

the
ct

VCU Welcomes Students

Freshman Celebrate Convocation, Spirit Walk · 3

Look for the first part of our special series, "Year Long Audition" inside.

News

Campus Connector services, buses change · 6

Sports

Men's and Women's Soccer season previews · 6

Spectrum

Library exhibit invites students to revisit childhood · 11

Opinion

Should Chik-Fil-A be here to stay? · 14

BRIEFS

On the cover:

New students and residential advisers celebrate in Monroe Park after Convocation.
Photo by Samantha Wittwer

Local & VCU

Group commits assault, violent robbery on VCU's main campus

Police are searching for a group of about 15 young people believed to have punched one passerby and robbed and beaten another in rapid succession on Virginia Commonwealth University's main downtown Richmond campus.

Neither victim was seriously injured in the two attacks, which happened along Shafer Street on the Monroe Park campus about 2:55 a.m.

VCU and Richmond police described the assailants as a group of 15 black males between the ages of 17 and 22.

The attacks came just days after students had returned to campus for the start of the fall semester and at a time when VCU Police Chief John Venuti is undertaking several measures to increase security.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Cantor faces Powell in Sept. 28 debate

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-7th, will debate Democratic challenger Wayne Powell on Friday, Sept. 28.

Cantor, who declined to debate Democratic challenger Rick Waugh in 2010, has not debated a Democrat in a general election since 2002, when he squared off with former Georgia congressman and "Dukes of Hazzard" star Ben L. "Cooter" Jones.

The candidates will "address issues important to the business community with a direct focus on jobs and the path to economic recovery," said a news release from the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, which is sponsoring the debate.

Powell, 61, is a former Army colonel and lawyer from Chesterfield County in his first run for political office.

The 7th District covers much of the Richmond region and extends west to Orange and Louisa counties. Cantor has represented the district since 2001.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Justice Department OKs Virginia voter ID law

The Justice Department has granted preclearance to Virginia's new voter ID law, Gov. Bob McDonnell announced Monday evening.

The law, which took effect July 1, expands the list of acceptable identification at the polls, including student identification cards issued by a Virginia college or university, utility bills and concealed-handgun permits.

It also changes the procedure when someone votes without presenting identification, requiring them to vote provisionally and later present an approved ID to their local registrar through email, fax, mail or hand delivery.

To promote compliance and address critics who say the law is designed to suppress the vote of minorities, students and the elderly, McDonnell also has issued an executive order requiring new voter ID cards to be sent to all registered voters in the state in advance of the November elections.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

National & International

Indiana police cite drought for marijuana finds

Police say marijuana growing operations in southern Indiana are easy to spot from the air because of the drought.

An airplane pilot guided troopers on the ground through browning forests and corn fields Tuesday to uncover grow sites in Clark, Scott and Harrison counties. The troopers cut down more than 100 marijuana plants.

Trooper Mike Bennett tells The News and Tribune that marijuana can flourish in harsh conditions, pointing out, "It's not called weed for nothing."

Bennett says the seized plants will be destroyed once a burn ban is lifted.

He says the owners of property where marijuana grows are rarely arrested, because most "have no idea that it's growing on their land."

Brief by the Associated Press

Official: Tourists and pilots die in Kenya crash

A plane crashed minutes after it had taken off in the famed Masai Mara game reserve killing four people, including two German tourists, officials said Wednesday.

Kenya's Tourism minister Danson Mwazo said two Germans, a mother and her son, died alongside two Kenyan pilots. Mwazo said the plane was carrying 11 tourists, including a family of five Germans, as well as four Americans and two Czech nationals.

He said two women from the family of Germans were critically injured and the other also survived. He said the Czech nationals were not seriously injured.

The condition of the four Americans, who were also from one family, was "relatively good" and they were transported to a hospital in the capital on a police helicopter, said Dr. Bettina Vadera, the chief executive of the Flying Doctors which sent two aircraft to evacuate the injured.

Dr. Vadera said the aircraft was completely destroyed after it came down nose-front after taking off.

Brief by the Associated Press

Mars rover Curiosity makes first test drive

The NASA rover Curiosity made its first test drive Wednesday on ancient soil of Mars.

"Wheel tracks on Mars," Jet Propulsion Laboratory engineer Allen Chen tweeted along with an image sent from one of the rover's cameras.

The rover moved forward about 15 feet, rotated to a right angle and reversed a short distance.

The drive was successful and means the rover's mobility system is fully functional, lead rover planner Matt Heverly told a JPL press conference.

"We're very excited to have this kind of milestone behind us," Heverly said. "We see that the system is performing very well and we're in a great place to do some science."

The test drive is part of a health checkup the rover has been undergoing since arriving on Aug. 5. Eventually, the rover could roam hundreds of feet a day over the ancient crater where it landed.

Brief by the Associated Press

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NEWS

In this section:

VCU begins contract with Groome Transportation • 6

New upperclassman dorms now open • 5

VCU Convocation Welcomes Class of 2016



Charles Couch
Staff Writer

Virginia Commonwealth University officials welcomed more than 3,000 freshmen to the university on Tuesday during the New Student Convocation at the Siegel Center.

“This is really one of the most transformative times that you’ll ever experience in your life,” University President Michael Rao said to the new students. “And just think, from this point, you really can become anything that you imagine.”

Several speakers joined Rao in his welcome, including several of the institution’s provosts and Kristen Iversen, the author of “Full Body Burden,” the book chosen for this year’s University College Summer Reading Program.

