Spring Break: Home or Bust

As your Hokie’s second semester continues, many of you are probably ready to have them home again! Your students may also be ready to spend some time at home and enjoy some home cooking. Luckily, spring break is quickly approaching! Before you can have some quality family time though, you have to get them home first. If the option of picking them up is unavailable, there are a variety of other travel options available to choose from.

Home Ride: Home Ride is a charter bus service that provides weekend and holiday bus service from various universities in Virginia, including Virginia Tech, to Northern Virginia, Richmond, Hampton, Harrisonburg, and Charlottesville. Home Ride allows students to sleep, study, or just relax without having to worry about who is at the wheel. The wide variety of schedules and prices also make it an efficient and economical option. For more information, visit www.homeride.com.

Carpool: Sometimes it is more convenient for students to ride home with other Virginia Tech students that live in the same area. Students have several carpooling options, ranging from asking a friend to using Zimride.com, a private ridesharing network. Zimride is not only convenient but safe as well since it requires users to sign in with their university login information.

Megabus: Megabus is an intercity bus service that operates throughout the eastern and western United States. There is a Megabus station located in Christiansburg, Virginia, making it a convenient option for students traveling home. Buses that depart from the Christiansburg station travel to Atlanta, Knoxville, New York City, and Washington, DC. Like Home Ride, Megabus also features a variety of rates and schedules. For more information, visit us.megabus.com.

Roanoke Airport: If Virginia Tech is a little too far from home, your student can opt to fly instead of drive. Roanoke airport gives students the option to travel to any part of the United States through a variety of airlines, making the journey back home convenient and hassle-free.

Q&A: Internships and Co-ops

Not only is this semester jam-packed with plenty of school work, but there are also plenty of career fairs to attend! Although Engineering Expo, Virginia Tech’s biggest career fair, was in the fall many engineering departments are hosting their own career fairs this semester. If you don’t know too much about summer employment, hopefully these facts can help!

What’s the difference between internships and co-ops?
Both are work experience related to your academic program. The difference is that internships are usually one term while co-ops are usually multi-term.

Are internships and co-ops paid or unpaid?
Internships can be either paid or unpaid, but most engineering internships are paid. Co-op positions are always paid.

Are internships always in the summer?
No. You will find the majority of internships are offered in the summer, but some employers offer internships year ’round, including during fall semester and spring semester.

Is there a minimum GPA requirement?
For any particular internship or co-op job, employers determine if they have a GPA requirement. For example, Boeing requires applicants to have a 3.5 GPA while many others do not. Want more information? Visit www.career.vt.edu/COOP/
Why Career Services?

Our office is here to help students in four key ways:

Explore: If your student is unsure about the major or career to pursue in engineering, we can meet with your student to discuss future plans and point the student to electronic and hard copy resources to do research. If the student wishes to do some self-exploration, we can direct students to various assessments where they discover their strengths, personality type, skills, values, interests and more. To get started with an assessment, your student can schedule an appointment with a career advisor by calling 540-231-6241.

Experience: The key ingredient employers seek as they hire students is relevant experience. In addition to internships or cooperative education positions, students can obtain these critical experiences through undergraduate research, leadership roles on campus, engineering project teams, and other means. Our career advisors are available to meet with students to talk about their particular quest for experience and the resources we have to help them reach their goals.

About the Virginia Tech Cooperative Education/Internship program (CEIP): A Virginia Tech academic program for over 50 years, this experiential learning method provides a means for students to gain a semester or more of paid full-time engineering experience while maintaining their status as a full-time student (important to many for scholarship or insurance reasons). A number of employers who hire our students have done so for over 50 years. Curious about where students work? Visit this site to discover where CEIP students have worked for the past five years: http://www.career.vt.edu/CEIP/ EmployersListByMajor.asp

Interested students can read more about steps to follow for this program on our website: http://www.career.vt.edu/COOP/Steps.htm The first step? Attend CEIP orientation.

Develop: A new Career Services program area this year, we work to assist students in developing professional presence and essential skills for workplace success. Focusing on key competencies employers desire for our students to have, Career Services is expanding our menu of programs, services and resources to help students grow in these key skills.

Launch: As students prepare to graduate, we are here to coach them to launch their career plans, whether that is a full-time position, graduate school or some other option. We have programs, services and resources for students seeking full-time positions or for those preparing for graduate or professional school.

What advice would you give to parents about helping their students who are unable to find summer job opportunities? If your student has difficulty landing a summer engineering internship or co-op position, a number of options are still available. Your student could work in a part-time position to gain transferable skills like customer service and teamwork, and then volunteer several hours a week with a local engineering organization for experience. Many engineering students pursue self-directed projects during their summers that can be shared as relevant experience with employers. Spending a day or two shadowing a local engineer could also benefit your student. And still another option for experience is undergraduate research.

