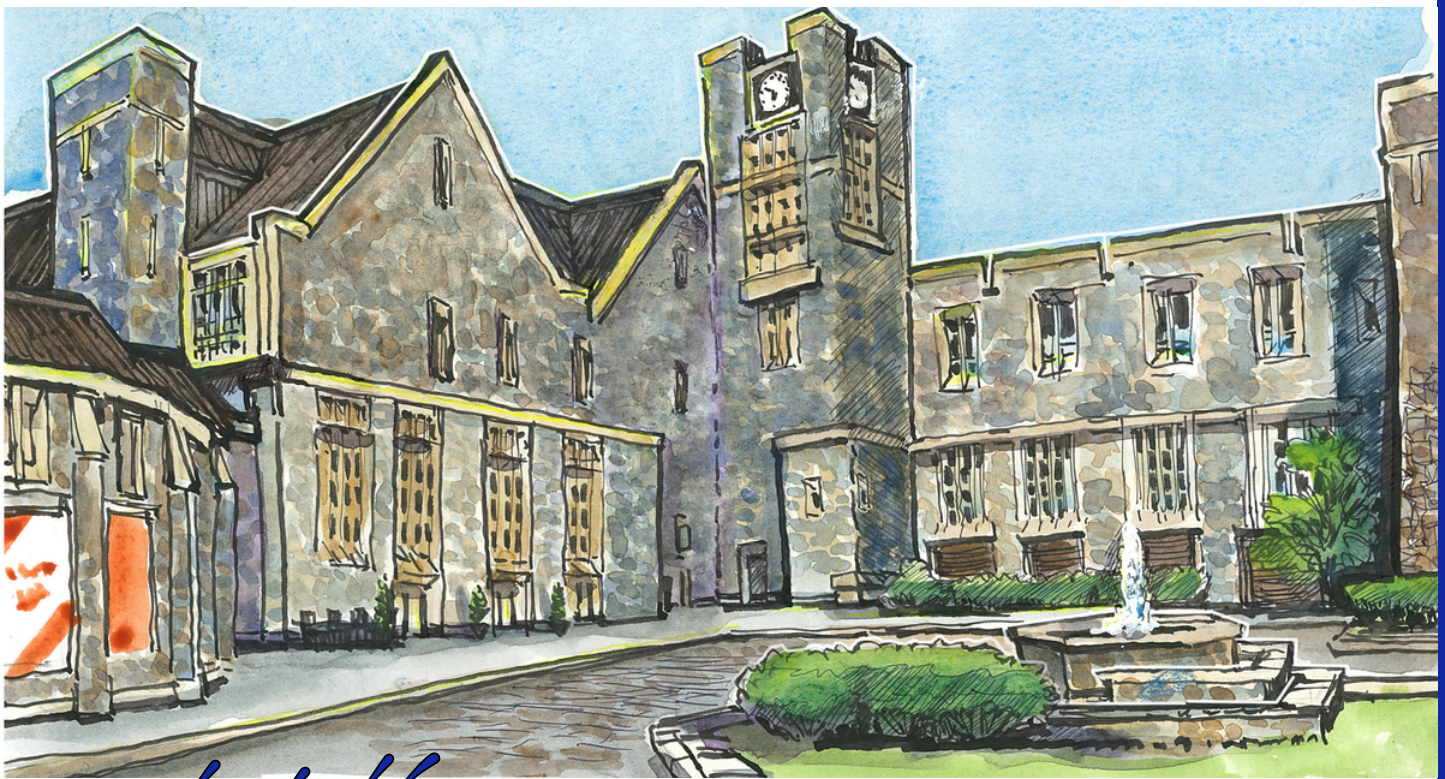




2026 Annual General Meeting Blacksburg, VA | 19-22 July



hosted by



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
MINING AND MINERALS
ENGINEERING
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FREEPORT-McMoRAN



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Sunday, July 19 — Welcome to VT!

