

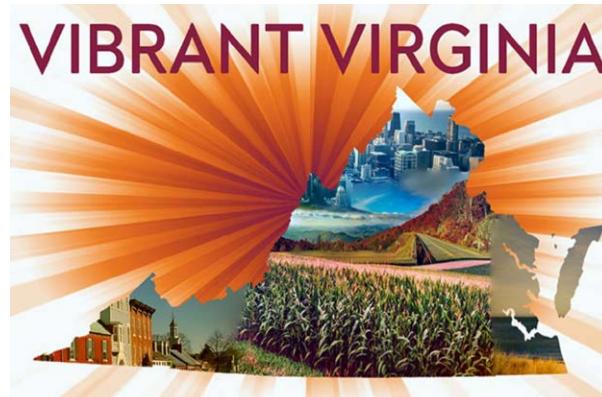
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# OIA connect

## HOME EDITION

### Project marks 2 years of promoting economic vitality

Vibrant Virginia, led by the Office of Economic Development and sponsored by Outreach and International Affairs, has released a report marking the accomplishments of its first two years. The initiative aims to grow a network of Virginia researchers and practitioners, addressing urban and rural issues across the commonwealth through applied research, policy analysis, and engagement projects.



Since 2018, Vibrant Virginia has brought together faculty and community partners to promote economic vitality in Virginia. It has awarded seven grants, funding projects on topics such as social media marketing and refugee and migrant partnerships in Virginia. The program also hosted 15 community conversations in four regions and received more than 25 abstracts for an upcoming book.

"Vibrant Virginia is a great example of how Virginia Tech's engagement and extension teams can maximize our impacts through deep collaboration. Working together, we've touched many corners of the commonwealth, exploring issues of shared concern in the state's urban and rural regions," said Conaway Haskins, economic development extension specialist with Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Tech Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Current collaborative efforts consist of a virtual statewide forum; a book project,

“Vibrant Virginia: Engaging the Commonwealth to Expand Economic Vitality and Inclusivity”; and the creation of a new leadership team, the Virginia Tech Council on Vibrant Virginia.

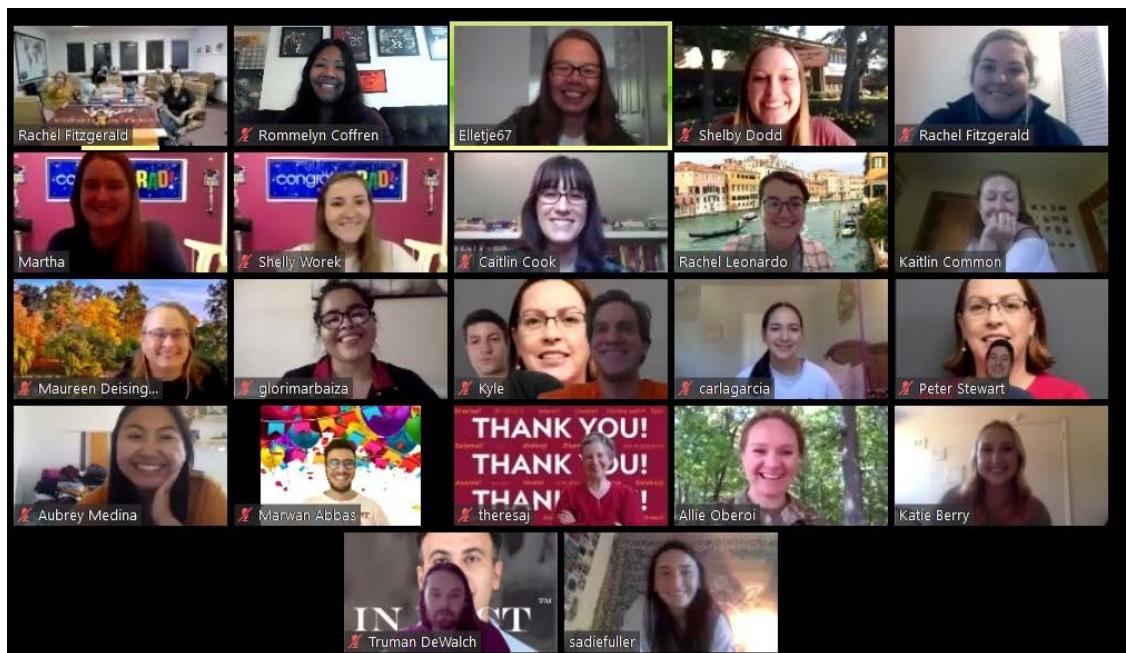
“As we move into the future, it is important that we continue to define the narrative of Vibrant Virginia, incorporating work from additional efforts including the Rural Virginia Initiative and GO Virginia,” said **John Provo**, director of the Office of Economic Development.

