SPECTRUM

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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VOLUME 22 NUMBER 33 FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2000

VTTI lands $15-million traffic-safety-research contract

By Cindy Wilkinson

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater has announced a multi-million-dollar contract for advanced safety research to be performed by a consortium of traffic-safety research organizations headed by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI). Funding for the contract is not to exceed $15 million over a three-year period, with an option to continue for additional years. Exact amounts will be determined through further negotiations at later dates.

“This project will provide a vehicle for the nation’s best researchers to solve some of our most difficult real-world problems using tools that have never been available before including the Smart Road and the National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS),” said the VTTI Director Tom Dingus.

Officials with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said the contract will provide support to explore human factors research using data collected on actual roadways, on the Virginia Smart Road test facility, and under simulated driving conditions implemented on the NADS.

Areas of research that may be explored by the consortium include: antilock brakes, vehicle lighting, vehicle mirrors, vehicle visibility, vehicle sensors, advanced technologies, suspension, handling, braking, display/con-trols, driver-response measurement/instrumentation, heavy vehicles, simulator support, technology assessment, device acquisition, customer acceptance, and rollover.

Fourth round of Student Success Grants awarded

By Catherine Doss

A total of approximately $300,000 has been awarded to 18 projects designed to help undergraduates succeed at Virginia Tech.

The 2000-01 Student Success grant winners, sponsored by the Office of the Provost, includes some projects that received continued funding as well as many new initiatives.

“The number of applicants and the assessment data we’ve collected so far indicate that the Student Success grants are meeting a very critical need at the university,” said David Ford, vice provost for academic affairs. “Many students enter Virginia Tech with what appear to be indicators for success such as high SAT scores and excellent high school GPAs, but once they get here other factors hinder their success.”

Ford said these factors include things like motivational and adjustment issues as well as study habits, social activities, and the inability to apply critical-thinking skills.

This year’s grant recipients cover a diverse range of colleges, departments, and units.

One successful project that received renewed funding incorporates required problem-solving sessions into general chemistry courses. Undergraduate student teaching assistants facilitate the sessions where students work in small groups using active learning methods.

An example of a new initiative that was funded this year involves enhancing the academic success of undergraduate international students. In this project, funds will be used to provide international first-year students with sections of the current first-year experience course along with an English-language lab.

“This year’s grant applicants took some very creative approaches to building programs that will help our students succeed,” Ford said. “We will continue to collect and assess data from these projects to see how well they are working or if modifications need to be made.”

The 2000-01 Student Success grant winners, department or college, and project titles are as follows:


By Stewart MacInnis

Bioinformatics management team named

The vice president for science for a non-profit organization working to integrate computer technology into biology has been named director of the Virginia Tech’s new bioinformatics institute.

Bruno Sobral’s work with the National Center for Genome Resources in Santa Fe, N.M., makes him the ideal candidate to lead the new institute, according to President Charles Steger in making the announcement to the university’s Board of Visitors Monday.

Steger also announced the appointments of Clark Tibbetts as associate director and David Sebring as the institute’s manager of corporate and governmental relations.

Tibbetts and Sebring are tracking in establishing a world class organization to lead the way in the very important field of bioinformatics,” Steger said.

Bioinformatics is emerging as the key to making usable the vast amounts of information available to scientists concerning the genetics of living organisms, including humans. It brings together mathematics and computer science to understand and manage the mountains of information generated by scientists unraveling the secrets of DNA.

“Scientists of all fields have done a wonderful job in decoding the DNA of numerous organisms,” Steger said. “The problem is this information is already too vast for any single human being to comprehend, and the mass of data is too large.”

(See FORTH on 3)

By Larry Hincker

BOV honors former President Torgersen

The University Board of Visitors has named the newest building on campus in honor of former President Paul E. Torgersen. Home of the Advanced Communications and Information Technology Center (ACITC), Torgersen Hall sits astride the Blacksburg entrance to campus on Alumni Mall and will literally and figuratively connect old and new information technologies.

