Bohland asked to coordinate Tech’s Northern Virginia operations

By Clara B. Cox

James R. Bohland, senior fellow for biomedical, bioengineering, and health projects, has been asked to take on an additional assignment as executive director of Virginia Tech’s Northern Virginia operations, while Janet Walberg Rankin, professor of human nutrition, foods, and exercise, has been named a faculty fellow part-time to help Bohland further Tech’s exercise, has been named a faculty fellow part-time to help Bohland further Tech’s initiatives. Both assumed their new duties on September 1.

Bohland will “work on Virginia Tech’s behalf with the academic leaders here on campus and with key individuals in Northern Virginia to help make the key decisions that will ensure that Northern Virginia remains an integral and strategic component of our university life in the coming years,” said Provost Mark McNamee, who made the appointment. McNamee said the creation of the new position “reflects the administration’s belief in the importance of Northern Virginia to the university’s future.”

Duties of the position include enhancing and expanding research and outreach opportunities in Northern Virginia that will benefit Virginia Tech and the state, developing relationships with regional leaders to ensure that the university’s efforts in Northern Virginia meet highest-priority needs, developing a system to share core university resources across all Tech locations in the region, helping to develop a sustainable and sound financial plan for Tech’s Northern Virginia operations, and developing working relationships among the different operations. Bohland will also provide advice on future decisions pertaining to programming, financing, and expansion and will serve as spokesman on Northern Virginia both in the region and on the Blacksburg campus.

“Northern Virginia continues to represent our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity. I look forward to working with our various program leaders in that region as we address the challenges and develop the opportunities,” Bohland said.

The director of the Northern Virginia Center will report to Bohland, who will work with vice provosts, deans, departments, institutes, and faculty members across college lines on interdisciplinary research and graduate opportunities in the region. In academic matters, departments and faculty members in Northern Virginia will continue to report to their respective college deans, while the dean of the Graduate School will continue to be responsible for academic and administrative policy and leadership matters related to graduate education.

McNamee also appointed Rankin to her new position to support the programs that Bohland initiated on the Blacksburg campus, facilitate the development of a vision for biomedical research, identify and link faculty members conducting biomedically related research, and support the development of administrative structures that enhance these efforts. She will also help support and expand relationships with the university’s current external partners—Wake Forest, Carilion, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine—as well as explore relationships with other appropriate external groups.

“I am a proponent of the saying ‘The best way to cooperate is to cooperate.’ Our goal is to reduce barriers to faculty cooperation in biomedical and health sciences and expand external alliances that will help

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences dean search initiated

By Clara B. Cox

The university has instituted a search for a new dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences to replace Andy Swiger, who is retiring on January 1.

Provost Mark G. McNamee has appointed a search committee, headed by Peter Eyre, dean of Veterinary Medicine, for the Agriculture and Life Sciences deanship. In a preliminary meeting of the committee, McNamee and Eyre emphasized the importance of the search, noting that the college is vital in Virginia Tech’s push to become a top-30 institution.

The dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences plays a prominent role in moving the university toward its goals and in setting a new vision for the college,” McNamee told the group.

An announcement about the job opening appeared in national publications on September 6, with a review of applications scheduled to begin October 1. The committee anticipates identifying finalists by the end of November.

Members of the committee in addition to Eyre are Jeffrey Bloomquist, associate professor entomology; Barbara Board, district director in Extension, Bob Bush, associate dean of Natural Resources; S.K. De Datta, associate dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences and director of the Office of International Research and Development; Bruce Hiatt, president of the Farm Bureau; Christine Kastan, senior extension agent; Deborah Johnson, graduate student; Peter Kennelly, professor of biochemistry; Allison McNett, undergraduate student; Craig Nessler, department head of plant pathology, physiology, and weed science; George Norton, professor of agricultural and applied economics; Dave Parrish, professor of crop

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Engineering dean finalist interviewing on campus

The Dean of Engineering search committee has announced the second of several finalists who will be on campus to interview.

Pradeep Khosla, who is currently the Philip and Marsha Dowd professor of engineering and robotics and head of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at Carnegie Mellon University, will be on campus September 24 through 26 for meetings with a wide variety of college and university faculty and staff members, students, and administrators. All interested parties are invited to attend the open forum and reception following.

The open forum and candidate’s presentation will be Wednesday, Sept. 25, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center auditorium.

Candidates have been asked to speak to the general topic of “engineering in the 21st century and the role of the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech.” The open forum and presentation will be video-recorded for later posting on the Provost’s Homepage.

The reception is Wednesday, Sept. 25, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the DBHCC Appalachian/Blue Ridge Room.

A brief profile of Khosla’s background is below. His vita is available at www.provost.vt.edu.

Khosla received his B. Tech. (Hons.) from IIT (Kharagpur, India), and both his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Carnegie Mellon University. He served as assistant professor of ECE and robotics (1986-90), associate professor (1990-94) and professor (1994- ), and founding director (1-97 to 6-99) of the Institute for Complex Engineered Systems (ICES) (which includes the former Engineering Design Research Center—an NSF ERC).

Faculty/Staff Awards Ceremony Today

Virginia Tech will honor its outstanding faculty and staff members today beginning at 5 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center auditorium.

