EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY
VIRGINIA TECH.

Office for Equity & Accessibility

2020-2021 Annual Report

Contents

Executive Summary

The Office for Equity and Accessibility (OEA) promotes a learning and working environment free from harassment and discrimination for employees and students.

As Virginia Tech's chief civil rights compliance office, we coordinate campus efforts pertaining to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and Section 508 compliance; affirmative action program and Section 503 compliance; civil rights and conflict resolution trainings; response to discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct, including Title IX reports; and prohibited conduct prevention efforts.

In this inaugural edition of the OEA annual report, we provide insight into the meaningful work of our office. The data in this report reflect the 2020–2021 academic year, with the exception of the affirmative action and search exemption information, which is based on the federal fiscal year of Oct. 1–Sept. 30. We hope you find this information beneficial as we work together to create a more equitable and accessible campus.

Our Office's Role

OEA engages in the following activities to further Virginia Tech's commitment to learning and working environments that protect against harassment and discrimination, consistent with our Principles of Community:

- Develop a strong and viable affirmative action program for the university and assess the university's progress toward full equal employment opportunity for women, minorities, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities.
- Review requests for search exemptions to determine if there are compelling justifications to limit equal employment opportunity in our hiring practices.
- Respond promptly and fairly to allegations of conduct prohibited by the university's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies when the alleged misconduct involves a university employee or university-operated program or activity.
- Ensure institutional commitment to Title IX is fulfilled and respond to reports of sexual violence and harassment.

- Develop and deliver training programs to inform members of our campus community of their rights and responsibilities under university Policy 1025: Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Assault and Policy 1026: Title IX Sexual Harassment and Responsible Employee Reporting.
- Provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities and oversee institutional practices to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility for students, employees, and visitors.
- Lead organizations or serve on campus, community, state, and national boards focused on civil rights, equity, affirmative action, accessibility, and inclusion.
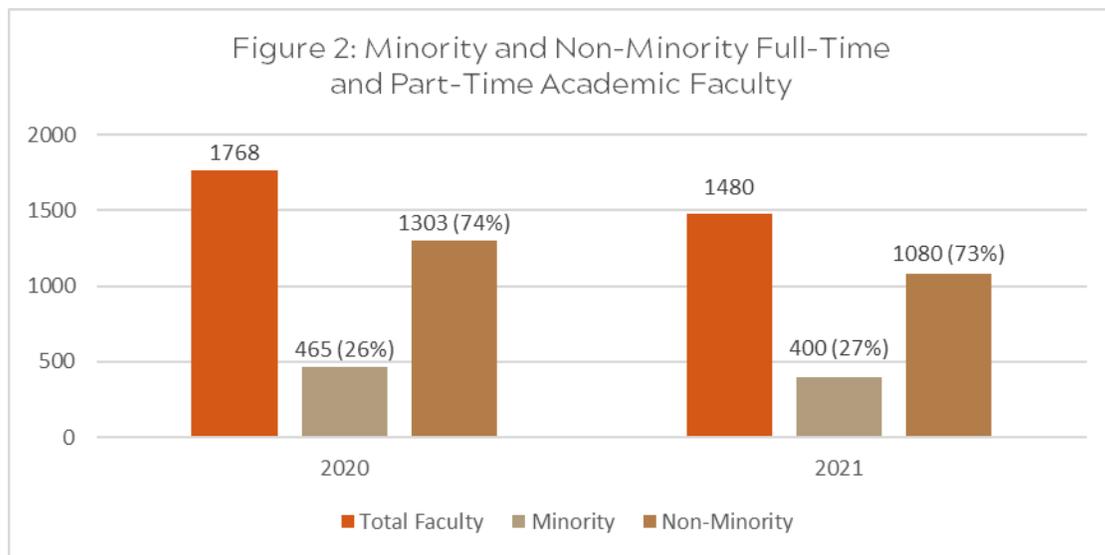
Affirmative Action

