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INSIDE VT WOOD

Reminder...

Remember to submit department news items by Friday 3 p.m. of each week to Will Pfeil at wpfeil@vt.edu for inclusion in Inside VT WOOD each Monday morning. All past issues of Inside VT Wood reside on our department website under the publications link.

News From Paul Winistorfer

- Welcome to Dr. Urs Buehlmann who has joined our faculty as an associate professor working in the area of manufacturing systems. Dr. Buehlmann's majority appointment is supported through Virginia Cooperative Extension. He will be working with our industry in the state and region, teaching secondary manufacturing, and contributing to our research and graduate education. Welcome Urs – we are most glad to have you with us and look forward to helping you grow your program in our department.
- Note the new Graduate Student Spotlight in this issue of Inside VT Wood. Our inaugural Graduate Student Spotlight is recognizing PhD candidate Omid Parhizkar. Omid is studying under the guidance of Dr. Bob Smith. We will also use this weekly Spotlight on our website in a prominent place.
- I will be in Southside this week at the Higher Education Center, continuing to work toward our educational platform there, with other partners from the region.
- We have final confirmation of the new scholarship platform on our campus supported by the Woodworking Machinery Manufacturers of America. This is in conjunction with the department of Mechanical Engineering. The first ME scholarship recipient students will be selected in March 2008. Thanks to WMMA leadership for establishing this new scholarship program at Virginia Tech in a unique collaboration with the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Wood Science and Forest Products. Visit the WMMA website at: <http://www.wmma.org/>
- Dr. Earl Kline submitted a proposal for summer session support under a new grants program on campus to offer the Wood Enterprise Institute (WEI) again in 2008. The Summer Session Advisory Committee met last Friday to review the 2008 Provost Office Summer Session Grant Program applications and “WOOD 2984 Wood Enterprise Institute” in Summer of 2008 was approved for funding. Congratulations Earl on this innovative approach to getting support for the WEI. \$5,000 has been awarded to the department in support of the WEI for summer 2008.
- November 7 the Graduate Seminar class will be hosted in the Kitchen Design Center. Please let me know if you would like to join the group for this tour as we look at additional interactions for our department on campus. I will need to turn in a count of those attending before we visit the Center. The Center is in the department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management and is located in Wallace Hall.
http://www.ahrm.vt.edu/Dept/center_intro.html

