Higher Education Not Slated to Suffer General Fund Reductions

By Ralph Byers, director of government relations

The House of Delegates and Senate adopted vastly different state budgets on Thursday, Feb. 26. In either case, as the recommendations now stand, for the first time in four years, higher education will not suffer General Fund reductions. Because of the differences in revenue and in budget methodology between the two chambers, there are significant differences between these proposals for both the University Division and Cooperative Extension. (Editor’s note: See chart on page 4 for budget information referenced in this article.)

A critical component of all the budget plans, including Governor Mark Warner’s introduced budget, is the amount of tuition flexibility provided to the institutions. Base tuition-and-fees policy to allow the university to increase rates to a level that would address the base operating funding requirements and strengthen academic programs in accordance with the four-year plan. The proposed House budget also provides additional non-General Fund authority and flexibility in its tuition-and-fees policy. However, the House budget limits tuition-revenue increases for 2004-06 to a level that would fund up to 95 percent of the higher-education base-budget-adequacy guidelines, slowing the pace of full funding of the university to a six-year period. Fortunately, all three budgets included $8 million for equipment purchases. This returns equipment funding to the previous level of support, following two years of steep cuts.

The Senate budget provides significant base funding through both General Fund and tuition and fees; this approach moderates the amount of tuition and fees increases required and meets the four-year funding plan. To illustrate the differences, for 2004-05 the Senate provides $12.3 million in General Fund support for Virginia Tech, while the governor recommended $3.4 million, and the House, $1.4 million. The (See GENERAL ASSEMBLY on 4)

University, Carilion establish new venture fund, consortium

By Larry Hinker

Carilion Health System and the Virginia Tech Foundation have established a private equity/venture-capital fund and an investment consortium that will make investments in promising companies willing to initiate operations or relocate their business to the Roanoke and New River Valleys. These two important steps will make approximately $55 million dollars in investment capital available to companies who operate in this region.

Carilion, the Virginia Tech Foundation and Third Security LLC, the Radford-based private investment and advisory firm, have created the Roanoke-New River Valley Investment Fund to deploy a portion of their respective investment portfolios to generate economic growth in southwest Virginia. The fund will be governed by a local board of directors and will be managed by Third Security.

Carilion and the foundation will each contribute $5 million of existing private-equity investment capital into the Roanoke-New River Valley Investment Fund. Third Security and its affiliates will invest $2 million in the fund. It is expected that qualified private investors will invest up to an additional $8 million, creating a fund pool of $20 million. Third Security will commit another $10 million to the new investment consortium.

“We always attempt to make wise investments with the foundation’s endowment fund, and this strategy meets that obligation and has the potential to help not only the university but our entire region,” said President Charles Steger. “It is our objective that this fund will assist in the further development of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center and our technology-transfer program. Today we know that ideas and innovation, the primary products of the American research university, are the fuels of the 21st-century economy. Thus, economic development and job creation are an important part of our mission.”

“Both Carilion and the Virginia Tech Foundation invest in private equity funds that provide returns for our long-term needs,” said Edward G. Murphy, Carilion president and CEO. “By creating a fund that will invest in companies operating in our region, we will stimulate additional economic activity and job creation. With Third Security participating in and managing the investment fund, we have great confidence in the success of this venture.”

Additionally, the Roanoke—New River Investment Fund has joined several other venture firms to form a consortium that can jointly analyze investment opportunities. Through this arrangement, the consortium can make investments currently envisioned in excess of $50 million available to the region. Currently, members of the consortium are Canaan Partners, Rowayton, CT; CMS Companies, Philadelphia, PA; Greer Capital Advisors, LLC, Birmingham, AL; Harbert Venture Partners, Richmond; Third Security, LLC, Radford; and Winston Partners Group, L.L.C., Arlington.

Each consortium member will make a portion of its investment fund available for consortium projects. By intentionally selecting groups who cover a full range of investment strategies (from start-up and early-stage investments to financing more mature companies to outright mature company buy-outs), the consortium will meet the needs of most any company, regardless of its stage of development. It will also provide a broad range of opportunities for the region.

Cuba and Russia trips enhance Tech geography courses

By Lynn Davis

Geography Professor Joseph L. Scarpace, just back on campus after leading the largest faculty-led study-abroad course in the history of Virginia Tech last month, is already planning another class tour. He took a record-breaking 112 students to Cuba for his urban-design-and-planning class (Geography 4984) and will offer the class again from May 23 to June 7.

