



2026

Annual General Meeting

from the President



Dear colleagues, friends,

When SOMP welcomed me as a new member in 2012, I could not have imagined what a special community I was joining. This has become my professional home—a network of exceptional people who share a passion for mining and minerals education and, as importantly, a passion for collaboration across institutions and borders. Working alongside such talented and generous colleagues is so very rewarding. I am humbled by your trust and grateful for the opportunity to serve as SOMP's President this year.

Our guiding theme for the year is **Leading Together** and I am really excited to see these words in action during our 2026 Annual General Meeting. The meeting will be hosted by the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering at Virginia Tech between July 19-22. We cannot wait to welcome SOMP members and friends to our iconic campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. We are confident the program will be both engaging and productive—with plenty of space to spark new connections and strengthen the partnerships that make SOMP so effective. We are also organizing a parallel program for partners to explore the beautiful New River Valley and experience the local culture. And between July 23-24, we will offer an off-campus excursion to regional mine sites.

Looking forward to our time in Blacksburg. Until then, Glückauf!

Emily A Sarver

Emily Sarver

Stonie Barker Professor of Mining Engineering, Virginia Tech
2026 SOMP President

4 Organizing Committee

5 Host Institution & Location

8 Travel &
Accommodations

10 Meeting Agenda, Abstract
Submissions & Registration

13 Partners Program &
Excursion

15 Other Details & Updates



2026 Organizing Committee

Prof. Emily Sarver, Virginia Tech, USA

Prof. Vladislav Kecojevic, Queen's University, Canada

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Elisabeth Clausen, RWTH Aachen University, Germany

Prof. Serkan Saydam, University of New South Wales, Australia

Prof. Zach Agioutantis, University of Kentucky, USA

Prof. Emeritus, Michael Karmis, Virginia Tech, USA

Prof. Domingo Javier Carvajal Gomez, University of Huelva, Spain

Hon. Prof. Angel Tobar Escudero, Technical University of Madrid / Epiroc, Spain

Prof. Oscar Jaime Restrepo Baena, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia

Ms. Sandra Nowosad, Curtin University, Australia

Assoc. Prof. Veiko Karu, Estonian Business School, Estonia

Dr. George Barakos, Curtin University, Australia

Prof. Godfrey Dzinomwa, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Namibia

Prof. Andrea Brickey, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, USA

Prof. Wei Victor Liu, University of Alberta, Canada

Assoc. Prof. Nga Nguyen, Hanoi University of Mining and Geology, Vietnam

Prof. Harmony Musiyarira, Namibia University of Science & Technology, Namibia

Prof. Oliver Langefeld, Technical University of Clausthal, Germany

Assoc. Prof. Bahareh Nojabaei, Virginia Tech, USA

Assist. Prof. Rohit Pandey, Virginia Tech, USA

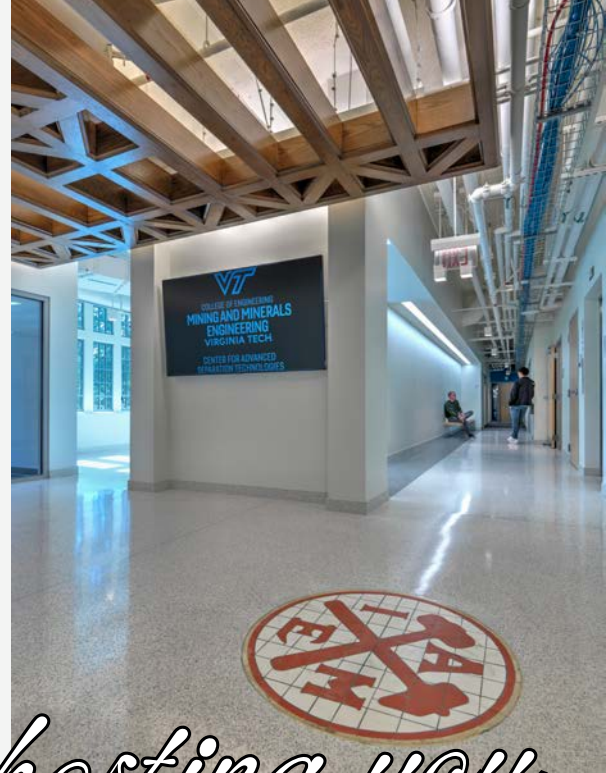
Assist. Prof. Amy McBrayer, West Virginia University, USA



