Anne Holton is a lawyer and former judge who served as Virginia’s Secretary of Education from 2014 to 2016. Married to U.S. Senator and former Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, she served as Virginia’s First Lady from 2006-2010.

She served as Interim President of George Mason University from 2019-20 and is now back at GMU as a professor in the Schar School of Policy and Government and in the College of Education and Human Development, and a Senior Fellow at EdPolicyForward. She is a lifelong advocate for children and families in Virginia.

As Virginia’s First Lady, Holton championed foster care system reform. As Virginia’s Secretary of Education, she worked to increase Virginia’s investment in public education, to promote innovation and the joy of teaching and learning in our schools, and to ensure every student has a successful pathway to the future, especially those in high-poverty communities. Her life’s work has focused on children and families at the margin, and the crucial role education must play in helping young people escape poverty.

With an AB from Princeton and a Harvard law degree, Holton has worked as a legal aid lawyer serving low-income families, a juvenile and domestic relations district court judge, a child welfare reformer, and Virginia’s Secretary of Education.

Holton currently serves on the Virginia Board of Education. She and her husband live in Richmond. They have three adult children, all of whom attended Richmond Public Schools.

Laura Beth Weaver grew up in the Shenandoah Valley, the daughter of strong Mennonite women for generations. Laura Beth earned a B.A. in Public Policy & Community Service and a M.A. in Community & Organizational Leadership, both from Emory & Henry College. Since moving to the New River Valley in 2011, Laura Beth has held multiple positions at the Women’s Resource Center and is currently honored to be the organization’s Executive Director. Laura Beth works with the Board, staff, survivors, and stakeholders together towards the organization’s vision of a community free of sexual and domestic violence. Additionally, Laura Beth has held a variety of volunteer and board appointments in the region and on a statewide level over the years, always with an eye toward social justice and especially the rights and safety of women and children. She lives on a family farm in Montgomery County with her husband and two obviously beautiful and perfect children…and a confusion of guinea fowl.
Meghan Kuhn serves as the Director for VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning.

Michele Deramo leads diversity education and engagement in the Office for Inclusion and Diversity with the goal of building capacity across the university to fulfill Virginia Tech's strategic diversity goals. Prior to her work in diversity, equity, and inclusion, Michele spent 20 years working in the area of service-learning and university-community partnerships.

Gunin Kiran was born and raised in Ankara, Turkey. She received both her Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering from the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. She moved to the United States in 1988 and attended a Ph.D. program in Chemical Engineering at University of Maine, where she and her husband lived for 12 years and where all three of her children were born. Soon after her first born started kindergarten, she shifted her focus to education. Gunin served as a room parent, fundraising coordinator, school improvement committee member and PTO president from 1994-2000. In 2000 her family moved to Blacksburg, Virginia, where her involvement in the local school system has continued. She served as PTA president of HAE, BMS, and BHS, as well as PTA secretary and fundraising coordinator of HAE. She served on many interview committees to hire principals, vice principals and band directors as parent representatives. In 2013 when her last child graduated from high school, she decided to run for a school board seat to represent district A on the Montgomery County School Board. She served two terms, a total of eight years, five of them as board chair, and retired in 2021. She is a member of the Dialogue on Race education
issues group, local chapter of NAACP education committee and local chapter of LWV education study group. She also serves as a trustee at the Montgomery County Floyd County Regional Library Board and is a member of the Rotary Club of Blacksburg. She is an avid reader with a passion for research and believes in continuing education.

Maya Madhi is a Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) major and Statistics minor graduating from Virginia Tech in May 2023. She is also the founder and director of Hokies Vote Caucus – Virginia Tech’s nonpartisan voting rights and civic engagement student program at VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning. In addition to organizing voter registration and engagement drives, she organizes civic engagement events in collaboration with student and community organizations to give students the skills they need to be advocates for their communities. Maya has interned to recruit poll workers and to lobby Congress for funding for Special Olympics International. Outside of school and work, she volunteers at Second Time Around – a local thrift shop where all proceeds go to the no-kill Montgomery County Animal Shelter. Her hobbies include reading, painting, and hiking. Topics she is passionate about include voting rights, women’s rights, judicial reform, education policies, and disability rights.

Caroline Lohr is the Undergraduate Student Senate President. She is a senior studying Psychology with a minor in Africana Studies. She passionate about advocating for preventative sexual violence education, mental health and well-being, along with safety in every aspect on or off campus. She works with administrators, faculty and staff, and most importantly students. She is a servant leader to the undergraduate population and is proud to be a Hokie!
Preeti Pandey is a junior at Virginia Tech majoring in both Philosophy, Politics & Economics, and Political Science with a focus on Legal Studies. Born and raised in Nepal, she understands the importance of keeping her culture alive. As the Vice President of the Nepalese Student Association, she continues to work to share her culture with the student body at Virginia Tech.

Her interest in leadership and social justice first began after joining Students for Racial Justice, for which she now serves as President. Through this work she aims to create a safe space for students of all backgrounds. Also, as the Assistant Director of Hokies Vote Caucus, she continues to work to motivate students to be civically engaged. Preeti’s involvement with different student organizations and internship with the League of Women’s Voters has inspired her to pursue a career in law after Virginia Tech.

