Big East universities file suit against Miami, BC, ACC

UPDATE: At press time, the latest development in the issue was a letter sent by the presidents of the five Big East schools involved in the lawsuit to President James F. Barker of Clemson University. Barker is the chair of the Council of Presidents of the Atlantic Coast Conference. The letter requests the opportunity for “face-to-face conversations” with ACC presidents. The purpose of the meeting would be to enable the Big East presidents to learn more about the “plans and likely consequences” of the ACC expansion plans. “We are now requesting that you work with us to arrange such a discussion,” the letter states. At press time, no meeting had been announced.

Teacher-education programs restructured

By Annette Calhoun

Proposed changes are under way in Virginia Tech’s teacher-education programs. “Restructuring teacher-preparation programs at Virginia Tech is part of a university-wide process of programmatic reshaping,” said Jerry Niles, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. “The major change is that all programs will be focused at the graduate level. This will enable us to prepare pre-service teachers, provide advanced-degree programs for teacher administrators and counselors, and work collaboratively with K-12 schools in partnerships.”

Graduate programs that lead to teacher licensure in elementary education, secondary education, and vocational education remain at the core of Virginia Tech’s teacher preparation, according to Niles. Graduate secondary-teacher education includes English, science, mathematics, social studies, second languages, and music. The graduate vocational-education program includes business, marketing, and family and consumer sciences. A reading-specialist program prepares experienced teachers to earn state-wide endorsements.

Dean of Students Office renamed

The Dean of Students Office has been renamed the Student Life and Advocacy Office. The Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSD) will not be a part of the Student Life and Advocacy Office. This includes student advocacy and the SSD will not be a part of the office. The SSD Office has become a separate unit and will be under the leadership of Susan Angle and report to Brian Warren, assistant vice president for student affairs. This office is located in 150 Henderson Hall and the new phone number is 1-3788.

Project S.A.F.E. (Sexual Assault, Facts and Education) has been transferred from the former Dean of Students Office to the Women’s Center. All remaining functions of the former Dean of Students Office will remain intact as program areas of the Student Life and Advocacy Office. This includes: student advocacy and student emergencies for off-campus students, student multicultural programs, orientation and parent programs. Reporting to the Dean of Students Office (See DEAN on 2)

A Statement Updating the Review of Race-conscious Programs

By Provost Mark McNamee

Follow the April 6, 2003 board meeting and the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee, I issued a renewed call for all departments and senior managers to once again review their programs for race-conscious activities. In this review, we received a full response from all departments in our administrative structure. Responses from individual departments were also coordinated through the responsible Dean, Vice Provost, or Vice President’s office to ensure a complete review.

As a result of this second review, 71 programs or activities were identified by departments. Based on our initial review of the specifics of these identified programs, 50 appear to be acceptable and 16 have been modified or discontinued until race-neutral alternatives can be adopted. There are five areas in which we are conducting further review to determine if the activities are or can be sufficiently narrowly tailored or are seeking clarification on the state and federal relationship in regard to sponsored activity. We are also reviewing the feasibility of race-neutral alternatives in these areas. The areas under further review include undergraduate admissions, private scholarships and fellowships, the Minority Academic Opportunities Program (MAOP), sponsored research requirements of the federal government, and the McNair Scholars program (also federally funded).

In April, Mr. Ben Davenport of the Board of Visitors, the president, other senior officials and I attended the Race-Neutral Conference sponsored by the federal Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights. This conference provided information on the race-neutral alternatives used by some universities to increase minority enrollments.

On May 16, 2003, the Office of the Attorney General requested that we provide an updated and complete set of materials to our office for review. In response, we once again shared a full set of the materials collected in this second review, along with our summary and prioritization of programs. This information was sent to the state solicitor on Tuesday, May 27. We will continue working with the Office of the Attorney General as we review activities and develop recommendations for the identified programs. We will also incorporate any further guidance we receive as a result of the Supreme Court rulings in Grutter and Gratz expected in late June.