According to Rao, the class of 2016 had the highest GPAs and SAT scores of any incoming class in VCU history. This makes them perfect candidates for the university, which has recently become a national research university, Rao said.

“It means that you will have a tremendous responsibility because you will become one of society’s important leaders,” he said.

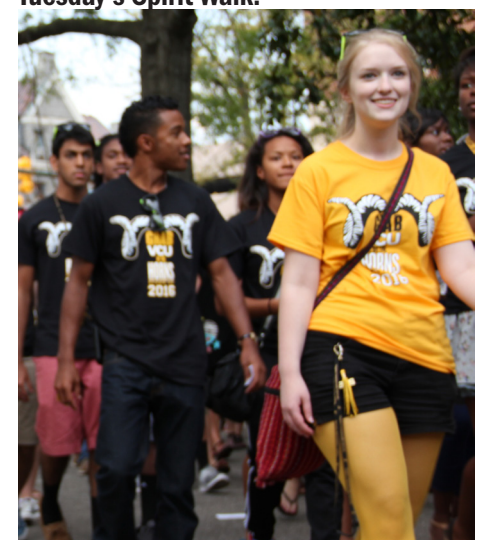
After Rao finished, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Beverly Warren took the podium. Warren said she encouraged the new students to aim to graduate in four years, even though it has become more common for students to take five or six years. Doing so is what one of VCU’s new mottos, “Make it Real,” is all about, Warren said.

“‘Make it real’ means you need to make your education become real, to really grasp it, to give meaning for your-

Continued on page 4



President Rao and others welcomed more than 3,000 new students, who then paraded down West Broad Street during Tuesday’s Spirit Walk.





PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA WITTMER

self,” she continued.

The provost also gave some advice that she said would help students achieve their bachelor’s degree in four years, which included taking advantage of university resources, treating college as a full-time job and connecting with faculty and student organizations.

Jae Lee, president of the Student Government Association, eventually took the stage. On Friday, new students will get the chance to learn about the different ways they can get involved in student life at the Student Organization and Volunteer Opportunities Fair, Lee said. These organizations let students interact with their university on almost every level, Lee added.

“What you guys do will set the precedent for the future generations of students coming in,” Lee told the freshmen class. “Your actions will shape the direction of VCU.”

Toward the end of the convocation,

Iversen gave her keynote speech. The book chosen for the reading program chronicled Iversen’s discovery of plutonium pits used in nuclear weapons in her hometown and her changing attitude toward environmental justice, the author said.

In addition to her novel, Iversen also shared with students the fears she experienced as a college freshman. Iversen said she had no idea which career path to choose even though she always wanted to be a writer. Then, she took a creative writing class and was handed back an assignment with the words “You are a writer,” scribbled on the top, Iversen said.

“Those four words changed my life,” Iversen said. “So one of the things I want to tell you today is that a teacher can indeed change your life.”

After the convocation ended, thousands of members of the class of 2016 joined the marching band for a spirit march down West Broad Street to Monroe Park for a relay and picnic. **CT**



Students marched down West Broad and Laurel Streets to Monroe Park during the Spirit Walk after Convocation.



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BW70

New student dorm opens with a focus on learning communities

Liz Butterfield
Contributing Writer

On Aug. 1, the newest addition to VCU housing, West Grace South, opened to students. The building is an apartment-style residence hall for upperclassmen.

"Over the last decade VCU has continued to transition from being a commuter school to a residential university," said Brian Ohlinger, associate vice president of Facilities Management. "With a total of just over 5,500 beds now, which will grow to 5,860 beds next summer, we are equal to the other major four-year schools in Virginia when it comes to on campus housing."

The building contains 112 apartments, including 164 double bedrooms, 120 single bedrooms, two courtyards and two bicycle shelters, with study lounges and community rooms on every floor. The building also has separate classroom and learning areas on the first floor reserved for classes and student programs during the year.

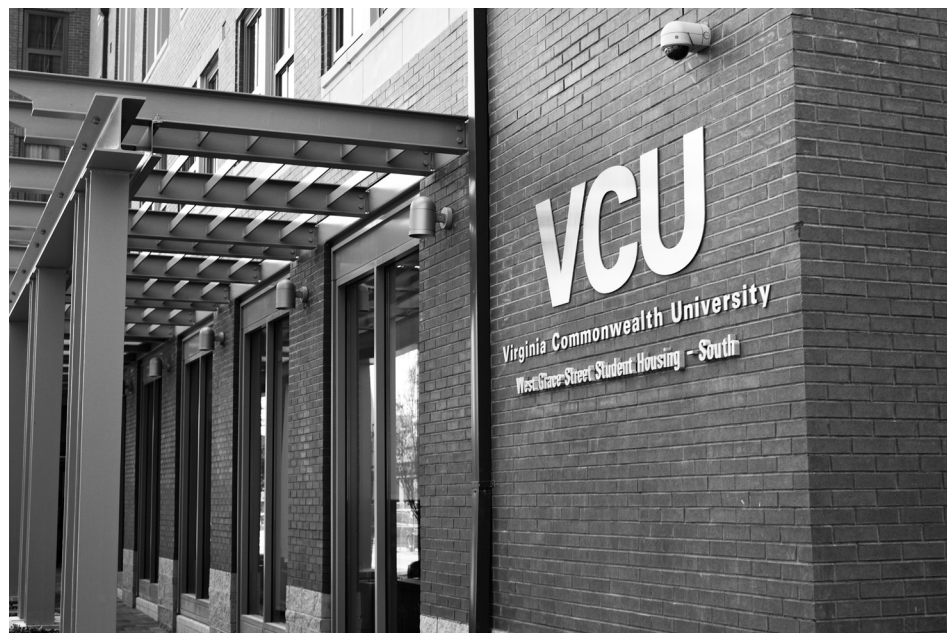
One of the goals in constructing the building was to create a community-centered learning program, Ohlinger said. The building is home to the students in the Academic Scholars Program in

