New scholarships created to enhance diversity

By Clara B. Cox

Virginia Tech has established 27 renewable undergraduate scholarships and three graduate fellowships to attract under-represented student populations to the university, a move that should help diversify the campus, a goal announced by President Charles Steger during his inaugural address last spring.

The first 27 scholarships, named the Presidential Diversity Grants in recognition of Steger’s goal, and the first three fellowships will be awarded for the 2001-02 academic year. The total number of undergraduate recipients in any one year could reach a high of 108 during the 2004-05 academic year, with a peak of nine graduate recipients anticipated a year earlier.

According to David R. Ford, vice provost for academic affairs, funding for the scholarships will draw on a variety of pooled resources, with the bulk coming from licensing fees paid by manufacturers to use trademarked Virginia Tech names. Ford said that the university is also drawing on existing scholarship programs and donor-designated endowments and annual gifts and is pooling the money in a “revolving,” or endowment-type, fund expected to approach $3 million by 2008.

“This is a concrete step with dollars attached, something that will be sustained and will grow. It is one step, albeit an important one, in increasing access to Virginia Tech for under-represented populations,” said Benjamin Dixon, vice president for multicultural affairs. Dixon, whose office issued the university’s five-year strategic diversity plan last fall, said the scholarship fund helps implement that plan, although he emphasized that a variety of other approaches either have been or will be initiated.

The diversity scholarship program will span a minimum of seven years, with an opportunity for review, revision, and renewal at the end of that time, Ford said.

“Initial undergraduate awards would be $3,000 a year each for 27 recipients, renewable for an additional three years depending on satisfactory academic progress,” Ford said. “The graduate component would include a maximum of nine diversity fellowships of approximately $5,100 per year each to Virginia residents and $7,500 each to out-of-state residents.”

Ford said that the initial idea for the scholarships came from a recommendation of the Provost’s Task Force on Undergraduate Enrollment of African-American Students, although he emphasized that the scholarships will target all under-represented groups, not just African-Americans. The task force was organized by former Provost Peggy Meszaros last year to expand ways to increase African-American student enrollment at Tech.

(See SCHOLARSHIPS on 4)

VTPL gets $1.8-million DOE grant

By Lynn Nystrom

The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded the Virginia Tech Photonics Laboratory (VTPL) a $1.8-million grant to continue its work in self-calibrating temperature and pressure sensors.

In addition, the DOE awarded VTPL’s partner, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, an additional $180,000 to collaborate on the project and work towards the commercialization of these sensors. Oak Ridge maintains an internationally recognized sapphire material-processing and fabrication facility.

The sensors are designed for use in harsh environments, particularly where temperatures exceed 1,500 degrees Celsius, said Anbo Wang, director of the VTPL. For example, these extremely hot environments are the hosts to jet engines, power plants, and ceramic engines that might power the autos of the future. The other Tech principal investigators on this program are Gary Pickrell and Russell May, all from VTPL.

By placing this sensing device in a jet engine, it could monitor sound-wave pressures, and warn the pilot that the engine is on the verge of shutting down. Or, this sensor in an auto engine could keep the vehicle operating at its most-efficient temperature and pressure.

“Virginia Tech is to be commended for its innovative research which continues to provide favorable results benefiting the residents, businesses and communities in Southwest Virginia and the surrounding region,” Congressman Rick Boucher said.

“This federal grant to Virginia Tech and to Oak Ridge National Laboratory will be invaluable as we continue to position our region as a leader in advanced technologies and research, and I am pleased that this award has been made,” (See VTPL on 4)

Fisk’s Jubilee Singers to perform

By Sally Harris

It was 1871, six years after the Civil War, when one of the main schools set up for freed slaves, Fisk University, was about to go under financially. Originally set up as an elementary and normal school for freedmen, the school was located in barracks that had previously housed Union wounded. Nine young students and a leader who believed it their destiny to save Fisk took off on a seven-year, toll-taking odyssey to sing Fisk back to health.

Most of them had been field hands and house slaves, as lacking in freedom then as they were in money now. None of them had coats or clothing suitable for the cold Northern climate they were about to encounter.

They began their tour, but it was an unsuccessful beginning because they were singing European or white songs. Freezing in the cold weather, encountering signs that warned them to go home, wearing themselves out traveling from town to town to sing for not much more than their keep, they depended on good people to feed and house them, since most hotels would not admit them.

