It turned out to be as good a decision for John as it had been for those who preceded him. A member of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, John benefitted from the leadership training he received and the relationships he developed while at Tech.

The summer after his senior year, John was due to go to camp as part of his military training. When he arrived, a clerk at the camp noticed that he suffered from asthma. “All of a sudden I had three years given back to me and I didn’t know what I was going to do,” he says. Back on Virginia Tech’s campus, he explained his difficulty to Commandant M.W. Shewe, on whose staff John had worked as a senior. Schewe worked to get John accepted into law school at the University of Virginia. “He was a fine man,” says John of the commandant.

John’s wife, Beverly, like many Hokie spouses, feels a strong connection to the Virginia Tech community. “I find the community to be wonderfully supportive, inclusive, and caring,” she says. John and Beverly still socialize with people they met while John was a cadet and the couple can be found on campus just about any time of year. “The only time we’re not on campus is in the summer, when nobody else is,” they laugh.

That sense of community is also a significant part of John’s relationship with the university. “It’s the sense of belonging to something that’s good and worthwhile,” he says.

For Beverly, being a Hokie-by-marriage is more than just a social experience. A retired teacher, she feels strongly about supporting education. That belief has led the couple to create several scholarship and fellowship funds. “I am a great believer in supporting academics through scholarships,” says Beverly. “Both John and I were fortunate that our parents provided for our educations, but I know that’s not always possible. Scholarships allow us to help someone who wouldn’t have been able to go to college to have that opportunity.”

While the couple has been generous in their support of Hokie athletics, they feel particularly ardent about supporting the academic side of the university. “That’s where we can make our greatest contribution to the growth of young people,” John says.

That sense of community and belief in the value of education led John and Beverly to agree to chair the Richmond regional campaign committee. Strong admirers of President Charles W. Steger, the Bates couldn’t say no when the president asked them to serve. But more than that, they felt like they needed to stand up and be counted.

“This is such a difficult time to raise money,” says John. “But the need is there and it is well-demonstrated. We’ve all got to jump in and do our part.”

When asked what he’d say to someone on the fence about supporting the campaign, John says, “We need every Hokie to participate. There are many ways to give. You can make a gift that does a lot of good for the university and a lot of good for yourself. If you want to give, we can find a way that you will like.”
Another Great Year Comes to a Close

As we reach the end of another year, it is a fitting time to say thank you for all you have done for Virginia Tech’s students and faculty. Your gifts in support of our programs, facilities, students, and faculty do more than just provide resources. They inspire us in our quest for excellence.

The nation’s economy has created challenges for all of us this year and you have helped us meet those challenges. Your generosity is ensuring that our students have the opportunity to study abroad, to engage in hands-on learning, and to expand their educational horizons. Your gifts allow us to break new ground in our research labs. And, because of your support for our outreach efforts, communities all over the world benefit from our discoveries.

As you are contemplating your giving plans for the year, I ask you to again consider supporting Virginia Tech. Your gift to our endowment ensures that Virginia Tech will be able to provide an excellent education for many years to come. Your unrestricted gift enables the president and our deans and department heads to be able to act quickly when unexpected opportunities arise. Your planned gift provides critical funding for our future. Whatever your area of interest, a gift to Virginia Tech can be a great way to reach your charitable giving goals.

On page 8 of this issue of Impact, you’ll find information about the many ways you can make a gift. For specifics on how to make sure your charitable donation is received by the end of 2009, I encourage you to visit our website at www.campaign.vt.edu. If you have any questions at all about making your gift or how to craft a gift that helps you meet your goals, please call us at 800/533-1144.

Betsy Flanagan

You Help Shape Virginia Tech’s Future

Take more than 30,000 students eager to learn and combine them with 2,600 faculty members eager to teach. It is just that combination that makes Virginia Tech the special place that it is. These scholars — young and old — are the heart of what we do, and we must work to create an atmosphere that sustains them and allows them to flourish.

Scholarships are the best way to support our students, particularly during times of economic uncertainty. Rather than fretting over funding, scholarships enable our students to focus on reaping the benefits of a well-rounded education. Making such a focus possible for an enthusiastic young person plants a seed that grows throughout his or her life. Receiving an endowed scholarship can be an important step for many of our students on the path to lifelong learning and active citizenship. Scholarship recipients also learn, firsthand, about the power of philanthropy to change lives. They often return the favor through their own philanthropy.