Real Environments (ASPiRE) program. ASPiRE is a new program at VCU that focuses on a living-learning community with a dedication to service, said Dr. Mary Slade, the program's executive director.

ASPiRE students will perform 100 service hours and take nine credit hours for a certificate of completion for the program while they live in West Grace South for the whole of their two-year program. The building's first two floors are reserved for ASPiRE students and the rest of the apartments are filled by upperclassmen based on the residential housing lottery.

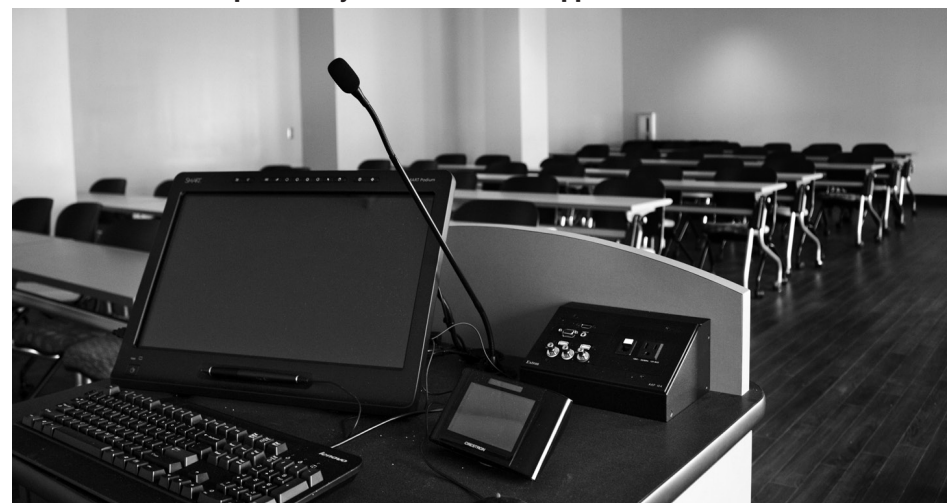
This project is the first of its kind at VCU, with the inclusion of the ASPiRE program space that is focused on community engagement, Ohlinger said.

According to Slade, two similar buildings are planned for the coming years with programs specific to each hall as a part of President Rao's initiative to build more living-learning communities around campus. Across the street from the newly-opened dorm, the West Grace North building is currently under construction. **GT**



PHOTOS BY LIZ BUTTERFIELD

West Grace South opened July 1 is exclusive to upperclassmen.



The ASPiRE Project is the first living-learning community at VCU, and the university plans to create more.



The building has two courtyards and two bicycle shelters with study lounges and community rooms on every floor.



West Grace South contains 112 apartments, including 184 bedrooms, bringing VCU's on-campus capacity to over 5,500 beds.



PHOTO BY AMBER-LYNN TABER

New Campus Connectors are smaller, with more amenities

Amir Vera
Contributing Writer

Students returning to VCU may have to look twice when trying to catch the campus connector. VCU is no longer using the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) as its main mode of transportation for students.

On June 26, the school signed a five-year contract with Groome Transportation in order to make it easier for the students to identify VCU transit services. The switch from GRTC to the smaller Groome buses began on July 1.

“(VCU) wanted a more customized service,” said Vince Groome, president of Groome Transportation. “They wanted to customize it to fit the needs of the students, parents and faculty.”

The new fleet of buses will run like GRTC, coming every 10-15 minutes to various stops around campus Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. – 2 a.m. and weekends 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Unlike the GRTC buses though, students will be able to keep track of where the new Campus Connectors are. According to Robin Mack, assistant manager of the Office of Parking

and Transportation, there will be a new GPS application for mobile devices that will be introduced Nov. 1 so students can easily identify the location of a bus.

“You will be able to see when the buses are arriving at the stops using the new mobile app or the LED screens posted at major stops,” Mack said.

While the buses have new custom routes and are more easily identified, they are somewhat smaller than GRTC’s buses.

According to GRTC officials, the old buses that ran between campuses could hold up to 47 passengers. The new Groome buses, according to Vince Groome, can only hold up to 32 passengers.

“Some customers have expressed concerns about the size of the buses,” Mack said. “However, we have been extremely responsive and added buses when needed. We also think the increased frequency and reliability of this new service will be a huge asset.”

The current Groome buses are temporary. According to Mack, a new fleet of larger buses will be arriving on campus Nov. 1, each of which will hold up to 34 passengers. **GT**



PHOTO BY AMIR VERA

The new buses hold 32 passengers, compared to the 47 carried by GRTC buses.

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VCU student remembered by family, friends after fatal hiking accident

Charles Couch
Staff Writer

Friends and family mourned and celebrated a recently deceased Virginia Commonwealth University business major at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Hampton on Aug. 14.