In addition to recognizing teaching and research excellence, President Charles Steger will give his vision for the university, highlight efforts on important initiatives now under way and give an update on the fiscal climate of the university.

University Provost Mark McNamee will serve as master of ceremonies for the hour-long program. “It will be an honor to recognize those who have helped create excellence in teaching and research and to highlight their commitment to outreach,” McNamee said.

The award-winners’ special section begins on page 3.

(See COLLEGE on 8)
Women Faculty Research Series set

The Women’s Center and the Organization of Women Faculty are sponsoring the Women Faculty Research Series this semester.

Each event will be from 4 until 5:30 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center. The first presentation will be Sept. 24, in the Executive Conference Room.

“Is Old Age Better Than the Alternative?” will be presented by Toni Calasanti, associate professor of sociology. Her presentation will include material from her most recent book, Gender, Social Inequalities and Aging, and a recent address on Virginia Public Radio.

On Thursday, Oct. 10, in conference room C, April Few, assistant professor of human development will present “Resiliencies of Rural Battered Women: A Qualitative Study,” which will include material from her research on intimate violence and domestic abuse.

On Thursday, Nov. 14, in the executive conference room, Muriel Lederman, associate professor of molecular and cellular biology, will present material connected to her book The Gender and Science Reader in her presentation, “How Should We Teach Science?”.

On Wednesday, Dec. 4, in the executive conference room, Rosemary Blieszner, alumni distinguished professor of human development will present material from her research on social networks in her presentation, “A Family is a Circle of Friends Who Love You: Circles and Cycles of Close Relationships in Old Age.”

Additional women presentations will be announced.

MSE doctoral students present seminars

Two materials science and engineering doctoral students will present seminars on Friday, Sept. 20, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Hancock auditorium. The seminars will be "Thermal Modeling of Laser Metal Deposition Processes" by Shawn Kelly and "Submicron Talc Reinforcement: The Trend in Automotive Polypropylene-Ceramic Composites" by Emilio Lobato.

‘Women in Graduate School’ conference set

The ‘Women in Graduate School: Challenges and Triumphs’ conference will be held September 28 from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center. The conference is sponsored by the Graduate Women’s Forum and co-sponsored by the Women’s Center, the Division of Student Affairs, the Graduate School, and the English Department.

Emily Toth, “Ms. Mentor,” columnist in the Gender and Science Reader, will present seminars on Friday, Sept. 20, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Hancock auditorium. The seminars will be “Thermal Modeling of Laser Metal Deposition Processes” by Shawn Kelly and “Submicron Talc Reinforcement: The Trend in Automotive Polypropylene-Ceramic Composites” by Emilio Lobato.

Researchers in the Department of Civil Engineering will present seminars on Friday, Sept. 20, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Hancock auditorium.

Research at Virginia Tech will be featured September 23 through 29 on the “On-Campus” section of the Science Coalition web site, a comprehensive resource for information on federally funded science research.

Each week, the coalition highlights scientific advances and on-going research at member universities. As a premiere research institution, Virginia Tech has been noted for scientific achievement and education in such areas as biotechnology, business, environment, education, the humanities, information technology, and materials. The Science Coalition web site featuring Virginia Tech will present research by faculty members and students on controlling mosquitoes, a new sensor that will simplify diagnostics, what happens to “whistleblowers,” a theatre’s healing role in Bosnia, a portable unit that can treat wastewater in remote locations, and such distraction to learning as cell phones and after-school jobs that take up more than 20 hours per week.

The web site can be found at www.sciencecoalition.org. The direct link to the Virginia Tech page after its week on the Science Coalition site is www.research.vt.edu/ resmag/sc2002/. The Science Coalition comprises major public and private research universities nationwide, together with more than 300 businesses, voluntary health organizations, medical groups, healthcare providers, and scientific societies dedicated to sustaining the federal government’s historic commitment to federally funded university science research.

and “International Issues in Education,” with Kim Beisecker, director of the Cranwell International Center.

A $10 registration fee covers conference materials and lunch. For more information, contact Rachel Christensen at 1-7806 or rachrist@vt.edu.

The Graduate Women’s Forum (GWF) is a student organization that works to create a community for graduate women to come together for professional skill building, surviving as a woman in academia and other professional arenas, and as a social-support network, including making connections with students across disciplines.

Under secretary Ray to speak

Mark E. Ray, under secretary for natural resources and environment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will speak on current forestry issues Thursday, Sept. 26, at 11 a.m., in F r a l i n auditorium. Ray oversees the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Tech featured on Science Coalition’s web site

By Susan Trulove

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2002 Faculty-Staff Award Winners

ALUMNI AWARD FOR OUTREACH EXCELLENCE

E. Scott Geller

By Sally Harris

Scott Geller, professor of psychology who received the 2002 Alumni Award for Outreach Excellence, “epitomizes the currently popular university slogan “knowledge at work,”” said Department Head Jack Finney.

Geller’s 32 years of exemplary research has focused on the application of behavioral science to serious societal issues. His award-winning teaching has demonstrated to students and the community and industrial leaders world-wide how behavioral-science principles and techniques can be applied to real-world problem solving. Geller’s 300-plus research publications, 17 books, 33 book chapters, 16 training manuals, 14 videotape programs, 12 audiotapes, and 177 magazine articles have shown diverse audiences how to make a difference with behavior-focused psychology.

