Tech joins Swiss to form International Disaster Risk Management Institute

By Larry Hincker

The Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH) and Virginia Tech have formed, in conjunction with the World Bank, the ProVention Consortium, the World Institute for Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The institute will be a wide-ranging advisory and analysis group dedicated to helping countries use applied research to mitigate loss of life and property from disasters.

Located near Washington, D.C., at Virginia Tech’s Alexandria Research Institute, DRM will draw upon expertise throughout the ETH system, Virginia Tech, and other affiliated universities. More than 200 natural disasters occurred in just 1998 alone or in any other year on record. Yet the risk is not fully understood or accounted for. Forty of the world’s 50 fastest growing cities are in earthquake zones. Half the world’s population lives in coastal zones. Ten million people are at constant risk of coastal flooding. Three million people per year are made homeless by flooding.

“Many governments, especially in developing countries, lack an adequate institutional framework for applying cost effective and reliable technologies for early warning disaster prevention and mitigation,” said President Charles Steger. DRM will work with governments, international agencies, private enterprises, and non-governmental organizations that have an interest in disaster risk reduction for sustainable social and economic development.

“We want to create a network for applied research, implementation and information dissemination in the field of disaster risk management. DRM brings together key institutions of the governmental sector, the private sector, and the research community,” said Stephen Bieri, chief executive officer of the ETH Board of Directors. Bieri said one goal of the institute will be to “move beyond a post-disaster response mentality towards a culture of integral risk management and sustainable risk reduction.”

DRM is initially established with seed monies from ETH, Virginia Tech, and Swiss Re, a major global re-insurance company. On-going operations of the institute will be funded by grants and contracts from public and private sources interested in global disaster risk reduction.

The DRM Institute will work in conjunction with the newly formed ProVention Consortium of the World Bank. In an announcement earlier this month, the World Bank said it will aim to equip developing countries with the means to better cope with natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods and reduce the related loss of life and destruction. The bank noted that in 1998, natural disasters claimed more than 50,000 lives and destroyed $65 billion worth of property and infrastructure.

Alexa Kriener, a World Bank official leading the ProVention Consortium, said, “The DRM as part of the ProVention Consortium can make a major contribution to the reduction of disaster losses and ending the cycle of poverty in disaster-prone developing countries.”

DRM will provide technical, economic, and social analysis and advice for investment and infrastructure improvement that will reduce disaster losses. “We will draw upon and leverage the intellectual resources of some of the world’s top universities. By applying science, technology, financial and (See TECH on 4)

Tech professors selected to receive SCHEV faculty awards

Wayne Purcell

By Stewart Macleod

From the start, Wayne Purcell’s career seems to have been on a trajectory to intersect with the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia’s Outstanding Faculty Award.

Purcell says he’s gratified by the recognition as one of 11 faculty members across the state to receive the award. Still, he says, the impact has had in the years of work leading to the award—and the impact he plans to have in years yet to come—are really the reward that is most meaningful.

That impact has ranged from what one former student termed an individual life-changing experience in a classroom to a sea change in the way a major sector of the U.S. agriculture industry operates. Purcell is an alumnus distinguished professor of agricultural and applied economics in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is also director of the Research Institute on Livestock Pricing and coordinator of the Rural Economic Analysis Program, both housed at the university.

The state council’s recognition is awarded based on contributions a faculty member makes in the classroom, through research, and beyond the classroom through public-service activities.

Purcell’s classroom ability has been recognized through many awards through the years. During the 12 years he was on the faculty at Oklahoma State University, he won every teaching award available. Since he joined Virginia Tech’s faculty in 1978, he has earned every major teaching award the university has to offer. In addition, he has won teaching awards from American Agricultural Economics Association, the Southern Agricultural Economics Association, and from professional and industry groups.

