VCU’s Massey Cancer Center at Stony Point Opens Doors

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

Now, Richmond-area patients can access a range of national cancer research advances and discoveries at a location close to their homes. On Oct. 12, Virginia Commonwealth University celebrated the newest addition to VCU’s growing Stony Point medical complex with the opening of a second facility that bears the Massey Cancer Center name.

VCU’s Massey Cancer Center at Stony Point is a $67 million, 20,000-square-foot addition to an outpatient facility that has offered suburban access to physicians from VCU’s Medical College of Virginia Hospitals for seven years. Last year, the Stony Point outpatient facility had more than 100,000 patient visits to its family practice and specialty physicians.

VCU’s Massey Cancer Center has received continuous funding from the National Cancer Institute since 1975, when VCU was designated a Comprehensive Cancer Center.

See STONY POINT page 2

Research @ VCU

VCU Receives $1.1 Million Research Grant from NIH

Study Seeks New Approach for Managing Pain Medication for Patients with History of Abuse

VCU Nursing Researcher to Study Stress, Immune Function, HIV

$2.76 Million NIH Grant Is Largest in Nursing History

Grants to Date
$121,732,847.

See the Research @ VCU section for detailed list of grants and awards.

Page 2

Virginia Lt. Gov. John Hager recently visited Virginia Commonwealth University’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department and discussed legislative topics in health-care and challenges and opportunities for persons with disabilities in the new millennium.

During his visit, department chair-term, David X. Cifu, M.D., announced the renewal of their federal grant that supports their work for Spinal Cord Injury Model System. The five-year, $16 million grant is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

VCU is one of only 17 U.S. centers that have been designated as Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems for their excellence in clinical care, education and research. Pictures of the VCU team were published in local newspapers Oct. 6. Members of the team met with Hager, bottom, during the Oct. 6 visit. From left, Paul Weinblatt, MD; Michael Levine, MD; William G. McKinley, MD; and Cifu.

Legislative Visit

VCU Debuts New Fetal Oxygen Monitor

VCU’s MCV Hospitals Is First Medical Center in State with New Technology

by Michael Ford
University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University’s Medical College of Virginia Hospitals is the state’s first medical center to offer a new FDA-approved fetal-monitoring technology that may cut in half the number of Caesarean deliveries done because of fetal distress. Due in part to early research by a VCU physician, fetal-pulse oximetry is designed to give doctors more accurate information about oxygen levels in a baby during labor and delivery.

During their patient’s labor, doctors make decisions about performing emergency Caesarean sections based on information dealing with fetal-heart rate related to fetal oxygen levels. Fetal-pulse oximetry is the first direct method of measuring real-time fetal oxygen levels during labor and delivery. Other monitoring methods, such as fetal heart-rate tracing and fetal stimulation, are more indirect markers of oxygenation.

John W. Seeds, M.D., VCU’s chairman of obstetrics and gynecology, said the new monitoring system will be used in conjunction with fetal heart-rate monitoring to give OB/GYN doctors at VCU’s MCV Hospitals the most comprehensive information about the condition of a baby during labor.

Fetal-pulse oximetry is an exciting new tool and the first major advance in our ability to safely take care of the baby in labor in 30 years,” Seeds said. “We’ll use it selectively when electronic fetal heart-rate monitoring suggests that the baby is having trouble.”
employee open forums

open forums will be held for employees of Virginia Commonwealth University Health System's MCV Hospitals and Physicians. The forums will be hosted by Sheldon Betchai, M.D., executive vice president of clinical enterprise, and Donna Katen-Bubensie, senior vice president/chief operating officer. The forums will be held:

- Oct. 24, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.: Cafeteria Annex/Main Hospital
- Oct. 25, 2 p.m.-3 p.m.: Cafeteria Annex/Main Hospital
- Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.: Banche Auditorium, Egyptian Building
- Oct. 26, 9-10 a.m.: Individuals will be visited.
- Oct. 26-27, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.: Cafeteria Annex/Main Hospital.

Noted Artist and Author to Speak at VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Sculpture will host a presentation by Rosamond Wolff Purcell, renowned photographer, author, and curator, at 4 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Grace Street Theater.