Holden Hall, Virginia Tech

8:30–11:30 AM	SOMP Council Meeting <i>Room 185</i>	
11:30 AM–12:30 PM	★ Welcome Lunch <i>2nd floor Community Space & Terrace</i>	
12:30–1:30 PM	Committee Meetings <i>1st Floor Conference Rooms</i> <i>(specific room numbers TBA)</i>	OR Free time <i>Explore or relax</i>
1:30–3:00 PM	★ Mining and Minerals Engineering Open House with Lab and Facilities Tours <i>1st & 2nd Floor Labs</i>	
3:00–6:00 PM	★ Opening Mixer & Watch Party for the World Cup Final Match <i>Community Space & Terrace</i> ⚽ Wear your team's jersey! - Dinner, drinks, and networking - Local-to-global remarks at halftime	
~6:00–7:00 PM	★ Virginia Tech Tour <i>Departs Holden Hall; returns Inn at Virginia Tech</i> Learn more about Virginia Tech and see the campus! Tour departs from Holden Hall, returns to the Inn at Virginia Tech	
	 NOTE: 🚶 This is an optional walking tour	

★ All social events are open to AGM participants, partners, special guests, and volunteers.

Monday, July 20 — AGM Day 1

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

8:30–9:45 AM

Opening Session

Moderator: Emily Sarver

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Emily Sarver (President, Society of Mining Professors)

Welcome to Virginia Tech

Julia Ross (Executive Vice President and Provost, Virginia Tech)

Leading, Together: Virginia Tech Mining and Minerals Engineering in a Global Community

Aaron Noble (Department Head, Virginia Tech Mining and Minerals Engineering)

Mining is Strong and SME Makes it Stronger

Mary Korpi (President, Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration)

From Awareness to Advocacy: Experience-Driven Strategies for Attracting the Next Generation to Mining

Masaki Miyoshi (Lead of Talent Acquisition, Teck)

9:45–10:00 AM

Break

10:00–11:10 AM

Advancing Mining Research: Networks and Partnerships

Chairs: Veiko Karu, Ceren Batan

Research and Development and Industry Committee Update

Veiko Karu

R&D Collaboration Between Australia and China for Coal Mine Methane Abatement

Hua Guo

Building Sustainable Research Networks Through International Academic Conferences: A Practical Model from a Regional Mining University

Danny Daniel López Juvinao

Next Generation Mining Methods (NextGenMIN): A New Global Research Hub Initiative

Serkan Saydam

From Practice to Principles: Transitioning from Applied to Fundamental Mining Research

Chengguo Zhang

Professors of Practice as a Link Between Industry, Applied Research, and Workforce Readiness in Mining Engineering Education

Richard Bishop

University-Company Chairs at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM): A Model of Collaboration Between Industry and Academia in the Mining Sector

Francisco Javier Elorza Tenreiro

Monday, July 20 — AGM Day 1

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

11:10 AM–12:00 PM Industry Panel: Automation for the Aggregates Sector

Moderators: Aaron Noble, Georgia Koutsouras

Panelists: Chuck Stilson (Senior Director of Engineering, Luck Companies)
Jason Threewits (Technology Product Manager, Carter Machinery)
Zach Ellis (Account Representative, Parts & Service Division, Epiroc)

12:00–1:00 PM Lunch

1:00–2:15 PM Industry Panel: Continuing Education

Moderators: Serkan Saydam, Georgia Koutsouras

Panelists: Ronel Kappes (Director Advisory to CTO, Newmont)
Angel Tobar (Strategic Director of University Partnerships, Epiroc),
Chuck Stilson (Senior Director of Engineering, Luck Companies),
William Chan (Account Manager, Mining, Hexagon),
Jason Threewits (Technology Product Manager, Carter Machinery)

2:15–3:15 PM Enrollment and Student Demand: Regional Perspectives

Chairs: Amy McBrayer, Georg Meissner

Mining & Minerals Programs Sustainability Committee Update

Amy McBrayer

Reimagined Annual Report on Mining and Minerals Programs

Sandra Pamela Nowosad

Snapshot of Mining and Minerals University Programs in the USA

Kray Luxbacher, Aaron Noble

Why Mining Enrollment Is Growing at Queen's University: Institutional, National, and Social Drivers of Student Demand

