Institute for Advanced Learning and Research officially open

By Curtis W. Callaway

Citizens and leaders from throughout Southside and university leaders from Virginia Tech gathered June 12 to celebrate the dedication of the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR). Institute officials and partners cut the ceremonial ribbon on the multi-million-dollar facility on Saturday.

“Congratulations to everyone on today’s long-awaited ribbon cutting,” said Governor Mark Warner in a special videotaped message sent from China. “This unique facility is important for several reasons. First, it brings the tangible presence of high technology and Virginia Tech to this region. Second, it offers a seamless set of higher-education programs because it is based on the principle that research and teaching are equally important. Third, it will be the next step in the economic transformation of Southside. By promoting economic diversity, we have a chance to make sure that Southside Virginia is the place that gets it right as we move into the information economy.”

State Senator Charles Hawkins, chairman of the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, the primary funding source for the building, said, “This is where it all changes. The future belongs to those who can be innovative.” Hawkins said that IALR was the only new project funded in Virginia’s budget for the next biennium—and no one from either party opposed it.

Virginia Tech, Averett University, and Danville Community College serve as academic partners to develop and offer courses at the institute. Additionally, Virginia Tech is the driving force behind the institute’s six research centers. “The institute is providing Virginia Tech with many new opportunities for cutting-edge research and real-world collaborations, which would not have been possible in Blacksburg,” President Charles W. Steger said. “There are already a number of exciting initiatives under way that build on Virginia Tech’s research strengths. We believe these also hold great promise to revitalize the economy in the region.”

“The vision and courage of the region’s IALR Board of Trustees; Delegate Daniel W. Marshall III, IALR executive director and director of Virginia Tech’s Southside outreach programs; Hawkins, Delegate Robert Hurt, Robert W. Searce, Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors; Virginia Tech’s newly elected Board of Visitors Rector Ben Davenport, and Danville Mayor John C. Hamlin. (R. Griffiths)

White named equine medical center director

By Jeffrey S. Douglas

Nathaniel White, the Theodora Ayer Randolph professor of equine surgery at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine (VMRCVM) at Virginia Tech, has also been named director of the college’s Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center in Leesburg.

‘I’m very pleased and honored by this appointment,” White said. “The Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center is a big part of the veterinary college and Virginia Tech’s commitment to the regional equine community.’

White has served as interim director of the center since April 1, 2003, and assumes permanent leadership as the top candidate to emerge from a comprehensive national search conducted by VMRCVM and Virginia Tech. “I’m very pleased and honored by this appointment,” White said. “The Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center is a big part of the veterinary college and Virginia Tech’s commitment to the regional equine community. I think the center has established a lot of momentum and has very exciting prospects for the future.”

White joined the center as assistant director in 1985 and was appointed the Randolph professor in 1987. He is an internationally recognized expert in equine colic and musculoskeletal disorders.

“Dr. White is a scholar and clinician of the highest order,” said Richard Schirg, dean of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. “Over the past year of

Board of Visitors acts on degree program, university budget

By Mark Owczarski

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors met June 7 for its quarterly meeting and took action on many items, including a new academic-degree program and the 2004-05 university budget.

The board approved the creation of a new master-of-fine-arts degree in creative writing in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and offered through the Department of English. Planning continues while the university seeks approval from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The department hopes to enroll the first class in 2005.

The board approved the 2004-05 fiscal year operating budget of $762.6 million. For the first time in several years, the operating divisions will see an increase. The University Division budget moves from $349.3 million to $370 million, and the Cooperative Extension/Agriculture Experiment Station budget moves from $66.3 million to $71 million.

President Charles Steger told the board that new funding from additional state appropriations and tuition increases will enable the university to extend as many as (See BOARD on 4)

White will be CALS associate dean, VCE director

By Charlie Scott

Missouri educator Patricia Sobrero has been named associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. She has served as associate vice president and associate director of University Outreach and Extension at the University of Missouri since 1999 and holds the rank of professor in the College of Human Environmental Sciences there.

At Missouri, Sobrero has addressed issues at the county, campus, system, state, and national levels. She is recognized for her ability to develop strong, lasting partnerships that generate programs and funding.

“We are indeed fortunate to have someone of Dr. Sobrero’s proven vision and leadership skills to move into this critical position,” said Sharron Quisenberry, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

At the University of Missouri, she has played a pivotal role in helping the Extension system develop a 21st-Century strategic direction and in implementing meaningful and (See SOBREO on 4)

University earns international computer honor

By Lynn A. Nyström

Virginia Tech is the recipient of this year’s ComputerWorld Honors 21st Century Achievement Award in Science. The award was presented Monday at an event evening in Washington, D.C.

Apple nominated Virginia Tech for its development of a 2,200-processor supercomputer with a cluster of 1,100 Power Mac G5 computers. Called System X, the supercomputer is the world’s third-fastest with the best price and performance for a top supercomputing facility.