Annually, on Oct. 1, we take a snapshot of the university's workforce to evaluate success and challenges in diversifying the campus. While we experienced a dip in the percentage of women in tenure track, tenured, non-tenure track, and research faculty positions (Figure 1), we saw an increase in the percentage of minorities in the same employment categories (Figure 2). Within our Administrative and Professional (A/P) faculty and staff job categories, percentages increased in the representation of women (Figure 3) and minorities (Figure 4). The overall percentage of veterans in the workforce across all employment categories remains unchanged since Oct. 1, 2020 (Figure 5).
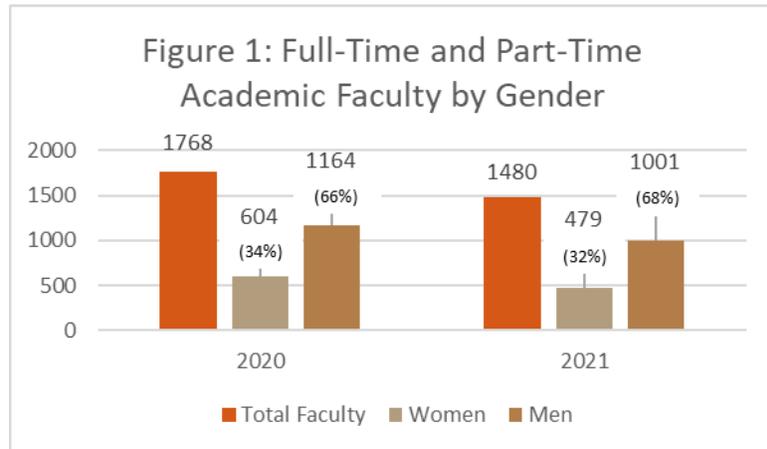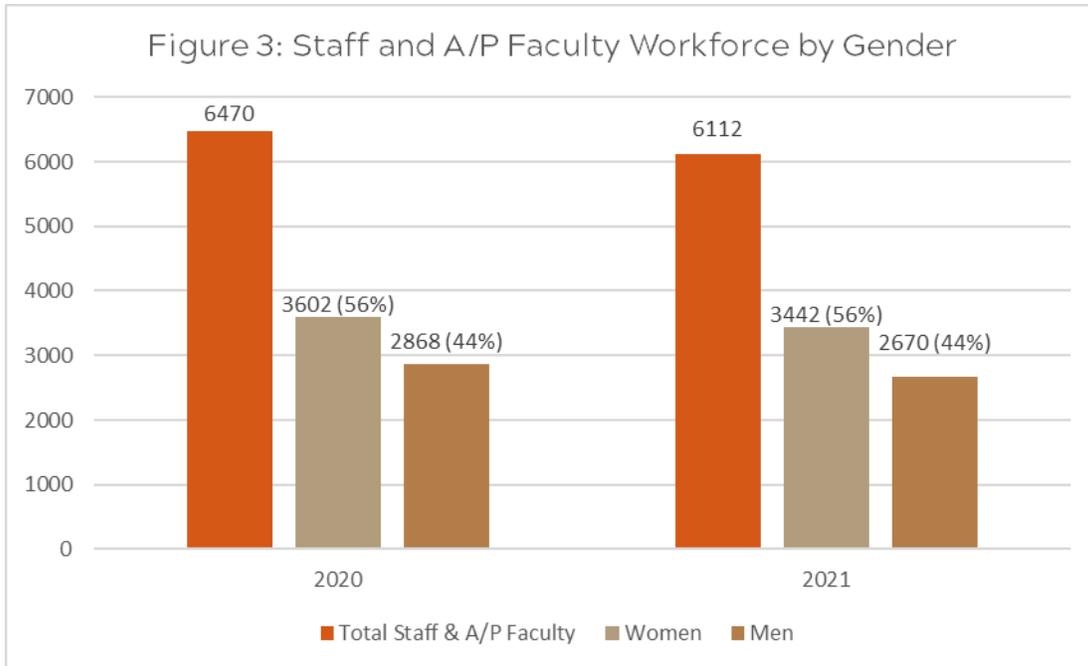
Working in collaboration with our colleagues in the Division of Human Resources, Office for Inclusion and Diversity, and Office of the Provost, we continually evaluate our efforts with a focus on improving the demographic representation of our workforce.

Figure 1: Full-Time and Part-Time Academic Faculty by Gender

2020: Total Faculty 1768, Women 604 (34%), Men 1164 (66%)
2021: Total Faculty 1480, Women 479 (32%), Men 1001 (68%)

Note: Data include tenure-track and tenured faculty, non-tenure track faculty, and research faculty.

Figure 2: Minority and Non-Minority Full-Time and Part-Time Academic Faculty

2020: Total Faculty 1768, Minority 465 (26%), Non-Minority 1303 (74%)
2021: Total Faculty 1480, Minority 400 (27%), Non-Minority 1080 (73%)

Note: Data include tenure-track and tenured faculty, non-tenure track faculty, and research faculty.

Figure 3: Staff and A/P Faculty Workforce by Gender

Note: The data include university staff, classified staff, and A/P faculty.

