**Commission on Colleges**
*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools*

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### REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

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### Statement Regarding the Report

*The Commission on Colleges is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with the Commission on Colleges.*

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**Name of the Institution:**     **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**

**Date of the Review:**     **November 2009**

**COC Staff Member:**     **Dr. Jack Allen**

**Chair of the Committee** *(name, title, institution, city and state)*:

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**Part I.    Overview and Introduction to the Institution**

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*To be completed by the On-site Review Committee.*

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**Part II. Assessment of Compliance**

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*Sections A thru E to be completed by the Off-Site Review Committee and the On-Site Review Committee. An asterisk before the standard indicates that it will be reviewed by the On-Site Review Committee even if the Off-Site Review determines compliance.*

**A.    Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity**

   **1.1    The institution operates with integrity in all matters. (Integrity)**
   *(**Note**: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)*

   **Compliance**

   The off-site committee found no evidence of non-compliance.

**B.    Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements**

   **2.1    The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies.  (Degree-granting Authority)**

   **Compliance**

   The Committee found that Virginia Tech has degree granting authority from the Commonwealth of Virginia, which established by Code 23-9.6:1 the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and that approval of degrees comes from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

   **2.2    The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution.  The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program.  The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it.  Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.**

   **A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and**

operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

**Compliance**

The Board of Visitors had 13 members appointed by the governor, one ex-officio member, and three representatives from the faculty, staff, and students. The board is active in policy making, insures that the financial resources of the institution are adequate for sound academic programs, and is not controlled by a minority of board members or organizations. TJC

**2.3** The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. **(Chief Executive Officer)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech has a chief executive officer, appointed by the Board of Visitors, whose primary responsibility is to the institution. The president of Virginia Tech does not preside over the board, which elected its presiding officer from among the appointed members of the Board.

**2.4** The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech has a mission statement that is clearly defined, comprehensive, specific to the institution and appropriate to higher education. It identifies the geographic area served by Virginia Tech as the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation and the world and it articulates Virginia Tech's institutional goals of creating, conveying and applying knowledge to facilitate personal growth, to advance social and community development and improve the quality of life. The mission statement addresses teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement. The mission statement is published in: The Update to the Strategic Plan 2006-2012; Inside Virginia Tech, a general information publication; the Undergraduate Course Catalog and Academic Policies; the Staff Handbook and on Virginia Tech's website; however, the mission statements published in the Undergraduate Course Catalog and the Staff Handbook differ somewhat from the mission statement cited in the narrative.

**2.5** The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

**Non-Compliance**

Virginia Tech is engaged in ongoing, integrated and institution-wide research-based planning that incorporates a systematic review of institutional mission, goals and outcomes; however, because assessment results were sparse, Virginia Tech did not satisfactorily evidence that its evaluation processes are institution-wide, ongoing, result in continuous improvement  and demonstrate that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.  Virginia Tech provided copies of its five-year strategic plans dating back to 1991.  The campus community is engaged in the review and revision of mission, goals and objectives during the updating of the strategic plan. Virginia Tech uses a Scorecard with a set of performance indicators to assess its progress. The Scorecard consists of Institutional Performance Standards established by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) which all public institutions must report on, as well as some of Virginia Tech's own performance indicators.  The narrative indicated that annual reports are used to identify accomplishments in the strategic plan domains of learning, discovery, engagement and foundations and that college deans are also encouraged by the Provost to include performance data on college-specific goals in the annual report. The Scorecard is reported annually to the Board of Visitors and published on the President's website for the campus community to view. A copy of the Provost's instructions for preparing the annual report was provided; however, no examples of the annual reports used to evidence accomplishments were included in the documentation provided.

**2.6**     The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. **(Continuous Operation)**

**Compliance**

 A Land-Grant institution, Virginia Tech has been in continuous operation since 1872. Its fall 2008 enrollment was 25,553.

**2.7.1**   The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. **(Program Length)**

**Compliance**

The institution offers 60 baccalaureate programs; 65 master's programs; and 55 for doctoral programs. The institution also offers associate degree programs, Educational Specialist Degree programs, a certificate in Advanced Graduate Studies program, and one professional degree program. All these programs are listed in their respective catalogs.  A six step process is designed to establish new programs. All approved degree programs meet the minimum semester credit hours for degree program length or the equivalent as set forth by local, state, regional and national standards.  Internal

processes are in place to ensure that newly established degree programs adhere to the program length requirements.

**2.7.2** The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program Content)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the Undergraduate and Graduate Course Catalogs and documents related to state council oversight of higher education indicates that the institution offers the associate, baccalaureate, master's specialist, doctoral, and professional degrees through programs of study in the eight colleges of agriculture and life sciences; architecture and urban studies; engineering; liberal arts and human sciences; natural resources; business; science; and veterinary medicine that are appropriate for higher education and directly connected to the institution's mission as a public land-grant university serving the state, nation, and "world community" primarily through the "discovery and dissemination of new knowledge." Program content as stated in compliance certification is very clear and comprehensive substantial in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. Furthermore, theses documents demonstrate coherence in course sequencing, increasing complexity in content and skill acquisition as students matriculate through courses and programs, and linkages between and among program components. The institution demonstrates through documents related to strategic planning and institutional effectiveness, especially those that provide evidence of annual program review and benchmarking against a well-defined list of peer institutions, that its educational programs are consistent with its mission within the state context of higher education and within the national realm of the public land-grant institutional mission to provide teaching, research, and outreach.

**2.7.3** In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General Education)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the Curriculum for Liberal Education: A Guide for Students, Advisors & Faculty 2008-2009, the Statement of Purpose for the Curriculum for Liberal Education from the Office of the Provost, and the Undergraduate Catalog, to name a few, confirms that the institution requires undergraduates to complete a substantive, college-level general education program, the Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE).

The CLE requires 34-38 credit hours across seven areas of study, chosen from over 500 courses offered by 64 academic departments.  The CLE is based on the standards articulated by the Association of American Colleges & Universities Liberal Education and America's Promise Campaign.  The goals of the Curriculum for Liberal Education outlined in the Statement of Purpose, Curriculum for Liberal Education are to create conditions for development of: creative and intellectual engagement; civic, personal, and social responsibility; and lifelong learning." The CLE promotes breadth of knowledge across seven areas identified as writing and discourse; ideas, cultural traditions, and values; society and human behavior; scientific reasoning and discovery; quantitative and symbolic reasoning; creativity and aesthetic experience; and critical issues in a global context.  The CLE, recently revised, became refined by the rationale that undergraduate education is enhanced by students taking courses broadly in key, well-articulated knowledge domains rather than through enrolling in a "set of common courses" during the early years of college study.  In this way, the CLE coheres with the in-depth study required in the disciplines to "educate the whole student" and "set the stage for a lifetime of learning and growth."  In furtherance of this philosophy, undergraduates complete a minimum of thirty-four (34) to a maximum of thirty-eight (38) semester hours, typically twelve courses, in the "seven areas of study, chosen from over 500 courses offered by 64 academic departments."  This supports the institution's mission to provide students with "a critical foundation of a broad base of knowledge and transferable skills" and the core competencies identified by the state's council for Higher Education which requires institutions to promote "the development of 'creative and intellectual engagement; civic, personal, and social responsibility; and lifelong learning." The CLE, a product of a comprehensive community-based general education curriculum reform initiated in 2002, will have on-going evaluation beginning in 2009 that will bring together disparate assessment activities such as academic program reviews and departmental assessment of student learning outcomes, in a regularly scheduled process directed by Planning and Development and Assessment Working Groups.

**2.7.4**  The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees.  If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges.  In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (*See Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach."*) **(Course work for Degrees)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech provides all coursework for its degree programs.  Both undergraduate and graduate course catalogs provide comprehensive descriptions of coursework toward degrees. The institution provided documentation for psychology program at baccalaureate (120 credit hours), master of science (36 credit hours), and Ph.D. (90 credit hours).