But the scholars who teach our students are just as crucial to our mission, for if we seek to provide our students with the very best education, we must first provide them with the very best professors.

Virginia Tech teachers and researchers bring distinction to the university. They are seeking cures for cancer, combating bioterrorism, and bringing technology and medicine 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. Their presence encourages others to come and lend their expertise and ability to Virginia Tech.

These exceptional educators must be recruited, compensated, and provided with the resources they need to engage in research. Those resources may take the form of salaries, financial support for research programs, or state-of-the-art facilities in which to conduct their research.

Furthermore, Virginia Tech students benefit from the hands-on learning experiences provided by high-caliber scholars. Students are able to work directly with these faculty members and engage in creating knowledge themselves.

Donors can make it possible for the university to recruit and retain extraordinary teachers and researchers through endowed professorships. Named professorships honor the contributions of faculty members to an academic discipline, to the school or college, and to the university. Such funds are often used to supplement salaries and to help us compete for the best faculty. By providing stipends and other enhancements to faculty members, professorships recognize and reward professors whose work is of the highest quality.

Your role in shaping Virginia Tech’s future is profound. Together, we can continue our mission of uplifting students, improving instruction, and serving society.
The Visitor and Undergraduate Admissions Center

When recruiting the best students and faculty, it’s important to make a good first impression.

Donors are helping the university do just that by supporting the new Visitor and Undergraduate Admissions Center that is expected to open in May 2011. Private contributions will cover a significant portion of the project’s cost.

Work on the two-story, 18,155-square-foot building is scheduled to begin in February 2010 on land that was once part of the campus golf course, but that has not been in use since construction of the nearby Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center.

For the moment, university visitors are likely to stop first at the small, vinyl-sided welcome center on Southgate Drive or, if they are able to find a parking space nearby, the Undergraduate Admissions office on the second floor of Burruss Hall.

The new facility will be far more convenient for visitors and make a far stronger impression on guests. The front of the new building will be built of Hokie Stone in the collegiate-gothic style that is so strongly associated with our institution. The rear of the building will feature a two-story, glass atrium with views of Burruss Hall, Lane Stadium, and, in winter, the Duck Pond.

The Visitor and Undergraduate Admissions Center is the latest in a string of improvements to the western entrance of campus created with significant private support, including the Inn and conference center, which opened in 2005, and the West Campus Signature Gateway, installed in 2008 at the corner of Prices Fork Road and West Campus Drive. That entrance is now used by more drivers than any other route into campus, according to Virginia Department of Transportation traffic surveys.

“This project is important because it establishes an appropriate front door to the university,” says University Architect Scott Hurst.

Once the new building is completed, highway signs will be altered to guide motorists to the university from U.S. Route 460 via Prices Fork Road instead of Southgate Drive, says Larry Hincker, associate vice president for university relations.

Hincker will oversee a project to install interactive displays — with information on the university’s history, the life of its students, and Virginia Tech’s impact on the Commonwealth — in the atrium of the new building.

“We want to create not only a functional area, where people go to get their parking passes and begin to understand how to get to whatever office they need to get to, but also to have a very special Virginia Tech experience,” Hincker says.

The atrium will occupy several thousand square feet of the building, but a larger portion of it will be used by Undergraduate Admissions. Hincker says it’s natural for that office to be present in a visitor center.

“Most visitors coming to campus are prospective students or their families,” he explains.

Numerous campus improvements are being made with help from our donors. Learn more at www.campaign.vt.edu/building.
Extraordinary support for the Department of Housing, Apparel, and Resource Management

Women are rapidly emerging as an economic force to be reckoned with. According to a new study by the Boston Consulting Group, in the next five years, women will earn an estimated $5 trillion in income. The income gap between men and women is set to shrink because the vast majority of new income growth over the next few years will go to women. Such an increase in income means that women will increasingly be in charge of the purse strings.

That shift is already being felt at Virginia Tech, where women are increasing their financial support of the university’s teaching, research, and outreach efforts.

