His travels aren’t just for pleasure, though. His trips most often involve speaking to international audiences about treating and preventing heart disease and stroke, particularly since 35 percent of all deaths in the world are related to cardiovascular disease, a problem that is increasing in developing countries where bad habits like overeating, smoking, and lack of physical activity are becoming more common.

Smith is a professor of medicine and director of the Center for Cardiovascular Science and Medicine at the University of North Carolina. He begins his term as president of the World Heart Federation in January 2011 and currently serves as Chairman of their Science Advisory Board. He has also been involved with the American Heart Association for the past two decades, serving as president from 1995-1996 and chief science officer from 2001-2003. For the past 15 years, he has provided leadership in the development of national and international guidelines, especially in the area of prevention strategies for cardiovascular disease.

Despite his busy schedule, Smith still finds time to serve his alma mater as co-chair of the Raleigh/Durham Regional Campaign Committee. He agreed to serve because, he says, “I think all of us who went to Virginia Tech understand the value of that education. I wanted to find a way to contribute and give back so that those who follow will benefit just as we did from those who preceded us.” He goes on to say that “there are so many creative and innovative ideas that have been launched on campus that it is essential that everyone pitches in to make them a reality. It is only when these ideas become a reality that we make true progress.”

Attending Virginia Tech

Smith came from a Virginia Tech family. His father had both undergraduate and graduate degrees in mechanical engineering from the university and many members of the family also attended. But family ties weren’t the only reason Smith chose to enroll.

Smith, a high school football star and a strong student, had been offered a national honor scholarship to Cornell — one of only 25 given each year. But he chose Virginia Tech because it had a strong reputation in engineering and one more thing that Cornell didn’t — a Division I football program. So Smith came to Blacksburg and played for two years during the period that Frank Mosely was coach.

After two years on the gridiron, however, Smith was faced with a difficult decision. He was already in the academically rigorous chemical engineering program and he knew he wanted to pursue a career in medicine, which meant his course work was going to become still
The Ut Prosim Society

In April, we recognized the members of the Ut Prosim Society, honoring donors who have given $100,000 or more to Virginia Tech. It’s an impressive group of Hokies. The society’s members have committed a staggering $700.5 million to Virginia Tech and account for nearly $334 million toward The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future.

Members of the Ut Prosim Society have had a profound impact on our campus and the lives of our students through their support of scholarships, professorships, research, and outreach.

This issue of Impact further recognizes this group of remarkable people and introduces you to them and some of the good work that they do for Virginia Tech. Ut Prosim Society weekend gives us an opportunity to thank them, and gives them an opportunity to visit the campus they love and witness first-hand the transformation they’ve had a large part in creating.

While these individuals may be the leaders in philanthropy on campus, there are many more members of the community that surrounds and supports Virginia Tech. Members of the regional campaign committees, new graduates who make regular gifts to the annual fund, those who support the university through planned and deferred giving, and many others play a valuable role in helping us invent the future.

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Like all of our donors, Ut Prosim Society members recognize that we have the capacity to excel in a number of areas, and they, like you, have shown their willingness to invest in the university to help us realize that potential. Because of their support – and yours – our successes range from research breakthroughs of global significance to enhanced regional economic development.

Virginia Tech professors and researchers are seeking cures for cancer, combating bioterrorism, and bringing technology to underserved rural areas. Bridging the past and the future, their work embodies both our traditional land-grant mission and our current goal to achieve top research status – the key to sustaining such efforts well into the future.

From our philanthropic leaders to our first-time givers, I want to thank you all for being such an integral part of our success – you can be proud of the university you are helping to support. And I hope you’ll continue to track our progress in the pages of this newsletter.

Together, all of us are making a difference.

Elizabeth A. “Betsy” Flanagan

Vice President for Development and University Relations

Global Spirit

In March, The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future traveled to Greensboro, N.C. Just a few weeks ago, the Bay Area Hokies in California celebrated their success in supporting the campaign. This fall, we’ll travel to Richmond, Va., and Los Angeles, Calif. All across the nation we’re finding loyal and enthusiastic Virginia Tech supporters. The success of these events has been tremendous. Together, our campaign regions have raised more than $433 million toward The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future.

Clearly, this campaign is a good vehicle for raising money, but it is worth noting that it’s also a good vehicle for bringing people together. You are all part of a community that extends far beyond the borders of Blacksburg, a community that has shown a remarkable level of support for the university. As co-chairs of this campaign, we’ve had the opportunity to meet many extraordinary people. And never do we attend an event where we are not inspired by them.

