

SPECTRUM



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

<http://www.spectrum.vt.edu>

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 20 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2003

General Assembly Finance Committees Present Budgets

By Ralph Byers,
director of government relations

The House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees presented their recommendations for modification to the state budget for 2003-04 on February 2.

Both committees recommended salary increases for classified employees and faculty members; the Senate recommended 2-percent increases in December 2003; the House, 2.5-percent increases. Both committees included language, however, to reduce or eliminate these increases should state revenues fall below projections.

For Virginia Tech, both House and Senate restored funding for the Corps of Cadets that Governor Mark Warner proposed to eliminate. A budget amendment for Cooperative Extension for \$1.1 mil-

lion was endorsed by the House, but not by the Senate. The House and Senate also differed on reductions to certain research and public-service centers, including the Coal and Energy Research Center, the Water Resources Research Center, the Center for Organizational and Tech-

GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE

nological Advancement, and the Reynolds Homestead. The Senate reduced four centers at Virginia Tech and a number of centers at other institutions by 10 percent.

In the House, funding for COTA (\$425,000) and the Reynolds Homestead (\$45,000) was eliminated entirely, while the

Coal and Energy Center and the Water Center were reduced by \$10,000 each.

Both the House and Senate otherwise let stand the budget reductions to higher education enacted in the last session, along with the reductions imposed in October by Warner. They both also proposed restrictions on the amount of tuition increases for in-state students for the 2003-04 academic year. These restrictions apparently resulted from concern over the fact that tuition state-wide has increased overall by 21.5 percent for Virginia students since 2001-02. However, tuition was frozen for a number of years and rolled back by 20 percent in the late 1990s. Thus tuition rates for in-state students on average are approximately where they were in 1995-96, and additional tuition revenues are the only available source of funding for programs given the

(See *GENERAL ASSEMBLY* on 4)

Stilwell garners major awards for AUV research

By Liz Crumley

A fleet of miniature underwater vehicles being developed by Virginia Tech researcher Dan Stilwell will enable scientists to gather environmental data off the coast of Virginia and in the Chesapeake Bay.

Stilwell, an assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, has received a \$400,000 Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) Award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and a \$300,000 Young Investigator Program award from the Office of Naval Research (ONR) to support his research.

Stilwell's goal is three-fold: to develop a low-cost miniature autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), to develop a mathematical theory that describes how AUV's can cooperate, and to deploy a fleet of vehicles that can gather environmental data that otherwise would be impossible to collect.

"One of our field sites is Hog Island Bay off the coast of Virginia. This bay serves as a natural barrier to man-made pollutants," Stilwell said.

Separated from the Atlantic Ocean by barrier islands, Hog Island Bay is the site of a long-term NSF ecological study. However, researchers haven't been able to collect certain critical data about the health of the bay. That data—including dissolved oxygen, which is used to estimate the metabolism of plants and organisms that live in the bay—has proven elusive with traditional collection methods.

"The difficulty is that changes in dissolved oxygen must be measured over periods of one to two hours and across the entire bay," Stilwell said. This will require several autonomous vehicles working cooperatively—one vehicle acting alone cannot cover the bay quickly enough to collect a scientifically valid sample.

(See *STILWELL* on 4)

Umberger named Virginia Cooperative Extension director

By Charlie Stott

Steven H. Umberger has been selected as the new director of Virginia Cooperative Extension, according to Gregory Brown, interim dean of Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

For the past six years, Umberger has been associate director of Extension for Agriculture and Natural Resource programs. His career with Virginia Cooperative Extension began in 1980 when he became 4-H livestock specialist in Virginia Tech's animal science department. He also served as Extension Sheep Specialist and Animal Sciences project leader before being named associate director in 1996.

Umberger will be replacing J. David Barrett, who is retiring later this month. Brown said, "Dave is leaving some large shoes to fill and his leadership will be missed. We want to express to Dave our deepest appreciation for his 30 years of service to Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech and the commonwealth and to wish him our best for the future."

"We have every confidence that Steve will step in and continue to provide strong leadership for Extension and the college. He has certainly demonstrated that ability over the past six years as associate director," Brown added. "The partnership between Extension and University Outreach forged by Dave Barrett will be continued by Steve."

