

# SPECTRUM

Virginia Tech  
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 17 FRIDAY, MAY 14, 2004

## TODAY'S EDITION

See page 3 for detailed Commencement information.  
See page 2 for Staff Appreciation Day information.

## ABC correspondent Thomas to address graduates



THOMAS

ABC News Justice Department Correspondent Pierre Thomas will address the 2004 graduates at Virginia Tech's 132nd Commencement ceremonies Friday, May 14.

The University Commencement ceremony, which will honor approximately 5,219 undergraduate and graduate degree candidates, will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Lane Stadium/Worsham Field. The Graduate School ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. at Cassell Coliseum.

Virginia Tech's 24th Northern Virginia Center Commencement ceremony will be held at 8 p.m. Saturday, May 15, at the George Mason University Center for the Arts in Fairfax. That ceremony will honor 275 degree candidates—245 will receive master's degrees and 30 will receive doctoral degrees.

President Charles W. Steger will preside over all three ceremonies.

Thomas, a 1984 Virginia Tech graduate, has covered the U.S. Justice Department and law-enforcement issues for ABC News since 2000.

In addition to Thomas, several student speakers will address the graduates and their families during the University Commencement ceremony. Sabrina Chin, a senior majoring in political science in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, will give opening reflections, and Sara Kennedy, a senior majoring in human nutrition, foods and exercise in the College of Agriculture, will deliver closing remarks. Class of 2004 President Nicole Reynolds, a senior majoring in biology in the College of Science, also will address the audience.

During the Graduate School ceremony, Orlando L. Taylor, vice provost for research and dean of the Graduate School at Howard University, will deliver the keynote address. Taylor, a national leader in graduate education, has dedicated his career to help make doctoral education more responsive to societal needs and students' interests. Howard University graduates the most African American Ph.D. students in the nation.

Harold L. Martin Sr., chancellor of Winston-Salem State College in Winston-Salem, N.C., and a member of the Virginia Tech Class of 1980, will be honored during the graduate ceremony with the Graduate Alumni Achievement Award. The award will be presented by Virginia Tech's Graduate School and the Virginia Tech Alumni Association.

Rebecca A. Belling Abler, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Biology in the College of Sciences, will speak to her fellow classmates and assembled guests during the Graduate School ceremony.

Lawrence J. Korb, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., will deliver the keynote address at the Northern Virginia Commencement. Korb was dean of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, director at the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Policy Education and assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan Administration. He has written 20 books and more than 100 articles on national-security issues.

## Higher education fares well in new budget

By Ralph Byers,

director of government relations

On May 7, 2004—almost two months past its scheduled adjournment date—the General Assembly adopted a historic package of revenue and spending increases to restore and enhance funding for public schools, higher education, health care, and other core state services. The week before, a divided House of Delegates finally passed a compromise revenue measure that enabled appropriations conferees to craft a budget acceptable to the Senate, which had insisted on significantly greater increases. Although a majority of House Republicans was opposed to any

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE

general increase in revenues, in the end a coalition of moderate Republicans and Democrats (including Delegates Dave Nutter and Jim Shuler, respectively) came together to approve narrowly a revenue bill to break the legislative impasse.

As a result, the General Assembly raised the sales tax from 4.5 cents to five cents, and increased Virginia's lowest-in-the-nation cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 30 cents per pack over two years. The package also reduced the sales tax on food, and increased the standard deduction and personal exemptions on the state income tax. Also, the General Assembly enacted a freeze on reimbursements to localities for the personal property tax on automobiles at \$950 million per year. Since the "car tax" reimbursement is treated as an appropriation, this action will prevent an additional drain on the General Fund as the number and value of automobiles increases.

For higher education, all this resulted in the most favorable budget in a number of years. Salary increases of 3 percent are scheduled for faculty and staff members in December of 2004, and a reserve fund is created for a minimum of at least 2-percent salary increases in 2005. Base adequacy operating support for the colleges and universities will increase by \$175.8 million

(See EDUCATION on 4)

## Charter Public Universities: A New Approach to Funding Higher Education

By President Charles W. Steger

For many years, Americans have benefited from the investments of previous generations. Now, our nation appears reluctant to reinvest in various public goods, whether it be for public infrastructure, transportation, the environment, or education. The story is the same in Virginia, and by now most Virginians have become accustomed to hearing about the underfunding of key state responsibilities, particularly education

According to a number of studies, including several conducted by the General Assembly, Virginia's higher-education system has been chronically underfunded—currently about \$400 million annually. Virginia Tech's share is about \$40 million.

