WINTER BREAK CLOSING

An official University closing creates a consistent internal and external understanding that University offices will be closed and classes are not in session. In addition, the closing allows Facilities operations to optimize energy cost savings during periods of low employee and student activity. Department heads and senior managers may identify in advance the locations of critical operations to assure on-going services where needed, such as research projects that would be negatively impacted if efforts were curtailed during the holiday closing.

Presentation Date: June 7, 2010

RESOLUTION ON WINTER BREAK CLOSING

WHEREAS, an extended winter break is a recognized sustainability practice in the higher education community, and will result in significant annual savings for Virginia Tech; and,

WHEREAS, a winter break corresponding more closely to the public school closings is a family-friendly practice; and,

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech Policy 4315, Guidelines on Holidays, currently provides the authorization for individual departments to close during the break between December 25 and January 1 and a number of departments close currently; and

WHEREAS, the majority of staff members take leave for the three or four days between December 25 and January 1 for which Virginia Tech is not closed due to a holiday; and,

WHEREAS, since newly hired University staff members currently receive four days of family leave per year if they begin employment prior to July 9 and two days of family leave if they begin employment after July 9, closing for a winter break might place a hardship on newly hired University staff who have not accumulated sufficient leave; and

WHEREAS, the Higher Education Restructuring Act provides level 3 institutions with an opportunity to develop a new human resources system for University staff, the designation of non-faculty employees hired on or after July 1, 2006, and the Management Agreement between the University and the Commonwealth stipulates that the Board approves any major changes to compensation and benefits plans for those University employees not covered by the Personnel Act before those changes become effective;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that University Policy 4315, Guidelines on Holidays, be amended as follows:

> The University is closed between December 25 and January 1 each year. All faculty members who earn annual leave as part of their appointments and classified and University staff must use annual or other appropriate leave balances to cover the days not worked that have not been designated as official holidays. Supervisors must approve any exceptions, but are strongly encouraged to be flexible and fair with employees and their individual work situations and personal circumstances in accordance with existing leave and alternative work policies.
>
> Salaried employees who do not work and have insufficient leave balances to cover the winter break will be placed in a leave-without-pay status in accordance with state and University leave policies.

Certain departments may remain open due to the nature of the work; in some cases, minimal or full staffing may be necessary. Each department head has the authority to designate the employees required to work during the winter break to support necessary University or departmental operations or functions. Normal holiday compensatory leave policies will apply when employees work on one of the officially designated state holidays.

During the winter break, departments must make arrangements to retrieve on a regular basis communications (e.g., voicemail, e-mail, etc.) from the public and provide a timely and appropriate response; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that newly hired University staff will receive four days of family personal leave regardless of their date of hire.

<u>**RECOMMENDATION**</u>**:**

That the resolution authorizing Virginia Tech to be closed for a winter break period annual between December 25 and January 1, amendments to Policy 4315, Guidelines on Holidays, and revisions to the Campus Leave Manual be approved in accordance with this resolution.

June 7, 2010