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Principles of Community emphasizes university-wide commitment to diversity

Blacksburg, Va., Va., March 14, 2005 -- At its recent quarterly meeting, the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors endorsed the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, a statement that affirms the university's commitment to a diverse and inclusive community. Board members joined university officials March 14 to sign the document in a public ceremony following the full board meeting held that afternoon.

The board's endorsement launches a university-wide effort to articulate and emphasize the value and importance of diversity in the Virginia Tech community. The Virginia Tech Principles of Community has also been endorsed by President Charles W. Steger, the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association (representing undergraduate students), the Graduate Student Assembly, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and the university's Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

"The board's public endorsement today is yet another indication that the Virginia Tech community is completely unified in our commitment to a diverse and inclusive community," said Steger. "The board recognizes and accepts its role in partnership with our community in shaping and supporting the our commitment to create a truly diverse and inclusive community. This important statement will guide all our actions as we work together to build a stronger and better future for our university."

"The university board feels strongly about this and we want the public to know of our commitment and strong belief in the value of a diverse university community," said Ben Davenport, rector of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

A copy of the Virginia Tech Principles of Community can be found at <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/story.php?itemno=637>.

According to Benjamin Dixon, vice president for multicultural affairs, copies of the signed document will be distributed to offices across campus in order to give the statement greater visibility across campus. "Widespread public display will demonstrate that the Virginia Tech Principles of Community is an integral part of our culture, and will serve as a guide for improving the university climate for all people."

The Virginia Tech Principles of Community draws upon several documents and university-wide initiatives developed over recent years, including the university's statement of mission and core values; the university's strategic plan and complementary "Diversity Strategic Plan" published in 2001; the work of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity created in 2003; the "Standards for Inclusive Policies, Programs and Practices" adopted by the CEOD in 2004; and the "Working Document on Diversity" developed at the request of the board of visitors in 2004. The statement was also reviewed and discussed at the university's recent Diversity Summit held in January.

"We have known for quite some time that our community faces many challenges if we are to make a real commitment to be a truly inclusive community," said Dixon. "We have made considerable progress, but important work remains. The Virginia Tech Principles of Community is another step in the right direction."

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