According to a PBS documentary, the group even found itself stranded in one small town, surrounded by an angry mob. They started singing, and the crowd disappeared one by one.

As they encountered hardship after hardship, their strength waning, the group began to incorporate “cabin songs,” or spirituals into their repertoire. The simple songs had few words because slaves were forbidden to learn to read and had to know the words by heart, according to Nikki Giovanni, poet and alumni distinguished professor of English, and sponsor to Nikki Giovanni, poet and alumni distinguished professor of English, and sponsor to Nikki Giovanni, poet and alumni distinguished professor of English.

The Jubilee Singers live on. The present group still sings the music that started from the (See CENTER on 4)

Center grants to examine IT impact

By Jean Elliott

The first round of grants has been awarded in connection with the Center for Information Technology Impacts on Children, Youth and Families, according to Peggy S. Meszaros, William E. Lavery professor and director of the newly formed center.

Funded last fall, the center provides a focus for research and outreach related to the human dimensions of information technology. Current statistics reveal that 55 million Americans go on line every day and more than a third of them spend at least an hour on the Internet.

Education and income are not major determinants of whether a household will be connected. Instead, the key predictor of an on-line connection in the home seems to be a parent’s experience with the web outside the home. Access and experience are just two factors that look to prolong the Digital Divide. Nearly two-thirds of on-line youth ages 9-17 prefer connecting to the Internet rather than watching TV or using the telephone. By 2005, it is expected that 75 percent of all U.S. households will be connected.

The focus of Virginia Tech’s newest center will be to examine how this continued growth in technology affects our children, youth, and families. Through research and outreach, the center will provide critical insights and data on issues of concern to families.

(See CENTER on 4)

TODAY’S EDITION
See page 4 for article on telecommunications.

REMINDER
FACULTY MEMBERS ARE URGED TO VOTE ON THE SENATE CONSTITUTION FEBRUARY 1-9.
Ballots with instructions should be in mailboxes by Thursday, Feb. 1. Fifty percent of the faculty must vote.
Friday, 2
Organization of Women Faculty Coffee Hour, 8-9 a.m., Easy Chair, University Mall: 1-9214 for information.

Saturday, 3
Black History Month Event, 2 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center: Call 1-6377 for information.

Women’s Basketball, 2 p.m.: At Providence.

Men’s Basketball, 8 p.m.: At Connecticut.

Sunday, 4
YMCA Hike, 1:30 p.m., Lancaster House parking lot.

Monday, 5
Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon, 1120 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

Black History Month Event, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Squires Old Dominion Ballroom: Call 1-5552 for information.

University Council, 3-5 p.m., 1045 Pamplin.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3-5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3-5 p.m., 1120 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

Alcohol-awareness Speaker, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Cassell Coliseum: Mike Green.

Tuesday, 6
CEUT, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Hillcrest small conference room: Margaret Hable. Call 1-6995 for appointment.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon, 1120 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

Family/Work Life Resources Program, noon-1 p.m., location TBA.

Disability Disclosure Seminar, 5-6 p.m., Henderson Career Services conference room: spangle@vt.edu to register.

Black History Month Event, 7 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center: Call 2-2232 for information.

Men’s Basketball, 7:30 p.m.: At Miami.

Wednesday, 7
Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon, 3060 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

Faculty Development Workshop, noon-1:30 p.m., 3060 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

CEUT, 2:30-5 p.m., Hillcrest large conference room: www.ceut.vt.edu to register.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3-5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

“The With Good Reason,” 7 p.m., WVTI: Topic TBA.

Women’s Basketball, 7 p.m., Cassell Coliseum: Connecticut.

Thursday, 8
ULD Training Program, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (Through 2-9), DHHCC room C, 116 Robeson: 1-6727 to register.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon, 3060 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon, 1140-H Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

CEUT, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Hillcrest large conference room: www.ceut.vt.edu to register.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3-5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen: 1-8029 for information.

UOIP sponsors grant-writing workshop
The University Office of International Programs (UOIP) is sponsoring a grant-writing workshop to be held in two sessions, Friday, Feb. 9 and Friday, Feb. 16. Participants will meet in 1020 Torgersen from 2-4 p.m. on both days. Experienced grant writers will guide faculty members and administrators through the entire grant-writing process, from locating funding sources through preparing a grant application.