By SOBRAL

Torgersen Hall, located at the upper left in this photo, will house the Advanced Communications and Information Technology Center. Burruss Hall is located in the lower left-hand corner of the photo. (R. Griffiths)

President Torgersen

In its resolution, the board noted that “the advancement of instructional technology at Virginia Tech has been the hallmark of Paul Torgersen’s presidency, a reflection of his lifelong commitment to teaching, and the very core of the vision he has articulated.” The ACITC will be home to various campus organizations devoted to the development and

(See TORGERSSEN on 4)

(See BIOINFORMATICS on 2)
Leaving Sharing donations requested

Virginia Tech employees in the University Library and the College of Engineering have requested leave donations from retired classified employees or a 12-month regular faculty members may participate by donating annual leave in increments of eight hours. There is no maximum donation limit, however there is a minimum level that must be maintained. Donation forms can be downloaded from the Personnel Services web site at http://www.psv.vt.edu/adp/forms/forms.html. Leave donations received after the employee's eligibility status changes (such as, return to work, disability retirement, or death) will be returned to the donor in accordance with established Personnel procedures. Leave must be donated to either a specific individual or area. Return the completed forms to: Joni Pimientel, personnel analyst, Personnel Services, (0518).

Tech sponsors economic development program

Virginia Tech’s Public Service Programs, a unit of the university’s Outreach Division, will co-sponsor an advanced training program on practical applications of finance in economic development on Thursday, June 22, at the Chesapeake Conference Center in Chesapeake. The one-day interactive course will feature presentations by some of the state’s leading investment and financial strategists.

Registrations is limited to 45 people. The course fee is $80 per person, which includes all instructional materials, refreshment breaks, and lunch.

To register, call 1-5182 or register on line at http://www.conted.vt.edu/economy/index.htm. For more information, contact Ellen Ague at 1-6681 or by e-mail at easgee@vt.edu.

New Orientation, Advising Preview web address

A corrected version of the web site address for the Orientation and Advising Preview on Wednesday, June 28 has been provided to Spectrum. The web site address is http://www.uaac.vt.edu/preview.html.

SALARIED CLASSIFIED

Continued from 1

Food and Consumer Economics Center: Call 8029 for information.

Entrepreneurial session open, free

The Tenth Anniversary Virginia Tech/Mobile and Portable Radio Research Group (MPRG) Symposium on Wireless Personal Communications 14-16 includes a panel on entrepreneurial opportunities in Southwest Virginia.

Ted Rappaport, MPRG founder, who will moderate “Entrepreneurial Activities and Perspectives for Southwest Virginia,” said the program is free and open to all faculty members and students.

For more information, contact Jenny Frank at mprg@vt.edu or call (757) 686-3765. To register, call the Virginia Tech Division of Continuing Education at 1-5182.

Save Our Streams program offered

The Virginia Tech Museum of Natural History Save Our Streams program introduction will be Thursday, June 15 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Field training will be Saturday, June 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Registration is required and attendance at the introductory meeting is required to participate in the field training. Call the museum at 1-3001 for registration and more information.

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**CLASSIFIED POSITIONS**

- **Information Technology Analyst, 738BL, Grade 0, University Computing Support.**
- **Laboratory Mechanic B, 5652M, Grade 6, CSES.**
- **Laboratory Mechanic C, 7606T, Grade 8, CPES.**
- **Laboratory Specialist, 3385G, Grade 8, Veterinary Medicine.**
- **Laboratory SpecialistSenior, 7597G, Grade 9, Biology.**
- **Laboratory Specialist Senior, 7650M, Grade 9, PWS.**
- **MedicalTechnologist, 2637G, Grade 9, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.**
- **NewMediaCenterManager, 6915G, Grade 7, Athletics.**
- **InstructionalServices, Office Services Specialist, 931T, Grade 5, University Registrar.**
- **Office Services Specialist, 1431T, Grade 5, University Registrar.**
- **Office Services Specialist, 1310T, Grade 5, University Registrar.**
- **Office Services Specialist, 2712H, Grade 6, Residential/Dining Programs/ Southside Warehouse.**
- **Office Services Specialist, 22337H, Grade 6, Residential/Dining Programs/Residence Education.**
- **Office Services Specialist, 0898H, Grade 6, Residential/Dining Programs/Residence Education.**
- **Office Services Specialist, 12337T, Grade 4, Mining/Minerals Engineering.**
- **Operating Systems Analyst, 22420T, Grade 1, University Computing Support.**
- **Program SupportTechnician, 1928J, Grade 8, USA.**
- **Program Support Technologist, 7286H, Grade 6, Residential/Dining Programs/Residence Education.**
- **Program SupportTechnician Senior, 1417Y, Grade 7, Engineering.**
- **Public Relations Assistant Specialist (Sales), Catering Manager, 64730G, Grade 8, Dine.**
- **Public RelationsCoordinator, LC003, Grade 12, University Relations.**
- **Real Estate Contract Administrator, 920215J, Grade 3, University Relations.**
- **Research SpecialistSenior, 7612M, Grade 9, CSES.**
- **Special Services Laboratory Manager, 7376T, Grade 11, ESC.**
- **Storekeeper (Stock Clerk), 2192, Grade 4, Residential/Dining Programs/Owners Dining Programs.**
- **Storekeeper (Stock Clerk), 74021H, Grade 6, Residential/Dining Programs/West End Market.**
- **Telecommunications DatabaseTechnician, Program/Support Technician, 6818A, Grade 6, CNS.**
- **Telecommunications NetworkTechnician, 6617A, Grade 10, CNS.**
- **Part Time Animal Care Technician A, W022155J, Grade 3, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.**
- **Part Time Copy Editor, W022016J, Grade 10, Sensory Loss Services.**
- **Refuse and RecyclingWorker, W02574G, Grade 1, DBHCC.**
- **SecretarialAssistant, W0249G, Grade 1, Residential/Dining Programs.**
- **Technician, 12201H, Grade 6, Physical Plant.**
- **HousekeepingWorker, 7605C, Grade 1, Physical Plant.**
- **Housekeeping Worker Senior, 2099J, Grade 3, Residential/Dining Programs.**