Geller has given more than 900 keynote addresses or workshops at professional-development conferences on the application of behavioral science to such problems as environmental protection, prison management, student motivation, alcohol abuse, drunk driving, road rage, and occupational health and safety. Geller’s outreach in industrial health and safety is recognized in major corporations. Many credit him with changing the corporate approach to injury prevention from traditional command-and-control enforcement to employee empowerment. This shift has resulted in substantial reductions in workplace injuries and fatalities.

Patricia G. Amateis

By Sarah Newbill

Patricia G. Amateis, associate professor and director of general chemistry, has received the University’s Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching, which will be presented September 20 at the annual Awards Ceremony.

When Amateis decided to obtain a chemistry degree at Concord College, her career plans changed when she began conducting chemistry help sessions for freshmen through the department.

The right mix of helping others with a subject near and dear to her heart led to a newfound love—teaching. She ended up with a degree in education, but went on to obtain her Ph.D. in chemistry from Virginia Tech and has been putting those elements to work for the benefit of students ever since. “I am privileged to spend every day of my job doing something I love. Actually, ‘job’ is not the right word to describe the way I feel about what I am paid to do. Teaching is not merely a job; it consumes my time and my thoughts,” she said.

Amateis thinks it is critical to make the 700-plus students she teaches, primarily freshmen, feel important during this transition time in their lives. “I attempt to accomplish this by learning their names, holding many office hours and one-on-one help sessions, and seeing each student as a person, not just a chemistry student.”

Her past honors include the 1994 Sporn Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, and the 2001 College of Arts and Sciences’ Certificate of Teaching Excellence.

W. Michael Aust

By Lynn Davis

Forest engineering, forested wetlands, and forest soils and hydrology in themselves are formidable topics—teaching them is equally challenging. That is why W. Michael Aust, associate professor of forestry, makes it his goal to approach each student and teaching situation on an individual basis.

“I believe that teaching is my most important duty,” Aust said. “The students that I teach will often become individually responsible for managing 50,000 to 100,000 acres of land, as well as planning harvests for thousands of acres per year.”

Aust presents his material in a hands-on learning environment so that students can grasp concepts more rapidly and retain information better. “He treats us as professionals and has high expectations for us,” his students said. Because he is continually motivating his students to perform at their highest potential, Aust has earned the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching in the College of Natural Resources.

“Interesting, intensive, enjoyable, relevant, informative, and memorable,” were virtues ascribed to Aust’s classes by his students. His field trips, patience with questions, and great sense of humor, made it easier for students to apply math skills to every day life. Students made it a point to name him “the most valuable asset to the forestry department.”

Other teaching activities include several graduate-student research projects as well as two weeks at the college’s forestry field camp. Aust received a M.S. in forestry from Mississippi State University and a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University.

ALUMNI AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Holly S. Bender, Eric M. Mills, Jared A. Danielson, and Pamela J. Vermeer

By Jeff Douglas

A team of faculty members and research associates working in the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Biomedical Sciences has been awarded a university XCaliber Award.

Led by former Associate Professor Holly Bender, the team included Eric M. Mills, Jared A. Danielson, and Pamela J. Vermeer. Cooperating in the Biomedical Informatics Research Group (BIRG), the team was honored for developing an innovative new instructional-software program called the Problem List Generator (PLG).

PLG software technology challenges students to develop deductive reasoning and higher-order thinking skills as they apply fact-based knowledge in making diagnostic assessments. While originally developed to help train veterinary students improve their clinical-pathology abilities, the software can be applied in computer science, marketing, business administration, mathematics, human medicine and other fields where problem-solving is required, according to Bender.

The program enables students to work through a problem and simultaneously compare their problem-solving approaches to the way experts think through the problem. The technology actually enables the instructor and the students to “see” what the other is thinking as they work through the process. Improved problem-solving abilities in students are fostered by the immediate feedback they get from comparing their own cognitive approaches to expert approaches, Bender said.

The group was awarded a $1.24-million grant from the United States Department of Education through their “Learning Anywhere, Anytime Partnerships” program to support the continued development and broader application of the software technology.

Timothy W. Luke

By Liz Crumblies

Timothy Luke, university distinguished professor of political science, has been a leader in establishing on-line courses and other methods of distance learning. In recognition of his efforts, he has been selected to receive a 2002 XCaliber Award for Leadership in Distance and Distributed Learning.

Luke is one of the founding members of the Virginia Tech Cyberschool in the College of Arts and Sciences, which went on line with select courses in 1995. Two years later, he launched the on-line master of arts degree in political science, the first program of its kind in the nation. Currently, he is the executive director of the university’s Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning and co-director of the Center for Digital Discourse and Culture.

Since joining the Virginia Tech faculty in 1981, after receiving his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis, Luke has received a number of honors for his research and teaching in the areas of political and social theory, international politics and environmental politics. He is a member of Virginia Tech’s Academy of Teaching Excellence and has received both the Wine Award and Alumni Teaching Award.

In 1995, Luke was chosen to be the Fulbright professor of cultural theory and the politics of information society at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, and in 1996 he was named visiting research and teaching scholar at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.
Rachel L. Holloway
By Susan Trulove
Rachel Holloway, director of undergraduate programs in communication studies, has received the 2002 Alumni Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Advising.

