

# VIRGINIA TECH CONDUCTOR

A GUIDE FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

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## Two Views of *Cold Mountain* Offered

Here are two views, point and counterpoint, on the recent Academy Award winning film *Cold Mountain*.

### Point

*This is an excerpt from a letter published on The National Association for Multicultural Education Listserv (<http://www.nameorg.org>).*

My name is Erik Todd Dellums. I am a Black man, a professional actor and a semioticist and film lover. I am therefore underemployed, under-appreciated and an afterthought in Hollywood. I am also a man who rarely sees an accurate depiction of Black people and American history in film and on television. It's something I've grown used to, but now I'M MAD AS HELL AND NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE!

*Cold Mountain...* is a sham; a slap in the face of African Americans everywhere, whose ancestors gave their lives in the Civil War, fighting for true freedom (Sorry, President Bush!) from the most heinous slavery system known to modern man: the American Slavery System.

How could a three-hour film depicting life in the heart of Virginia and North Carolina during the Civil War use 30 seconds of Black people picking cotton as its total reality of slavery during this period?...The film depicts one of the more important battle decisions in the Civil War; a battle in which the Union trained Black soldiers to tunnel under Confederate lines; a battle in which Blacks suffered their highest rate of casualties of any Union division in the fight! This is the great battle that opens *Cold Mountain*. You tell me if you spot ANY Black actors in the film fighting. It plays like "Saving Private Ryan" another film in which Black contributions to history — namely the Battle at Normandy — are completely excised from a major film. Shame on you, Hollywood. Shame on you!

### Counterpoint

*by Scott Johnson, associate professor of human development, Virginia Tech*

A few weeks ago, on the list serve for the National Association for Multicultural Education, Erik Todd Dellums posted a critique of the film *Cold Mountain*, criticizing, among other things, its failure to provide more parts for Black actors, *See Cold Mountain on page 4*

## Conference on Scholarship of Diversity Features Straightforward Discussion

*By Jean Elliott*

Every session of the Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity was punctuated with lively discussion and drew across-the-board rave reviews. Evaluations reflected a positive tenor with participants calling the experience "thought-provoking," "lively," "candid," "empowering," "enlightening" and "one of the highlights of my year." There were several requests that this event become an annual affair.

The premiere conference featured more than 40 presentations, symposia and panels, and brought together undergraduates, graduate students, faculty members and administrators from across the region. The topics cut across a variety of disciplines, including biology, political science, mathematics, psychology, human resources, history, education, and public administration.

Janet Sawyers, Professor Emerita from the Department of Human Development, served as the conference organizer. One of the initial challenges, in part due to its multidisciplinary approach, was developing a contact list for participants. Most of the announcements were sent electronically and the end result: over 130 scholars from four states gathered to exchange ideas and discuss their research.

"Since the emergence of the college, it has become clear that a value for diversity is one of the core values that is providing a common ground on which faculty can come together in teaching, scholarship and outreach," said Jerry Niles, Dean of the college of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences "The faculty's extensive participation in the Conference

through the sharing of their scholarship is a wonderful example of this commitment."

### The Panel

One of the most compelling sessions featured the straightforward remarks of four panelists, all from various colleges and disciplines at Virginia Tech. They provided advice for scholars doing diversity research and discussed their own challenges and perceptions. Susan Gooden, associate professor in the Center for Public Administration and Policy, started off with these recommendations to researchers: "Do something that you are passionate about... Do something that is going to contribute to the betterment of society... Ask questions that challenge people to think in different ways." And while she says that her "personal experience has been positive, I'm not sure that's applicable across campus."

Mary Connerley, associate professor in the Department of Management in the Pamplin College of Business, warned young colleagues to "stay away from diversity until you're tenured... it will limit where you can go." Connerley went on to explain that research could have diversity variables, but should contain other "hard core dependent variables, something they can wrap their arms around."