Jes, with one S, Davis (she/her) is a two time graduate of Indiana University where she earned her Masters of Public Affairs with a concentration in policy analysis in 2018. She currently works to develop a new generation of community leaders through her role as the Associate Director within VT Engage: The Center for Leadership & Service Learning at Virginia Tech. Here she works on democratic engagement programming and helping students to develop their civic identity and ethos, growing their understanding of their own leadership identity, and committing to Ut Prosim as a way of life through service initiatives. She believes that higher education has an obligation to prepare students to be active in their communities and is committed to practicing what she teaches.

Jes currently serves as a planning commissioner for the Town of Christiansburg. She is also active in several university governance positions at Virginia Tech including chair of the LGBTQ+ Caucus. She also serves as the Secretary for the League of Women Voters for Virginia and the Director of Diversity for the League of Women Voters for Montgomery County. In her spare time, Jes is currently pursuing a PhD in the Higher Education program at Virginia Tech. Jes looks forward to continuing to have a positive impact on communities through democratic engagement and civic learning.
Leslie Hager-Smith has been the Mayor of Blacksburg since 2017. Her interest in town governance took root during her years as a reporter and columnist for the Roanoke Times. She was formerly the director of the Downtown Merchants of Blacksburg; a small business owner; and she directed Community Programs for the YMCA at Virginia Tech. She champions quality of life for all residents, focusing on projects that enhance place attachment and create community.

Deborah H. Travis, a former resident of Chesterfield, VA has lived in Christiansburg, VA for over 27 years. She is married and has three adult children and two granddaughters. She is a Senior Financial Advisor with Northwestern Mutual here in Blacksburg and has worked in the insurance and investment industry since 1975. Debbie holds a B.S. Degree in Business Administration and M.Ed in Business Education from Virginia State University.

Debbie has always been very active in the community. She has served as Treasurer and part of the Diversity & Equity Committee with Asbury UMC Women’s group, she serves on Asbury UMC Finance committee and church council, and a past Associate Matron of the former Tri-Community Order of Eastern Star, a member of the former Christiansburg Ruritan Club. She is currently Vice President of the League of Women Voters-Montgomery County and serves as President of the Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County Branch of the NAACP.

Dr. Jessica Wirgau has been Chief Executive Officer of the Community Foundation of the New River Valley since 2011. The Community Foundation invests in our community, now and for future generations by encouraging charitable giving, supporting innovative programs, and nurturing collaboration. Prior to joining the Foundation staff, Jess worked at the Town of Blacksburg on the restoration of the Alexander Black House, and later as a Graduate Assistant in the Office of the Senior Fellow for Resource Development on the creation of the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, focusing on community outreach and local government engagement. She began as a volunteer with the Community
Foundation in 2005, later served on the Board of Directors, and eventually joined the staff in 2009. Jess earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from Duke University and the University of Virginia, respectively, and in 2014 earned her Doctorate in Public Administration and Policy from Virginia Tech with a focus on Organizational Behavior and Change. She serves on several regional and statewide boards and commissions including the Virginia Impact Investing Forum Advisory Board and the Virginia Funders Network Strategic Planning Team. She lives in Blacksburg with her two sons and her husband.

Frances Keene serves as Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs. She earned a Ph.D. in higher education from Virginia Tech, a master’s degree in counselor education from the University of Virginia, and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the College of William and Mary.

She began her career at Virginia Tech as a victim services adjudication coordinator in the Office of Judicial Affairs, now called Student Conduct. She went on to become Assistant Director in 2003, and was named Interim Director in 2004, prior to taking on the role of Director.

As a 2016 recipient of the Aspire! Award for embracing Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) as a way of life, she was recognized for her work in the community and her spirit of service. Frances deeply values her work with students and educators who prioritize student learning and development in a residential context.

Elizabeth A. McClanahan is currently serving as Chief Executive Officer of the Virginia Tech Foundation as well as an adjunct faculty member of Virginia Tech’s Pamplin College of Business. Prior to her current roles, she returned to her small hometown of Grundy to serve as the President and Dean at Appalachian School of Law. She has decades of legal experience, working in both the private and public sectors. Most notably, Elizabeth served as a Justice on the Supreme Court of Virginia. Prior to her service on the Supreme Court, Elizabeth served on the Court of Appeals of Virginia and served as Chief Deputy Attorney General of Virginia. Over the years, Elizabeth has served on various boards and commissions. She is a proud resident of Southwest Virginia and is a strong supporter of Virginia 4-H.
Joseph Hancock is a political consultant and has worked in field operations for over 40 years. He began his work in California and worked as a campaign consultant for many including Tom Bradley, Jimmy Carter, Gary Hart, and Howard Dean. After moving to Virginia, he served as a consultant in the presidential campaign for Barack Obama and in the governor’s race for L. Douglas Wilder. Joseph has also managed campaigns for local candidates in Roanoke and across Virginia, too many to name.

His career has included working in the Office of the Registrar and as a Precinct Manager for the city of San Francisco. He also worked as an evaluation analyst in the Department of Health for the State of California. He currently lives in Roanoke, Virginia.

Joseph studied at Southern California University, Virginia State University, and Norfolk State University. Has four children, two girls and two boys and is the proud grandfather of three grandchildren.