The Ad Hoc Committee met on Sunday, June 1 to discuss the findings of the comprehensive review. I then briefed the committee on the status of the review and recommendations. Dr. David Colburn, provost of the University of Florida shared the experiences of his university with race-neutral admissions practices. Mr. Farook Sait from the USDA and Mr. Charles (Chip) Blankenship and Gerald Parks from General Electric also participated in the meeting.

Board of Visitors approves programs

By Jean Elliott

The Board of Visitors has approved a new master-of-natural-resources degree, a program that is unique in the state. The College of Natural Resources’ programs in forestry, wood science and forest products, and fisheries and wildlife sciences are each ranked among the top-three in the nation. There is also a demand in student interest and from related agencies for professionals with skills in the management of natural resources. The new master-of-natural-resources degree, a program that is unique in the state, is expected in late June.

Teacher-education programs restructured

By Clara B. Cox

Barbara Pendergrass, who had served as dean of students since 1998, retired June 1 after 24 years service to the university.

“I don’t think I have ever worked with anyone who cared more about students and who was more effective in working with them. I’m going to miss her wit, her wisdom, and her extraordinary contribution to the Division of Student Affairs,” said Lanny Cross, vice president for student affairs.

“For all of us in the Dean of Students Office, working with—not for—her has been the highlight of our careers. Barbara has a unique leadership style that fosters teamwork unlike anything any of us have experienced. She believes in ‘collective wisdom’ and always includes all staff viewpoints in decision making for the office. Every voice is both included and heard. All of us are hopeful that her unwavering commitment to all people and consistent treatment for all students will continue to be a guiding force in our work,” Tom Brown, associate dean of students said.

As dean of students, Pendergrass endeavored to make a difference in attitudes, bring visibility to the needs of different minority communities on campus and affirm their value and importance to the university. “I wanted them to know that they are welcome at the table,” she said. “Anything that was inclusive
By Susan Trudove
Research at Virginia Tech will be featured the week of June 23 in 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 (www.research.vt.edu/resmag/sc2003) will present research by faculty members and students on fuel-cell materials and systems, sensors for harsh environments—such as oil wells and transformers, why the elderly fall, preparing for and preventing biological disaster, biomaterials for use in the human body, the economic and health promise offered by non-forest timber products, and Nikki Giovanni’s NAACP Image Award-winning book, Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea, which puts the black American experience of the “Middle Passage” into the context of space travel.

BIG EAST

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spiration in which two members of the Big East Conference, Miami and Boston College, “have abandoned their contractual and fiduciary obligations to their partner schools in the Big East...based on their desire to make more money irrespective of the cost to their partners.”

The lawsuit alleges that Miami “made repeated public and private statements and commitments to the other members of the Big East that it intended to remain a member of the Big East and that it had no intention of leaving to join any other conference” even though Miami and Boston College had “been engaged in secret negotiations to leave the Big East to join the ACC.”

The lawsuit alleges that the actions of the defendants will cause the plaintiffs “to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in revenues, as well as the value of tens of millions of additional dollars spent to improve the facilities and teams in the conference.”

The lawsuit also addresses the ACC’s conduct: “By raiding the Big East, the ACC plans not only to add Miami, Boston College and Syracuse to its roster, but also to try to destroy the Big East as a viable competitor in major college football” by placing it “at risk of losing its guaranteed berth in one of the four BCS Bowls, which will result in the loss of tens of millions of dollars, plus hundreds of millions more in lost television and radio broadcast contract rights and other harm.”

The lawsuit complaint details statements made by defendants’ representatives that they had no intention of defecting from the Big East, including:

- On March 6, 2002 during a Big East Conference CEO meeting, Miami President Donna Shalala reiterated Miami’s commitment “in the strongest terms possible, emphatically stating that the University of Miami is in the Big East Conference and has no interest in leaving it for any other conference.”
- On Nov. 2, 1999 former Miami President Edward Foote said “We have no plans to change conferences. We are proud to be partners with the fine institutions that comprise the Big East Conference.”