Carol Burger, associate professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, gave a brief history of women in science and questioned whether scientists could do interdisciplinary work, which she eventually concluded — "probably not." She however, has helped the cause by creating a journal, now accepting submissions for Volume 8, entitled

*See Mid-Atlantic on page 3*

## Why Race Matters - Lessons Learned from the Attack on Affirmative Action

*By Jean Elliott*

Jeff Milem, a widely recognized expert in the area of racial dynamics in higher education, delivered the conference keynote entitled "Why Race Matters - Lessons Learned from the Attack on Affirmative Action."

He opened the session with last year's Supreme Court ruling.

*"Effective participation by members of all racial and ethnic groups in the civic life of our Nation is essential if the dream of one Nation, indivisible, is to be realized,"* wrote Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in last year's Grutter v. Bollinger decision.

Milem authored one of the chapters in the book, *Compelling Interest - Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Colleges and Universities*, which proved to be pertinent in this court ruling. "As we wrote this book, we wrote it with Justice O'Connor in mind. She was our audience... because we knew... that she would have the deciding vote." And as it turns out, said Milem, "it was one of three books cited by O'Connor as being influential in helping to substantiate that diversity was a compelling interest for the institutions as well as for broader society."

Milem's talk dovetailed with the book. He cited research by William Trent and associates, which affirms that large disparities do exist in access and opportunities. The next section delves into the research by Linda Wightman, who disputes that merit can be defined exclusively by test scores.

Milem argued that standardized tests that are used for admission



are designed only to predict first year's grades. "Still, institutional leaders misinterpret this to mean that test scores are a valid indicator of institutional quality," said Milem. "Campus leaders place an inordinate and inappropriate significance on these scores in the admissions process, which re-enforces the pressure on admissions when considering test scores. In this line of thinking," says Milem, "students are viewed as educational resources that enhance an institution's reputation and not as a focus of the educational enterprise."

Next, Milem dashed the myth that fairness is best achieved through race-neutral policy, referencing research by Shana Levin. "Research in social psychology clearly indicates that racism persists as a major societal concern," said Milem. "If we were to take a color-blind approach to admissions in higher education as advocated by opponents of affirmative action, we would not improve conditions in our society. In fact, these approaches are likely to preserve the racial status quo."

Research completed by Pat Gurin at Michigan indicates that both students and institutions benefit from diversity on campus. Also, the context in which diversity is enacted matters greatly. Milem introduced this area by quoting G Liu, who wrote about the compelling interest test in "Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review." Liu wrote, "It is a mistake to understand the diversity rationale only as an issue concerning admissions rather than as an issue implicating broader institutional policy. Thus, to establish a "compelling interest" in educational diversity, a university must demonstrate clear, consistent internal policies and practices designed to facilitate interracial contact, dialogue, and understanding on campus."

At this point, Milem introduced the different types of diversity. *Structural* diversity is based on the numerical and proportional representation of students from different racial/ethnic groups in the student body. *Diversity of interactions* refers to interactions with diverse information and ideas as well as interactions with diverse

*See Keynote on page 3*

# Commission Accepts Faculty Senate Statement

The Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity voted on March 22 to accept the Faculty Senate version of "Position Statement Reaffirming Our Civil Liberties" as follows:

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia has a rich history of securing the inalienable rights of individuals, dating to the first settlement of our Commonwealth in 1607, through the Revolutionary War and the adoption of key documents authored by Virginians such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Mason; and

WHEREAS, these documents include the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, the United States Constitution, and the U.S. Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech deeply appreciates its Police Department's commitment to our country's cherished rights and liberties; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech houses a diverse population, including citizens of other nations, whose contributions to the University community are vital to its character and function; and

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution guarantees to all persons living in the United States fundamental rights; and

WHEREAS, Federal, State and Local governments, in their efforts to protect residents from terrorist attacks, should do so in a rational and deliberative fashion to ensure that any new security measures enhance public safety without impairing constitutional rights or infringing on civil liberties; and