"We are very fortunate to have someone with Steve's talents and dedication assuming the role of director at this critical time in Extension's history. I feel he is ready to meet the new challenges of the 21st century," Brown said.

Mark G. McNamee, university provost and vice president for academic affairs, said, "Throughout his career, Dr. Umberger has proven to be a leader and has time and again shown the ability to pull people together to get the job done. Those attributes along with his years of knowledge about Virginia Cooperative Extension and its programs will make him an effective Director."

"In addition, Dr. Umberger is respected across the commonwealth. He already has support from many individuals and organizations

throughout the state," McNamee said. "We are extremely pleased that he has agreed to accept this position. Given the enormous budget challenge, the next three years will be critical to the future of Cooperative Extension."

Umberger said, "I am grateful for this opportunity. I know there are challenges ahead, especially in light of the state budget cuts, but by working together with our many supporters, Extension will continue to play a vital role in Virginia's future."

As associate director, Umberger said, "It was a particularly rewarding experience to get to see and hear about the outstanding educational programs conducted by our agents, specialists, and volunteers. During my more than 22 years as a part of Virginia Cooperative Extension, I cannot recall a time when agents and specialists have been more focused on the delivery of high-quality educational programs."

A joint program of Virginia Tech and Virginia State, Extension provides educational programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences and Community

(See *UMBERGER* on 4)

Business consultant to discuss U.S.-France cultural differences

By Sookhan Ho

"Figuring out the French" will be the subject of a talk by French business consultant Gilles Asselin on Wednesday, Feb. 19, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. at 1045 Pamplin Hall.

The talk is part of a lecture series on international research and cultural aspects of global business sponsored by the Pamplin College of Business and the French program of the Department of Foreign Languages. The talk is open to the Virginia Tech community.

Asselin, who recently published a book, *Au Contraire! Figuring Out the French*, will discuss cultural differences between France and the U.S. in social relations and profes-

sional behavior. He will address such issues as education, politics, importance of work, management styles, expectations for meetings, and teambuilding practices. He will also offer practical advice on matters considered essential for successful business relations between people from the two countries.

Asselin is the president and founder of SoCoCo Intercultural Incorporated, a training and consulting firm specializing in Western European-American business relations. A French certified public accountant and audit manager, he spent three years in Africa, working with the French Peace Corps in Cameroon and conducting an organizational development program in

the Congo.

In 1990, he moved to Wisconsin where he earned graduate degrees in business and industrial psychology. Together with professional colleagues, he designs and conducts training programs for employees of global companies. Clients include AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, Crown, Cork & Seal, Hotel Sofitel, Wyeth-Ayerst Research, Sanofi-Synthelabo, as well as several French-American schools in the U.S.

His lecture is part of a collaboration between the Pamplin College and the French program to promote the study of French as well as study and internship opportunities in France. The effort is supported by a two-year federal grant with additional funds from Virginia Tech.

Mandatory Information Session Set for International Students

There will be a mandatory information session on Saturday, Feb. 15 from 9 a.m. to noon in Burruss auditorium for all F-1 and J-1 students at Virginia Tech.

All international undergraduate and graduate students must attend this session. The information session will cover new immigration regulations as well as new electronic-reporting requirements to INS (in SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System).

Tuesday, March 11, has been designated as SEVIS data collection/registration day during which all currently enrolled international students must report to

(See *INFORMATION* on 4)

ACTIVITIES

EVENTS

Friday, 7

ULD Computer Skill Course, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 3080 Torgersen.

Music Event, 8 p.m., Squires Recital Salon: Faculty/Guest Artist Recital.

Black History Month Event, 12:20 to 1:30 p.m., Fralin auditorium.

Saturday, 8

Men’s Basketball, 4 p.m.: At St. John’s.

Sunday, 9

Women’s Basketball, 2 p.m., Cassell Coliseum: Notre Dame.

Music Event, 3 p.m., Squires Recital Salon: Ensemble Concert.

Monday, 10

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon, 1120 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3 to 5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen.