Purcell's work has broken new ground in bridging the worlds of art, the history of science and the history of medicine. First recognized for her photographs of objects and specimens from museums of natural history around the world, Purcell's images have been exhibited and curated worldwide including at the New York Academy of Sciences, the Cleveland Museum of Art, Gallery Fiolet in Amsterdam, and the Museo Civico Naturale in Madrid.

Her published works include Illuminations: A Bestiary and Finders Keepers: Treasures and Oddities from the Collections of Peter the Great to Louis Agassiz, with text by Stephen Jay Gould, and Suspended Animation with text by F. Gonzalez-Crussi, Ph.D.


Monitor

continued from page 1

when electronic fetal heart-rate monitoring suggests that the baby is having trouble. We anticipate using it on 15 to 20 percent of women in labor.

The fetal-oxygen monitor works by shining infrared light through a sensor, which is inserted into the uterus and rests against the cheek of the fetus. The amount of light transmitted and reflected back through the baby's skin provides a measure of how much oxygen is present in the baby's blood. Oxygen-rich blood has a different amount of infrared light than blood that doesn't have oxygen. Information about oxygen levels can be paired with conventional heart-rate monitors to deliver companion printouts that document the condition of the fetus throughout labor. Across the country, 45 percent of C-sections may be done for fetal distress.

"Large studies already done suggest the use of fetal-pulse oximetry may safely allow us to decrease the rate of Caesarean delivery done for fetal distress by half," said Melissa Jones, M.D., a neonatologist in the Department of Pediatrics.

In 1984, Seeds did the first basic research in the country into the use of infrared light technology to measure oxygen in the blood of a fetus while at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His findings from that three-year study were published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology.
School of Dentistry Earns $4.8 Million Grant from NIH

Researchers to Study Genetic, Immunologic Risk Factors for Periodontal Diseases

by Michael Ford

University News Services

Researchers in Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Dentistry have earned a $4.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study genetic and immunologic risk factors for periodontal disease. The grant is awarded to investigators at the VCU Clinical Research Center for Periodontal Disease, directed by Harvey A. Schenkein, D.D.S., Ph.D.

Studies supported by the grant will be carried out by investigators at VCU's Schools of Dentistry and Medicine, as well as NIH collaborators. Investigators will study genetic risk factors for early-onset forms of periodontal diseases, a relatively uncommon but severe group of periodontal diseases that run in families. Studies also will examine abnormalities in the immune systems of these patients that may predispose them to oral infections. Additionally, investigators will research characteristics of oral bacteria, including what allows some bacteria to infect the gums, enter the bloodstream and travel to other body sites.

Schenkein, assistant dean for research and professor in the School of Dentistry, has studied early-onset periodontal disease since 1987, and research at VCU in this area extends more than 20 years. Schenkein and his colleagues published findings about a genetic link in early-onset periodontitis in the Journal of Periodontology in 1994. That report followed a study involving 200 families from Maryland to South Carolina that found heredity seemed to make some family members unusually susceptible to a bacterial infection that triggers the onset of periodontal diseases.

"We study families. As part of the genetics projects, we've seen kids grow up and have their own kids," Schenkein said. "We've been collecting blood samples from these patients for 20 years or more and those are still used as part of these studies."

That research will provide a foundation for studies conducted under VCU's new NIH grant.

"We're going to take advantage of the expertise the NIH has and the NIH benefits because we have patients we've been studying here in Richmond," said Schenkein. "NIH researchers will have access to samples and clinical information from those patients. This is mutually advantageous to both groups."

Since 1988, investigators in the VCU Clinical Research Center for Periodontal Disease have published about 60 papers on genetic risk for periodontal diseases, immune function in periodontal diseases and bacterial infections. The center was founded in 1978.

VCU Professor's Work to be Shown at International Film Festival

by Matthew DeLap

University News Services

Ann international film festival will showcase the work of Virginia Commonwealth University's Pamela Turner, assistant chair of communication arts and director of the School of the Arts' new 3-D computer-anim ated film "Falling Back to Earth: Tomatillo," will be shown at the Ajijic Festival International de Cine in Mexico Nov. 5-12.