Some of the students included professionals and adults from such places as the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia and the American Geographic Society. Scarpace said the group, which traveled around Cuba in four large tour buses, visited Trinidad, Cuba’s best example of colonial architecture left intact; Santiago, the island’s second-largest city; Baracoa, the site of Columbus’ landing; and of course, Havana, the capital city.

Eighteen lectures and six field trips later, students had more than a passing knowledge of Cuba’s unique urban, historical, architectural, and cultural landscape. “This was a good time in history to visit Cuba,” Scarpace said. “The country is at an interesting crossroads, politically and economically. Last spring 70 dissidents were arrested and incarcerated. Any of my students will say, ‘You are never the same after you have visited this struggling nation.’

“Travel abroad not only enhances urban (See CUBA on 3)

TODAY’S EDITION

See page 2 for information on presentations related to mad-cow disease.

THOMAS

ABC correspondent Thomas to address Commencement

By Mark Oczarski

ABC News Justice Department Correspondent Pierre Thomas will address the 2004 graduates of Virginia Tech during the University Commencement exercises Friday, May 14 at Lane Stadium/Worsham Field.

“We are truly honored to have Pierre Thomas speak at our 2004 University Commencement exercises,” President Charles W. Steger said. “His remarkable accomplishments in the field of broadcast journalism will certainly inspire our graduates.”

A 1984 Virginia Tech graduate, Thomas has covered the U.S. Justice Department and law-enforcement issues for ABC News since 2000, reporting on “World News Tonight with Peter Jennings” and contributing to “Good Morning America,” “This Week,” “Nightline,” and other ABC News special events.

He has covered a variety of major news stories including the Robert Hansen FBI spy scandal, the Oklahoma City Bombing, missing FBI files controversy, and the Chandra Levy case. Thomas was a significant contributor to ABC News’ team coverage of the September 11 attacks and their aftermath, coverage that won the network’s news division a coveted Peabody Award and a DuPont Award.

Thomas began his journalism career with the Roanoke Times and joined the Washington Post in 1987. During his 10-year career at the Post, Thomas first covered local Virginia politics, police and courts for the Metro section. He then went to work on the Metro investigative staff and the national staff where he covered the Justice Department and law-enforcement issues.

From 1997 to 2000, Thomas was CNN’s Justice Department correspondent, reporting breaking news on terrorism, cyber-crime, the hunt for Osama bin Laden, the capture of the railway killer, and the Justice Department’s involvement in the Elian Gonzales case.

A member of the National Association of Black Journalists, Thomas has won numerous awards and recognition during his journalism career. In 1991, he was part of a team whose work was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for reporting on illegal gun use in the (See ABC on 3)
Exemplary Awards nominations sought

Each year the university recognizes the work of departments and/or programs that maintain exemplary teaching and learning environments for students and faculty members.

This year, departments and programs will be recognized for effectively linking research and scholarship with teaching, with particular concentration on innovative undergraduate programs. The deadline for submitting nominations for the awards is noon, Friday, April 9. $20,000 will be available for awards to the department(s) and/or programs as to be determined by the selection committee drawn from the university community.

The theme of this year’s award includes research and scholarship. “And scholarship has been added the original exemplary-department theme to better connect the awards program to current university goals and to encourage the participation of more programs in the department.

Nominations are encouraged from undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, and others who have benefited from the work of the nominated department(s).

Letters of nomination (not exceed two pages) should describe the achievements of the department(s) in this year’s topical area, with particular concentration on innovative undergraduate programs. Send nomination letters as electronic attachments by e-mail to: Exemplary Department Awards Program Committee, c/o Karen W. Strickler, Office of the Provost, kstrickler@vt.edu. The deadline for receipt of nomination letters is noon, Friday, April 9.

Documentary on supercomputer to air nationally

A documentary on the background and development of Virginia Tech’s supercomputer, the fastest supercomputer at any academic institution in the world, will air on the Research Channel on March 19.

The program, “An Evolution in Supercomputing: System X at Virginia Tech” will air four times: 5 and 11 p.m. (the rain location is the Wesley Foundation, located at the corner of Roanoke and Otey Streets.) At 8 p.m., participants will march through campus and downtown Blacksburg, returning to the Drillfield for a closing celebration. The march route is accessible for disabled persons.

For more information, contact Susan Anderson at 1-8041 or 951-2013, or e-mail her at anderson@math.vt.edu.