Caitlin Kremp's family, who could not be reached directly for comment, held a private memorial service for the 18-year-old student who died Aug. 7 due to a hiking accident in southwest Colorado.

"Thank you everyone who came to support my family yesterday at Caitlin Kremp's service," Kremp's sister, April Hafer, posted Aug. 15 on Facebook. "It was all so beautiful and our family is truly blessed to have as much support as we do."

Kremp and eight other students were in Colorado on a four-day trip sponsored through VCU's Outdoor Adventure Program, according to university officials. She fell roughly 200 feet from a rock outcrop and died instantly, according to a press release from authorities in La Plata County, Colo.

Kremp was a student worker in the program, VCU officials said.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends at this difficult time," said Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Beverly J. Warren in an official statement released Aug. 8 by the university.

VCU is providing grief counseling to



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RICHMOND TIMES

the other students on the trip, as well as on campus for Kremp's friends and associates, according to the statement.

Kremp's family opened a scholarship fund under her name at VCU, Hafer said on Facebook.

"With the scholarship at VCU we hope to make Caitlin's name live on forever because everyone should have the same amazing opportunities to love life and experience it to the fullest like she did."

VCU's Outdoor Adventure Program continues to operate on its regular schedule of activities, said Anne Buckley, the university's director of public affairs. **CT**

CRIME LOG

AUG. 18-20

Thursday, Aug. 16

No crimes recorded for this day

Friday, Aug. 17

Disorderly Conduct

ABC Store, 1217 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for panhandling.

Alcohol Violation

900 Block of West Broad Street - A male visitor was arrested for being drunk in public.

Alcohol Violation

Corner of West Main and North Brunswick streets - A female student was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Grand Larceny

Harris Hall, 1015 Floyd Ave. - A female student advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from an unsecured location.

Saturday, Aug. 18

Trespassing

Coliseum Lofts, 1335 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for Trespassing.

Petit Larceny

ABC Store, 1217 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for petit larceny.

Disorderly Conduct

1219 W. Broad St. - A male student was arrested for disorderly conduct.

Petit Larceny

Grace St. South Dorms, 835 W. Grace St. - A male student advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from a secured location.

Burglary Residential

518 W. Grace St. - A victim advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from a secured location.

Sunday, Aug. 19

Larceny

Hibbs Hall, 900 Park Ave. - A male visitor was arrested for receiving or possessing stolen goods.

Petit Larceny

Franklin Sreet Gym, 817 W. Franklin St. - A female student advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from a secured location.

Petit Larceny

School of Engineering, 601 W. Main St. - A male student advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from a secured location.

Drug Offense

Corner of West Broad and Ryland streets - Two male visitors were arrested for possession of marijuana.

Monday, Aug. 20

Alcohol Violation

Barnes and Noble, 1111 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for being drunk in public.

Trespassing

Cabell Library, 901 Park Ave. - A male visitor was arrested for trespassing.

Alcohol Violation

Brandt Hall, 710 W. Franklin St. - A male visitor was arrested for being drunk in public.

Trespassing

Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St. - A male visitor was arrested for Trespassing.

Assault Offense

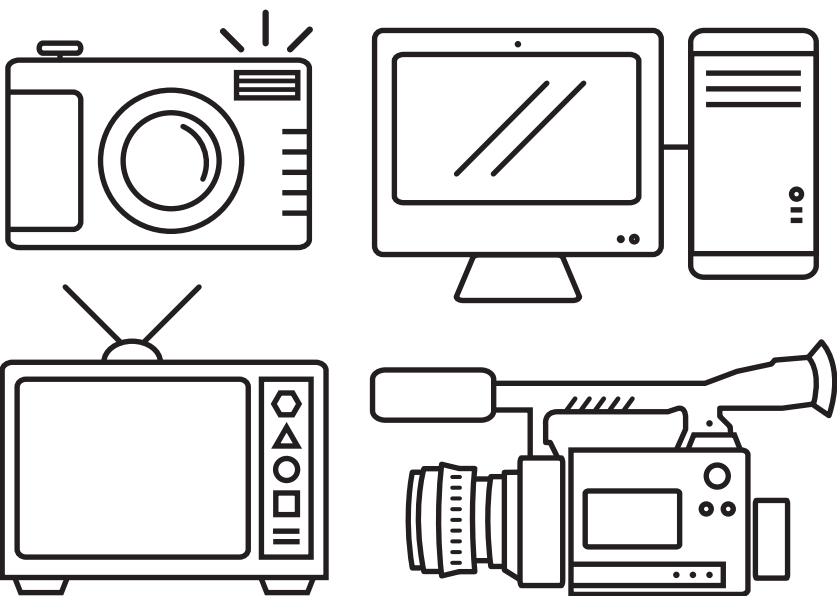
Ackell Residence Center, 1100 W. Broad St. - A male employee advised that a known person assaulted him.

Petit Larceny

Grace St. South Dorms, 835 W. Grace St. - A male student advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from a location.

Robbery Commercial

1317 W. Cary St. - A victim advised that an unknown person(s) robbed the Cary St. Mini Mart.



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Compiled from VCU Police Reports

VCU Rec Sports invites all new and returning students to experience all we have to offer.