An academic advisor since 1990, Holloway has been director of undergraduate programs since 2000. She advises more than 80 students and teaches, “She is always on top of things, always organized, and knows the students’ programs of study better than they do. She has overhauled and moved advising in our department to a new level,” wrote former Department Head Howard Sypher. “(Because) she cares about the quality of advice that students receive…Rachel organized mandatory advising training for faculty members.”

Holloway uses the developmental-advising approach, expecting students to accept more responsibility for their academic career each year and explore interests through electives. She builds a four-year plan with her advisees and encourages internship and student leadership as career preparation.

Beth Waggenspack wrote that Holloway pioneered mass advising sessions, mentors the award-winning chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, and “established a regular series of checks on progress towards degree, which has reduced the burden on the faculty greatly and benefited students immensely.”

Holloway also coordinates summer orientation for the College of Arts and Sciences and is a major speaker at university summer orientation. “Students tell me later that they still remember the strategies Dr. Holloway provided during orientation,” Waggenspack said.

Former student Abigail Bidwell, director of communication for the First Baptist Church of Naples, wrote, “Dr. Holloway still gives me advice and encouragement. She impacts the lives or her students in positive ways daily.”

PROVOST’S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN ADVISING

Richard L. Shryock
By Sally Harris
Caring about students, their college careers, and their futures has earned the Provost’s Award for Excellence in Advising for Richard Shryock, associate professor of French in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Shryock earned overwhelming praise from colleagues, students, and alumni.

Shryock’s assistance begins before students decide to come to Virginia Tech. As a recruiter, “he has been mentioned several times as a major reason they chose to come here,” according to a colleague.

Once here, students are impressed by Shryock’s genuine interest in helping them. He has extensive knowledge of their options for study here and abroad and helps them see the many career possibilities they have. A colleague said Shryock had created a sheet of the course sequences for the French major and minor that “makes a student’s course of study highly understandable, and thus ‘doable.’”

Shryock’s advising extends to students in other colleges who need foreign languages. He also influences other advisors throughout the university and around the country through talks, web pages, and brochures. “We in the French section look to his vast experience and specialized knowledge as a mainstay of our success as advisors,” one colleague wrote. Another said Shryock is known for “his generosity of time and his generosity of knowledge.”

After meeting Shryock, one potential student’s father said, “Right then I knew she’d be okay at Tech.”

Jeanet S. Francis
By Jeffrey Douglas
With a special knack for offering students a caring and personal touch in what can sometimes seem like a large and bewildering environment, Jan Francis has turned the undergraduate advising process for history students into an “art-form.”

Francis, who formally advises about 100 history majors, is known for her comprehensive knowledge of academic regulations and procedures.

She is also widely admired for her ability to attract the deep and trusting bonds with students that enable her to provide the highest levels of personal service.

Francis stays in close touch with alumni, and frequently profiles their success in a department newsletter she created. She has produced a brochure that details the university’s rules and expectations concerning student performance, a career booklet, and she manages the department’s information center, an important resource for students.

She played an active role in “Project Success,” a university-wide program designed to detect and counsel students who were at risk of developing academic difficulties before serious problems developed. Francis also serves as an informal advisor for Phi Alpha Theta, the history honors society.

Francis believes the advising process is a joint effort between the student and the advisor and strives to present useful information in an empathic environment that helps students make the best choices for themselves.

“Each year at graduation, I feel that I have 60-80 kids of my own graduating,” Francis said. “I become very attached and want them to have successful careers and fulfilling lives.”

WINE AWARDS

Richard D. Fell
By Stewart MacInnis
Challenging, innovative, and accessible are among adjectives used to describe the teaching style and personality of Rick Fell. These qualities, combined with a caring attitude for students, earned the entomology professor a Wine Award.

The award is to be presented at the Virginia Tech Faculty/Staff Awards Ceremony September 20.

During his more than 20 years at the university, Fell has taught or co-taught 11 different courses. He currently teaches courses in insect biology, insects and human society, honeybee biology and bee keeping, and insect behavior.

Students consistently rate Fell as one of the best and most challenging professors they have had. Both students and colleagues describe him as enthusiastic and dynamic in the classroom. He captures and maintains student interest through a unique blend of humor, demonstrations, and discussions.

“He is exciting, entertaining, informative, articulate, and most importantly, he hits the bull’s eye with respect to the message he’s trying to get across,” a colleague said.

Fell has been praised for his efforts and dedication to teaching, his innovative use of electronic technologies in the classroom, and for his ability to relate well to students. He mentors other faculty members and graduate students who seek his assistance in improving their teaching skills.

He is an adviser for first-year biology students, and is the coordinating adviser for the entomology minor. He has won teaching awards from professional societies and from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Judges of the Alumni Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Advising, and Provost’s Awards for Excellence in Advising:

Rachel L. Holloway

D. Michael Moore

Janet S. Francis

Richard D. Fell

By Liz Crumbley
During his 30 years as an advisor of instructional technology (IT) graduate students, Professor Mike Moore has earned a reputation for “doing whatever it takes” to help his students achieve the goal of earning their degrees. His outstanding efforts are being recognized with the 2002 Alumni Award for Excellence in Graduate Academic Advising.

He is excited, entertaining, informative, articulate, and most importantly, he hits the bull’s eye with respect to the message he’s trying to get across,” a colleague said.