Virginia Tech faced stiff competition with more than 250 of this year’s most innovative applications of technology submitted for consideration. In April, Virginia Tech was named one of five finalists for the award along with Rice University, Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center, CoreTek, and the Columbus Zoo. Entries came from 33 states and 26 countries.

“Virginia Tech is using information technology to make great strides toward (See UNIVERSITY on 4)
Vet Med research symposium examines obesity issue

The health risks obesity poses to people and pets will be examined during a special seminar that kicks off the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine’s (VMRCVM) 16th-annual research symposium on June 17-18 in VMRCVM room 102. Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Graduate School Dean Karen Depauw will feature remarks from a variety of university and guest researchers on June 17. Highlights include:

- Janet Walberg Rankin, interim director of the Institute for Biomedical and Public Health Sciences, will present “New Approaches to Research at Virginia Tech: Institute for Biomedical and Public Health Sciences” at 9 a.m.
- Pamela E. Starke-Reed, deputy director of the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) Division of Nutrition Research Coordination, will present an overview of NIH obesity research at 9:15 a.m.
- John C. Peters, director of Proctor & Gamble’s Nutrition Science Institute will present “Social Change and Obesity Prevention: Where Do We Begin?” at 9:45 a.m.
- Dottie LaFlamme, a veterinary nutrition communications specialist with Nestle Purina Pet Care PTC will present “Feline Diabetes: A Model for Human Type II Diabetes” at 10:15 a.m.
- Kevin P. Davy, associate professor of human nutrition, foods, and exercise in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, will present “Obesity and Hypertension: Two Epidemics or One?” at 10:45 a.m.
- Korinne Saker, associate professor, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, will present “Obesity: A Growing Concern for Companion Animals” at 11:15 a.m.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Schroder at 1-3144 or eschrade@vt.edu, or Jane Todd at 1-2014 or janetted@vt.edu.
Promotion, Tenure, Continued Appointment, and Administrative Promotion Listing 2003-2004

Provoost Mark McNamee, the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee have recommended the following candidates for promotion, tenure, continued appointment, or administrative promotion. President Charles Steger concurred and presented these recommendations to the Board of Visitors on June 7. The Board of Visitors approved the following actions:

Promotion with Tenure to Associate Professor, Collegiate Faculty

Amy E. Bell, electrical and computer engineering; James M. Berksen, fisheries and wildlife sciences; Daniel Breslau, science and technology in society; Sean G. Corcoran, materials science and engineering; Samuel R. Cook, interdisciplinary studies; Harry J. Dankowicz, engineering science and mechanics; Luiz A. DaSilva, electrical and computer engineering; John J. Donovan, psychology; James M. Dubinsky, English; Alnoor S. Ebrahim, School of Public and International Affairs, urban affairs and planning; Stephen H. Edwards, computational and mathematical sciences; David E. Effifiy, food science and technology; Michael W. Ellis, mechanical engineering; Edward T. Ewing, history; Jessica A. Folkart, foreign languages and literatures; Scott P. Greiner, animal and poultry science; David Hicks, teaching and learning; Matthias G. Imhof, geosciences; Sharon P. Johnson, foreign languages and literatures; Jeancelleste M. Kampe, engineering fundamentals; Otto I. Lanz, small animal clinical sciences; Edwin E. Lewis, entomology; S. Parameswaranakum Mallikarjunan, biological systems engineering; John J. Morris, chemistry; Sanjay Raman, electrical and computer engineering; Binoy Ravindran, electrical and computer engineering; Jesse J. Richardson Jr., School of Public and International Affairs, urban affairs and planning; Korrim E. Saker, large animal clinical sciences; Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, apparel, housing, and resource management; Jill C. Sible, biology; James A. Spotila, geosciences; Ann M. Stevens, biology; John C. Tedesco, communication; Zhijian (Jake) Tu, biochemistry; Kevin E. Van Cott, chemical engineering; Bradley A. Whitney, interior design, School of Architecture+Design; Christopher W. Zobel, business information technology.

Promotion with Tenure to Professor, Collegiate Faculty

Dwight Viehland, materials science and engineering; Tenure at the Currently Held Rank of Associate Professor, Collegiate Faculty

Marilyn Casto, interior design, School of Architecture+Design; Ronald M. Lewis, animal and poultry sciences; William D. Nichols, teaching and learning; Sean F. O’Keefe, food science and technology.

College select first Excellence in Outreach Award winners

By Susan B. Felker

Virginia Tech’s colleges have named winners of the first annual College Awards for Excellence in Outreach.

The awards, made possible through funding from Outreach and International Affairs, recognize the efforts of faculty members who have made outstanding contributions in “putting knowledge to work” for the benefit of constituencies outside the university.