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SPORTS

In this section:

Men's Soccer Preview (cont'd) • 10

Men's basketball announces non-conference schedule • 11

Women's Soccer Preview • 13

Men's Soccer preps for A-10 debut

Quinn Casteel
Sports Editor

2011 Overall Record / Conference Record:
11-9-0 / 6-5-0

2011 Final CAA Rank: 7 (out of 12)

2011 Final NCAA Rank: 59 (out of 203)

2012 Preseason Atlantic 10 ranking: 3 (out of 16)

Overview:

The VCU men's soccer team has experienced growth each of the past two seasons under head coach Dave Giffard, finishing last season within the top 60 teams in the country and at one point, cracking the top 25 in the coach's poll. This year, the team is looking to once again make strides in bringing the program back to fruition with another year of progress and improvement.

Having joined the Atlantic 10 for all sports, the Rams are not a member of the Colonial Athletic Association for the first time since 1995 when they made the switch from the Metro Conference. For the men's soccer team, the move to the A-10 is not as drastic an improvement from the CAA as it may be for other sports, considering the CAA was the fourth-best conference in the NCAA last season top to bottom. However, the upside is that the team can make a splash on a national stage once again, because the teams at the top of the A-10 are among the best at the college level.

"On the surface you can look at it and say maybe this doesn't help us as much as other sports, but the key to it is how many games you play," said Giffard on the move to the A-10. "This year's schedule is a good one and we were fortunate that we got paired up with the top eight teams in the league, and we had a lot of flexibility with our non-conference schedule as well."

VCU will play two fewer conference games than they did a season ago, which allowed the team to schedule additional out-of-conference matches with elite teams such as in-state rivals Virginia and James Madison.

2012 will be a season of change for



Senior forward Jason Johnson (No. 11, right) will lead the charge for VCU this fall.

the Rams, playing for the first time without their captain Yoram Mwila, who was killed in an auto accident in June. Along with being in a new conference, VCU will go into the fall season with heavy hearts and a lot of added determination to prove themselves in the A-10 – a potentially bad combination for opposing teams. The team has high expectations for themselves and others as well, having been voted to finish third in the conference behind only national runner-up Charlotte and longtime A-10 powerhouse, Xavier.

"When I took over this program in 2010, we decided our destination was to win a national championship," said Giffard. "But we have a long way to go – we've been climbing each year, and now I think realistically year-in-year-out we should be competing for it all."

Forwards:

The VCU offense and the entire team for that matter, starts with third-year man Jason Johnson, a dynamic scorer out of Saint Anne, Jamaica. Johnson has led the team in goals each of his first two seasons and is only getting better as he continues to develop and mature. He is a professional level talent and has highly realistic chances of being an MLS draft pick sometime in the next two years.

"He's already on a lot of MLS teams' radars, even when he was an underclassman," said Giffard of Johnson. "He developed a bit later than a lot of guys, but he's had a big growth each offseason and I certainly expect he'll have opportuni-

ties if he continues along this path."

Despite the worlds of talent that Johnson brings to the table, the last two seasons have been, in essence, a Batman and Robin attack up top between Johnson and Mwila – without Mwila, the team's second leading scorer each of the last two seasons in the picture, more defensive attention will be on Johnson unless Giffard and company can find another Robin.

Two weeks into camp, there is an intense battle emerging between several players vying for the starting forward spot alongside Johnson. Among those players is sophomore Kharlton Belmar, who at this point is in position to grab the starting job if he continues to impress in practice and in games. Giffard called Kharlton the most athletic player on the team, which is saying a lot considering the athleticism of players such as Johnson and sophomore defender, Juan Monge Solano.

"Kharlton presents a lot of issues for opponents," said Giffard. "He's got a ton of pace and he's probably the most athletic guy on our team. He can cause some problems for the defense and make exciting things happen. He's also very honest and a hard worker."

Belmar's biggest challenge for the starting spot will be redshirt freshman Devon Fisher, a highly talented player out of the Chesapeake area. Giffard said that although Belmar is in better position right now, the battle will continue to go on throughout the season as they, along with other elite scorers like freshman Matt Freibaum, Clemson transfer

K.C. Onyeador and Barcelona native Jose Manel Bel battle for playing time. Giffard called Manel Bel, whose father played 10 years for Barcelona, "the best finisher on the team," and expects him to find his way onto the field either in the midfield or up top.

Midfielders:

The VCU midfield is highlighted by defensive mid Romena Bowie, who has established himself as one of the best at his position in the country over the last two years. Bowie is from the same town in Jamaica as Johnson, and possesses many of the same talents but from a defensive perspective. Bowie is expected to be the sole patroller of the defensive midfield for the Rams this season.

Alongside Bowie in the midfield will be more familiar faces for VCU soccer fans such as Mario Herrera Meraz, who started every game for the Rams in the spring, as well as junior Nate Shiffman who was a full-time starter in fall of 2011. Joseph Haboush, a Richmond native, is entering his senior year and is expected to be a cornerstone of the midfield as well after starting on-and-off over the past three years.

And the depth doesn't end there – Giffard's midfield is among the deepest in the conference, with even more players with experience in the mix like Peter Lee, a junior and former starter for the Rams. Additionally, newcomers such as Dakota Barnathan, Devon Fisher's brother Ritchie Duffie who is a transfer from North Carolina Wesleyan, and red-

Continued on Page 10

shirt freshman Cameron Foster will add depth and compete for playing time.