[Read more...](#)

— Julia Kell

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## AROUND OIA



## Global Education office cheers its student team

The Global Education Office threw a virtual party to celebrate its 2019-20 student team, many of whom are graduating seniors. Peer advisor and exchange student **Marwan Abbas**, still recovering for a 24-hour journey home, joined from Egypt.

Festivities included celebratory Zoom backgrounds, a baby photo guessing game, name that country trivia, and an end-of-year highlights video.

Students play a vital role in the GEO’s operations, serving as peer advisors, student assistants, and orientation leaders. The semester presented unforeseen challenges, but the student team rallied and adjusted to working

remotely. They continued to hold study abroad advising sessions and class presentations via Zoom. Digital outreach efforts increased, and global safety activities also continued.

The GEO staff enjoyed being among students again. One of their biggest challenges with being away from the office has been the lack of student interaction. “We feed off of students’ energy and enthusiasm. It was a nice moment to be in the same “room” with them again and to celebrate their accomplishments,” Associate Director **Rachel Fitzgerald** said.

— Rommelyn Coffren

**RELATED:** Study abroad was just the [‘tip of the iceberg’](#) for senior Shelly Worek.



## LCI celebrates international student graduates

More than 40 students from around the world convened Friday on Zoom to celebrate their graduation from the Language and Culture Institute. Most will continue their education as full-time undergraduates at the university this fall.

Zichong “Zach” Guo, a graduate from China who spoke during the virtual ceremony, said his classmates hailed from around the world — Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay, and Kuwait, to name just a few — but pulled together under unusual circumstances this semester. “I greatly respect everyone’s respect for so many cultures,” he said. “I felt really cared for by the

teachers here who treated us more like friends than students.”

According to Director **Donald Back**, LCI faculty had to shift all their courses — over 200 hours of classes — online in just a couple weeks. For students, the shift was even more abrupt.

“Our students, many of whom come to us with very limited English skills, found themselves suddenly facing a great obstacle in unfamiliar surroundings,” Back said. Some students returned to their home countries, he said, but most were unable to travel and have had to stay in and around Blacksburg. “I’m so proud of all these students, who persevered under incredibly unusual circumstances. They’re our heroes.”

[Read more...](#)



Anju Poudel is a Ph.D. candidate at Tribhuvan University in Nepal and lead author on the study.

## Entomology Today showcases IPM work in Nepal

Elevation can impact effectiveness of certain insects as biological control agents against an invasive weed.

That’s according to new research from Tribhuvan University in Nepal, part of a project led by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Integrated Pest Management housed at the Center for International Research, Education, and

Development. The findings were published in April in the journal [Biocontrol Science and Technology](#) and spotlighted in [Entomology Today](#), a project of the Entomological Society of America.

The weed, known as the Mexican devil or Crofton weed, thrives in warm, moist climates and is one of Nepal's most destructive weeds. Invading many of the country's tropical and subtropical forests, the weed easily outcompetes native vegetation, decreases the carrying capacity of pastureland, and is poisonous to some livestock, especially horses.

Its spread puts at risk human and animal health, economies, and environments. Almost half of threatened species are at risk due to invasive species, and the risk is higher than ever due to increases of climate change, human mobility, and globalization.