This year’s winners are Ted Koebel and Carole Kuhns Station, who share the award from the College of Architecture and Urban Studies; LuAnn Gaskill, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences; Audrey Zink-Schar.

Employment

INSTRUCTIONAL

Dairy Science. Assistant Professor. Aerospace and Ocean Engineering. Associate, Assistant or Full Professor.

Small Animal Clinical Sciences. Veterinary Medicine. Assistant or Associate Professor.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL

University Development. Director of Foundation Relations. University Honors Program. Assistant Director.


Northern District Cooperative Extension. Extension Agent. 4-H Youth Development. Alexandria.

Northern District Cooperative Extension. Extension Agent. 4-H Youth Development. Richmond.


Career Services

moving to new location

By Donna Ratcliffe

Virginia Tech Career Services will be closed June 24 and 25 to move from Henderson Hall to its new location on the corner of Washington Street and West Campus Drive. The office will be open in the new building June 28.

Situated with the Student Services Building, West End Market and Dietrick Dining Hall nearby, the building is also in close proximity to a number of residence halls, including Harper, Ambler Johnston and Cochrane halls.

Career Services assists students in three key areas: making career decisions, gaining experience through internships or cooperative education positions, and preparing for a job search or graduate school. In addition to students, Career Services works closely with employers in assisting them in meeting their hiring needs and with alumni in assisting them with finding positions, changing careers and serving as a career resource to other alumni and students.

With two stories of almost 22,000 square feet of air-conditioned space solely dedicated to Career Services, there will be space for interviews, employer-information sessions, meetings, career-development classes, a career-resource library, computer lab and staff offices. The space for on-campus interviews has grown by 40 percent with each of the 32 rooms wired for Ethernet connections.

Members of the campus community are invited to stop by the new facility for a tour.

Letters to the editor and questions for “Ask Spectrum” should be addressed to the editor, 101 Media Building, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061. E-mail: Spectrum: http://spectrum.vt.edu. Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religious or political affiliation. Anyone having questions concerning discrimination or accessibility regarding the programs described in this newspaper should contact the Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Office: 540-231-7500 (v), 540-231-9480 (TT).

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Members of the campus community are invited to stop by the new facility for a tour.

For more information on all faculty and classified-staff positions, see www.jobs.vt.edu.
Puri to head Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics

By Lynn A. Nystrom
Ishwar K. Puri, professor of mechanical engineering and executive associate dean of engineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago, will become the head of Virginia Tech’s Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics, August 1.

“Dr. Puri has worked with some of the strongest mechanical engineering experts in the world,” said Hassan Aref, dean of the College of Engineering. “His enthusiasm for his new job and the tasks at hand has been infectious to the point where I sometimes forget that he is not already here.”

Puri obtained his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 1982 from the University of Delhi. He received his master’s degree and Ph. D. in engineering science from the University of California at San Diego in 1984 and in 1987, respectively.

He served as assistant research engineer at the University of California, San Diego from 1987 until 1990. He then moved to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) as assistant professor of mechanical engineering. He was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 1994, and to full professor in 1999.

At UIC, he directed the mechanical and industrial engineering graduate programs from 1994 until 1997, and again during the 1999-2000 academic year. He served as the associate dean for research and graduate studies the following year, and as executive associate dean of engineering from 2001 until 2004. He was on the steering committee of the UIC Institute for Environmental Studies and headed UIC’s micro- and nanotechnology initiatives.

Puri has conducted research through major government and private foundations. He has written a book on the environmental implications of combustion processes, and a textbook on advanced thermodynamics.

Puri is a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He succeeds Norm Dowling who has served as the interim department head during the international search.

Extension agent helps children to save bay dune

By Lynn Davis
Jeffrey Kirwan, associate professor of forestry and Extension specialist in the College of Natural Resources, has been advising students and teachers at Ocean View Elementary School in Norfolk to save what appears to be the last mature dune in Norfolk on the southern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Kirwan visited Ocean View Elementary through Project Learning Tree, in which he visited elementary schools across the state to do tree inventories and set up tree lists on the web for students to participate in tree-identification activities. Students and teachers at Ocean View asked Kirwan on his visit there if he could help to save the dune located near the school.

Following Kirwan’s advice, the teachers and students at Ocean View and at nearby Willoughby Elementary contacted local authorities for assistance in saving the dune. Their work resulted in the Norfolk Environmental Commission recommending a 6.5-acre parcel, known locally as the “Sand Hills” to be permanently protected by city-council action.

The dune, which has an elevation of 70 to 85 feet, also has historic significance. Some of the trees on the site were present at the time of the Sarah Constant landfill and are the only living things that can provide a linkage between the past and present. The first settlers of Jamestown landed there.

