Four CALS dean candidates to interview in March

The Provost’s Office has announced that four candidates for the position of dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will be on campus for interviews in March.

The candidates are Colin Guy Scanes, interim director of the Center for Designing Food for Human Nutrition and former associate dean of the College of Agriculture, Iowa State University; Sharron Quisenberry, dean of the College of Agriculture and director of the Montana Agriculture Experiment Station; Cameron Ray Hackney, dean of the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences and director of the West Virginia Experiment Station at West Virginia University; and Mike Weiss, acting dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Idaho.

Scanes is scheduled to be on campus March 11 through 14; Quisenberry, March 16 through 19; Hackney, March 23 through 26; and Weiss, March 30 through April 2.

In 1995, Scanes became professor of animal/nutritional physiology in the Department of Animal Science at Iowa State University. His administrative assignments include executive associate dean/associate director of the College of Agriculture/Iowa Agricultural and Home Economics Experiment Station, Iowa State University; interim director of the Plant Science Institute and associate dean of the College of Agriculture, Iowa State University. He is currently interim director of the Center for Designing Food for Human Nutrition.

Quisenberry has planned and implemented entomological-research programs in several areas including wheat, rice, forage crop, and livestock systems. She is nationally and internationally recognized for her expertise in plant-pest interactions and plant resistance to insects. Currently, Quisenberry is serving on the National Academy of Sciences’ Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources and on the Governor’s Economic Policy Advisory Committee.

University selected as partner in Carnegie initiative

Tech Chemistry Professor Jim Tanko described the CIC as an opportunity for universities to participate in a discussion evaluating their goals for graduate education. Tech’s Chemistry Department will have a seat at the table to participate in the group dialogue examining and assessing ideas pertaining to graduate education in chemistry.

“In addition to sharing ideas and experiences with other universities, we may implement some ideas presented by others if they remain consistent with our goals and objectives and if we think that they would work in our environment,” Tanko said.

Tanka said he hopes the environment and timing are right for substantive changes to occur in the Graduate School, which he believes will help advance the university’s objective of becoming a top-30 research institution.

Internal search announced for vice provost

A Search Committee has been formed and an internal search has begun for a vice provost for outreach and international affairs to replace C. Clark Jones, who is retiring at the end of the fiscal year. Provost Mark McNamee announced today:

“We decided to look inside the university community to fill this position for several reasons,” McNamee said. “Certainly, we have a number of highly talented faculty members and administrators who are dedicated to outreach, recognize the value of an international approach in all three parts of our mission, and understand the importance of sharing our knowledge throughout the world. With the university undergoing so much change and with the budget a continuing concern, we also felt that an internal search could provide us with candidates who would have the institutional knowledge to carry us through these critical times.”

The vice provost for outreach and international affairs is responsible for the planning, marketing, delivery, and oversight of the university’s outreach, economic development, and international activities and provides executive leadership and vision to a range of programs, services, and activities.

Among its units are Outreach Program Development in continuing education and public services, Economic Initiatives and Marketing Research; the Virginia Tech Southside Initiative; Commonwealth Campus Centers in Abingdon, Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach; Office of International Research, Education, and Development; and the Center for European Studies and Architecture in Switzerland.

The vice provost provides leadership to the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center; is leading the program planning for its successor, The Virginia Tech Center, which is scheduled to open in 2005; serves as the spokesperson for outreach and international programming; and represents the university at various functions and on such boards as the Hotel Roanoke Conference Center Commission, Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville. The position is also available (See INTERNAL on 4)

BoV Meeting Scheduled

The Board of Visitors will hold its quarterly board meeting on campus Sunday, March 9, and Monday, March 10. The full meeting of the board will be held on Monday, March 10 at 1 p.m. in the Board Room, 2100 Torgersen Hall.

General Assembly Adjourns after Adopting Budget to Address Revenue Shortfall

By Ralph Byers, director of government relations

The 2003 General Assembly adjourned February 22, after adopting a budget to address the largest revenue shortfall in the state’s history.

For higher education, the major issue was the amount of tuition flexibility the institutions would be granted to recover a portion of the $305 million cut in General Fund support being imposed.

Although the institutions argued strongly that tuition decisions should be left to the individual boards of visitors, in the end the General Assembly opted against flexibility, mandating a 5-percent cap on tuition increases above the annualized 2003-04 tuition rates for in-state students.

The budget also imposes a base-adequacy adjustment that would double the 1990-91 level of payment for public universities in the 1995-96 fiscal year.