"Tomatillo," a five-minute film set to music, was inspired by Turner's garden and combines advanced graphic techniques with photographs to make this given tomato-like fruit come to life. Turner describes her film as a peaceful, thought-ful journal into other worlds and other possibilities.

Along with taking home the Best Animated Narrative Award from the Brooklyn Film Festival in September, "Tomatillo" earned Turner's CINE Award for outstanding filmmaking from the CineWomen New York Festival. Her film was screened at CINE's awards ceremony Sept. 28.

"Tomatillo" will be shown as part of the Science/Fiction exhibit at the Women Made Gallery in Chicago through November. The Brooklyn Film Festival and the Ajijic Festival International de Cine both are new festivals that encourage first-time filmmaking and give filmmakers an opportunity to have their work seen by a large and diverse audience.

Secretary Embodies Spirit of Dorris Douglas Budd Award

by Matthew DeLap

University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University recently held an awards ceremony to honor this year's recipient of the Dorris Douglas Budd Award. The award recognizes an individual's commitment and dedication to the university and its constituents.

Dorothy "Dottie" Winfree, a program support technician for Employee Health Services, was presented with the award by VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.

"Dottie has always worked hard to promote the image of the department and of VCU by working diligently to provide excellent customer satisfaction," said Frank J. Tortorella, M.D., director of employee health services. "She works tirelessly to complete the many tasks she performs in her daily work."

Winfree is described by co-workers as compassionate, caring, friendly and helpful. "Dottie has such a calming effect on people," said Amy Unger, assistant to dean for administration, humanities and sciences. "She's always helping the faculty, staff and students who may be upset because they were hurt on the job or because they just don't want to have to fill out another form."

The Budd Award recognizes outstanding performance in an administrative support role. The recipient enhances VCU's image, mission, and day-to-day activities through their efficiency, skills and devotion to the job. Candidates are nominated by their supervisors and the winner is selected by a university committee. All recipients must have worked for VCU at least five years before they are eligible.

Other finalists included: Inez Eason, nursing security care unit; Regina Jef ferson, dental admission; Linda Johnston, dental admissions; Mitam Murchie, Clinical Laboratory Services; Rene Stewart, formerly in the Department of Pediatrics; Nancy Veney, obstetrics and gynecology; Ellen Wright, University Student Health Services.

Budd was a VCU secretary to the vice president of administration from 1951-81. Her dedication to service and commitment to excellence
VCU to Host Free Women’s Health Seminar With Focus on Cancer

Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Social Work will hold its eighth annual Forum on Social Policy on Nov. 2. The event will feature keynote speaker Carmen Nazario, principal deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration on Children and Families.

Nazario will discuss “Reflections on Policy for Children and Families: What We’ve Done and What We Have Left to Do,” at 2:30 p.m. in the School of Engineering Building.

This year’s forum also will include a panel discussion on Nazario’s presentation, featuring John Purnell, executive director of the Friends Association for Children, and Sherri Brach, chief professional officer for United Way, and students from each of the school’s three degree programs. The panel discussion will be followed by a question-and-answer session from audience members.

Nazario was appointed principal deputy assistant secretary in 1999. She has broad management and policy responsibility for the ACF, which has an operating budget of more than $37 billion and includes more than 60 programs that address the needs of families and children. She is also a 1973 alumna of the School of Social Work.

The Forum on Social Policy is free and open to the public. For more information, call 828-1030.

World-Renowned Latin-American Author to Speak at University

In 1992, he authored The Buried Mirror, a comprehensive history of the Hispanic population from both sides of the Atlantic. That volume also provides an understanding of the economic, political and cultural changes facing the growing Hispanic population in the United States. Fuentes narrated a five-hour television series based on the work for the Discovery Channel.

Fuentes’ lecture also is part of VCU’s sixth annual International Students Research Conference, held Oct. 26-27.

“Language & Identity: Word, Sound and Image” is sponsored by the VCU Honors Program through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The series features talks by linguists, poets, scholars and others throughout the 2000-01 academic year. For details, call 278-0187, or visit www.vcu.edu/lecture/.