**FACULTY POSITIONS**

**INSTRUCTIONAL**

- **Department of Biological Technologyn Instructor:** Contact: John Husser, 241 Squires (0340), Review begins October 15.
- **Department of Political Science, Assistant Professor of Political Theory:** Contact: Stephen Small, 531 Main (0130). Review begins October 15.
- **Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, University Veterinarian and Director, Office of Animal Resources:** Contact: Kent Ludeman Eng, College of Veterinary Medicine, Phase II, room 214 (0442). Review begins July 15.
- **NON INSTRUCTIONAL**
  - **University Development, Assistant Director of the Alumni Center Campus:** Contact: T.O. Willams, II, 209 Purchasing (0336). Review begins immediately.
  - **Department of Psychology, Director, Center for Organizational Research:** Contact: Roseanne Fid, 508D Dining (0436). Review begins immediately.
  - **Virginia Cooperative Extension, State Master Gardener Coordinator (re-advertised):** Contact: Diane Roff, 122 Hultsker (0437). Review begins June 20.

**SPECTRUM**

**EDUCATION**

- **Virginia Tech:** Bachelor’s degree in architecture; a new engineering building, three dormitories; McComas Hall, a student health-and-fitness center; the Memminger Center, an athletic training facility, and the Virginia Tech Center, a graduate education facility in Falls Church. Torgersen made several high-profile appointments and improvements to facilities in Falls Church. Torgersen made several high-profile appointments and improvements to facilities in Falls Church.

**OCCASIONS**

- **Off Campus Adult ProgramAssistant:** Contact: 610M, Grade 4, VCE—Arlington County.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Engineering Fundamentals Emerging Scholars Program:** Also, Russell D. Murphy Jr., economics. "Studying Performance at Virginia Tech: Benchmarking Recent Achievement.” Virginia Tech, mathematics, "Assessing Downstream Success of Students in the Emerging Scholars Program in Calculus."

**FORTH**

- **Continued from 1 “Engineering Fundamentals Emerging Scholars Program.” Also, Russell D. Murphy Jr., economics. "Studying Performance at Virginia Tech: Benchmarking Recent Achievement.” Virginia Tech, mathematics, "Assessing Downstream Success of Students in the Emerging Scholars Program in Calculus.”"**

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Historian Davis to join university's new Civil War center

By Clara B. Cox

By Sally Harris

Four get outstanding-program grants for 2000-01

By Catherine Davis

Castagnoli's discovery may protect against Parkinson's Disease

By Sookhan Ho

Pamplin honors Digsgs

By Robert H. Digges

In Other News

Historian Davis to join university's new Civil War center

By Clara B. Cox

By William C. Davis, an award-winning author of numerous books on the American Civil War and a nationally noted consultant on the period, will join the Virginia Tech faculty as director of programs for the university's new Virginia Center for Civil War Studies.

"With more than 40 books to his credit, William C. Davis is the most prolific writer in Civil War history. His contacts with the media, especially Hollywood and the publishing field, add several dimensions to our Virginia Center for Civil War Studies," said James I. Robertson Jr., executive director of the center and university distinguished professor of history. Robertson himself is a nationally recognized Civil War historian and author, perhaps best known for his award-winning definitive biography Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend.