Recognizing the political difficulties within Virginia and the unlikelihood that we will see restoration of lost funding anytime soon, three universities have proposed a novel solution. (Even the "historic" budget recently passed, which carries significant new funding for higher education, addresses about 10 to 15 percent of our overall funding needs.) If the state cannot fund us, we ask for greater flexibility in managing ourselves to address the funding problem.

To counter the impact of the budget cuts and address chronic underfunding, which have resulted in fewer teachers, larger classes, and fewer course offerings, Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the College of William and Mary have put forth the University Restructuring Initiative during the 2004 General Assembly legislative session. The initiative proposes that each institution, and any others that qualify, be given increased authority and management flexibility for operations.

Under the new relationship, the universities would remain public institutions

with boards of visitors appointed by the governor, confirmed by the General Assembly, and accountable to the commonwealth. Authorities and performance standards would be spelled out in the "charters," in much the same way that a municipality receives its governing authority.

The state would continue to have oversight responsibilities. Charter universities would remain public bodies (political subdivisions), but not state agencies. University employees would remain public employees. Charter universities would still be under the control of the many state laws governing education. For example, the state would still approve new degree programs and determine certain management standards. The schools would still be subject to the Freedom

of Information Act and the Conflict of Interests Act.

Boards of visitors would set tuition reflective of the state determined "cost to educate" and relative to the market of peer universities. We expect to be no more than the 60th percentile of our peers.

The new relationship would not affect the compact we have with the people of Virginia, who share with us a desire to sustain educational excellence.

Under any scenario, public university tuition in Virginia is expected to rise in coming years. (Under the charter plan, all the schools will devote additional resources to financial aid.) Higher education has carried the lion's share of budget cuts in the past

(See CHARTER on 2)

## Virginia Tech and Charter School Legislation

As Virginia Tech comes to the end of another academic year—a year that was marked by a difficult and contested state budget process—university officials have already begun to look ahead and prepare for the 2004-05 academic year.

Throughout the summer and fall semester, university leaders will work to secure passage of charter-school legislation in the 2005 Virginia General Assembly by reaching out to Virginia Tech students, faculty and staff members, alumni, parents and our elected officials and communicating how this proposed legislation is the best approach to preserve the academic quality of Virginia's great public universities.

To help the Virginia Tech community understand the impact of this legislation, the university will launch a public web site containing a broad range of information on this very important issue, including the legislation, presentations on the implications of the legislation, FAQ's, and links to information compiled by the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary, Virginia Tech's partners in this legislative proposal.

The web site, which will be located off the Virginia Tech homepage (<http://www.vt.edu>) about June 1, will also provide community members the opportunity to provide feedback through an on-line submission form.

The Virginia Tech community is encouraged to learn more about charter-school legislation and its impact on the future of this university. Please visit the Virginia Tech homepage for continuously updated information.

## BOV Academic Affairs Committee to Meet

By Larry Hincker

The Academic Affairs Committee of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors will hold a public meeting at 2 p.m. Thursday, May 20, at the Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church.

The purpose of this session is to determine agenda items for future Academic Affairs Committee meetings.

# ACTIVITIES

## EVENTS

### Friday, 14

**Spring 2004 Grade Sheets Due.  
Pay Date for Faculty and Staff Members.  
International Graduation Reception,**

11 a.m., Cranwell Center.