—by LIsSETTE LINARES

Social Work’s Annual Forum to Feature Distinguished Alumna

by Matthew Delap
University News Services

Nominations Sought for Virginia Communications Hall of Fame at VCU

The Virginia Communications Hall of Fame at Virginia Commonwealth University is seeking nominations for four members, who will be inducted next spring. The Hall of Fame will hold its 15th induction ceremony on April 4.

The new members will be selected by a committee of their peers. Recipients will be selected based on their careers in publishing, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, interactive media and communication education.

To be eligible, communicators must have begun or ended their careers in Virginia.

Nominations will be accepted through Nov. 17 and can be submitted online at www.talkinghead.com/fame. Nomination forms also are available by contacting the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame, VCU School of Mass Communications, 901 W. Franklin St., P.O. Box 543854, Richmond, VA 23284-0175. For more details, call 828-2660.

A new helipad at VCU’s Medical College of Virginia Hospitals will soon provide an on-site landing for helicopters transporting patients who need emergency medical care. The 53-square-foot landing pad, complete with a safety fence and special fire suppression system, is located on the roof of MCV Hospitals’ Main Hospital. Helicopters currently land in a parking lot about 10 blocks away from the hospital. Patients then are transferred to a waiting ambulance that delivers them to the hospital’s emergency entrance. The new helipad should shorten the time it takes to transport patients to the hospital by five to 15 minutes. The new helipad is funded in part by the Virginia Department of Transportation, which plans to erect new lights along Interstate 64 near the current landing pad that will pose a hazard to safe helicopter landings. Air ambulances transport patients to MCV Hospitals about 200 times a year.
VCU Receives $1.1 Million From NIH

Study Seeks New Approach for Managing Pain Medications for Patients with History of Abuse

by Michael Ford
University News Services

A Virginia Commonwealth University researcher has received a $1.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop a new approach to insure proper use of pain medications in patients with a history of prescription drug abuse.

As the project's principal investigator, Deborah L. Haller, Ph.D., associate chair of the Division of Addiction Medicine will develop the medication adherence therapy. The new program combines patient education and self-monitoring, motivational counseling and behavioral therapy. The grant also will support an evaluation effort to determine if this new therapy preserves effective pain relief and reduces abuse.

"The people who tend to have problems with pain medicine are people who have previously had problems with alcohol or other drugs."

"Pain is the most common symptom, the number one reason people come to see the doctor. Generally, doctors are poorly trained to deal with pain," said Haller, associate professor, psychiatry and a faculty member in VCU's Institute of Drug and Alcohol Studies. "The goal of the study is to design a brief treatment that doctors and nurses can use in primary care settings or in pain clinics where they have patients who come to them with pain and who have a history of addiction, or who seem to be abusing their pain medicine."

Statistics show as many as one in five patients with chronic pain abuse their pain medications. Other patients with chronic pain do not receive adequate analgesic medications because their physicians are concerned that patients may become addicted. This is particularly true for patients who previously have abused pain medications.

Funding for the four-year therapy development project comes from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. During the first two years, investigators will focus on testing and refining the new treatment with only a handful of patients. During the final two years, a pilot study of 30 participants will test the therapy.

"The people who tend to have problems with pain medication are people who have previously had problems with alcohol or other drugs," Haller said. "It's less likely that someone who's never had any kind of problem with any kind of drug is going to get hooked on pain medicine." Three other VCU faculty are study co-investigators: Sydney H. Schnoll, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair of VCU's Division of Addiction Medicine, an expert on chronic pain; Karen Ingeaud, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychiatry, who also has grant funding to study medication adherence among HIV patients; and Dace S. Svendsen, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, whose expertise is cognitive behavioral therapy.

Virginia Commonwealth University has awarded a Virginia Commonwealth University nursing researcher $2.76 million to further investigate whether behavioral therapies can interrupt the domino effect in which stress depresses the immune system and compromises the body's ability to fight illness and disease.

For nearly two decades, Nancy McCain, D.S.N., R.N., with the School of Nursing, has studied the relationships among stress, the immune system and HIV infection. In her view, stress is an intrinsic by-product of HIV disease and treatment, because patients must dramatically change their lives to accommodate treatment regimens.