We have traveled thousands of miles from Blacksburg this year and everywhere we’ve been there have been Hokies gathered together because they believe in what we are doing. That shared spirit — that Hokie Spirit — is instantly recognizable no matter how different the setting or the geography. That spirit is a good reminder of the potential and reach of Virginia Tech. We are proud to be Hokies and proud to represent Virginia Tech everywhere we go.

This far-flung support of Virginia Tech mirrors what the university itself is doing all over the world. Our students are studying at our facilities in Switzerland, the Dominica Republic, India, and Egypt. Our faculty members are doing research across the globe and reaching out to communities in Africa, Haiti, Nepal, and others. Your gift means that you are part of a worldwide community that understands the importance of service and giving back.

We ask you to continue your support of our university. Know that your support of our students makes it possible for them to go out into the world and live the spirit of Ut Prosim. Your support of our faculty means they can solve problems all across the globe.

Wherever you are, you have a part to play in our continued success. We hope you know how much your support is valued and appreciated.
Scott Taylor (chemical engineering '86) knew early during his high school years that he was going to be either an architect or a chemical engineer—the only question was where he would attend college. When the time came to begin applying for admission, Taylor narrowed his choices down to Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech. He visited both universities in one weekend and decided on Virginia Tech following his trip to the Blacksburg campus.

“I loved the environment at Virginia Tech,” Taylor said. “I feel like the quality of education I received was incredible. You can ask anyone I talk to; I speak very highly and positively of my experience here.”

Taylor was aware of Virginia Tech’s reputation as a top engineering school, but the university’s beautiful campus and state-of-the-art facilities also played a role in his decision to come to Blacksburg. That’s why Taylor is generously donating to the College of Engineering Signature Building Fund— he wants to ensure that future generations of engineering students have access to the latest resources and tools, just as he did during his years as a student.

By the time he arrived in Blacksburg as a freshman, Taylor had chosen to study chemical engineering. As it turned out, he got much more than just a chemical engineering degree.

He credits his professors for giving him the necessary skills and education to develop a working knowledge and understanding of multiple engineering disciplines. It was this broader educational approach that helped Taylor build a successful business at Peerless Projection Molding, Inc.

“Though my degree is in chemical engineering, I have functionally been a mechanical engineer,” Taylor said. “So, the flexibility of the training at Virginia Tech was key. I might have a specific strength with polymers, but I’m not at all out of place with mechanical engineering.”

It is no secret that the engineering programs at Tech are extremely competitive and challenging, but when Taylor thinks back on some of his most memorable moments in Blacksburg, completing a class is one of the first things that comes to mind. “The day we finished unit operations class,” Taylor recalled. “It was pretty intense—eight hours on paper, but for most of us it was more like 16-20 hours.”

Groups of five or six students sat in a classroom and designed experiments, outlined them, conducted them and reported the results in a presentation. Taylor believes this class contributed greatly to his professional success because it pushed students beyond the books and prepared them for a real-world role as an engineer.

Taylor acquired his company in 1995 and successfully grew the business over the years. Though he received an excellent engineering education at Virginia Tech, the demanding curriculum did not easily allow for many business-related electives to help aspiring engineering entrepreneurs. That’s something Taylor believes has changed in recent years.

To help today’s students get a better understanding of business, Taylor has returned to Virginia Tech several times to speak specifically to engineering students. “When I’m on campus during my visits, I meet with a group of students with a business interest and two-thirds of what I do is answer questions,” Taylor said. “That opportunity didn’t exist when I was here, but I think it is being pretty well addressed now, especially considering the rigor of the curriculum.”

In addition to his campus visits to share his experiences with future generations of engineers, Taylor also sits on the Engineering Advisory Board where he champions the mission of training undergraduate engineers. Taylor firmly believes that the engineering department’s commitment to its undergraduates has helped the program achieve national recognition and respect. It is also one of the core values that he took away from his experiences at Virginia Tech.

At the same time, Taylor understands that students look for more than just a reputation when deciding on a college or university, which is why he generously supports the College of Engineering Signature Building Fund.

“It’s a competitive world out there and while it would be great to separate the quality of education from aesthetics such as buildings, certainly perception plays a certain role in where students choose to attend college,” said Taylor. “With a new engineering building, I think several departments like mechanical, chemical, and aerospace and ocean engineering can take some serious steps forward.”