According to the lawsuit complaint, the plaintiffs and other members of the Big East relied on these representations that the defendants were committed to the Big East and as a result invested “tens of millions of dollars” in their respective football programs, including: Virginia Tech invested approximately $37 million in the second phase expansion of its football stadium.

Pittsburgh negotiated for a long-term lease to play its games at newly constructed Heinz Field, a $250 million facility...constructed an approximately $100-million events center in which it plays Big East basketball...and negotiated for a long-term lease for the use of a multi-million-dollar practice and training facility.

Connecticut “has just finished construction of a $90-million-dollar football stadium as part of its demonstrated commitment to college football.”

Virginia Tech’s entry into the Big East was “accelerated by a full year” in reliance on Miami’s assurance.

The lawsuit seeks damages to compensate the Big East universities for their losses as well as punitive damages to punish defendants for their behavior. The lawsuit also seeks an injunction to prevent defendants from reaping the benefits of their unlawful conduct.

DEAN

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was very meaningful to me as well as seeing students grow, seeing students take action to accomplish something.”

The legacy includes a number of initiatives that originated in her office; Safe Zones which are areas on campus where the gay community can feel safe and connected to the university; Comfort Zones which are areas where any member of the campus community can feel accepted; the annual Diversity Summit; the Diversity Roundtable; and Multicultural Fellows, a program that provides faculty and staff members with an opportunity to help the university focus on the value of diversity by bringing people together who wouldn’t ordinarily have a chance to interact and providing them the opportunity to share ideas.

The initiative that seemed to give Pendergrass the most pride is Student Voices, a think-tank of students from diverse backgrounds that meets every other week. The 15 students who comprise this group helped redraft the religious holiday policy as it relates to class attendance, they have looked at the policy affecting campus climate and have defined what constitutes sexual harassment and university commissions have turned to them for feedback on particular issues.

Pendergrass came to Blacksburg in 1979 to work as a counselor for minority students and as a staff counselor at Virginia Tech while attending school part-time. She earned a doctorate in counselor education at Tech in 1987.

Two years later she was named assistant to the vice president for student affairs. She moved to the dean of students’ office in 1995 as associate dean of students and worked in that position until 1998, when she was named dean of students.

University featured on Science Coalition’s web site

By Stewart MacInnis
Maureen Storey, research associate professor and acting director of the Virginia Tech Center for Food and Nutrition Policy, was tapped to serve as a private-sector adviser to U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson during the recent World Health Assembly.

She attended the 56th World Health Assembly, the annual meeting of the 192 member states of the World Health Organization, or WHO. The meeting was held from May 19 to May 28.

Highlights of this year’s assembly included the appointment of anew WHO director-general, and the adoption of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, WHO’s first global treaty. Among the key global public-health issues discussed at the assembly were the latest information on SARS, HIV/AIDS, tobacco control, the post-conflict health challenges in Iraq, and violence prevention.

Storey attended the meeting to keep abreast of discussion on the WHO’s strategy to address world-wide issues of diet, nutrition, and chronic diseases. A global strategy is scheduled to be presented at the assembly next year as the capstone to a three-year effort to dampen a worldwide increase in obesity rates.

In a critique last year of the first draft of a WHO report addressing those issues, Storey and other health-and-nutrition experts urged the international organization to re-write the report to include physical activity and fitness as factors in preventing obesity. They also urged the body to reconsider proposed policy recommendations that imposed food taxes as a means of discouraging consumption of foods the report’s authors deemed unacceptable.

Finally, the group called for a revised report to be reviewed by a panel of experts in nutrition, physical activity, and various aspects of food production.

“This is an important issue because the strategies will result in national and global policies,” Storey said. “To be effective, those policies must be built on a reliable scientific foundation, especially when governmental financial resources are stretched as much as they are today.”

The Center for Food and Nutrition Policy, an organization looked to by national policy makers, is located in Northern Virginia. In 1999, the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization named it a center of excellence.

The mission of the center is to advance national, science-based food-and-nutrition policy. The mechanisms for accomplishing the mission include research, outreach, public service, teaching and communications.