**Corps of Cadets Graduation Ceremony,** 1 p.m., DBHCC auditorium.

**Graduate Commencement,** 3 p.m., Cassell Coliseum.  
**University Commencement,** 7:30 p.m., Lane Stadium.

### Saturday, 15

**College Ceremonies. See Detailed Information on Page 3.**

**VMRCVM Graduation,** 9 a.m., Squires Commonwealth Ballroom.

**Northern Virginia Ceremony,** 8 p.m., George Mason University Center for the Arts Concert Hall.

### Sunday, 16

**Spring 2004 Final Grades Available: Web View.**

### Wednesday, 19

**Staff Appreciation Day,** 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., Rector Field House.

**“With Good Reason,”** 7:30 p.m., WVTF.

### Thursday, 20

**Staff Senate,** noon, 1810 Litton Reaves.

**Summit on Student Athlete Success,** 7:30 a.m. until noon, first floor Torgersen Hall.

### Monday, 24

**First Summer Classes Begin.**

### Wednesday, 26

**Last Day to Add.**

**“With Good Reason,”** 7:30 p.m., WVTF.

### Monday, 31

**Memorial Day Holiday for Faculty and Staff Members.**

## JUNE

### Tuesday, 1

**Pay Date for Faculty and Staff Members.**

## BULLETINS

### Virginia Tech documentary to air

The Research Channel will air a Virginia Tech documentary, “Help Save America’s Pearly Mussels,” beginning June 3. The program will air at 4:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m., and 10:30 p.m. that day, and at various other times throughout the month.

“Help Save America’s Pearly Mussels” documents efforts to preserve and restore native freshwater mussel populations in the southeastern United States. The documentary features work by Fisheries and Wildlife Professor Richard Neves. Fisheries and Wildlife Professor Louis Helfrich is the executive producer. The program was produced by Visual and Broadcast Communications.

The documentary is the first of a series of four programs on freshwater environmental issues that will air on the Research Channel through October.

The Research Channel is available on Virginia Tech Cable on Channel 47. The program may also be viewed after June 3 via streaming video by going to <http://www.researchchannel.org/>.

### Hazardous-waste conference scheduled

Virginia Tech will host the 22nd Annual College and University Hazardous Waste Conference August 8-10, 2004 at the Hotel Roanoke. The theme for the conference is “Managing Today for a Greener Tomorrow.” The annual conference aims to bring together peer organizations and industry to share and discuss their concerns and ideas on hazardous-waste-management issues. Participants are encouraged to network and engage in idea exchange and new learning.

The conference is chaired by Frank Imperatore ([imperato@vt.edu](mailto:imperato@vt.edu)), hazardous-materials manager in Environmental, Health and Safety Services.

Thursday, May 20 is the deadline to receive the early-

bird price of \$325. Registrations received after May 20 will be charged the full conference rate of \$375. The conference includes information sessions and training opportunities with many guest activities. Additional conference information and the on-line registration form may be found at the conference [web site \(www.ehss.vt.edu\)](http://www.ehss.vt.edu).

### Virginia Tech Recycling update

In cooperation with the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority (MRSWA), Virginia Tech Recycling will also be accepting “E-waste” at the YMCA Thrift Store trailer. Acceptable items include computer monitors and hard drives, printers, TV’s, and cell phones. E-waste collected at the trailer will be transported to the MRSWA Recycling Center for proper handling and safe recycling.

Because of heavy traffic during “Student Move Out,” faculty and staff members are not encouraged to bring “E-waste” items to the Thrift Store trailer. However, MRSWA and the New River Resource Authority are hosting an “E-Waste Recycling Event,” on Friday, May 14, from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and Saturday, May 15, from 8 a.m. until noon at the MRSWA Recycling Center. This event is open to the public. Acceptable E-waste items will receive a payback, as follows: monitors, \$11; CPU’s, \$8; TV’s less than 27 inches, \$15; fax machines, copiers, etc, \$.35 per pound; cell phones recycled free of charge.

Faculty and staff members can also recycle their non-working or functionally obsolete computer monitors by contacting the Environmental Health and Safety Office. Check their web site at [www.ehss.vt.edu](http://www.ehss.vt.edu), and go to “Programs” and then “Monitor Disposal.”

For more information about the campus event, contact the Virginia Tech Recycling office, at 1-9915 or [recycle@vt.edu](mailto:recycle@vt.edu). For more information about the E-Waste Recycling Event, contact the MRSWA Recycling Center at 381-2820 or 674-1677.

### ISD Team seeks input

The International Strategic Directions Team (ISDT), a university-wide working group charged with providing leadership to help determine the place of international programs within the university, has developed draft vision and mission statements and would like feedback on them from the university community.

The ISDT draft vision and mission statements are available on line at <http://www.oired.vt.edu/resanddev/isdt/isdtinfo.htm>. The ISDT invites faculty and staff members and students to visit the web site and offer comments and suggestions. Minutes of team meetings, presentations, and other documents may also be accessed from the web page.