Participants should bring to the first session a list of key words describing the grant they plan to write. By the end of both workshops, each person should have a proposal ready for submission. For information, contact David Britt at 1-8888 or dbritt@vt.edu.

Women Faculty group holds monthly meeting
The Organization of Women Faculty Coffee Hour will be held Friday, Feb. 2 from 8-9 a.m. at the Easy Chair in University Mall. The organization includes women in academic and administrative faculty positions, and all women faculty members are welcome. The coffee hour is an informal networking opportunity held on the first Friday of every month. For information, contact Tamara Kennelly at 1-9214.

Disability-related seminar offered
Career Services and the Dean of Students Office are sponsoring a seminar titled “Discussing Your Disability And Accommodation Needs With Prospective Employers” on Tuesday, Feb. 5 from 5-6 p.m. in the Henderson Career Services conference room. RSVP to Susan Angle at spangle@vt.edu by 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 5. Anyone requiring special accommodations should contact Angle at 1-3787/TDD 1-8718 by this deadline.

Call for posters announced
All faculty and staff members and students are invited to submit posters in research areas related to bioinformatics and computational biology. The call for posters, including a submission form, is available on-line at http://www.rgs.vt.edu/onenil/vbi. Questions can be directed to members of the organizing committee listed in this document. Poster abstracts are due February 19.

AID initiates fundraising campaign
The Association for India’s Development (AID) is initiating a campaign to raise funds for earthquake-relief activities in India. AID is now accepting donations, which will be sent directly to affected areas. Collection desks and donation boxes will be set up on campus, and the group is sponsoring a fundraising luncheon on Saturday, Feb. 3. For information, e-mail Prahalad Thota at pthota@vt.edu.

Copán lecture to honor Currie
By Humberto Rodríguez

A lecture by Mark Schneider, “The Maya: Architecture as Cosmic Vision,” is also scheduled in conjunction with this exhibition. For information, contact Mark Schneider at 1-9208.

Copán, Honduras dating from AD 300-825.

Brown keynote speaker for BHM
By Clara B. Cox
Judge Joe Brown, the non-traditional presiding judge of the syndicated courtroom show that bears his name, will present the keynote address for Virginia Tech’s Black History Month celebration February 8 at 7 p.m. in Squires Colonial Hall.

Brown grew up in one of the toughest neighborhoods in South Central Los Angeles, graduating at the top of his high school class. He enrolled in UCLA, where he paid his tuition by loading trucks and digging ditches. A friend recommended that he try law school, and he went on to earn a doctor of law degree with honors from UCLA.

Brown moved to Memphis in 1974 to take a legal-services position with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and later became the city’s first African-American prosecutor. He started his own practice in 1978. He returned to public service in 1990 and was elected judge of Division 9 of the State Criminal Courts for Shelby County.

In this televised courtroom, he uses creative alternative sentencing to encourage offenders to learn from their mistakes.

FISK’S continued from 1
depths of the suffering and search for solace of their race. Today, Giovanni said, it is a “high honor” to be chosen to be a part of the Jubilee Singers.

The Fisk University Jubilee Singers will perform spirituals and "cabin songs” Saturday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown auditorium. The concert is open to the public free of charge. For information, call Giovanni at 1-9453.
Leffel honored for outstanding service

By Jeanne M. Garon

Linda G. Leffel, professor and director of marketing research in University Outreach, has been honored by the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA), Region III, with its Outstanding Service to Continuing Education award.

Presented at the organization’s recent meeting in Tampa, Fla., the award recognizes Leffel’s contributions to Virginia Tech’s continuing-education program development as well as her contributions to the broader field of continuing education. It also recognizes Leffel’s commitment to involving the developing workforce in the use of distance-education technologies and expanding market-research initiatives.

“There is no greater honor than recognition from one’s peers, and Linda has earned it. Over the past several years she has played a pivotal role in our efforts to make Tech’s educational programs accessible worldwide to diverse populations,” said C. Clark Jones, vice provost for outreach. Leffel, who has worked at Tech more than 25 years, received her doctorate in education from the university in 1973 and subsequently served in various leadership roles in continuing education. Her most recent position was director of program development, where she led a team that developed a business plan resulting in $1.2 million in funding and provided nationally recognized market research on the need for workforce-technology training.

