Schurig named dean of Vet Med College

By Clara B. Cox

Gerhardt Schurig, interim dean of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine since October 2003 and an internationally renowned researcher, has been named the third dean of the two-state, three-campus professional college, effective immediately.

“Dr. Schurig is an outstanding scholar with a long and distinguished record of service to the college and the university. His vision for the college and his commitment to excellence will ensure that the college’s educational, research, professional, clinical, and outreach programs will continue to grow and develop,” said Mark McNamie, university provost and vice president for academic affairs, in making the announcement.

Schurig replaces Peter Eyre, who resigned for health reasons in 2003 after serving as dean for 18 years. The new dean was selected following an international search.

“We have accomplished a great deal in our first 25 years, but I believe we have enormous potential for growth and achievement in many established and emerging areas,” Schurig said. “In particular, I believe our college is poised to play a vital role in Virginia Tech’s rapidly developing collaborative research programs in the biomedical and life sciences.”

A long-time professor and veterinary immunologist in the college’s Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, Schurig is internationally renowned for his work in developing the RB-51 vaccine, adopted in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the official vaccine for bovine brucellosis, a zoonotic disease that causes

Veterinary College plans 25th anniversary celebration

By Jeffrey Douglas

The Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine will observe its 25th anniversary during a year-long celebration that begins in August 2004 and concludes in May 2005.

The anniversary celebration will be structured around the theme “Breaking New Ground in Veterinary Medicine” and will include a series of special events and communication programs designed to recognize the college’s achievements over its first quarter-century of operations and raise public awareness about the changing role of veterinary medicine in society.

“We are all very excited about our anniversary year, and we are celebrating this milestone at a very important time in the history of the veterinary profession,” said Gerhardt Schurig, a founding faculty member and the VMRCVM’s current dean.

“Over the past 25 years, this college has established itself as a vital part of the region’s animal and human-health communities, and we look forward to celebrating the excellent relationships we maintain with so many organizations and agencies as part of this event.”

The year-long series will include celebrations at Virginia Tech and throughout the region, the publication of a history book, the presentation of a community vet-school
Blacksburg Summer Arts Festival opens
Squires Studio Theater at 7 p.m. on the dates indicated. For more information on the Friday Night Out Concert Series and theatre performances, call 1-5921.


“A With Good Reason,” 7:30 p.m., WVTF: Peter Wallenstein.

Friday, 11
Summer Arts Festival Concert, 6 p.m., Henderson Lawn: “Double Take.”

Monday, 14
Last Day to Resign.

Sponsored by the Virginia Tech School of the Arts and the Town of Blacksburg, the Blacksburg Summer Arts Festival 2004 will host a variety of live music, theatre, and visual-arts events. All events are free of charge and open to the public.
The Friday Night Out Concert Series will run to July 30, with different music performances each Friday beginning at 6 p.m. on the Henderson Hall Lawn, located at College and Main Streets. The series includes performances from various genres including Celtic swing, bluegrass and traditional folk music.

Summer theatre performances include “Lovers” by Brian Friel and directed by Gregory Justice, running from June 9 through 12 and July 14 through 17; and “The Imaginators” by Dwayne Hartford directed by Susanna Rineheart, performed June 23 through 26 and July 7 through 10. Both directors are faculty members of the Virginia Tech Department of Theatre Arts. All performances will be held in Squires Studio Theater at 7 p.m. on the dates indicated. For more information on the Friday Night Out Concert Series and theatre performances, call 1-5921.

The Armory Art Gallery hosts, “Underground Hip Hop in the Southwest Hills,” an exhibit of five West Coast artists with speaker/performance by Juan Amador and Benjamin Rojas through June 30; and “Lately in Lexington,” recent photographs from Lexington, Virginia artists from July 9 through August 14. The Perspective Art Gallery will also host an exhibit through August 12. For more information on visual-arts exhibits, contact the Armory Art Gallery at 1-5921 or the Perspective Art Gallery at 1-6040.

This summer’s special-event offerings include the Independence Day Celebration on July 4 with a parade to begin at 4 p.m. on Main Street and a fireworks display at 9:30 in the Blacksburg Municipal Park.

For more information visit the Summer Arts Festival 2004 web site at http://www.sota.vt.edu/SAF/ or call the Virginia Tech School of the Arts at 1-5921.