Living and working in California, Taylor and his family don’t get back to Blacksburg nearly as often as they would like, but each trip back reminds him just how much his experiences at Virginia Tech shaped him both personally and professionally.

Taylor and his wife Jackie sailed competitively in regattas all over the world until their son was born. Today they compete in triathlons while 9-year-old Ryan is into tennis, swimming and any of the Nintendo Wii sports. It’s still a bit early to know where their son may want to attend college, but should he choose Virginia Tech you can imagine Taylor will be sure to show him around the beautiful and growing campus that he fell in love with years ago—with a special stop at the new engineering building.
As we begin the second year of the public phase of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future, we’re optimistic about our continued success in spite of the challenges we face. The clearest reason for that optimism is our progress to date. As of May 31, 2009, we had raised $792,491,859. We remain ahead of schedule toward our $1 billion goal.

This year, former Virginia Tech Professor of Communication Ed Ewing was among the donors inducted into the Ut Prosim Society, reserved for households that have given $100,000 or more.

Ewing, who passed away May 14, shared several characteristics with all the new members: generosity, a desire to make a difference, and a strong affinity for Virginia Tech. And he shared yet another trait with 81 of the new members: They all previously belonged to the Caldwell Society, a group established in 2002 for those whose giving ranged between $50,000 and $99,999.

The fact that well over half of this year’s new Ut Prosim Society members had been in the Caldwell Society illustrates one of the most valuable characteristics of giving societies for institutions such as Virginia Tech. People who belong to them are likely to put more into—and get more out of—a lifelong involvement with their university.

At Virginia Tech, we have a variety of giving recognition societies—ranging from the Pylon Society for those who donate any amount over consecutive years, to the Ut Prosim Society’s President’s Circle for households that have provided $1 million or more, to the Legacy Society for people who have committed to help us through their estate plans.

Why such a diverse range of donor societies? It’s because we appreciate gifts of all types at Virginia Tech. And we understand how important it is to show that to our generous supporters.

Next year will mark a quarter-century since the Ut Prosim Society was created. Today, as we work toward the $1 billion goal of our most ambitious campaign to date, we cannot help but be struck by the incredible impact that members of our giving societies are continuing to make.

Membership in each of our giving societies has grown to a remarkable degree. The Ut Prosim Society, which began with fewer than 125 households, now has 1,066. Combined, they have committed a staggering $700.5 million to Virginia Tech, including gifts and commitments made prior to the society’s creation. Of that total, $333.6 million has come since July 2003, when we launched The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future.

Members of the Caldwell Society, including both current households and ones that have moved into the Ut Prosim Society, have committed $43.9 million. In its first eight years of existence, the Caldwell Society has grown from 58 households to 436 households, including 80 that joined in just the first quarter of this year.

Taken together, the 879 households in the Legacy Society have committed $536.9 million, of which $232.2 million has been realized.

The Pylon Society has more than 10,000 members who, combined, have contributed nearly $40 million to academics at Virginia Tech.

The real reason numbers such as those above are so exciting is because every new or advancing member of any giving society represents an opportunity our students might not have had without support from donors. To cite just one example, let’s return to Ed Ewing, who along with his wife, Jane, created a fund that provides scholarships for students to travel abroad.

When asked about his gift several years ago, Ewing said, “One of the most educational things to do is travel. . . . You can’t sit in the classroom and gain what you can get if you’re out there mixing with people from another culture. So it seemed like a golden opportunity to give back.”

For numerous students, the Ewings’ scholarship is a golden opportunity for a broader education. Caroline Ickes is such a student. A native of Lewisburg, W.Va., she graduated in May with a double major in communication and international studies. She was able to spend five months studying in Europe thanks to the Ewings. Ickes said she planned to highlight that experience in her applications to graduate programs in international affairs, because “study abroad is crucial for demonstrating your intercultural skills and communication abilities with a diverse audience.”
They were all honored as new or advancing members of the university’s most prestigious donor recognition society. Members are inducted when their lifetime giving reaches $100,000 and advance on reaching $250,000, $500,000, and $1 million.

Ut Prosim is Latin for "That I May Serve," and is not only the name of the society but the university-wide motto for Virginia Tech.

At this year’s gathering of the society, 111 members, including the Chaney’s, were inducted. Frank Chaney, a member of the Pamplin College of Business Class of ’79, has said that service and philanthropy “fits right into what I was taught by my mother and father. After caring for my family, making this world a better place than it would be without me is my number one goal in life.”