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“The majority of Moore’s students pursue careers in higher education, aided by his policy of encouraging them to begin publishing journal articles while they are working toward their degrees. Moore and his students have co-authored more than 60 refereed publications and/or presentations, and six of his advisees have received awards for their dissertation research.”

In addition to advising the College of Human Resources and Education’s IT students, Moore serves as graduate coordinator for the Department of Teaching and Learning, acting as liaison between the students and the Graduate School.

J. Anne Gleason, a professor at New Mexico State, wrote, “I most appreciated his sensitivity to student needs.”

By Jeffrey Douglas
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After meeting Shryock, one potential student’s father said, “Right then I knew she’d be okay at Tech.”
Benoit received the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching and has received the Certificate of Teaching Excellence numerous times.

Thweatt returned to ECE as an instructor during fall semester 2000. After teaching introduction to computer engineering at the university for the summer session, he spent a year teaching mathematics at Lloyd C. Bird High School in Chesterfield. Thweatt returned to ECE as an instructor during fall semester 2001.

Although a novice at teaching, Thweatt has earned high evaluations as well as high praise from students. The young instructor “put more effort and heart into the class than any other teacher I have ever had,” commented one student in Thweatt’s fall 2001 course. “I found him to be the best professor I have had at Tech,” wrote another.

In addition to teaching, Thweatt serves as coach and adviser for the Academic Competition Organization (ACO) of Virginia Tech, which he and two fellow undergraduates founded in 1995. Students in the ACO play in intramural, regional and national “college-bowl” and academic-quiz competitions. Thweatt’s team won 12 out of their 14 competitions this past season.

SPORN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING INTRODUCTORY SUBJECTS

John D. Boyer

By Sookhan Ho

John D. Boyer, an instructor in the Department of Geography, has received the 2002 Sporn Award for Excellence in Teaching Introductory Subjects.

Boyer, who has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in geography from Virginia Tech, has taught World Regions since 1998. This university core course typically enrolls more than 500 students.

“My teaching philosophy is simple: make it accessible, and make it relevant,” Boyer said. “People have a natural tendency to want to learn about the world once I provide the structure to help them make sense of an unfathomable amount of information and connect it to their own lives.”

He has created an on-line “accompanying text” and a highly popular, weekly international film series, “Geography Night at the Movies,” to reinforce themes covered in class. He uses music videos, live web interaction, and slide shows to enhance learning.

“Students get very excited about the world when they understand what is being taught and that they have a vested interest in it,” Boyer said.

His remarkable teaching skills, concern for his students, and readiness to help other faculty members are reflected in his consistently high teaching scores, his students’ enthusiastic evaluations, and his colleagues’ warm praise.

“This class opened my eyes to truly see the whole world,” said one student.

“As cliched as it sounds, I feel that he genuinely inspired me and other people in the class to grow and be better people.”

DIGGS TEACHING SCHOLARS AWARDS

Megan M. Boler, John R. Seiler, and William E. Snizek

By Sarah Newbill

Forestry, teaching and learning, and sociology are subjects that don’t have much in common, yet all three have a unique similarity—they are taught at Virginia Tech by three faculty members who have been recognized for their exceptional contributions to the teaching and learning environment. Megan Boler, John Seiler, and Bill Snizek have been named the 2002 Diggs Teaching Scholars. They will each receive the award on September 20 at the annual Awards Ceremony.

Boler, associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, joined the faculty in 1998 and has since developed six courses, produced a video, and created a diversity resource center. She is published in education, philosophy, women’s studies and cultural studies, including her 1999 book Feeling Power: Emotions and Education.

Seiler, professor in the Department of Forestry, has developed the multi-media electronic textbook, Forest Biology, and the multi-media plant-identification program Woody Plants in North America, known as the largest single collection of native woody-plant photographs in existence. He also helped develop a middle-school natural-resource outreach program and an on-line forest-biology course for public-school teachers.

Snizek, an distinguished professor in the Department of Sociology, has developed innovative practices in the classroom, including methods to enhance learning in large lecture settings. His “Sociological I.Q. Test” is used to help students recognize cultural stereotypes, and the classroom “mailbag” is for students to contribute questions or comments and explore personal areas of interest.

The Awards Ceremony is today at 5 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center auditorium.
PRESIDENT’S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Catherine L. Barker

By Sarah Kayser, University Relations intern

Known for her genuine concern for and rapport with the undergraduate students and her colleagues, Catherine “Cathy” Barker is much more than a program-support technician. “She is a role model and an inspiration, continually going beyond the expectations of her job to help the students,” Associate Dean Rich Oderwald said.

“Cathy is the glue that holds together the Academic Programs Office in the College of Natural Resources, as well as the coordinator of important college events,” Oderwald said. “She is a true professional and deserves to receive the 2002 President’s Award for Excellence for her outstanding work for the university.

“We recently had to distribute the academic-probation letters to students with below minimum grades. Cathy, on her own initiative, checked each student’s record for any irregularities that may have caused an erroneous notation. She found four errors in the system,” Oderwald said. “By going the extra mile she saved the students, me, and the university considerable embarrassment and clean-up work.”

“Cathy is instrumental in the success of our activities. She works after hours and on weekends to make sure events are successful. Last year, she even identified and fixed a problem with room arrangements hours before the next gathering, a full year in advance,” Oderwald said.