**\*2.8**   The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.  **(Faculty)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the Faculty, Graduate Assistant Profile (2008), reports of Student-Faculty Ratios, reports of accreditation, and evidence of National Science Foundation research and development expenditures (2007), and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges C. Peter Magrath Award for Community Engagement, indicate that the institution employs an adequate number of permanent, full-time, qualified faculty to support the institution's mission as a public, land-grant university serving the state, nation, and world community.   The 2007 IPEDS data indicated that Virginia Tech employed 1371 (85.6%) full-time instructional faculty members and 231 part-time instructional faculty members (14.4%). Review of IPEDS data 2007-2008 show a student to faculty ratio of 16 to 1 and comparable to peer institutions, with part-time instructional faculty numbering 14 %.  The institution attributes the judicious assignment of part-time faculty to "draw on the expertise of experienced and qualified professionals at federal agencies, research laboratories, or companies," to supplement instruction.  In this way, the institution demonstrates that the work of the core faculty is supplemented purposefully to promote student learning, maintain the integrity of academic programs, and fulfill the institutional mission. Adequate numbers of faculty to support academic programs are also monitored and assessed through discipline-specific accreditation reviews.

**2.9**   The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered.  Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

**Compliance**

The library provides the broad spectrum of resources in print and electronic form sufficient to support the university curriculum and research needs.  The five libraries which compose the University Libraries have hours of access which range from 102 hours in the main library to 60 hours in the Northern Virginia Resource Center and those five libraries provide an appropriate array of services and assistance.  These facilities are open to any Virginia resident and collections are generally available to non-university users as well as in support of the University's public service mission. The library's membership in the Virtual Library of Virginia, a statewide consortium funded by the Legislature, augments the resources that are made available to the institution.  Services for distant learners are appropriately established including the availability of resources in online form, virtual reference, delivery of books by mail, and a single point of contact for obtaining library materials regardless of the location of those materials.

The committee's review of the Association of Research Libraries Statistics Report (2006-2007), institutional documents denoting discretionary allocations to the library (2001-2008), and an array of library and learning resources and services reviewed and accessed on the Web, indicate that the institution's students and faculty have access to

appropriate collections and learning resources for educational programs at the baccalaureate, first-professional, and graduate degree and certificate levels to fulfill the institution's land-grant mission of education, research and outreach. In addition to access to several hundred electronic databases and interlibrary loan services, patrons have access to holdings in five physical facilities that include 2.3 million volumes, nearly 400,000 government documents, and over 35,000 serials, 6.3 million microforms, 17,000 archival documents and artifacts, 10,000 computer files, 92,000 graphic materials, 10,000 audio materials, 16,000 films and videos, and 139,000 cartographic materials. An array of virtual services enhanced through partnership with state resources, expands offerings to patrons and state residents. The Library for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis (LISA), the Innovation Space, the Writing Center, Math Emporium, and the Faculty Development Institute, to name a few, offer additional services to students and faculty in support of teaching and learning. The institution relies on user benchmarking, user surveys, and course evaluations to ensure that library resources remain adequate and relevant for academic programs.

**\*2.10** The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student Support Services)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech's student support programs, services and activities are varied and support the mission, promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. The institution provides a broad range of programs and services to enhance personal development and learning of its students. The strategic plan outlines services for graduate and undergraduate students that support holistic development, discovery and engagement. Examples of assessment surveys measure the impact of programs and services. There are 10 living learning environments designated to foster civic engagement and service learning. E-learning distance learners receive assistance from a full-time Student Services coordinator. There are 15 departments in Student Affairs with annual assessments, and a 4 year program review cycle to maintain and enhance services to support holistic development and student learning. Outstanding examples were provided as to how Virginia Tech is committed to: provide diverse and inclusive living and learning communities; develop opportunities to strengthen cross-cultural and international competencies; design and deliver ethical leadership opportunities within and outside the classroom; promoting the quality of student life, health, and well-being; integrate service learning in courses across the curriculum; and increasing experiential and service learning opportunities through community and business partners.

**2.11.1** The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the

change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

**Non-Compliance**

The institution has not provided audited financial statements for its most recent fiscal year  Audited financial statements were provided for the fiscal year ended June 2008 and the institution indicates that it will provide audited financials to the SACS Commission upon completion of those statements by the Auditor of Public Accounts of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

A review of the institution's financial statements and trends in its financial ratios indicate a sound financial base and the financial stability required to support the institutional mission.  Additionally, Moody's Investor Services upgraded the university's debt rating to Aa2 from Aa3.

**2.11.2** The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. **(Physical Resources)**

**Compliance**

The Virginia Tech main campus is located in the city of Blacksburg, and includes 338 buildings, totaling approximately 8.9 million gross square feet.  The campus proper comprises approximately 2100 acres.  In addition, the University also leases 64 buildings that add approximately 858,000 gross square feet of building space inventory.

Virginia Tech also has several extended campus sites throughout the state of Virginia and a Center for European Studies are Architecture in Switzerland.  Finally, the University also has thirteen Agricultural Research and Extension Centers throughout the state.

The University has developed a robust process for capital planning.  It utilizes its Campus Master Plan as a guide in the development of the campus infrastructure and to ensure that facilities plans align with the institution's strategic direction.  Virginia Tech generally updates its Campus Master Plan every ten years, with the most recent update occurring in 2006.  In addition, the University prepares an annual Capital Outlay Plan, a forward looking six year plan for capital projects required by the State.  This plan is developed with involvement of the full campus community, with projects submitted from the department level.  Proposals are vetted through administrative channels, and the annual plan is then submitted to the Board of Visitors for approval before final submission to the state.

The University's Facilities Department is responsible for maintenance of University facilities.  In 2005, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted a system to identify and track deferred maintenance related to state facilities.  This system is known as Facilities Inventory and Condition Assessment System (FICAS).  It was developed by the Auditor of Public Accounts and is managed by the Virginia Department of General Services. FICAS is the primary tool used by the University to monitor the condition and adequacy of its facilities.  Virginia Tech is in the process of finalizing and validating its

inventory and condition assessments in FICAS. Once completed, the University and the State will be able to more effectively track deferred maintenance and more effectively allocate resources where needed. Additionally, the University relies on State Council of Higher Education for Virginia classroom and laboratory utilization benchmarks to monitor both the effective use of its current inventory and the adequacy of available space to address immediate campus needs.

**2.12** The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**
*(**Note:** This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification. If a recommendation(s) is warranted during the on-site review, include only the number and the recommendation under 2.12. Narrative, rationale, and evidence supporting the recommendation, as well as any other comments regarding the committee's assessment of this Core Requirement, should be included in Part III of this report. Delete this note prior to printing the final report.)*

Comment:

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**C. Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards**

**3.1.1** The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission)**.

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech's mission statement is current and comprehensive, periodically reviewed and updated and approved by the governing board. It was last modified and approved by the Board of Visitors on June 12, 2006. It defines Virginia Tech's institutional priorities as creating, conveying, and applying knowledge to expand personal growth, advance social and community development, foster economic competitiveness and improve the quality of life. The mission statement identifies Virginia Tech's foci as teaching, learning, research, discovery, outreach and engagement, and the geographic area served as the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation and the world. The mission statement guides the institution's operations in that Virginia Tech's strategic plan is developed around its mission statement The mission statement is communicated to the institution's constituencies in: The Update to the Strategic Plan 2006-2012; Inside Virginia Tech, a general information publication; the Undergraduate Course Catalog and Academic Policies; the Staff Handbook and on Virginia Tech's website.

**3.2.1** The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

**Non-Compliance**

The Board of Visitors is responsible for the selection and evaluation of the president of the University. The Board has a process for the evaluation of the president. However, the Committee was not able to find documentation of the periodic evaluation of the president.

**3.2.2** The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 the institution's mission;

**Compliance**

The by-laws of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Tech outline the legal authority and operating controls for the institutions. The by-laws specify the responsibility of the Board of Visitors related to the institutional mission.