Waldron also received his degree from Pamplin, though it was in 1949, well before Frank Chaney was even born.

Along with the Robertsons and the Montagues, Waldron was among the 61 people who advanced to a new level within the Ut Prosim Society. In his case, it was to the highest level, the President's Circle.

“There are a lot of charities and places to give money, but you usually go back to your beginnings and the places that hold a lot of good memories for you,” Waldron said. “Family, church, and Virginia Tech, that’s me.”

The Robertsons, who are now senior benefactors within the society, have endowed a scholarship within the College of Engineering along with their many other gifts to the university. Tom Robertson, who earned his degree from the College of Engineering in 1952, has said it’s important for people at his stage of life to thank those who have helped them.

He has credited his professors with “always instilling, in one way or another, [the concept of] ‘That I May Serve,’ plus providing a good, basic engineering education.”

The Montagues, who became distinguished benefactors, have a strong family connection to the university as well. Chester Waldron lives in South Carolina. Tom and Barbara Robertson live in North Carolina. John and Jean Montague live in Virginia. Frank and Susan Chaney live in Maryland. Though they all live in different states, their shared affinity for Virginia Tech and their distinguished history of support brought them to the annual Ut Prosim Society weekend in April.
The 172 new or advancing members of the university’s most prestigious donor society were honored April 24 and urged to continue to support the university as it advances toward its $1 billion goal for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future.

“"When you think about it, the students and the alumni at Virginia Tech are our customers. The Ut Prosim [Society] members, you’re our stockholders, and we need a return on investment. We’ve got a [campaign] goal that we have to achieve, and actually exceed, to be able to do the kinds of things that will take us to the upper echelon of the universities in this country. You’re either going up or you’re going backwards, and this is a time where we need to shine, and this is the group to do it.” - John Lawson

Later, he added: “When you have limited resources and you’re worried about the economy and you’ve only got a few things that you feel like you can support, then you’ve got to support this place because you can see the value of your investment. You can see what it does for the students. You can see the difference that we’re making across this country and across the globe.”

"You are individuals that clearly understand that inventing the future requires something more than contemplation," Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger said at a formal ceremony where new and advancing members were thanked. "It requires action and participation, and you are here with us this evening because you have demonstrated your capacity for both.”

"When you think about it, the students and the alumni at Virginia Tech are our customers. The Ut Prosim [Society] members, you’re our stockholders, and we need a return on investment. We’ve got a [campaign] goal that we have to achieve, and actually exceed, to be able to do the kinds of things that will take us to the upper echelon of the universities in this country. You’re either going up or you’re going backwards, and this is a time where we need to shine, and this is the group to do it.” - John Lawson
The Montagues carry on that tradition of both philanthropy and service.

In addition to Mr. and Mrs. David A. and Elyssa Street, and Jean Skelton Montague, John W. Montague Jr., Hampton, VA; Portsmouth, VA; Atlanta, GA; and Blakeslee Nettleton Chase, Wise, VA; Chester Waldron, Charlottesville, SC; and all those mentioned above, as well as the more than 170 others who this year were inducted into or advanced within the Ut Prosim Society, are an essential resource for the university to draw on — all the opportunities Tech has given to us," Jean Montague has said. “We hope that our contributions can, in some small way, help to invent the future of Virginia Tech and to continue its legacy of service to others.”

People like her and all those mentioned above, as well as the more than 170 others who this year were inducted into or advanced within the Ut Prosim Society, are an essential resource for the university to draw on — not only to maintain its legacy of service, but to do even more to make a difference in the commonwealth, nation, and world.
Mark Lindsey (architecture ‘82) is a self-admitted adrenaline junkie. He is a man who is not afraid to take risks. He mountain bikes, snowboards, and scuba dives. He also races Formula 5 race cars for the South Atlantic Road Racing Championship Series and crews for a professional race team on the weekends. And it’s a good thing he does, because Mark manages the motorsports design team for the Richmond, Va., based architectural engineering firm Baskerville Architects. “I love being able to take my hobby and use it professionally in the design of motorsports facilities,” Mark says.