Transmissible encephalopathies conference scheduled

The Center for Food and Nutrition Policy will host a Ceses forum titled “Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies in Animal and Human Health: The Science and the Policy” on March 8-9 at the Marriott at Metro Center, Washington, D.C. Featured invited speakers include Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson.

Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE’s) are a group of fatal neurodegenerative diseases that affect humans and various animals. TSE’s took on increased importance in December 2003, when a dairy cow in Washington state was diagnosed with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE/mad-cow disease).

The forum will bring together scientists, policymakers, and other stakeholders to participate in discussion and debate on the issue. Members of the Virginia Tech community are invited to attend.

The Center for Food and Nutrition Policy is an independent research and education center affiliated with Virginia Tech and located in Alexandria.

For more information and registration forms, visit http://www.ceresnet.org/images/Misc/CFNP_TSE_Conference.pdf or contact Meghan Steele at msteele@vt.edu.

Science of mad-cow disease a symposium topic

By Sally L. Harris

An upcoming campus symposium will include a talk on the science behind mad-cow disease.

The symposium itself, “Biological systems and soft materials: Future directions in statistical physics,” is on the interface of statistical physics, biology, and chemistry.

The speaker on prions, who are believed to play a key role in mad-cow disease, is Susan W. Liebman of the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, who will discuss “Prion-prion interactions in yeast.” Liebman speaks from 9:45 until 10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 7.

Another speaker of note is Ching-Hwa Kiang of the Department of Physics at Rice University, who works with assemblies of DNA-based nanostructures—gold particles linked with DNA fragments—which may serve as sensors for different kinds of DNA. The talk is at 9 a.m. Sunday, March 7.

One Virginia Tech alumna, Leah Shaw, now in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Physics at Cornell, is an invited speaker. She is working on a genome-wide statistical model for protein synthesis. She will speak at 3 p.m. Saturday, March 6.

The symposium will be held in lecture room 101 of the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center on the seventh floor of the Roanoke Higher Education Center, 108 North Jefferson Street. Registration and placement testing will be held on March 15. Tuition, due at registration, is $360 and includes textbooks. Enrollment is limited to 12 qualified students.

PERLIN TO LECTURE ON HISTORY OF WOOD

John Perlin, author of “Forest Journey: The Role of Wood in the Development of Civilization,” will lecture on “The Role of Wood in World History,” March 15 at 3 p.m., in the Fralin Biotechnology Center auditorium.

Internationally known for speaking about the worldwide forest loss, Perlin will discuss how deforestation accelerates erosion, the greenhouse effect, and the expansion of deserts.

A reception will follow the lecture in Fralin atrium. For more information, contact Robert Bush at 1-8834 or rrush@vt.edu.
Nominations sought for Governor’s Awards

The 2004 Virginia Public Service Week (VPSW) will be observed from March 3 through 9, 2004. This year’s theme will again be “Proudly Serving Virginians” to emphasize the service aspect of public employment. As in previous years, VPSW provides a platform for both recognizing and rewarding deserving employees and providing the public with an opportunity to learn more about the work state employees do every day on behalf of the state’s non-profit citizens. The recipients of the Governor’s Massey Scholar Award will be announced during the awards ceremony in Roanoke.

The H1B Visa for non-university sponsored work authorization visas was significantly reduced for Fiscal Year 2004. The quota of 65,000 was effective Oct. 1, 2003 through Oct. 1, 2004. On March 17, 2004, these numbers were exhausted, and no additional non-university/non-profit allotments are expected until the end of this year. Faculty and staff members employed by Virginia Tech or any college, university or certain specific non-profit organizations, are not affected at this time by the reduced quota. There is, however, a large number of graduates and current staff members who wish to look to the private sector for employment and the limited quota presents a challenge.

The Cranwell International Center is sponsoring a free seminar on March 19 at 5 p.m. in 341/345 Squires on methods of dealing with work authorization and limited H Visa Quotas. The guest speakers are from a private immigration law firm and they will be offering the program as a service to the university and community population. This company has no current relationship with Virginia Tech, and is not contracted with the state of Virginia.

Permanent-residency opportunities will also be discussed at the seminar. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and printed information and referrals for further immigration guidance will be made available to those attending.

Private interviews to discuss permanent residency and other issues with an attorney are available on March 19. These meetings will be held at the Cranwell Center and are free of charge. Individuals currently on an H1 visa or other work authorization visa may request an appointment by contacting Stephen Conrad at sconrad@vt.edu. Any services arranged with these attorneys will be at the expense of the individual and are not reimbursable by Virginia Tech.