What do you see some of the most successful students doing that you wish all students would do? Successful students take advantage of the many resources on this campus, including Career Services. We know students can explore majors or careers, gain experience, develop professional skills and launch their career plans on their own. But, we can help them explore MORE, experience MORE, develop MORE and launch MORE. Your student just needs to take the first step: seek our assistance. Visit our website: http://www.career.vt.edu/Advising.html

Great Resources from Career Services

1. http://www.career.vt.edu/COOP/Steps.htm: This webpage provides information on how to participate in the CEIP program.

2. http://www.career.vt.edu/MajorCareerExploration/Welcome.html: Does your student need help determining which major to choose? Try these helpful hints.

3. http://www.career.vt.edu/Experience.html: Getting experience is essential to landing not only a full time job after graduation, but also for co-ops and internships.

4. http://www.career.vt.edu/JobSearchGuide/Index.html: Searching for a job can be overwhelming, confusing, and daunting. This guide will not only help ease the job search, but provides resume tips as well.
“One Big Day. One Big Thanks.”

When Hokies participate in community service, they go above and beyond. Virginia Tech’s motto wouldn’t be Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) if its students weren’t dedicated to service activities, both in Blacksburg and abroad. If your student is living in one of the engineering residential communities, they are required to complete ten hours of service learning every semester. The most popular way to do so is by signing up for the Big Event. The Big Event is a student-run community service effort that has grown into the second largest event of its kind in the nation. Students are broken up into separate small teams and are assigned a project that they have to complete. Students can either create their own team or join an existing team, many of which are associated with campus organizations. The projects, which are submitted by Blacksburg and Christiansburg residents, can range from hedge trimming to painting. In 2015, 8,050 volunteers helped complete 1,043 projects in Blacksburg and other local communities. The Big Event not only allows your student to give back to the communities that support Virginia Tech, but also gives him or her the opportunity to meet new students, gain new skills, and to strengthen bonds within their organizations or teams. The Big Event also gives students the opportunity to meet adults from around the area. This year’s Big Event, which is taking place on April 9th, is supposed to be the best one yet so encourage your student to join in and give one big thanks!

Galipatia Happenings

Although students are no longer attending the first-year Hypatia/Galileo course, there are still plenty of activities for the community! Students will continue to participate in professional development activities, service learning, engineering outreach, and plenty of socials organized by our upper-classmen committees. Along with required activities, your student can also take part in voluntary design challenges in our design space, Studio 1! In the next few weeks students will have the following opportunities:

- The Virginia Tech Relay for Life is coming up soon! This event is the largest collegiate relay in the country, and funds raised go to support the fight against cancer. The service learning committee is currently recruiting students to join the Galipatia relay team!
- The professional development committee hosts a weekly Slush Rush where students can enjoy slushies and talk with VT faculty. This is a great time to learn about different majors and what to expect in upcoming classes straight from the people who teach them.
- Student organizations and engineering design teams will be visiting students in Lee Hall at the Mini-Gobblerfest! This is a great opportunity for students to find a club or activity!
- The academic committee is continuing to host review sessions for the big tests, including physics, engineering, and calculus.
- Companies continue to host activities in Studio 1, including an upcoming visit from Ford!
- Student teams will be working this semester to solve real world problems for the first ever In-VenTs Grand Challenge! The projects will include investigating Chloramine Production at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center and developing a Mobile Health Unit.
- Students interested in learning some hands on skills can sign up for a soldering workshop and laser-cutter training at Studio 1.
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Students with three or more exams in 24 hours can have one rescheduled as long as they turn in the form before April 15.
Taking courses away from VT? Know the rules!

Christi Boone is the contact person for students with concerns about academic assistance and support, or academic standing questions. She is also the contact person for external transfer students to the college (students transferring to VT from another 2- or 4-year school).

Here is some of her advice about transferring credit for non-VT classes.

What should students know about transferring in course credit from other colleges/universities?

Transfer courses should always be pre-approved by the Academic Affairs office; if a student doesn’t get pre-approval, they risk that the course will not transfer in to meet a degree requirement. The Transfer Credit Request form should be submitted at least 3 weeks before you plan to begin the transfer course (and it, like all other engineering forms, can be found at www.eng.vt.edu/forms). The instructions on this form explain how you can view the on-line Transfer Equivalency Database to see how courses may transfer to Virginia Tech.

