



Virginia Tech Graduate Student Newsletter Washington, DC Metro Region March 11, 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	14-16	Career and Professional Development Team Visit
Mar	15	Respect, Equity, Anti-Discrimination Training
Mar	15	Moving from Conflict to Collaboration
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 (CANCELLED)
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)
Apr	20-21	Hokie Pop-Up Shop

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 (2nd 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

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 15th, 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 Hooders 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 23rd 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 30th 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

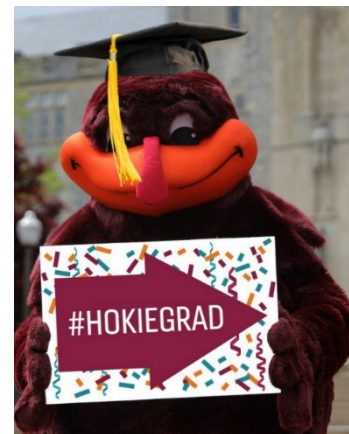
Both Master's and PhD regalia can be ordered from the VT Bookstore through the following link: <https://colleges.herffjones.com/college/vt/>.

- 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.

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.

Respect, Equity, Anti- Discrimination Training, March 15th, 2-4pm, VTRC

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

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

Gennelle Chatman, JD
Equity Manager

**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

Bryan Hanson, Ed. D.
Graduate School Ombudsperson

*Full participation satisfies the University's compliance training requirement

As a means to fully support members of our community across all campuses, Bryan Hanson, the Graduate School's Ombudsperson is visiting the Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church on **Wednesday, March 16th from 9am to 4pm, Room 401**. The day will entail open office hours for connecting individually as well as a conflict engagement seminar (see above flyer) to provide some comfort engaging with the natural conflicts experienced within our day-to-day lives. For those that would like to set up a time to meet, please contact Bryan to set up a time to meet during his visit.

Office hours, March 16th at the NVC for individual meetings: 9am to 2:30pm
bryanh76@vt.edu or by phone at 540-231-9573

Registration for OEA/Ombudsperson Seminars (NVC-214): 2:00pm – 4:00pm
Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/BWvZA75EmNjFruqA6>

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 15th, 6-6:45pm

Black Affinity Group, March 16th 12-12:45pm

BLACK AFFINITY GROUP



Zoom Meeting March 16th 12:00 – 12:45pm
Featuring a discussion on academic success strategies and Dr. Edward A. Bouchet. Join us to connect, build community, and stay the course in graduate school!!!

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

Bouchet Society Tea in Blacksburg, sign-up to attend by March 15th

Dr. Edward Alexander Bouchet was the first African American to receive the Ph.D. Degree in 1876 from Yale University in Physics. The Blacksburg and Washington, DC Area Campuses will celebrate his legacy during Graduate Education Week.

The Virginia Tech Chapter of the Bouchet Graduate Honor Society will host a Bouchet Society Tea on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 from 3:30pm - 4:30pm. Please see the flyer for details and registration information.

If you would like to attend and are in need of transportation, send your request to: chontresehayes@vt.edu on or before March 15th.

The Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion and The Washington, DC Area Campuses



PLEASE JOIN US FOR

Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Tea

with President Timothy Sands, Dean Surprenant and Dr. DePauw

Scholarship, Leadership, Character, Service and Advocacy

03.23.2022 | WED | 3:30 PM

GRADUATE LIFE CENTER - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

This event will be Live streamed

COME LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LIFE, AND LEGACY OF DR. EDWARD BOUCHET AND FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THIS PRESTIGIOUS HONOR SOCIETY.

RSVP: bit.ly/BouchetTea

Please RSVP by Friday, March 18th



Professional and Development Workshops for Graduate Students in the DC Metro Region, Online

March 22 - Building Your Personal Brand: CANCELLED

New DC Hokies Career Toolkit,

There is a new Canvas course, DC Hokies Career Toolkit, in which students can enroll for access to in-depth modules on multiple career management topics: <https://canvas.vt.edu/enroll/HYL6DC>

FREE Professional Photo Shoot, March 23rd, 3-6pm



A professional photographer will be at the Northern Virginia Center, Room 200 on March 23rd 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](#)

Career and Professional Development Team Visit the DC Region, March 14th-16th



**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!

Meet with a career advisor for an individual career consultation (in-person or zoom), and/or visit with us during an open house. Discuss your career plans & progress, ask questions, and learn about available resources!

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

**HOKIE
ONE
STOP**

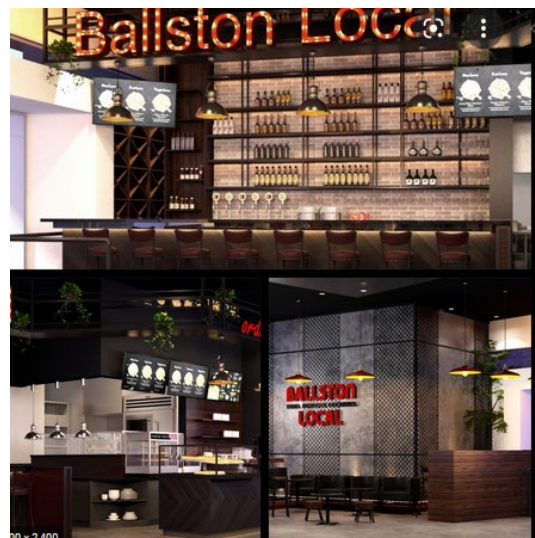
[Arlington Career Consultations](#)

[Falls Church Career Consultations](#)

[Alexandria Career Consultations](#)

Celebrating Graduate Students Happy Hour, March 25th, 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.