Elaine Ager Tyrrell (clothing and textiles ’65, M.S. home economics ’67) is but one example of that shift. Tyrrell recently made what is believed to be the largest commitment of support ever to the Department of Housing, Apparel, and Resource Management.

With her $1 million estate gift, Tyrrell becomes a member of Virginia Tech’s Legacy Society. Of the gift, 75 percent will be endowed for scholarships. The rest will be endowed to support teaching, research, or outreach.

“This is an excellent gift that will benefit numerous initiatives related to the apparel program in terms of students as well as faculty,” says Professor LuAnn Gaskill, the department chair. “Certainly it’s the largest gift I’m aware of to this department, or to any apparel program I’ve ever been affiliated with.”

Tyrrell of Burtonsville, Md., has recently agreed to chair the Washington D.C./Maryland Regional Campaign Committee. She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the mid-1960s from what was then the Department of Clothing, Textiles, and Related Art. She taught apparel design at Cornell University before moving to the Washington, D.C., area with her husband.

While working at what was then the National Bureau of Standards, Tyrrell developed fabric flammability regulations for children’s sleepwear and other products. She later worked for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in several management positions, became an expert on mechanical hazards associated with children’s toys, and served as the agency’s spokeswoman for regulatory activities regarding children’s products.

Tyrrell studied in the Virginia Tech program headed from 1960 to 1978 by Oris Glisson, for whom the university’s costume and textiles collection is named.

“As far as professors were concerned, my idol was Oris Glisson,” Tyrrell says. “There was something about that woman. She was beautiful, sophisticated, well-educated. I admired everything about her.”

Tyrrell was awarded several scholarships at Virginia Tech, including one from a corporation that also supported several male engineering students. To her surprise, she learned the male students received far more money than she did. This less-than-positive experience influenced Tyrrell’s estate gift decision.

“It was obvious to me that they did not view my areas of study as being very deserving of financial support,” she said. “That stuck with me. I wanted the scholarship I created to support deserving students studying textiles and apparel design at Virginia Tech.”

Gift Helps Civil Engineering Students

A Virginia Tech civil engineering alumnus who founded a land development firm in Tennessee has made a generous commitment to support the Land Development Design Initiative (LDDI) at his alma mater.

“I think the concept they have [for LDDI] is absolutely fantastic,” says Julian Bell ’62, who recently made a sizable gift to the program.

Bell says his career shows how students can benefit from learning what it takes to work in land development from top professionals in the industry — an opportunity LDDI provides.

The DuPont Company hired Bell out of college. He soon learned the company demanded skills that were well beyond the technical ones taught in traditional engineering programs.

“The first year I was with DuPont I was strictly doing engineering, but then they gave us a ton of business work to learn — how to get return on capital, how to justify projects, estimating, cost control,” Bell recalls. “They broadened my horizons.”

Bell left DuPont in the late 1960s to work for the City of Chattanooga, Tenn. He founded his own company in 1975. Since then, Bell Development has created 26 subdivisions, containing 4,100 home sites, in the Chattanooga-Hamilton County region.

Bell says a former client’s words have always stuck with him: “You’re not designing roads; you’re designing lots and locations for subdivisions and communities.”

Civil engineering students participating in the Land Development Design Initiative gave a class presentation during the spring 2009 semester. They are, from left, Adeyemi Ojumu, Eric Duvall, and Timothy Smith.

Bell had been out of school for years by the time he heard that. But his support of LDDI helps ensure that tomorrow’s civil engineers won’t have to wait that long to get similar insights from developers.
One of the busiest areas of campus has been transformed in a project funded by donors. Officials recently celebrated the opening of the Graduate Life Center Amphitheater near the College Avenue entrance to Virginia Tech. The $330,000 project features a small stage and fountain, both built of Hokie stone. Between them is a seating area that will eventually be shaded by elm trees. Officials believe it’s a vast improvement over what was there before — a brick fountain that had not been turned on for a decade.

The amphitheater lies in the shadows of the Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown (GLC), Squires Student Center, and Newman Library. Matt Gart, a university architect involved in the amphitheater project, estimates the area receives either the first or second most pedestrian traffic on campus. The Class of ’59 made the main gift for the project, which also received money from the Hokie Parents Fund and the Class of ’99. At an October ribbon cutting for the amphitheater, T.O. Williams, Class of ’59 reunion chair, said he and his classmates also earmarked class gift money to undergraduate education and the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, “but we wanted to do some sort of brick-and-mortar project, and we also wanted to do something to honor graduate students.”