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution;

**Compliance**

The By-Laws of the Board of Visitors for Virginia Tech outline the responsibilities of the Board of Visitors for oversight of the financial stability of the university. The by-laws articulate that the Board of Visitors is responsible

for approval of university budgets and for overview of its financial management and that Board of Visitors responsibility should remain at the policy, not operational, level.

3.2.2.3 institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services;

**Compliance**

The by-laws of the Board of Visitors clearly delineate the policy making responsibilities of both the Board and the President. Operationally, the institution has a well developed Policy on Policies that outlines institutional responsibilities for policy development and oversight.

3.2.2.4 related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

**Compliance**

The by-laws of the Board of Visitors clearly outline Board and institutional responsibilities for oversight of relationships with outside entities such as related foundations and corporate entities, including Board approval of all legal documents related to such relationships.

**3.2.3** The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Conflict of interest)**

**Compliance**

The Board of Visitors is governed by the Code of Virginia's State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act. The Board has training for new members that addresses conflict of interest. Board minutes documents that members adhere to the Conflict of Interest Act.

**3.2.4** The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

**Compliance**

The 13 members of the Board of Visitors, the governing body of the institution, are appointed for staggered four-year terms by the governor, and are eligible for reappointment for a second term. The board member selection and appointment process, together with member term limits, quorum requirements for all meetings, and conflict of interest provisions, help to shield the board against external influences.

**3.2.5** The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

**Non-Compliance**

There is a policy regarding dismissal of the Board. The institution has a not, however, demonstrated whether it has implemented this policy.

**3.2.6** There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. **(Board/administration distinction)**

**Compliance**

The institution has demonstrated that there is a clear and appropriate distinction in writing between the policy-making function of the Board of Visitors and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. It documents with minutes that the distinctions are put into practice.

**3.2.7** The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech clearly defines its organizational structure in the Bylaws of the Board of Visitors, the Faculty Handbook, and the University Council Constitution. In these documents, the Board appoints the president and delegates the implementation of Board policies and the operation of the university.

**\* 3.2.8** The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. **(Qualified administrative/academic officers)**

**Compliance**

The institution adheres to comprehensive search policies including requirements for documentation of credentials, and periodic performance reviews of senior administrators as printed in the faculty handbook sections 3.3 and 3.8. A review of academic and experiential backgrounds of deans, and senior administrative bio-sketches indicates a talented administrative team with appropriate qualifications.

**3.2.9** The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff. **(Faculty/staff appointment)**

**Compliance**

The Faculty Handbook and the Classified and University Employee Handbook, documents available on the Human Resources and the Office of Equity and Inclusion websites along with other documents provided for the committee's review, indicate that the institution identifies and establishes clear conditions of employment to ensure the employment of qualified professionals on a variety of levels and the operation and management of the institution so as to achieve its goals and educational mission. The provision of well-articulated policies and handbooks with thorough detail and clearly expressed professional expectations for the conduct of business combined with the wide dissemination of policy and policy updates show that the institution affirms its role in the development, application, and monitoring of work conditions. A number of

committees assist in the development of policies for faculty and staff respectively and approval for policies comes either from Human Resources, in the case of staff, or from the University Council, the President, and the board as required for faculty.
In addition, the institution seeks compliance with federal initiatives to promote affirmative action, prevent harassment, and provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities in the furtherance of the institution's educational mission.

**3.2.10** The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators on a periodic basis. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

**Compliance**

Annual evaluation of administrators is conducted in accordance with section 3.8 of the Faculty Handbook. Additionally, periodic evaluation of department heads and college deans is addressed in the Faculty Handbook section 2.10.5, Policy 6105. Academic deans and senior academic leaders who report to the provost and senior vice president undergo a periodic review according to explicit procedures. In spring 2007, the entire Academic Council, consisting of 32 deans, vice presidents, and other staff members reporting to the President participated in an executive development program. Each administrator's talents and abilities were assessed via a 360degree feedback process with special training and coaching for improved performance provided by external consultants.

**3.2.11** The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech documents that its president has ultimate responsibility and exercises fiscal and administrative control over the university's intercollegiate athletics program. The Director of Athletics reports to the president, who annually approved the budget for Athletics. The university has established Athletics Committee to provide advice and oversight on broad policy issues related to the intercollegiate athletics program. The committee is part of the university's governance organization with a diverse membership of faculty, students, and administrators, with the charge of providing "advice to the director of athletics on such matters as financial aid for student-athletes, residential life for student-athletes, program balance between revenue and non-revenue sports, recruiting, admissions, NCAA compliance, and general intercollegiate athletic budgetary and operational matters; provide advice to the provost on matters related to academic progress of athletes, the admission policy for athletes, academic advising of athletes, and relations with academic departments and faculty in general; participate in the search process for the selection of the director of athletics; and participate in the periodic evaluation of the director of athletics in coordination with the president."

**3.2.12** The institution's chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities exclusive of institution-related foundations that are independent and separately incorporated. **(Fund-raising activities)**.

**Compliance**

The President of the institution does control the institution's fund-raising activities, exclusive of institution related foundations that are separately incorporated. The President controls these activities through the Vice President for Development and University Relations, who has a well developed campus organization to manage fund-raising activities on campus.

**3.2.13** Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (1) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation and (2) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission. **(Institution-related foundations)**

**Compliance**

The institution cites the existence of six institution related affiliated foundations that are not controlled by the University. These include the Virginia Tech Alumni Association; the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund; the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets; Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties; Virginia Tech Services and the Virginia Tech Foundation.

The institution has provided the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws for each of these entities. Additionally, an affiliation agreement is in place with each entity, that accurately describes the relationship between the two entities and that describes any liability associated with the relationship.

**3.2.14** The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech policies concerning intellectual property rights are established by the institution's Board of Visitors Policy 13000, which met Virginia State requirements. The ownership of intellectual property is adequately documented in the Policy 13000, and an Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) provides guidelines in resolving questions of ownership. The university's generous revenue sharing (50%) for distribution of royalties and licensing income is a laudable incentive for faculty and staff. An Intellectual Property Committee exists and has authority to and responsibility for promulgating guidelines and procedures necessary for the implementation of the policy. The policies are conveyed to the faculty through a Special Research Faculty Handbook. The 2009-2010 Hokie Handbook provides information for students related to the university's intellectual property policies and the New Student Handbook (graduate students) as well as a specific section on the Office of Research website devoted to student generated intellectual property. The institution has an appropriate web site, policies and mechanisms for offering advice on intellectual property rights. The application of all university polices to distance learning is documented in the distance learning policy.

**\* 3.3.1** The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas **(Institutional Effectiveness)**:

3.3.1.1  educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

**Non-Compliance**

Virginia Tech offers 65 bachelor's degree programs and 145 master's and doctoral degree programs, however student learning outcomes data was provided for only eight degree programs.  The committee examined all eight degree programs; all had identified student learning outcomes and measures, but assessment data and changes planned as a result of committee findings was sparse.  In many instances, data for the 2008-09 academic year was not available on WEAVEOnline.  The narrative states that "Virginia Tech's size and breadth of programs have represented a challenge in implementing the online assessment process" and "levels of success in developing meaningful measures and operationalizing among departments."  The documentation provided did not evidence that all of Virginia Tech's educational programs are assessed and that improvements are made on the basis of assessment findings.

3.3.1.2  administrative support services

**Non-Compliance**

Assessment plans were submitted for a sample (14) of administrative support units within the Division of Academic Affairs. The assessment results presented were from 2007-08.  Most plans contained partial assessment data, for only 1 or 2 of the objectives listed. Sample assessments and outcomes data, mostly from 2005-06 were provided for the Division of Student Affairs; however, no assessment data linked to strategic plans were provided for the other divisions of Virginia Tech.  The documentation provided does not evidence that Virginia Tech has identified expected outcomes for all of its administrative support offices, assessed the extent to which it has achieved those outcomes and provided evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

3.3.1.3  educational support services

**Non-Compliance**

Virginia Tech provided assessment plans and assessment results for only 4 educational support services : Career Services, Center for Academic Excellence, University Academic Advising Center and the Office of Distance Learning and Summer Sessions.  The documentation provided did not evidence that all of Virginia Tech's educatinal support services are assessed and that improvements are made on the basis of assesssment findings.