Defense:

While the midfield is clearly the deepest position for VCU, the back line is where the Rams have the most stability. The team will begin the season with the same back four which played together all spring in the starting lineup, anchored by left back Juan Monge Solano. Solano is a member of the Costa Rican U23 National Team, and has earned some well-deserved recognition over the past two years for his excellent ball skills and offensive prowess from the left back position.

"A lot of that probably stems from that not a lot of left backs can attack as well as he can," said Giffard. "A lot of recognition certainly came his way as a freshman, and I think like J (Jason Johnson) and Bowie, he's ready to have a big year."

Dennis Castillo, another Costa Rica National Team player (U20), is expected to start at center back for VCU in his freshman season. Castillo played alongside Monge Solano and the rest of the presumed starting back line in the spring, and has already earned the utmost confidence from his head coach.

"He's a great organizer, fighter, leader, and will certainly give us a lot of help in the back," said Giffard of Castillo.

Next to Castillo on the right side of the starting back line will be Assane Keita, a player who broke out over the last few games of fall 2011. Keita, who

played high school soccer in Massachusetts but is originally from Senegal, is entering his sophomore season having already contributed to five shutouts with the Rams.

Rounding out the starting defense will be Juan Arbelaez, a senior who made 17 appearances with VCU last season but did not start a match. Arbelaez transferred from George Perimeter Junior College a year ago, and this season will step in for Nick Rich who graduated last spring and was a staple on the Ram back line for the last four years.

Brad Seymour and Garrett Harvey will begin the season as reserves on the defensive side, but will be competing for minutes right away.

"Brad and Garrett were two guys that basically started all of last fall for us, and they've kind of been displaced at this point by Dennis and Assane," said Giffard. "They'll be working hard and providing a lot of good competition for those spots."

Senior Andrew Wells has earned the starting goalkeeper job in camp over the last two weeks, beating out three other players for the spot. Wells, along with the rest of the VCU keepers, has very minimal experience on the college level in regular season matches but impressed the coaching staff during the spring season and cemented his role in practice this summer. Because of the overall lack of experience at the position, goalkeeper will be one of the few positions of concern for the Rams. However, despite the lack of experience, Giffard said he is

confident and comfortable with any of the four goalkeepers playing in a game this fall.

Top Players:

Jason Johnson (Junior, Forward)

Coach's Analysis: "Certainly the talent and potential has been there for J, but it's been a growth process. As we've grown, he's continued to grow- he's more mature, he understands what's expected of him and I think he's ready for a breakout year and possibly make the next step on to the pro game."

2011 stats: 11 goals, 1 assist, 23 points, 80 shots

Juan Monge Solano (Sophomore, Defender)

Coach's Analysis: "He has improved significantly over the spring and summer, and we're looking forward to him being a big impact for us on the left side."

2011 stats: 5 goals, 1 assist, 11 points, 19 shots

Kharlton Belmar (Sophomore, Forward)

Coach's Analysis: "Kharlton presents a lot of issues for opponents. He's got a ton of pace and he's probably the most athletic guy on our team. He can cause some problems for the defense and make exciting things happen. He's also very honest and a hard worker."

2011 stats: 1 goal, 1 assist, 3 points, 5 shots

Key Matches:

Aug. 26 vs. William & Mary - VCU Tournament (7:30 p.m. at Sports Back-

ers Stadium)

Sept. 25 vs. Virginia (7 p.m. at Sports Backers Stadium)

Oct. 5 vs. Charlotte* - Conference Opener (7 p.m. at Sports Backers Stadium)

Oct. 26 vs. Xavier* (7 p.m. at Sports Backers Stadium)

* Indicates conference match **CT**



Coach Giffard said Romena Bowie is a prototypical No. 10

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Men's basketball announces non-conference schedule

Jim Swing
Sports Editor

The VCU men's basketball team has announced its 2012-2013 non-conference schedule beginning with an exhibition contest against Virginia Union on Nov. 1.

Head coach Shaka Smart and his staff have compiled one of the toughest non-conference schedules in recent memory this season, highlighted with matchups against Memphis and Alabama. The Rams will face last year's NCAA Tournament opponent Wichita State at the Siegel Center on Nov. 13 in a return game from an ESPN BracketBusters game two seasons ago. On Nov. 22 VCU will take on a highly-touted Memphis team in the Battle 4 Atlantis Tournament in the Bahamas, where the Rams are guaranteed three games against possible opponents such as Duke, Minnesota, Louisville and Missouri.

On Dec. 1 VCU will host the reigning Ohio Valley Conference champions Belmont. Less than a week later the Rams will head to Norfolk to take on former CAA foe Old Dominion in the first part of a home and home series. Former VCU head coach Anthony Grant will bring his Alabama team to the Siegel Center on Dec. 15 in the second part of a home and home guaranteed by his contract when he left in 2009. In their final home game of the regular season, the Rams will welcome last year's Patriot League champions Lehigh, which knocked off Duke in the first round of the NCAA Tournament a season ago. **CT**

Sports continued on Page 13

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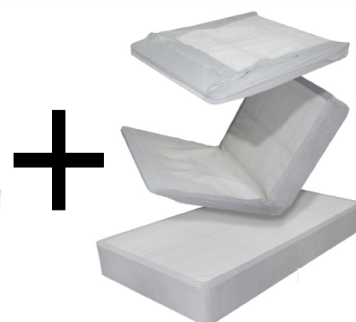
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YEAR LONG AUDI TION

For prospective art students, their senior year of high school is full of portfolio reviews, submissions of their best artwork and for some, auditions. At VCUarts, the No. 1 public art school in the nation, students pursuing applied and fine arts spend their first year in the notoriously rigorous Art Foundations program while performing arts majors audition prior to being admitted to the school. While theatre, music and dance majors spend their time in practices and performances the whole year, AFO students spend their first year in a series of classes designed to strengthen their basic art skills where they will showcase not just their artistic skills, but their ability to handle being at the No. 1 public art school in the nation. The CT will be following five students through their first year, documenting their transition to college and their journey through their first year in VCUarts.