Black History Month Event, 7 p.m., Squires Brush Mountain.

Horticulture Garden Class, 7 to 9 p.m., Greenhouse complex classroom: Holly Scoggins.

Tuesday, 11

On-campus Bloodmobile (through 2-13).

ULD Computer Skill Course, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 3080 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon,

1120 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3 to 5 p.m., 1120 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3 to 5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen.

Men’s Basketball, 7:30 p.m.: At Miami.

Black History Month Event, 5 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center.

Wednesday, 12

ULD Computer Skill Course, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 3080 Torgersen.

YMCA Mornings, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Luther Memorial Church.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon, 3060 Torgersen.

YMCA Slide Show, noon, Cranwell Center.

Faculty Development Workshop, 1:30 to 3 p.m., 3060 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3 to 5 p.m., 1120 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3 to 5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen.

Women’s Basketball, 7 p.m., Cassell Coliseum: Georgetown.

With Good Reason, noon, 7:30 p.m., WVTF.

Black History Month Event, 8 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center.

Thursday, 13

ULD Computer Skill Course, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 3080 Torgersen.

Black History Month Event, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon, 1120 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon, 1140 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 10 a.m. to noon, 3060 Torgersen.

Faculty Development Workshop, 3 to 5 p.m., 3060 Torgersen.

Black History Month Event, 6 to 8 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center.

Friday, 14

Pay Date for Faculty and Staff Members.

ULD Computer Skill Course, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 3080 Torgersen.

Black History Month Event, noon, Squires Black Cultural Center.

The New Virginians Vocal Jazz Benefit Dinner, 7 to 10 p.m., Owens Banquet Hall.

Black History Month Event, 8 p.m., Lyric Theatre.

V-Day 2003, 8 p.m., Squires Haymarket: “The Vagina Monologues.”

SEMINARS

Friday, 7

MCBB, 12:20 to 1:10 p.m., Fralin auditorium: Rick Kittles, Howard University

Geological Sciences, 3:30 p.m., 4069 Derring: Gary Kocurek, University of Texas.

Friday, 14

Geological Sciences, 3:30 p.m., 4069 Derring: Shuhai Xiao, Tulane.

BULLETINS

Workshop offered on NIH grant writing

Success in obtaining sponsored research is a matter of matching intellectual merit with practical skills in writing grants and searching for funds. To help departments and colleges in this endeavor, the Office of the Vice Provost for Research offers faculty workshops each semester. New this semester is a National Institutes of Health (NIH) workshop series.

A program on “Building the NIH Grant Proposal” will be held Friday, Feb. 21, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Fralin auditorium. This workshop will be a practicum on how to put together an effective NIH proposal. Specific sections of NIH Form 398 will be examined, with practical examples on how to present a persuasive case for funding your research idea. Other topics include budget formats, compliance issues, and the review process.

The second program will be an “NIH Mock Review Panel” on Friday, March 7, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Fralin auditorium. How do reviewers look at a proposal? What are the key features they look for in deciding to fund or reject a

grant application? This session will be a simulated NIH review panel discussion, focused on actual pre-proposals submitted by workshop participants. Panelists will include senior faculty members who have served on NIH panels. Participants are encouraged to submit a one-page abstract before the session, but this is not necessary to attend.

To register for either or both programs, contact Debbie Nester at 1-5410 or debbiell@vt.edu.

Learn more about workshops and funding opportunities at www.research.vt.edu.

V-Day Virginia Tech presents benefit production

V-Day Virginia Tech will present a benefit production of Eve Ensler’s Obie Award-winning play, “The Vagina Monologues” for the second year in a row. Performances will be held at Haymarket Theatre on February 14 and 15 at 8 p.m., and February 16 at 2 p.m. The benefit production is sponsored by the V-Day Initiative. Tickets are \$8 for students and \$10 for the public and may be purchased at the Women’s Center of Virginia Tech (1-7806).

Beneficiaries from this year’s production will include the Women’s Resource Center of the New River Valley. Ten percent of the proceeds will support work ending violence in Native American, Native Alaskan, and First Nations communities as part of the national V-Day campaign.