3.3.1.4  research within its educational mission, if appropriate

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech identifies expected outcomes in research, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes and provides evidence of improvement based on the analysis of the results. Virginia Tech's strategic plan articulates four research areas of focus: energy, materials and environment, social and individual transformation, health, food and nutrition, and innovative technologies and complex systems. A set of outcomes and performance indicators for the four areas has been identified. The Office of Institutional Research collects data on some of the performance indicators which the Provost's office uses to populate the university and college scorecards. The University Scorecard is used to report progress on the strategic goals to the Board of Visitors.

3.3.1.5  community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech's strategic plan contains one goal related to community/public service. There are four performance measures listed for the goal. The Scorecard which Virginia Tech uses to report progress on the accomplishment of strategic plan goals reports on only one of the four performance measures, however, the Service Learning Center's 2007-08 annual report reported assessment data for 3 of the 4 performance measures. Virginia Tech has two service learning initiatives that they may want to consider incorporating in the performance measures for their strategic plan service learning goal, The Big Event and VT-Engage.

**3.4.1**  The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. **(Academic program approval)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech's comprehensive academic program approval process is commendable, even though the university opted for partial compliance with this standard. The university's degree program process as outlined in the Faculty Handbook illustrates the university's commitment to academic program review process for their efficacy.

**3.4.2**  The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. **(Continuing education/service programs)**

**Compliance**

Continuing education, outreach, and service programs at Virginia Tech are consistent with the mission which focuses on "teaching and learning, research and discovery and outreach and engagement." Virginia Tech is committed to, as articulated in its strategic plan, "engaging its intellectual assets to address economic and social needs of communities around the commonwealth, the nation and the world." Offering more that 400 short courses, seminars, workshops, training programs and conferences, Virginia Tech provides services to more than 30,000 individuals yearly.  Outreach, service and community programs are varied and carried out through a number of initiatives, programs, offices and extensions. Noted examples include: Training and Technical

Assistance Center which works with children and youth with disabilities; The Virginia Tech Summer Training Academy for Rising Students destined to assist at risk youth by enhancing their critical thinking, team-building and decision making skills; VT-Engage which promotes volunteerism and promotes the university's motto: "Ut Prosim, That I May Serve"; and Women and Minority Artists and Scholars Lecture Series aimed at increasing the diversity of scholarly voices and artistry in the Virginia Tech community. Assessment and evaluation of programs, initiatives and services are systematic and lead to continuous improvement.

**\*3.4.3** The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. **(Admissions policies)**

### Compliance

The committee's review of the Undergraduate Course Catalog, the Graduate Course Catalog, and information made available online to prospective students indicates that the institution establishes, implements, and communicates effectively sound admissions policies that adhere to principles of good practice by the National Association of College Admissions Counseling and support the institution's mission as a public, land-grant research university. Through its policies the institution makes clear its stance on its goals to attract a diverse and qualified student population that can benefit from the educational programs offered by the institution. The institution's policies conform to state standards and address different undergraduate admissions categories for first-time, transfer, and international applicants, for example, as well as provide for an appeals process. Furthermore, the institution vests Office for Undergraduate Admissions with "exclusive" responsibility for undergraduate admissions. On the graduate level, the institution vests candidate review and evaluation to Graduate Admissions Committees in each academic department. For graduates, the institution has clearly communicated policies on admissions to attract qualified students who may benefit from the educational programs offered. The institution establishes minimum standards for graduate admission and communicates cases where status may be granted as "conditional" or "visiting," for example. However, the institution makes clear that these exceptions may only be for master's or certificate levels for example, and that first professional degrees or doctoral programs exhibit increased selectivity.

**3.4.4** The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. **(Acceptance of academic credit)**

### Compliance

Virginia Tech transfer policies are published in undergraduate and graduate catalogs. There is a published articulation agreement between Virginia's four-year public institutions, including Virginia Tech, and two year public institutions of higher learning that meet specified criteria. Virginia Tech adheres to the policies contained in the articulation agreements with Virginia Community College System. Virginia Tech does

not award credit for experiential learning or 'life experience' credit nor does it accept professional certificate for transfer credit.

**3.4.5** The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. **(Academic policies)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech publishes general academic policies in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs in several forms. Virginia Tech's website is the official repository of institutional policies, including academic policies. The existing academic policies, new policies or changes to existing policies are available for review on the University Council website. Policies are develop and/or updated through a systematic process which includes impute from affected constituencies. The final approval of policies at Virginia Tech rests with the president and the Board of Visitors. Academic policies at Virginia Tech seek to enhance learning, teaching, scholarship, research and service and adhere to principles of good educational practice.

**3.4.6** The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the registrar's website and documents about course approval, undergraduate credits, and distance learning course expectations, to name a few, confirms that the institution employs sound practices for determining the amount and level of credit award for academic courses. The policy adheres to best practices advocated by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and uses the Common Data Set definition of a semester credit hour and accordingly, the institution requires "750 contact minutes for traditional in-classroom delivery of a course" regardless of format or mode of delivery. The university has published guidelines that define credit hours and course levels, that determine credit hours and course levels for new courses and that determine the equivalency of courses delivered in an alternate format. Academic Program reviews are conducted systematically to ensure that undergraduate and graduate programs are adhering to the standards of good practice and the policies established. To establish, maintain, and review course credit value and integrity of student work, the institution relies upon established internal faculty governance review processes, the formal Academic Program Review Process (APR), external accreditation processes, and the undergraduate and graduate honor codes.

**3.4.7** The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution**. (Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

**Compliance**

The Senior Vice President and Provost approve all new contractual agreements and the appropriate Vice President approves the renewal of contractual agreements. Consortial programs are subject to the University's academic review process whereby all authorized degree programs are scheduled for review every seven years. Virginia Tech enters into domestic contractual agreements only with institutions that are in good standing with its regional accrediting organization. Faculty and administrators review the agreement for quality of coursework. The office of University Legal Counsel and the President provide final approval on Memoranda of Understandings.

**3.4.8** The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the Undergraduate Course Catalog and Graduate Catalog demonstrates that the institution does not award academic credit for work that is not at the collegiate level, including vocational, developmental, or remedial studies. In addition, the institution does not award academic credit for experiential learning or life experience nor does it award any credit for graduate degrees earned via correspondence study or from continuing education courses.

**3.4.9** The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

**Compliance**

The institution supports student learning and teaching excellence through a variety of services designed to meet student need. The primary academic support unit is the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence which provides programs and services designed to assist students with the transition to college, to help them succeed academically and to enrich their education experiences. A series of other offices including the Cook Counseling Center, the Writing Center and the University Libraries offer academic support across a range of skills needed to be academically successful. The Cook Counseling center offers personal and online service for test taking skills, note taking and other academic support. The Writing Center offers media innovation support as well as regular services. The Libraries offer online chat rooms to explore resources, and the Graduate students are supported by the COE Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Services are evaluated regularly in order to address student satisfaction and utilization. The Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning provides academic support specifically for distance learners. A comprehensive inventory of academic support and enrichment initiatives documents an array of services across the institution. Academic support services within individual colleges and for specific populations including the Cranwell International Center and the Services for Students with Disabilities are well documented.