WHEREAS, our nation has taken its strength from the freedoms guaranteed to all individuals and should lead the world in setting the example of Democracy's ability to protect itself without undue coercion of its citizens or resorting to government secrecy, violation of due process or invasion of privacy.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE FACULTY SENATE AT VIRGINIA TECH:

1. AFFIRMS its strong support for fundamental constitutional rights; and

2. AFFIRMS its opposition to measures that single out individuals for government stricture based solely on their ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and/or country of origin; and

3. RECOGNIZES efforts of Virginia Tech law enforcement to preserve and support the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution and thereby preserve individuals' constitutional freedoms; and

4. CALLS UPON all members of the community to demonstrate similar respect for civil rights and civil liberties; and

5. CALLS UPON the Virginia Tech community to proactively educate all individuals that any university records may be obtained by federal agents under the USA PATRIOT Act without informing the individual unless a request or subpoena permits such notification; and

6. AFFIRMS that Virginia Tech should provide notice to individuals whose education and/or other records have been obtained by law enforcement agents, when a request or subpoena permits such notice to occur, pursuant to Section 507 of the USA PATRIOT Act and other federal security legislation; and

7. AFFIRMS that Virginia Tech libraries should provide notice to library users as follows: "Library Patrons: Under Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act (Public Law 107-56) records of books and other materials borrowed from this library, as well as Internet activity in this library, may be obtained by Federal agents. This federal law prohibits librarians from informing you if records about you have been obtained by Federal agents"; and

8. REQUESTS that the Virginia Tech administration and police department continue to ensure that all persons within the University community are guaranteed their fundamental constitutional rights, including: freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and privacy; protection from unreasonable searches and seizures; due process and equal protection to any person; equality before the law and the presumption of innocence; access to counsel in judicial proceedings; and the right to a fair, speedy, and public trial.

# Phi Beta Delta Promotes Diversity

by Tom Howard

The Virginia Tech chapter of Phi Beta Delta (PBD), the Honor Society for International Scholars, is an organization on campus that supports and promotes diversity through recognizing achievements and activities in international scholarship, teaching, and service by faculty, staff, and students. Locally, PBD provides a forum for individuals from varying backgrounds and fields of study to meet in the interest of promoting a more diverse, enriching, and internationally focused educational experience. It provides the opportunity for faculty and staff members to interact with students in an informal professional setting to exchange views on important global issues. It is also a means for members to stay in touch with groups of like-minded individuals on other campuses throughout the United States and around the world.

Phi Beta Delta has staff support from Hope McClure in the Office of the Associate Provost for International Affairs, where Charlene Brewster serves as Chapter Coordinator. Each year the chapter promotes or sponsors several programs and initiatives. Last year these included an undergraduate and a graduate student essay competition and support of a Virginia Tech student at the annual PBD conference at the Universidad de las Americas in Mexico. It inducted 28 students, six faculty, and four honorary members. It also presented awards to individuals who had made significant contributions to international education from this campus. One of these recipients was Ali Etebari, a Ph.D. candidate in biomedical engineering who was recognized for the organization of "Book Aid," the systematic collection of used textbooks and other educational materials to send to educational institutions in developing countries, especially in Africa. It is also preparing to host a South-east Regional meeting of PBD chapters in November. Through the work of Justo Ulloa, president of the Gamma Omega chapter, the meeting will be in conjunction with the annual meeting of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association. Other members of the local chapter's governing board are faculty members Dayton E. Egger, Moses Panford, Aris Spanos, and Thomas C. Howard, Grady Gillies and Cesar "Hann" Chirinos. Anyone interested in the activities of Phi Beta Delta is urged to contact any of these officers or Hope McClure in the Office of the Associate Provost for International Affairs. The next induction and awards ceremony will be on April 19. Additional information about Phi Beta Delta may be found at <http://www.oired.vt.edu/Phi%20Beta%20Delta/bod.htm> of the Gamma Omega chapter.

# Dixon Announces Research Initiative

By Jean Elliott



Ben Dixon, Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, kicked off the Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity with a bit of news in his welcome speech.