VCUarts freshmen prepare for first year

Mechelle Hankerson
Executive Editor

Andrew Kearns,
AFO (graphic design)

Andrew Kearns from Salem, Va. has spent the better part of the past year packing.

"I feel like my whole life has been packing and unpacking," he said on his second day in Johnson Hall.

Kearns, who came to VCU to pursue a degree in graphic design, spent his senior year of high school in Rouen, France as part of an exchange program. He returned in late July, with a month left to visit with his friends he hadn't seen in a year, visit his grandparents in Massachusetts and take a week-long vacation to Myrtle Beach before he had to move into his dorm.

Since he was out of the country during normal freshman orientation times, Kearns registered for classes earlier in the summer and then attended a shortened orientation the week before freshman move-in. He moved into his dorm the same day, two days before the rest of the freshman class came to campus.

"I can't even put stuff away," he said of his half-unpacked dorm room. "I just can't deal with it. I'm going to leave it there (and) hope it disappears. It won't,

I'll just get more stuff to deal with."

After a year in France, coming back to America (and Richmond) is something Kearns is looking forward to.

"It's really different when you're an exchange student because you're really trying to adapt to a different culture and then make friends who aren't the same as you," Kearns said. "But this year, it's more about meeting people like me and meeting people who are from America and have a similar culture as me and talk the same way that I do and enjoy the same kind of things and do the American-college-freshman thing."

Part of the "American-college-freshman thing" in VCUarts is a group of four required classes that all Art Foundations (AFO) students must take before applying into their specific major at the end of the first year, during spring portfolio review.

AFO students must successfully complete Time Studio, Space Research, Surface Research and Drawing Studio. The classes, taken two at a time over the first two semesters, are meant to encompass the basics of art and design.

In addition to those four classes, AFO students must complete two project classes, meant to give them a sampling of different majors. First-year AFO students must also complete Fo-

cused Inquiry I and II and both parts of introductory art history classes.

Kearns said most of his academic classes won't be hard for him, but his first four art foundation classes might be difficult for him.

"I've always liked art but I don't like...fine arts," he said. "I don't like drawing...I don't enjoy painting. Sculpture's okay, but really...I love the idea and I like being exposed to (fine arts), but I don't feel very strong doing them."

Kearns spent most of his time in high school as part of the school's forensic team and working with theatre productions. During his junior year, he joined the yearbook staff where he could start experimenting with graphic design.

"(Graphic design) is more technical, (it's) on the computer (and) it's more about the creative process than actually doing it," he said.

Brooke Marsh,
AFO (photography)

Like Kearns, Brooke Marsh isn't entirely comfortable with what AFO will demand of her this year. But she's a self-declared optimist, and despite feeling like she has less art experience than many of her incoming peers, she's

excited to be in the AFO program.

Marsh began her art education her junior year of high school. She never took an Advanced Placement art class because she didn't take the required prerequisite before her senior year at Chopticon High School in Morganza, Md.

She never took sculpture or film photography classes, but she enrolled in Time Studio and Surface Research this semester, which she hopes will hone her video-making and 2-D art skills. "I never got to take a sculpture or a film photography class, so I don't know anything about darkroom or anything about 3-D design," she said. "I'm excited to learn those techniques."

For the required portfolio submission for admission into the school, she submitted samples of her photography, still-life drawings and watercolor paintings.

"It's intimidating...just not having the experience that all the other kids have," Marsh said. "But if I can get into the art school, I must have some kind of talent that they're looking for, I must have something that they want here, I feel like if I can get accepted, I obviously belong here."

Marsh banked a lot on belonging at



Rex Kennedy (above) talks with other dance students at the major mixer on Aug. 22. Tricia Wiles, (below, right) attended a tour during Welcome Week to find her non-major classes. Andrew Kearns (right) moved into his dorm in Johnson Hall before other freshmen after spending his senior year in France.

VCUarts—she didn't apply anywhere else during her college search.

"I was going to apply to other schools, but I would find something about them I liked and then I would find something that I didn't like and I knew that I would absolutely hate it when I went there so I decided just not to apply there," she said.

Neither of Marsh's parents attended college and she said they were both open to Marsh pursuing her photography degree wherever would best fit her needs.

"(My mom) was uneasy about the price just because it was out-of-state, but she was willing to support me and

once we got the financial aid letter, it fell into place," she said.

Marsh had about half of her tuition paid for through loans and grants from the school but still had to take out private loans.

Kate Rancka, Voice

Unlike Marsh, Kate Rancka from Midlothian, Va. didn't immediately decide to attend VCU. A voice major, Ranacka was seriously considering Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y.

The daughter of two music majors - her dad studied vocal music and her mom studied music education and

played the clarinet - Rancka was advised to attend a state school for her undergraduate studies, then move to a more prominent school for graduate school.

She auditioned at the Eastman School of Music and was accepted, but ultimately settled on VCU.

