The AFROTC Department held its Fall 2010 commissioning ceremony on December 17 in War Memorial Chapel. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force was William J. Mahoney (Computer Science). He has reported to Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, for qualification training as a Cyber Space Officer.

The eighth edition of American Public School Law by M. David Alexander, School of Education/Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and Kern Alexander (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), was released on January 1. The volume was used at 170 major universities in 2010 and is acknowledged as the leading textbook in the field.

Jacqueline Bixler, Alumni Distinguished Professor of Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, was one of two Virginia Tech teacher/scholars to deliver a keynote address at the 2010 Fall University and Graduate School Commencement ceremonies on December 17. Bixler addressed undergraduate students at the University Ceremony. Approximately 2,500 students were honored for completing their academic degrees.

On December 17 Mike Butera earned the first ASPECT Ph.D. degree awarded at Virginia Tech.

Toni Calasanti, Sociology, published “Gender Relations and Applied Research on Aging,” The Gerontologist 50,6 (2010): 720-34. The article was the 50th anniversary feature article in the journal.


Travis J. Cross, Music, published a chapter in Teaching Music through Performance in Band, Volume 8, edited by Richard Miles, Volume 8 (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2011), 913-28; the chapter is a teacher resource guide for Morning Star by David Maslanka. The series provides accompanying reference recordings covering the standard repertory for symphonic band and wind ensemble.
Department of English graduate student Molly Scanlon, undergraduate majors Orlando Dos Reis and Erika Duerksen, and Writing Center Assistant Director Jennifer Lawrence presented “Making the Leap: The Role of the Writing Center in Transitioning from High School to College Writing” at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing & International Writing Centers Association (Joined Conference) in Baltimore, Maryland, November 4-6, 2010. Dos Reis and Duerksen work as undergraduate tutors in the Writing Center.


Jim Garrison, School of Education/Teaching and Learning, was invited by the Center for Dewey Studies at the University of Köln (Cologne), Germany, to serve as a visiting scholar there from November 30 to December 11. Garrison consulted with faculty members and students and taught a 20-hour workshop.

Aarnes Gud mestad, Foreign Languages and Literatures/Spanish, published “Moving beyond a sentence-level analysis in the study of variable mood use in Spanish,” Southwest Journal of Linguistics 29,1 (2010): 25-51. She also was awarded an Instructional Enhancement, Innovation and Exploration Grant by CIDER for her proposal titled “Development of an Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics Course.”


Human Development faculty member Andrea K. Wittenborn and graduate students Bonnie Culpepper, Maureen C. Smith, Deborah L. Styler, Lauren E. Swank, Kristin E. Wade, and Ashley P. Wise presented “Depression and dyadic distress in couple relationships” at the annual conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy on September 23-26 in Atlanta, Georgia.
Melanie C. Kiernan, a senior Communication major, was one of 34 college students to receive North Carolina Campus Compact’s Community Impact Student Award. Kiernan was recognized for her leadership nationally in service activities. She is chair of the executive board for the Campus Coalition of YMCAs, a program leader for the YMCA at Virginia Tech, and a Youth Service America Youth Council member. Details about Kiernan’s award can be found here.


The Fall 2010 issue of The New River, a journal of digital writing and art, recently appeared. The managing editors are Sean Conaway and Mark Derks, both master’s students in Creative Writing; the editor is Edward Falco, English. Featured in the fall issue is work by Megan Moriarty, a master’s student in Creative Writing. The issue can be found here.


ASPECT student Nina Salmon, who is an Assistant Professor of English at Lynchburg College, received that institution’s 2010 Elsie Ervin Bock Award for Excellence in Citizenship.


Debra Stoudt, Foreign Languages and Literatures/German and Associate Dean, published “Mysticism,” Handbook of Medieval Studies, 3 volumes, edited by Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 933-65.

For Memories' Sake, a documentary directed by Ashley Maynor, Theatre and Cinema, and produced by Paul Harrill, Theatre and Cinema, won a Rosebud Award as one of the top five films screened at the 20th Rosebud Film and Video Festival in Arlington, VA.

Andrea Wittenborn, Human Development, was quoted in the December 2010 issue of Prevention Magazine on the impact of stress on couple relationships.

Denise Young, an instructor and New Student Coordinator in the Department of Communication, completed the 2010 Political Leaders Program through the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia. Young was competitively selected for the ten-month program, which involves classes one weekend a month at different locations across the Commonwealth. Participants participate in group problem-solving related to educational and political issues in Virginia.

Alumni Highlights

Lisa B. Taylor, who earned her B.S. in Human Development in 2003, was selected as 2010 Teacher of the Year for Montgomery County Public Schools. Taylor has been an elementary education teacher for five years and currently teaches second grade at Belview Elementary School. A resourceful educator, Taylor has secured more than $7,500 in grants for projects at Belview, including the installation of SmartBoards in several classrooms. She was recognized as the MCPS Teacher of the Year at the opening of schools event on August 23, 2010.

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