ON TOPIC: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Talent Development team is pleased to offer relevant and meaningful learning opportunities to Virginia Tech. "On Topic" is a quarterly publication that offers resources and professional development opportunities, focusing on the university's core values and goals.

This summer, the focus is on Professional Development. Many of us already know the importance and benefits of professional development, but struggle with fitting it into ever-tighter schedules. To add to this, for many of us, we are used to working from our home offices and now are being asked to return to our campus office. Everything is in a state of flux, including our personal goals.

So for this edition we'll be looking more at "how" and less at "why." We hope you find numerous resources and strategies for setting goals, developing a schedule, and making time to invest in your development, and most importantly, you.

The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

ONLINE COURSES

If you have never accessed a LinkedIn Learning course previously, please use this link to activate your Virginia Tech account.

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Effective Professional Development is about developing the habit of setting aside time to work on you and your goals. But that doesn’t mean it’s easy. All too often we get stopped before we even start. If you’re stuck, check out this interview with Virginia Tech’s own Dr. Alicia Johnson, as she discusses strategies for getting started.

Set a Goal (It’s Okay, Start Small): Set reasonable goals for yourself. What do you want to learn or improve on? How long do you think it will take? And don’t forget, how will it help you? Thinking about the benefits down the road will keep you motivated.

Make time (and make it a habit): We can’t stress this one enough: Set aside time! Even if it’s just 5 or 10 minutes a week, write it down, put it in your Google or Outlook Calendar, and stick to it.

Implement: Whatever skills or information you learn, find ways to implement it. This will help you learn faster and retain the information.

Reflect and Adjust: Set aside time to reflect on the journey of discovery and what you’ve learned. Try to do this after each course or at the end of your professional development time that day. Connect what you’ve read or seen to your job. At the end of the month, evaluate what worked and what didn’t. Maybe it went great and you’re ready for the next challenge, perhaps you need to change the time of day, or you want to double the amount of time you dedicated for your development.
Did you know that Virginia Tech has multiple groups dedicated to curating, developing, and creating resources to help you succeed in your career and life? Reach out to any of these groups and start your professional development journey today!

**VT Prof. Dev. Resources**
- **HR - Talent Development**
- Career and Professional Development
  - for students
  - for faculty & staff
  - for alumni
  - for family
- Assessment & Professional Development (Student Affairs)
- Graduate School - Graduate Life
- Technology-Enhanced Learning and Online Strategies (TLOS) - Professional Development Network

**Articles**
Professional Development isn't a straight line; it's a journey. Having a goal in mind is important, but don't forget to stop and smell the roses on your way.

**Goal setting**
- SHRM - Employee Career Development Plan
- Creating Your Professional Development Plan: 3 Surprising Truths
- The Secret to 100% Commitment is 10 Behaviors

**Continuous Development**
- Four tips to make time for professional development
- Why You’re So Busy and How to Ruthlessly Prioritize
- 10 Ways to Maximize Your Professional Development

**Don't forget about you**
- Self-care is Professional Development
- 6 Things You Need to Recover From Every Day

**Videos/Podcasts**
- **TED**
  - 5 steps to designing the life you want
  - The Only 3 Career Steps that Matter
  - Speed Learning: Learn In Half The Time
  - How Accountability Partners Keep You Committed
- **99U**
  - The Incredible Benefits of a “Get Better” Mindset

**Book Lists**
- Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston and host of two podcasts, Dare to Lead and Unlocking Us. Check out her list of recommended books.
- Adam Grant, Ph.D., is an Organizational Psychologist at Wharton, bestselling author, and host of the TED podcast, WorkLife. Here's his list of 12 books to read this summer.

Many more development opportunities and resources are available for faculty and staff at Virginia Tech. See what is available [HERE](#)!