Figure 4: Minority and Non-Minority Staff and A/P Faculty Workforce
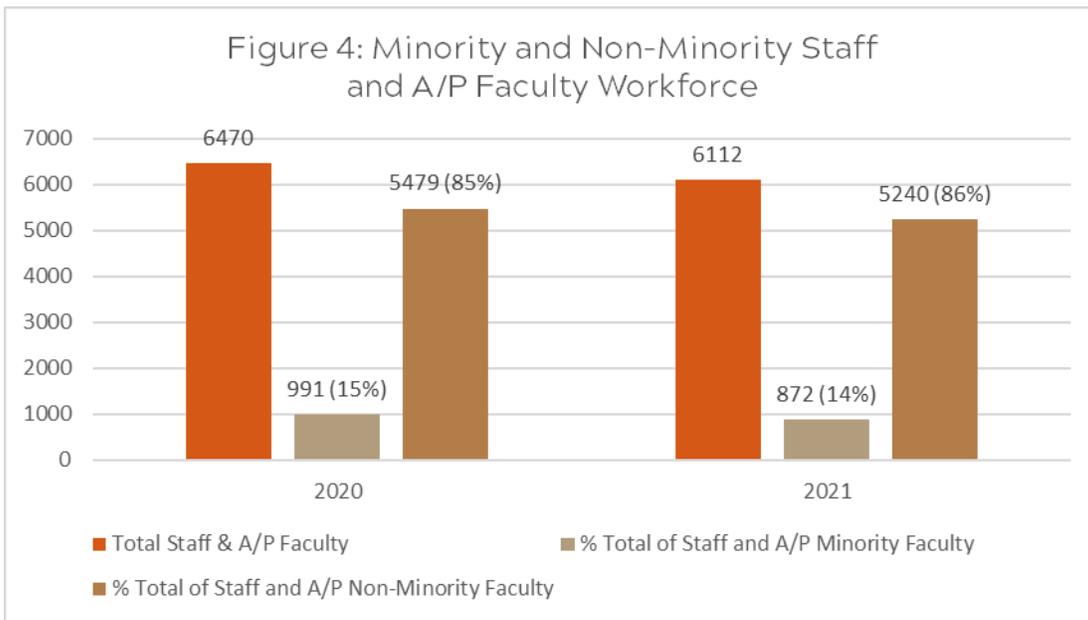
Note: The data include university staff, classified staff, and A/P faculty.
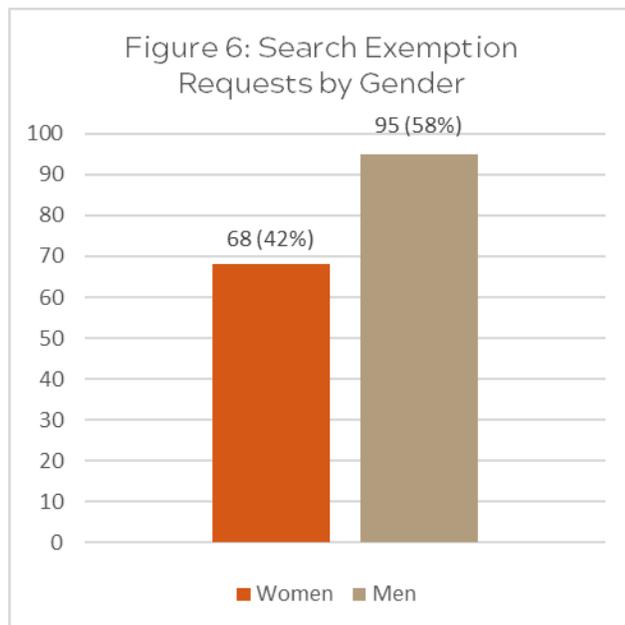
Source: Snapshot of workforce Oct. 1, 2020, to Oct. 1, 2021, Virginia Tech Main Campus Functional Affirmative Action Plan, using data from Banner Human Resources Information System.

Figure 5: Veteran Workforce

Bar chart showing:
- 2020: 7985 (Total Staff), 216 (2%) (Total Veterans on Staff / % of Veterans)
- 2021: 7977 (Total Staff), 155 (2%) (Total Veterans on Staff / % of Veterans)

