

## Thoughts about Virginia Tech

David L. Eisler, President  
April 19, 2007 Memorial Ceremony

Today we speak for the student who has experienced firsthand the devastating impact violence can have on a campus,

Today we speak for the faculty member who sees the search for learning and knowledge replaced by grief and suffering,

Today we speak for parents who worry about their sons and daughters, people more precious to them than anything in this world.

These are times when we ask why, but there is no why.

We search for a reason, but know that there is no reason.

Yet even in this time of unspeakable and unimaginable horror we see lessons of goodness and courage, of grace under fire, and in doing so learn something about ourselves.

Monday began as any other in Blacksburg, Virginia, but was transformed into a day few will ever forget. In an instant quick-thinking students shattered windows and barricaded their classroom door so they and others could escape.

A faculty member shielded his classroom and his students with his body, in sacrificing his life, saving the lives of his students.

Made in an instant these are not decisions that are edited, reviewed, and revised. These are spontaneous, instinctive, and good beyond any measure. In a moment of terrible evil, true goodness and greatness are revealed.

Your presence here today reflects a basic human need. We gather here through the understanding that we need each other.

We gather here not as a campus, but as a community. In doing so, we project our love, our compassion, and our support for colleagues, students, and families in Virginia.

We gather together because we need to do so, knowing that while much of the world will focus on the evil, we will focus on the good.

Today, while I encourage you to think of those students who will not graduate and those faculty who will never again enter a classroom,

I also want you to reflect on the great courage and goodness displayed on Monday.

And in doing so always remember that we are here for each.

Together we can and we will make the world a better place.