The General Assembly approved 2.25-percent salary increases for faculty and staff members, to be effective on the new facilities authorized by the voters in the recent general-obligation-bond referendum. This fee, based on a $1.67-per-credit fee on out-of-state students at four-year institutions and a $1.50-per-credit fee on out-of-state students at two-year institutions, will produce $2 million to defray debt-service costs.

The inconsistency of the state’s policies over the last 10 years with respect to tuition—which included increases, freezes, rollbacks, and then increases—prompted the budget writers to instruct the Joint Subcommittee on Higher Education Funding to recommend to the next General Assembly a tuition policy as part of higher education’s base-adequacy guidelines. The budget also provides an increase of $4.5 million in student financial aid to be allocated to the institutions.

The General Assembly also supported the project goals were to support and disseminate about the study. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which was founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1905 and chartered by an act of Congress in 1906. More information about the study and participants is available at www.carnegiefoundation.org.
Events

Friday, 28
Pay Date for Faculty and Staff Members.

Saturday, 1
Women’s Month Begins.
Spring Break Begins.
Men’s Basketball, noon, Cassell Coliseum: Villanova.
Women’s Basketball, 4 p.m., Cassell Coliseum: West Virginia.

Tuesday, 4
Women’s Basketball, 7:30 p.m.: At St. John’s.

Wednesday, 5
Men’s Basketball, 7 p.m., Cassell Coliseum: Miami.
“With Good Reason,” 7:30 p.m., WVF.

Saturday, 8
Men’s Basketball, 2 p.m.: At WVU.

Activities

Big East Women’s Basketball Championship, TBA, Piscataway, N.J.

Sunday, 9
Spring Break Ends.

Wednesday, 12
YMAC Noon Slide Show, noon, Cranwell Center.
Big East Men’s Basketball Championship, TBA, Madison Square Garden, N.Y.
“With Good Reason,” 7:30 p.m., WVF.

Thursday, 13
Art Gallery Exhibit Opening, Armory Art Gallery (through 4-4).
Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon, 3060 Torgersen.
PBK Lecture, 4 p.m., “1100 Tregersem” John Brauman, Stanford.

Seminars

Friday, 28
MCBB, 12:20 to 1:10 p.m., Fralin auditorium: Jonathan Dinman, University of Maryland.
MSE, 3:30 p.m., 100 Hancock: Michael Kelley, William and Mary.

Friday, 14
MCBB, 12:20 to 1:10 p.m., Fralin auditorium: Grant Cramer, University of Nevada, Reno.
Geological Sciences, 3:30 p.m., 4069 Derrign: Gene Hunt, University of Chicago.
MSE, 3:30 p.m., 100 Hancock: Alexis Claire, Alfred University.

Bulleins

PBK to sponsor Visiting Scholar’s Lecture
Virginia Tech’s Mo Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa will sponsor a Visiting Scholar’s Lecture on the topic “Impacts of Technology on Basic Science” in the Torgersen Hall Museum (1100 Torgersen) at 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 13.

Employees request leave donations
An employee in Information Systems and Computing has requested leave donations.
Salaried classified employees or 12-month faculty members may participate by donating annual leave in increments of eight hours.
There is no maximum donation limitation per year, nor is there a minimum balance that must be maintained. Donation forms can be downloaded from the Personnel Services web site at http://www.ps.vt.edu/forms/.

Leave donations received after the employee’s eligibility status changes (such as, return to work, disability retirement, retirement, etc.) 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 form to Ella McVauh, personnel analyst, Personnel Services, Southgate Center.

Children’s Literature and Natural History
Every Fourth Friday of the month at 6:30 p.m., there will be a natural-history story-time activity at the Barnes and Noble bookstore in Christiansburg sponsored by the Museum of Natural History at Virginia Tech. Today’s topic is “Marvelous Moths.” The event is a mixture of children’s literature and natural-history activities. The activities are for children between eight and 12 years old, but other ages are welcome if accompanied by parents.
For more information, contact the museum at 1-3001.