Storey advises U.S. delegation to WHO

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2003
By Karen Gilbert

While some graduate students scrounge for scholarship opportunities, others like David A. Neal III receive multiple offers.

Neal’s academic credentials started early in his career. As an undergraduate and a master’s student at Virginia Tech, Neal became interested in designing futuristic aerospace vehicles that efficiently adapt to diverse, multi-variable conditions during flight. For example, morphing aircraft are planes that have wings that can change shape like a bird’s wings, instead of rigid flaps.

Neal spent a summer as an undergraduate intern with Virginia Tech’s Center for Intelligent Material Systems and Structures (CIMS). Subsequently, the center and Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio sponsored Neal’s senior-design team project. Neal was selected as presenter for the team, placing him in front of an audience full of high-ranking Air Force scientific officers, all very educated in morphing. Neal was ultimately awarded a graduate research assistantship combined with support from the GE Scholars Fund to study morphing at CIMS. His resulting master’s degree work included the development of a complete simulation model for looking at morphing analysis.

(See NEAL on 4)

Former Dean Notes Achievements of Retiring Staff Members

By Andy Swiger, dean emeritus, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

When recently retired from Virginia Tech, I received, among other things, a very nice retirement dinner and an article in Spectrum. For all these I am deeply grateful. I’ve noticed similar recognitions for other administrators and non-academic members. Certainly these other retirements and departures constitute a significant loss for the university.

But little note has been made of some others who are leaving the university community and who will be missed by many. This month, we will be saying goodbye to three such unsung heroes: Betty Greene, Pat Ballard, and Suella Wolfe. Combined, these invaluable staff members have served the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for 106 years.

I know that my tenure as dean of the college would not have been nearly as productive or as enjoyable without their professionalism, dedication, loyalty and friendship. What made them even more special was that they treated everyone they came in contact with the same way as they treated the dean. It didn’t matter if it was a staff person, faculty member, administrator or an outsider done or dainty, they were kind, respectful and helpful. They were always willing to go the extra mile, add the extra touch.

At a recent retirement luncheon for them, more than 180 people from many different units on campus and from all corners of the state attended. (See FORUM on 4)
VTI fellow appointed to Dulles project panel

By Ennis McCrery

John Collura, a Virginia Tech Transportation Institute fellow, has been selected to serve on a panel to oversee and support the proposed $2-billion Dulles Rail Project in Northern Virginia. The project involves state transportation agencies in collaboration with industry partners, including Bechtel, Washington Group, and West Group.

The Dulles Rail Project includes an 11-station, 24-mile extension of the Washington METRO Rail from Falls Church to Tysons Corner, Dulles Airport, and Loudoun County. The expansion will occur in stages, with a scheduled completion date of 2010. "Like any project in the planning phase, the timeline is subject to uncertainty," Collura said. "But there are plans to build the project incrementally, in part because it is very expensive, and funding for the entire plan cannot be obtained immediately." The original METRO line was also built in stages.

The project panel will provide guidance on financing and federal reauthorization issues, preliminary engineering matters, and service-area coverage. It will also estimate transportation demands and associated travel-time savings and will negotiate with public-agency participants and industry partners to arrange innovative contracts, such as design-build alternatives.

Collura is a professor of civil engineering and the director of the Civil Infrastructure Engineering and Advanced Transportation Systems Program at the Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church. He also teaches graduate courses in public transportation planning, design, and operations. "This project illustrates the role that the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute and Virginia Tech's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering play in the commonwealth," Collura said.


LanE Stadium expansion to continue

The university is moving forward with the Lane Stadium west-side expansion with strong support from alumni. Several major donors have committed $1.9 million to enable planning efforts to proceed.

When stadium expansion plans were approved in 2001, the university Board of Visitors asked the university to conduct major gift feasibility for the west-side project. The original schedule called for another review by the board at its June, 2003 meeting. Since private funding has not been secured, the university will not move forward with construction now.