The event is sponsored by the V-Day Initiative, the Women’s Center, the Department of Theatre Arts, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Women’s Studies Program.

For more information, contact Rachel Christensen at 1-7806 or rachrist@vt.edu.

Children’s literature, natural history offered

The Museum of Natural History at Virginia Tech will present a natural-history story-time activity at the Barnes and Noble bookstore in Christiansburg every fourth Friday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The event is a mixture of children’s literature and natural-history activities. The activities are for children between 8 to 12 years old, but other ages are welcome if accompanied by parents. For information, call 1-3001.

Play inspired by mascot to premier

By Susan B. Felker

“Hard Times Blues,” a new play inspired by the life of Virginia Tech’s first mascot, Floyd “Hard Times” Meade, will premier this month with performances in Roanoke and Blacksburg. The play is a poignant, dramatic presentation of historical fiction accompanied by live music.

In 1896, Meade began entertaining spectators at sporting events at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, as Virginia Tech was known then. By 1907, the Tech employee was so popular that athletic teams adopted him as their official mascot. In 1913, after Tech athletic teams had begun to be known as the “Gobblers,” Meade started taking a huge turkey gobbler to games. He trained the bird to flap its wings and gobble on command.

Meade left a lasting legacy at Virginia Tech and in the surrounding community. He continued the turkey tradition he had established until 1929, when it was passed to another Virginia Tech employee.

Playwright Lucy Sweeney developed the play about Meade in collaboration with Marshal B. McAden, director; William Penn, musical coordinator; the Dumas Theatre Troupe of Roanoke; and other theatre artists. Sponsored by Cooper House and the Dumas Troupe, the play will be performed at the Lyric Theatre in Blacksburg for only three performances: on Friday, Feb. 14, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 15, at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 16, at 3 p.m.

The play will make its debut in Roanoke at the Dumas Theatre on February 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. and February 8 at 2 p.m.

(See PLAY on 4)

Horticulture Garden Winter Courses offered

Horticulture Garden Winter Courses are being offered this semester at the Greenhouse Complex classroom on Washington Street.

Hands-on Series courses are as follows: Orchids are Easy, February 15, 10 a.m. to noon. Presented by Scott Rapier \$35.

Flower Arranging 101, February 24, 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Alan McDaniel. \$25.

Prune and Train Fruit Trees, March 15, 10 a.m. to noon. Presented by Rob Tanzer. \$30. Winter Seminar Series courses, all \$15 each, are as follows:

Bellissima! The Gardens of Italy, February 3, 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Robert McDuffie. Cut Flowers from the Home Garden, February

10, from 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Holly Scoggins.

Shade Gardening, February 17, 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Stephanie Huckestein.

Water Gardening 101 February 22, 10 a.m. to noon. Presented by Sheri Dorn.

Organic Vegetable Gardening, March 17, 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Polly Hieser.

Dwarf Conifers, March 24, 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Alex Niemiera. Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail, March 31, 7 to 9 p.m. Presented by Leonard Adkins.

For more information and registration call 1-5970 or visit web site www.hort.vt.edu/vthg/.

ACHIEVERS

Thomas Fox, associate forestry professor in the College of Natural Resources, served on the working group which authored the chapter on forest ecosystems and which also reviewed the full report. "The State of the Nation" report identifies major gaps in what is known about the nation's lands, waters, and living resources, and proposes periodic reporting of key indicators that will inform and influence policy decisions for generations to come.

Garth Wilkes, a university distinguished professor in the chemical engineering department, has accepted a \$6,000 check from Jon Geibel, research fellow, Chevron Phillips Chemical Co., Bartlesville, Okla. Geibel was present for the MACRO 2002 Conference: An Update of Macromolecular Education and Research at Virginia Tech. The Polymer Materials and Interfaces Laboratory and the Center for Adhesive and Sealant Science sponsored the meeting.

Raymond D. Smoot Jr., vice president for administration and treasurer, has been appointed by the board of directors of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) as chairman of its Investment Committee. The nine-member investment committee provides oversight of the VRS investment portfolio, which totals around \$35 billion and is among the nation's largest retirement systems.

The Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Region Five Conference was held at James Madison University with the theme: "Expanding Cultures: Your Campus and the World."

Jeremy Hart, recreation center manager of BreakZONE, and **Scott Reed**, assistant director for leisure services and marketing, co-presented "Recreation Programs: The Backbone of Union Recreation Revenue." **Carol Bishop**, operations-services manager, and **Dallas Cass**,

customer-services manager, co-presented "Are Your Student Employees MIFed? Motivations, Initiative, and Fun." **Melissa Vidmar**, public-relations manager, presented "Expanding Your Potential through Professional Etiquette." **Doug Yates**, administrative-services manager for University Unions and Student Activities, received the C. Shaw Smith Award at the ACUI Conference. Smith was a professional in the college-union field for over 30 years. Yates is only the second person to receive the award; the first award was given in 1993.

Albert Moore of Environmental, Health and Safety Services has become certified by the American Board of Industrial Hygiene in comprehensive practice of industrial hygiene. Having met all educational and experience requirements and received a passing score on a national examination, he now possesses the right to use the designation certified industrial hygienist (CIH).

Clark Jones and **Erv Blythe** have been voted as recipients of the 2002 Leadership in Science and Technology Award for their joint efforts and commitment to the southern piedmont region and their work in creating a vision and shaping Virginia Tech's commitment to the region through its southside initiative.

Massimiliano Di Ventra of the physics

department gave a lecture at the Conference on Nano and Giga Challenges in Microelectronics in Moscow. Di Ventra's plenary lecture, titled "Electronic Transport in Nanoscale Conductors," emphasized important physical properties of electrons and systems at the nanoscale that are of interest in building future electronic devices.

The Expository Writing Program at Harvard University has recognized **Peter Graham**, the Clifford Cutchins III professor of English, for excellence and dedication in advising Michael Edson, an undergraduate student of the English department, who received an honorable mention in the 2002 Trollope Prize competition for his essay "Darwin and Trollope: A Study of Victorian Literary Culture." In addition, Graham and the department will each receive \$250 for curriculum development.

Jim Dubinsky, assistant professor in the English department, gave two papers at the annual Association for Business Communication Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. The papers were titled: "Business Writing and Community Partnerships: It's about Change" and "Avoiding Exploitation: Lessons from Designing Community-Based Writing Assignments."

Simone Poirier-Bures of the English

department visited Queen Elizabeth High School in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where the grade-10 students are studying her novel *Candyman*. She spoke to three classes and met with a group of last year's students who displayed their creative projects based on the novel. The projects included such things as designs for an alternate book cover, imaginary diaries written by the main characters, and a dress that one of the characters might have worn to a dance.

In addition, Poirier-Bures's essay "Sacred Gift: On Kumys and Commodification," which tells about an experience in Kyrgyzstan, has been published in *Resurgence*, a British journal considered "the spiritual and artistic flagship of the Green movement." Five of her photographs were printed with the essay. Another one of her essays, "My Mother and I Hear Her Death Approaching," appeared in the summer issue of the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and two excerpts from her memoir in progress about Kyrgyzstan appear in the current issues of *Crazyhorse* and *Artemis*.

Editors at Houghton Mifflin have asked **Carl Bean** of the English department to review the penultimate draft of *Creating Effective Websites* by Summers and Summers.

EMPLOYMENT

The following classified positions are currently available. Position details, specific application procedures/position-closing dates may be found on Personnel Services web site <http://www.ps.vt.edu>. Positions are also listed on the Job Line, a 24-hour recorded message service. For information on all job listings, call 1-5300. Some positions include state benefits. Positions with numbers beginning with "W" are hourly and do not include state benefits. Individuals with disabilities desiring assistance or accommodation in the application process should call by the application deadline. Closing date for advertised positions is 1 p.m. Monday. An EO/AA employer committed to diversity.

CLASSIFIED POSITIONS

FULL TIME

One full-time food-service position available.

Accountant Senior, 007320F, PB 4, Bursar's Office.

Accounting Technician, 008060M, PB 3, APS.