Some roads, sidewalks to be closed or restricted because of utilities work
Several roads and nearby sidewalks on campus will be closed or restricted during the summer as work begins on underground utilities.
Ag Quad Lane, the access road leading to the new Ag Forestry Building, and the parking area between Smyth/Seitz will be closed for approximately 30 days from May 17 through June 18. Limited access can be arranged for special deliveries (including Fralin Hall) by contacting Steve Chapman at pager 953-9270 or e-mail chugman@vt.edu.

Work will begin at the intersection of Stanger Street and Prices Fork Road this summer to install a dedicated left-turn lane at the intersection of Stanger Street and Prices Fork Road. Two-way traffic will be maintained through the intersection for most of the summer but the lanes may be restricted for construction. The work will be done by the Town of Blacksburg to improve the safety of the intersection.

On Price’s Fork Road/University City Boulevard (including the bike path), work will begin in late May/early June for the future Nederland Road intersection. The bike path will be left open to support pedestrian traffic. The work will be done by the Town of Blacksburg to improve the safety of the intersection.


Free Civil War institute offered for teachers at Hotel Roanoke

Teachers looking for resources and practical cross-curriculum ideas for teaching Civil War history will find them at the free third-annual Civil War Teacher Institute July 30 to August 1 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center in Roanoke.
The institute is sponsored by Virginia Tech’s Virginia Center for Civil War Studies and the Civil War Preservation Trust.

“We hope to build on the success of last year’s workshop and make that great watershed of the American heritage more dramatic and more inspiring for teacher and student alike,” said James I. Robertson Jr., Virginia Tech alumni distinguished professor of history, director of the Civil War Center, and well-known Civil War author. “Our generation is the bridge—the only bridge—between Civil War soldiers and generations yet to come. We have a moral and patriotic obligation to ensure education keeps all ages informed of the American past; for if our children lose their culture, we will have lost our history.”

All activities at the institute, including meals, are free, although teachers will have to provide their own lodging. Teachers who attend also will earn 2.2 continuing-education units through Virginia Tech.

Featured speakers will include Robertson; William C. Davis, a Virginia Tech history professor and program director of the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies; and Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust.

Other participants include historians from the Pamplin Historical Park and National Museum of the Civil War Soldier in Petersburg, National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Victorian Dance Ensemble, representatives from the Petersburg National Battlefield, and Doug Jimerson and the Gilmore Light Ensemble. Activities include a field trip to Appomattox Court House, demonstrations by living historians, and focused material topics. There will be ample opportunities for questions and for networking.

Reservations for the institute must be made by July 9. To register, call Jennifer Rosenberry toll-free at (888) 606-1400 or send an e-mail message to jrosenberry@civilwar.org. To reserve a room at the Hotel Roanoke, call the hotel directly at (540) 985-5960 or toll-free at (866) 594-4722 (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Friday). Ask for the Civil War Preservation Trust Institute room block when making a reservation.

To see a report on last year’s institute go to www.civilwar.org/historyclassroom/lec_anntechinst.htm.
Continuing-education association honors Settle

By Susan F. Belker

Virginia Tech’s Commonwealth Campus Centers in the greater Washington, D.C., area—Richmond; Hampton Roads; Southwest Virginia; and Roanoke will be playing a greater role in universities’ outreach efforts. The changes involve the addition of more outreach programs tailored to regional needs that will be developed by a new associate director for outreach at three locations in high-population areas of the state. The new staff members will be in place by June 1.

“Ideas will remain a centerpiece of the program offerings at each center, but new programs, both credit and non-credit, as well as the residential offerings, will be added,” said John E. Dooley, vice provost for Outreach and International Affairs. “Our intent is to better utilize the Commonwealth Campus Centers as local gateways to the full scope of university resources in the timely response to and leadership for regional needs and opportunities.”

Dooley announced the appointment of associate directors for outreach at three of the locations, Charlotte L. Anders, Hampton Roads; John M. Aughenbaugh, Richmond; and Barbara L. Bennett, National Capitol Region. They will be working to fulfill Virginia Tech’s tripartite mission in the outreach, and to provide a direct, local link between the university and its outlying constituencies.

