



## Virginia Tech Graduate Student Newsletter Washington, DC Metro Region March 4, 2022

### ***Important Academic Dates and Deadlines***

This information only applies to students completing **ALL required coursework for their program and students eligible to graduate in Spring 2022**. The dates and deadlines listed below are to keep you on track for degree completion and graduation this semester.

#### **Spring 2022 Masters/EDS Deadlines**

**May 11** Final Exam Defense (**Submit request 2 weeks prior to defense date**)  
**May 27** Electronic Thesis/Dissertation

#### **Spring 2022 PhD/EDD Deadlines**

PhD/EDD Students planning to participate in Commencement for 2022 follow dates below, if not follow the dates above for Masters/EDS.

**Mar 24** Final Exam Defense (**Submit request 2 weeks prior to defense date**)  
**Apr 7** Electronic Thesis/Dissertation

**Non-Thesis ONLY Programs (MNR, MIT, MBA, MEng...)****May 16 Non-Thesis Final Exam/Evaluation**

Each respective program will send out an email with detailed instructions for Final Exam/Evaluation scheduling towards the end of the semester to ensure you are on track for degree completion and exam scheduling.

**Important:** An approved Plan of Study is required to Apply for Degree Conferral and to Schedule your Final Exam! You can check to see if you have an approved Plan of Study in Hokie Spa. **If you do not have an approved Plan of Study, please reach out to your department for assistance!** Your department will work to complete your Plan of Study and ensure that it is received with the Graduate School for Final Approval. [Link to Schedule Final Exam](#)

**All students graduating are required to have a Final Exam scheduled with the Graduate School for degree awarding.**

***Save the Date! Events, Info Sessions, Workshops, etc***

Mar	7	NCR Job Fair at the NVC
Mar	14-16	Career and Professional Development Team Visit
Mar	15	Respect, Equity, Anti-Discrimination Training
Mar	15	Latinx Affinity Group
Mar	16	Black Affinity Group (more info to come)
Mar	17	International Students Support Group at the NVC
Mar	22	PDW: Building Your Personal Brand
Mar	23	FREE Professional Photo Shoot at the NVC
Mar	25	Celebrating Graduate Students Happy Hour
Mar	29	First Generation Affinity Group (more info to come)

***Need a Mask? Pickup Points in the DC Metro Region***

KN95 masks for individuals are available at these two pickup points in the DC Metro Region campus locations:

- **Northern Virginia Center, Falls Church**, in the Lobby at the Guard's desk.
- **VT Arlington Research Center**, Ballston, at the second floor Reception.

These masks are free to the campus community. Individuals should continue to use these resources in a responsible manner.

## VT COVID Testing Program in the DC Region

The university's COVID testing program in the DC Region is through a mail-in testing program. The test kits are distributed in the library. An overview of instructions is shown below. Please be patient as we bring this new program online, and remember that the program is for people without symptoms. If you are experiencing COVID symptoms, please contact your health care provider.

1. Register online to pick up a test. The scheduling website is <https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=20170330&appointmentType=29318318>
2. Select Falls Church or Arlington on the website to see available pickup times.
3. Pick up your test from the NVC Library (1st floor) or Arlington Main Desk (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) as scheduled. You will need to show ID. Hokie Passport is preferred, but another government-issued ID such as a driver's license or passport is acceptable.
4. **DO NOT ADMINISTER THE SELF-TEST IN THE LIBRARY.** Preferred locations are your private office, home, or car. You can also administer the self-test outside, or in some part of the building where you can be far away from other people.
5. Carefully follow the sampling and shipping instructions included with the test kit. On Mondays and Tuesdays between noon and 4 pm, the NVC library will have a collection box at the service desk. The regular UPS driver will pick up completed test kits from this box. Outside of these hours, you must ship your test through UPS from a nearby office or public collection box.
6. Tests are processed by the testing company, and the results will be communicated to the university by Friday. Negative test results will be communicated by email only. Positive
7. results will be communicated by either EH&S (for employees) or Schiffert Health (for students) using a combination of email and phone.

## International Students Important Information

### H-1B (Work Visa) and Permanent Residency Workshop

The DC International Student Office (DC ISSO) is collaborating with the Cranwell International Center and inviting all students in F-1 or J-1 visa status to participate in our upcoming **H-1B (Work Visa) and Permanent Residency Workshop** on **Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM**. During this virtual webinar presented by immigration attorneys, you will get the chance to learn more about the H-1B work visa and employment-based permanent residency options.