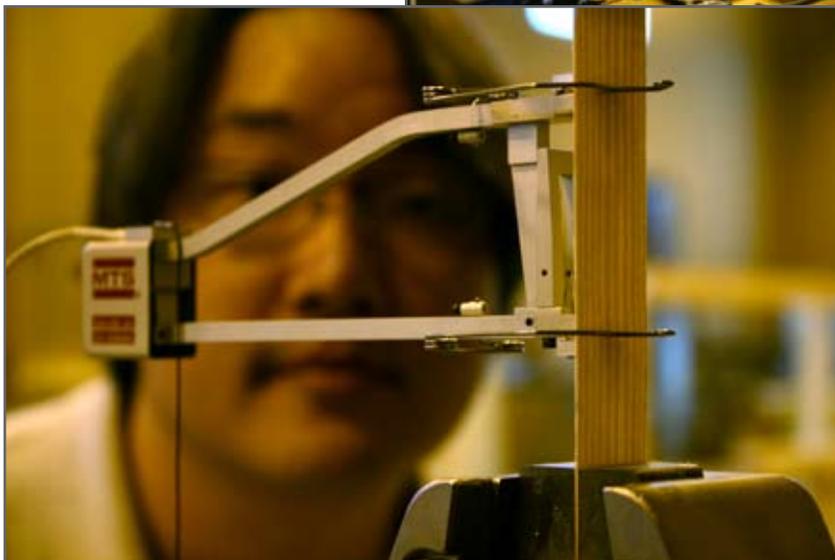
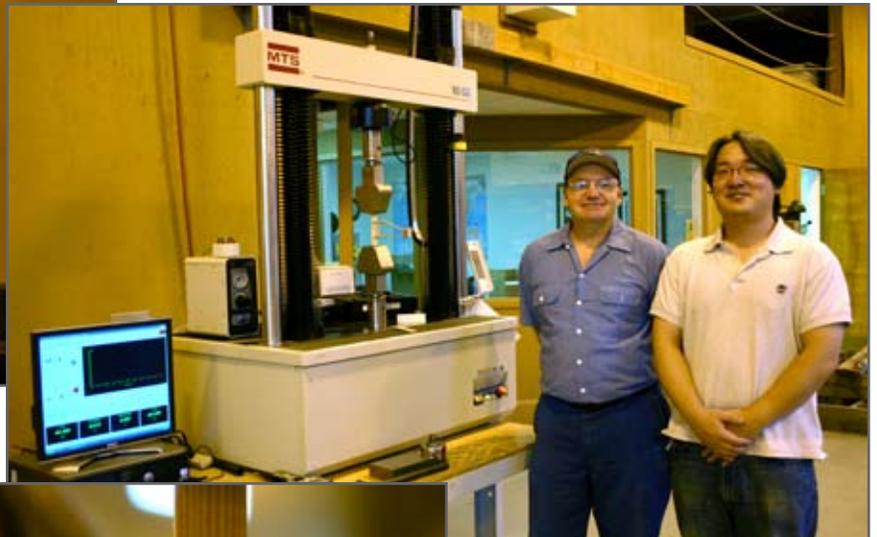
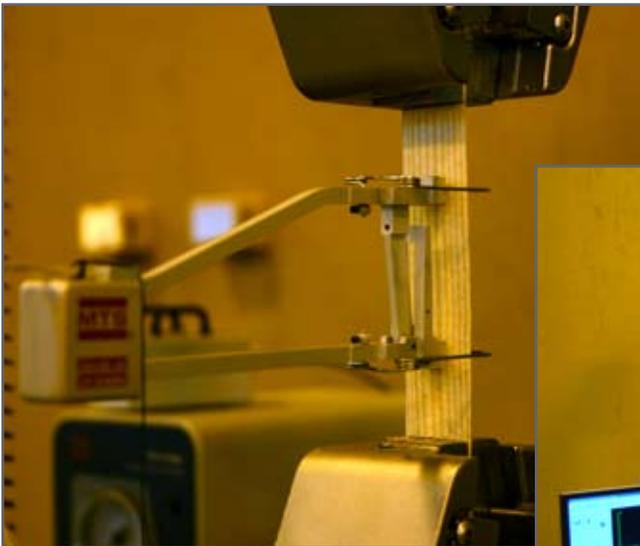
Dr. David Damery Visited Wood Science Last Week



Dr. David Damery of the University of Massachusetts visited our program last week and met with faculty about areas of interest and collaboration. Shown here at the Brooks Center is Dr. Robert Bush, Dr. David Damery and Paul Winistorfer.

New MTS Upgrade

The department has supported a software and fixtures upgrade to the MTS test frame at the Brooks Center. Shown in these photos are the new extensometer used to



measure strain in individual flakes under tension. This research work is part of Gi Young's graduate research. Engineering Lab Manager Rick Caudill oversaw the upgrade and will be happy to work with students and faculty needing training on the new software system for this much used test frame.

Dr. Urs Buehlmann joins Department of Wood Science and Forest Products at Virginia Tech



BLACKSBURG, VA., November 1, 2007 - Dr. Urs Buehlmann has joined the department of wood science and forest products in the College of Natural Resources as an Associate Professor.

Dr. Buehlmann works in the area of manufacturing systems. His focus is on secondary wood processing and industry competitiveness. He has a special interest on globalization and the impact of globalization on the forest products industries.

Dr. Buehlmann has a background in wood products manufacturing and management. He received his Ph.D. in the area of wood processing from the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products and a MBA in Finance and Management from Virginia Tech. He previously obtained an industrial engineering degree from the Swiss Institute of Wood Technology. Prior to joining the department, he was general manager at Enkeboll Designs in Los Angeles, CA.

Dr. Buehlmann will support the forest products industries in Virginia with focus on secondary manufacturers. He will provide technical and business expertise to companies and assist the university, government and associations in issues relating to his clientele. As a long term supporter of WoodLINKS, a high school woodworking education support program, he will champion woodworking at high schools and community colleges. Dr. Buehlmann's research program will focus on manufacturing systems and their impact on (global) competitiveness of enterprises.