Assistant Manager, W022990H, PB 3, RDP.

Assistant Director of Budget Operations/E&G Budget Manager, 001951F, PB 5, BFP.

Communications Officer, 000364G, PB 3, Police.

Electrician, 001691F, PB 3, Physical Plant.

Electrician Supervisor, 002038F, PB 4, FES.

Executive Assistant, 007763M, PB 3, Military Affairs.

Front Office Manager, 001144G, PB 3, DBHCC.

Highway Equipment Operator A, 000182F, PB 2, Physical Plant.

Housekeeping Worker, P020050C, PB 1, Physical Plant.

HVAC Technician, 008001H, PB 3, RDP.

Lab Instrument Maker/Unit Operations Lab Technician, 000734B, PB 4, Chemical Engineering.

Lab Specialist Senior, 007743M, PB 4, PPWS.

Laboratory Specialist Senior, 002610M, PB 4, CVM.

Laboratory Specialist Senior, 008054M, PB 4, PPWS.

Large Animal Technician, 001307M, PB 3, VTH.

Medical Technologist, 006771M, PB 4, VTH.

Police Captain, 008057G, PB 4, Police.

Police Dispatcher, 000364G, PB 3, Police.

Police Lieutenant, 008058G, PB 4, Police.

Police Sergeant, 008059G, PB 3, Police.

Powerline Assistant, 006523F, PB 3, FES.

Powerline Worker, 000030F, PB 3, Facilities.

Pre-prep Supervisor, 000394H, PB 2, RDP.

Student Services Program Assistant, 001233B, PB 2, MME.

Unit Manager, 007961H, PB 5, RDP.

PART TIME

One part-time food-service position available.

Animal Care Technician, W020556M, PB 2, CVM.

Animal Care Technician, W023031M, PB 2, CVM.

Fisheries Technician, W023519M, PB 2, FWS.

ICU Veterinary Technologist Large Animal, W022218M, PB 2, VTH.

Large Animal Husbandry, W022155M, PB 1, VTH.

Radiologic Technologist, W022238M, PB 3, SHC.

Starter Marshall/Shop Attendant,

W022113J, PB 1, Golf Clubhouse.

OFF CAMPUS

Barns/Grooms Assistant, 006548M, PB 1, CVM.

Nursing Shift Supervisor, 002996M, PB 2, EMC.

FACULTY POSITIONS

INSTRUCTIONAL

Department of Philosophy, Visiting Assistant Professor, Contact: Roger Ariew, 0126.

Department of Educational Leadership/Policy Studies, Assistant/Associate Professor. Contact: Valarie Giddings, 260 Wallace Hall, 0426.

NON- INSTRUCTIONAL

University Development, Director of Development, College of Natural Resources. Contact: Rhonda K. Arsenault, 201 Pack Building, 0336.

Residential/Dining Programs, Residence Director. Contact: Gail Kirby, 109 East Eggleston, 0428.

Residential/Dining Programs, Coordinator of Theme Housing Programs. Contact: James Penven, 109 East Eggleston, 0428.

Residential/Dining Programs, Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Contact: Gerald J. Kowalski, 109 East Eggleston, 0428.

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Research Associate (Leader, Technical Operations). Contact: Cindy Wilkinson, 3500 Transportation Research Plaza.

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Research Associate, Human Factors Engineer. Contact: Cindy Wilkinson, 3500 Transportation Research Plaza.



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Spectrum, a faculty-staff tabloid, is published each Friday 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: Lawrence G. Hincker, associate vice president for University Relations; Jean Elliott, director of news and information.

Editor

John Ashby, 1-6961

News Bureau Manager
Sherri Box, 1-8508

Production Manager
Melinda Shaver, 1-8524

Business Manager
Paula Vaught, 1-8819

Web/Editorial Assistant
Sherri Songer, 1-2522

Letters to the editor and questions for "Ask *Spectrum*" should be addressed to the editor, 102 Media Building, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Electronic Spectrum: <http://www.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, religion, 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), 540-231-9460 (TTY).