**To register for tomorrow's webinar, please use the following link:**

[https://virginiatech.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_8EMhZ5Y0SMCgmSqq74Mfvg](https://virginiatech.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8EMhZ5Y0SMCgmSqq74Mfvg)

*\*It is important to note that the international offices are **not** able to advise students regarding the H-1B work visa or permanent residency. You should always seek the guidance of an experienced immigration attorney regarding these anticipated changes to your status.*

## Important Tax Information

It is important to be aware that, as a nonresident student in the U.S., you are legally required to file a tax return if you received U.S. income during 2021.

Please note that even if you did not work or receive income in the U.S., you are still obligated to file [Form 8843 \(Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition\)](#) with the **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**. Form 8843 is due by **May 1, 2022**.

This tax season runs **January 24, 2022 – April 18, 2022**. To assist in filing your taxes, Virginia Tech has arranged access to **Sprintax Tax Preparation** for you. Sprintax will guide you through the tax preparation process, arrange the necessary documents and check if you are due a tax refund. **Sprintax does not need to be used if you are only filling out Form 8843.**

Sprintax was used by over 170,000 international students, scholars and nonresidents last year. The average Federal refund received by eligible students was over \$1,185.

### To receive access to Sprintax:

1. Submit the **2022 Request for Sprintax Software Access**.
2. Indicate in the form if you received income in 2021. If you did, you will be emailed a unique code that will provide access to free **federal** tax filing assistance through Sprintax.
3. **IMPORTANT:** Sprintax codes are only emailed out on **Friday afternoons**. We appreciate your patience as we work to make sure students receive their codes each week.

Additionally, the IRS requires that any foreign national claiming tax treaty benefits on wages or salary earned in the U.S. file a [Form 8233 \(Exemption from Withholding on Compensation for Independent \[and Certain Dependent\] Personal Services of a Nonresident Alien Individual\)](#) each year they wish to claim the tax treaty. The **VT Payroll Office** is currently preparing 2022 tax treaty documents, and you can find the **schedule of available appointments** on our **tax website** under the “Tax Treaties” tab.

Our **tax website** has lots of resources and information for you to access to assist you in preparing for this tax season. *\*However, please note that our office (and all other university staff) are not qualified or allowed to provide individual tax advice.*

## VT Graduate Student Commencement in the DC Metro Region, Spring 2022, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1pm at the GMU CFA

The [Commencement website](#) for the DC Area is live. Please bookmark this page as it will be updated frequently during the semester. Here are the summary details:

### Date:

Sunday May 15th, 2022

**Venue:**

GMU Center for the Arts  
4373 Mason Pond Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

**Schedule:**

11:30 am Student Check-in begins on Main Level  
***All participating students should be checked in by 12:30 pm.***  
12:15 pm Doors open to the Auditorium for Guests to be seated  
12:30 pm Faculty, Students and their Hoods Line-up  
1:00 pm Processional  
3:00 pm Light reception for graduates and their guests in the Main Lobby immediately following the Commencement.

**Degree Conferring Dates**

In order to participate in Commencement, please make sure you have completed the necessary work by the [Degree Conferring Dates](#). If you have any questions, please contact the Graduate Student Services Office (GSSO) at 703-538-8327 or see [here](#) for more information or to make an appointment. **Please note the important Dates and Deadlines Workshop offered by the GSSO on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm for those who plan on graduating in Spring 2022.**

**Regalia**

Regalia is required for attending Commencement, and celebrating your academic achievements! Order by April 30<sup>th</sup> to ensure you will receive the regalia in time for the ceremony.

**PhD**

- Hoods are edged with dark blue
- Doctoral gowns are faced with black velvet with three bars across the sleeves.
- Tassels are gold

**Masters**

- The colors for the edging of hoods for master's students are determined by the college and discipline granting the degree. You can find the proper hood color [here](#)
- Tassels of caps are black

***Both Master's and PhD regalia can be ordered from the VT Bookstore through the following link: <https://colleges.herffjones.com/college/vt/>.***

- Click on "Keeper Cap and Gown" (Order Now),
- From the drop down, choose "Graduate School"

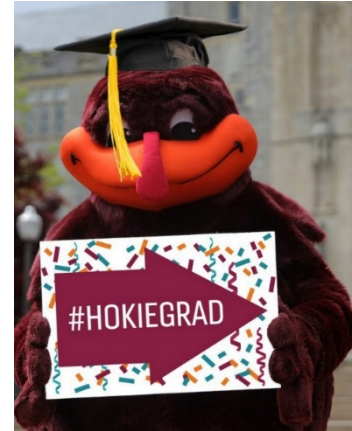


- "Washington, DC Ceremony"
- "Degree Type" (You can select Masters or Doctors)

### Graduate Student Speaker Competition

Each year we invite students to submit a speech for the Graduate Student Speaker Competition. If selected, the graduating student will have the opportunity to attend the Faculty/VIP Reception prior to the Commencement, and give remarks in front of family, friends and graduates! Speeches should be no longer than 10 minutes. The deadline for submission is March 22, 2022 and the applicants will be notified by April 1, 2022.