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!

Cook Counseling Center invites you to join:

International Students Support Group

Meet other students and discuss common concerns.

We'll have pizza and drinks

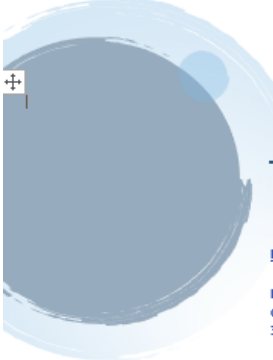
Thursday, March 17th
3:00 - 4:30 pm

At the picnic tables outside of the front door of the NVC



RSVP to Julie Kaplan - jskaplan@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 2nd floor, Room #2-314

2:30 – 3:30 pm – [Graduate Student Support Group](#) in the Falls Church Room on the 2nd 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 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 2nd 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 2nd floor. Please RSVP to 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

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.

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

MetroLab Student Cup Competition, March 25th

MetroLab Network is a non-profit organization supporting the effort of cities and universities working in partnership on innovation projects. Your university is a member of this network, and we wanted to make you aware of a competition event for students working on innovation with local partners. The [MetroLab Student Cup](#) is an opportunity for students to showcase their work, with the finalists presenting at our summit where local government and university leaders will attend.

We would greatly appreciate your help in sharing this opportunity with your students.

Students can submit completed civic research projects for awards of \$1000 and the chance to be featured as the MetroLab Network Innovation of the Month through our partnership with [GovTech](#).

What types of projects are eligible?

We are looking for projects that provide new analysis, policy, or technical insights to civic challenges. Civic challenges include improving government, community services, social services; creating new mobility options; rethinking urban spaces; improving public health, and more. Preference will be given to projects that can demonstrate that research responded to a community-identified issue, was done in partnership with a civic partner (i.e. a state or local government or agency, a regional or neighborhood civic association, or a non-profit focused on

community engagement or service delivery), and has produced or will have measurable impact for the community.

What does the competition process look like?

Interested students should complete the [online application](#) by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Friday March 25th, 2022. The application asks for a project description as well as a few other key details about partnership with civic organizations. Finalists will be selected in April and will present their projects to a team of judges from government and civic organizations. Up to 5 winners will be selected in a final pitch competition during [MetroLab Network's Annual Summit](#) in June, with one grand prize winner who will be featured in the MetroLab Network Innovation of the Month series.

Where should I direct questions?

If you have question about the application process please direct questions to elias.gbadamosi@metrolabnetwork.org

International Food Markets

Northern Virginia boasts an international array of grocery stores and markets. This section highlights some of them in our area. Many of these places are small mom and pop stores, while others are big supermarkets. Can't find fresh garam masala for your red lentil dal? Searching for soursop for a fresh morning fruit shake? Stop by some of these special markets from around the world to freshen up your dishes with spices, produce and desserts from all corners of the globe.

Aditi Spice Depot, 409 Maple Ave E, Vienna

This is a small grocery, filled with the aroma of Indian spices, and crammed with chutneys, spicy snacks, incense, little statues of Hindu gods, etc. This is my go to for frozen vegetable and meat samosas, various chutneys and basmati rice. Seasonally, they sell curry leave trees to plant at home. And during Diwali the store offers a 10% discount on purchases. They also have a shop in Herndon.



Escape to DC!

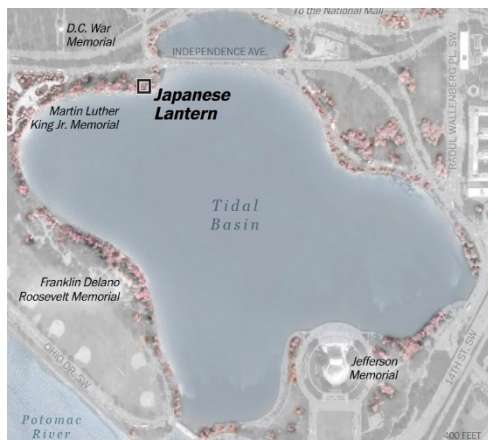
The National Cherry Blossom Festival,

March 20th to April 17th

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 22-25th. 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*

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 or (703) 538-8312



Susan Merten

Assistant to the Associate Dean and Director of the NVC
Room 410, smerten@vt.edu or (703) 538-8310

GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES Office (GSSO)

Contact: 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 or (703)538-8439



Jessica Mullins

Assistant Director, DC International Student Services
Room 488, mullins1@vt.edu or (703) 538-8326



Torri Brown

Immigration & Graduate Student Advisor
Room 490, torribrown@vt.edu or (703) 538-3775



Erin Mahoney

Admissions & Academic Progress Advisor
Room 494, erinm23@vt.edu or (703) 538-3789