Stephen R. Koontz, associate professor of (See PURCELL on 3)

Y.A. Liu

By Liz Crambley

“I chose university teaching in 1974 because I enjoy the challenge of motivating and inspiring young people, and years of teaching have only deepened my enjoyment,” said Y.A. Liu, a recipient of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia’s Outstanding Faculty Award for 2000. Liu, the Frank C. Vilbrandt professor of chemical engineering, (CHE), is one of 11 faculty members from colleges and universities throughout Virginia selected to receive the award, which is the highest honor accorded faculty members by the state. The awards, presented March 2 during a ceremony in Richmond, recognize “the finest among Virginia’s college faculty members for their demonstrated excellence in teaching, research and public service.”

Since coming to Virginia Tech in 1982 from the faculty of Auburn University, Liu has received several honors in recognition of both his teaching and research efforts, including the 1984 Western Electric Fund Award from the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) for excellence in instruction of engineering students, the 1986 National Catalytic Award for excellence in chemical education from the Chemical Manufacturers’ Association, the 1990 George Westinghouse Award, and the 1995 Fred Morsfield Design Award from the ASEE for creativity and excellence in teaching and research of engineering design. In addition, Liu has been honored as a teacher by the faculty and students of Virginia Tech. In 1996 he received the College of Engineering Sport Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction, the highest honor awarded by the college’s 5,000 students. In 1997, the faculty (See LIU on 4)
Travel money available

Because there is still money available in the travel fund project, the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) is re-opening the application process for travel-fund money for this cycle.

Student applications in an envelope and marked “GSA” on the outside of the envelope must be submitted to the GSA office, 309 Squires. Students may also submit completed applications via email to gsa@vt.edu.

Applications will be accepted until July 15.

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For more information, contact Foxie Hinkle at foxieh@email.vt.edu.

Housing packet available

The Off Campus Housing Office in Squires Student Center is offering free professional housing packets to faculty and staff members.

The packet contains information to aid in a search for professional or family housing within the New River Valley. Call the office at 1-546-3466 or e-mail vtoch@vt.edu for a free packet.

CEUT offers the “Skilful Presenter”

On Wednesday, March 8, from 3 to 5:30 p.m. in Hillcrest, Margaret Hable will present the workshop “The Skilful Presenter.”

The presentation is information about audience rapport, body language, voice tone and inflection, presentation structure, learning environment, questioning techniques, audiovisual materials, and processing activities.

OWF plans coffee hour

The Organization of Women Faculty will hold its monthly coffee hour from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Friday, March 3, in the Easy Chair at University Mall.

The Organization of Women Faculty is a group of women in academic and administrative faculty positions at Virginia Tech. The monthly first Friday coffee hour is a time for networking informally and to get to know each other. All women faculty are welcome. For more information, contact Tamara Kenedy, 1-9214.

Nationally known advising consultant to speak

By Catherine Doss

Tom Brown, a leading consultant on issues regarding diversity and academic advising, will speak on “Advising for Diversity” on Thursday, March 9, at 3:30 p.m. in 150 Squires.

Brown is well known among the academic advising community and is a frequent faculty member at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Summer Institute where he facilitates sessions on advisor development and multi-cultural issues in academic advising.

Brown has served as an administrator in academic and student affairs for nearly 30 years at Saint Mary’s College of California. He has served in a number of elected and appointed roles for NACADA and has also been active in education beyond the continental United States. He served as a consultant with the American Council on Education Leadership Development Program in Puerto Rico and co-authored a recruitment and training manual for the Peace Corps as part of an effort to increase the participation of minorities among Peace Corps volunteers.

Brown’s visit to Virginia Tech is part of an on-going effort to enhance undergraduate advising at the university. His presentation is free and open to the faculty, staff, and students. The program is sponsored by the Office of the Provost, University Studies, and the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

For more information, contact Cheryl Atkins at 1-6122.
EMPLOYMENT

The following classified positions are currently available. More details of these positions, specific application procedures and position-closing dates may be found on the Personnel Services website at http://www.ps.vt.edu. Available positions are also listed on the Job Line, a 24-hour recorded message service. For information on all job listings, call 1-5300. Some of the following positions include state benefits. Positions with numbers beginning with a “W” are hourly and do not include state benefits. Individuals with two parallel positioning assistance or accommodation in the application process should call the application deadline.