To participate please fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/j7Tgz8HRXibxfSbR6>



### Images and Reflections Photo Slideshow

We welcome submissions of photos or short videos that tell the story of your student experience at Virginia Tech. Submit them using this [Google Form](#) or email them to Susan Merten at [smerten@vt.edu](mailto:smerten@vt.edu).

### VT Commencement Pop Up Flower Shop



As with previous years, there will be a pop up flower shop selling VT flowers and some swag outside the Commencement venue. If you would like to review the bouquets and/or pre-order, see [here](#).

## Events, Workshops, etc.

### 2022 Free [NCR Job Fair](#) at the Northern Virginia Center, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2-6pm



Organized by the DCHokies alumni, the annual NCR Job Fair returns after an unexpected year off due to the pandemic. All area job seekers are welcome to this event, including current students. Register soon to ensure your resume is sent to companies ahead of time!

**Please note: All attendees and recruiters will be required to show proof of COVID-19**

**vaccination or proof of vaccine medical exemption.**

### [To Register as an Attendee](#)

## Respect, Equity, Anti- Discrimination Training, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2-4pm, VTRC



Henry Yampolsky, JD  
Assistant Director for Education,  
Outreach & Conflict Resolution



Genelle Chairman, JD  
Equity Manager



Bryan Hanson, Ed. D.  
Graduate School Ombudsperson

### RESPECT. EQUITY. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION TRAINING\*

Understanding policies on harassment, discrimination, and gender-based violence  
Tuesday, March 15, 2022  
2 PM - 4 PM  
The Ballston Room  
Light refreshments will be provided

### You're invited to an OEA Double Feature

### MOVING FROM CONFLICT TO COLLABORATION

What if you could learn to respond to conflict with strength, clarity, and ease as opposed to reacting to it with fear, avoidance, or aggression? In this highly interactive workshop, we will explore the key features of destructive conflict interactions and learn real-life skills for transforming even the most difficult interactions into opportunities for growth, connection, and dialogue  
Wednesday, March 16, 2022  
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
NVC-214  
Light refreshments will be provided

\*Full participation satisfies the University's compliance training requirement

## LATINX AFFINITY GROUP



### Zoom Meeting Mar15th 6:00 - 6:45pm

Featuring a discussion on graduate student leadership and academic success strategies. Join us to connect, build community, and stay the course in graduate school!!!

For more information or meeting access contact:  
chontreshayes@vt.edu

## Latinx Affinity Group, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 6pm

**Global Connect: International Students Support Group, March 17th, 3pm**

The next International Students Support Group will be on Thursday, March 17, 2022, from 3:00 to 4:30 pm., at the picnic tables outside the NVC front doors. Please join Julie Kaplan, Cook Counseling Center, to meet other students and discuss common concerns. We'll have pizza and drinks! More information to follow!

**Professional and Development Workshops for Graduate Students in the DC Metro Region, Online, Various Tuesdays at Noon****March 22 - Building Your Personal Brand:**

In this session, we will discuss the concept of personal brand both as a job seeker and a professional, break down the process of identifying and/or clarifying your own brand, review the basics of how to leverage social media platforms and other means of showcasing your brand, and taking a look at ways to maintain. This session is geared for those new to personal branding. This presentation will be recorded. Register [here](#).

**FREE Professional Photo Shoot, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 3-6pm**

A professional photographer will be at the Northern Virginia Center, Room 200 on March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 3-6pm. Sign up for a free professional headshot (business attire) or formal Graduate Portrait (regalia)! If you are working on your LinkedIn or want to celebrate your graduate accomplishments, our professional photographer will have both Virginia Tech and business backdrops to showcase your formal photo!

All participants must wear a mask before and after the shoot. Registration is required.