"... I have chosen this conference and this time to formally announce our intent to establish a research initiative for Virginia Tech in the broad area of

diversity. Hopefully, out of this initiative will emerge an agenda for the university that will allow us to focus the power of our intellectual resources and our research capability on critical diversity topics."

Dixon went on to explain that those topics could range from "investigating and problem solving around the issues of access, equity and inclusion in higher education to increasing cell-phone accessibility for persons with disabilities"

Ironically, research in these areas is already underway on this campus. Dixon's point was clear, however, when he emphasized that "We can and must do a better job applying the research right here at home, sharing and disseminating that information with others, stimulating further research in areas that need attention, and otherwise recognizing and celebrating the efficacy and legitimacy of diversity research across the board."

The five goals of the Diversity Research Initiative are to:

1. Conduct scholarly inquiry into the challenges and opportunities of creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive educational environment that is built on the principles of equity and multicultural perspectives.

2. Stimulate and coordinate academic reviews and local implementation of exemplary strategies, programs, and activities that result in best practices in areas related to:

a. recruitment and retention of diverse student, faculty, and staff populations

b. teaching and curriculum development/transformation

c. outreach and community development (local and global)

3. Complete the implementation of Task 3E of the University Diversity Strategic Plan, (which reads *Develop a university-wide Research Agenda related to diversity and multicultural issues and identify incentive, reward, and/or recognition programs and related resources that support the implementation of this agenda*), and assist in the completion of the related goals of the University Strategic Plan.

4. Position the university as a top research institution that recognizes, celebrates, and optimizes diversity as an important component of research excellence across a wide variety of disciplines within all of the colleges of the university.

5. Broaden the definitions and understandings of diversity, equity, and multicultural concepts through studies of topics related to increasing access to and improving the quality of life experiences for both the majority and non-traditional or underrepresented populations.

Given the current economic, political, educational, and social environment, Dixon acknowledges that he is not sure how, exactly, this initiative will be put into operation.

"It will not happen, until and unless we say it's going to," said Dixon. "First the will, then the way."

A steering committee of representatives from across the campus will be formed to create a "place and space" within the organizational structure of the university, and direct the overall initiative. This group will conduct an ongoing review of research activities in the area of diversity, equity, globalism, multiculturalism, and related topics. They will also be charged to identify incentives and reward mechanisms to promote and recognize achievements in these areas.

Those interested in being involved in some way should contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

## About The Conductor

*The Conductor* is produced twice during the fall and twice during the spring semesters by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to the editorial board at [multicultural@vt.edu](mailto:multicultural@vt.edu).

Back issues are online at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/vtpubs/spectrum/>

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*Salem Times Register*

## Mid-Atlantic...

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*Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering.*

Diane Bell, professor of anthropology and currently a visiting fellow from the American Council on Education in the provost's office at Virginia Tech, opened her comments by announcing that the discipline of anthropology "is very diverse. It crosses boundaries in a very cavalier fashion ... We blur across departments. In anthropology, *man* equals culture and women are present as wives and children... readers, breeders, and follow-the-leaders." More seriously, Bell said that "to de-center man is a profoundly political act." In her research, "I try to be more reflexive ... you are part of the knowledge that you generate. State it. Don't hide it. Reflexivity, handled well, gives us a long way to go on feminine scholarship."

### VT Presenters

Research presented by members of the Virginia Tech community included:

Richard Shingles (Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Disparities in Earnings for Individual with Equivalent Years in Education);  
Rebecca Scheckler, Jill Sibles, and Muriel Lederman (Pedagogy for Diversity in Sciences: Assessment and Theory);  
Robert Prickett, Ann Potts and Cecile Cachaper (The Creation of an On-Line Diversity Resources Database);  
Gresilda Tilley-Lubbs (Crossing the Border: Closing the Gap);  
Susan Groenke (When Social Classes Collide: A Look at "Class" in the Classroom);  
Potts, Rosary Lalik, Tilley-Lubbs, Groenke (Looking Back: Exploring Whiteness through Autoethnography);  
Scheckler, Katherine Allen, Kusum Singh (Climate and Pedagogy: Women's Choice of Majors);  
Miya T. Simpson (Exploring the Academic and Social Transition Experiences of Ethnic Minority Graduate Students).  
Poster sessions by Virginia Tech faculty/staff/students included:  
Peggy Quesenberry and Kofi Boateng (SBD: Rebirth of an Inclusive Student Organization);  
Jerri L. Sayers, Gwendolyn M. Lloyd, and Penny Burge (Math Doctoral Students: Choice of Major and Graduate Success);  
Narkia Green, Fred Piercy, and Gloria Bird (Stressors and Coping of African Americans at Virginia Tech);  
Patrick M. Johnson (Sensory-Impaired Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom);  
Julia Best (African American Undergraduate Students' Experiences in Residential Learning Communities in a Predominantly White Institution – A Qualitative Inquiry).

The seeds for this conference were planted two years ago as a grant from the provost's office supported research for the "Final Report – Improving Campus Climate to Support Diversity and Retention: A Pilot Program for New Faculty." Compiled by Fred Piercy, Valerie Giddings, Katherine Allen, Ben Dixon and Peggy Meszaros, this report was critical in establishing a variety of programs, including new faculty mentoring breakfasts (monthly workshops which addressed issues such as grant writing, balancing life and work, effective teaching, mentoring, and negotiating the politics of academia), a benchmarking retention project that explored the best faculty recruitment and retention practices of the top-15 NSF ranked research universities, a college-wide diversity summit as well as a university-wide workshop. That research and those projects helped to earn a follow-up grant, which helped to support the regional conference.

Peter Wallenstein, associate professor in the history department, concluded the conference with an address entitled, "The Perils and Promise of Diversity Research."

"I enjoyed Dr. Wallenstein's sense of humor in addressing the sensitive, usually touchy subjects, without losing the seriousness of the issues involved," wrote one participant.

Wallenstein said, "I do think there's at least an analytical difference between what I might say as a scholar analyst, and what I might do as proponent activist... There is, I submit, a certain tension between the two roles. Perhaps we shouldn't always be preaching when we are doing our scholarship. But we have to work out our own styles too."

Proceedings from the conference may be obtained online at <http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/conference>.

### Historical Marker:

## Separate But Not Equal:

## Race, Education, and Prince Edward County, Virginia

Source: VCU Libraries, Special Collections and Archives  
[www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/speccoll/pec.html](http://www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/speccoll/pec.html)

On April 23, 1951, the students of all-Black Moton High School in Prince Edward County, Va. decided that they had had enough of the poor conditions of their school and walked out. Organized and led by Barbara Rose Johns, the students' strike demands were simple: facilities equal to those provided to white high school students as required by law. Four years earlier the school had been ruled inadequate by the State Board of Education and, by 1951, the facility, which had been built to accommodate 180 students, was being used to serve 450. But coming four years before Rosa Parks would refuse to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus and nine years before sit-ins at Greensboro lunch counters, the students' simple demands set off a firestorm that changed the landscape of American education.

Attorneys Spottswood Robinson and Oliver Hill of the Richmond NAACP met with the students and agreed to represent them if, rather than seek equal facilities, they would instead challenge Virginia's law requiring segregated schools. Their case eventually became one of five included in the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, Kansas Supreme Court decision overturning the "Separate but Equal" precedent set in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896.

But Virginia Senator Harry Byrd subsequently led a policy of "Massive Resistance" to court-mandated integration in the state, which ended only under federal and state court pressures in 1959. This defeat did not silence the segregationists of Prince Edward County, which chose to close its public schools from 1959 to 1964 rather than integrate them.

During that period, Prince Edward County would become the focus of many on both sides of the desegregation issue. Money poured in from segregationists all over the nation, which helped the county to open an all-white private school and representatives from localities throughout the South flocked to Prince Edward County to take lessons in fighting desegregation. Likewise, pro-integration organizations such as the NAACP and the American Friends Service Committee arrived to investigate and report on the situation in Prince Edward County and offer educational alternatives for the locked-out African-American students.