Visit www.campaign.vt.edu/glc for an expanded story on this project and video from the amphitheater ribbon cutting.

Virginia Tech’s Chemistry-Physics Building was named for former university president T. Marshall Hahn Jr., in an October dedication ceremony. The event featured a host of distinguished speakers, including President Charles W. Steger, former university provost Dave Roselle, former Virginia Tech faculty member and Rhodes Scholar William Lewis, and former Norfolk Southern CEO David Goode.

While president of Virginia Tech from 1962-1974, Hahn spearheaded some of the most significant changes in the university’s history. By fully opening enrollment to women, expanding undergraduate and graduate degree offerings, eliminating the mandatory military requirement, and reorganizing the institution’s colleges, he transformed what was then known as Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) into a major academic institution that, today, is Virginia’s leading research university.

Hahn’s broad support of the university’s programs includes athletic programs as well as academic ones, and a conference room in the men’s team section of the recently opened basketball practice facility also bears his name. In 2004 the university’s horticulture garden was named for Hahn’s wife, Peggy, in recognition of the couple’s contributions toward a major expansion of the garden and the construction of a pavilion, which also was named for her.

The 85,000-square-foot Chemistry-Physics Building was the second building to be named for Hahn, and is to be known as Hahn Hall-North Wing. An adjacent 71,000-square-foot building was named for Hahn in 1990 and is used mainly for chemistry research. That building is now called Hahn Hall-South Wing.

Hahn arrived at Virginia Tech in 1954 as a professor and head of the Department of Physics. He left in 1959 to serve as dean of arts and sciences at Kansas State University, but returned three years later to become the university’s youngest president, at age 35.

“I’ve had a long and varied career, but the years at Virginia Tech were our happiest and most fulfilling,” Hahn has said of himself and his wife, who still live in Blacksburg. “So we’ve tried to give back to Tech as much as we can, and in a variety of areas.”

Watch video from the naming ceremony at www.campaign.vt.edu/hahn.
Presidential Scholarship Initiative
Student Q&A

Virginia Tech’s new Presidential Scholarship Initiative allows qualifying in-state students to attend the university at no cost. The first 49 students to benefit enrolled in August and, with donor support, the program may grow to help up to 200 students at a time. Here, in an edited conversation, Zargham Ghani, a university studies major from Springfield, Va., discusses what the scholarship means to him and his family.

What led you to come to Virginia Tech?
I think what made the decision to go to Tech for me ... was the scholarship. I pretty much got accepted everywhere I applied.

Where else did you apply?
I got into the University of Virginia, [The College of] William and Mary, [James] Madison [University], and George Mason [University].

How does Blacksburg differ from your hometown?
I live in the suburbs of [Washington] D.C., so it’s not a city, but still Blacksburg seems like a farm location compared with Springfield.

How did your parents react when they learned of your scholarship?
At first my mom was overwhelmed with joy, because it’s sort of been their goal [for me to attend college]. They knew deep down, but they would not tell me ... that they could not pay for college for me, so it was like a big relief — on my dad’s part, especially. I’m the oldest sibling so it [meant] a lot for my parents. I have three younger brothers and [for] my parents [it’s] like now I’ve set the bar, so they expect that to continue with my younger siblings.

Why might someone want to consider donating to help the Presidential Scholarship Initiative?
My friend has a 4.0 [high school grade point average], but he decided to go to community college because of financial reasons. ... If more people donated to scholarships like this, it would really push people who ... have great potential.

Our colleges are always appreciative of the generosity of their donors. One way they acknowledge that generosity is by recognizing donors in their college publications. Recently, the College of Architecture and Urban Studies produced an interactive online magazine that highlights the college’s accomplishments and its donors. Check it out at www.caus.vt.edu/09magazine.
Jessica Blackwood wanted to do more than just get a good grade on the two-year research project she developed as part of her studies at the Governor’s School of Southside Virginia. She wanted to help her younger brother Carson, a basketball-loving teen whose left foot was amputated years before. So Blackwood persuaded high-school classmates to work with her to design a prosthetic foot that offers greater range of motion than the one her brother uses.