**Sign up for your FREE photo shoot [here](#)**

**Celebrating Graduate Students Happy Hour, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 4-6pm**

*Ballston Local, VTRC-Arlington*

Come celebrate the outstanding work of the Virginia Tech graduate community in teaching, research and service in the DC Metro Area! All students, faculty, advisors, and staff welcome. Free appetizers and giveaways. Sponsored by the Innovation Campus, and the Departments of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering.



**Career and Professional Development Team Visit the DC Region, March 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>**

**CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
VIRGINIA TECH.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL**  
VIRGINIA TECH.

**Calling all DC Hokie Grad Students!**  
**Career & Professional Development will be on campus March 14-17th!****Career Consultations:**  
**Arlington** - 3/15, 1:30-3:30 PM, Register [Here](#)  
**Falls Church** - 3/15, 4:00-6:00 PM, Register [Here](#)  
**Alexandria** - 3/16, 11:30-12:30 PM & 1:30-2:30 PM, Register [Here](#)**Open House Receptions:**  
**Falls Church** - 3/14, 5:00 - 6:30 PM; Outside Lobby (*Rm 200 if rain*)  
**Arlington** - 3/15, 12:00 - 1:00 PM, Falls Church Foyer  
**Alexandria** - 3/16, 12:30-1:15 PM, WAAC Courtyard**VTGrate Spring 2022 Application Cycle**

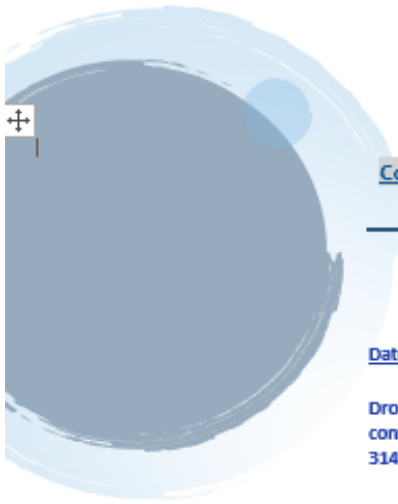
If you are interested in joining the Virginia Tech Graduate Academy for Teaching Excellence (GrATE), we will have another application cycle in the first few weeks of the Spring '22 semester from January 24-March 5, 2022.

Application requirements are in the "[Membership](#)" tab on the menu, where you can then navigate to "[Member](#)," "[Associate](#)," or "[Fellow](#)" depending on which level of membership you are interested in applying for. If you need teaching evaluations, please connect with us for [Peer Observation](#) and we can help.

Have questions about the application? Please either email program manager Jonilda Bahja [jonildab@vt.edu](mailto:jonildab@vt.edu) or submit a question to the [Ask A Fellow](#) form and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

If you have questions about the academy, please email Ernesto Acosta at [ela2ness@vt.edu](mailto:ela2ness@vt.edu)

## Cook Counseling Hours/Events at the VTRC



Cook Counseling Center at the VT Arlington Campus  
Julie Kaplan, Ph.D., Embedded Counselor

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2021

Drop-in office hours with Julie Kaplan, Ph.D. (for meetings or consultations) from 4:00 to 5:00 pm, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Room #2-314

2:30 – 3:30 pm – Graduate Student Support Group in the Falls Church Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

All Graduate Students at Arlington are welcome. Meet other students and discuss common concerns. We'll have pizza and drinks. RSVP to [jskaplan@vt.edu](mailto:jskaplan@vt.edu) to attend.

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2021

Drop-in office hours with Julie Kaplan, Ph.D. (for meetings or consultations) from 2:30 to 3:30 pm, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, #2-314

1:00 – 2:00 pm – All students and staff are invited to join us on a Spring Walk on a nearby trail. Take a break, relax, and have mindfulness moments.

4:00 – 5:00 pm – Ph.D. Support Group in the Farragut West room, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Please RSVP to [jskaplan@vt.edu](mailto:jskaplan@vt.edu)

All Ph.D. students at Arlington are welcome. Meet other students and discuss common issues. Snacks and drinks will be served.