Billie R. Cline

By Mary Ann Johnson

Billie Cline, who provides support to deliver 4-H programs to the youth of the state, has received the President’s Award for Excellence.

Cline was cited for her work with the 4-H Data System and also for serving as the 4-H publications manager and editor of the State 4-H Information Newsletter as well as being the 4-H events coordinator.

She works with agents, specialists, and 4-H members throughout the state and the nomination especially noted her skills at solving problems for all of them.

She has an overview of the organization, said Robert Ray Meadows, director of 4-H. During the past few years her experience and overall view of 4-H allowed her to make sure that projects continued even while there were vacancies in the 4-H department. She handled the responsibilities and then provided orientation and guidance when the new 4-H specialists joined the department. She performed this task with the dedication and professionalism that is her trademark, Meadows said. Cline also has been the coordinator and leader of delegations of teen 4-H’ers to the National 4-H Congress and Citizenship Washington Focus programs. Cline said these projects were some of the best parts of her job and Meadows added that her efforts were a valuable contribution to the Virginia 4-H program.

Cline joined Extension as a 4-H agent in Rockingham County after her graduation from Radford College in 1967.

President's Award for Excellence recipients are recognized for “extraordinary contributions and sustained excellence . . . .”

Eric R. Day

By Stewart MacInnis

From everyday garden pests to exotic invasive species such as Africanized bees, when Virginians confront insect pests they turn to Eric Day in Virginia Cooperative Extension’s Insect Identification Laboratory for definitive identification and sound advice on how to deal with them.

Day’s professional competence, his service-oriented attitude, and the reliance placed in him by the state’s agriculture industry, government agencies, and homeowners has earned him the President’s Award for Excellence. The award will be presented at the annual Faculty-Staff Awards Ceremony.

“Eric Day is one of the best-known Virginia staff members in the state,” said Timothy P. Mack, head of the Department of Entomology. “He works hard, cares about his place of work, and has had a positive effect on people in every county in the state.”

Manager of the laboratory for 16 years, Day makes thousands of identifications of insects every year. Extension agents from throughout the state send specimens to him for identification. The speed with which he makes identifications allows farmers, forest managers, and homeowners to limit the damage caused by insect pests.

In addition to identifying pests, Day has developed an Internet site for his laboratory that provides photos and illustrations of insects, fact sheets, and information on how to deal with problem insects.

Extension agents and specialists depend on Day’s expertise, his quick identifications, and his encyclopedic knowledge of insects in their day-to-day work, said Doug Pfeiffer, professor of entomology.

Carolyn L. Furrow

By Sally Harris

Carolyn Furrow, web technician and IT specialist for the College of Arts and Sciences, is considered indispensable to her colleagues and has received a 2002 President’s Award for Excellence.

Beginning work part-time at Virginia Tech at age 17 and full-time at 18, Furrow took college courses and workshops to become a technology specialist. Ask what she does, and she will say, “I provide computer hardware, software, network, and web-site support for the administrative staff of the College of Arts and Sciences. I assist the associate deans by conducting research and organizing and presenting data and information for executive reports and presentations. I also serve as webmaster for the college server.”

But ask the deans she assists, and you’ll learn what makes Furrow exceptional. “She functions as nurse, teacher, counselor, technician to all of us and our hardware, has never met a problem she couldn’t solve, and never, never loses her patience nor her creativity,” “Carolyn exemplifies the union of exceptional skill and positive attitude.”

“Service is her most closely held value, and she practices it day in and day out.” “Carolyn’s work lives through her regular gifts of excellence to others.” “Carolyn has an inquisitive mind, which always asks the question, ‘How does this work, and what can I learn to make it better?’” “And ‘Carolyn has a wealth of information-technology expertise, and she willingly gives of her time and talents to always help those in need.”

Terry T. Rakestraw

By Netta Benton

Terry T. Rakestraw, executive secretary in the Department of Food Science and Technology, is a recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence for 2002. The award will be presented September 20 at the annual Faculty-Staff Awards Ceremony.

Since beginning work at Virginia Tech in 1996, Rakestraw has served as a mentor for new staff members as well as for students in the department, and helps train staff and faculty members about Extension rules and regulations. University Distinguished Professor George Flick Jr. praises her for meeting challenges with a smile and always meeting deadlines.

Rakestraw helped organize and implement the Third International Conference of Recirculating Aquaculture as well as the CFAST/Virginia Tech booth at the annual Boston Seafood Show. “She brought this program back from the ashes and made it a success,” Sumner said.

She also helped her department head reorganize the responsibilities of the main office staff and has organized a system that provides a back-up for each staff member to help out when the workload is too heavy for one person.

During two periods when she was the only departmental secretary, she worked longer hours and took work home. According to Department Head Susan Sumner, she “never complained about the long hours or the sometimes hectic conditions when several faculty members wanted their work completed at the same time. Words do not describe what she has had to do. Her creative talents and innovative ideas get her through some rough moments.”

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Josiah S. Tlou
By Jeanne Garon
Josiah Tlou, associate professor of social studies education, has received the 2002 Alumni Award for Excellence in International Programs. With grants totaling $3.5 million, his work has centered on curriculum development in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, where he is well known for his contributions. “Josiah has built an extraordinary record of teaching, research, and service at Virginia Tech and abroad,” said Judith Shrum, chair of the selection committee. “The longevity and impact of his work in Africa stands as a model for any scholar who would both honor his academic discipline and serve the world community.”