Areas of Expertise:

- Manufacturing systems
- Manufacturing management
- Company competitiveness
- Lean manufacturing
- Globalization
- Wood recycling

Dr. Buehlmann has joined Virginia Tech as a faculty member in manufacturing systems, further strengthening the expertise already in place at the department of wood science and forest products.

Urs Buehlmann, Associate Professor
Department of Wood Science and Forest Products
Brooks Forest Products Center (0503)
1650 Ramble Road
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Phone 540.231.7107 - Fax 540.231.8868 - Email ubuehlm@vt.edu - Skype: ubuehlmann



Omid Parhizkar, PhD Candidate
Yazd, Iran

My name is Omid Parhizkar. I come from Yazd, an ancient city with a 3,000 year history in Iran, also called the “bride of desert”. I have 2 sisters and 1 brother. Three of them are graduated in engineering fields (civil, chemical, and mining). After completing high school in 1998, I left my family and moved to Tehran, where I obtained my bachelor’s degree in wood science and paper technology in University of Tehran in 2002, the oldest and largest university of Iran. The university is among the most prestigious in Iran, and among the first options of applicants in the annual nationwide entrance exam for top Iranian universities.

Following a brief stint (one year) in Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand, I came to Virginia Tech in 2004 as a Visiting Research Scholar to work for Dr. Robert L. (Bob) Smith. My project was titled ‘Assessment of Virginia’s Bio-Energy Resources, Wood Residues Using GIS’. This project provided valuable information toward the expanded use of bio-energy in Virginia.

I found Blacksburg and Virginia Tech a great place to study and live. I further pursued my research under his guidance and am working toward a PhD in forest products marketing and management in the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products with expected completion Spring 2008.

I am exploring a broad range of topics in my doctoral research, including renewable and alternative energy, international trade and marketing for forest products, transportation, logistics, and distribution. As a team member of this larger project, I have worked with Virginia transportation officials, U.S. forest products industries, and the Virginia Office of Economic

Development. I investigated the transportation issues facing the Appalachian region and explored and intermodal transportation alternatives that are available to the regional wood products industries. The results were communicated to the Appalachian Regional Commission for further action plans.

This transportation project led us to international trade and transportation issues and another project. The purpose of the second project was to make wood products from Appalachia, especially Virginia and West Virginia, more competitive in Latin America markets by improving their transportation modes and making transportation more cost effective. This project was in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The distribution networks available for U.S. lumber in Mexico and the Dominican Republic are being finalized. My dissertation is titled ‘Identifying strategic impact factors on the export distribution channels of the United States hardwood industries to Mexico’.

My graduate experiences here have been very positive. Being involved in various meeting groups for projects has been a large part of my graduate student experience. Doing research on different topics taught me that a very critical part for the success is the proper goal and definition of the project scope: define the right goals, limit your study to the vital areas, and plan to collect proper data and prepare for all the things that can intervene in the study. I believe that being able to communicate findings is as important as the quality of the research itself.

I was recently awarded a scholarship from Anderson Tully Company during the activities of Wood Week 2007. At the end of my graduate studies, I want to continue working in the forest products marketing and management and international development field and later I hope to lead initiatives. I am taking the time and effort to acquire the knowledge and experience to achieve my goal. I am grateful that I have the chance to meet many inspiring people and learn from them. In my spare time I enjoy exercising, swimming, and reading.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the guidance and support of Dr. Bob Smith that has been sustaining me during these past several years. His encouragement and assistance has made the doctoral program a very rewarding program. Thank you also to my committee members (Drs. Hammett, Han, Kline, and Miller) for your guidance. Thanks to the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products folks for your great friendship. Go Hokies!

Special Study Course Offered for Spring

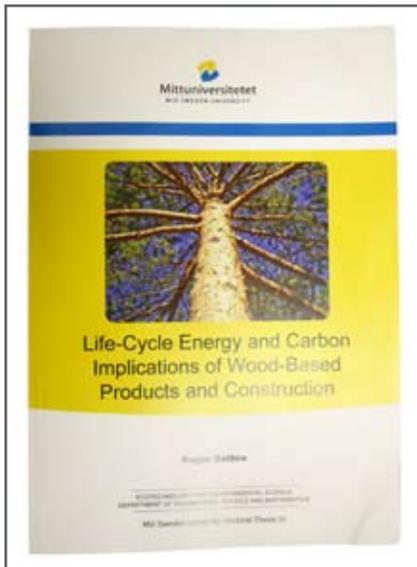
Dr. Hindman will be offering a Special Study course in the Spring Semester entitled Design of Wood Structures. This course will cover the design methods currently used for light-frame construction in the United States, including the National Design Specification for Wood Construction (NDS). No prerequisites are required, but students should have a general grasp of wood mechanics. The course is numbered WOOD 5984 and does not have a CRN number as of yet. See Dr. Hindman for more information.