 703-635-9957

 [jskaplan@vt.edu](mailto:jskaplan@vt.edu)

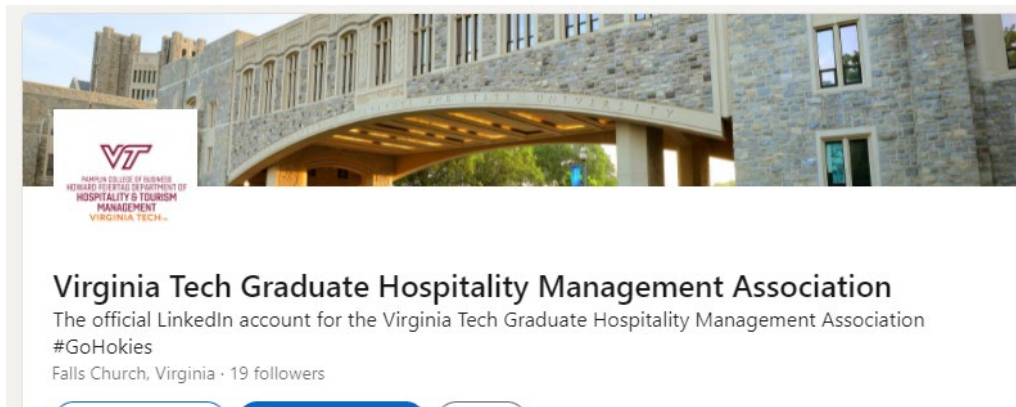
Questions? Contact  
Julie Kaplan, Ph.D.

## Hokie Shop to visit DC area, April 20-21

The Virginia Tech Hokie Shop, Virginia Tech's official bookstore, will host a two day pop-up shop on April 20-21 at the Northern Virginia Center (next to the West Falls Church metro station) in the greater Washington, DC region. Virginia Tech students, employees, alumni and community members in the DC area are invited to share their preferred times to shop and give feedback on the types of items to have in stock for this pop-up Hokie Shop in this [D.C. area Hokie Shop survey](#). Survey closes March 18.

Questions about the survey or the event may be directed to [robin.jones@vt.edu](mailto:robin.jones@vt.edu).

## Virginia Tech Graduate Hospitality Management Association



The Virginia Tech Campus in Falls Church, located near Washington D.C., offers a unique Graduate program, Master of Science in Business Administration: Hospitality and Tourism Management (MSBA-HTM). This MSBA-HTM program is designed to provide strategic business administration best practice, leadership development, as well as instilling the key skills necessary to thrive in hospitality and tourism management. Through this degree, graduates are prepared for exciting management positions in the global hospitality and tourism industry.

The Virginia Tech MSBA-HTM program delivers success through its extremely proficient scholar-professors and instructors, who reconceive best business practices. Many courses offer industry-leader guest presentations and mentoring through the support of a vast network of Hokies Alumni. The Virginia Tech MSBA-HTM program facilitates students in the advancement of their professional careers, through learning strategic industry knowledge and best practices preparing them to take their career to the next level. Anyone interested in being part of this student association can [join through this link](#).

### Student Leaders

**President:** Deepanshi Behal

**VP:** Evelyn Owie

**Secretary:** Mehnaz Hayat

**Treasurers:** Norah Almalki & Hamidreza Talafian

**Events Coordinators:** Jazmine Antonio & Mehnaz Hayat

**Social and Digital Media Marketing:** Katie Rhoads, Hamidreza Talafian & Azeemullah Baig

**Public Relations:** Richard Jones

**IT & Presentation:** Obeid Altutaby and Hailah Almosned

**Photography:** Chloe Stone

[LinkedIn Profile](#)

## ***Graduate Student Climate Survey Launching March 15th***

On Tuesday March 15th, graduate students across all campuses will receive an invitation in their Virginia Tech email to participate in the Graduate School's triannual climate survey measuring students' attitudes toward campus climate, department climate, advising, mentoring and inclusion and diversity. Virginia Tech is committed to creating and supporting a climate that fosters inclusion and diversity where all students can be productive and engaged members of our campus communities. This survey will allow Virginia Tech's leaders to receive valuable input from students about their campus climate. For additional information please review to the [FAQs](#) or reach out to Kacy Lawrence at [klawr5@vt.edu](mailto:klawr5@vt.edu)

## ***Apply to be the Graduate Student Representative on the Board of Visitors!***

Each year the Board of Visitors selects one undergraduate student representative and one graduate student representative. Student representatives serve a one-year term from July 1 through June 30.

Both BOV student representatives also serve as members of [University Council](#), the Commission on Student Affairs, and Order of the Gavel, and may be asked by the president, provost, or other university leaders to serve on special task forces or committees. It is vitally important for the student representatives to maintain constant contact with administration, including the president and provost and other university leaders, as well as with the students on all campuses of the university. It is also expected that the student representatives will assist others in becoming educated about the positions and encourage others to become future applicants.