Of course, while risk may be all well and good for hobbies, it is less so for your tax returns. The 3rd International Congress on Heart Disease in Women will be held in association with the World Congress of Cardiology in Beijing, with 20,000 estimated attendance. One of his most important projects is a study in China involving implementation of prevention guidelines for heart attacks in patients in 65 hospitals from every region of the country. In June, 2010 he will serve as Co-Chair of the Science Program Committee for the World Congress of Cardiology in Beijing, with 20,000 estimated attendance. The 3rd International Congress on Heart Disease in Women will be held in association with the world congress. Clearly, Smith is a man on a mission — a mission to serve a worldwide community. But that mission includes giving back to Virginia Tech. He gives back because he has a profound respect for what they do, “Mark says. “This was an opportunity to give back in gratitude for that.”

For others thinking about making a significant gift to the university, Mark has some advice: “I think that for some people, if they have children, they need to take care of their family, but if a significant amount of the inheritance will disappear to taxes, this is a way to make the most impact without losing the money to taxes. Get a good trust attorney. It isn’t complicated, and our attorney made it a painless process.”

Though Mark was not a cadet himself, he respects the corps and wanted to recognize his nephew, a cadet who graduated in May. “I have always had a tremendous amount of respect for what they do,” Mark says. “This was an opportunity to give back in gratitude for that.”

Finding the right avenue to give back to Virginia Tech can be a challenging task for many. But that mission includes giving back to Virginia Tech. He gives back because he has a profound respect for what they do, “Mark says. “This was an opportunity to give back in gratitude for that.”

Dennis and Mark Lindsey

Mark Lindsey 1999-2000

Mark’s support of CAUS recognizes his many wonderful memories of Virginia Tech. Perhaps it isn’t surprising that Mark, who was playing with Erector sets and Lincoln Logs at a very young age, picked one of the nation’s best architecture programs — the one at Virginia Tech. “I think I made the decision to be an architect in the third grade,” he says, “I was building stuff with my friends when I was in kindergarten.”

Though architecture students have a heavy course load, Mark found time to have fun too. “I loved walking to Lane stadium to see a game,” he says. “I loved going down to the river and hanging out. I also have a fondness for Cowgill Hall. I spent lots of late nights and quality time there,” he laughs. And he knows that his education at Virginia Tech laid the groundwork for his professional career. “Part of being an architect is taking a lot of ideas and combining them for a new idea,” he says. “One of the things I learned at Tech was to not be a linear thinker. I learned a whole new thought process. There are lots of different ways to get to the same answer.”

Smith continued from page 1

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Henry Long is winner of the 2009 University Distinguished Achievement Award

Virginia Tech awarded its 2009 University Distinguished Achievement Award to Henry Long, of Warrenton, co-founder of the Lang and Foster real estate firm. The award is presented each commencement to a man or woman of national distinction in a field of enduring significance to society. Long graduated in 1959 from what is now Virginia Tech’s Pamplin College of Business, with a bachelor’s in business administration. In 1968, Long and Wes Foster founded what would become the nation’s largest privately held real estate brokerage firm.

Long is serving on the regional campaign committee for Northern Virginia within the $1 billion Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future, and has been an active member of boards for the Potomac and Madeira schools, both in McLean; the foundation for George Mason University, in Fairfax; and the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Gene Fife Receives University’s Highest Award

Gene Fife of Charlottesville is the 2009 recipient of Virginia Tech’s most prestigious award, the William H. Ruffner Medal. The Ruffner Medal is awarded annually to a person with outstanding achievement in efforts devoted to the promotion, improvement, and development of the university’s mission as a land-grant university.

Fife chaired the quiet phase of the current, $1 billion Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future and, along with his wife Anne, is a member of the President’s Circle of the Ut Prosim Society, the university’s highest level of donor recognition.

Virginia Tech is not the only university to benefit from Fife’s involvement. He chairs the governing council of the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, is a member of the Trinity Board of Visitors of the College of Arts and Sciences at Duke University, and serves on the advisory board to the Duke Islamic Studies Center.

Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center’s new barn dedicated to Paul R. Fout

The late Paul R. Fout, a renowned horse breeder and trainer who passed away in 2005, was posthumously honored when a new equine barn on the campus of Virginia Tech’s Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center was dedicated in his name on Friday, April 17.

Fout approved the design of the new barn before his death, acknowledging the benefit of adding space to move horses in and out of the hospital quickly, thereby freeing up space for critical care cases and other emergent needs within the main hospital. The new barn is an open-air facility and includes 12 horse stalls, a nurses’ station, and three work areas. It will be utilized primarily for elective cases as well as a place to house and care for outpatients.