At the time the Moton students walked out, Edward H. Peebles was a high school sophomore and basketball player in Richmond, Va. By the fall of 1953, he had entered Richmond Professional Institute (now Virginia Commonwealth University) with what he describes today as "all the traditional prejudices" of his southern, white experience. Richmond Professional Institute proved to be a stimulating place for him. The campus, classrooms and local restaurants functioned like salons, providing a place safe from the prejudices where new ideas could be discussed. By the mid-1950s, he was active in the Civil Rights movement and involved in activities seeking to reform Virginia's social policies. After graduating in 1957, a two year Navy stint, and working for two years a public assistance caseworker, he left for the University of Pennsylvania to seek his master's in human relations. His concerns for the state of race relations in Virginia prompted him to return to continue to visit Prince Edward County to research his thesis, *The Prince Edward County Virginia School Issue* (1963).

During the course of his research, Peebles photographed over 100 images of both Black and White schools in Prince Edward County. He is now an Emeritus professor of VCU after 30 years in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health as well as other departments. And VCU Libraries now houses Dr. Edward H. Peebles Jr.'s photographs and several of his written works on Prince Edward County — the first time that the

images have been presented en masse to show the conditions that prompted a student strike and captured Dr. Peebles' interest and sympathies.

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## Keynote...

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people. *Institutional Diversity-Related Initiatives* refers to cultural awareness workshops, ethnic studies courses, etc. that occur on college and university campuses. These three work best in symphony with each other. Milem cautioned, "While each type of diversity can have significant positive effects on educational outcomes, the impact of each is extended by the presence of the other types of diversity on campus."

### Theory-linking...

Milem then began to link theory with diversity and learning, which is best illustrated by the following:

- Encountering the new and unfamiliar causes us to abandon routines and actively think.
- Disequilibrium occurs when one encounters perspectives that depart from one's own embedded worldview and past experiences.
- Learning and social development occurs when interacting with others who hold different perspectives.
- Campus diversity creates conditions — unfamiliarity, disequilibrium, differing perspectives, and contradictory expectations — that promote learning and deeper complex thinking.

In summary, people, says Milem "need to confront that 'Aha' experience to stimulate development of active thinking."

### Conditions that Make Diversity Work

- Presence of diverse peers
- Discontinuity from previous experiences
- Equality among peers
- Discussion under rules of civil discourse
- Normalization and negotiation of conflict

Milem elaborated on the various benefits of diversity, including individual, institutional, economic and societal. These are detailed in slides which can be viewed at [http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/proceedings/Virginia\\_Tech\\_Slides-Milem.pdf](http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/proceedings/Virginia_Tech_Slides-Milem.pdf). He also detailed the many types of outcomes, breaking them down into various categories including: learning, democracy, process, and material.

No doubt, it is a struggle to institutionalize diversity. A complacency sets in that Milem refers to as "organizational inertia." There is always the constant battle with resources and external factors. There is a big picture to consider, however, when conducting research in diversity. "We need to explore how different students benefit from diversity in different ways," says Milem. "Research can be quantitative and qualitative, longitudinal or experimental. Target the types of benefits (individual, institutional, societal, economic) and the short- or long-term outcomes (learning, democracy, process, material). Document the effectiveness of policies and practices that help ensure the benefits of diversity; and explore the organizational conditions/factors that make diversity work."

In concluding the question and answer session, Milem tried to rally scholars to get busy with their research. While the Supreme Court decision represented a victory to many affirmative action proponents, Milem warned that the next legal attack will probably come at a non-elite institution around something like race-targeted summer programs. He noted that "Michigan had deep pockets" to defend this and "had amassed a volume of empirical information. I don't know how much time we have to produce evidence (in non-admission areas) but there is no time to rest on our laurels."