Interested? See here for more information and the application:

<https://bov.vt.edu/studentrepsapply.html>



## Escape to DC!

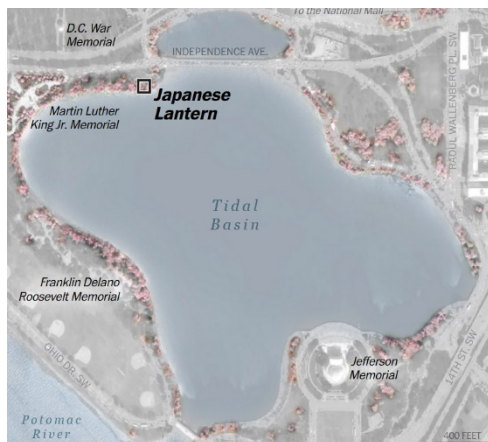
### The National Cherry Blossom Festival,

March 20<sup>th</sup> to April 17<sup>th</sup>



The National Cherry Blossom Festival is one of the most popular events in the DC Region. For so many of the locals, this blooming of the Cherry Trees around the Tidal Basin, is among the first harbingers of the spring season. Suddenly, after months of cold weather and greyness, the earth begins to revive with colorful spring flowers and tree blossoms. These beautiful, old trees were [gifts of friendship given to the United States from Japan in 1912](#). For over a hundred years, our region has celebrated their blooms.

The Tidal Basin, run by the National Park Service, is always a nice walk but take time to see the cultural sights such as the [Japanese Stone Lantern](#) – when it is lit, the Festival is officially open. There is also the Japanese Pagoda which was gifted in 1958. You can read about it in this excellent interactive piece by the [Washington Post](#) from last year. As you go around the [Tidal Basin Loop Trail](#), there are several important memorials to Martin Luther King, Jr, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson and other treasures to see.



This year the peak bloom is predicted for March 22-25<sup>th</sup>. Its only a few weeks away so start planning to visit the Tidal Basin. In the past, I've gone just before or just after the peak bloom and it has always been amazing, and less crowded! If you go really early in the morning, you can nab a parking space nearby. Otherwise, take the Metro, the Smithsonian Metro Station is probably the closest depending on where you are coming from. Or reserve a parking spot in advance. The Cherry Blossom Festival website recommends "convenient and affordable parking in advance through [SpotHero](#), the nation's leading parking reservations app. To reserve your parking spot, visit the [National Cherry Blossom Festival SpotHero Parking Page](#) and book a spot with rates up to 50% off drive-up."



***Welcome to the Virginia Tech Graduate School  
in the DC Metro Region***

***The Newsletter is compiled, written and/edited by Susan Merten. It is circulated every Friday.***

***Please send information of interest for graduate students by COB Wednesday to***

***[smerten@vt.edu](mailto:smerten@vt.edu)***

**Connect with the VT Graduate School through the following sites**



[Graduate Student Assembly-  
VT-National Capital Region](#)



[VTGradSchDC](#)



[NVC Website](#)

**VT Graduate School in the DC Metro Region**



**Kenneth H. Wong**

Associate Dean for Graduate Education

And Director of the Northern Virginia Center (NVC)

Room 412, [khwong@vt.edu](mailto:khwong@vt.edu) or (703) 538-8312



**Susan Merten**

Assistant to the Associate Dean and Director of the NVC

Room 410, [smerten@vt.edu](mailto:smerten@vt.edu) or (703) 538-8310

**GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES Office (GSSO)**

**Contact: [gssoncr@vt.edu](mailto:gssoncr@vt.edu) or (703) 538-8327. To schedule appointments, click [here](#)**



**Corinne Julien**

Assistant Director, Graduate Admissions and Academic Progress

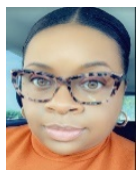
Room 492, [corinne3@vt.edu](mailto:corinne3@vt.edu) or (703) 538-8439



**Jessica Mullins**

Assistant Director, DC International Student Services

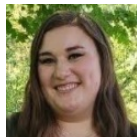
Room 488, [mullins1@vt.edu](mailto:mullins1@vt.edu) or (703) 538-8326



**Torri Brown**

Immigration & Graduate Student Advisor

Room 490, [torribrown@vt.edu](mailto:torribrown@vt.edu) or (703) 538-3775



**Erin Mahoney**

Admissions & Academic Progress Advisor

Room 494, [erinm23@vt.edu](mailto:erinm23@vt.edu) or (703) 538-3789