Closing date for advertised positions is 1 p.m. Monday. An EO/AA employer committed to diversity.

Full Time


Development Program Researcher, 7565D, Grade 9, University Development. Electrical Supervisor (B & Supervisior A), 340G, Grade 9, Physical Plant. Enrollment Services Coordinator, 2228J, Grade 10, Educational/Computing Engineering.

Five full-time food operations positions available.

Food Operations Manager A/Assistant Manager, 1205H, Grade 8, Residential/Dining Programs/Hotel Girl. Food Operations Manager B/Executive Chef, 17814, Grade 10, Residential/Dining Programs/Dietick Dining. Food Operations Manager B/Executive Chef, 98374, Grade 10, Residential/Dining Programs/West End Market.

Geotechnical Engineering Technician (Lab Insp Supervisor), 7501J, Grade 11, Civil/Environmental Engineering. Housekeeping Worker, 6811G, Grade 1.

Housekeeping Worker, 6756C, Grade 1, Physical Plant/Housekeeping. Housekeeping Worker, 7275C, Grade 1, Physical Plant.

Installation/Repair Technician, 17910, Grade 8, Biological Systems Engineering. Mechanical Engineer, 11993, Grade 12, Physical Plant.

Medical Technologist, 2362M, Grade 9, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Office Services Assistant, 464G, Grade 4, Physical Plant.

Office Services Specialist, 9243H, Grade 5, Residential/Dining Programs/Culinary Services Administration.

Office Services Specialist, 6484T, Grade 5, Center for Academic Enrichment/Ex- Extension.

Office Services Specialist, 1522T, Grade 5, Political Science.

Office Services Specialist, 0131T, Grade 5, University Registrar.

Office Services Specialist (Motor Pool Dispatcher), 7660G, Grade 5, Motor Pool.

Office Services Specialist/Unit Secretary, 0148B, Grade 5, Residential/Dining Programs/Dietrick Dining/Center. Painter, 1694C, Grade 6, Physical Plant.

Plumber/Steamfitter, 7278H, Grade 7, Residential/Dining Programs/Facilities. Police Captain, 7578T, Grade 11, Police.

Program Support Technician, 6137T, Grade 6, College Arts/Sciences.

Program Support Technician, 7509J, Grade 6, Center Power Electronics.

Program Support Technician Senior, 3507J, Grade 7, Water Resources Research Center.

Programmer, 1162D, Grade 10, Bursar’s Office.

Public Relations Assistant Specialist, 4492J, Grade 8, Center for Transportation Research.

Public Relations Specialist, 7543J, Grade 10, Center for Transportation Research.

Recruiter, 7570D, Grade 10, Personnel Services.

Part Time

Banquet/Setup (Foid 8), 022143G, Grade 2, DBHCC.

Computer Technician (Installation/Repair Tech.), 022991T, Grade 8, Mathematics.

Executive Secretary, 022994T, Grade 6, University Leadership Development.

Housekeeping Worker, 022057G, Grade 1, DBHCC.

Housekeeping Worker, 022490H, Grade 1, Residential/Dining Programs. Laboratory Technician Senior, 022172M, Grade 5, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Office Service Specialist (Asst. Recruiter), 0220647, Grade 5, DBHCC.

Office Services Aide, 022669C, Grade 2, University Library.

Office Services Specialist, 1945J, Grade 5, Near Environments.

Program Support Technician, 022198T, Grade 8, AIS/HRIS Team.

Public Relations Assistant Specialist/ Web Designer, 022974H, Grade 8, Residential/Dining Programs/Marketing/Conference Services.

Radiologic Technician, 022239G, Grade 7, Health Center.

Switchboard Operator (Off Services), 0220821M, Grade 4, CVM.

Office Services Assistant, 6808A, Grade 4, HNEF.