# Multicultural Fellows Program Expands

The sponsors of the Multicultural Fellows Program are pleased to announce the addition of 14 new fellows. The Multicultural Fellows Program began in February 1999 with 10 fellows. A year later, additional fellows were added. As some of the original fellows chose to move to alumni status, there was a need to expand the program once again. In the fall of 2003, applications were made available for interested faculty, staff, and administrators. A new class was selected this spring.

The new fellows were asked, "What do you feel you can contribute to the Multicultural Fellows program?"

**Darleen Baker** "...I would like to bring not only my own commitment to creating and maintaining a campus that is welcoming and secure for diverse peoples, but also the wealth of enriching experiences serving on the commission is giving me."

**Reza Barkhi** "It is important to me to do what I can to make sure that people do not judge each other based on a category they may be classified in and that every individual is responsible for his or her thoughts rather than the thinking of the classification that they are assigned based on social categories that humans make. I would work to promote individuals as unique people who can reach their full potential in the absence of prejudice that can hold them back. This way, each individual can contribute more fully to the societies and the society as a whole will also benefit as each person reaches his or her full potential."

**Ellen Cianelli** "My personal commitment to providing leadership and direction to the employees of Virginia Tech to work together harmoniously shines through each and every day. I have a lot of energy, a positive communication style and the ability to tackle difficult issues head on in an effort to improve the work environment at Virginia Tech."

**Jean Elliott** "I am very interested in equality and justice issues. I have had the pleasure of serving on the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences diversity committee, the CEOD, attended the Diversity Summits, and led a steering committee for the Women's Leadership Initiative, a two-day workshop which fostered and empowered relationships between faculty, staff, and administrators. I feel these experiences would be valuable and hope to bring a can-do attitude to the multicultural fellows' projects."

**Susan Groenke** "I feel I can contribute an understanding for the need to foster a welcoming community for all here at Virginia Tech. Currently, only 10 percent of public school teachers in the United States represent minority populations. The teacher education program at Tech would like to attract more diverse students, but share with the larger university the challenge in figuring out how to do so. Thus, I can contribute an understanding of the challenge which lies before us, and a commitment to meeting this challenge. I can also contribute a research background in rural and socioeconomic diversity issues in literacy and education, as well as the ability to write grants. I have received grants to sponsor multicultural programs from NEH and VEA in the past."



Reza Barkhi  
Associate Professor,  
Accounting and  
Information Systems



Ellen Cianelli  
Employee Relations  
Analyst



Jean Elliott  
Communications  
Manager



Susan Groenke  
Assistant Professor,  
Teaching and Learning



Cathy Jacobs  
Director, Work/  
Life Resources



Robert Leonard  
Associate Professor,  
Theatre Arts



Manuel Perez-Quinones  
Assistant Professor,  
Computer Science



Susanna Rinehart  
Assistant Professor,  
Theatre Arts



Judith Snoke  
Director, English  
Language Institute



Bevelee Watford  
Associate Dean,  
College of Engineering

**Cathy Jacobs** "My position as director of VT Work/Life Resources, as well as coordinator of the Office Managers Development Group and mentoring programs, permits frequent contact with classified employees. With input from other fellows, I would work to more fully utilize these opportunities to increase awareness about diversity and campus climate issues. Moreover, I feel strongly about the need for "conversation" at all levels of the university; to share stories with others, and discover in those a new appreciation of similarities and differences. As a fellow, I would hope to increase situations in which that type of exchange can freely occur across lines of culture, race, religion, socioeconomic status, etc."

**Terry Kershaw** "I have experience, knowledge and a commitment to diversity at Virginia Tech and a willingness to work as part of a team."

**Robert Leonard** "I have eight years of experience working to undo racism and other forms of oppression at Virginia Tech. My will and resolve remain strong. I am interested in helping effect positive change in our institution."

**Manuel Perez-Quinones** "I feel I can provide one more Hispanic voice to many of the issues being considered at the university level. I also feel that I can help the university use a more inclusive definition of "diversity," one that goes beyond women and african americans. In summary, I bring a culturally aware and sensitive point of view to many issues."