Virginia Tech is a public land-grant research university. The institution prides itself on being an inclusive community of knowledge, discovery, and creativity which aims to prepare leaders and problem-solvers. True to its motto-'**Ut Prosim' (That I May Serve)**- Virginia Tech is known for a culture of service and a dedication to improving the quality of life and the human condition within the Commonwealth of Virginia and throughout the world.

Founded in 1872 as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College under the Morrill Act, the university has grown from its rural, teaching- and military-focused origins into a comprehensive institution offering more than 280 degree programs and 38,000 students across undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels. With more than 2,500 faculty and annual research expenditures above \$500M, Virginia Tech is today among the major research universities in the U.S. The university is especially recognized for its College of Engineering, which consistently ranks among the top engineering schools in the nation. Virginia Tech's flagship campus is located in Blacksburg on some 2,600 acres, and it also has multiple multiple regional campuses and and international sites.





we look forward to hosting you

The Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering at Virginia Tech occupies a special place in the university's history and identity: The very first engineering degree conferred by Virginia Tech was in mining engineering, establishing a tradition of technical excellence that has endured for more than a century. From its earliest years, the department has combined education, research, and service to advance the mining profession and contribute to the responsible development of natural resources. Today, the department continues to play a vital role at the leading edge of engineering innovation.

Widely recognized as a major research engine of the university, the department is home to the Center for Advanced Separation Technologies (CAST) and the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER), which expand its reach and impact across industry and government. Faculty and students lead cutting-edge work in mineral processing, mine health and safety, automation, and sustainable resource recovery. With the newly renovated Holden Hall providing state-of-the-art labs, classrooms, and collaboration spaces, the department is well positioned to prepare the next generation of engineers and to ensure that mining remains not only a proud legacy at Virginia Tech, but also a vital part of its present and future.



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
MINING AND MINERALS
ENGINEERING
VIRGINIA TECH.

BLACKSBURG

Nestled in the scenic New River Valley on the edge of the Appalachian Mountains, Blacksburg offers the quintessential “college town” experience. With Virginia Tech at its heart, the community thrives on a vibrant mix of culture, innovation, and Hokie spirit. Downtown Blacksburg features locally owned restaurants, coffee shops, and live music venues, creating an energetic yet welcoming atmosphere.