Anders has held the position of interim director of Virginia Tech’s Roanoke Center since last July. She is also outreach program specialist for tourism, serving as a liaison between the university and state-, regional-, and community-based business development and tourism programs seeking community development information and expertise. She is a board member and vice president of the Virginia Festivals and Events Association; a member of the Education Committee of the Virginia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus; and is a former board member of the Virginia Downtown Development Association and continues as the chair of its annual conference planning committee. She also serves on the conference planning committee for the Virginia Governor’s Conference on Travel and Tourism and in 2004 provided leadership for program management for the 25th anniversary celebration of the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

Aughenbaugh has been with Virginia Tech’s Office of Economic Development since May 2000, most recently as economic-development specialist responsible for collaboration with local and state agencies and Virginia Tech academic departments on numerous community-development projects. He provided day-to-day operating budget management and secured and managed sponsored research and technical-assistance projects serving various Virginia localities and planning-district commissions. He also assisted with the analysis and completion of technical-assistance projects, including target-market studies, market and business-plan feasibility studies, and business-incubator feasibility projects.

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A program, a Legislative day, the dedication of a major piece of sculpture, and other events.

The anniversary theme was selected to call attention to both the origins and aspirations of the VMRCVM. The slogan evokes images of the college’s historic 1978 ground-breaking when former Virginia Tech President William Lavery, late founding Dean Richard B. Talbot and late Virginia Governor John Dalton got construction underway on an interim teaching hospital facility by guiding a plow across a former pasture on the southwest side of the Virginia Tech campus.

The anniversary also emphasizes the pioneering role the college is playing in a national initiative underway in the veterinary profession to help prepare more veterinarians to deal with the bioterrorism, infectious diseases, and biomedical health challenges of the post-9/11 world. The VMRCVM’s national Alumni Society kicks off the celebration on August 20 during an annual summer meeting that features “A tribute to Peter Eyre.” Eyre, who led the college from 1985 through 2003, has assumed a faculty position in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology. The alumni society will also present its biannual anniversary celebration before the Virginia Tech/University of Maryland football game on November 18.

College Family Day will be held on Friday, Oct. 8, from 4 until 8 p.m. on campus. Designed for faculty and staff members, students, alumni and their families, the celebration will feature food, entertainment, games and other activities designed to recognize the valuable contributions made every day by the various members of the college’s immediate community. Beginning in fall 2004, the college will also present a monthly Community Vet Clinic, which is designed to help people with the modern process of training a veterinarian and learn more about the many different ways veterinary medicine is helping create and maintain a safe and healthy society. That program is expected to include a half-dozen major events which will be presented over the fall and winter.

Regional celebrations designed to take the anniversary celebration to various locations around the state are also being planned. Veterinary practitioners and other friends of the college will be invited to attend evening 25th Anniversary functions which will be presented in Williamsburg, Leesburg and College Park, Maryland.

The Grand Celebration event will be held on the weekend of April 8-9, 2005 on the Blacksburg campus and at the Hotel Roanoke. Major programs associated with the final celebration weekend include the college’s first Legislative Day, the annual Open House, the dedication of a major piece of sculpture, and a formal black-tie dinner at the Hotel Roanoke featuring prominent politicians, state and federal government officials and friends representing the many different public and private organizations that have helped the VMRCVM become what it is today.

The 25th-anniversary celebratory sculpture will be dedicated and dedicated on the grounds of the VMRCVM as part of the grand-celebration weekend has been created by nationally recognized artist Gwen Reardon, who designed the famous statue at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. Featuring a horse, a female veterinary student, and a dog, the bronze sculpture will be installed at the main entrance to the college off Duck Pond Drive. Major funding for the project has been provided through a donation made by Jane Talbot, widow of founding dean Richard Talbot. The sculpture will be the first major piece of sculpture installed on the Virginia Tech campus.

Other communication projects associated with the year-long celebration include the publication of a 25th-anniversary book, which will chronicle the historical development of the College of Veterinary Medicine as well as the early years of veterinary medicine at Virginia Tech. A 25th-anniversary celebration the silver anniversary will be produced and shared with veterinary practices throughout Virginia and Maryland. A calendar featuring animal photography and sharing information about the college and the profession will also be produced.
Tech’s De Datta receives award from Philippine government

By Susan B. Felker

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has honored S. K. De Datta, associate scientist, with a Presidential Citation Award. The award recognizes De Datta’s contributions towards eradicating hunger through improved agricultural productivity and food security, particularly for the production of rice.

De Datta received the award at the opening session of the 17th PhilRice National Research and Development Conference, an annual event attended by some 500 rice scientists, government officials, extension workers, growers, and other rice industry representatives.

De Datta was the agronomist and principal scientist at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines from 1964 to 1991 and headed the IRRI agronomy department from 1966 to 1989. From 1989 to 1991, he provided leadership in the Rainfed Lowland Rice Ecosystem programs at IRRI.