With the Help of a ‘Village,’ Virginia Tech Engineering Students will Provide Kenyan Medical Clinic with Electric Power

Some 12 years ago, the entrepreneurial spirit in engineer McKinney steered his now 30-year-old full service design firm away from big box, high technology manufacturing and into the sophisticated challenges of the life sciences where there are demands for bio-safety containment.

These facilities have four bio-safety levels (BSL). At level one, something in the room might make you sick, but contamination is not fatal. Infectious agents in a level four room can be considered lethal. With these new challenges in mind, McKinney completed his first BSL-3 facility in 2003, a $2 million public health laboratory in Virginia. BSL-3 labs are used for working with tuberculosis, HIV and similar pathogens. In 2008, he added a BSL-4 lab to his firm’s experience. There are only a handful of these in the United States.

We need your help! We are always looking for ways to improve Impact and the best way to do that is to ask you. Please take just a few seconds to go online and let us know what you think. Thank you! Visit us at www.campaign.vt.edu/impact.
A skier crashes and damages the cartilage in her knee. Imagine if, instead of cutting into her for surgery, doctors could inject material that would stimulate her body to build the type of new cells needed to repair the damage.

Jenni Popp, a 2009 Ph.D. recipient from the Virginia Tech Wake Forest School of Biomedical Engineering and Sciences, will soon move to Boulder, Colo. — skier’s country — to join a research project at the National Institute of Standards and Technology that could lead to treatments to repair injuries like the one described above. Her degree is in biomedical engineering, and she specializes in the emerging field of tissue engineering.

During her studies, Popp had significant support from the David W. and Lillian Francis Memorial Scholarship, which made it easier for her to focus on her important research. Below, the Millinocket, Maine, native discusses her work and the role that donors can provide empowering the people like her — the next generation of researchers.

What interested you in tissue engineering?
I come from a long line of engineers. I’ve always been interested in science. So I wanted to combine my bachelor’s in chemical engineering with biology and medicine. I’ve also always been fascinated by anatomy and the human body and how it works. I decided to combine those two by working on tissue engineering and, more specifically, I’ve been working on bone-tissue engineering.

What brought you to Virginia Tech?
I really wanted to come down south and I chose Virginia because it’s a beautiful state. I was accepted to both U.Va. and Virginia Tech. I visited both campuses and when I came to Virginia Tech everyone was really welcoming and it was just an overall gut feeling that this was the place for me — just the atmosphere. It felt like the right place for me.

Talk about your research here in school.
My research here is trying to develop a tissue-engineered implant to help or to stimulate bone regeneration in some type of bone defect. I specifically have been working on creating a polymer scaffold supplemented with calcium and phosphate minerals to mimic the chemistry of bone, which would, in theory, stimulate bone regeneration. So far I have one publication in the Journal of Biomedical and Materials Research that was looking at the effect of zinc on osteoprogenitor cells because we were thinking about incorporating zinc into our minerals to see how that would further stimulate bone regeneration. Out of my dissertation research I’m working on two other publications that are more directly related to creating a composite construct for bone regeneration.

For somebody who isn’t an expert in tissue engineering, what’s a scaffold?
Why do you need one in order to use engineered cells to help medical problems?
A scaffold is a three-dimensional template for regeneration. The idea is that when implanted into the body it would serve a template within the defect for your native cells to infiltrate and then start to grow new tissue as the scaffold is degrading. So the idea is that the scaffold will degrade at a similar rate to the rate that you’re going to have new tissue growth.

Did the scholarship you had make a difference for you?
Why should donors consider directing their support to graduate students?
The scholarship has been great. Graduate students are faced with so many different stresses as they go through their graduate careers taking classes and doing their research. It takes a lot of hours to get your work done, and having one less thing to worry about in the form of cost-of-living and other expenses is definitely a great relief.

Why should donors consider directing their support to graduate students?
We’re doing some really great research here at Virginia Tech. Allowing graduate students to focus on their important and exciting research to help further the university, help further the research community overall, and help improve lives, is just really important. Helping graduate students to do that research without having extra stresses is a great service, a great help.

So you’re going to Boulder. Do you ski?
I love skiing.

Have you ever been injured skiing?
I haven’t personally. But my fiancé, he got skier’s thumb. He fell and tore a ligament and broke a small piece of bone on his thumb.

Any chance that your research can help him with that?
It’s possible. Maybe not my research in particular, but musculoskeletal tissue engineering in general. Being able to regenerate both ligaments and bone, and fixing that bone-ligament interface, definitely would help. Someday in the future I think that could happen.