Fast forward to the present. The Meherrin, Va., native recently began studying biology at Virginia Tech. She plans to become a neurosurgeon. She still views education as a tool to use on behalf of others. “I’ve always wanted to try to help people in the biggest way that I can,” Blackwood says.

Virginia Tech officials have launched an ambitious program to make it easier for students like Blackwood reach their extraordinary potential.

For qualifying in-state students, the Presidential Scholarship Initiative is designed to complement all other aid options to make a Virginia Tech education available at no cost. The university plans to award up to 50 undergraduate scholarships through the initiative annually. To renew their scholarships, students must maintain an adequate grade point average (GPA).

Private contributions are essential to allow the program to grow to serve up to 200 students a year by 2012.

“Virginia Tech officials have launched an ambitious program to make it easier for students like Blackwood reach their extraordinary potential. For qualifying in-state students, the Presidential Scholarship Initiative is designed to complement all other aid options to make a Virginia Tech education available at no cost. The university plans to award up to 50 undergraduate scholarships through the initiative annually. To renew their scholarships, students must maintain an adequate grade point average (GPA).

Private contributions are essential to allow the program to grow to serve up to 200 students a year by 2012.

Jessica Blackwood is one of 49 Virginia students benefitting from the ambitious Presidential Scholarship Initiative.
Ways to Give: Still Time in Tax Year 2009

For those who want to help Virginia Tech invent the future, there’s no better time than the present to make year-end charitable giving decisions in order to take full advantage of 2009 tax benefits.

Making sure your year-end gift counts for 2009 depends upon whether you intend to send it by mail, transfer securities to Virginia Tech Foundation Inc., or phone in a credit card donation. Please feel free to contact us with questions you or your financial advisor may have. We’ll be happy to guide you through the process.

Whether you’re planning a cash donation by check or credit card or a gift of appreciated securities or real estate, contacting the Office of Gift Planning — at 800/533-1144 or 540/231-2813 or giftplanning@vt.edu — can help assure your contribution is counted for 2009 tax purposes.

Outright gifts of cash, securities, or other qualifying assets can go to work at Virginia Tech right after receipt.

By giving cash, a pledge payable over as many as five years, or appreciated securities, such as stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, you may realize significant tax benefits.

Donating real estate can simplify estate planning, provide income tax deductions, and free the donor from maintenance costs, property taxes, insurance, and other ongoing expenses.

Company matching programs may increase the impact of your support.

Artwork, equipment, collectibles, supplies, books, and other types of tangible property can also be valuable gifts to Virginia Tech.

Life insurance policies offer gift options. You can cash in a policy that is no longer needed for its original purpose and the proceeds can benefit the university immediately. You can transfer ownership of a current policy directly to the Virginia Tech Foundation Inc. in order to receive tax benefits and deduct the premiums you continue to pay.

Deferred gifts are a way to make the university’s future part of your legacy. They can be structured to fit individual circumstances and goals. And making such a gift entitles you to membership in the Legacy Society.

Simple and flexible estate gifts, such as bequests and retirement account beneficiary designations, allow you to retain lifetime control of your assets and may provide an opportunity to make a larger gift than would otherwise be possible.

A bequest through a will or trust can provide support as a specific dollar amount or a percentage of the remainder of an estate after other bequests or expenses have been paid. Bequests can even be limited to certain circumstances, such as the death of other named beneficiaries. A testamentary trust can provide lifetime income to family members with the trust remainder going to Virginia Tech.

Retirement account balances can also benefit the university after your lifetime. Simply name the Virginia Tech Foundation Inc. as a beneficiary. These assets may prove more valuable as tax-wise gifts to charities, which, unlike heirs, pay no income or estate taxes.

Life income gifts provide you with income from your donated assets — usually for life. You enjoy dependable, professional management of those assets, along with significant tax benefits. When the plan ends, your gift supports Virginia Tech. Life income gifts can pay out a fixed or variable dollar amount, either right away or deferred.