Since 1991, De Datta has served as director of Virginia Tech’s Office of International Research and Development, which was expanded in 2003 to become the Office of International Research, Education, and Development. In this capacity, he has obtained approximately $57 million in funding for 14 projects. The Integrated Pest Management Collaborative Research Support Program (IPMCRSP), a decade-long project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and host country institutions, is the largest.

He has also been associate dean for international agriculture in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for 10 years and is a tenured professor in the Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences. He was named associate provost for international affairs in August 2003.

De Datta’s research on rice has significantly changed the production of this important food crop, the staple of diets around the world. In an early project at IRRI, his team worked on the development of rice varieties and associated technologies that would produce high yields in Asia, where yields were then the lowest in the world. This work led to the development of the “miracle rice,” named “IR9,” in 1966. He also worked to improve rice-production methods, leading to the substitution of direct seeding of rice for the age-old transplanting method of rice propagation, an innovation that enabled rice farmers to produce three crops per year with less labor on fields that previously had only yielded one annual crop. Additionally, his contributions in weed-and-crop-nutrient-management practices have led to significant changes in farming in 55 rice-growing countries.

De Datta’s work has been acknowledged as a significant factor in bringing about the “green revolution” caused by the introduction of improved farming methods in the developing world. He received the prestigious Borlaug Award from the vice president of India in December 1992 in recognition of his contributions.

He continued his involvement in improving crop production in the Philippines through the $19.4 million IPMCRSP project, which involves research on integrated pest management in rice-vegetable cropping systems throughout the developing world with the collaboration of governments in five regions and several other land-grant universities in the United States.

University researchers receive 24 patents in 2003

By Susan Trulove

Virginia Tech researchers received 24 patents in 2003. Faculty and staff members and students who earned patents were honored by the university and Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties Inc. (VTIP) at a reception May 20 at the German Club.

“The creativity, contributions to knowledge, and technology transfer that patents signify are an important form of scholarship,” said University President Charles Steger.

Mike Martin of Blacksburg, VTIP executive vice president, said, “These patents represent a significant resource for economic development.”

Patents were awarded for power electronics for fuel cells and computers, new materials, sensors, a method for drying wood; plant varieties, and human health-related discoveries, including a spermicide that also prevents disease.

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brand name and attractiveness to future generations of undergraduate students,” Ford said. “We must remember our land-grant heritage, remain competitive in striving to diversify our undergraduate student body, and continue to provide competitive academic programs for all students. It is my expectation that Dr. Spencer will provide the leadership to enable us to accomplish these goals.”

Spencer has experience in student- and academic-affairs roles to bring to the new position and has an academic background in mathematics, higher-education administration and research and evaluation. As associate dean of the Pamplin College of Business, Spencer has been responsible for the academic programs for the undergraduate business majors for 21 years. During that time, several new programs began in the college, including the creation of a freshman-sophomore advising center, implementation of a college-based job-development and career-services program, and inauguration of pilot programs with the Virginia Community College System.

“She has provided excellent leadership for the undergraduate programs in the Pamplin College of Business over the last 21 years,” said Dean Richard Sorenson, “and her involvement in the college will be sorely missed. Her experience and skills will be of great value to the university.”

Spencer earned a bachelor’s degree magna cum laude in mathematics from Susquehanna University, a master’s degree in higher-education administration and biophysics, with a concentration in statistics, from Virginia Tech. Before joining Virginia Tech as assistant dean in 1983, Spencer served as an assistant dean of the College of Business and Economics at the University of Delaware.

Spencer has received numerous honors, including the having been selected in 2000 as one of the new AACSBS affinity group steering committee for women in management education, serving as part of the National American Council on Education network to identify and encourage women to enter higher-education administration, and being featured in an article about women in management education in the national magazine RIC Ed.

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After graduating with a bachelor’s degree from the City College of New York in 1991, Hou earned his master’s degree at Columbia University in 1993 and his Ph.D. at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn in 1998, all in electrical engineering. He received Polytechnic University’s Alexander Hessel Award for the outstanding Ph.D. in electrical engineering. He joined the Virginia Tech faculty in 2002.

Hou has published extensively in the area of wireless and multimedia networking and is a co-recipient of two best-paper awards from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers—for the 2001 Transactions on Circuits and Systems for Video Technology and the 2002 International Conference on Network Protocols.

In addition to the CAREER Award, Hou also has won an Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Award and a NSF Information Technology Research grant since joining Virginia Tech.