site and Telework Policy
http://www.policies.vt.edu/4325.pdf

Virginia Department of Human Resource Management, Policy 1.25, Hours of Work
http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/pol1_25hoursofwork.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Virginia Department of Human Resource Management, Policy 1.35, Emergency Closing
http://web1.dhrm.virginia.gov/itech/hrpolicy/pol1_35.html

Virginia Department of Human Resource Management, Policies and Procedures Manual
http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/hrpolicies

6. Approval and Revisions

- Revision 11

  Updates to position titles and/or responsibilities due to university reorganization.

  New Section 2.2, #5 added, designating individuals in certain administrative positions as "essential personnel" for large scale emergencies.

  Approved March 28, 2008 by the University President, Charles W. Steger.

- Revision 12

  Technical corrections, including: changing leave type reported from Inclement Weather (IW) to Authorized Closing (AC); referencing the university Policy 4300 Hours of Work in sections 2.3 and 2.4; adding Martin Luther King, Jr., Day as an observed holiday in section 2.6.5; changing the name of Policy 4325, Alternate Work Site and Telework Policy; and updating the methods for communicating authorized closing information in section 3.1.

  Approved January 17, 2010 by University President, Charles W. Steger

- Revision 13

  Added Section 3.4 regarding Emergency Notifications; removed separate responsibility for cancellation of classes and added provision that if the university is closed, classes are cancelled; added reference to the detailed procedure regarding these closures that is to be maintained by the Vice President for Administrative Services; added section 2.1.2 regarding cancellation of weekend operations; technical corrections, including removing WVTF radio station and the university switchboard from list of official communications channels, updating external web-links, and slight reorganization of some sections for clarity.

  Approved November 11, 2011 by University President, Charles W. Steger.

- Revision 14

  Language modified in Section 3.4.1 pertaining to actions during a *Shelter in Place* or *Secure in Place* alert.

  Approved October 3, 2012 by University President, Charles W. Steger.

- Revision 15

  Combined and re-organized several sub-sections under "2.3 Compensation" into table format for ease of reference. Updated titles, technical and grammatical corrections.

  Approved September 4, 2015 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 16

  Reworded information in the table for clarification.

  Approved January 20, 2017 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.