Students aid emergency-assistance program

By Kimberle Badnelli
Because of the contributions of Virginia Tech students, the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP) will be able to provide support to thousands of individuals and families in Montgomery County. More than $8,000 was collected during the fourth-annual Flex Out Hunger program coordinated by the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity and Virginia Tech’s Office of Student Programs. Students were given an opportunity to use their dining plans to purchase grocery certificates for the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program.

“The funds raised through the Flex Out Hunger Program go a long way in restocking our food bank, which is always in need,” said Phil Pappas, president of MCEAP. “The Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program provides emergency assistance to individuals and families who for reasons beyond their control are temporarily unable to provide for themselves. MCEAP appreciates the generosity of the Virginia Tech students for helping to meet the food needs of those less fortunate.”

Flex Out Hunger donation tables staffed by Sigma Alpha Epsilon students were set up outside of all the major dining centers in May. Students were asked to complete a set-up form and take it to a designated cashier to have their donation subtracted from their dining plan. Everyone who made a donation was also entered into a drawing for various door prizes donated by local businesses.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon started the Flex Out Hunger program four years ago, with the goal to provide an easy way for Virginia Tech students to donate money to the local community. Over the past four years, Virginia Tech students have donated more than $41,000 to MCEAP through this program.

“The Flex Out Hunger Program was again a win/win/win situation for the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, for students and the SAE fraternity, and for the Office of Student Programs,” said Edward Spencer, assistant vice president for student affairs.

BOARD

Continued from 1

80 new faculty lines in the coming fiscal year.

The board also approved the creation of clinical-track faculty ranks within the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. The new ranks will give the college greater flexibility in hiring faculty members who teach, conduct research, and work in the teaching hospital.

Four university professors and administrators were honored with emeritus or emerita status. The promotions of more than 60 administrators were honored with emeritus or emerita status. The promotions of more than 60 administrators were honored with emeritus or emerita status.

SOBREDO

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accessible programs for diverse learners.

“The breadth of her background in education, leadership, administration, external relations, organizational learning, and program development will strengthen Extension and the college,” Quisenberry said. “In the future, we must closely align the educational outreach expertise of Extension together with teaching and research to address problems that face society. With her leadership, Virginia Cooperative Extension can reach new heights in meeting the needs of the citizens of Virginia.”

From 1991 to 1999, Sobredo was associate dean at the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service. From 1985 to 1991, she served as associate district supervisor in the Middle Tennessee Extension District. She also has experience as a teacher and administrator in the public schools.

She serves on the Strategic Direction Council of the national Extension Committee on Organization and Policy. Sobredo also serves on the committee’s Health, Nutrition, and Wellness Committee, on the Expanded Food and Nutrition Task Force, and the Health and Human Sciences Task Force. Earlier this year, she was appointed to the Secretary of Energy’s national Energy Advisory Board as a representative of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges.

Sobredo earned her bachelor’s degree from East Tennessee State University, her master’s from the University of Maryland, and her doctorate from Vanderbilt University. She will assume her new position July 1.

Continued from 1

remarkable social achievement in science,” said Daniel Morrow, executive director of the ComputerWorld Honors Program. “The materials submitted on behalf of Virginia Tech will enrich the program’s growing collection on the Information Age and help build an accurate record of the truly outstanding achievements being made in these remarkable times.”

Virginia Tech built “a world-class supercomputer to tackle fundamental, grand-challenge problems in computational science and engineering.” While supercomputers have been invaluable, their high cost of often tens to hundreds of millions of dollars has limited their deployment to a few national facilities.

The goal of the Virginia Tech project was to develop novel computing architectures that reduce their cost, time to build, and maintenance complexity. As a result, institutions with relatively modest budgets can now afford to build a premier supercomputer,” said Hassan Aref, dean of the College of Engineering.

The engineering college collaborated with the university’s Information Technology group to build the supercomputer.

As the cluster was being built, the university named Srihari Varadarajan, an assistant professor of computer science in the College of Engineering, the director of Tech’s new Terascale Computing Facility. Jason Lockhart, also of the College of Engineering, and Kevin Shinpaw of information technology were named associate directors. Pat Arvin, associate vice president for information technology, and Glenda Scales, associate dean for research computing and distance learning in the College of Engineering, provided the overall direction for the project that included some 160 student volunteers.

System X is going through an upgrade process, wherein the nodes that comprise the supercomputer are being replaced by the Service G3 server platform. This upgrade has several advantages. It reduces the size of the supercomputer by a factor of three, consuming significantly less power than its predecessor. It generates less heat thereby reducing the cooling requirements. The upgrade adds automatic error correcting memory that can recover from transient bit errors. Finally, it has significant hardware monitoring capabilities—line voltages, fan speeds, communications—that allow real-time analysis of the health of the system.

Virginia Tech’s partners for building System X were Apple, Mellanox, Cisco, and Liebert.