

Teaching and Learning: Hokie Spirit

By Cheryl A. Lindeman



If you didn't know what a Hokie is, I am sure you have it in your mind now – a flashing image of a college campus struck by tragedy on April 16th. For those of us who teach in Virginia, the news reports left us with immediate questions –

Is one of our students in the group? It was a very long week for all of us because this type of tragedy could have taken place on any learning campus. Various departments on Virginia Tech's campus are active in NCSSSMST activities. Therefore, the April 16th event involved one of our affiliate member campuses.

If we reflect about our most difficult teachable moments in our careers, I am sure the Virginia Tech tragedy was extremely taxing on our minds. For those of us teaching high school seniors, who were in the process of sending deposits to Virginia Tech, it was particularly agonizing. For myself, I faced a college biology class with 7 future Hokies (as we call them) walking quietly into the lab and staring right at me. You could hear a pin drop in the room. Luckily, the Commonwealth of Virginia has a "moment of silence" followed by the pledge of allegiance. I asked for a moment of silence for the victims. When it was over I allowed the students to offer comments. The room was still silent. What could they say?

The healing for all of us was hearing good news reports from campus. The students at Virginia Tech showed the nation how they could work together to begin the insurmountable task of healing. Those of us who knew of our graduates attending VT called to make sure the students and their families were okay. Hearing the echo "Are you okay?" was a familiar sound. Our NCSSSMST conference registrar, John Wenrich, has his office located on campus at VT. Luckily, he was in San Francisco at a Conference with some of our NCSSSMST past presidents.

The Virginia Tech's Office of the President has set up a special recovery web site. It is located at: <http://recovery.vt.edu>. The executive committee of the NCSSSMST Board of Directors recommended a donation to the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund. Our prayers and concerns go out to the VT Hokie Family.

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