Charitable lead trusts provide support for Virginia Tech now, and later benefit you or your heirs. Such trusts are typically used to reduce gift or estate taxes on assets passed to children, grandchildren, or other heirs. Of particular note this year is the charitable IRA rollover provision, which will be available to donors until Dec. 31, 2009. This temporary provision allows certain income tax exclusions for some donors 70 1/2 years of age or older who make charitable gifts by direct transfer from Individual Retirement Accounts to Virginia Tech Foundation Inc. Your qualifying gift can be made from traditional or Roth IRA. Your gift is limited to $100,000 per taxpayer, per year. Other restrictions may apply depending on the use of your gift. For more details on this provision, please visit our website at www.campaign.vt.edu/IRArollover.

For detailed instructions on how to make sure your gift is received by Virginia Tech before the end of the tax year regardless of the form the gift takes, please visit our website at www.campaign.vt.edu. If you have additional questions or would like to discuss any gift to Virginia Tech, please contact the Office of Gift Planning at 800/533-1144 or 540/231-2813 or at giftplanning@vt.edu.

Legacy Society

Since graduating in the late 1970s, Dennis and Deborah McDonald have made it a point to give back to Virginia Tech.

Once their children became established in their own careers, and the couple decided to revisit their estate plans, they were pleased to learn they could make a deferred gift to Virginia Tech “that really left a mark for us personally, as well as helping the university,” Dennis says.

The McDonalds set up trusts to benefit programs they care deeply about in the business and natural resources colleges. Across the university, numerous programs are stronger because of people just like them — members of Virginia Tech’s Legacy Society.

The Legacy Society was created in 1990 to recognize people who have made deferred gifts to the university. It has had more than 1,700 members, including those who have passed away.

At the most recent annual gathering, which took place in September at the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center, there was plenty to celebrate. Combined, Legacy Society members have committed more than $361.7 million to help ensure the university’s continued excellence.

Many Legacy Society members, like the McDonalds, view estate giving as a natural way to extend their longstanding practice of supporting an institution they care a great deal about.

Or, as Deborah puts it: “We gained so much with our education, with our friends, with the environment [at the university], and Tech stays with you all of your life. So why not perpetuate that even after your life has passed (and) keep giving?”

The Legacy Society event took place in September 2009.
Campaign Snapshot

As we begin the third 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 October 31, 2009, we had raised $854,343,392. We remain ahead of schedule toward our $1 billion goal.

Regional Campaigns

Virginia Tech kicked off its campaign in the Richmond region over two nights in late September. Richmond is the largest of the regions to which the campaign will travel over the course of the public phase of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future. More than 15 percent of Virginia Tech’s living alumni reside in the Richmond capital region; more than 20,000 parents and friends live in the Richmond region. All of these individuals have a vested interest in both the present and future of Virginia Tech.

Betsy Flanagan, vice president of development and university relations at Virginia Tech, noted during the Richmond kickoff event that this campaign was meant to sustain and build on the university’s many accomplishments. “Those who participate in this campaign will have a direct impact on our ability to recruit students and meet their financial needs,” she said. “You will enable us to hire and retain exceptional faculty, which is always a challenge.”

President Steger remarked that it was a pleasure to be with a group of Hokies like those in Richmond who are moving the university forward. “You have dramatically changed the lives of our students by supporting the education of these amazing young people,” he said.

The university needs all Hokies to participate in the campaign. “I hope you’re all inspired to participate in the campaign,” said John Bates, co-chair of the Richmond Regional Committee. Flanagan agreed. She said, “If we are to continue our steady rise among the nation’s great universities, we have to engage every Hokie.”

The success of the regional campaigns has been critical to the success of the overall campaign. Each campaign region has a part to play and they have been doing quite well.

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Regions Racing Toward the Goal!
A thief sneaks into the neighbor’s yard, the moon glinting on his white fur. He steals food from the bowl outside the back door, leaving behind his saliva — and his DNA.

The next morning, Virginia Tech biochemistry Professor Erin Dolan takes a sample of that saliva to determine which of the neighborhood cats is stealing her cat’s food. She brings the sample to her session at the 2009 Circle of Excellence Conference (COEC), where the participants engage in DNA gel electrophoresis to identify the thief.

And that was just one of the fascinating sessions available at this year’s COEC, which took place at the Inn at Virginia Tech from May 31 to June 1. The COEC is sponsored by the WLP Council, whose mission is to engage Hokie women in the life of the University. The conference is an opportunity for Virginia Tech’s community of alumnae, friends, and donors to come together to learn about Virginia Tech students, faculty, research, and outreach efforts.

