

POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 221

TO: All Faculty and Staff
FROM: Charles W. Steger
DATE: August 5, 2002
SUBJECT: Observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Approved by the Student Government Association: March 19, 2002
Approved by the Graduate Student Assembly: March 28, 2002
Approved by the Commission on Student Affairs: April 11, 2002
Approved by University Council: May 6, 2002
Approved by the President: May 6, 2002
Effective: Immediately, for calendars not yet approved by the Committee on Academic Support (i.e., beginning with AY 2005-06)

The University Council, on recommendation of the Commission on Student Affairs, approved a resolution for observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Following is the text of the resolution as adopted by University Council.

WHEREAS, the third Monday in January is recognized by both the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Government¹ as a holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., and

WHEREAS, this holiday is of great significance to members of the university community, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the United States, and

WHEREAS, many members of the university community dedicate their time on this day to celebrating the life and accomplishments of Dr. King, holding informative programs on issues that greatly impact minority and majority populations at Virginia Tech, and

WHEREAS, the university calendar criteria, as approved May 3, 1993, do not currently provide for the observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and

WHEREAS, out of the twenty-five institutions in our S.C.H.E.V. peer group, Virginia Tech is one of three universities which does not recognize this day as a holiday, and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Student Affairs believes that the current university policy, which simply requests that faculty make reasonable efforts to accommodate students who wish to participate in commemorative events, neither adequately recognizes this day nor provides a sufficient opportunity for students, faculty, and staff who wish to attend and participate in commemorative events, and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Student Affairs believes that by not holding classes on this holiday, Virginia Tech will take a significant and necessary step to ensure that members of the university community have the opportunity to attend commemorative events and celebrate the holiday, and

¹ VA. Code/2.2-3300, and 61 USC 6103, respectively.

² Virginia Tech Presidential Policy Memo #163

WHEREAS, the current failure of the University to adequately recognize this day as a holiday inadvertently fosters the appearance of racial insensitivity at Virginia Tech, in direct opposition to the university's commitment to diversity, and prevents many students, faculty, and staff from participating in significant educational experiences, therefore let it be,

RESOLVED, that the university calendar criteria, as approved by University Council, May 3, 1993, be amended to include the following:

- The third Monday in January shall be designated a holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. There shall be no classes on this holiday.

Note: This resolution has no effect on faculty and staff. It remains a work day for faculty and a classified staff holiday. All rules pertaining to classified staff holidays remain in effect.

CWS:tew