Vlad Kecojevic

The Next Generation of Mining Engineers: Building Global Capacity for Critical Minerals Development

Ismet Canbulat

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Monday, July 20 — AGM Day 1

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

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NUST's Approaches to Student Recruitment and Outreach

Mallikarjun Pillalamarry, Harmony Musiyarira

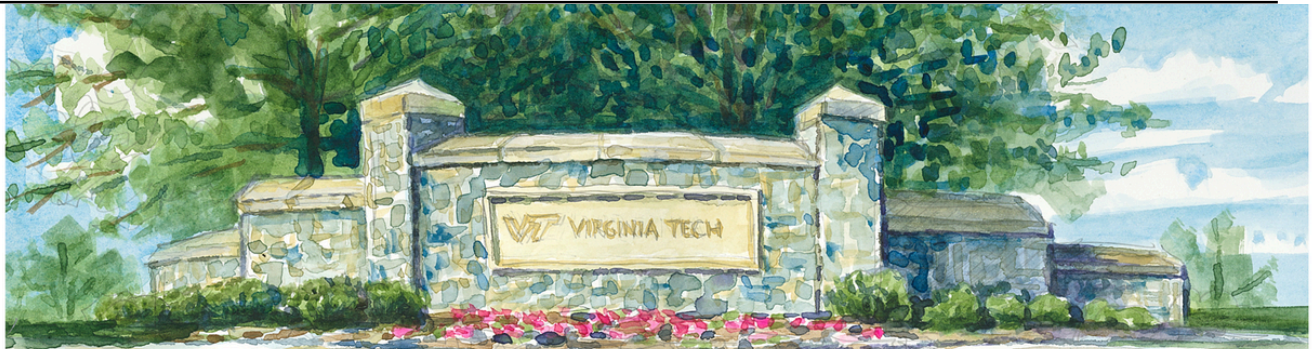
Mining Engineering Education in the Iberian Pyrite Belt, Southwestern Spain: 125 Years of Past, Present, and Future

Domingo Javier Carvajal Gomez

3:15–3:30 PM Break

3:30–5:00 PM SOMP Business Session

Led by: Vlad Kecojevic (Secretary General); Zach Agioutantis, Elisabeth Clausen, and Serkan Saydam (Deputy Secretaries General)



Feather Bone Provisions & Assembly, Blacksburg VA

6:00–9:00 PM

★ Outreach Night

- Dinner, drinks and bluegrass music
- Outreach insights and highlights
- Remarks by Melissa Russell (Executive Director, Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration) on *SME's Investment in the Industry's Full Workforce Development Cycle*



NOTE: 🚌 Shuttles depart from the Inn at Virginia Tech at 5:50 PM

Tuesday, July 21 — AGM Day 2

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

9:00–10:30 AM **Mini-Workshops: New Directions in Teaching and Learning**

Facilitators: Amber Spears, Emily Sarver

Education Committee Update

Sandra Pamela Nowosad

Mini-Workshop Breakout Leads:

Exploring the Feasibility of Using Large Language Models for Automatic Grading of Research Assignments at the Wits School of Mining Engineering: Challenges, Opportunities, and Implications

Clinton Birch

Integrating AI-Driven Leadership into Mining Engineering Education

Aaron Noble

Equipping the Next Generation of Mining Engineering Students with Essential Digital Mining Competencies

Sandra Pamela Nowosad

Beyond Extraction: Integrating the Raw Materials Value Chain into Mining Engineer Education

Juan M. Menéndez Aguado

Use of AI for Working with (Unstructured) Data – A Practical Guide for Engineers

Bruno Grafe

10:30–10:45 AM **Break**

10:45–11:45 AM **Mapping and Building Capacity in Mining Education**

Chairs: Seher Ata, Tugba Sen

Capacity Building Committee Update

Seher Ata

Putting SOMP on the Map – The Further Development of an Interactive, Peer-Reviewed World Map of Mining Engineering Programs

Georg Meissner

Challenges and Opportunities in Establishing a Master's Program in Sustainable Mining in Mozambique

Mpoyi Jacques Kanda

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Tuesday, July 21 — AGM Day 2

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

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Mining Engineering at Tennessee State University: Program Development and Integration with Tennessee's Mining Industry

Lin Li, Kate Brown Requist

Capacity Building in Mining Education in Southeast Asia in the New Context – Showcases from Indonesia and Vietnam

Nga Nguyen

UTEP Mining Engineering – A Program Reimagined and Relaunched!

George Luxbacher

11:45 AM–12:45 PM

Networking Lunch

12:45–1:15 PM

Collaboration Stories in Mining Education

Chairs: Angela Binder, Emily Sarver

Members Development Committee Update

Angela Binder

Empowering Sustainability Education: Clausthal University of Technology–Taita Taveta University Collaboration for Enhancing Sustainable Mining Training

Florence Weber

Expanding Research Collaborations: Transferable Lessons from the Baltic University Programme (BUP) for the SOMP Community

Veiko Karu

1:15–2:30 PM

Collaborative Teaching Workshop

Workshop Leads: Sandra Pamela Nowosad, Rachel Fitzgerald

Facilitators: Emily Sarver, Oscar Jaime Restrepo Baena, Andrea Brickey, Angel Tobar

2:30–2:45 PM

Break

Tuesday, July 21 — AGM Day 2

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

2:45–4:15 PM

Curriculum Refresh: Integrating New Competencies

Chairs: Elisabeth Clausen, Maggie Noonan

Bridging Industry and Community Perspectives in Postgraduate Mining Education

Chrysanthi Rodolaki

Teaching Mining in a Multi-Stakeholder World: Embedding Systems Thinking & Decision Communication Using REMINDNET Training-School Cases

Veiko Karu

Integrating Social and Environmental Responsibility into Minerals Engineering Education

Fei Wang

Problem-Based Learning Design and Implementation in Mineral Economics and Sustainability Education

Qian Zhang

Integrating CFD and Data-Driven ML into Mining Engineering Education: Bridging Theory, Industry Practice, and Student Outcomes

Shimin Liu

Leaning into Automation, Robotics, and Artificial Intelligence in the Mining Engineering Curriculum

Steven Schafrik

Competency Development for Safe Human–Autonomous Haulage System Interaction in Surface Mining

Angelina Anani, Nathalie Risso

The Future of Engineering Professionalism: A Review of Generative AI's Influence on Student Performance and Workforce Readiness

Milka Madahana

Smith Creek Farm, Riner VA

6:30–10:00 PM

★ Awards Night

- Dinner, drinks and presentation of SOMP Awards
- DJ, dancing, and fun!



NOTES:  Meet in the lobby at 5:40 PM for Annual Group Photo



Shuttles depart from the Inn at Virginia Tech at 5:50 PM

Wednesday, July 22 — AGM Day 3

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

9:00–10:20 AM Workshop: Enabling AI tools for Effective Teaching

Workshop Leads: Rohit Pandey, Hosein Foroutan

Facilitators: Bahareh Nojabaei, Basel Shabab

10:20–11:00 AM Rising Stars: Shaw Teaching Award and Karmis Fellowship
Recipient Presentations

Moderator: Emily Sarver

11:00–11:10 AM Break

11:10 AM–12:30 PM Mini-Workshops: Case Studies in Outreach and
Recruitment

Facilitators: Juan Maria Menéndez, Christy Rodolaki

Mini-Workshop Breakout Leads:

From Fragmented Delivery to Immersive Learning: Digital Uplift of an Introductory Mining Course
Seher Ata

Reframing Mining Engineering Education: The Politecnico di Torino Experience
Marilena Cardu

Virtual Space Mining Camp: Fostering Interest in the Minerals Industry Among Middle and High School Students
Andrea Brickey

Artificial Voice, Real Impact: A Critical Framework for Mining Recruitment and Outreach
Angela Binder

Empowering Women and Communities in Artisanal Gold Mining: Human-Centered Innovation as a Teaching Framework for Future Mining Engineers in Colombia
Oscar Jaime Restrepo Baena

12:30–1:30 PM Lunch

Wednesday, July 22 — AGM Day 3

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

1:30–2:30 PM

Poster Session and Contest

Chairs: Victor Liu, Sepehr Ghaderi

Options to Integrate Carbon Sequestration and Critical Minerals Recovery from Diverse Mineral Resources and Wastes

Fei Wang

Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) for Mining Engineering: Governance-to-Reclamation, From Classroom to Decision-Grade Outputs

Veiko Karu

Clean Technologies and Sustainable Mining Education: Lessons from Limestone Mining in La Guajira, Colombia

Danny Daniel López Juvinao

Development of Deep Coal Resources and Rock Strata Control in Centennial Mining Areas

Yang Li

Physics-Informed Machine Learning for Fluid Dynamics in Mining: Challenges and Opportunities in South Africa

Joseph Githiria

DSS II: The Techno-Economic and Environmental Assessment of a Vertical, Minimally Invasive Deep-Sea Mining Method for Seafloor Massive Sulfide Deposits

Georg Meissner

On-Site Material Characterization as a Tool for Effective Excavations

Basileios Deligiorgis

Process Development of Ligand-Functionalized Biochar Adsorption for Sustainable Rare Earth Element Recovery

Wycliffe Tugume

CFD-Based Underground Ventilation and Climate Simulations for Digital Twin Development

Tugba Sen

Geothermal Potential for the Decarbonization of Mining in Peru and the Andean Region: Opportunities and Challenges

Edgard Gonzales

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Wednesday, July 22 — AGM Day 3

Assembly Hall, Inn at Virginia Tech

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Multi-Country Comparative Analysis of ESG Management Capacity in the Mining Industry: Historical Evolution and a Competency-Based Training Framework Proposal

Fred Ignacio Camus Yeomans

Critical Raw Materials Act Meets Net-Zero Industry Act: Venture Pathways for Estonian Phosphorite and Black Shale

Veiko Karu

The Lens of Learning: Integrating Machine Learning and Video Analytics for Real-Time Student Monitoring

Milka Madahana

Authentic Assessment Through Project-Based Learning in Programming and Data Science Courses for Mining Engineers

Milka Madahana

Impact of Workforce Proficiency on the Installation Quality and Performance of 250 kN Surelock Cable Anchors in UG2 Reef Stopes

Thovhedzo Gcuda

2:30–3:45 PM

Advancing Curriculum Design and Delivery for Impact

Chairs: Nga Nguyen, Florence Weber

An Outcomes-Driven Lens for Rethinking Assessment in Engineering Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Rohit Pandey

The Use of Active Learning Methods and Artificial Intelligence in Mining Engineering Education: A Case Study

Cemalettin Okay Aksoy

Improving University Talent Quality by Engineering Education Accreditation—Taking the Mining Engineering Program in China as an Example

Li Liu

Shifting Perspectives: Rethinking Mining Engineering Education in Turkey Through Interactive and Reflective Learning

Tugba Sen

Wednesday, July 22 — AGM Day 3

Lane Stadium, Virginia Tech

4:30–6:00 PM

★ Closing Mixer

- Best Poster Award presentation
- SOMP leadership transition
- Preview of 2027 SOMP AGM
- Food, drinks and celebration!



NOTE:  Walking group departs from the Inn at Virginia Tech at 4:0 PM



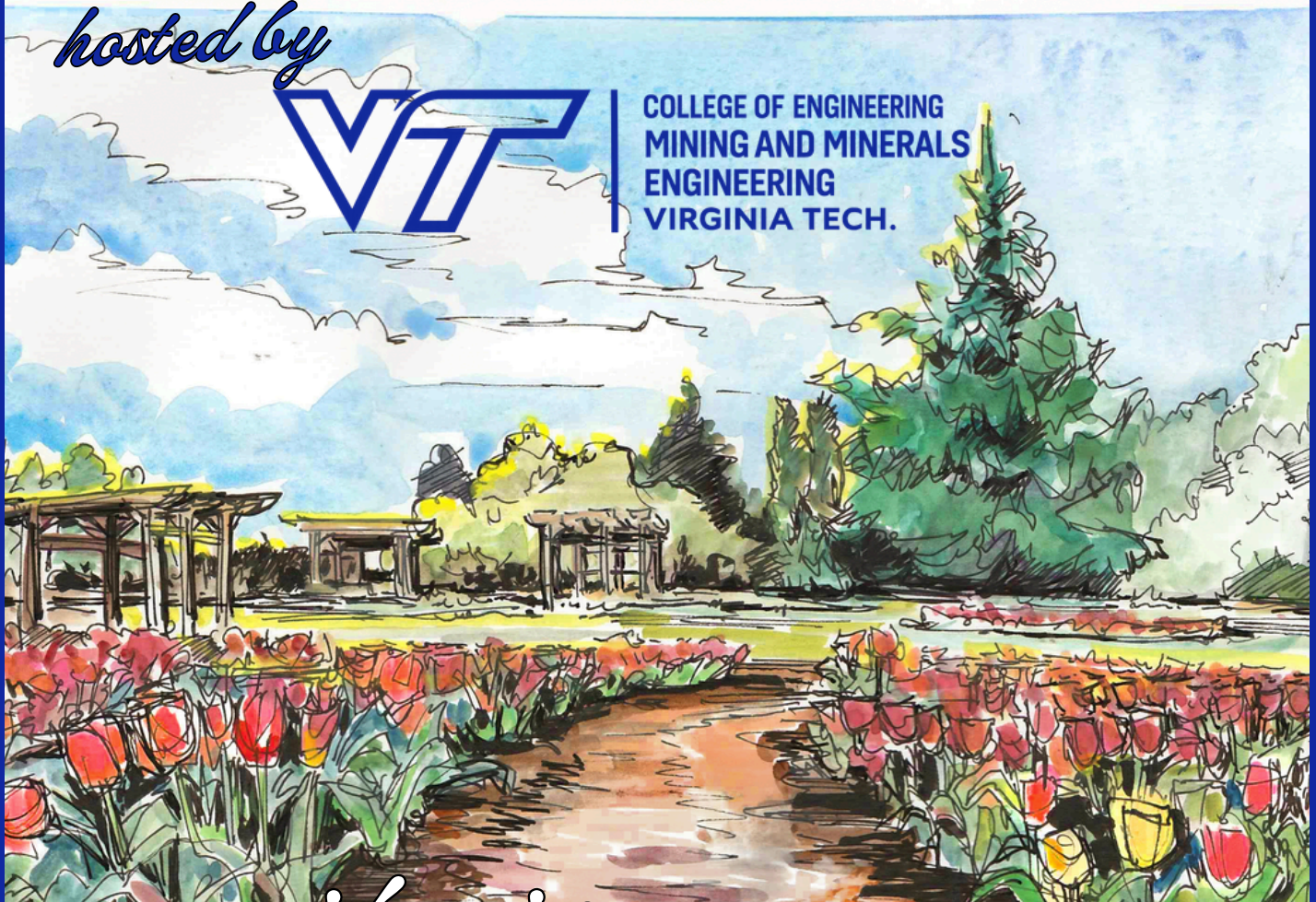


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PROGRAM

Sunday, July 19

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 11:30 AM–12:30 PM | ★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Welcome Lunch in Holden Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet SOMP members, guests, and AGM hosts• <i>Then explore or relax until the Open House</i> |
| 1:30–3:00 PM | ★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Mining and Minerals Engineering Open House |
| 3:00–6:00 PM | ★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Opening Mixer & Watch Party for the World Cup Final Match <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ⚽ Wear your team's jersey!• Dinner, drinks, and fun in Holden Hall |
| ~6:00–7:00 PM | ★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Virginia Tech Tour <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn more about Virginia Tech and see the campus! Tour departs Holden Hall, returns to Inn at Virginia Tech |



NOTE: 🚶 This is an optional walking tour

Monday, July 20

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 9:20 AM | Depart Inn at Virginia Tech |
| 10:00 AM–3:00 PM | Mountain Lake Lodge Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historic lodge tour and local history with lunch• Dance lesson and art workshop |
| 3:40–4:50 PM | Downtown Blacksburg |
| 4:50 PM | Return to Inn at Virginia Tech |
| 6:00–9:00 PM | ★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Outreach Night <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dinner, drinks and bluegrass music at Feather Bone Provisions & Assembly |



NOTE: 🚌 Shuttle departs from the Inn at Virginia Tech at 5:50 PM

Tuesday, July 21

9:00–9:45 AM	Yoga Session (Drillfield Room, Inn at Virginia Tech)
10:35 AM	Transfer to Hahn Horticulture Garden
10:45 AM– 12:45 PM	Hahn Horticulture Garden Experience • Tour, lunch, and visit with a therapy horse!
1:00–2:30 PM	Center for the Arts Experience • Behind-the-scenes interactive tour
2:45–4:00 PM	Painting workshop at the Alexander Black House
4:15 PM	Return to Inn at Virginia Tech
6:00–9:00 PM	★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Awards Night • Dinner, drinks and dancing at Smith Creek Farm



NOTES: 📷 Meet in the lobby at 5:40 PM for Annual Group Photo



Shuttles depart from the Inn at Virginia Tech at 5:50 PM

Wednesday, July 22

8:50 AM	Depart Inn at Virginia Tech
9:30–10:30 AM	Teaberry Alpaca Farm Tour
11:30 AM–1:20 PM	Lunch and Tasting at Well Hung Vineyard
2:00–3:30 PM	Dixie Caverns Tour
4:30 PM	Return to Virginia Tech, with direct transport to Closing Mixer
4:30–6:30 PM	★ Shared SOMP AGM Event: Closing Mixer • Food, drinks and celebration at Lane Stadium

SOMP

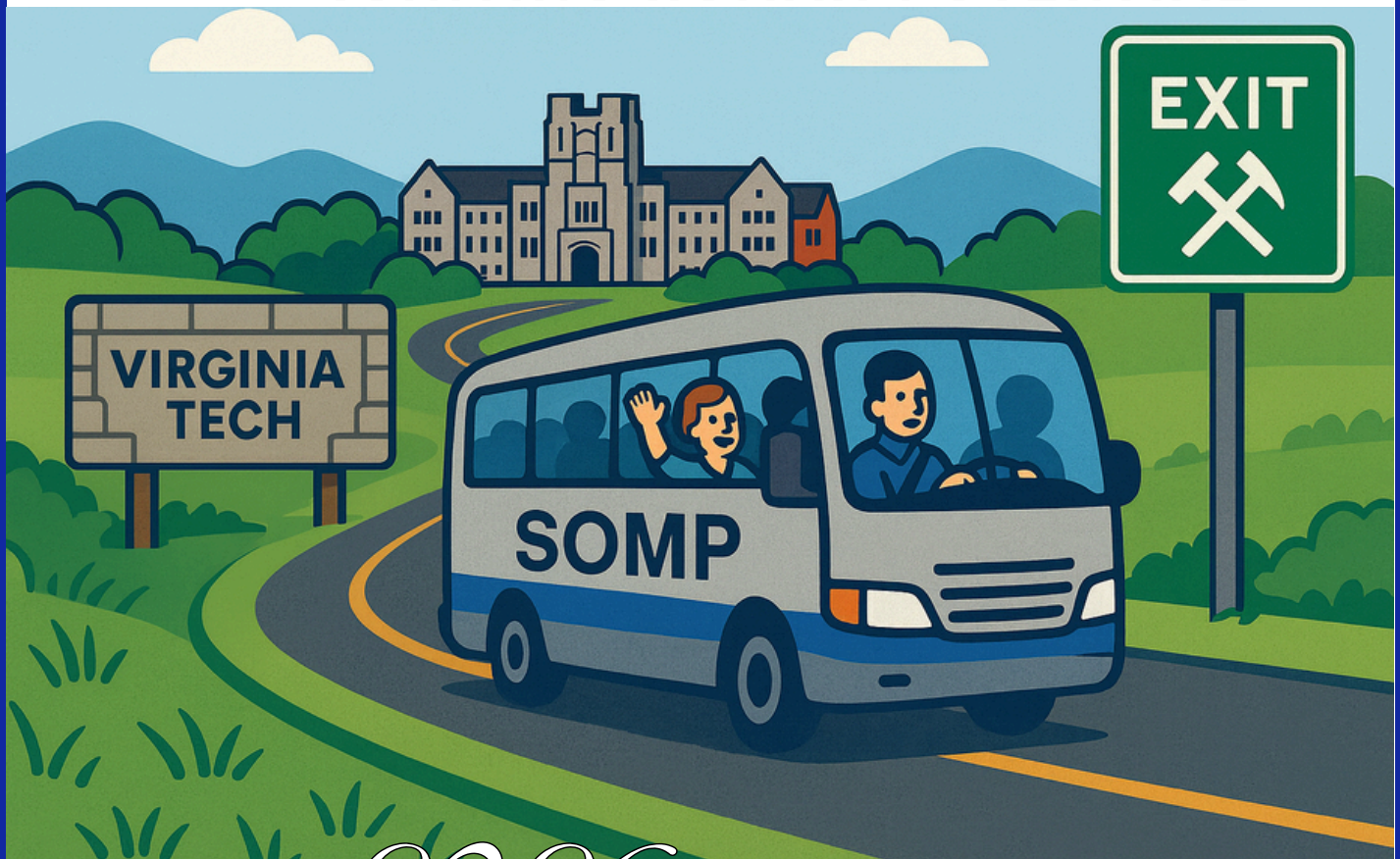
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2026
FIELD TRIP

Thursday, July 23 — Field Trip Day 1

Leadership and Innovation

6:30 AM



Depart from Inn at Virginia Tech

NOTE: 📦 🍪 ☕ We'll provide breakfast boxes and coffee to go!

10:00 AM–12:30 PM

Site Visit: Rockville Quarry (Rockville, VA)

- Site orientation and quarry overview
- See the Epiroc SmartROC D65, one of the first autonomous drill deployments at surface mine in the USA
- Lunch

1:00–5:00 PM

Values-Based Leadership Workshop:

Luck Companies Corporate Headquarters (Manakin-Sabot, VA)

- Interactive workshop focused on leadership principles that resonate across academic, professional, and personal settings
- Designed for SOMP members, partners, students, industry representatives... everyone!

5:30 PM

Check-in: Drury Plaza Hotel (Glen Allen, VA)

6:30–8:30 PM

Networking Evening with Luck Leaders: Tarrant's West Restaurant

- Happy hour and dinner

9:00 PM

Return to hotel

Friday, July 24 — Field Trip Day 2

Future of Quarrying

7:00 AM



Depart from Hotel

NOTE: 🍩 ☕ Enjoy the continental breakfast provided by the hotel before we leave

10:00 AM–2:00 PM

Site Visit: Bull Run Quarry (Chantilly, VA)

- Site orientation and overview of autonomous operations
 - Perspectives from Luck Companies and the National Sand, Stone and Gravel Association
 - Guided pit tour to view autonomous equipment and plant innovations
 - Working lunch with a discussion of precision drill-and-blast and other advancements shaping the future of quarrying
-

no later than 3:00 PM

Drop-off at Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD)

~7:30 PM

Arrive in Blacksburg