Department Meeting

The next department meeting is November 14th at 3:30 pm in the Brooks Center classroom – mark your calendar today.

Professor and Department Head, Department of Forestry – Position Available

The position of Professor and Department Head of the Department of Forestry is available and the search has begun. Please see the web resource site established for this important leadership search in our college www.forestry.vt.edu/searchresources



Life Cycle Energy and Carbon Implication of Wood-Based Products and Construction

A recent doctoral thesis completed by student Roger Sathre of the department of Ecotechnology and Environmental Science department of the Engineering, Physics and Mathematics of the Mid Sweden University may be of interest to those studying life-cycle-analysis of building materials and houses.

Michigan Wood Energy Website

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is proud to announce the launch of the Michigan Wood Energy website, an interactive educational tool to assist facility managers in the use of wood biomass for energy. We'll be doing a more widespread outreach campaign in the coming weeks, but we wanted to give you all a first look at the new site — <http://michiganwoodenergy.org>.

The site features the Wood Energy Calculator, which allows users to generate cost savings estimates for switching to wood as a boiler fuel, and a copy of “Exploring Woody Biomass Retrofit Opportunities in Michigan Boiler Operations,” the new report from CTA Architects and Engineers that looks at statewide potential for wood systems.

Jessica Simons - Natural Resources Specialist, Southeast Michigan

Resource Conservation & Development Council

7203 Jackson Road Ann Arbor, MI 48103-9506

Phone: (734)761-6722 x 105

Fax: (734)662-1686

Web: www.semircd.org/ash

TUESDAY THIS WEEK!! Training, Testing and Certifying Your Manufacturing Employees Webinar Broadcast

The Woodworking Machinery Industry Association (WMIA) is hosting a webinar on November 6 titled "Training, Testing and Certifying Your Manufacturing Employees". The program speaker is Chris Hallam of American Woodmark Corporation. Paul Winistorfer will moderate the broadcast. The broadcast is free, but you must register. You can register at <http://www.iiian.ibeam.com/events/watt001/23803/>

Upcoming Holiday Schedule

Governor Tim Kaine has announced the state schedule for the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays. The schedule will be as follows:

Thanksgiving:

Wednesday, November 21 – Offices close at noon

Thursday, November 22 – State offices closed

Friday, November 23 – State offices closed

Christmas:

Monday, December 24 – State offices closed

Tuesday, December 25 – State offices closed

New Year:

Monday, December 31 – State offices closed

Tuesday, January 1 – State offices closed

A Bad Time To Cut Wood - Family Awaits Approval For Sawmill, But Zoning Alone Might Not Save It

Saturday, Oct 27, 2007 - 12:08 AM

By CALVIN R. TRICE

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

LOUISA. A family-owned sawmill business sits temporarily closed after running afoul of county regulations, but it faces a longer-term threat in worldwide market forces that are affecting the entire Virginia timber industry.

The family that owns Fred Dehner Sawmill Inc. sought to move the company to the family's ancestral homestead in eastern Louisa County last year only to be derailed by permit requirements.

But Fred Dehner, the second of three generations of his family to cut logs into boards, says the 47-year-old sawmill faces challenges beyond the conditional-use permit it is seeking.

"It'll be hard to keep up no matter how you run it, because timber's not selling and the price of fuel is double what it was," Dehner said.

The recent downturn in homebuilding has dried up demand for wood products. And in the larger view, global competition has begun supplying builders with wood harvested and cut elsewhere in the world that can often be purchased cheaper here than local wood.

For the first time in 10 years, the Virginia Department of Forestry last year recorded a year-to-year decline in the number of acres harvested. That number fell from about 235,000 acres in 2005 to about 200,000 last year.