Tlou’s collaborations have provided opportunities for other faculty members. Currently, a Virginia Tech team works with Malawi educators to strengthen teacher education and prepare curricula. Another grant provides $1.1 million for Virginia Tech’s Center for Instructional Technology Solutions in Industry and Education to integrate technology with Malawi’s educational system. “Each time I take the 20-hour trip to Africa,” he said, “I think, ‘Of what possible use could we be?’ But we start collaborating, and good things start to happen.”

“This work on a groundbreaking, comprehensive social-studies curriculum in the blossoming democratic spirit of Malawi is truly extraordinary,” wrote colleagues Patricia Kelly and Jerry Niles. “We are fortunate that he has spent his career helping us realize that it is through international understanding that we all continue to grow.”

John G. Casali
By Liz Crumbley
John Casali, whose human factors and ergonomics research has provided advances in fields ranging from hearing protection to wheelchair use, is the recipient of the 2002 Alumni Award for Research Excellence.

Casali, the John Grado professor of industrial and systems engineering, is director of Virginia Tech’s Auditory Systems Laboratory and Vehicle Driving Simulator Facility. He has conducted research in noise control and hearing protection, active noise cancellation, truck safety, vehicular displays, warning-signal design and vehicle operator communications. This research spans more than 60 projects funded for a total of more than $4.5 million.

Along with a graduate student, Casali holds two U.S. patents for custom hearing-protection devices. Casali also has invented and patented a light-weight, detachable power/steer drive attachment for folding wheelchairs.

After receiving his graduate degrees in industrial engineering at Virginia Tech, Casali joined the faculty in 1982. The College of Engineering honored his work in 1998 with the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Research. He also has received numerous national honors, including the Jack A. Kraft and Paul M. Fitts awards from the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society and the David Baker Award—the premier industrial engineering research award—from the Institute of Industrial Engineers.

Casali has authored more than 150 publications and presented more than 65 technical papers and 20 seminars. Under his chairmanship, 23 M.S. and 13 Ph.D. students have completed their degrees.

Malcolm Potts
By Sarah Newbill
Malcolm Potts, professor in the Department of Biochemistry, has received the Alumni Award for Excellence in Research, which will be presented September 20 at the annual Awards Ceremony.

“Extreme” might be the most appropriate word to describe Potts’ experiences and his research. As a Ph.D. student he subjected himself to extreme conditions, spending a year at the Royal Society Research Station on an uninhabited island in the southwest Indian Ocean. As a post-doctorate student, he was a member of the Florida State University Expedition to Antarctica.

Since 1985, he has been at Virginia Tech studying primitive organisms that, like himself, are able to withstand extreme conditions. This research has enabled him and colleagues in the Virginia Tech Center for Genomics (VIGEN) to devise methods to dry human cells for long-term storage. The benefit—the ability to transport, store, and use these cells and other biomedical products in remote settings. This research has multiple applications, including combat-casualty care and medicine.

Potts received his undergraduate and graduate education in plant biochemistry and microbiology at Van Mildert College in the University of Durham, England. He completed post-doctoral studies in the department of Biogeochemistry at Carl von Ossietzky University in Germany, then went on to the Royal Society-Israel Academy of Sciences Post-doctoral fellow at Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem. He was awarded the D.Sc. from the University of Durham in 1995 based on his research.

James A. Myers
By Mary Ann Johnson
James A. Myers, who retired as agricultural and natural-resources Extension agent at Buckingham County, has received the Alumni Award for Excellence in Extension.

Myers spent nearly his entire career at Buckingham County, beginning in 1973. During his tenure, he was able to direct educational programs to fulfill the needs of the citizens of Buckingham County particularly by working with an Extension Advisory committee, Public Issues forums, and the Extension Leadership Council.

Working with the swine industry, he targeted the program to meet the challenges of an evolving industry. From 1978 to 1986, he co-chaired the Buckingham Area Swine School which offered programs on nutrition, herd health, breeding management, genetics, and marketing. Success was noticeable in this school as producers increased the average number of pigs weaned per litter by two, increased their feed efficiency, and saved feed cost.

Working with the beef industry, he started programs geared towards marketing and the use of performance-tested bulls, which have resulted in increased net profits. For example, one program encouraged producers to combine calves from several farms into truckload lots. In 2001, the Buckingham Cattlemen’s Association sold $780,000 in one night in combined truckloads. In 2001, Buckingham County’s cattle sales, using Myers’ electronic marketing program, resulted in $1 million in sales. The Virginia Cattlemen’s Association selected the Buckingham County beef producers to showcase the First Annual Summer Roundup.

Myers received his bachelor’s degree in animal science in 1972 and his master’s in adult education in 1977 at Virginia Tech.

Charles C. Stallings
By Stewart MacInnis
A knack for intuitively understanding the problems faced by dairy farmers and the development of practical solutions to those problems that have had an international impact are among the reasons Charles C. Stallings has been awarded a Alumni Award for Excellence in Extension.

Stallings, a professor of dairy science and a dairy specialist for Virginia Cooperative Extension, will receive the award today at the annual Faculty-Staff Awards Ceremony.

