News2Note
February 2012


Michael Alexander, History, was recognized as the January 3 Virginia Tech Teacher of the Week by the Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER). Alexander was honored for his highly successful approach to teaching introductory classes and his commitment to using a variety of techniques to engage his students. Winner of the 2011 Sporn Award for Excellence in Teaching Introductory Subjects, Alexander is a student-friendly professor who also is willing to share successful teaching approaches with others, as exemplified by his presentations at CIDER’s Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy.

Barbara Allen, Science and Technology in Society, was awarded a three-year NSF grant ($138,000) for a research project titled “Chemical Communities: Shaping Policy-Relevant Science and Industrial Transformation in an International Comparative Perspective.”


ASPECT students Heba El-Shazli and Marc Thomas were selected to participate in the Spring 2012 Diversity Scholars Program; the program was organized by the Office of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives and the Graduate School at Virginia Tech.

Several individuals in the College were recent recipients of an Assessment Dissemination Grant from the Office of Assessment and Evaluation. Political Science faculty member Craig Brians and students Logan Vidal and Victoria Dounoucos were awarded $700 each to present “Teaching with Clickers: A Learning Outcome Assessment” at the American Political Science Association *Teaching and Learning Conference*, February 17-19, in Washington, D.C.
ASPECT student Seth Bartee published “What Happened to the American Scholar?” in SPECTRA: The ASPECT Journal 1.2 (December 2011): 21-27. Bartee also published “Interdisciplinarity and the Perils of Historiography,” Public Knowledge Journal 3.2 (December 2011): 3.2.7a (online); the article is part of a series in response to ASPECT Director Francois Debrix’s lead article "Against Interdisciplinarity as a Panacea.”

The Center for 21st Century Studies has announced members of the inaugural Nomadic Studies cohort traveling to Morocco, Turkey, and Sri Lanka this summer. Participating are: Zoe Belyavsky, International Studies and French; Kathryn Berlin, Human Development; Grace Dunbar, Biological Sciences; James Flanagan, International Studies; Lani Fu, Theatre Arts and Humanities, Science, and Environment; Christine Kayanan, History; Felicia Kiefer, Sociology, and Public and Urban Affairs; Michelle McGuire, Psychology; Catherine O’Donnell, International Studies; Gina Reistrup, International Studies; Virginia Roach, Engineering; Noah Rogers, International Studies; Jessica Smyth, Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences; Mirab Somuah-Sampong, International Studies; Emily Tyson, English; Shelby Ward, English; Tempest West, Communication; and Samantha Zabolli, International Studies. Sixteen of the students will receive substantial support from the College for their experience abroad; University Honors is providing comparable support for two students. All participants are enrolled in Introduction to 21st Century Studies (C21S 2984) this semester and are pursuing a minor in 21st Century Studies.

Travis J. Cross, Music, was the guest conductor for the Stafford County All-County High School Band on January 6–7, the Prince William County All-County High School Band on January 12–14, and the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association District VI Middle Level Band on January 27–28.

Francois Debrix, Political Science and Director of ASPECT, published “Against Interdisciplinarity as a Panacea,” Public Knowledge 3.2 (December 2011): 3.2.7 (online). Public Knowledge is a student-led electronic journal published by graduate students in ASPECT, Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP), Government and International Affairs (GIA), and Planning, Governance and Globalization (PGG) at Virginia Tech, with the support of the Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society, the Graduate School, and the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA).

Alexander Dickow, Foreign Languages and Literatures/French, composed the lyrics to “Yardwork in Moscow, Idaho circa 1988,” which was performed last fall by the University of Idaho Vandaleers Concert Choir. The music is by Robert Dickow. The composition can be found here.

A project designed by Principal Investigators Tom Ewing, History and Office of the Dean, Bernice L. Hausman, English, as well as Bruce Pencek, Universities Libraries, Naren Ramakrishnan, Engineering, and Gunther Eysenbach, University of Toronto, was a winner of the Digging into Data Challenge, an international funding competition designed to promote innovative humanities and social science research using techniques of large scale data analysis.
The team’s proposal, titled “An Epidemiology of Information: Data Mining the 1918 Influenza Pandemic,” is one of 14 selected for funding by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The two-year project will be conducted by faculty and graduate assistants associated with the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment and the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science at Virginia Tech and the Centre for Global Health Innovation at the University of Toronto. Virginia Tech will receive $123,778 in external funding, the University of Toronto $125,000. Details can be found here.

Jim Dubinsky, English, was accepted to the Office of Professional Development Management Academy program. The program is designed to support the professional development of associate chairs and program directors.


Jessica Folkart, Foreign Languages and Literatures/Spanish, published “The Ethics of Spanish Identity and In-difference,” Philosophy and Literature 35.2 (2011): 216-32. In addition, she was elected and inducted as Vice President of the International Association of Hispanic Women’s Literature and Culture (Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica) in Barcelona in Fall 2011.

RPM Advisory Board Professor Rosemary Carucci Goss, Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management, was selected by the editorial staff of Multi-Housing News as one of 11 “Ones to Watch” for 2012 for her three decades of work with students in the residential property management program. As such, she was featured on the cover of the November 2011 issue of the trade association’s journal, along with AHRM/Residential Property Management juniors Neil Werner, Taya Burns, and Brooke Marbardy.