How does transfer credit get applied to my transcript at VT?

When you complete the course at the transfer institution, you need to have an official transcript sent from that school to Virginia Tech’s Registrar’s office. The Registrar’s office will then load the transfer credit to your Virginia Tech transcript (typically within 4-6 weeks).

Should I retake a class over break?

Taking a summer course because you’ve gotten off-sequence is a great opportunity to “catch up.” Or, if you need to repeat a course (either to obtain a passing grade, or to just build your foundation in the material), doing so in the summer might be a great way to enter the next school year ready to move into “next level” courses. Remember that taking courses at another university will not affect your Virginia Tech GPA (the credit will transfer, but the grade doesn’t factor into your GPA calculation here; the only way to affect your Virginia Tech GPA is with Virginia Tech courses).

In your experience, what should students be wary of when taking transfer classes?

A transfer course only transfers if you earn a “C” or better. A “C” will NOT transfer. So, even though the grade you earn in the course won’t affect your Virginia Tech GPA, it’s important you complete the course with a “C” or better to receive credit here.

BE SURE to get PRE-APPROVAL (with the transfer credit request form). If you take a class without approval and then the course doesn’t transfer, or transfers only as a free elective, then you’ve wasted time and money.

If the summer course you plan to take is a pre-requisite to a course you want to take in the fall, it’s not likely that the Registrar’s office will receive your final transcript in time to post your transfer credit before fall classes begin. In that case, we recommend that you be prepared to show the department whose course you wish to register in a printed or screen-captured copy of your unofficial transcript with grade for the pre-requisite transfer course. If the summer courses you plan to take is being taken to meet requirements to enter into your desired engineering major, it’s not likely that the Registrar’s office will receive your final transcript in time to post your transfer credit before the period to change your major ends. To change your major your Virginia Tech transcript must show credit for all necessary courses, including transfer courses. So, you may have to delay the major change until the end of the fall semester, by which the summer transfer credit will be posted to your VT transcript.

Did you know that VT offers more than 1800 class sections in the summer and over 250 online classes? Drop/Add for Summer 2016 began on March 12th and students can enroll up through the second day of each session.

There are two summer sessions students can choose from. The first summer session begins May 23 and ends July 2. The second summer session begins July 5 and ends August 13.

There is also summer on campus housing available. You can find information about this option at the Housing & Residential Life website.

If your student is looking into this option there are also employment opportunities in the area while they are here taking classes. There is a listing of job search sites on the summer session website.
Parents & Family Weekend - Are you coming?

The weekend of April 22nd, you are invited to visit campus! There are tons of events for you to do with your student on campus and in the community. We hope you can come make some memories with your student at their second “home”!

Some of the highlights include the Spring Football game, fireworks, Relay for Life, Softball, Horticulture Club Spring Plant Sale, downtown Blacksburg farmers market, Home Sweet Home Brunch and MUCH more!

Book your hotel NOW if you are planning to attend. You may even find you have to look in the towns of Radford and Christiansburg for lodging. Here are some websites to help with that;

Blacksburg
Christiansburg - 10 minute drive
Radford - 20 minute drive

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Get your 2016 Football Tickets Soon!

http://www.hokietickets.com/

- Sep 3 Liberty @ VT
- Sep 10 VT vs Tennessee @ Bristol Motor Speedway
- Sep 17 Boston College @ VT
- Sep 24 East Carolina @ VT
- Oct 8 @ North Carolina
- Oct 15 @ Syracuse
- Oct 20 Miami @ VT
- Oct 27 @ Pittsburgh
- Nov 5 @ Duke
- Nov 12 Georgia Tech @ VT
- Nov 19 @ Notre Dame
- Nov 28 UVA @ VT
- Dec 3 ACC Championship

How You Can Help Prep for Finals

- Slip in a reminder about the help session provided by the Student Success Center in the next call with your student, “Making it through the final stretch”. This is a one hour seminar to help students learn skills to deal with stress, review strategies and motivation techniques. The session is offered four times in 111 Femoyer Hall.

  Monday, April 18 at 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
  Thursday, April 21 at 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
  Tuesday, April 26 at 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
  Friday, April 29 at 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

- Send a finals care package! Campus Cookies will deliver some “homemade” goodies to your student if you don’t have time to make your own.

If you want to make your own package here are some fun non-food items to send: an encouraging note for your student to read before each exam, Starbucks/coffee gift card, highlighters (lots of colors), sticky tabs for marking textbook pages, new ear buds for their iPod, new pens/pencils, iTunes gift card, printer cartridges, silly putty or other hand held items to play with while reading/reviewing notes.