Founded in 1915, the University Continuing Education Association (formerly the National University Continuing Education Association) is among the oldest college and university associations in the United States. As the principal U.S. organization for continuing higher education, the association assists institutions of higher learning and affiliated non-profit organizations to increase access through a wide array of distance-education technologies and continuing-education program development, where she led a team that developed a business plan resulting in $1.2 million in funding and provided nationally recognized market research on the need for workforce-technology training.

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Martinsville to sponsor Tech research project

By Heather McElrath

Henry and Patrick counties, and the City of Martinsville have decided to sponsor a research project by Virginia Tech’s Center for Wireless Telecommunications (CWT) to study telecommunication needs and determine optimal bandwidth for broadband wireless (LMDS) Internet access.

The project, in the amount of $155,000, is currently well into the planning stages. It involves cooperation and support from Henry and Patrick counties and the City of Martinsville. It will encompass financial modeling, a business plan, proposed business structure, engineering design and deployment.

CWT Director Charles Bottian said the project demonstrates the center’s goal to jumpstart broadband wireless availability in under-served areas of the state using Local Multipoint Distribution Service (LMDS).

LMDS is a new Federal Communications Commission radio spectrum allocation that provides a high-speed “last-mile” connection from user’s premises to the world-wide optical-fiber network.

Through its private foundation, in 1998 Virginia Tech purchased LMDS licenses covering most of Southside and Southwest Virginia. Its goal is to use public-private partnerships to bring affordable broadband access to the region and end the digital divide that has, in the past, kept high tech business and industry from seeing the region as a viable location.

Several months ago, County Administrator Sidney Clower brought together representatives of local civic, business, and educational groups with the CWT research team consisting of faculty members from the departments of finance, marketing, electrical and computer engineering, geography; communications network services personnel, and CWT graduate students.

The project’s principal investigator is CWT faculty member and Space and Wireless Business Center Director George W. Morgan.

Student Success grants available for 2001-02

By Jeanne M. Garon

The Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs has announced the availability of Student Success grants for the 2001-02 academic year to support two types of endeavors, innovative programs and research projects, and has issued a call for proposals for the grants.

Student Success innovative programs are designed to enhance students’ ability to maintain a 2.0 grade-point average (GPA). Proposals may pertain to new or existing programs. Principal investigators may compete for and receive consecutive years of program funding, depending on the worthiness of competing proposals in subsequent years. The maximum award is anticipated to be $25,000; however, worthy proposals with appropriate budget justifications may be awarded up to $50,000.

Members of the campus community are also invited to propose Student Success research projects designed to evaluate the effectiveness of programs currently enhancing undergraduate student success. Results will be used to guide decisions about long-range plans for enhancing student success and retention rates. The maximum award for research projects is $5,000.

All proposals must be received by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs before the close of business on Monday, March 12. The office will notify directors of selected programs no later than May 1, and will require acceptance letters from project directors by May 15.

For more information on the program, visit http://filebox.vt.edu/admin/provost/success/index.html or contact Angela Mathias at mathias@vt.edu.

VTPL

Continued from 1

Honeywell, ABB, Howmet, and Corning are a few of the companies that have teamed with the Virginia Tech Photonics Laboratory (VTPL) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory to help commercialize the new sensing technology.

Honeywell is the leading producer of gas-turbine engines and Corning is the leading manufacturer of optical fiber, cable and photonic products for the telecommunications industry. ABB is the world’s largest manufacturer of power-generation equipment. Howmet is the industry leader in manufacturing precision investment castings of aluminum, titanium, and superalloy for aircraft, turbine engines, and aerospace needs.

In the past, industry has primarily relied upon semiconductor pressure sensors that have several major drawbacks. These include a limited temperature range and technology impacts.

The wider community is also a resource. “Because Blacksburg was the first and is the most widely known town in America,” Meszaros said, “opportunities abound for meeting with families who have lived with technology for more than a decade.”

For more information on the program, visit http://filebox.vt.edu/admin/provost/success/index.html or contact Angela Mathias at mathias@vt.edu.

Lecture

Continued from 2

archaeology of Copán, is highlighted in this exhibition. Currie’s work, conducted in 1941 and 1942, was an important step in the understanding of the Copán culture and its role in the Classic Maya region.

The exhibition features a large model of the main temple complex at Copán, along with a number of artifacts including jade figurines, pottery, and textiles. The exhibition also includes a video presentation that explains the significance of Copán and its impact on the broader Maya world.

The exhibition is open to the public and is free of charge. It will run until May 15.

By Jeanne M. Garon