Program Support Technician, 7543J, Grade 6, NVC–Computer Science.

Program Support Technician, 5435M, Grade 6, Virginia Cooperative Extension-Nelson County.

Secretary Senior, 5783M, Grade 5, Virginia Cooperative Extension-Medelon County.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL

University Development. Director of Annual Giving. Contact: Nevin Kester, 201 Pack Building (0336). Review begins immediately.

Center for Power Electronics Systems. Research Associate/Lab Manager. Contact: Ann Craig, 674 Whittemore (0111). Review begins immediately.


Office of the Vice President for Administration and Treasurer. Assistant to the Vice President for Administration and Treasurer. Contact: Mode Johnson, 312 Burnias (0142). Review begins March 7.


purrell’s

Continued from 1

agricultural and resources economics at Colorado State University, said Purcell’s example and his genuine and personal concern made him agricultural economics as a career.

When he attended the first session of Purcell’s freshman introductory agricultural economics class, Koontz intended to transfer to the College of Engineering.

“When I was motivated to stay in the department by Dr. Purcell through his excellent teaching,” Koontz said. “Dr. Purcell continued to motivate me through much of my undergraduate program, and his enthusiasm for the profession and service to agriculture motivated me to pursue graduate school. I am in the right profession; I cannot imagine doing anything else, and Wayne Purcell is in large measure responsible for making my decision.”

Purcell’s applied research, especially in the area of pricing, price discovery, and demand changes in the direction of beef marketing.”

Dr. Purcell is widely respected throughout America. which reach audiences throughout North

Dr. Purcell is a well-known and well-respected chief economist for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. “His persistent efforts to help the beef sector understand the importance of strengthening demand tells us whole new ways to do things that benefit the beef sector.”

His public-service activities have included three known and well-respected personally across the state, throughout the nation, and even in other countries. Among those activities are presentations he makes to industry groups, developing special-issue conferences for producers, and his weekly reports for certain agricultural commodities which reach audiences throughout North America.

 Владимиров, 1250 Parkside (0502). Review begins June 1, 2000.


By Liz Crumbley

Sherali, the W. Thomas Rice chair of engineering, has been elected to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE). Sherali, a professor of industrial and systems engineering (ISE), was among 78 engineers and eight foreign associates elected from all engineering disciplines to membership in the NAE for 2000.

Sherali was elected for his contributions to engineering system design based on optimization theory and he is affiliated with the NAE’s Industrial, Manufacturing and Operational Systems Engineering section.

Election to the NAE is among the highest professional distinctions accorded an engineer. Academy membership honors those who have made “important contributions to engineering theory and practice, including significant contributions to the literature of engineering theory and practice, and those who have demonstrated “unusual accomplishment in the pioneering of new and developing fields of technology.”

Sherali, who joined the ISE faculty in 1979, has received numerous research and education awards during his tenure at the university, including the David F. Baker Distinguished Research Award from the Institute of Industrial Engineers (IIE), the Virginia Tech Alumni Award for Research Excellence, the IIE Fellow Award, the Thomas L. Saaty Prize for Applied Advances in the Mathematical and Management Sciences, the Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences (INFORMS) Computer Science Technical Section Research Award, the INFORMS Koopman Prize, the Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia, the III Albert G. Holzman Distinguished Educator Award, and the Virginia Tech Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Among Sherali’s research accomplishments is the invention, in collaboration with graduate students, of the Reformulation-Lin-earization Technique. This ground-breaking work has been applied to a variety of complex, real-world problems that arise in production, location, distribution, and engineering design situations.

By Larry Haecker

University settles discrimination lawsuit with Brzonkala

Virginia Tech and Christy Brzonkala, a former Virginia Tech student, have reached an out-of-court settlement concerning her discrimination lawsuit against the university. The university agreed to pay $75,000 to Brzonkala. She had originally sought $4.3 million. No legal fees were paid. Brzonkala will drop her lawsuits against the university including a related case filed in Montgomery County Circuit Court.