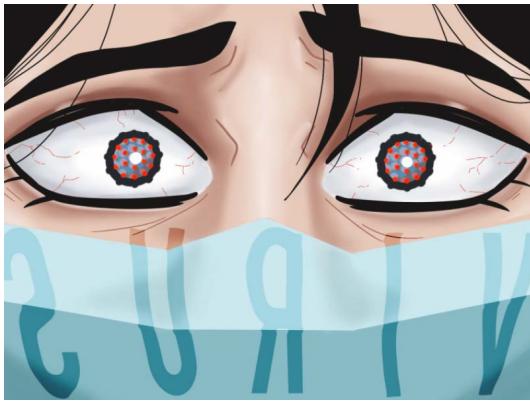
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## NEWS TO USE

### Latest from Virginia Tech

- **COMMENCEMENT 101:** Get the [latest details](#) about Friday's ceremony.
  - **NO TUITION HIKE?** Board of Visitors considering proposal to [extend tuition freeze](#).
  - **NEW SCHOOL:** Board of Visitors OKs [School of Communication and Digital Media](#).
  - **'MURDER HORNET':** The [Asian giant hornet](#) is not expected to be in Virginia for the foreseeable future.
  - **TRAVEL GUIDELINES:** All [essential travel must be preapproved](#).
  - **OPEN ENROLLMENT:** The last day to [make changes](#) is Friday.
  
  - **STAY INFORMED:** Remember, you can find the latest information from the university on its [COVID-19 webpage](#).
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## Moss Center showcases student artwork online

The Moss Arts Center continues its support of student creativity with its [Student Arts Spotlight](#), a new program celebrating creativity in the time of social distancing. The center has created a dedicated online space to feature the images above and other works of Virginia Tech undergraduate and graduate students.

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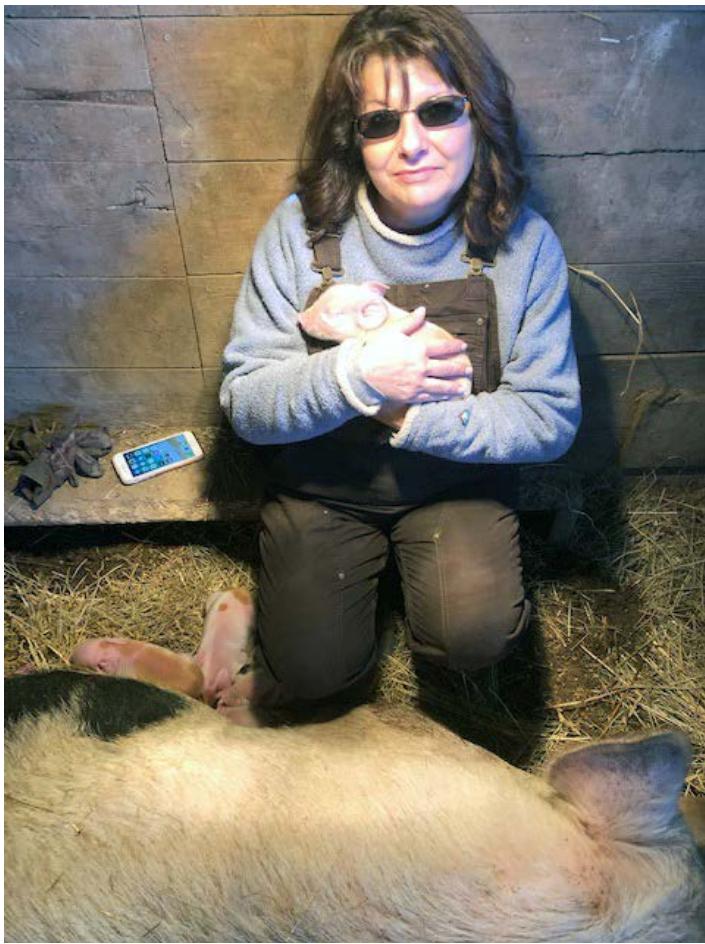
## MORE FUN WITH ZOOM



## ***Mmmmm, doughnuts!***

Outreach Information Services Director **Scott Farmer** donned his Krispy Kreme bakers hat, grabbed his Krispy Kreme coffee mug, and set his Zoom background to a video of "hot now" Krispy Kreme doughnuts rolling off the line for a recent online meeting. "I thought this particular Zoom appearance with the video in the background was pretty sweet," he says. We're sure his check from the doughnut maker is in the mail ...

(You can download your own Krispy Kreme background videos — available in both [original glazed](#) and [new fruit glazed](#). You'll need to provide your own hat, though.)



