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- [CSC-4help](#)
- [Staff Senate](#)

In this issue

- Hokie Parents' Fund projects **1**
- Anti-spam **2**
- Higher Education Restructuring Act **2**
- CALEA Update **2**
- ITKnowHow wiki **2**

Hokie Parents Fund Programs

Two programs within Information Technology are being funded through the competitive proposal process for the Hokie Parents Fund. The fund is a special giving program for parents of current and previous students. Gifts improve campus life and increase educational quality.

VT I.T. & You

This collaboration between Student Software Distribution and University Computing Support will provide incoming students and parents with information about IT services. The program will be held during Fall move-in at a central location—Torgersen Bridge, and will assist students with technical issues in getting online at Virginia Tech. With the new university laptop computing requirement, students' connectivity is more mobile, and the central location provides a way to get assistance in a variety of related issues. Colleges and other services within IT will be joining the program. Students will become more familiar with available services and get off to a good start. Objectives include providing education on how to stay legal with software downloads and file sharing and on how to maintain a secure computer. Students will be able to receive assistance with software installations as appropriate and to get answers to their licensing questions. Additional information will be available. Others wishing to be involved should contact Joyce Landreth or Patty Branscome.

Student Collaborative Workspace

This Learning Technologies project will create a student work space with a large, shared-screen display and collaborative software in Torgersen Hall. This space will provide state-of-the-art groupware for students working on team projects to facilitate more efficient interactive group activities. This system will support simultaneous authoring of computer documents and presentations, seamless sharing of these documents, and a record of meeting activities.

Anti-spam

An anti-spam measure called MailHurdle is being tested on the VTMail system. E-mail arriving from previously unseen sources will be delayed by a temporary delivery error. Most legitimate systems will automatically resend the message, while most spam-generating software will not resend the message. Upon this second attempt at sending, the message is immediately allowed through the system to reach its recipient. Subsequent messages from that sender/system combination will arrive without delay. Some legitimate mail systems are not standards-compliant; MailHurdle maintains a master list of these and permits delivery. MailHurdle does not affect spam ranking. If you fail to receive legitimate mail that you know has been sent, please contact 4Help. See http://computing.vt.edu/email_and_calendar/mailhurdle.html

Higher Education Restructuring Act

The Board of Visitors quarterly meeting held June 12 included action on policies for information technology related to the increased university autonomy provided by the Higher Education Restructuring Act. The Act takes effect July 1. The authority for information technology is summarized on <http://www.vt.edu/restructuring/authorities.html>

The increased autonomy in IT means more university control for major projects, the IT strategic plan, budgeting, funding, project lifecycle, security policies and procedures, and infrastructure and operational policies. The BOV approved four policies that provide the basis for this self-governance. Policies will be posted on it.vt.edu in the coming weeks.

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ITKnowHow Wiki

<http://itknowhow.w2k.vt.edu>

The ITKnowHow wiki is designed for both central and departmental information technology administrators at Virginia Tech.. Contribute and use this resource to document common solutions, tips, tricks, links, scripts and source code for solutions to IT issues. The ITKnowHow wiki is intended to complement computing.vt.edu and answers.vt.edu that are intended primarily for end-user faculty, staff, and students.

CALEA Update

A 1994 law, the Communications Assistance to Law Enforcement Act, has taken on new significance with Federal Communications Commission updated rules. The rules have been the subject of controversy, requiring Internet service providers to redesign networks to meet the government's surveillance needs. Originally conceived as a statute that facilitated authorized tapping of telephone networks, through the regulations, the act is extended to the Internet, possibly including college networks. The American Council on Education led a coalition of higher education and library groups along with privacy and civil rights groups in challenging the regulations. The U.S. Court of appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit upheld the FCC regulations. The higher education coalition's piece of good news was the court's confirmation that the statute exempts private networks, a category containing many colleges and universities. Brenda van Gelder tracks the issue for Information Technology.

References:

ACE's press release: <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16801>

ACE statement: http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Press_Releases2&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=16788

"Security Implications of Applying the Communications Assistance to Law Enforcement Act to Voice over IP," <http://www.ita.org/news/docs/CALEAVOIPreport.pdf>