**Peggy Quesenberry** "I have a desire for progress, so I am willing to speak to people if needed. I am interested in programs for staff in custodial and food service positions."

**Susanna Rinehart** "...I have a deep commitment to justice, energy born of commitment, a desire to collaborate and learn; and ability to articulate difficult issues, to seek common ground, to draw the best from people, to meet and speak to people 'where they're at.' I have connections to wide-ranging segments of the campus and the larger community-- through my teaching (I teach about 550 students per semester); acting in and directing numerous public performances; as a faculty senator; a member of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity; and as president of the board of my children's school."

**Edward Sewell, Jr.** "...I will give of my experience and commitment..."

**Judith Snoke** "I have the time, interest, and experience to be a vigorous representative of the International students perspective."

**Bevelee Watford** "...our programs are a model for other colleges and the university to follow. We have helped the College of Business to establish programs and seek to let others use what we have learned. The College of Engineering is among the leaders at Virginia Tech in institutionalizing efforts at increasing diversity."

## Cold Mountain...

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and its shying away from depictions of slavery in the Civil War South.

Mr. Dellums clearly has an argument, and yet it's hard to know how far to accept it without missing one of the film's greatest virtues: it is one of the first films on the Civil War that depicts the Southern cause as morally and politically bankrupt from the beginning, with few if any redeeming qualities.

The pro-war faction in *Cold Mountain*, for example, is portrayed either as neonatally naive war mongers, or corrupt and rapacious profiteers. When news of war breaks out, the young men of *Cold Mountain*, the fictional North Carolina town in which the story is set, break into cheers and hurrahs and all predict a victory in three months. Contrasted with the scenes of massive, mindless slaughter during the battle of Petersburg three years later, where soldiers are butchered like cattle in a stock yard, and the grim scenes of amputation and grimy death in what passes for a Southern hospital later in the film, the "give 'em hell" shouts of *Cold Mountain's* school boys and shopkeepers in 1861 seem stupid at best, if not sheer lunacy.

And while slavery is not the center of the film, the few depictions of it only underscore the moral depravity of the Civil War South that in other films often is camouflaged as Southern nobility, including those movies filled with the roles for Black actors that Mr. Dellums craves, like 1989's *Glory*. The odyssey of *Cold Mountain's* hero, Inman, as he deserts back to *Cold Mountain* from a Richmond hospital, begins with an encounter with a scurrilous white minister, played by Philip Seymour Hoffman, who has drugged and is about to drown his pregnant black slave girl, lest his hypocrisy in impregnating her become generally disclosed.

Shortly after, Inman, played by Jude Law, and the minister, Veasey, encounter a ferry girl so reduced to depravity that she first extorts their money for the crossing when she learns they are being chased, and then offers to prostitute herself to them for more money later. Though they make it over the river, both Inman and Veasey are soon sold to the patrollers by an incestuous moonshiner who panders his wife and daughters to trap the pair.

Later, Inman watches a group of runaway slave families being gunned down by another patrol, and is himself later chained to and shot down with other Blacks by Confederates too cowardly

to risk being caught with Black prisoners by a Union reconnaissance force.

Throughout the film, scenes of the Southern homefront depict little more than a Confederate *Lord of the Flies*. The Homeguard, in the person of the despicable, vulpine Captain Teague, has little aim other than war profiteering, lechery, and butchery. Even *Glory* gave us noble Rebel soldiers fighting with dignity, to say nothing of the interminable hagiography surrounding figures like Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee. Anthony Minghella, *Cold Mountain's* director, has given us a different Civil War entirely. *Cold Mountain* shows the South as a moral cesspit, peopled with ethical vermin.

Having lived with over a century of what is often claptrap about Southern honor and the "noble cause," few of us should fail to see *Cold Mountain* as a far more scathing portrayal of the antebellum South than even *Roots* gave us. In the end, it is a film that clearly is much less intended to be about slavery per se, than about the social and moral corruption that produced and sustained it. For that, arguably, despite Mr. Dellums' critique, Minghella clearly deserves our applause.