*At her small farm in McCoy, Belinda Pauley holds one of mama pig Rosie's newborn piglets. "There's nothing cuter than a baby pig," says Belinda, who's preparing to welcome more piglets soon. "We also have two horses, one donkey, five dogs, and about 30 chickens." She and her husband used to have a cow, but says Belinda, "she's now in the freezer."*

## **Belinda Pauley**

*Program manager at [International Support Services](#), Belinda Pauley provides immigration advising services to visiting scholars and student interns. Having worked for Virginia Tech for 33 years, Belinda says she still enjoys meeting new people from around the world and learning more about their cultures.*

### **Are you binge-watching any shows on TV?**

I'm not a big TV watcher, but I like "Homestead Rescue," "According to Jim," and "Love It or List It."

### **What is one small thing that makes your day better?**

My miniature dachshund, Rudy, who is always so excited to see me come home from work.

### **What was your first job?**

Cashier at a local community convenience store when I was a high school junior and senior. It taught me responsibility and the value of money. The worst was how rude people can be, so now I always try to be nice to cashiers.

### **What is your most prized possession?**

My family — which includes my husband, my children, and soon my new grandson, who is due to arrive in August.

**What's your favorite quarantine snack?**

The same snack I take to work every day — yogurt and a banana.

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**Daniel Sumner**

*Daniel Sumner is the assistant director of the [Women and Gender in International Development](#) team at CIRED.*

**What books are on your nightstand/coffee table?**

Right now, most of the books I'm reading are of the children's literature variety. Currently, my 2-year-old is really a fan of "Little Blue Truck," "The Day the Crayons Quit," and "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus." All three are now in our constant rotation of bedtime books. At the same time, I'm trying to find time to reread "The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinction" by David Quammen.

**What is the most interesting trip you've ever been on?**

During my time at CIRED, I have been privileged to have the opportunity to travel and support the implementation of several of Virginia Tech's projects. But for me personally a family trip to the American Southwest remains one of the most interesting. During that trip, I visited several Ancestral Pueblo cultural

sites at Hovenweep National Monument, Mesa Verde National Park, and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. Did you know that Canyons of the Ancients National Monument contains the highest known archaeological site density in the United States? If you ever find yourself in the Four Corners region, I highly recommend these and other national park units — Chaco Culture National Historical Park, Aztec Ruins National Monument, or Canyon de Chelly National Monument.

**What activities are you doing in quarantine to pass the time?**

Quarantining with a toddler has definitely been an adventure. To help pass the time, we have been going on a considerable number of urban safaris (pushing my little one around Roanoke in his jogging stroller), building block towers, collecting rocks, and binge-watching the occasional season of "Thomas and Friends." I have also embarked on a series of DIY/craft projects that I have had planned for a while and now have some time.

**If you were a plant, what plant would you be?**

Good question. ... I would have to go with the saguaro cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*).

**What are your random talents?**

I'm not sure it is exactly a talent, but I have been told that I am an effective tour guide — whether highlighting my favorite places in Blacksburg, breweries in Roanoke, or any national park site or city that my family and I visit, I really enjoy sharing my love for places with others.

— Sara Hendery

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## LIFE AT HOME



**Julia Kell**, communications specialist with the Office of Economic Development, sent along this picture of her Australian shepherd, Toby, who's keeping her company while she works at home. Julia rescued this handsome guy in September.

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## BREAK TIME

### A few one-liners

We've reached that point in the quarantine when it's time for a few one-liners. Funny or dumb? You decide:

- What's the best thing about Switzerland? I don't know, but the flag is a huge plus.
- I submitted 10 puns to a joke-writing competition to see if any of them made the finals. Sadly, no pun in 10 did.
- What's the difference between a hippo and a Zippo? One is really heavy, and the other is a little lighter.
- Can the HokieBird jump higher than Burruss Hall? Of course! Burruss Hall can't jump.
- If you have 10 apples in one hand and 14 oranges in the other, what do you have? Really, really big hands.
- I took part in the suntanning Olympics, but I only got bronze.

- What do Alexander the Great and Winnie-the-Pooh have in common?  
Same middle name.
- Murphy's Law says that anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Cole's Law is thinly sliced cabbage.
- Not only is my new thesaurus terrible, it's also terrible.

Think you can do better? [Send us](#) your worst — er, *best* — funnies.

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