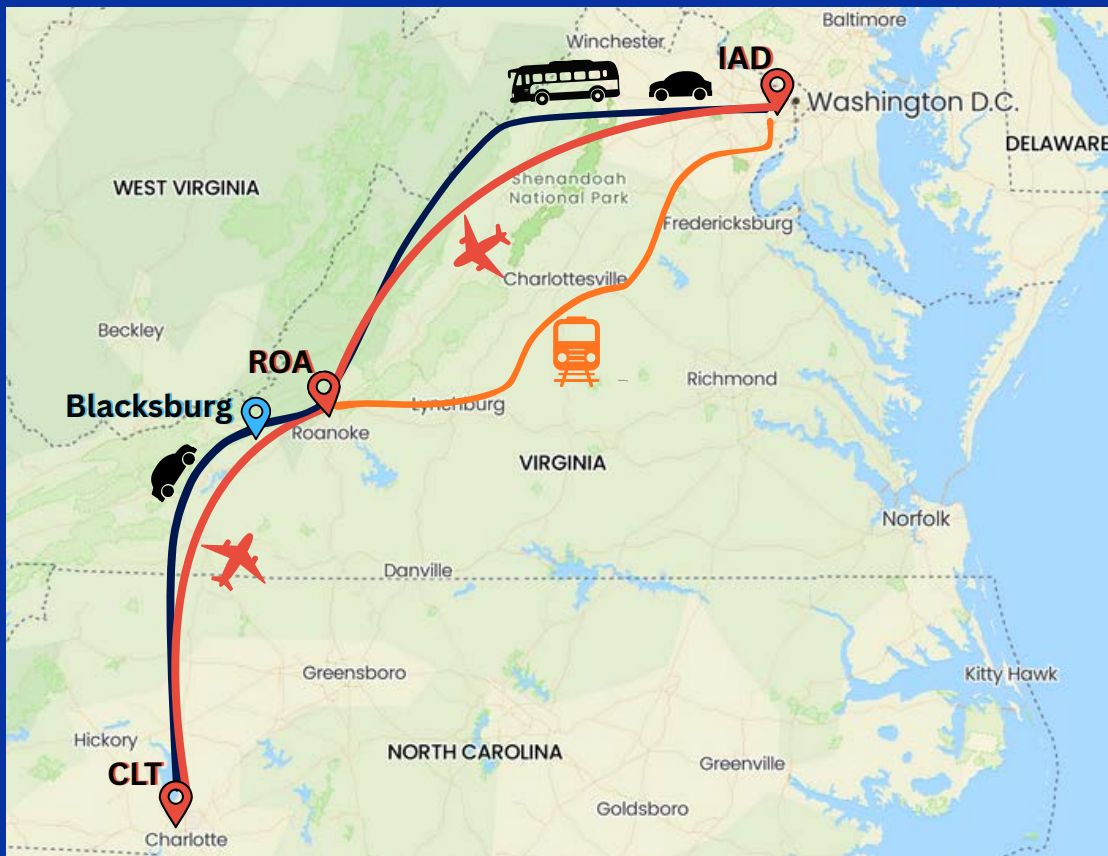
Regularly ranked among the best small towns to live in the United States, Blacksburg combines natural beauty and outdoor recreation with a strong sense of community. Its walkable downtown, dynamic arts scene, and proximity to hiking and biking trails make it a destination that balances academic excellence with quality of life. For visitors and residents alike, Blacksburg captures what it means to live, work, and learn in a true college town.

BLACKSBURG



GETTING

HERE



It is recommended to fly into one of several international airports in the mid-Atlantic US. Washington Dulles (IAD), Charlotte (CLT) and Atlanta (ATL) all offer connecting flights to the Roanoke Regional Airport (ROA), which is about a 40-minute drive to Blacksburg.

Notably, arrival to IAD offers the most flexibility with options for: direct *Virginia Breeze* bus transfer to Blacksburg, connecting regional flight to ROA, or *Amtrak* train from DC Central Station to Roanoke (note you must take metro from IAD to DC Central Station). From ROA and the Roanoke Amtrak station, there is a direct *SmartWay* bus transfer to Blacksburg.

For those wishing to rent a car, expect drive times of about 4.5 hours from IAD or 3.0 hours from CLT.

HERE

STAYING



The Inn at Virginia Tech is the preferred hotel for the SOMP 2026 participants. The Inn is situated on the northwest corner of campus and is co-located with the Skelton Conference Center, where AGM sessions will be held July 20-22. It is a short walk from other key locations, including the main academic buildings like Holden Hall—home to Mining and Minerals Engineering—and the athletics complex.

A “SOMP 2026” room block with a special nightly rate has been made at the VT Inn. Rooms may also be available at other nearby hotels, including the Residence Inn by Marriot and Hyatt Place which are also within walking distance.