The Dehners have a hearing before the Louisa County Planning Commission next month for a conditional-use permit. The permit would let them have wood trucked in for them to cut for finishing.

But pricing trends don't augur well even with the permit, Fred Dehner said recently.

Timber is still a \$25 billion industry in Virginia, employing 225,000 people. But it's not a growth industry, experts say.

Softwood pine, spruce and firs from Canada are less dense than southern softwoods. That makes them easier to compress into the 4-by-8-foot panels used to build houses, said Paul M. Winistorfer, head of Virginia Tech's Department of Wood Science and Forest Products.

The 2-by-4s sold at Home Depot are likely to come from Eastern Europe, where slow-growth spruces and firs also produce a more uniform quality. And companies in New Zealand and South America have been investing in tree plantations to take advantage of faster growth rates that produce greater volume, Winistorfer said.

"If you look at what's happened in the European Union and resources available in Eastern Europe and Russia, we are seeing products that were not in the marketplace 10 years ago," Winistorfer said.

Some of the advantages of foreign wood deal with quality. However, some countries enjoy cheaper labor and fewer regulations, factors that drive costs up here, said Paul Howe, executive vice president of the Virginia Forestry Association.

"When you take into account that some of those countries have cheaper labor costs and don't have the environmental regulations that we have, they're just able to make products cheaper," Howe said.

The timber industry's fortunes are cyclical, and businesses expect downturns that result from the housing slump that has slowed building and the demand for building supplies.

However, Randy Bush, executive director of the Virginia Forest Products Association, said the changes in the industry during the past five years have been more pronounced than at any other time during the 30 years he's been with the association.

Bush cites as one cause the loss of furniture manufacturing plants in Southside Virginia and North Carolina to locations overseas. That migration hurt timber product manufacturers who'd enjoyed abundant local demand, Bush said.

"When that went away, the market that we were so close to had been reduced by a significant amount," he said.

The loss of other manufacturing jobs to foreign countries meant the loss of local customers for wooden packing pallets, Bush added.

Another trend that affected small family sawmills like the Dehners' was property ownership patterns. For 38 of its 46 years, Dehner Sawmill was a mobile business that timber investors solicited when they bought large tracts of land to harvest trees for years at a time.

However, the state has fewer tracts large enough to buy for logging. That development forced the Dehners to settle in one place. The sawmill operated for six years in Goochland County before high rent drove it out — compelling the business to set up in Louisa last October.

Timber experts refer to the trend as fragmentation. Virginia is still 61.5 percent forest, and reforestation is taking place at a faster clip than tree cutting, they say.

But split inheritances and property subdivisions on the edge of urban growth for housing has made large swaths of forestland owned by individuals a bygone trait, Bush said.

"It's more difficult for a company to buy land," he said. "For a 150-to 200-acre plot of land, you may have to deal with 10 landowners. Whereas 40 or 50 years ago, you only had to deal with one or two."

The outlook is not all bleak for the state's timber manufacturing. Howe, the forestry association executive, notes that Virginia is endowed with quality western hardwoods that will always give loggers and millers here an advantage.

But the industry could use some regulatory help. Many woodland owners are selling and subdividing their property for the same reason farmers do — to make money. Howe suggested that state and local governments provide incentives to allow forest property owners to keep their land wooded by cutting trees to sell and reforesting in cycles.

"That way, they could keep their land in trees in the long run, which benefits the environment," he said.

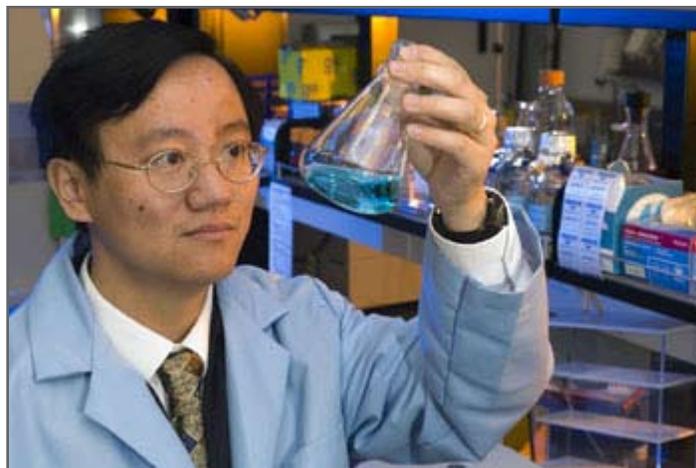
Contact staff writer Calvin R. Trice at (540) 932-3674 or ctrice@timesdispatch.com