"We are particularly worried about the impact of stress on people with diseases such as HIV, in which immune function is critical to good health," McCain said. "Sometimes just a little change in their immune system can significantly impact the quality of their life. If we can reduce psychological stress, we should be able to slow down the deterioration of the immune system that occurs with HIV infection."

McCain's current work builds upon her previous findings that behavioral interventions can successfully lower stress levels and improve immune function for HIV patients. The five-year study seeks to evaluate whether the interventions' effects can be prolonged. Study participants will be enrolled into one of three groups. One group will learn five different types of relaxation methods, such as breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation and meditation. A second group will learn Tai Chi exercises, and a third will focus on spiritual growth. Some participants will take part in the full complement of classes, while others will participate in booster sessions as well. In addition to determining whether quality of life and psychosocial function improve, researchers will evaluate whether the interventions improve the immune system's functioning.

"The grant will allow us to carefully assess childhood abuse's impact on the immune system that occurs early in life and may have lifelong ramifications," said McCain, principal investigator. "The field is just beginning to understand the immune system's response to stress, and to untangle the connection between the mind and the body."

The current study is funded through the NIH's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Investigators hope to enroll a total of 200 participants at two study sites in Richmond and Norfolk. For details, call 828-5030.

Cutting Edge

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

Numerous studies have shown that women who suffered sexual abuse as children are at risk for developing psychiatric and substance abuse disorders in adulthood. While that finding was undisputed, researchers wondered whether the childhood sexual abuse actually was the cause for the psychiatric disorders that developed later. A new Virginia Commonwealth University study begins to clarify the answer to this critical question.

"Although women who report a history of childhood sexual abuse are clearly at increased risk for psychiatric disorders, critical issues about this association had been unclear," said Kenneth Kendler, M.D., director of the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics at VCU and principal investigator of the study.

"For example, sexual abuse usually occurs in dysfunctional families, so researchers asked what really caused the psychiatric illness: Is it the abuse or just the background of dysfunction that increases a woman's risk for illness? This study shows that the association between risk and abuse cannot be explained by background familial factors."

The VCU study is believed to be the first population-based study in the United States to carefully assess childhood abuse's connection to adult psychiatric illness based on detailed personal interviews. It was published in the October issue of the Archives of General Psychiatry, a journal produced by the American Medical Association.

Researchers Investigate Link Between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Risk for Developing Psychiatric Illnesses

VCU Study Begins Unraveling Answer to critical question

Kenneth Kendler

Kendler pointed out that the study's strength lies in the fact that both parents and "co-twins" were interviewed in the course of the study. This allowed researchers to establish whether family disruptions or genetics could play a role in the development of the women's psychiatric disorders.

"Both members of a twin pair would have very similar levels of exposure to family conflict, and they both would have an equal genetic relationship to their parents," he said.

However, despite being raised in the same family environment, the twin exposed to childhood sexual abuse had a consistently elevated risk for psychiatric disorders compared with her unexposed twin.

Kendler and his colleagues assessed the relationship between the severity of childhood sexual abuse and the prevalence of psychiatric and substance abuse disorders in 1,411 female adult twins. They defined sexual abuse on three levels: nongenital, genital and intercourse. They found the association between childhood sexual abuse and a lifetime history of a major depressive disorder or alcohol dependence is most evident with more severe forms of sexual abuse.

While the link was modest and often nonsignificant with nongenital childhood sexual abuse, it increased with genital childhood sexual abuse and especially intercourse.

Twin who reported intercourse as a form of abuse were more than five times as likely to have two disorders than those who were not abused. Childhood sexual abuse was associated with all psychiatric disorders, with the strongest association seen with bulimia, alcohol abuse and other drug dependence.
CHIEF
continued from page 1

"Dan goes beyond being chief of
crime. He's a goodwill ambassador," said
Paul Timmreck, senior vice president for
the Division of Finance and Administration, which
includes VCU Police.

"Dean's been a real asset to the uni-
versity. In this environment, we
take nothing more serious than
campus security. He headed up a
very effective effort, and he is
leaving the department in
very good hands."