IN OTHER NEWS

Department of English designs book to fit writing program

By Sally Harris

When students in first-year college writing classes are going to pursue majors as diverse as philosophy, geology, engineering, and economics, how can the teacher be sure the students all get the kinds of writing instruction they need?

The Department of English has solved that problem. The department teaches 130 sections of first-year writing each semester to about 3,300 students who will use writing in different ways. The department found that books for the teaching of writing all had strengths, but none had everything needed and all had a great deal of material that was not germane to the university's requirements.

Most traditional textbooks are geared to writing personal essays, memoirs, and autobiographies or to writing about literature as literature, said Paul Heilker, associate professor of English and director of the first-year writing program. That model does not work well at a university that has a strong science and technology component. Also, the department had been assessing its program and found that students needed a more unified experience in first-year writing courses. So the department decided to design its own *Department of English Writing*

Yearbook. "We decided to make a book that fit the curriculum rather than make the curriculum fit a book," Heilker said.

The idea of custom-publishing its own textbook came from Lucinda Roy, head of the English department. Heilker found two publishers interested in working with the department on the book: Allyn & Bacon/Longman and Prentice Hall, both parts of the same company, Pearson Education, but still competitors with each other. "We wanted to pick and choose material from all the book lists they had," Heilker said.

The publishers had never considered such a venture before, but were interested in participating, Heilker said. So he was able to choose a chapter on citing sources from one book, a discussion of avoiding speaking anxiety from another under the domain of those publishers. All in all, he pulled materials from about six books from each publisher into one yearbook. "There are lots of custom readers," Heilker said, "but this is really quite different in that we have content from all sorts of books that no one ever thought of putting in the same place before. It's a collaboration between our writing-curriculum faculty and the publisher's holdings." Pearson pulled it together into a book and is now touting Virginia Tech's innovative approach at its national sales meet-

ings.

The *Writing Yearbook* enables the Department of English to collaborate with two publishing companies to get a book with everything first-year students need and with no wasted content. The book is an artifact that provides a visible statement about the department's goals and gives professors in upper-level courses a view of exactly what writing skills the students in their classes should have mastered.

The writing program, which will now be consistent throughout all the hundreds of classes, teaches analytical thinking and writing that will serve students from all colleges and majors. "We teach students to look for patterns across disparate sets of data and then interpret the meaning of those patterns," Heilker said. "They then ask 'What does this pattern of symbols mean, this pattern of numbers?' Finally, they argue about the value or significance of that interpretation. These are skills that apply in all areas." The result, he said, is that students learn to think critically and read and speak effectively as undergraduates across the board.

The book features quotations on the importance of writing from President Charles

Steger, Provost Mark McNamee, and deans from three colleges. The first part of the book stresses the sequence of writing assignments and objectives. All students will have common writing assignments and oral presentations. The book will contain exemplary writing by students for each writing assignment. It is easier, Heilker said, for students to see that they can master the writing skills if the exemplary assignments are by other students and not famous writers. The Virginia Tech faculty invented the writing assignments. That way, Heilker said, "We won't have to modify our expectations to fit what is in a book; we built a book to fit our expectations."

Spring semester 2003, about 1,600 students will use the *Department of English Writing Yearbook*; about 3,300 will use it in Fall 2003. The book will be evaluated and revised yearly to include additional student writing and faculty materials. "It may become entirely a Virginia Tech project published through Pearson Education," Heilker said.

STUDENT DEATH NOTICE

Gregory K. Floyd, a student in the College of Arts and Sciences.

UMBERGER

Continued from 1

Initiatives, and 4-H Youth Development. It has 107 local offices across the state as well as educational programs at 13 Agriculture Research and Extension Centers and six 4-H Centers.

"I believe that through our experiences over the past 10 years, we have developed a

formula for success in Virginia," Umberger said. "Given our current fiscal challenges, it is important that we take advantage of the organizational strengths we have established and maintain the capacity to rebuild as new opportunities arise. I very much look forward to being a part of and providing leadership for that process."

As professor of animal and poultry sciences and an Extension sheep specialist at Virginia

Tech for more than 15 years, Umberger was credited with significant contributions to production and marketing aspects of Virginia's sheep industry.