The team includes 22 members from all eight colleges and offices with international responsibilities who began in October to review the current state of internationalization at Virginia Tech; efforts at other universities, available research studies, strategies, and benchmarks for achieving world-class status. The committee’s recommendations will be presented to Provost Mark McNamee for use in developing the next university-wide strategic plan.

### VTES moving to new location June 3

The Virginia Tech Electric Service Business Office will move to a new location effective Thursday, June 3. The VTES Business Office will be in room 101 within the Electric Service Facility at 601 Country Club Drive, SW.

The Electric Service Facility is located directly across the street from the University Storage Facility. The last day of business operations at 1421 North Main Street will be June 2.

The VTES Business Office is responsible for all VTES business operations such as customer service, billing, and payment processing. For more information, contact VTES at 1-6437.

## STAFF APPRECIATION DAY SCHEDULE – May 19

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.—Rector Field House

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Open to Everyone: table tennis, volleyball, horse shoes, basketball, checkers, chess
10:10 a.m. to 3 p.m.	CommonHealth Massage Schedule
10:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Tours Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena Smithfield Plantation National Weather Center Wallace Hall Design Kitchens Historical Walk with Doug Martin
10:15 a.m.	Bingo station opens; continues until all prizes awarded
10:30 a.m.	Relay competitions begin
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Picnic Luncheon
noon to 1 p.m.	D.J. Music
1 to 3 p.m.	Band Performance: “Little Milton and the Confessions”

## CHARTER

*Continued from 1*

recession and in the early 90s. External limitations on management and planning have distorted normal funding patterns. Tuition was constrained—either frozen or reduced—by the legislature for seven years. The net effect? We under priced the product at the expense of quality and service. Virginia Tech, for example, still has the lowest overall cost to attend of all our 23 public peer universities throughout the nation. But are we better for it? Sufficient monies are not available to properly run the enterprise.

Preservation of quality lies at the heart of this proposal. Virginia schools have over the past several decades built a national reputation for excellence and value. But they cannot continue to live on reputation alone. Investments are needed now.

Because of the anticipated cost savings from greater management flexibility, the charter universities are willing to accept a smaller share of future higher-education funds from the commonwealth. We expect new efficiencies that would in effect further reduce the “draw”

on the state treasury.

We believe our approach is positive for the state, the schools, and our students. It would enable us to use our own resources to solve persistent funding shortfalls. New financial resources can be applied to hire additional faculty members or address long-standing salary inequities and deficient operating budgets. Students will see protection of quality programming, retention of talented faculty members, increased course offerings, and reduced class size.

The commonwealth must continue seeking creative means to fund state colleges and universities and maintain the quality our students, our customers, and our citizens expect. We believe this proposal is consistent with current political philosophies. Most importantly, when considered against today’s political realities, it is about the only viable course for some of our state universities.

The stakes are huge for the next generation of students, businesses and markets that rely on new knowledge and trained workers, our nation’s industrial competitiveness, and indeed, our quality of life.

*Spectrum* will resume publication on June 4.

# CAMPUSUPDATE

## Nichols receives Governor's Award

Byron Nichols, supervisor of the university's power-plant operations, was one of six state employees and a team of nurses and security personnel from Western State Hospital who received Governor's Awards during recent ceremonies at the Executive Mansion in Richmond.

The ceremony was held in conjunction with Virginia Public Service Week. Bill Leighty, Governor Mark R. Warner's chief of staff, said each of the award recipients "in his or her own way has contributed mightily to Governor Warner's efforts to reshape how Virginia's government does business." Leighty presented the awards on behalf of Warner.

More than 200 nominations for the Governor's Awards were received from state agencies. A committee of agency directors from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches selected the award recipients.

Nichols' award area was in workplace safety. He was cited for "his proactive approach and efforts to make the power plant a safer place to work" which have had an "immeasurable impact on his employees' lives. His dedication, enthusiasm, and professionalism have resulted in significant improvements in power plant operations."

One of his co-workers said, "Mr. Nichols has led the way in promoting a safe and healthy work environment at the Power House, which is one of the most-hazardous work environments at Virginia Tech. He develops the operating procedures that are used within the Power House covering all systems and equipment."