His Extension education program in dairy-cattle nutrition is credited with helping Virginia dairy farmers take rank among the most-efficient producers in the Eastern United States. Concepts and educational and management materials developed by Stallings have been cited as among the key factors leading to the success of the Virginia dairy industry.

One of the most successful tools he has developed is a computer-software program that helps farmers balance the nutritional value of the rations fed to dairy cattle. He has also developed educational programs leading more than 80 percent of Virginia’s dairy producers to seek laboratory analysis of the rations they feed their cattle. The result has been a 21-percent increase in income over feed costs for many Virginia herds in the last 10 years.

Stallings makes presentations nationally and internationally. Technical material he has developed has been translated into Spanish, Turkish, Greek, and French.

He earned a bachelor’s degree from Eastern Kentucky University, and a master’s degree and doctorate from Michigan State University.
Arts and Sciences program aids students in job-search process

By Sally Harris

In today’s economic climate, finding a job may seem a daunting task to someone just completing college. But a new program in the College of Arts and Sciences will give students an edge when they start looking for employment.

The Recruiter-in-Residence program will bring to campus recruiters from major companies and organizations to give students an opportunity to interact with a national recruiter on an informal basis before having to come face to face with one in an interview situation, according to Deborah Wilson, career services coordinator for the college. “The recruiters who have volunteered their time to assist our students are not here to make a pitch for their company,” Wilson said, “although they will provide information to any student who is interested. What they are here to do is to speak with students about all aspects of the job-search process.”

The recruiters will help students learn how to write a resume or critique resumes students already have. This will include instructions on the items to include and ways to highlight accomplishments.

The recruiters will give interviewing tips and discuss how students can successfully navigate a career or job fair. They will conduct mock interviews to give students the experience they need to negotiate the real job interview without making beginners’ mistakes. They will also answer students’ questions about job hunting.

Recruiters scheduled thus far include those from Ferguson Enterprises Inc., the U.S. Air Force, Black & Decker, USA Inc., NVR/Ryan Homes, GEICO Direct, Apex Systems Inc., Raytheon Co., the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and IBM.

Students interested in the College of Arts and Sciences interested in the program should call Wilson at 1-8131 to schedule an appointment with the recruiter. All sessions will be held in the Old Security Building across from the Women’s Center.

Excellence in Education Awards honor innovative teaching

By Jean Elliot

The College of Human Resources and Education’s Excellence in Education Committee has once again identified exemplary public schools and community-college programs across Virginia. However, because of budget cuts at both higher-education and public-school levels, a moratorium has been placed on the two-day conference where winning programs were presented and exhibited. Award winners still receive plaques; while certificate-of-recognition winners receive framed awards. Out of 67 proposals received, there were nine winners while eight others earned certificates of recognition.

Judges look for programs that are innovative, creative, effective, unique, replicable, and of significant importance to the first-place awards at the state level. The awards will be presented Saturday, Sept. 21, at the NFPW Communications Conference in Bismarck, N.D.

NFPW is an organization of professional journalists and communicators in journalism, public relations, education, publishing, and other fields.

University communicators win national awards

The following classified positions are currently available. Position details, specific application procedures/position-closing dates may be found on Personnel Services web site http://www.ps.vt.edu. Positions are also listed on the Job Line, a 24-hour recorded message service. For information on all job listings, call 1-5300. Some positions include state benefits. Positions with numbers beginning with “W” are hourly and do not include state benefits. Individuals with disabilities desiring assistance or accommodation in the application process should call by the application deadline. Closing date for advertised positions is 1 p.m. Monday. An EO/AA employer committed to diversity.

**FULL TIME**
One food-service position available. Academic Advising Specialist, 001016B, PB 3, Biology.
Administrative Assistant, 006137B, PB 3, ASA.
Analytical Biologist, 008200K, PB 3, VBI.
Biostatistician, 008018K, PB 4, VBI.
Budget Analyst, 006927F, PB 4, BFP.
Business Practices Specialist, 007962F, PB 5, Controller’s Office.
Computer Systems Engineer, 001080B, PB 5, Computer Science.
Division Head, Construction Services, 007597F, PB 6, CDC.
Employee Relations Program Coordinator, 001070D, PB 5, Personnel Services.
Financial Analyst, 006676Y, PB 4, OPS.
Housekeeping Worker, 00776C, PB 1, DBHCC.
Laboratory Specialist, 007810M, PB 3, PPM.
Molecular Biologist, 008019K, PB 3, VBI.
Scientific Glassblower, 001267B, PB 5, Chemistry.
Service Leader/Cashier, 000750H, PB 1, RDP.

PART TIME
Animal Care Technician, W022679M, PB 1, VTH.
Animal Care Technician Large Animal, W020068M, PB 2, VTH.
One food-service position available. ICU Veterinary Technologist Large Animal, W022181M, PB 2, VTH.
Large Animal Husbandry, W022155M, PB 1, VTH.
Pmm Support Technician, W022937M, PB 2, VTH.

OFF CAMPUS
Administrative Program Support, 007411B, PB 3, Engineering/NVC.
Biologist, 007999J, PB 4, CML.
Nursing Supervisor, 006726M, PB 3, CVM.
Senior Program Administrator, 006436Y, PB 4, DCE.