Air Force funded researcher engineers enzymes to advance the hydrogen economy

By Susan Trulove

BLACKSBURG, Va., November 2, 2007 — Y. H. Percival Zhang, assistant professor of biological systems engineering at Virginia Tech, has received an Air Force Young Investigator award to advance development of an onboard process to convert a cellulosic material into hydrogen to power fuel cell vehicles.

Zhang and colleagues Barbara R. Evans and Jonathan R. Mielenz of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Robert C. Hopkins and Michael W.W. Adams of the University of Georgia have previously demonstrated that they can use a combination of 13 enzymes never found together in nature to completely convert polysaccharides (C₆H₁₀O₅) in a starch-like powder form and water into hydrogen (PLOS ONE May 23, 2007). “The enzymes use the energy in the starch to break up water into only carbon dioxide and hydrogen,” Zhang said.



Y. H. Percival Zhang

In the Air Force-funded research, Zhang will engineer enzymes to expedite the conversion of the insoluble cellulosic substrate into the soluble product that is ultimately converted to hydrogen energy – to effect a phase change from solid to liquid. “It is a rate-limiting step in the process and our research will speed up the reaction rate,” said Zhang. “How fast the reaction happens is an important consideration because you don’t want to wait in your vehicle while the product of a biochemical process feeds your fuel cell,” said Zhang.

There is a newly-discovered enzyme that converts cellulose to glucose 1-phosphate (G-1-P); this enzyme will be engineered to speed up the process. The critical step is the conversion of G-1-P to glucose 6-phosphate (G-6-P) – the energy source for many living systems that a subsequent enzyme team will convert to hydrogen for the fuel cell, as previously demonstrated.

The process can stall at G-1-P, but Zhang has a plan for creating a special enzyme that converts the material from G-1-P to G-6-P so quickly there is hardly a pause at all.

“This novel enzymatic carbohydrate-to-hydrogen conversion has reached an exceedingly high hydrogen storage density, so that 1 kilogram of sugar will release 0.148 kilogram of hydrogen, and hydrogen release from the carbohydrate can be implemented at modest biochemical reaction conditions, such as 140 degrees F, and normal pressure,” he said.

“Energy storage is important for transportation applications because you don’t want the fuel tank to take up a lot of space.”

The Air Force Office of Scientific Research will award approximately \$9.5 million in grants to 29 scientists and engineers who submitted winning research proposals through the Air Force’s Young Investigator Research Program. The program is open to scientists and engineers at research institutions across the United States. Those selected will receive the grants over a three-year period. A total of 215 proposals were received in response to the solicitation in major areas of interests to the Air Force. Interest areas include: aerospace, chemical and material sciences; mathematics, information and life sciences; and physics and electronics. The program supports scientists and engineers who have received Ph.D. or equivalent degrees in the last five years.

Grant recipients must show exceptional ability and promise for conducting basic research. The objective of this program is to foster creative basic research in science and engineering, enhance early career development of outstanding young investigators, and increase opportunities for the young investigators to recognize the Air Force mission and the related challenges in science and engineering.

Zhang’s basic research will help characterize the cellulose phosphorylation cleavage at the surface of cellulose, understand the kinetics and mechanisms of the reaction, and promote development of future carbohydrate-hydrogen

fuel cell power systems. He is also developing one graduate level course on enzyme engineering, supporting Ph.D. students, and providing opportunities for undergraduate research. Zhang is also a participant in the U.S. Department of Energy ORNL-led Bioenergy Research Center and collaborates with other DOE labs, universities, companies, and military labs.

General Announcements

October Monthly Memo from the Graduate School

Announcements & Deadlines:

The Graduate Student Services Office (GSSO) in the National Capital Region encourages faculty staff and students to place suggestions in the drop box outside the room 200 at the Northern Virginia Center or to send an email to the gssso@nvc.vt.edu.