Also receiving awards were Tiawanda Holt, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Agnes Mack, Virginia Commonwealth University; Pat Davenport, Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind; Dyan Aretakis, University of Virginia; and Marquis Bolton, Department of General Services.

### CORRECTION

In the obituary for Alex Baer published in the April 30 issue of *Spectrum*, it was incorrectly reported that he had died in Oelsnitz, Germany. Oelsnitz was his place of birth; he died in Blacksburg. We regret any confusion caused by this error.



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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Editor  
John Ashby, 1-6961

News Bureau Manager  
Susan Dickerson 1-8508

Production Manager  
Melinda Shaver, 1-8524

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## COMMENCEMENT 2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### FRIDAY, MAY 14

**Corps of Cadets Ceremony**  
**Graduate School Ceremony**  
**Army Commissioning**  
**Naval Commissioning**  
**Commencement Dinner**  
**UNIVERSITY CEREMONY**

Donaldson Brown Center auditorium 1:00 p.m.  
Cassell Coliseum 3:00 p.m.  
Donaldson Brown Center auditorium 3:00 p.m.  
Squires Colonial Hall 3:30 p.m.  
West End Market 3:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Lane Stadium/Worsham Field 7:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MAY 15

Commencement Breakfast  
Deet's Place (Coffee and Pastry)

Owens Food Court 6:30 – 9:00 a.m.  
Lower Level, Dietrick Dining Center 6:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

### COLLEGE/DEPARTMENTAL CEREMONIES

**Agriculture and Life Sciences**  
**Architecture and Urban Studies**  
**Pamplin College of Business**  
**Engineering**  
**Liberal Arts and Human Sciences**

Cassell Coliseum 11:00 a.m.  
Burruss Hall auditorium 1:00 p.m.  
Cassell Coliseum 8:30 a.m.  
Cassell Coliseum 2:00 p.m.

Apparel, Housing and Resource  
Management/Human Development/  
Teaching and Learning  
Communication  
English  
Foreign Languages and Literatures  
and International Studies

Burruss Hall auditorium 9:00 a.m.  
Squires Commonwealth Ballroom 11:30 a.m.  
Shultz Dining Hall 10:00 a.m.

History  
Interdisciplinary Studies  
Music  
Philosophy  
Political Science  
Science/Technology in Society  
Sociology  
Theatre Arts

McBryde Hall, Room 100 1:30 p.m.  
Squires Haymarket Theatre 11:00 a.m.  
Donaldson Brown Center auditorium 11:00 a.m.  
Squires Recital Salon 9:30 a.m.  
Major Williams Hall, Foyer 11:00 a.m.  
Squires Colonial Hall 12:00 p.m.  
L'Arche bed/breakfast, 301 Wall St. 1:00 p.m.  
McComas Hall, Small Gym 10:30 a.m.  
Squires Studio Theatre 9:00 a.m.  
Donaldson Brown Center auditorium 8:30 a.m.  
Squires Brush Mountain Room 11:00 a.m.

### Natural Resources

Geography

### Science

Biology  
Chemistry  
Economics  
Geosciences  
Mathematics  
Physics  
Psychology  
Statistics

War Memorial Hall, Gym 10:00 a.m.  
Hahn Hall, Chemistry Atrium 9:00 a.m.  
McBryde Hall, room 100 11:30 a.m.  
Hancock Hall auditorium 9:00 a.m.  
McBryde Hall, room 100 8:30 a.m.  
Chemistry/Physics Building, room 130 11:00 a.m.  
Burruss Hall auditorium 11:00 a.m.  
Hillcrest Hall 11:00 a.m.

### VA-MD Regional College of

**Veterinary Medicine Ceremony**

### Air Force Commissioning

Squires Commonwealth Ballroom 9:00 a.m.  
Squires Colonial Hall 3:00 p.m.

### NORTHERN VIRGINIA

### CEREMONY

George Mason University Center  
for the Arts Concert Hall, Fairfax, VA 8:00 p.m.

## EMPLOYMENT

For information on all faculty and classified-staff positions, see [www.jobs.vt.edu](http://www.jobs.vt.edu).

### FACULTY POSITIONS

#### INSTRUCTIONAL

Department of Statistics. Instructor (Restricted).

Department of Statistics. Instructor of Statistics/Director of Undergraduate Programs.