Legend: Total Staff, Total Veterans on Staff, % of Veterans
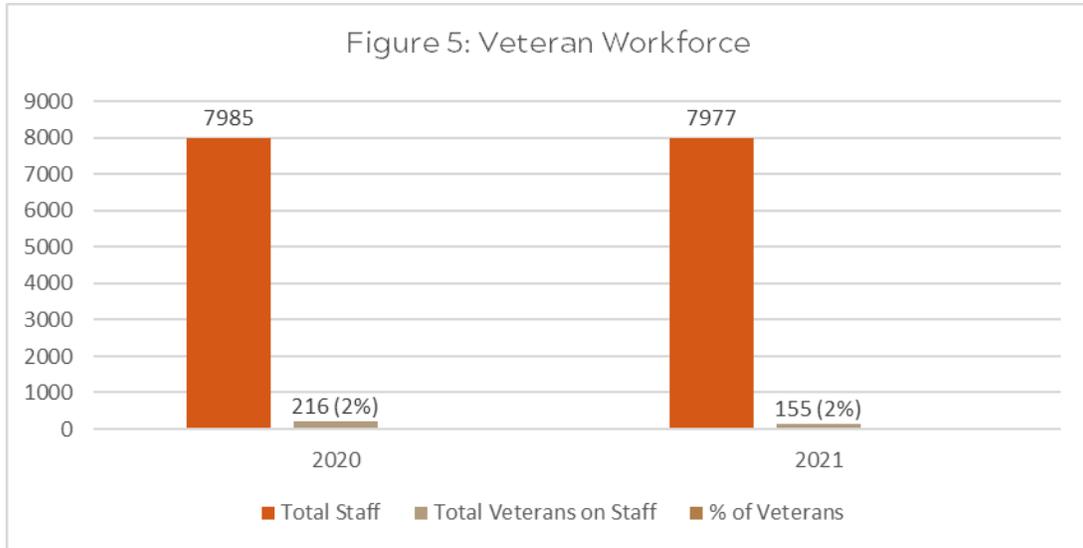
Search Exemptions

Virginia Tech is committed to providing equal employment opportunity for all qualified individuals. In support of this commitment, competitive searches are conducted to fill the majority of our vacancies. In some instances, positions may be filled via search exemption processes, without competition, when specific criteria are met.

During the 2021 affirmative action plan (AAP) year, OEA processed 163 search exemption requests. While the majority of the hires were male and white, hires of African Americans, American Indians, and Alaska Natives were higher than their representation in the overall employee population (Figures 6 and 7). Exemptions are most often requested for research faculty positions (Figure 8). The most commonly approved search exemption basis was to hire a postdoc without a search process (Figure 9).

Figure 6: Search Exemption Requests by Gender

Bar chart showing:
- Women: 68 (42%)
- Men: 95 (58%)

Legend: Women, Men

Figure 7: Search Exemption Requests by Race & Ethnicity

Category	Value
2 or More	3 (2%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0 (0%)
Asian	47 (29%)
Black or African American	14 (9%)
White	87 (53%)
Hispanic	12 (7%)

Figure 8: Search Exemption Requests by Employment Category

Category	Value
A/P	34 (21%)
Research Faculty	102 (63%)
Teaching and Research (T&R) Faculty	27 (16%)

Figure 9: Search Exemption Requests by Reason

Reason	Count
T&R - A/P Only: Identified candidate is the leading expert in the field and has no viable competitors.	1
T&R - A/P Only: Target of Opportunity for Excellence Positions (TOP).	20
T&R - A/P Only: Position is one year or less or is salaried part-time.	19
T&R - A/P - Research: Identified candidate is the only one possessing the unusual set of experience and skills required for the position.	8
T&R - A/P - Research: Candidate is a dual career hire.	23
Research Only: Identified candidate previously worked on the project in a significant role, and continuation of personnel is critical to the project's success.	16
Research Only: Identified candidate is named in the research grant or is listed as PI or CoPI.	5
SR-Postdoc Positions: PhD awarded in last 5 years with a minimum of 1 year of postdoctoral eligibility remaining	48
Conditional: Target of Talent (TOT)	3
SR-Postdoc Positions: Candidate's PhD is in progress or has not yet been awarded.	20

Title IX and Sexual Violence

On Aug. 14, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education issued new Title IX regulations. To respond to those changes, the university implemented Policy 1026: Title IX Sexual Harassment and Responsible Employee Reporting. The regulations narrowed the scope of what is considered Title IX sexual harassment but still allow educational institutions to respond to non-Title IX sexual harassment using codes of conduct. To give a full picture of sexual violence impacting the campus community, we have provided data on all official reports of sexual violence and harassment regarding students.

OEA received 298 reports regarding students who experienced some form of sexual harassment or violence. This is a 19 percent increase from the prior academic year.

Figure 10 details the types of reports received, with sexual harassment being the most frequently reported. Of the reports that resulted in formal complaints and investigations, Figure 11 indicates a student was found responsible for gender-based harassment or violence in 16 cases. In 14 cases, the respondent was found not responsible, and in three cases, the respondent was found in violation of a non-gender-based student conduct policy. As Figure 12 shows, suspension was the most common sanction, and four students were dismissed from the university.