**3.4.10** The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the University Council's bylaws and meeting minutes as well as bylaws and meeting minutes of various commissions and faculty associations confirms that the faculty of the institution through a system of shared governance with departmental and college administrators hold authority and responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. This power is limited primarily in the area of establishment of new degree programs by the board and state council for Higher Education to ensure consistency with institutional mission and the strategic planning for stewardship of state resources. The University Council, and especially the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies and the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies are designated for final responsibility of program review and to make decisions about new programs and areas of study. In addition, the Academic Program Review (APR), a comprehensive program review process that takes place every seven years, involves faculty in departments and programs in an intensive self-study process to determine course and program strengths and weaknesses; to ensure that courses and programs align with institutional goals; to evaluate the credibility of claims about student learning outcomes, and to use results of this assessment and evaluation intentionally for course-level and program improvement.

**\*3.4.11** For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech has assigned, for each major in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, program coordinators who are qualified in their fields, and who hold terminal degrees appropriate to their respective academic disciplines. Virginia Tech Faculty Online Credential System (FOC) provides qualifications and competencies of academic program coordinators. Academic Program Coordinators at Virginia Tech are responsible for working with faculty to ensure curriculum development and curriculum review and assessment.

**3.4.12** The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

**Compliance**

The institution has designed a comprehensive approach to improving its technology-assisted learning environment. Policies that support this approach include the requirement that each student purchase a laptop in support of further integration of computing in the classroom. Student Software Distribution provides software to support students in specific disciplines with "student bundles." The SSD also provides basic computer software such as Microsoft Office to all students at discounted prices. Computer software support is provided 24/7 for basic problems and during regular business hours for more extensive consultations. Support services are ramped up at the start of school to facilitate software deployment and implementation. No evidence beyond informational websites supporting software training for students was in

evidence. Requiring students to submit their theses and dissertations electronically is another policy that fosters training and understanding in expressing ideas in a technologically advanced medium. Student computers are provided across campus as well state of the art classrooms. The InnovationSpace provides a multi-media learning environment for student projects which includes appropriate hardware and software as well as guidance from faculty and staff in the center. The institution has had considerable success in faculty development to integrate technology into teaching with more than 95% of the faculty participating over a four-year cycle. Workshops are also offered to graduate students through the Graduate Education Development Institute. The institution has appropriate software to support its mission including a course management system and ePortfolios. The institution's participation in the National Survey on Student Engagement provides an avenue for gauging students' use of technology and needed improvements. A sample of technology-assisted learning environments is documented including the Math Emporium (including diagnostic quizzes and electronic hyperlinked textbooks) and .Aurolog (a system for foreign language learning). The Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning provides oversight to insure that best practices in electronically delivered programs are followed. Students participating in distance learning are supported with information about what is needed to be successful as well as a help line provided online and by telephone. The committee's review of documents and websites describing technological resources and services indicates that the institution employs an impressive array of technology services and resources to enhance student learning, faculty instruction, and administration of student records. Evidence of "exemplars" or "instances of technology-assisted learning environments" that include the Math Emporium, the Auralog software for foreign language learning, the digital history reader project, and the Interchange model for public speaking instruction demonstrate an alignment between the institutional mission and use and development of technology to enhance teaching and learning. From a longstanding history of use of technology in distance and distributed learning; to contemporary policies that require students to own personal computers; to auxiliary services that support student software distribution, and to campus spaces like the InnovationSpace, a multimedia computer laboratory for student technology support, the institution demonstrates a visible, user-friendly culture of technology across campus. In terms of accountability of service, the institution demonstrates high levels of usage for its technology among students and faculty. The Faculty Development Institute and the Graduate Education Development Institute provide academic year programming designed to help faculty and graduate students keep pace with current and emerging technologies. Post workshop evaluations are used to determine success and needed changes.

**3.5.1** The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. **(College-level competencies)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE) and examples of student learning outcomes for the CLE and academic programs indicates that the institution identifies college-level competencies for the general education of undergraduates. The CLE at Virginia Tech is designed to foster broad base knowledge and transferable skills. Though evidence describing assessment activities over time indicates some difficulty establishing efficiency in assessment and coordinating assessment activities to meet changing demands of the state council of higher

education, the assessments conducted provide evidence that graduates have attained the competencies previously identified. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) has outlined a six-year assessment cycle for the core curriculum which began in 2007-08 and includes written communication, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, critical thinking, oral communication and information technology literacy. Newly established alignment of the institution's CLE and the Association of American Colleges & Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes and the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia core competencies has provided a new framework for implementation that when combined with newly established and streamlined processes for academic program review and WEAVE Online assessment, indicate that effective and efficient processes are established to ensure a healthy culture of accountability.

**3.5.2** At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of undergraduate degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns 25 percent of the credits required for the degree through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**.

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech has established policies and procedures that prohibit the conferring of degrees if at least 25% of credits hours required are not earned through instruction offered by Virginia Tech. No degree programs at VT are offered through joint, cooperative or consortia arrangements. The Office of the University Registrar and the dean's office of respective colleges are charged with monitoring this requirement. Virginia Tech's one exception of non-adherence to this requirement was noted in the narrative. Posthumous degrees were awarded to the undergraduate victims slain in the campus shooting that occurred April 16, 2007. Some students did not meet the minimum hours required. The Commission on Colleges was notified of this proposed action and approval was granted.

**3.5.3** The institution defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Undergraduate program requirements)**

**Compliance**

Requirements for Virginia Tech's undergraduate programs, including general education components, are defined and published in the undergraduate catalog. Virginia Tech homepage is the public repository for all undergraduate programs and is a platform used by the university to define and publish requirements for undergraduate programs, including general education components. The curriculum for Liberal Education Guide provides specific requirements for the curriculum for liberal education. The rest of the college's undergraduate program requirements: Agricultural and Life Sciences, Natural Resources, Science, Business are published in the Undergraduate Course Catalog, and specific requirements for major programs can be found on the home page links. All undergraduate programs conform to accepted standards in accordance with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Procedures are in place to make sure that distance degree programs requirements are published and compatible

to the curriculum found in traditional programs.  Program requirements conform to accepted standards and practices of degree programs in higher education.

**3.5.4**  At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline, or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech's, Office of the Provost Teaching Faculty Guidelines document provides credentials of faculty by level and discipline. Virginia Tech has provided data that demonstrates that at least 25% of the discipline course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree – usually the earned doctorate –in the discipline, or the equivalent of the terminal degree. Guidelines are in place to document and review credentialing expectations and appropriateness.

**3.6.1**  The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the Graduate Course Catalog, Graduate Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes, 2009-2009 List of Student Learning Outcomes, and Policy Memorandum Numbers 126, 152, and 160, to name a few, indicates that post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and master's and doctoral degree programs are substantive and rigorous.  Post-baccalaureate, professional, master and doctoral degree programs at Virginia Tech are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate degree programs at Virginia Tech.  Internal processes are in place to ensure that post-baccalaureate, professional, master and doctoral degree programs have the rigor appropriate for each level.  Through policies and procedures established for course approval and academic program review, the institution conveys the message that graduate study is characterized by an "advanced curriculum, greater emphasis on research and application, a more involved student-faculty relationship, and a higher order of critical analysis."  Evidence of differentiation in student learning outcomes for different levels of study combined with policies that prevent accumulation of graduate credits by undergraduates without special status, demonstrates that post-baccalaureate study builds upon the foundation established by undergraduate programs but is progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.  Faculty who deliver instruction at these advanced levels hold the necessary credentials to provide quality instruction as demonstrated in the FOCS system in standard 3.7.1.