Umberger earned his bachelor's degree in animal science from Virginia Tech and a master's degree in animal science from the University of Tennessee. He earned a doctorate in reproductive physiology from North Carolina State University.

available, but their size, cost and infrastructure requirements are prohibitive for many applications.

"By producing AUV's that are very small and cost about \$2,000 in parts, our AUV's will be suitable for a number of applications that cannot now be addressed with current AUV technology," Stilwell said. "The idea of a miniature AUV was originally proposed by Carl Wick, a researcher at the U. S. Naval Academy. Dr. Wick designed the prototype miniature AUV on which our original designs were based."

"If we're successful with these experiments in water, we can develop autonomous vehicles that will work cooperatively on land or in the air," Stilwell said. In the air, for example, teams of vehicles could be designed to more efficiently perform surveillance or track plumes of pollutants. Because these AUV's are so inexpensive, they also could be used by the military to seek out and detonate underwater mines.

Stilwell also is developing a robotics curriculum for seniors and first-year graduate students that will emphasize the unique engineering problems associated with underwater robotics. "The design of an underwater robot requires a set of skills that cross traditional department boundaries," Stilwell said. "A curriculum that combines elements from electrical engineering, ocean engineering, computer science, and other departments does not currently exist."

Last year Stilwell and fellow CAREER-award recipient Craig Woolsey of Virginia Tech's aerospace and ocean engineering department helped found the university's Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Team, which will design and build AUV's for a national competition.

STILWELL

Continued from 1

Stilwell's research for both the NSF and ONR is aimed at creating the first miniature AUV's capable of operating effectively as a group. "Cooperation between autonomous vehicles is one of the major advancements my graduate students and I are pursuing," he said.

Stilwell's ONR project will complement his work for the NSF. At additional field sites on the York River and the Chesapeake Bay, Stilwell plans to develop the capability to take three-dimensional measurements of parameters that vary with time.

"Applications for this technology include rapidly locating and tracking chemical pollutants in the water. Using a fleet of AUV's, we would be able to quickly map a chemical plume, track its progress in real-time, and quickly locate its source," Stilwell said.

One of the important research issues will be to develop the algorithms that enable a fleet of AUV's to cooperatively find and track a plume in real-time.

The two-foot-long cylindrical AUV's under construction in the Autonomous Systems and Controls Laboratory at Virginia Tech will be fitted with sensors for monitoring dissolved oxygen and other environmental parameters, including conductivity, salinity, temperature, and depth.

When on the surface, the AUV's will use the Geographical Positioning System (GPS) for precise navigation. The AUV's also will carry miniature sonar systems to help with navigation and wireless transmitters to send data to one another and to researchers on land.

Other larger AUV's are commercially

INFORMATION

Continued from 1

the Old Dominion Ballroom in Squires Student Center with their immigration documents (all previously issued I-20 or DS-2019 forms, I-94 card and passport).

Students whose last I-20 or DS-2019 form was issued before June 1, 2002 must also bring updated financial information. Students should report any time on March 11 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Information will only be collected that day. Students will receive their new SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 form at a later date.

All international students will be entered into the SEVIS system by mid-May and be issued a new I-20 or DS-2019. New forms will be issued only to those students who have attended the information session on February 15 and registered on March 11.

PLAY

Continued from 2

Tickets, which cost \$12 for general admission and \$8 for students and children, are available at the Record Exchange in downtown Blacksburg, Printer's Ink at University Mall, Cooper House at 305 Washington St., and the Lyric Theatre in downtown Blacksburg. Additional information is available at 552-2473 or hardtimesblues@vt.edu.

The performances are part of the Black History Month celebration. Information on other events is available on line at <http://www.mcp.vt.edu/calendars/bhm2003.shtml>.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Continued from 1

state's revenue shortfall.

The presidents of the colleges and universities will be working with the General Assembly to inform it that tuition flexibility is imperative to avoid additional budget reductions in the coming fiscal year. The House and Senate Conference Committee on the Budget will begin work during the week of February 10 to reconcile differences between the two chambers. The legislature is scheduled to adjourn on February 22.