As he pre-
par es to retire on Jan. 1, Dean can reflect on
a long list of accomplishments, nothing more
important than a safe environment for learn-
ing, research and patient care. Despite its
urban location, VCU historically has ranked as
one of Virginia's safest campuses; violent
crime is rare. As a chief who practices team-
work, Dean has aggressively introduced new
tools and initiatives to maintain university
safety, from launching the first campus bicy-
cle patrols in Virginia to earning federal grant
money for outreach efforts in the nearby
Carver community. His strategy also keeps
patrol units highly visible.

"Mr. Dean has been a wonderful per-
son to work with. He's very open to any
new ideas," said Capt. Tina Buck,
the department's highest-ranking female offi-
cer as deputy chief for support services.

"He thinks out of the box. As a leader,
he's extremely proactive."

In recent years, Dean has been an
instrumental voice in building relations
with both city and community leaders in
protecting the neighborhoods surround-
ing VCU. For many of his early
years, VCU Police was restricted by law
from stopping crime— even a speeding
driver— off campus property. In the early
1980s, VCU lobbied for expanded police
powers, and today— after receiving court
approval three times for expanded jurisdic-
tion— patrols up to a half-mile from
campus boundaries. VCU's efforts have
earned praise from its partners.

"Dean brings a combination of
intellect and common sense to policing," said Fred Russell, deputy chief of Rich-
monnd City Police. "He is able to meet the
needs of the students and the campus with
an effective community policing program." 

During a summer round of golf with VCU's chief in 1988, Dean had learned that
the university was hiring officers, and the
newly formed institution sig-
naled future career opportu-
nities. In 1982, Dean completed
his bachelor's degree in adminis-
tration of justice and public safety,
using the universi-
ty's tuition-waiver
program. Dean became
the first VCU
police chief pro-
moted from the ranks.

Dean still remembers his first day on
the job. "It was a beautiful fall day. All the
leaves were turning on the trees," said
Dean, who had served three years in the
Army before becoming an Henrico
County patrolman. "My intentions were
to get a degree and move on. Well, I got
a degree and never moved on. I really
learned to love this place." From his
days as a student to his days today
as VCU's highest-rank-
ing offi-
cer, Dean has
brought a per-
sonal touch to
the police
department.

"Dean's been
everything from a student to an officer
that has gone up through the ranks," said
Capt. Herman Hicks, VCU's deputy chief
for investigations who has worked with
Dean for 30 years. "That's what makes
him as good a chief as he's been. He's able
to relate to students as well as officers. He's
walked these streets and he's patrolled
these buildings. He brings an understand-
ing to the job."

In managing a pressure-packed unit,
Dean has been praised with using humor
to diffuse the tension and dealing with
issues as they surface. His door is always
open. "You don't want to be too rigid in this
job," Dean said. "You need to go with the
flow. You never know what's going to hap-
pen at any time."

In 1990, at Dean's suggestion, VCU
Police launched its own training academy,
which today also trains officers with small
and specialty units from across the state.
While a primary academy goal is simply to
prepare strong officers, it also is designed to
help them learn unique skills required on a
university campus. That includes
promoting education and crime prevention,
which carry through all police
activities today.

"One of the things that we've tried to
do over the years is get our officers to under-
stand university life," Dean said. "Our pop-
ulation turns over every four years. Every
September, we're dealing with a new group
of students who need to hear our same
crime-prevention strategies. I'm proud to
say our people do a great job."

Henry Rhone, Ph.D., vice provost for
student affairs, commends Dean for cre-
ating a two-way relationship between his
division and the police department. Rather
than acting impulsively as situations devel-
op, Dean first consults with the appropriate
campus leaders to gather information so he
can make decisions that are best for both stu-
dents and VCU.

"Dan has really been an ideal chief
in a number of ways, particular-
ly working with student issues," said
Rhone, adding that
Dean prepares his officers for
unique campus
demands. "It's critical that you have a police
force that understands the role of VCU. The
police are here to protect and allow students
to pursue their education in a safe envi-
ronment."