In his opening keynote address, university spokesman Larry Hincker, an associate vice president for communications, said, “Many people may think of Virginia Tech as a large research university, but essentially, what we do is educate.”

“In our students, we see the promise of the future. As women, we see the promise of the future for women. And we have a responsibility to help our students realize that promise.”

In his opening night keynote address, university President Sir Thomas H. and Margaret A. Goodell encouraged students to pursue their passions and follow their dreams, because “every step they take has an impact.”

“I have come to realize over the years what an extraordinary place this is,” he told the participants.

That sentiment was echoed by Virginia Tech’s soccer coach Kelly Cowgill, who noted that the women’s soccer teams have worked for more than two decades at Virginia Tech. At the end of the session, Cowgill talked about how impressive he is by the bright, highly motivated students at the university.

“Tales on the Caldwell March”

Students in Virginia Tech’s nationally renowned architecture program learn how to design beautiful structures during their five-year course of study. Actually getting their designs built is something that usually does not happen until they are out working in the field.

But for students like Alden Haley and Corey McCalla, that is not the case. They are among the dozens of Hokies — from a variety of programs — who are getting real-world experience in their fields of study by participating in the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2010. With help from faculty advisors, as well as considerable donor support, the students on Virginia Tech’s Solar Decathlon team built an 800-square-foot home to showcase new possibilities for environmentally friendly design.

Their structure — which is named LUMENHAUS in homage to the Bauhaus design movement that influenced its look — not only has solar panels on the roof, but a computerized system to maximize energy efficiency and user comfort.

Only a handful of people have an opportunity to participate in this kind of hands-on learning. “In school, it’s pretty uncommon to actually have built a house,” says Haley, an Ashland, Va., native who is heading into his fifth year of the architecture program. “This is really special.”

Robert Dunay, the T.A. Carter Professor in Architecture, says that is likely to be the case for lots of students. “This is probably one of the best educational experiences that they get — to see the transition between the abstraction of their drawings and calculations and the performance of the actual construction,” says Dunay, a faculty advisor to the Solar House team.

Virginia Tech is fielded one of 20 student teams in the Solar Decathlon, which is the most recent in a series of such contests sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy to promote energy-efficient construction. Each team displayed its entry on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., for three weeks in October 2009. Virginia Tech placed 13th in the national contest and is one of only two U.S. universities invited to compete in the first Solar Decathlon Europe, which will take place in Madrid in June 2010.

For more information about LUMENHAUS, visit www.lumenhaus.com.

Solar House team member Corey McCalla reflects on the opportunity to participate in the Solar Decathlon. McCalla has worked in mergers and acquisitions for Microsoft and is one of only two U.S. universities invited to compete in the first Solar Decathlon Europe, which will take place in Madrid in June 2010.

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Sponsor Walter Medding didn’t walk with first-year students in the 2009 march. Siegrist has been an executive at Bank of America, has worked in mergers and acquisitions for Microsoft, and now works for Expedia. She says she still draws on lessons in how to lead that she learned as a cadet, and I know how valuable that is.”

Medding of Fredericksburg, Va. “I think it’s a great university. It helped me in my life, and I’m sure it helps almost everybody that goes in.”

Caldwell March sponsors donated $116,000 in fall 2008 and spring 2009 combined. Some sponsors actually walk alongside the cadets. Sandy Siegrist of Pilot Mountain, N.C., says she enjoyed seeing today’s cadets helping each other during especially challenging portions of the fall 2008 march.

“At one point on the march,” she recalls, “there was a very steep climb, absolutely no trail, and they were scratching at the dirt with their hands, dragging one another up there, carrying a few people, because you are only as fast as the slowest man.”

Siegrist continues, “The upperclassmen who were there in a role to lead were cheering those kids on like real leaders. That’s the kind of thing I experienced as a cadet, and I know how valuable that is.”

Siegrist has been an executive at Bank of America, has worked in mergers and acquisitions for Microsoft, and now works for Expedia. She says she still draws on lessons in how to lead that she learned in the corps of cadets “everyday in my work and my personal life.”