The Title IX coordinator publishes an annual report with more detail regarding the impact of sexual harassment and violence on our campus community.
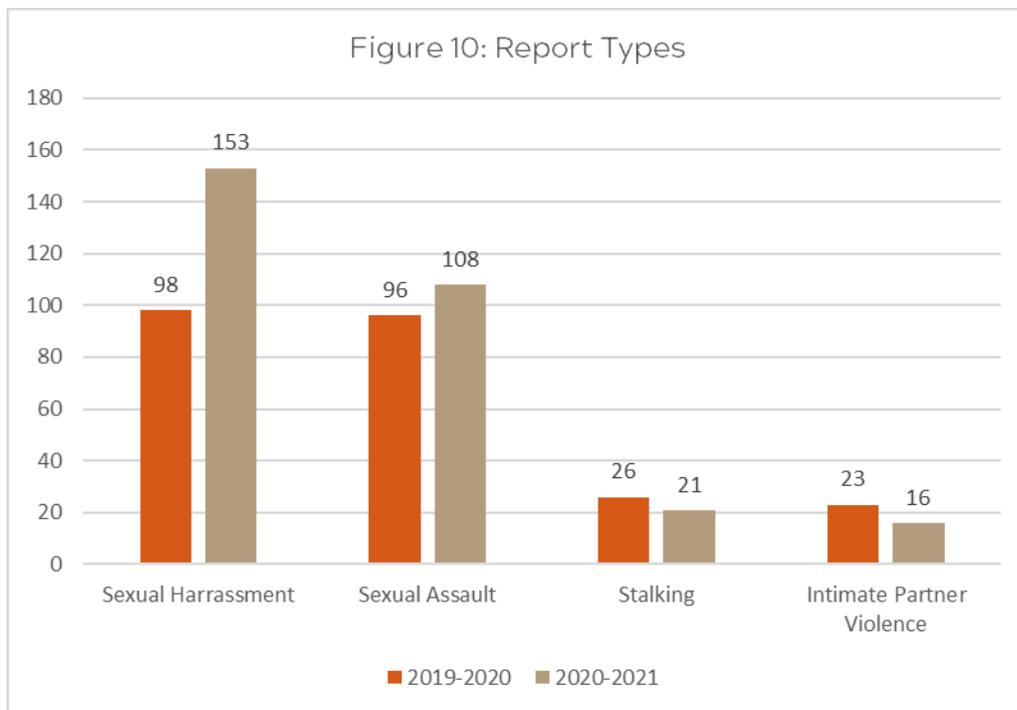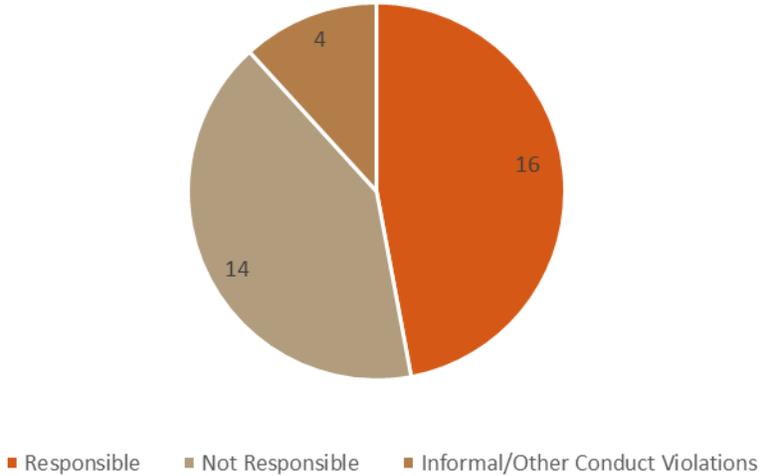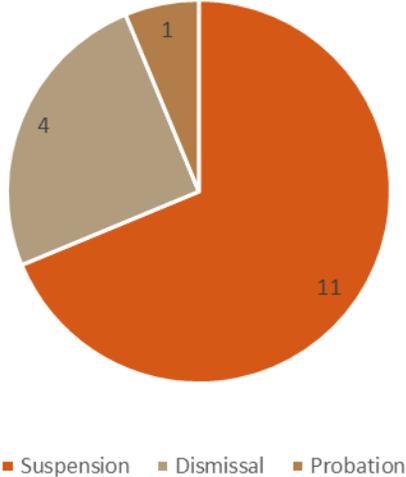

Figure 10: Report Types

Report Type	2019-2020	2020-2021
Sexual Harrassment	98	153
Sexual Assault	96	108
Stalking	26	21
Intimate Partner Violence	23	16