The instructions, criteria, and nomination forms for the Governor’s Awards are available on the Personnel Services website. Nomination packets must be submitted in hard copy or faxed to 1-3830. The deadline for submitting the nominations to Personnel Services (0318) is March 18.

Masurel scholar award available

The P. Howard Massey Food and Nutrition Scholar Award supports graduate students engaged in multidisciplinary, applied scholarly activities related to the food/nutrition problems of developing countries. The award supports international and cross-cultural research costs related to food/nutrition problems; travel for research, study and exchange at professional meetings; student tuition and fees. The award is for $500. Priority will be given for research-related costs of graduate student projects. Selection criteria include multidisciplinary applied research related to food/nutrition problems affecting individuals and households in developing countries; other related research applicable to developing countries; potential contribution of proposed activity to research base, professional development, alleviating food problems or other outcomes.

Project qualifications include financial need, and international cross-cultural experiences. Application materials are available from Sherry Saville, HNFE, 338 Wallace Hall (0430), or call 1-5540. Completed applications are due to Saville on April 7, by 5 p.m. in 338 Wallace Hall.

SPECTRUM
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FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2004

Spectrum, a faculty-staff tabloid, is published bi-weekly on Fridays during the academic year, with the exception of certain holidays, exam weeks, and the summer. Copy deadline is noon Friday. No advertising is accepted.

Spectrum is a non-profit publication of the Office of University Relations. Laurence G. Hincker, associate vice president for University Relations; Mark Ozczen, director of news and information; Editor John Ashby, 1-4961

Interim News Bureau Manager Ada Hobtza, 1-6508

Production Manager Melissa Sharon, 1-6584

Business Manager Angie Robinson, 1-8819

Letters to the editor and questions for “Ask Spectrum” should be directed to the editor, 102 Media Building, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Electronic Spectrum: http://www.spectrum.vt.edu

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CA MPUUPDATE

Multicultural Academic Opportunity, Apprentice Scientist(s), five positions.

Computer Science, Post-doctoral Associates, 3 positions.

Office of Distance Learning/Computing, Director of Web Services.

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Senior Research Associate.

Chemistry Department, Post-doctoral Associate.

Virginia Bioinformatics Institute, Post-doctoral Associate.

Virginia Cooperative Extension, Program Director, Smith Mountain Lake 4-H Educational Center.

Virginia Cooperative Extension, Extension Agent, Food, Nutrition, Health (Stafford County).

Tidewater Agricultural Research/Extension Center, Peanut Variety/ Quality Evaluation Program.

Virginia Cooperative Extension, Extension Agent, Crop/Soil Sciences, Augusta.

Woman University Relations intern

By Jennifer Whittenberg,

University Relations intern

More than 100 specialists in the history, language, literature, and culture of the Slavic regions of Russia and Eastern Europe will convene at the Hotel Roanoke March 18 through 20, for the 42nd Annual Southern Conference on Slavic Studies Conference. Librarian of Congress and Russian historian James Billington will be the keynote speaker.

The conference is a forum for specialists from the southern region of the United States to present their current research on the history, literature, economics and political culture of Russia and Eastern Europe. These presentations encourage a productive exchange among scholars about their research and findings.

“The Slavic-speaking world is one of the most important areas of the planet because of its resources and politics. Americans should be interested in gaining an understanding of this region’s people, history and culture,” said Amy Nelson, associate professor of history in Virginia Tech’s College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

Billington is a noted Russian historian. He has been instrumental in establishing mutual scholarly and political relationships with the countries of the former Soviet Union. Billington directed the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars from 1973-1987, where he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies.

Billington is the author of “Russia Transformed, Breakthrough to Hope, August 1991" (1992) and “The Face of Russia”(1998). At the conference he will discuss his forthcoming book on Russian national identity, “The Slavic-speaking world is one of the most important areas of the planet because of its resources and politics. Americans should be interested in gaining an understanding of this region’s people, history and culture,”

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Continued from 1

level of tuition increases for next year will be
directly related to the amount of General Fund
support provided. The Senate budget also
provides for faculty and staff salary increases
in November 2004, while the House and
Executive budgets defer salary increases to
November 2005. If no pay increase is approved
for 2004-05, state employees will have gone
without pay increases for three out of the last
four years.