Department of Political Science. Instructor/Graduate Coordinator.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL  
Office for Equal Opportunity.  
Director.

University Development. Regional Director of Major Gifts.

University Development. Senior Director of Development. Regional Programs.

Athletics Department. Head Wrestling Coach.

Nursery School. Research Scientist, Childhood Development/Early Childhood Education.

Housing Research Center. Postdoctoral Associate. Center for Housing Research.

Virginia Bioinformatics Institute. Educational/Outreach Coordinator.

Virginia Bioinformatics Institute. Research Associate Professor (three positions).

College of Agriculture/Life Sciences. Career and Alumni Relations Coordinator.

College of Agriculture/Life Sciences. Advising and Recruitment Coordinator.



**EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED** The university recently recognized employees for their years of service. Cited for 45 years of service was Alvin Harmon, left. Helen Williams and Kenneth Baker, right, were recognized for 40 years of service. President Charles Steger, third from left, was present to help honor the service-award recipients. The full list of recipients is published under the Kudos section of HokiE-News. (M. Kiernan)

## VCCER implements climate-change initiative

By Susan Trulove

The Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER), which is based at Virginia Tech, is leading an interdisciplinary coalition to identify potential carbon-sequestration sinks within the state as part of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) \$2.4-million Southeast Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnership project.

"Carbon sequestration is important—to capture atmospheric carbon that is believed to cause global warming," said VCCER Director Michael Karmis. "It is hoped that development of technologies to remove carbon from the atmosphere will enable fossil fuel use to continue without negative climatic effects."

According to the DOE, carbon sequestration is one of the most promising means of reducing the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and can be achieved through either terrestrial or geologic sinks. DOE defines terrestrial carbon sequestration as, "either the net removal of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere or the prevention of CO<sub>2</sub> net emissions from the terrestrial ecosystems into the atmosphere."

Soils and vegetation are good examples of carbon-storage sinks. Geologic sinks include oil and gas reservoirs, unmineable coal seams, and deep saline aquifers. These structures have stored oil, natural gas, brine

and CO<sub>2</sub> over millions of years. Many power plants and other large sources of CO<sub>2</sub> are located near potential geologic sinks. In many cases, injection of CO<sub>2</sub> into a geologic formation can enhance the recovery of hydrocarbons such as natural gas, providing marketable byproducts to offset the additional costs of carbon sequestration.

Virginia Tech will pinpoint CO<sub>2</sub> sources, geological and terrestrial sinks, and transport requirements in Virginia, and will create a geographical information system (GIS) database using this information. The university has received \$447,700 in funding as its portion of the 18-month project, which ends in September 2005.

Karmis, who is also the Stonie Barker professor of mining and minerals engineering in the College of Engineering, is project director and has been appointed the governor of Virginia's alternate on the Southern States Energy Board.

In addition, the Tech's team includes Steven Schafrik, research associate at the VCCER; Nino Ripepi, graduate research assistant at the VCCER; Carl Zipper and John Galbraith, faculty members in the Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Stephen Prisley and Randolph Wynne, associate professors in the Department of Forestry in the College of Natural Resources.

## Brown to direct Office for Student Life

By Clara B. Cox

James Thomas "Tom" Brown, former interim director of the Office for Student Life and Advocacy, has been named director of the office, which has been renamed the Office for Student Life. The newly named office is responsible for multicultural programs, student advocacy, orientation, parent programs, and response to student emergencies.

"Tom Brown has done an outstanding job this year. He is moving Student Life forward in many ways, including strong support for multicultural centers and programs and improvements in summer orientation. The new initiative to improve programs for parents should meet real needs and better position Virginia Tech for the future," said D. David Ostroth, associate vice president for student affairs, in announcing the appointment.

After joining the Division of Student Affairs in 1994, Brown served as assistant and, then, associate dean of students. When the Dean of Students Office was abolished in 2003, he was named interim director of the new Office for Student Life and Advocacy before his recent appointment as director of the Office for Student Life. During his 26 years with the university, he also worked for Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Tech Alumni Association.

Brown, who holds bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and a master's degree from the University of Virginia, is a former chair of Virginia Tech's Academy of Leadership Excellence and former regional chair of Mid-Atlantic States for National Orientation Directors Association. He currently represents the university on the Business Relations Advisory Council for the Town of Blacksburg and is a member of Tech's Commission for Student Affairs.