Student leadership conference for high school students set
A Student Leadership Conference is being planned for March 14-16 in Roanoke at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. The conference is designed to attract emerging young leaders of the future who are currently in the tenth and eleventh grades. There will be many training opportunities for the students as well as avenues for them to showcase their outstanding leadership skills. The theme of the conference is “Achieving the Vision through Yesterday’s Wisdom.”
The conference, sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs and the Outreach Program Development Office, is being launched in the year in which Virginia Tech celebrates the Golden Anniversary of the first African American student to enroll at the university. During the year-long celebration of this event, the African American student to graduate will also be honored.
The focus of the first Student Leadership Conference will be on the leadership lessons that can be gleaned from those “who have been there, done that.” Pioneers and path makers from all generations have much to share with today’s students. The conference experience will be designed to give students an avenue to demonstrate that they are not “at risk,” but “at promise,” given the right opportunities.
The conference activities will include leadership workshops, alumni panels, campus tours, network sessions, and prizes for the participants. In addition, the conference will provide opportunities for some student participants to apply for scholarships and other support should they choose to pursue higher education. Participants may also be selected to serve as student moderators for workshop sessions, and everyone will be able to volunteer to be a part of “Open Microphone Night.” The first night of the conference will afford the participants the opportunity to attend “Realizing the Dream,” a program hosted on the campus. The program will promote the ideals and ideas of such leaders as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.
For more information, contact Jane Todd, at the Outreach Program Development Office at 1-2014, janetod@vt.edu, or visit website http://www.conted.vt.edu/vtleadership/.

Gods and Generals artist to sign prints, books on campus
By Clara B. Cox
Historical painter Mort Künstler, the official artist for the movie Gods and Generals, will be on campus Saturday, March 1, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center main dining room to sign prints and books. Künstler will be joined by James I. Robertson Jr., alumna distinguished professor of history and executive director of the university’s Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, in signing copies of their newly released book Gods and Generals.
The two will also take orders for a Virginia Tech limited edition of their collaborative work, a leather-bound, gilt-edged edition of Gods and Generals, and a print of a new Künstler painting of Stonewall Jackson, “Divine Guidance,” signed and numbered by the artist. Proceeds from the sale of this one-time, individualized set will support programs of the Civil War center. “Virginia Tech’s Virginia Center for Civil War Studies is fortunate in having a friend and supporter in Mort Künstler, and we are honored to have him visit,” Robertson said. Robertson was the principal historical consultant for the Gods and Generals movie.
In 2000, Künstler issued a Virginia Tech limited edition of his painting “The Winds of Winter: Jackson’s Romney Campaign January 1862” and donated proceeds to the Civil War center. Since he began painting, Künstler has developed a reputation for historically accurate paintings. His painting “The High Water Mark,” unveiled at the Gettysburg National Military Park in 1988 on the 125th anniversary of the Civil War battle, is considered the most accurate painting ever done of the event. In 1992, the U.S. Postal Service commissioned him to do a painting of the Buffalo Soldiers and issued a stamp of the painting two years later.
In addition to prints of his Civil War paintings, he has issued several books in recent years about the period, collaborating with Robertson on three. In addition to Gods and Generals, the two Civil War experts worked together on The Confederate Spirit and Jackson & Lee: Legends in Gray, with Künstler supplying the paintings and Robertson the text.
For more information, call Robertson at 552-0760 or Paula McElvoy at Künstler Enterprises, Inc. at 516-922-6760.
Tech’s Public Service Programs receive federal grant funds

By Susan B. Felker

Regional businesses interested in international marketing could get a boost, thanks to a grant awarded to the university’s Public Service Programs by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Commercial Service Rural Export Initiative.

The grant will fund two seminars on export procedures, one at the Southwest Higher Education Center in Abingdon on September 4 and the other in Charleston, W. Va. on September 5. J. Douglas McAlister, director of program development for University Outreach and International Affairs (UOIA), announced the grant. Public Service Programs is part of UOIA Program Development.

The seminars will cover an overview of international product marketing; quotations; contract administration, export and banking document; presentation of documentation to customs and banks; and export logistics within and outside the United States.

The seminar in Abingdon will also feature a supplemental afternoon program on opportunities stemming from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the resultant simplified procedures involved in exporting to Mexico.

Chad Miller, economic-development specialist with Public Service Programs, said that the grant resulted from the success of last year’s seminars co-presented with the U.S. Dept. of Commerce Export Assistance Center, Charleston, W. Va. office.

Through the Rural Export Initiative (REI), the U.S. Dept. of Commerce Commercial Service provides companies in rural areas with better access to export assistance and global market research by connecting them with international trade services and increasing the number of companies in rural areas engaged in exporting. The long-term goal of the program is to empower companies and communities to revolutionize the way global business is done. The Commercial Service currently has Export Assistance Centers in 18 rural areas.