**3.6.2**  The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the graduate course catalog, the WEAVE online Assessment Sample of Graduate Student Learning Outcomes, The Commission on Graduate Studies' Student Learning Outcomes for Graduate Degrees at Virginia Tech, and documents describing the established processes for evaluation of the progress of graduate students, including multiple examinations and requirements for evaluation by faculty advisors, indicate that the graduate curriculum focuses upon acquisition of knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ongoing engagement in research and professional practice when appropriate. Furthermore, the institution's graduate curriculum consistently communicates that advanced instruction requires a significant level of independent learning and inquiry grounded in the literature and research in the field, so that graduates can contribute capably to a profession or field of study through their own sound inquiry and/or professional work. Furthermore, the Transformative Graduate Education initiative, the Graduate Education Development Institute, the Future Professoriate Certificate Program, the Citizen Scholar initiative, and graduate honoraries provide supplemental education and training to enhance graduate student socialization to scholarly roles and responsibilities; especially congruent to the institution's mission as a public, land-grant research university. Together these programs coalesce with the formal graduate curriculum to enhance graduate students' knowledge base and experiences and independent and team research conducted throughout graduate study. An established process of academic program review and external accreditation processes ensure graduate program quality and consistency with best practices in the various programs and fields. Graduate Curricula that include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ongoing student engagement in research and training experiences is clearly stated in the purpose of graduate education in the mission of the Graduate School at Virginia Tech. To fulfill its mission of graduate education, the Graduate School "works in partnership with faculty, deans, departmental heads, program chairs and the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGSP)." At the request of the vice president for graduate education and dean of the graduate school, a set of general graduate student learning outcomes and possible assessment measures are in place to assist departments in determining and demonstrating graduate education competencies outlined in this standard. Graduate students are required to demonstrate mastery of these competencies during their stay at Virginia Tech.

**3.6.3** The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through institution offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

**Non-Compliance**

Virginia Tech's published policy No. 194 allows a graduate student, upon approval, to transfer up to 50% of credits towards a graduate degree. The policy is as follows:

Policy No. 194

"Individual master's degree programs may, on approval of the Graduate School, be granted permission to allow up to 50% of the courses on the plan of study to be transferred from other institutions for programmatic reasons. Requests for such

permission must be submitted in writing by the program to the Dean of the Graduate School, justifying the program's need for an extended allowance of transfer credit and suggesting what guidelines and limits would be appropriate. Requests are not made to grant exceptions for individual students. Requests will be reviewed by the Graduate Curriculum Committee, which will advise the Graduate School regarding action on such requests."

These changes being effective for students enrolling for the first time in or after the Spring semester of 2000; moreover, for existing programs which can document a history of regular, legitimate use of the 50% transfer allowance from Virginia Schools, the Graduate School may, at its discretion, accept the program's history in lieu of a written request. The Graduate School and the Commission or Graduate Studies. Degree requirements

Up to 50% by definition means 50% of course work can be transferred.  If approval is granted to allow a student to transfer 50% of the degree requirements from another institution, mathematically it is impossible for that student to earn a majority of credits toward the degree through instruction offered by Virginia Tech.  This policy renders Virginia Tech out of compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.6.3.

**3.6.4**  The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the institution's Graduate Course Catalog, the Web sites of various colleges, schools, and programs, and the publication, Building Graduate Community, confirms that the institution defines and widely disseminates degree requirements for graduate and post-baccalaureate programs that conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for graduate degree, first professional degree, and graduate certificate programs.  Requirements for graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs are published in the Graduate Catalog annually.  These requirements are established by the vice president and dean of graduate education and the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGSP)  In addition, each graduate program that offers graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degrees may establish policies, procedures, and requirements for respective programs. The institution articulates shared expectations for residency and GPA related to admissions and matriculation as well as differences in stringency for graduate certificates, master's degree, the first-professional degree in Veterinary Medicine, and doctoral degree level work.  The institution accounts for nuance among different disciplines and programs, including thesis and non-thesis requirements, and establishes a program of institutional review and evaluation that involves the University Council, Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, executive administrators, and an established process of Academic Program Review (APR).

**3.7.1**  The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution.  When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the

field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. **(Faculty competence)**

**Non-Compliance**

Review of the Faculty Online Credential System indicates that the institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. A very high percentage of the tenured faculty holds the terminal degree in the teaching discipline. Adjunct, graduate teaching assistants and other part-time instructors typically hold master's degrees in the teaching discipline or a "closely-related" discipline. The Faculty Online Credential System displays information relevant to departmental justifications where appropriate, allowing for justifications of teaching to be matched to specific courses. The institution documented criteria for justification using criteria such as teaching competence and effectiveness (as evaluated by students and peers), related work experiences, professional licensures and certifications, honors and awards, as well as publications and presentations in the field. However, in a few cases especially related to part-time or adjunct faculty, insufficient documentation of teaching credentials or justifications was provided.

**3.7.2** The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Faculty evaluation)**

**Compliance**

At Virginia Tech all faculty members are evaluated in accordance with the Faculty Handbook and Special Research Faculty Handbook, regardless of contractual or tenured status. The process begins with individual faculty by submission of a Faculty Activity Report (FAR). Besides annual evaluations, the departmental promotion and tenure committee reviews pre-tenure faculty members twice during the probationary period. The Faculty Handbook provides the criteria for awarding tenure and/or promotion. Student evaluation of teaching is an integral part of the faculty evaluation. Tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty are evaluated annually. Regardless of status, faculty must submit a detailed listing of their accomplishments in accordance with departmental procedures. Written feedback of the evaluation and consultation are provided by the department chair and in some cases department or college committee. Decisions about tenure are made in the sixth year of employment if not before. Tenure-track faculty members are evaluated at least twice during that six year period. A one year terminal appointment is offered if tenure is denied. Promotion and tenure decisions are reviewed at the department, college and provost levels. A post-tenure review is mandatory at Virginia Tech. Faculty with tenure are required to undergo a post-tenure review by the department promotion and tenure committee if they receive an unsatisfactory evaluation in two consecutive years. A sample unsatisfactory performance review letter was included in the supporting documentation. Senior administrative faculty members are reviewed periodically, usually every five years in accordance with university policy.

**3.7.3**   The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. **(Faculty development)**

**Compliance**

Faculty development activities at V.T. are numerous and are designed to enhance the teaching, research, scholarship and outreach of all faculty members in the University community.  New faculty development programs, professional development leave opportunities, tuition waiver program faculty awards and instructional support services are in place to support faculty in their ongoing professional development.  Outstanding and innovative opportunities for faculty at Virginia Tech are also provided through the nationally recognized Faculty Development Institute; the Office of Outreach and International Affairs; the VT Professional Development and Leadership Workshops and the Executive Development Institute.

**3.7.4**   The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. **(Academic freedom)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the institution's strategic plan and the student handbook which are made publically available on the web, as well as tenure and promotion procedures for faculty in various categories indicates that the institution recognizes the essential role of freedom of inquiry in the university setting and academic enterprise. The institution takes a stance of embrace of the principles espoused by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Through well-articulated policies and processes for grievance and resolution including student advocacy by the Dean of Students for undergraduates, and the Graduate School Ombudsperson, the institution identifies academic freedom as a "core value" and establishes its centrality to teaching and learning.  Virginia Tech seeks to protect and promote academic freedom of faculty and students through their established written policies and procedures.

**3.7.5**   The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

**Compliance**

As described in Faculty Handbook, Section 1.0 and on the university's governance website, governance at Virginia Tech is a shared responsibility of the faculty, staff, students and administration. The Faculty Handbook and other university policies outline the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. "The University Council, the University Commissions, the University Advisory Councils, and the university standing committees provide an organizational structure through which faculty, students, staff and administrative responsibilities are shared and fulfilled." Virginia Tech faculty are well represented in various university councils, and their engagement includes the development and oversight of academic programs and policies, policies and procedures affecting faculty employment, approval of new or revised courses and certificates, and new degrees.  The Faculty Senate officers meet regularly with the provost and president to share concerns and information.  The

president of the Faculty Senate is a non-voting member of the Board of Visitors and the University Council.

**3.8.1**  The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. **(Learning/information resources)**

**Compliance**

The institution provides five physical locations with staff services and/or collections that support student learning and faculty teaching and research.  These physical locations are complemented by a robust set of online services and collections.  A 2000 study documented the need for additional and repurposed library space.  Progress on the recommendations from that plan are in evidence in the establishment of additional collaborative work spaces, consolidation of information access services in one location, and a tripling of the space for Special Collections since 2005.