In Cooperative Extension, both the
Executive Budget and the Senate budget
provided increased General Fund support for
each year of the biennium. The Senate budget
includes salary increases in November 2004 and
39 new agent and specialist positions. The
Senate also included the funding for food,
nutrition and health research recommended by
the governor. The House eliminated that increase
and included no other additional funding
except for the November 2005 salary increase
for all employees.

The House and Senate have appointed a
Conference Committee to attempt to resolve
differences between the two budgets. The
Senate budget is predicated on a revenue
package that increases the state’s General
Fund and transportation revenues by a net of
$2.4 billion for the biennium, while the House
plan includes an increase of about $434
million over the projected revenues. Due to
these great differences in available revenues,
as well as in assumptions and methodologies
in many areas of the budget, reconciling the
two proposals will be a daunting task. At this
writing the Conference Committee has not
met, and most observers assume that the
General Assembly will not conclude its
deliberations on the budget by the March 13
deadline for adjournment.

MAJOR LANGUAGE—PROPOSALS

Tuition and Fee language. The language proposed by the Governor’s Budget, the House Budget, and the Senate Budget all provide additional flexibility for the Boards of Visitors to set and manage tuition and fees. Both
the House and Senate versions bring new emphasis to adherence to the non-General Fund appropriation limits set forth in the Appropriation Act. While neither the House nor the Senate establishes tuition caps, the House suggests tuition rates of 4 to 8 percent for Virginia undergraduates, while the Senate projections are in the 6 to 7 percent range. The House would also require new out-of-state student fees to pay debt service on the Equipment
Trust Fund and for the Building System Repair and Replacement Fund with the proceeds from those fees submitted to the state.

Indirect Cost Language. The Executive budget caps the allocation of 30 percent indirect cost recoveries to the institution’s instructional programs at the level established in 2003-04. Future increases in this funding source
would be used to support research activities. The House and the Senate leave this language in place. NOTES: (a) The Governor’s Budget and the House propose a 3-percent salary increase for faculty and staff members, effective December 2005; the cost of this salary action is not disclosed in the Executive Budget. The Senate provided funding for a 3-percent faculty and staff salary increase in December 2004, along with the authority
to use tuition revenues to increase the faculty rate up to 4.5 percent (b). The governor included one-time funding for research activities of $2,004,625 in 2004-05.

In Other News

Bernard “Bernie” F. Feldman

By Jeffrey Douglas

Bernard “Bernie” F. Feldman, a professor
in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and
Pathobiology (DBSP), was killed in an
automobile crash on February 19.
Feldman was an internationally
recognized clinical pathologist and
hematologist who joined the faculty of the
Virginia-Maryland Regional College of
Veterinary Medicine in 1990. For the past 14
years he has taught and mentored DVM and
graduate students, and directed the Veterinary
Clinical Diagnostics, Clinical Pathology
and Comparative Hemostasis Laboratories in the
Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

“This is an enormous loss, not only for our
college, but for the international veterinary
community,” said Lud Eng, a long-time
colleague and head of the DBSP. “Bernie was
a tremendous professional and a wonderful
colleague. We will miss him dearly.”
Feldman earned his DVM degree from the
University of Illinois. He earned his Ph.D.
in comparative pathology from the University of
California at Davis, where he also served as a
National Institutes of health fellow in clinical
pathology. Feldman served on faculty at UC-
Davis for the next 22 years.

Herbert D. Stiles

Stiles obtained his bachelor and master-
of-science degrees from Rutgers University
and his Ph.D. degree from the University of
Florida.

Stiles was a member of the American
Society of Horticultural Science and several
other professional scientific groups.

Student Deaths

Clayton Waterfield, a student in university
studies, and William A. Rice, a student in
the College of Architecture and urban
studies.

Stiles was a professor of horticulture
who served as Extension small-fruits specialist until his retirement in 2002. During his tenure
he assisted in the development of new high-
quality raspberry varieties as well as new
trellising systems to improve efficiency of
both raspberry and blackberry production.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is
pleased to help fund additional parking that
will encourage the use of mass transit in one of
the region’s busiest traffic corridors,” said
Metro Board Member Dana Kauuffman.

“Providing additional parking at this Metro
station will encourage people to use Metro as
an alternative to getting into their cars and will
help relieve congestion along the L-66 corridor.”

“Additional parking will make Metrorail
more user-friendly and will allow even more
individuals to take advantage of public transit,”
Metro Board member Catherine Hudgins said.

After all, we want people to park their cars
and use public transit. This new parking facility
will allow them to do just that.”