Figure 11: Outcomes

Responsible: 16
Not Responsible: 14
Informal/Other Conduct Violations: 4

■ Responsible   ■ Not Responsible   ■ Informal/Other Conduct Violations

Figure 12: Sanctions

Suspension: 11
Dismissal: 4
Probation: 1

■ Suspension   ■ Dismissal   ■ Probation

Response to Reports of Prohibited Conduct

OEA is committed to providing a prompt and fair response to reports of protected-class discrimination and harassment as well as retaliation (prohibited conduct). OEA uses multiple approaches to respond and fairly resolve the variety of reports received.
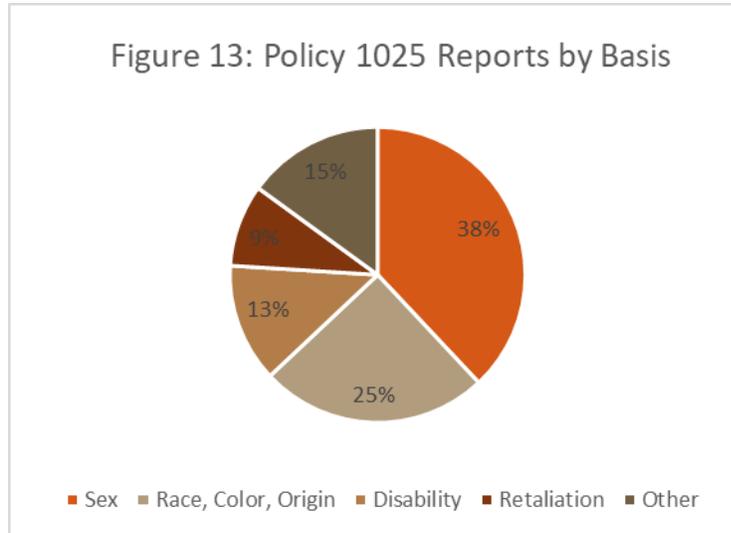
- **Outreach:** OEA receives a report from a responsible employee or other third party but is unable to reach any impacted parties and does not have sufficient information to move forward without their participation.

- **Consultation:** OEA hosts discussion with reporting and impacted parties, as appropriate. These exploratory meetings focus on sharing resources, rights and responsibilities, possible supportive measures to assist impacted parties, and ways a particular concern might be appropriately resolved. A consultation may or may not itself be the ultimate resolution to a concern.

- **Facilitated or Informal Resolution:** OEA, at the request of any and all impacted parties, assists in resolving the report through a number of approaches that do not include an investigation and formal resolution. Facilitated or informal resolution typically includes consultations with impacted parties, respondents, and/or supervisors, managers, or administrators.

- **Formal Complaint and Resolution:** OEA conducts a preliminary assessment to confirm that the issue(s) fall under OEA's jurisdiction and authority, then conducts an inquiry to determine if the complaint warrants investigation. If so, OEA gathers the facts necessary to make a formal determination regarding whether an employee or program violated the university's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

A report may—but need not—result in a complaint, which is a formal request for OEA to resolve an allegation of prohibited conduct through investigation.
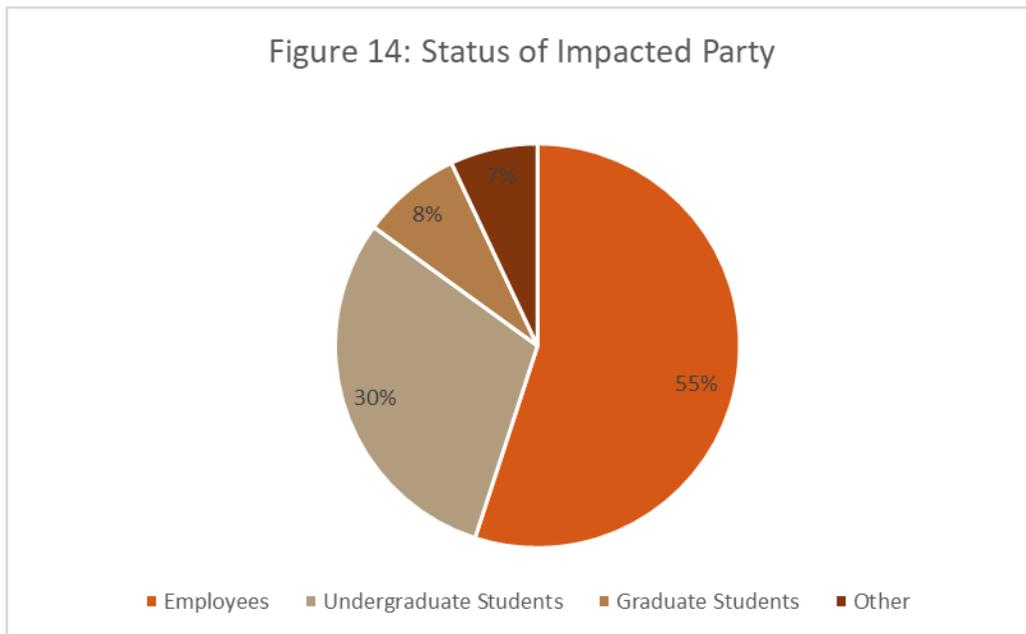
Reporting Statistics