Services on site and via the internet are in evidence.  Services are provided within the physical libraries through service desks, online through tutorials and virtual reference services, and through the deployment of college librarians to the individual colleges with focus on the needs of the particular discipline.  Assessment of the library's success is documented by participation in the nationally recognized LibQUAL surveys which have been conducted regularly since 2001.  The library also conducted additional surveys modeled on the University of Washington in an effort to locate specific actionable input from users.

**3.8.2**  The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of library use)**

**Compliance**

Regular and timely instruction is provided online and in-person and regular assessment of the effectiveness of those services is conducted.  Online instruction is provided via a Research Help link on the library's homepage, an Instruction Portal website with database and tutorial handouts, screencast tutorials, subject guides, and an Ask a Librarian option including a live chat session.  These services provide appropriate support for distance learning students as well.  The library has a dedicated webpage for distance learning and extended campus users.
In-person instruction is provided one on one from reference and information desks, in group instructional sessions developed for specific courses in concert with the instructor's teaching plan, in presentations to campus groups, facility tours.  Students and faculty may also schedule an individual appointment with the appropriate subject librarian or enroll in a 3 credit hour graduate courses initiated in fall 2008.  The institution's instructional activities place them in the mid-range of Association for Research Libraries members, while their staff is considerably smaller than average.  Assessment is conducted largely via surveys which gauge student opinion of the library instruction they have received.

**3.8.3**  The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

**Compliance**

The institution provides sufficient, qualified staff (librarians and support staff) to accomplish the mission of the institution as evidenced win the acceptable and sustained scores in their LibQual survey results. The credentials of the Library professional staff are appropriate including ALA-accredited master's degrees in library and informative science.

**3.9.1** The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

**Compliance**

The Virginia Tech Principles of Community and Hokie Handbook clearly describe student rights and responsibilities both in print and online at the Division of Student Affairs website. The University Policies for Student Life (UPSL) proscribes appropriate student conduct, procedures for adjudicating alleged violations. Annually, students receive an email to remind them of student conduct policy with links to updated documents. Additional information is posted to the Honor Code, Graduate Catalog and the Graduate Honor System Constitution which is appropriately disseminated and available at institutional websites.

**3.9.2** The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records).**

**Compliance**

Policies and procedures for data security, confidentiality, and integrity are available at the University Policies web site and information technology web site. The Virginia Tech Information Technology (IT) Security Office provides tools, education, and security audit review to assure university data is properly maintained and protected. The Management of University Records policy provides regulations regarding the establishment, access, and maintenance of records. Back up measures for data are in place and reviewed regularly.

**3.9.3** The institution employs qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs. **(Qualified staff)**

**Compliance**

Staffing of the Division of Student Affairs includes 127 administrative staff and/or professional faculty members including Core of Cadets. The leadership encourages involvement with professional associations, and partnerships with faculty in programming. Performance appraisals are conducted annually in compliance with procedures outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The departments undergo systematic reviews of their programs and services. The Schiffert Health Center and Cooke Counseling Centers are appropriately accredited.

**3.10.1** The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability.  **(Financial stability)**

**Compliance**

The audited financial statements and financial trends/ratios of Virginia Tech indicate that the institution is financially stable.  Positive trends are noted through the institution's Composite Financial Index, growth in net assets, steady increases in operating revenues, particularly contracts/grant income and tuition, and growing enrollment demand.

Virginia Tech has experienced steady growth in its diverse funding streams including tuition and fees, auxiliary income, endowment income and contract and grant revenues. The university's tuition and fee rates are extremely competitive and enrollment demand remains very healthy.  The Commonwealth of Virginia supports approximately 26% of the institutional budget through state appropriations. Although the University has experienced some reduction in state appropriations recently due to the slowdown of the national and state economy, the institution anticipates no major impact on operations due to cost containment initiatives and strategic resource allocation.

Annual audits by the Auditor of Public Accounts have been conducted with no major findings. Additionally, Moody's has provided Virginia Tech a bond rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook, while Standard and Poor's provided a AA rating with a stable outlook.

The University is in the midst of an impressive and ambitious $1 billion capital campaign. As of June 30, 2008, the institution had raised approximately $683 million.

**3.10.2** The institution provides financial profile information on an annual basis and other measures of financial health as requested by the Commission. All information is presented accurately and appropriately and represents the total operation of the institution. **(Submission of financial statements)**.

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech has provided the financial profile information and measures of financial health as requested by the Commission.  The institution has provided its most recent audited financial statements (June 2008) and indicates that it will submit the report for the year ended June 2009 as soon as the report is completed by the Auditor of Public Accounts.

**\*3.10.3** The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. **(Financial aid audits)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech, as an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, is included in the statewide comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) of the Commonwealth. The Auditor of Public Accounts performs the audits of the institution's annual financial report, the State-wide CAFR and as well as the annual Statewide Single Audit for all state agencies as required by OMB 133. The 2008 Statewide Single Audit report

indicated two findings related to Virginia Tech's financial aid programs. Both findings were minor and management responses provided a plan to address the findings.

**3.10.4** The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. **(Control of finances)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech has developed a robust system of budgetary and financial controls and has provided evidence of appropriate control over its financial resources.

University Administration has created a culture that places great value on accountability and compliance. The institution has developed a Statement of Business Conduct Standards as well as a Financial and Business Compliance Survey. The latter is an annual survey that must be completed by each department, which requires a self-assessment of their organization's business practices. Finally, the university participates in the Commonwealth of Virginia's comprehensive risk management program, Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS).

The university has established a solid framework of controls over its financial resources. The Office of Budget and Financial Planning monitors financial activities, including capital projects, ensuring that they remain within the parameter of the budget. This office also has a monitoring system in place, including regular reports to executive management and to the Board of Visitors. Additionally, the university has appropriate control systems over key areas such as cash handling, disbursements, capital projects, procurement and accounts receivable.
Financial controls are enhanced by the activities of the Virginia Tech Internal Audit Office. This office reports directly to the Finance and Audit Committee of the Board of Visitors. Additionally, an annual audit plan is developed based upon a risk assessment and management input, and audit reports and findings are presented to the Board of Visitors Finance and Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. Additionally, the Auditor of Public Accounts of the Commonwealth of Virginia conducts an annual audit of the financial statements.

**3.10.5** The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. **(Control of sponsored research/external funds)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech controls its sponsored research activities primarily through its Office of Sponsored Projects. The OSP office has developed a robust pre and post award management program that is well organized and defined. Pre and post award administrators are assigned to each project, by awarding agency, to assist with the management and monitoring of each award. The services provided by OSP include comprehensive training for faculty and staff involved in research activities, including a voluntary training certification for research administrators.

Enhancing controls over the research and external funds are the annual A-133 audits by the Auditor of Public Accounts as well as regular audits of various aspects of sponsored research operations by the Office of Internal Audit.

**3.11.1** The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. **(Control of physical resources)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding its physical resources through a comprehensive policy framework and a clearly defined distribution of responsibilities that includes the Controller's Office, the Purchasing and Surplus Property Department; Fleet Services as well as individual department heads. A review of the University's policies and procedures related to its fixed asset inventory indicates that Virginia Tech has appropriate safeguards over such assets. Property inventory procedures are defined and in place and include a physical measurement of fixed asset inventory once every two years. Virginia Tech also has established a comprehensive risk management program through the Office of Risk Management for property and casualty risks to enhance protection over its physical resources. Finally, the Auditor of Public Accounts includes a review of control over physical assets in its annual audit.

**3.11.2** The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. **(Institutional environment)**

**Compliance**

A review of Virginia Tech's organizational and policy framework indicates a significant and remarkable level of commitment to ensuring a safe, healthy and secure environment for the campus community.

The Virginia Tech campus experienced an unprecedented and shocking tragedy on April 16, 2007. One of the consequences of this event was that the university faced extraordinary scrutiny with respect to certain aspects of its safety programs. As a result of this heightened scrutiny, which included the Virginia Governor's Review Panel and several internal working groups appointed by the University President, the university has engaged in a thorough review of its campus safety programs and made numerous changes to enhance them.

