December 9, 2011

Dear Hokie families,

Yesterday’s events on Virginia Tech’s campus once again tested our Hokie Nation. Our hearts are wounded, but our strength is intact and our spirit of Ut Prosim prevails. Students, faculty, staff, and the community are supporting one another and our university in many ways. We thank you for the many sympathies expressed for Officer Crouse and the university police department.

We, in the Division of Student Affairs, are committed to assisting your students through this tragic event. Our students are part of a large, tightly-knit community that is resilient and supportive. Our student family is paramount and every resource is being made available to them as they process their feelings. We want to keep you and your students informed of these resources so that, as needs arise, you can be confident that there is always someone here to help.

- The Cook Counseling Center will be open at the McComas location today until 5 p.m. and the East Eggleston Hall location until 8 p.m., at McComas on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and at McComas on Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Walk-ins are encouraged and the staff is ready to see anyone who wants to talk. The after-hours emergency number is 540 231-6444.
- The Dean of Students office in East Eggleston Hall will be open until 5 p.m. today, and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Again, no appointment is necessary.
- Because the Friday final exam schedule has been postponed to Saturday, Dining Services has expanded regular Saturday hours to provide nutritious meals that will help students achieve their best performance.
- If your student lives in a residence hall, the entire Residence Life staff is available for conversations. Many of our RAs and professional staff are gathering with students to talk this through in a variety of settings.
- Be assured that Virginia Tech is committed to ensuring a safe and secure campus environment, with a model alert system. The Virginia Tech Police Department is a nationally accredited, full-service law enforcement agency with 54 sworn officers, and is among the finest in the nation.
- Many of you will continue to have questions about the incident and how the university is handling it. The best information can be found on the Virginia Tech website at www.vt.edu. Special statements from the university and the Virginia State Police are posted regularly as more information becomes available.
- Please also refer to the Division of Student Affairs website at www.dsa.vt.edu for additional information. You will find a link on the front page of the site that will lead you and your student to the many resources that are available.

While we hope to assist all our students through this, we realize that the most significant connections students have are with their families. We encourage you to talk frequently with your students. It may take several conversations before they recognize and share their thoughts and feelings. Please encourage them to talk with friends and to support each other. Recognize that new technologies and networks will enable them to converse in new and different ways. As days pass, the intensity of their feelings may ebb and flow, but their memories of yesterday will remain. With your help and ours, they can reflect and recover.

Finally, let me say that Virginia Tech is firmly grounded in our Principles of Community and our Aspirations for Student Learning. These guiding principles are informed by civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect, and they affirm our common humanity. In times such as this, we rely on our collective strength, and count on you as vital members of our university community.

We appreciate your assistance as we heal. Together, we will prevail.

With warm regards,

Edward F.D. Spencer
Vice President for Student Affairs