A total of 116 reports were received during the 2020–2021 reporting period. A single report can (and often does) include multiple bases of discrimination. For example, one report can include allegations based on both race and sex. In those situations, the report counts in both categories.

Figure 13 shows reports alleging discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression were the most frequent at 38 percent. Discrimination allegations based on race, color, or national origin were second. The majority of our reports are from employees, but 30 percent were from undergraduate students (Figure 14).

Figure 13: Policy 1025 Reports by Basis

- Sex
- Race, Color, Origin
- Disability
- Retaliation
- Other

Sex: 38%
Race, Color, Origin: 25%
Disability: 13%
Retaliation: 9%
Other: 15%

Note: "Other" category includes reports of discrimination based on age, genetic information, political affiliation, and veteran status.

Figure 15 shows that of the 116 reports, 56 percent were resolved via some form of consultation, and 26 percent involved either informal resolution or a formal investigation.

Figure 14: Status of Impacted Party

- Employees
- Undergraduate Students
- Graduate Students
- Other

Employees: 55%
Undergraduate Students: 30%
Graduate Students: 8%
Other: 7%

Note: "Other" category signifies those who are unaffiliated with Virginia Tech or affiliation is unknown.

Figure 15: Response to Reports

- Consultation
- Outreach
- Resolution

(Consultation 56%, Outreach 18%, Resolution 26%)
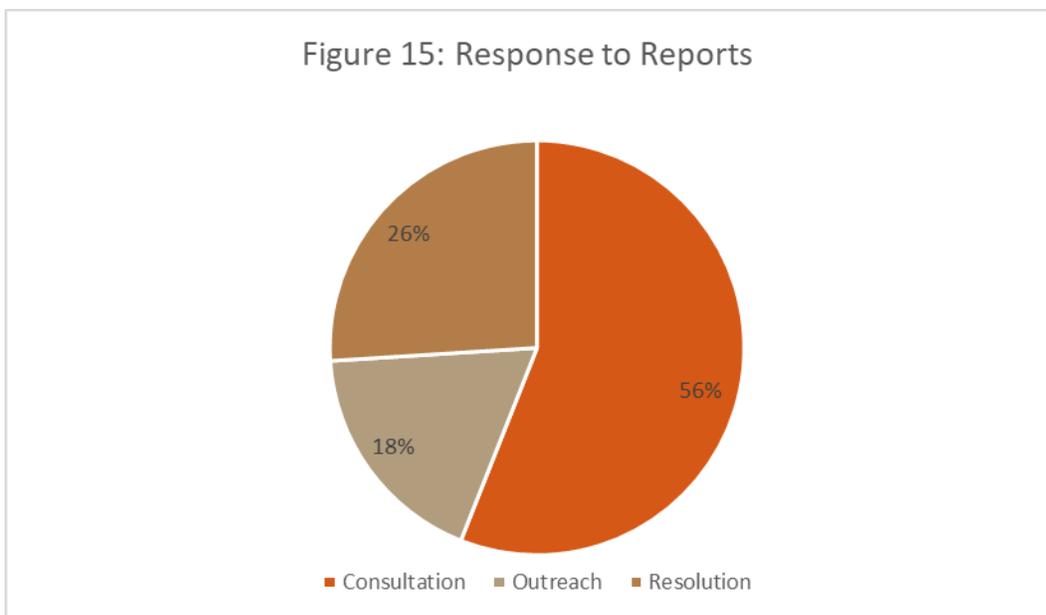
Compliance Training

OEA provides ongoing compliance training to ensure the campus community understands the university's policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment. The training is an integral part of our education and outreach work.

Figure 16: Compliance Training Completions

2019-2020: 4094
2020-2021: 7180

Each year, OEA sets a goal to increase the number of employees who have taken the training within the last two years or, for new hires, within 90 days of their first day.