Davis is an award-winning author for his work, among them Pulitzer Prize nominations for Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol, which he wrote in 1975, and Battle at Bull Run, a 1978 publication. He has also garnered the Jules F. Landry Award for the best book in Southern history. Jefferson Davis Award from the Confederate Memorial Literary Society (twice), Bell I. Wiley Prize from the National Historical Society for the best book in Civil War and Southern history, Daniel Laney Prize for Best Book in Civil War History, Cass P. Collins Award from the Texas Institute of Letters for the best work of nonfiction, Reuben Porter Award from the Alamo Battlefield Association, and Sunniferdiv. G. Roberts Prize from the Sons of the Republic of Texas.

Among his most recent books are Lincoln's Men: How President Lincoln Became Father to an Army and a Nation and Bluegrass Confederates: The Headquarters Diary of Edward O. Guerroat, both published in 1999. Additionally, he has been the editor of American History Illustrated and Civil War Times Illustrated and executive editor of Historical Times Inc. In addition to books, he has written magazine and journal articles and chapters in anthologies.

Davis has served as historical consultant on such television productions as The Blue and the Gray mini-series, Gettysburg—The Final Fary, the David Wolper production North and South, the British documentary The Divided Union, and the 52-episode series Civil War Journal.

A fellow in the Society of American Historians, he is a past president of the National Historical Society. He has advised the Eastern National Park and Monument Association of the National Park Service and the USS Monitor National Park and Monument Association of the National Park Service to produce the videos. Davis will begin working at Virginia Tech in August at the beginning of the 2000-01 academic year.

Castagnoli's discovery may protect against Parkinson's Disease

By Sally Harris

In a discovery that opens an important direction in the study of Parkinson's disease, Virginia Tech scientists have identified a compound in tobacco that inhibits an enzyme that breaks down key brain chemicals.

Parkinson's disease, a central-nervous system disorder that causes the gradual deterioration of neurons in the section of the brain that controls movement. The brain's neurotransmitter neurons have been found to be less likely to get Parkinson's than non-smokers, but no one has isolated a particular substance in tobacco that may be responsible for that phenomenon.

Neal Castagnoli, director, and Kay Castagnoli, senior research associate, at Virginia Tech's Howard W. Peters Center in the chemistry department, located in the College of Arts and Sciences, conducted research to the isolation of a compound in tobacco that protects against the loss of dopamine in mice and thereby may prevent Parkinson's disease.

By Catherine Davis

Four members of the university's faculty and staff have received outstanding-program grants for 2000-01. The grants are funded by Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost.

The winners are Barbara Prindergrass, dean of students, for support of Hispanic Heritage Month; Teresa Queenberry with the Cook Counseling Center and Phyllis Smith with Schiffelt Health Center, both for staff-development programs focused on excellent customer service; and Melinda Crowder, assistant director of UUSA, to support an administrative benchmark study being conducted by American College Unions International and Educational Benchmarking, Inc.

The award amounts ranged from $2,500 to $5,000.

"Having both Davis and Robertson at Virginia Tech gives us a one-two punch that clearly elevates us to the premier educational institution in the world for the study of the American Civil War," said Peggy S. Meszaros, Tech's senior vice president and provost.

The university announced in early 1999 that it was establishing the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies with Robertson at its helm. Since then, the center has conducted several conferences, including a Merck-sponsored symposium for physicians that drew 155 doctors from five states. It recently announced receipt of a grant from the Hugh I. Shott Jr. Foundation to produce two videos on West Virginia in the Civil War and has acquired the services of Greystone Communications, a Hollywood producer of numerous biographies and historical series for television, to produce the videos.

Davis will begin working at Virginia Tech in August at the beginning of the 2000-01 academic year.

Pamplin honors Digsgs

By Robert H. Digges

The Pamplin College of Business honored real-estate developer and philanthropist Robert H. Digsgs at its Commencement ceremony with its Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Digsgs earned a B.S. in business administration in 1959 from Virginia Tech and an MBA in 1961 from the University of Virginia. He has been self-employed since his junior year in college. He started out in real estate sales and development and has built an entire career in this field.

Digsgs has contributed various gifts over the years to the Pamplin College and Virginia Tech. As a guest speaker in an Introduction to Business class several years ago, he discussed entrepreneurship and business skills. In 1998, Digsgs established the Dorothy Hotell Digsgs Professorship in Entrepreneurship in the Pamplin College.

The college created the Distinguished Alumnus Award 11 years ago and included it in its Commencement ceremony to inspire graduating students by recognizing the outstanding career accomplishments and contributions to the college of its alumni. Previous award recipients were Cliff Cutchins, Henry Dekker, George Dickerson, Charles Eaton, Gene Justice, John Peterson, John Rowcovich, Lloyd Sorenson, Ann Spencer, and Charles O. Stucker.