Now, 32 years later, Dean will turn in
his badge and gain more time with his fam-
ily, including his wife, Linda, and two chil-
dren, Danny and Debora. He also has big
plans to trim some strokes off his golf game,
and he leaves VCU with great memories. "I
don't think you can stay with a job 32 years
if you don't enjoy it," he said. "It's been an
incredible experience."
Editor's Note: As approved by the Virginia General Assembly and Gov. Jim Gilmore, state employees have begun transition to a new classified compensation plan. UniverCity News sat down with Linda Harber, executive director for VCU human resources, to discuss the new plan and how employees will be affected.

How did the new pay plan come into place?

Over the years, state employees have expressed concerns that the previous pay plan was not competitive with the labor market and did not properly compensate employees. In 1998, a special commission was established by the Virginia General Assembly and Gov. Gilmore, to recommend improvements.

Later that year, compensation issues emerged as a major concern among employees who took part in Gov. Gilmore's statewide survey and town hall meetings. The new pay plan addresses some of these concerns.

What were some of the problems with the previous classified compensation plan?

There were three main problems with the previous plan that are eliminated with the new plan.

The first was that new employees coming into state government often earned the same or more salaries as employees who have more state experience.

Second, in the past, pay practices were not flexible. Employees generally received salary increases through promotions and relocations and employees who did not want to change jobs did not have opportunities to increase their compensation.

The final problem was that the pay structure was not competitive with the labor market for many job occupations, which made it difficult to recruit and retain employees.

VCU Focuses on New Classified Compensation Plan

With the reform, the 23 pay grades in the previous system recently were replaced with eight pay bands. What does this mean for employees?

The new plan makes it easier for employees to receive base-pay salary increases and move through pay bands as employees gain knowledge and job-related skills or as they take on additional job duties.

It also provides the flexibility to adjust pay within the bands to help retain high-performing employees and provide a way to bring lower salaries of long-term employees who demonstrate high levels of expertise in line with salaries of new hires performing the same work.

Are there limitations on how fast an employee can move through his or her pay band?

Yes. For example, a change in an employee's work resulting in an in-band adjustment, cannot exceed 10 percent of his/her salary. An increase due to competitive transfer to another position in the same pay band cannot exceed 15 percent of an employee's annual salary.

They also will be eligible for performance increases, which will be determined based on available funding each year.

Will individual employee position descriptions or titles change?

Employee position descriptions did not change during the conversion, however titles did change.

The previous classification system had 1,650 titles, which have been reduced to about 300 broader categories called "roles." As in the previous system, when an employee's duties change dramatically, the position description will also need to be revised.

Virginia Commonwealth University Human Resources is conducting training on the new compensation system. For more information, visit the Human Resources Web site at www.vcu.edu/hr/compclass/index.htm. Or call the Compensation Reform Hotline at 278-1727 or e-mail at emprel@vcu.edu.

D.C. Arts Center
Exhibition Features Work of Professor

by Matthew Delap
University News Services

The Washington, D.C. Arts Center, 2438 18th St., N.W., will host an exhibition of works by Virginia Commonwealth University professor Dan Smith. Titled "Extended Sites," the exhibition runs through Nov. 5.

"Extended Sites" features a body of work that displays Smith's reflections on the relationship between man and land. The exhibition documents Smith's experiences during his travels throughout the United States, an in particular, Georgia, Maine, Nevada, North Carolina and Texas. Smith's art work incorporates ordinary materials such as maps, highway paint, photographs, barbed wire and even dirt collected while traveling. Excerpts of his poetry also will be included in the exhibition.

Smith is an adjunct professor of art at VCU and also teaches at Hampton University. He holds studio degrees from East Carolina University and the University of South Carolina.

The D.C. Arts Center is a non-profit gallery dedicated to emerging artists and their work. The Arts Center is open from 2-7 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, and from 2-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For more information, call (302) 462-7833.
SEMINARS

Oct. 24 — "What's New in Academic Technology." Sponsored by the Instructional Development Center. For details, call 828-4383. 12:30 p.m./Student Commons' Forum Room

Oct. 25 — "Mini Medical School: Guest Speaker: Dr. Michael Marron, Associate Director for Biomedical Technology National Institute of Health Bethesda, MD." Sponsored by VCU's Medical College of Virginia Hospitals, The Science Museum of Virginia and the Annabella R. Jenkins Foundation. For details, call 367-6922. 7 p.m./Science Museum, Ethyl Corporation IMAX Dome