As Figure 16 demonstrates, OEA has made significant strides in increasing the number of employees who complete compliance training.
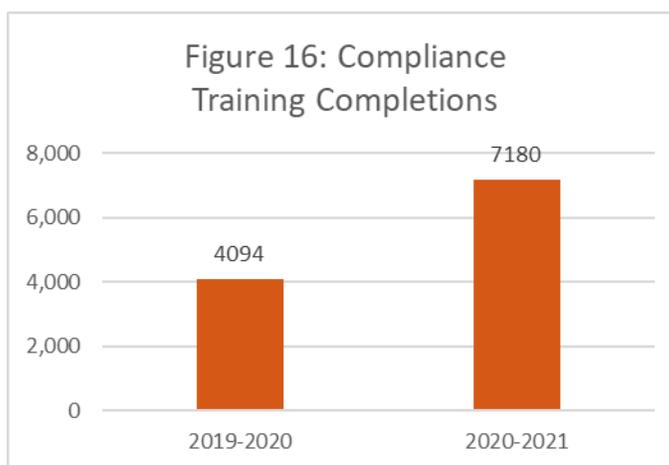
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Accessibility

OEA works in collaboration with employees and supervisors to determine reasonable accommodations for employees. We also oversee institutional compliance to ensure the institution's commitment to physical and programmatic accessibility.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for everyone, individuals with disabilities have experienced

Figure 17: Accommodations by Type

- Covid-19 Related: 42%
- Workplace Related: 35%
- Return to Work Related: 23%

disproportionate negative impacts. As Figure 17 shows, the majority of reasonable accommodation requests handled during the reporting year were related to COVID-19.
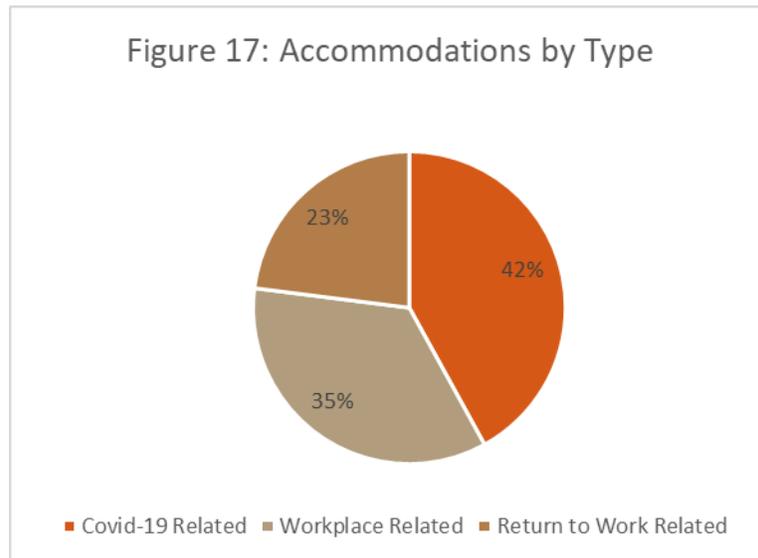
Physical Accessibility

During the reporting year, OEA completed 29 plan reviews for large and small projects and nine building reviews. The information provided in these assessments advises campus partners on strategies to improve accessibility in the built environment.

Each year, the Campus Accessibility Working Group (CAWG) submits a coordinated budget request to identify and prioritize projects to improve accessibility in the built environment. The results of these major accessibility projects are available in the CAWG annual report.

Under the leadership of the campus ADA architect and in consultation with stakeholders, OEA will engage in the following physical accessibility planning efforts:

- Conduct a comprehensive study of campus parking to verify the exact number and locations of accessible parking spaces on campus and ensure ADA parking requirements are met and accessible parking is distributed optimally.

- Assemble a database of all campus buildings and facilities to determine where the greatest accessibility challenges exist. This will identify instances of non-compliance before a complaint is received and result in a prioritized list of issues so that effort can be targeted to the most critical areas of concern.

Conclusion

After reading this inaugural report on equity and accessibility trends at Virginia Tech, we hope you are positioned to join and lead informed discussions of our current campus climate and the opportunities to strengthen our institutional values through equitable practices.

OEA recognizes that efforts to foster an inclusive community free of discrimination and harassment are ongoing. In the 2021-22 academic year, the office will continue its work to increase policy compliance; respond to requests and complaints with promptness; and educate faculty, staff, and students regarding their roles and responsibilities in the prevention of prohibited conduct.

We look forward to sharing our progress in diversifying the campus workforce, hosting outreach and training activities, and expanding the office's staffing to resolve reports as well as ensure accessibility on the university's physical and digital campuses.

As all members of our community are charged with maintaining a work and learning environment based on mutual respect and understanding, we encourage you to participate in trainings and review resources from OEA. To learn more, visit oea.vt.edu or email us at equityandaccess@vt.edu.