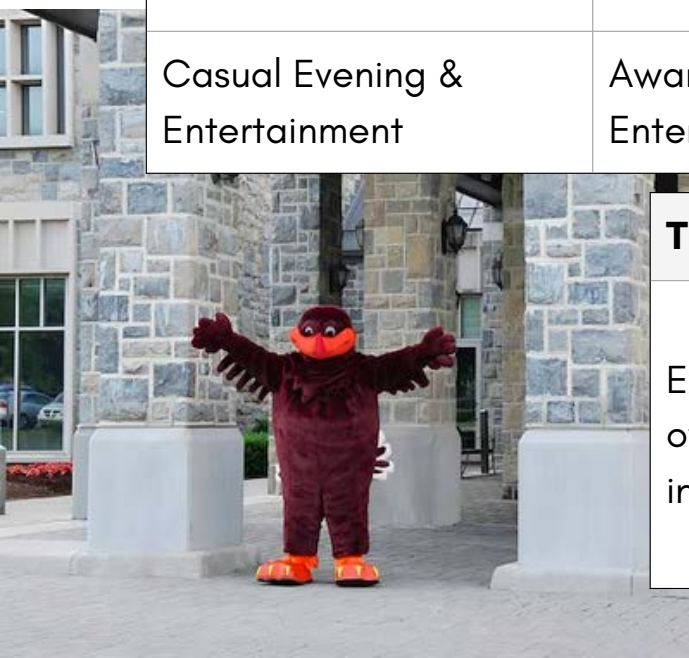
2026 SOMP AGENDA

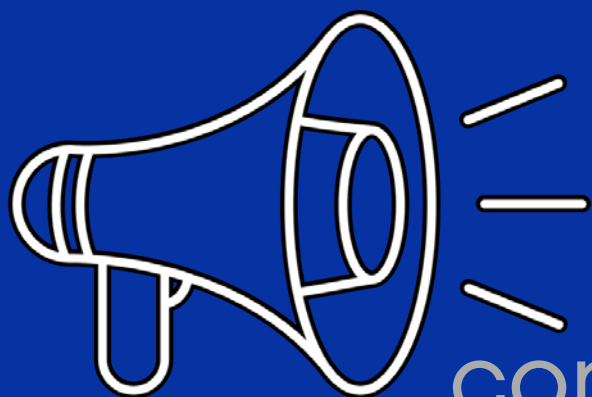
at a glance

Saturday July 18	Sunday July 19
Arrive to Blacksburg	SOMP Council & Committee Meetings
	Virginia Tech tours
	Kickoff Mixer ft. World Cup Final watch!

Monday July 20	Tuesday July 21	Wednesday July 22
AGM Opening	AGM Sessions	AGM Sessions
AGM Sessions		
Casual Evening & Entertainment	Awards Evening & Entertainment	Closing Mixer & Flag Ceremony

Thursday July 23	Friday July 24
Excursion (tentative: departs from Blacksburg, overnight accommodation, returns to major international airport)	





CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

coming in November



leading, together

In keeping with our guiding theme for 2026, abstract submissions will be invited to showcase

- ✓ Leading-edge practices in teaching and learning
- ✓ Forward-thinking curricular activities
- ✓ New approaches to student recruitment and outreach
- ✓ How-to strategies for expanding research collaborations



REGISTRATION

opens January 18

Registration	Early (before May 1)	Regular (after May 1)
Regular members	\$750	\$900
Members from developing countries or regions (OECD definition)	\$500	\$600
Junior members	\$500	\$600
Non-members	\$900	\$1,080
Partner program participants	\$500	\$600
Field trip	\$500	\$600