For more information on the seminars or on Virginia Tech’s other training and consulting services for businesses, contact Miller at chadm@vt.edu or at 1-8324.
Researcher tackles recycling of chemically treated lumber

By Lynn Davis

The use of chromated-copper-arsenic (CCA)-treated wood has garnered a great deal of media attention over the past few years due to possible environmental and public-safety concerns. “Another concern of this material has just recently gained attention from researchers, environmentalists, and government organizations,” said Bob Smith, wood science and forest products associate professor in the College of Natural Resources. “That is the amount of CCA-treated wood being removed from people’s homes and businesses and going to the nation’s landfills.”

Chromated copper arsenate, or CCA as it is commonly known, is the chemical compound used to pressure-treat wood to resist attack from insects and decay. Smith said CCA can typically extend the life of wood in an outdoor environment by 30 to 40 years, thus saving the forest resource. “Since the early 1970s, CCA-treated wood has been in approximately 50 percent of residential decks built in the United States.”

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the wood-preserving industry have voluntarily removed the use of CCA for the treatment of wood in residential applications starting in January 2004. “This will end much of the media hype in the possible adverse side effects that CCA may produce because of the arsenic in its formulation,” predicted wood-science research assistant Dave Bailey. “However, another concern is the amount of CCA-treated wood that could end up in landfills, especially from residential decks. Several researchers across the country have indicated that the amount of discarded CCA-treated wood reaching landfills is increasing and the tonnage is expected to rise substantially over the next several decades.”

Research performed by the wood science and forest products department and the USDA Forest Service in Blacksburg estimated that one billion board feet of CCA-treated wood is removed from residential decks and disposed primarily in landfills each year. Researchers from other universities have examined the possible leaching of CCA chemicals from wood to unlined landfills, to determine if the rate of CCA chemical leachate will contaminate groundwater supplies. “This research could cause tighter regulations on the disposal of CCA-treated wood, and force the cost of disposing old decks to increase over the next few years,” Smith said.

To help reduce the burden on landfills and the demand of timber harvested for use by the wood industry, research is being conducted at the Brooks Forest Products Laboratory at Virginia Tech to extend the useful life of used CCA-treated material. This research has evaluated the amount of useful material that a deck contains, which instead of ending up in a landfill could be re-used.

“The research has calculated the amount of CCA-treated wood in a residential deck before demolition, and then determined the amount of usable CCA-treated material capable of being recycled,” Bailey said. “We have determined that over 80 percent of a discarded CCA-treated deck can be recovered into usable lumber.”

The physical and mechanical properties of the spent CCA-treated wood were also evaluated, to verify if this used material can perform to needed standards. The chemical-retention levels (the amount of chemicals in the wood) of the used CCA-treated wood were similar to that of new CCA-treated wood found in many local home-improvement centers. The strength of the old wood was also tested for comparison to new CCA-treated wood. The mechanical tests concluded that the strength properties of the discarded CCA-treated wood, destined for the landfill, were similar as new CCA-treated wood.

Smith said, “We are currently evaluating what it would take for landfill managers to be willing to separate out the CCA-treated wood to sell or donate to parties that could recycle the materials into the usable products we have identified. Our research has helped to recognize the potential of discarded CCA-treated wood. It could certainly reduce the burden on landfills and lessen the demand of our forests by extending the life of current forest products.”

Denton to analyze media, politics at presidential conference

By Annette Calhoun

Robert Denton, professor of communications studies and W. Thomas Rice chair and director of the Corps of Cadets Center for Leader Development, is an invited speaker at the ninth-annual Presidential Rhetoric Conference, being held through March 2 at A&M University in College Station, Texas.

Included in the program is a panel discussion with George H.W. Bush, 41st president of the United States, James Carville, political consultant to President William Clinton, and Mary Matalin, political consultant to President George H.W. Bush.

Denton’s paper “Political Television in the Internet Age,” analyzes American politics and the Internet. He discusses concerns by some scholars that the merging of the Internet with television, and the increase in customizing information to specific interests, will result in more social fragmentation and group-centered politics with less opportunity for public debates. “Just as was the case with television, the early literature of the 1980s and 1990s suggests the Internet would democratize politics by encouraging even greater participation, fostering new political parties and interest groups as well as leveling the playing field among electoral participants. However, studies now show that few people access political or issue sites. Even more informational sites are becoming overly commercialized. Thus, as television, the Internet has yet to transform American politics and democracy to the utopian notions of more informed and politically active citizenry.”