The Graduate Student Services Office in the National Capital Region will hold a monthly open house for current graduate students on the last Thursday of the month between the hours of 6:00-7:00 at the Northern Virginia Center. For more information, please contact 703-538-8327 or email us at gssso@nvc.vt.edu.

Call for Nominations for 2007-08 Graduate Student Awards

The Graduate School is requesting nominations for the following graduate student awards:

- Outstanding Dissertation in (1) sciences and engineering (2) social sciences
- Graduate Student Service Excellence
- Graduate Student Teaching Excellence
- Graduate Man and Woman of the Year
- Outstanding Graduate Student by college at the (1) master's and (2) doctoral level

Eligibility and nomination requirements vary for each award; please see attached table for details. Nominations must be submitted by February 1, 2008, unless otherwise stated. Award winners will be notified by letter. All awards include a monetary prize and a plaque or certificate. Winners and their advisors will be recognized at the awards banquet during Graduate Education Week in March 2008.

Change to Requirement to Pay Tuition for Students on Assistantship

Due to the fact that graduate tuition increased at a greater rate than stipends, it is necessary to update the tuition payment requirement. Accordingly, for students who are paid at Step 20 or below, departments must pay an in-state tuition, academic fee and engineering fee (if applicable) scholarship in an amount that is at least proportional to the assistantship appointment. Students who are paid at Step 21 or above may need to pay their tuition from their assistantship stipends. Departments are asked to apply these new rates for contracts issued for all future appointments. Departments must specify on the assistantship agreement whether or not tuition will be paid by the department or the student. Please contact Monika Gibson in the Graduate School (gibsonm@vt.edu) if you have any questions or concerns about this change.

New Graduate School Forms

On November 1, 2007, the Graduate School will release a new suite of forms. These forms will replace any older versions previously used by the Graduate School or revised by departments for their own personal use. While we understand that there will be older forms in the pipeline for a while, no old forms will be accepted as of January 14, 2008 which is the beginning of the spring 2008 semester. If you have websites that direct students to our forms, please make sure that you check to ensure that the URL link is still accessible. In addition, no departmental modifications will be allowed or accepted to the new version forms.

Application submission and decision deadlines

In an effort to help streamline the processes for departments, the Graduate School is establishing specific deadlines by which students can apply and when departments must make a final determination on an applicant. For spring 2008, the online application will no longer be available after December 15, 2007. Departments must make final decisions on all their applicants by Friday, December 28, 2007. Term changes will be accepted for students who do not complete their application packets within established departmental deadlines. Please contact the Graduate School directly if you would like to recommend a term change for application consideration.

Nominations for Cunningham Doctoral Scholars

As an integral part of our recruitment efforts to attract outstanding doctoral students to Virginia Tech, I am pleased to open the competition for the 2007 Cunningham Doctoral Scholars Program. Please review the guidelines and timelines available on the Graduate School web site, http://www.grads.vt.edu/financial/for_departments/gs_funding.html

Clare Boothe Luce Fellowship:

Graduate Catalog

Graduate Course Listings

As a first step in rolling out the new Graduate Catalog you can now find an improved version of the graduate course listings. <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/programs>

Graduate Catalog

College Deans will receive a note from the Graduate School next week with information on how we will begin populating information for each Graduate Program. Look for more information within your College as Deans delegate update abilities. As the updates begin we will offer some technical information sessions for those that may have difficulties adding content.

Enrollments

Graduate enrollments for fall 2007 reached an all time high of 6,496 university-wide. This includes full-time and part time enrollments in Blacksburg, extended campuses, and beyond. In fall 2007 the university also achieved its goal of getting 900 new PhD students, three years ahead of the targeted year, 2010. Today Doctoral students comprise 42% of graduate enrollments, compared to 30% in fall 1998, and 28% in fall 2002.

Institutional Plan for Graduate Degrees (IPGD) – Call for Proposals

The Institutional Plan for Graduate Degrees (IPGD) provides the overview of our academic plans for graduate education at Virginia Tech. The IPGD is updated annually and in this regard, I've included the call for proposals below.

CGS&P activities

Mr. John Kane's appointment as the 2007-2008 Chief Justice of the Graduate Honor System was ratified by the commission on September 19, 2007.

