

## Open letter to the university community from Beyond Boundaries co-chairs Thanassis Rikakis, Alan Grant, and Rosemary Blieszner

---

**Contact:**

- [Tracy Vosburgh](#)<sup>[1]</sup>
- 540-231-5396
- [tracyv@vt.edu](mailto:tracyv@vt.edu)

---

BLACKSBURG, Va., Feb. 5, 2016 – *The following is a letter to the Virginia Tech community from Beyond Boundaries co-chairs: Provost Thanassis Rikakis, Alan Grant, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; and Rosemary Blieszner, associate dean of the Graduate School:*

Last year President Tim Sands challenged the university community to envision the future Virginia Tech through a process we dubbed [Beyond Boundaries](#)<sup>[2]</sup>. Since then, four representative committees with dozens of people have been excitedly collaborating by pointing their lenses on the future. So far, you too have helped with more than 250 comments into our [Idea Bank](#)<sup>[3]</sup> on the website.

These groups are looking at fundamental questions facing the enterprise. What will the campus of the future look like? Will there even be a campus? How do we prepare students for a globally connected society? How will they become truly engaged citizens? How do we structure the tremendously successful land-grant university model to address issues that are increasingly multi-national? What financial options can we avail in an era when state support is dwindling and tuition becomes a barrier? How do we still maintain broad access to our important constituencies?

We invite you to continue your involvement by reviewing some preliminary assessments and recommendations posted on the website. View and comment on summaries of committee work on our [Discuss page](#)<sup>[4]</sup> or check-out the committee process and related materials under [Reports](#)<sup>[5]</sup>. We want to hear from you. Feel free to contact [sub-committee chairs](#)<sup>[6]</sup>, or the steering committee or subcommittee representatives, or make comments on the website. As the subcommittee work comes to a conclusion, note that the [Idea Bank](#)<sup>[7]</sup> will close on Monday, Feb. 15.

Interested in knowing how the proposed Destination Areas and InclusiveVT fit with Beyond Boundaries? The Beyond Boundaries initiative looks a generation into the future. The Steering Committee's visioning report will set some key evolution parameters for the university. Destination Areas and InclusiveVT serve as immediate steps for moving Virginia Tech toward its long-range goals.

Annually, we will invite faculty to submit proposals through an incubator that explore ways to address such parameters and establish our future directions. The incubator will launch a continuous, bottom-up, innovation process for Virginia Tech. Hear Provost Rikakis speak about the Destination Areas and related projects by viewing an [archived town hall meeting](#)<sup>[8]</sup>.

In late March, we will publish a more detailed draft report and will again solicit your input. On April 4 (Noon, Squires Haymarket Theater), we will join President Sands for a "town hall meeting" and again have a conversation with you.

— *Invent the Future*

We know the world is a very different place than just a few decades ago. We know higher education too is different and will play an increasingly important role as the world's boundaries shrink and as knowledge based employment becomes increasingly reliant on advanced education. Fundamentally, the Beyond Boundaries effort will help us better fulfil our mission as a 21st century global land-grant university. We will move forward together as we invent the future of Virginia Tech.

---

## Related Links

- [Former University of Michigan president launches Beyond Boundaries project with lecture this week](#)<sup>[9]</sup>
- [Envisioning Virginia Tech in the year 2047](#)<sup>[10]</sup>

---

## Links

[1]. <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/media-contact/vosburgh-tracy-res.html>

[2]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/index.php>

[3]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/participate.php>

[4]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/discuss.php>

[5]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/reports.html>

[6]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/about.html>

[7]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/participate.php>

[8]. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/da-town-hall.html>

[9]. <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2015/09/092115-president-bbcoleman.html>

[10]. <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2015/08/082715-president-beyondboundaries.html>