The action last week on the part of several ardent supporters will however enable design and planning to continue and we will be able to maintain momentum on this important facility.


DEAN

Continued from 1

Dave Ostrooth, associate vice president of student affairs, the Student Life and Advocacy Office will be under the leadership of Tom Brown. The office will continue to be located in 152 Henderson Hall with the same phone number, 1-3787.

Student advocacy and emergency work for on-campus students will now be a part of the Residence Life function within the Office of Student Programs (formerly RDP). Gerry Kowalski will give leadership to support for on-campus students and the office is located in 109 E. Eggleston, 1-6204.


STUDENT DEATHS

Christopher Loyd McGowan, a student in the College of Arts and Sciences, Sara J. Wojciechowski, a student in the College of Architecture.

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies continues its mission of preparing school principals and superintendents for leadership and administrative duties, and counselors and education research methodologists for private- and public-sector employment.

Recently, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) reviewed Virginia Tech's professional-education and teacher-education programs. NCATE is the accrediting body for colleges and universities that prepare teachers and other professional personnel for work in elementary and secondary schools.

"Virginia Tech has passed every review since its first one in 1972 and remains fully accredited," Kelly said. NCATE is expected to issue its latest assessment in October.


NEAL

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Now that he is planning his doctoral studies, Neal learned recently that he is receiving a 2003-2004 National Science Foundation (NSF) Fellowship. The NSF graduate fellowship will cover his tuition and fees and provide Neal with a $27,000 annual stipend for three years while he earns his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at Virginia Tech. Neal learned about his NSF fellowship just days after opening an e-mail informing him he had earned a distinguished National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship.

Neal selected the NSF fellowship, designed to promote early career development of scientists and engineers by offering support at critical junctures in their careers. NSF strives to assure a steady stream of diverse, highly-ability students through the educational and research training systems by providing such fellowships.

An interest in engineering and aerospace runs in Neal's family. His father, David Neal Jr., was an engineering technician in the Air Force for 20 years, stationed at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia. "As soon as I displayed the slightest interest in engineering, my father pushed me to pursue engineering. He kept me on track all along the way," Neal said.

During his undergraduate career, Neal also participated in the Black Engineering Support Team (BEST), providing him with an upper-class mentor. Neal felt strongly about the importance of the BEST program; so he went on to serve as a BEST mentor for two years. From his experience both participating and leading, Neal believes minority engineering programs are paramount to encouraging more minorities to study engineering.

"Students might come into college thinking things are impossible, but they aren't," Neal said. "The College of Engineering has a great environment, the professors are great people, and the opportunities for undergraduate involvement are tremendous.

Harry Robertshaw, assistant head for research and graduate studies in mechanical engineering and Daniel Inman, the George R. Goodson professor of mechanical engineering, are Neal's co-advisors.


BOARD

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of natural resources for sustainability in an increasingly complex environment.

Also related, the Board of Visitors approved that the Department of Apparel, Housing and Resource Management, formerly known as the Department of New Environments (NE), rename its B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees to reflect the name change. In addition, the board now recognizes the interior-design program, formerly in NE, as an independent undergraduate degree program.

All of these proposals will be forwarded to the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) for approval.


FORUM

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came to honor and say goodbye to Betty, Pat and Suella. It was a remarkable show of love and respect for three wonderful people and valued co-workers.

It takes many people shouldering differing responsibilities to make an organization successful. These three have given more than they share to the success of the college, university and the broader community, in which we work and live.

To say they will be missed is a huge understatement. They have contributed so much to so many and done so willingly and graciously.

I sincerely thank them for the tremendous work and friendship they have provided me and countless others at Virginia Tech and beyond.


SPRING 2003

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be employed as a research assistant at Virginia Tech and perform research and evaluation of high school students for the University of Puerto Rico.

DePauw called the audience's attention to some "firsts" at this year's Commencement. "This is the 50th anniversary of the first woman to receive a Ph.D. at Virginia Tech," she noted. "Historically, women graduate students were a small percentage compared to males; today, women are 42 percent of the graduating class."