Oct. 26 — "Physiology Seminar: Perinatal Regulation of Lung Channels." Sponsored by Pfizer, Inc. For details, call 367-6755. 4 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 3-016


Nov. 1 — "Emergency Medicine Grand Rounds: Physiology of Trauma." Sponsored by Emergency Medicine. For details, call 828-4960. 7:30 p.m./Main Hospital, Rooms 422, 423

Nov. 1 — "Mini Medical School: Hypertension — The Good the Bad and the Ugly." Sponsored by VCU’s Medical College of Virginia Hospitals, The Science Museum of Virginia and the Annabella R. Jenkins Foundation. For details, call 367-6922. 7 p.m./Science Museum, Ethyl Corporation IMAX Dome

Nov. 2 — "Physiology Seminar: Topic TBA." Sponsored by Physiology. For details, call 828-4976. 4 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 3-016

WORKSHOPS

Oct. 23 — "Career Connections Orientation." Sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call 828-1645. 11 a.m./Student Commons, Capital B

Oct. 23 — "Career Connections Orientation Workshop." Sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call 828-1645. 11 a.m./Student Commons, Capital B

Oct. 25 — "Blackboard CounselInfod Introd." Sponsored by the Instructional Development Center. For details, call 828-4934. Registration is required. 1 p.m./Lyman Dental Building, Room 425

Oct. 25 — "Career Planning Series." Sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call 828-1645. 2 p.m./Student Commons, Common wealth A

Oct. 25 — "Career Connections Orientation Workshop." Sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call 828-1645. 4 p.m./Student Commons, Capital B


Oct. 25 — "Reservations and Events Training Workshop." Sponsored by Reservations and Events. For details, call 828-0592. Noon/Student Commons' Theater


Oct. 28 — "Academic Success: Talking with Professors." Sponsored by University Counseling Services of the Division of Student Affairs. For details, call 828-6200. 3:30 p.m./Student Commons' Forum Room

Oct. 27 — "Using Sound in PowerPoint." Sponsored by the Instructional Development Center. For details, call 828-7710. Registration is required. 9 a.m./Lyman Dental Building, Room 425

Oct. 27 — "Pay for Performance at MCV Hospitals #1021." Sponsored by Training and Development. For details, call 828-0592. 9 a.m./Lyman Dental Building, Room 425

Oct. 27 — "Using Sound in PowerPoint." Sponsored by the Instructional Development Center. For details, call 828-7710. Registration is required. 9 a.m./Lyman Dental Building, Room 425

VU Music Offers Chamber Concert With Many Strings Attached

by Matthew Delap
University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Music will feature I Musici, the internationally unknown ensemble, at 8 p.m. Oct. 27 in the VCU Performing Arts Center. Part of the Mary Anne Remmolds Chamber Concert Series, the performance will feature selections from Bach, Goudini, Rolla, and Rossini.

Formed in 1952 without a conductor, this unique ensemble consisted of 12 students from the Academia Nazionale de Santa Cecilia in Rome and was best known for promoting an appreciation of Italian Baroque music. Its repertoire has since expanded to cover a larger range of music including works written for the ensemble by Nino Rota and Frank Martin. I Musici is comprised of six violinists, two viola players, two cellists, a double-bass player and a harpsichordist. Admission to I Musici is $25 for adults, $20 for VCU faculty and staff, $20 for seniors and $10 for students. For tickets, call 828-1166.

Guitarists Blend Jazz and Flamenco in Grace Street Theater Performance

Combining the sounds of jazz and flamenco in a Grace Street Theater performance will be guitarists Bern Nicud and VCU's own Ayman Farouk. The concert will be held at 7 p.m. Nov. 5.

A New York jazz guitarist, Nicud has taken his own path since graduating from the Berklee School of Music in 1975. He has become proficient in a variety of jazz and flamenco styles, and is dedicated to helping students learn. Nicud has been a featured soloist in Europe and Asia, and his work has been heard on numerous recordings.

Ayman Farouk, an assistant professor of musicology, his work has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classical, flamenco, jazz and Middle Eastern influences. He has been described as a solo guitarist while imbibing classic...