“We have been exasperated at every court level. The courts would likely find in our favor on the merits,” said Brzonkala’s attorney David S. Agans. However, this case has carried on for too long and cost the university untold thousands of dollars. Although we are convinced that we would prevail in court, this settlement precludes any further investment preparing for discovery and trial,” said former university President Paul E. Torgerson, who oversaw the settlement action while president.

The settlement agreements states, “It is further understood that this Settlement Agreement does not constitute an admission of the Defendant as to the allegations made by the Plaintiff but it is understood that all of the Plaintiff’s allegations are expressly denied and the settlement here made is merely to compromise and settle an existing controversy without further expenditures of time and resources.”

Bonzonaka said the university for discrimination under Title IX of the federal code, based on an alleged rape in September 1994 in the dormitory room of former student Antonio Morrison. The case was dismissed from Roanoke Federal District Court in 1996 even before the facts of the case were heard. The case was sent back to District Court on appeal based on a distant related legal issue recently resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court.

This settlement does not affect the case currently before the Supreme Court testing the constitutionality of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act. In the same lawsuit against the university, Bonzonaka also sued Morrison and James Crawford, another former Virginia Tech student, for violation of her civil rights. The Roanoke District Court declared the 1994 law unconstitutional, a ruling later upheld by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. Virginia Tech is not a party to that aspect of the lawsuit.

By David Nutter

Visitors to meet March 6

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors will meet on campus Monday, March 6, beginning at 1 p.m. in Squires Brush Mountain Room.

The board will consider, among other business, tuition and fee policy for the 2001 academic year, the merger of the Ph.D. degrees in economics and agricultural and applied economics, and the 2000-2001 Pratt Fund budget.

The Academic Affairs Committee will meet at 8:30 a.m. in 6020 Newman Library. The Buildings and Grounds Committee will meet in executive session at 8:30 a.m. in the McDonald Brown Hotel and Conference Center (DBHCC) Boardroom. The open session will begin at 9 in conference room A of the CEC.

The Finance and Audit Committee will meet in executive session at 7:30 a.m. in the DBHCC Private Dining Room. The open session will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room.

The Student Affairs Committee will meet at 9 a.m. in DBHCC Boardroom.

On Sunday, March 5, the Executive Committee of the board and members of the Student Affairs Committee will meet at 8 a.m. in DBHCC Boardroom to review candidates for the student representatives’ positions to the board.

Later that afternoon, the board will hold its regular information session with campus constituency groups at the DBHCC.

Liu

Continued from page 1

presented Liu with its most prestigious teaching recognition, the W.E. Wine Award for Teaching Excellence.

Ley Richardson, a 1999 Cheagle graduate who won the highly competitive Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship for Minorities and is a Ph.D. candidate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, regards Liu as “the most inspir-
ing professor in the classroom I have ever wit-
tnessed.”

“He is a rare individual who cares deeply about his students and colleagues and has the innate ability to evoke the best in them,” Richardson said, noting that Liu “remains in his office every weekday until at least 2 a.m., and he always has an open door policy.”

Liu continues bringing his research and industry expertise into the classroom to help shape se-
nor design students, for example, have devel-

oped computer models for manufacturing pro-
cesses to reduce pollution and costs at Alliant Techsystems in southwest Virginia. Liu’s gradu-
ate students are assisting AlliedSignal Poly-
mers in Richmond with engineering staff train-
ing and process improvements projects that have a potential annual economic payback of more than $35 million.

When Liu was promoted to the Vibertand professorship in 1993, he became the youngest Virginia Tech faculty member at that time to hold an endowed professorship. He has achieved international acclaim for his research and publications in magnetoechemical engineering, coal cleaning, engineering design, and artificial in-
telligence. He has published pioneering textbooks in the field of chemical engineering, as well as more than 100 papers.

Liu received his undergraduate engineer-
ing degree from the National Taiwan Univer-
sity, his master’s from Tsu University, and his Ph.D. from Princeton.

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