James Hawdon, Sociology, is the senior collaborator on the funded ($314,000 over 3 years) NSF REU “Research Experience for Undergraduates” proposal, funded for $314,000 over three years. The summer program engages undergraduates from a number of disciplines who will spend a month working together on several research projects involving water-issues using the Stream Lab at Strouble’s Creek. Hawdon will teach student how to design and field a community
survey about water use, attitudes toward environmental conservation, and support for various water policies.

Department of History M.A. students **Stephan O’Hara** and **Laura West** were the winners of this year’s Virginia Center for Civil War Studies Research Scholarships. O’Hara received a scholarship for his work on the memorialization of American presidents who died during the immediate post-Civil War era. West was recognized with a scholarship for her work on African American education in the post-bellum South. The scholarships are intended to aid the work of graduate students in the Department of History M.A. program whose research promises to make a significant contribution to an understanding of the place of the Civil War in American history and the causes and consequences of that grave conflict; they are made possible by endowments to the Center for Civil War Studies from the J. Ambler Johnston Scholarship, the Homer E. Davis Scholarship, the Frank S. Roop Scholarship, and the Old Dominion Chapter #69 United Daughters of the Confederacy Scholarship.


*The Passion of the Christ* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) by **Neal King**, Sociology, was featured in the January Visible Scholarship Initiative, sponsored jointly by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the University Libraries. A reception on January 26 in recognition of this scholarship featured remarks by King.


The Department of Music hosted the Fifteenth Annual Virginia Tech Honor Band from January 20–22. The event drew some 500 students from 170 schools in seven states. Students auditioned upon arrival for placement into one of five bands. Guest conductors this year included Virginia Tech music faculty Travis J. Cross and Polly Middleton as well as Virginia Tech alumni S. Daniel Galyen, associate director of bands at the University of Northern Iowa, and Scott Humphries, director of instrumental studies and music education at Manchester College in Indiana. David Widder, Music, coordinated the event.

The following CLAHS students were chosen to assist with the New Student Orientation program in July 2012. Terrence Austin, Political Science, was chosen as one of six Orientation Assistants who will direct the 30 undergraduates serving as Orientation Leaders. Among the Orientation Leaders are: Jonathan Ammirati, Communication; Katie Baird, Human Development; Caroline Blevins, Communication; Liesa Brauch, Communication; Wisam Fillo, English; Jenae Green, Communication; Will Miller, History; Matt Pangle, Music; and Sarah Pelham, Philosophy. They will work with freshman from across the University during the three weeks of New Student Orientation.


The following CLAHS faculty were accepted into the 2012 Proposal Development Institute, sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research: **Craig Brians**, Political Science; **David Cline**, History; **William Glenn**, School of Education; **Benjamin Jantzen**, Philosophy; **Deborah Milly**, Political Science; **Zhange (Nicole) Ni**, Religion and Culture; **Kelly Parkes**, School of Education; **Susanna Rinehart**, Theatre and Cinema; **Gresilda (Kris) Tilley-Lubbs**, School of education; **Anastasia Vogt Yuan**, Sociology; and **Zac Zimmer**, Foreign Languages and Literatures/Spanish.


ASPECT student **Scott Tate** was selected to participate in the Virginia Tech 2012 Future Faculty Development Program, held January 9-12.


**Karen Watson**, Director of Academic Support for CLAHS, was selected as a 2012 Virginia Tech Multicultural Fellow. The Multicultural Fellows Program is a network of dedicated faculty, staff, and administrators who provide leadership and promote multiculturalism at Virginia Tech and
the larger community; Fellows are selected on the basis of their interest in multiculturalism and their potential to contribute to the mission of the program.

**Andrea K. Wittenborn**, Human Development, with colleague Hazhir Rahmandad, Industrial and Systems Engineering, was awarded funding from the Institute for Society, Culture and Environment for “A Mathematical Model of Adult Depression: Intervention and Policy Implications.” Funds will support the development of a proposal to be submitted to NIH in June 2012. In addition, Wittenborn was interviewed on how depression affects couple relationships for an article in *Women’s Health*; the article can be found [here](#).

**Doris Zallen**, Science and Technology in Society, was selected to serve on the Centers for Disease Control's EGAPP (Evaluation of Genomic Applications in Practice and Prevention) Working Group. The group is charged with advising the CDC on policies related to genetic testing and other applications of genetics in human health and medicine.

**Alumni Highlights**

**Juan Carlos Sánchez Sierra**, a 2011 ASPECT alumnus, was awarded a competitive post-doctoral fellowship for the 2011-2012 academic year with the option for second year extension with Margarita Favela from the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Humanities at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM); the fellowship has the option for a second-year extension. Sánchez Sierra is working on a project titled “Liderazgo, cultura politica y practicas de moralidad en Mexico 1960-1980” (Leadership, Political culture and practices of morality in Mexico 1960-1980).

Please submit items for inclusion in upcoming *News2Note* newsletters to Associate Dean Debra Stoudt at dstoudt@vt.edu.