Through their support, alumni like Siegrist are helping today’s cadets to learn these valuable lessons as well. Learn more about the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets at www.vtcc.vt.edu.

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.
Polymer program alumni start efforts to create three endowed professorships

As a show of their loyalty and pride in the Virginia Tech polymer program, now part of the encompassing Macromolecules and Interfaces Institute, a group of alumni has initiated a fundraising campaign to support three endowed professorships in macromolecular science and engineering.

Tony Brennan, a Virginia Tech engineering alumnus and professor at the University of Florida, is spearheading the fundraising initiative with the help of the Virginia Tech development office. The Macromolecules and Interfaces Institute is assisting their efforts.

In 1978, Virginia Tech’s Polymer Materials and Interfaces Laboratory was established at Virginia Tech, conceived by two long-term colleagues, Garth Wilkes, now a professor emeritus of chemical engineering, and James McGrath, a professor of chemistry. In addition to their two departments, other faculty from engineering science and mechanics, materials science and engineering, mechanical engineering, and wood science strongly contributed to establishing the foundation of the interdisciplinary program.

In three-plus decades the lab has brought in millions of graduate research dollars, educated thousands of undergraduate and graduate students, and provided several hundred polymer short courses to industrialists and academicians. It has built a strong, solid reputation and network throughout the world of polymeric materials.

Polymer science and engineering has been and continues to be a well-recognized and important educational and research strength of Virginia Tech. Since the pioneering efforts by McGrath and Wilkes, along with Tom Ward and Jim Wightman, also professors of chemistry, more than 600 Ph.D. and master’s students have graduated from the polymer programs. These graduates populate the research laboratories and other departments of major corporations around the world, and some are leading professors in major universities both in the United States and internationally.

Faculty Support
Key to Student Success

When John R. Jones III graduated from Virginia Tech in 1967 with a degree in mechanical engineering, he knew he was going into the real world with one of the best engineering educations in the country. He parlayed that education into a successful career that included 36 years at American Electric Power. In 2005, Jones took a step back, looked at his career, and realized he owed much of his success to the education he received while at Tech. It was then that he knew he wanted to support future generations of mechanical engineers, but he wasn’t entirely sure how to do it.

Jones considered scholarships, but he wanted to find a way to support both students and faculty. He found what he was looking for in a faculty fellowship—more specifically the John R. Jones III Faculty Fellowship.

“Scholarships are a great way to show support, but for those that can do more, a faculty fellowship is a great way to touch hundreds of students,” Jones says. “The students will benefit in many ways from the fellowship and they will go on to succeed. Why? Because the level of education they receive at Tech.”

Established in 2006 and first awarded in 2007, the Jones Fellowship acknowledges and rewards mid-career faculty who have shown exceptional merit in research, teaching, and/or service.

“One of the many benefits of fellowships, mine in particular, is that it allows faculty some research funding that they can then invest in their own ideas and see if they can grow a new idea or research program,” says Michael Ellis, one of three professors at Virginia Tech who currently hold Jones Fellowships. Michael Ruan and Ranga Pitchumani are the others.

Ellis is an associate professor of mechanical engineering and co-director of the Graduate Automotive Technology Education Center for Automotive Fuel Cells and director of the Energy Systems Laboratory at Virginia Tech. He and three other faculty members (David Dillard, Bob Moore, and Scott Case) are working with General Motors to develop a better understanding of fuel cell durability. To make the technology commercially viable, according to Ellis, fuel cells must last longer and have a more accurate methodology for predicting their durability under a variety of circumstances.

Jones is passionate about giving back to Virginia Tech and hopes others will follow his lead in helping future generations of students obtain the best possible education from the very best experts in the field—they like Michael Ellis.
You’re the team behind the team,
the thousands upon thousands of loyal — okay, maybe even a little fanatical! — supporters who help make every victory possible, both on and off the field. You make it to every game, cheer every play, and stand behind your team through thick or thin. And thousands of you support our students, professors, and programs with your generous contributions. You deserve your own All-American trading card.

Visit www.vt.edu/All-Americans today to find out how to make your very own trading card. Use it as your Facebook profile picture. E-mail it to your friends. Print it out and wallpaper your den with it. It’s your card. Do whatever you want. Even if it is a little... well... fanatical.

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