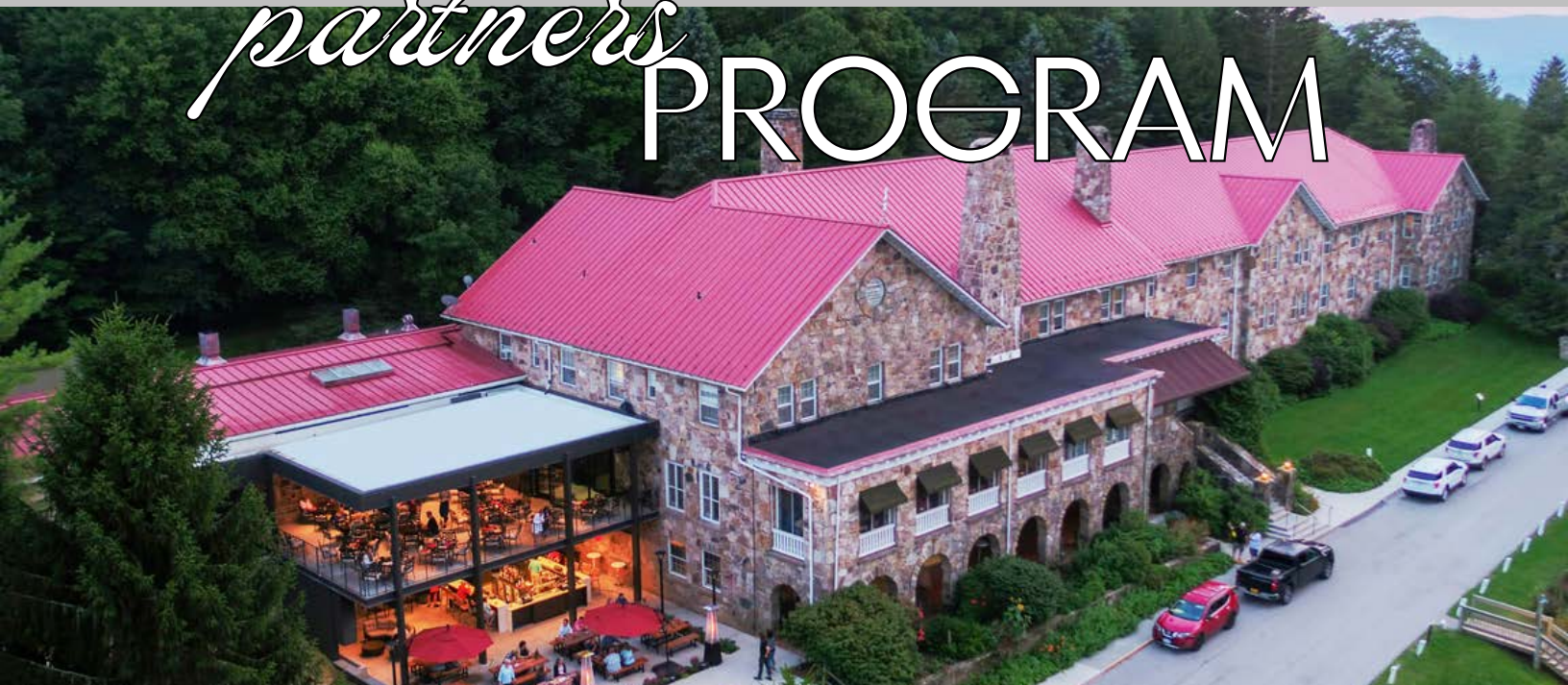
join or renew your membership to save!

All rates shown in US dollars



A special partners program is planned for July 20-22, highlighting the unique character of the region. Participants will enjoy themes centered on nature and wellness, local arts and culture, and the vibrant life of the Virginia Tech campus and the Blacksburg community. The program will provide opportunities to experience the scenic beauty of the New River Valley, explore regional traditions and creativity, and engage with the welcoming spirit that makes Blacksburg one of the nation's most celebrated college towns.

partners PROGRAM



take a Field Trip

As an add-on to the 2026 Annual General Meeting, participants may register for an optional two-day field trip to regional mine sites, with a strong emphasis on professional development. The trip will offer opportunities to explore active and historic mining operations, engage with industry experts, and discuss the future of mining-and mining education.

The group will depart the morning of July 23 from the Inn at Virginia Tech and will return late in the day on July 24, with drop-off arranged near an international airport to facilitate onward travel. Full details of the itinerary will be shared as soon as they are confirmed.



other details

weather and attire

Blacksburg in July tends to be warm, with daytime highs between 75-90 °F (23-31 °C) and overnight lows averaging 65 °F (18 °C).

Expect 'business casual' dress for all events, except for the Awards Evening which will be more formal. Participants on the partners program can dress casually and with comfortable shoes for some walking. Participants on the excursion should wear long pants and closed shoes for site tours.

official invitation letters

If you anticipate needing an official invitation letter from Virginia Tech for the purpose of obtaining a travel visa to the United States, please contact us (**info@somp2026.com**) as soon as possible with the following information: visitor's full name, title, institution and address, plus a copy of the visitor's CV.

inquiries

Please direct inquiries to our team at
info@somp2026.com



for updates
www.somp2026.com