## Thorp to head electrical, computer engineering

Lynn A. Nystrom

James S. Thorp, a member of the National Academy of Engineering, will become the head of Virginia Tech's Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), effective July 1.

Thorp, who has spent most of his professional life at Cornell University where he received both teaching and research awards, anticipates that Virginia Tech's electrical-and-computer-engineering program will be "considered as one of the nation's top-10 departments in both undergraduate and graduate programs.

"To do so would mean continuing the department's leadership in existing areas and to focus on selected emerging areas such as nanoscience, complex systems, and energy and environment," Thorp said.

Hassan Aref, dean of Virginia Tech's College of Engineering, announced Thorp's appointment after a nation-wide search. "The college is extremely fortunate to attract a researcher and administrator of the caliber of

Professor Thorp to our campus. His record of administration at Cornell is superb. I believe his vision for our Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering will complement our overall goals to make the engineering college truly outstanding."

Thorp served as the director of the School of Electrical Engineering at Cornell from 1994 until 2001. During that time, he hired nearly half of the school's existing faculty members. He secured eight assistant professors who would receive a National Science Foundation Career Award, one of the most prestigious honors given to a person beginning an academic career. Thorp also increased his department's funding substantially and participated in the planning of a new \$100-million building for nanoscience.

Since 1994 he has held Cornell's Charles N. Mellows Professorship in Engineering. At Virginia Tech, he will hold the Hugh and Ethel Kelly Professorship.

He earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Cornell in 1959, 1961, and 1962, respectively.

## EDUCATION

Continued from 1

over the biennium; \$63.3 million in the first year and \$112.5 million in the second. Student financial aid state-wide will increase by \$5.7 million per year. Other items include \$8.3 million in one-time seed funding for research at various institutions, and increased allocations for equipment and maintenance reserve.

Virginia Tech's overall General Fund support will increase by \$5.7 million in the first year of the biennium and \$12.8 in the second to support base adequacy, salary increases, and other items. Non-general fund authority is \$12.5 million for the first year and \$22.1 for the second year. Specific items in the new budget of interest to the Virginia Tech community are as follows.

**Research:** One-time research funding of \$2.0 million was provided in 2005-06 to support "research efforts in computational modeling, engineering, and host-pathogen interaction."

**Cooperative Extension:** Cooperative Extension received an increase of \$1.3 million in both years for 23 positions as part of its Critical Staffing Initiative.

**Equipment Trust Fund:** Funding for equipment was returned to the \$8.0-million-per-year level.

**Capital Outlay and Maintenance**

**Reserve:** Maintenance reserve funding of \$2.5 million per year was included, along with \$3.9 million in General Fund support for boiler pollution controls. Equipment funding for the new Agriculture/Natural Resources facility and Bioinformatics Phase II totals \$5.1 million (\$3.9 million and \$1.2 million, respectively.) Non-general fund authorization of \$2.75 million was obtained for southwest campus heating

and cooling infrastructure, and non-general fund improvements to residence and dining halls totaling \$4.0 million are also authorized.

**Institute for Advanced Learning and Research.**

The institute in Danville received its first General Fund appropriation for operations of \$2.25 million in each year of the biennium. It also received an equipment authorization from

the Equipment Trust Fund of \$3.5 million.

**Charter Universities.**

Senate Joint Resolution 90 created a 12-member joint subcommittee of the General Assembly to "study the administrative and financial relationships between the commonwealth and its institutions of higher education." The subcommittee will include three members of the Senate, five members of the House of Delegates, a member of the State Council of Higher Education, a member of the Board of Visitors of an institution, and the secretaries of finance and education or their designees. The joint subcommittee is directed to "examine the issues and law relating to the feasibility and practicability of restructuring the administrative and financial relationships between the commonwealth and its public institutions of higher education." The joint subcommittee is to present its findings no later than the first day of the 2005 session of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly will reconvene on June 16 to consider any changes to the budget that Governor Mark Warner might propose. For more information on the General Assembly session, contact Laura Fornash, state legislative liaison ([Fornash@vt.edu](mailto:Fornash@vt.edu)) or Ralph Byers, director of government relations ([byers@vt.edu](mailto:byers@vt.edu)).

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