Virginia Tech administration and the Board of Visitors have responded to these events, and the recommendations of the review panels, with a renewed commitment to providing for the safety and security of the campus community. Examples include addition of 13 positions to its Police Department over the past four years; establishment of an Office of Emergency Management that includes three new staff positions; development of an emergency response system; funding of a 911 response center; installation of banner textual displays in classrooms and the addition of several counselors in the Counseling Center. Further, the university has developed a solid, well reasoned policy framework that defines roles and responsibilities of various campus units with respect to campus safety.

Virginia Tech has a well established and funded Police Department that is a fully accredited law enforcement agency. This department engages not only in active policing but also emphasizes community outreach and crime prevention.

The Environmental Health and Safety Services office is responsible for overall campus safety conditions and workforce safety programs. Its primary responsibilities related to laboratory safety, occupational safety and health, core operations/radiation safety. This office coordinates with a variety of campus operations including Human Resources, Police Department, Office of Emergency Management, Facilities Services and Research Compliance to enhance campus safety programs.

Finally, the University has created a University Safety and Security Policy Committee "to serve as a coordinating and policy body, with responsibilities for establishing the framework for an overarching university safety, emergency management, and security program for all Virginia Tech facilities (on- and off-campus, owned and leased) and ensuring that it is implemented through the appropriate offices; evaluating the overall safety and security infrastructure; and providing oversight to the work of university operational committees responsible for environmental health and safety, violence prevention, emergency management, and other safety and security related efforts." This committee is chaired by the President of the University.

**\*3.11.3** The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. **(Physical facilities)**

**Compliance**

The Virginia Tech main campus is located in the city of Blacksburg, and includes 338 buildings, totaling approximately 8.9 million gross square feet. The campus proper comprises approximately 2100 acres. In addition, the University also leases 64 buildings that add approximately 858,000 gross square feet of building space inventory.

Virginia Tech also has several extended campus sites throughout the state of Virginia and a Center for European Studies are Architecture in Switzerland. Finally, the University also has thirteen Agricultural Research and Extension Centers throughout the state.

The University has developed a robust process for capital planning. It utilizes its Campus Master Plan as a guide in the development of the campus infrastructure and to ensure that facilities plans align with the institution's strategic direction. Virginia Tech generally updates its Campus Master Plan every ten years, with the most recent update occurring in 2006.

The institution measures space utilization by use of benchmarks/goals established by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Virginia Tech's utilization rates fall within the acceptable range established by SCHEB, which indicates that space is productively and efficiently used and that there the type and amount of space available is adequate to meet current demand.

The University's Facilities Department is responsible for maintenance of University facilities. In 2005, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted a system to identify and track deferred maintenance related to state facilities. This system is known as Facilities Inventory and Condition Assessment System (FICAS). It was developed by the Auditor of Public Accounts and is managed by the Virginia Department of General

Services. FICAS is the primary tool used by the University to monitor the condition and adequacy of its facilities.  This data is to be used to identify the most urgent targets for deferred maintenance fund allocations.

Primary responsibility for oversight of management of physical resources rests with the Vice President for Administrative Services.  The administrative infrastructure that exists to ensure the proper management and stewardship over the institutions physical assets is appropriate and well organized.  The current organization was developed through a reorganization that occurred in 2008, which defines restructured departments and responsibilities in an effort to improve services and efficiency.

Maintenance of University facilities is the responsibility of the Facilities Department, and the Real Estate Office is charged with ensuring the adequacy of leased property.

**3.12.1** The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. **(Substantive change))**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech identified changes that had not been made in accordance with the substantive change policy, notified the Commission of these omissions, and introduced a process to assure that substantive changes planned in the future would trigger a notification process.  These improvements establish a more effective identification, reporting, and tracking of substantive changes.

**3.13.1** The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**
*(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)*

**Compliance:**

The off-site committee found no evidence of non-compliance.

**3.14.1** A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

**\*4.1**   The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. **(Student achievement)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech monitors retention and graduation rates to evaluate student achievement. Data showing first year retention and 4, 5, and 6 year graduation rates for first-time, full-time bachelor degree seeking students were provided.  Virginia Tech also utilizes results on state licensing examinations to evaluate student achievement.  Exam pass rates were provided for the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam, Certified Financial Planner Exam, Registration Examination for Dietitians, Architect Registration Examination, Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education's Exam, North American Veterinary Licensing Exam, Certified Public Accountant Exam and PRAXIS II.  Virginia Tech monitors job placement and graduate school admission of its students who have earned a B.S or B.A. Degree via a post-graduation survey.

**\*4.2**   The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. **(Program curriculum)**

**Compliance**

Virginia Tech's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution.  The goals of the institution, as found in the 2006-2013 strategic plan, demonstrate Virginia Tech's commitment to fulfilling its mission and purpose.  Internal and program evaluations, indirect student surveys and state and national trend data are used to assist the faculty administration in ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and meets the needs of the students, employers and state and nation.

**\*4.3**   The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. **(Publication of policies)**

**Compliance**

The committee's review of the institution's website, the Student Handbook, the Undergraduate Course Catalog and the Graduate Course Catalog indicates that each year the institution widely distributes to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies in online and print publications.  The University Registrar's website provides information regarding the academic calendar, refund and grading policies to students and to the public. Information regarding deadlines and holidays is posted to the Virginia Tech website and made available in publications and through emails to faculty, students and staff. The instructional faculty is made aware of required elements in course syllabi through the Faculty Handbook and dates of final exams are posted and easily accessible on the web.  Worthy of note, the institution posts a calendar of ethnic and religious holidays on the web which signifies an institutional stance of recognition and support of diversity, and employs e-mail communications when necessary and a user-friendly technological interface, namely the Timetable of Classes, to enhance students' ability to select courses and

plan their academic programs. The University Bursar's Office, Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, and Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs provide information regarding refunds and grading policies as well as information for each college. Information on the website for the Bursar's Office explains refund policies and another technological interface, Receiving You Aid, assists students in completing the award of scholarships and student financial aid.

**\*4.4**  Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. **(Program length)**

**Compliance**

Program length is appropriate for all educational programs at Virginia Tech and is consistent with standard practices in higher education. The appropriateness is determined and monitored by the following: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, faculty, the administration and the accrediting bodies that have awarded regional and specialized accreditation.

**\*4.5**  The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. **(Student complaints)**

Requirement/Standard #4.5

**Non-Compliance**

While the report lists many policies for response to student complaints as related to student behavior, academic grievance, or harassment, the committee did not find examples indicating how these policies have been followed to address such matters.

**\*4.6**  Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. **(Recruitment materials)**

**Compliance**

Recruitment materials and admissions information for prospective students are made available in print and online. Virginia Tech has in place a process to assure that it presents its recruitment materials in ways that accurately represent its practices and policies. They are reviewed by the Office of Admissions, University Relations, and respective deans on an annual basis.

**\*4.7**  The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the *1998 Higher Education Amendments.* **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

**Compliance**

A review of materials provided, including the Single Audit Report of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Annual Financial Report, indicate that Virginia Tech is in compliance with its obligations under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments.

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**E.** **Additional Observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (optional).**

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**Part III.  Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan**

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*To be completed by the On-Site Review Committee.*

**A.      Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan**


**B.      Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan**

    1.      ***Broad-based Process***. *The institution uses a broad-based institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment.*

    2.      ***Focus of the Plan***.  *The institution identifies a significant issue that (1) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and (2) accomplishes the mission of the institution.*

    3.      *I**nstitutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan***.  *The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.*

    4.      ***Broad-based Involvement of the Community***.  *The institution demonstrates that all aspects of its community were involved in the development and proposed implementation of the Plan.*

    5.      ***Assessment of the Plan***.  *The institution demonstrates that it has goals and a plan to access their achievement.*


**C.      Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP**