Students and Alumni Can Now Order and Send Official Transcripts in Electronic Form

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Recently implemented changes make it easier than ever for University of Virginia students and alumni to send or receive official transcripts.

All students past and present can request their official transcripts through **an online ordering service** now being offered by the **University Registrar**. Students who enrolled at the University after 1985 can email a secure electronic PDF of their transcripts to third parties.

The new system, which went live in May, drastically reduces the time it takes to send a transcript to prospective graduate schools, employers or other third parties, associate University registrar Sheila Tolley said. Before, students enrolled after 1985 could request an official transcript online, but it would then be mailed out, which could take up to several days. (Students enrolled before 1985 previously could not even request a copy online; they had to come into the registrar's office or mail in a request. They now can request a transcript online, but those documents still exist only as paper records.)

Under the new system, students and alumni can receive their official electronic transcript within 45 minutes if there are no holds on their account, Tolley said.

"We take orders online 24/7," she said. "You do not have to come all the way here to put in a request for your official transcript."

Another big change: Students and alumni no longer have to pay for their official transcripts.

"It is now a full-fledged customer-service process," Tolley said. "You do not have to pay for your transcript, and there are a lot of built-in services for alumni and students. They are told what to do via email and we also send reminders."

Students and alumni can even opt to receive text-message updates about the progress of their transcript requests.

The Office of the Registrar collaborated with the National Student Clearing House and U.Va.'s **Information Technology Services** to create the new system, among the first in the nation, Tolley said. U.Va.'s customized system was one of the first to be integrated

with the PeopleSoft student information system, administrative software used by many institutions of higher education.

University Registrar Carol "Stash" Stanley said providing secure electronic official transcripts was a goal since she came to U.Va. in 2000. The new system was worth the wait, she said.

"We have been able to make the system much more secure than it would have been 12 years ago because of the advances in technology," she said.

The security features that guard the integrity of the electronic transcripts are very advanced, Tolley said. To release an electronic transcript to a third party, students or alumni must hand-sign a form and either fax it to the National Student Clearing House or scan it and send it as an email attachment.

Blue Ribbon Security, an online system that operates like paper securities, indicates whether the file containing the electronic transcript has been opened or tampered. If the document has not been touched, the Blue Ribbon seal will appear on the document; if the seal is not present, the document has been altered.

— *by Lisa Kessler*

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