



**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 Government<sup>1</sup> 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,"<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> VA. Code § 2.2-3300, and 61 USC 6103, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> 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

**Note added March 31, 2008: On this date, the Board of Visitors passed a resolution to close the university, thus making this a faculty and staff holiday also. (See attached resolution)**

## **UNIVERSITY CLOSURE FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**

**Whereas**, the third Monday in January is recognized by both the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government 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 state, and the nation; and

**Whereas**, many members of the university community dedicate their time on this day to celebrating the life and accomplishments of Dr. King, participating in a variety of informative programs on issues that greatly impact minority and majority populations at Virginia Tech; and

**Whereas**, 22 of 25 SCHEV peer institutions close completely in observance of the holiday; and

**Whereas**, most Virginia colleges and universities and state government agencies also close in observance of the holiday; and

**Whereas**, Virginia Tech has recognized Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday by canceling classes and providing a paid holiday for staff; however, offices are open, requiring many staff to defer the holiday and administrative and professional faculty and research faculty are expected to be at work; and

**Whereas**, complete closure to honor the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., conveys a powerful, positive symbolic message to both majority and minority members of the university and external community, and closure provides students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to participate in significant educational experiences,

**Therefore**, let it be resolved that effective January 14, 2008, policy 4315 be amended to designate Dr. King's birthday, the third Monday in January, as a holiday where the university is closed and holiday policies apply.

### **Recommendation:**

That the university close for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday to allow all members of the university community to observe, celebrate, and acknowledge Dr. King's contributions.

Approved March 31, 2008