At the October 3rd meeting, the Graduate Student Assembly announced that there is a new, updated website for the GSA. Information and deadlines on the Travel Fund (TFP) and Graduate Research and Development (GRDP) programs that provide money for graduate students to travel to conference and conduct research can be found on the website.

This past year the GSA, working with the commission, has acquired free statistical consulting for graduate students through the Statistics Department effective January 2008.

Policies & Procedures Reminders/Updates

Enrollment of graduate students working on their thesis/dissertation: graduate students who have been out of residence and return to work with their Advisor during their thesis/dissertation writing should be enrolled for a minimum of 3 credits of research (this presumes that all other coursework on the student's Plan of Study has been completed). Faculty advisors and committee members should not agree to work with students who are not enrolled, i.e., a student who wishes to return to defend a thesis/dissertation needs to have a period of research enrollment for working with his/her advisor and committee prior to the defense.

Titles of departmental graduate personnel: The Graduate School has adopted the following terminology on our new forms and in the Policies and Procedures document. Graduate Program Director refers to the designated faculty member in the department who plays an academic supervisory role in directing the graduate program. If the Department Head wishes, the Graduate Program Director may sign graduate forms on behalf of the Head. Graduate Coordinator refers to the staff member in the department who plays a managerial role in the handling of the graduate program. We are requesting that the Graduate Coordinator receive copies of all official paperwork for students prior to them being sent to the Graduate School. This should insure that if anything is lost in transition between units, that a copy of such paperwork is available.

Students defending before they are ready: We need the help of Graduate Program Directors to insure that students aren't being allowed to defend before they are ready to submit an ETD within two weeks following the defense. In the future, all members of a student's Advisory Committee will be required to sign the request form for scheduling a defense. Their signature will verify that they have seen the thesis/dissertation and agree that it is ready for defense. This new procedure is necessary because of the number of delays in filing of ETDs, some of which extend to months or years.

Defending Student Status: The 1 credit DSS Status was designed for students who had a completed thesis/dissertation ready for defense in one semester but could not arrange to schedule that defense until the beginning of the next semester (typically because of faculty schedules that are beyond the student's control). However, many of the DSS requests that come to the Graduate School are from students who are still working on their thesis/dissertation, so they do not fit within either the intent of the policy or the time at the beginning of the semester for scheduling a defense with only the 1 cr of DSS enrollment. If extenuating circumstances result in the Graduate Program Director and/or the student's Advisor requesting an exception that allows DSS after the usual time, that request and the formal scheduling of the defense must be completed during the designated DSS period.

Defenses or Preliminary Exams are not valid if they have not been formally scheduled. For both adherence to policy and for everyone's protection, formal scheduling of these examinations by the Graduate School is required before an examination should be held. Thus, the Advisor should have the examination card in hand before the exam. Examinations held without prior scheduling will need to be rescheduled and conducted a second time.

Annual Call for Proposals Institutional Plan for Graduate Degrees (IPGD)

The Graduate School issues its annual call for new degree proposal for inclusion on the Institutional Plan for Graduate Degrees (IPGD). The current IPGD is comprised of a list of degree programs that are "approved for development" (pre-approved) and a wish list of degrees not yet pre approved. Submissions will be considered for "pre-approval" of degrees to be implemented no later than fall 2011.

We anticipate that colleges will review and select from proposals generated by their academic units. We would like to receive the college-approved proposals by February 1st so that we can finalize the 08-09 update to the IPGD by the end of the spring, 2008 semester.

Please provide the following information (in two pages or less) for degree programs you wish to have considered for inclusion on the plan:

- Need and Demand for the degree
- Target audience
- Faculty resources to be utilized

- Graduate courses (existing and proposed) underpinning the degree
- Conformity with the VT Strategic Plan particularly with regard to research emphasis and interdisciplinary nature
- Source of financial support
- Anticipated implementation date

The proposed degrees currently listed on the wish list will be considered for pre-approval in this review cycle. Please review the current “wish list” and indicate those proposals that should be removed from consideration. The current IPGD is attached.

Please send proposals to Karen P. DePauw in the Graduate School by February 1, 2008.

Karen P. DePauw, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies &
Dean of the Graduate School
Graduate School (MC 0325)
GLC @ Donaldson Brown