"(VCU) is a lot less expensive (and) I know Richmond really well," she said. Rancka is not staying in-state just for the convenience though.


"VCU has an amazing music program anyways. VCU is not a 'settling' school, it's a really good school," she said.

Rancka began learning how to read music and play piano when she was 3 years old and was in voice lessons by the

time she was 7. From then on, she was involved with community groups and theatre companies in the Richmond area.

She participated in the theatre program at her high school, Thomas Dale High School and over the summer lent her talents to a local production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" as a narrator. During high school, she spent a summer as part of the Governor's School for the Arts, which she called the best summer of her life.

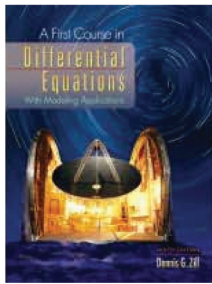
"It was the first time I was able to... just sing eight or nine hours a day and be around people who actually enjoy it



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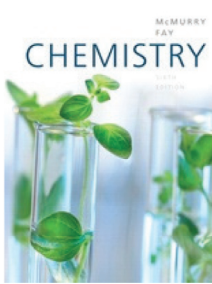


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and (are) not annoyed by it," she said.

Rancka said she expects to find the same kind of environment at VCU, as well as some new experiences. For the first time in her singing career, she'll have a male voice teacher, Kenneth Wood.

"I'm not really nervous," she said. "I think that it will be exciting."

Rex Kennedy, Dance and Choreography

For an 18-year-old freshman from Hudson, Co. who is 1700 miles from home, Rex Kennedy is surprisingly calm.

"I feel really prepared, the only thing I'm nervous about is how I'll be viewed by the VCU dance population... how (will) the other freshman dancers will look at me, will they think I'm crazy?" he said before classes began.

"I definitely put myself out there to push myself creatively and I have high expectations for myself and I don't settle for things that have been done before," he said.

With an athletic background- Kennedy played basketball and participated in track and field- he said he caught on to dance quickly.

"The physicality was easy, (dancing is) just using it in different ways," he said.

For the first two years of his high school career, Kennedy attended a normal school where he pursued sports. After a dance studio opened near his house and a year of dancing, he transferred to the Denver School of the Arts,

making a 40-minute commute every day for two years.

It paid off. And for the last two summers, Kennedy has been able to attend the prestigious American Dance Festival at Duke University.

The ADF is a six-week program that offers classes, performances and training for dancers and choreographers of different skill levels, from students to professionals.

Kennedy was able to perform in the Festival's performances, take classes and watch other dances perform.

Through his time at the ADF, he also became familiar with VCU. James Frazier, who serves as one of the ADF Schools' co-deans, is also the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies at VCU School of the Arts. In addition to Frazier's presence, Kennedy noticed that there seemed to be more VCU students participating in the ADF than any other school. Kennedy's final choices came down to VCU and NYU and although cost was a consideration, his experience with VCU students at the ADF helped him make his decision.

"(The dancers at ADF) have been what I look up to because they were always creative and really individuals as well as being good technically," he said. "I feel like it's a good place to nurture young dancers, especially to push us to be creative and innovative."

Kennedy is the kind of student VCU-arts Dean Joe Seipel said is the norm in the school.

"There's a sense in the school of the arts that it's really cool to be dedicated to your studio or your theatre or music, whatever it is," Seipel said. "There's always a sense that the people that are the most respected around the art school campus are the ones that are the hardest workers."

VCU Dance and Choreography is an invited member of the Council of Dance Administrators, which is a forum of the country's 25 leading dance programs.

Tricia Wiles, Theatre

Tricia Wiles spent her high school career as busy as she could possibly be. She played volleyball for four years, participated in theatre, pursued vocal music outside of school and dabbled in other activities, including gymnastics.

Out of everything she did, though, her favorite thing to do was musical theatre.

"I love the aspects of dance, acting and singing and then developing the characters in one single show and I just thought it was so amazing that you could have every type of...talent thrown together in one big jumble," she said.

Wiles spent her senior year studying musical theatre through an Independent Study course at her high school. She had to propose the class to her school's administration and decide what would she do in it. She spent the year helping with theatre classes and occasionally

leaving school during the day for private voice lessons.

Deciding not to pursue dance required Wiles to take an honest look at herself as a performance artist. She had been singing in church since she was 4 years old and had been taking private voice lessons for three years and thought pursuing a voice major might not be worthwhile for her.

"If I actually have a shot at being talented enough and experienced enough to actually make this my living, then I need to even out my talent," she said. "I don't want to be that actor who can sing and dance but can't act worth anything."

Once she realized that theatre was the best fit for her, Wiles had to decide where to go.

She auditioned for six schools but thought VCU had the most established program.

"A lot of schools are just starting out and just starting their programs and one thing about VCU is that it had this foundation that 'We're top-notch and we know it,'" she said.

VCUarts is ranked as the No. 1 public arts school in the country with No.1 rankings in its sculpture, fiber arts, graphic design and glass programs among the country's other public art schools. **CT**

Follow Andrew, Brooke, Kate, Rex and Tricia online at commonwealthtimes.org

ANDREW KEARNS' AND REX KENNEDY'S PHOTOS BY AMBER-LYNN TABER. BROOK MARSH'S, KATE RANCKA'S AND TRICIA WILES' PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE STUDENT.



Andrew Kearns
Salem, Va.
AFO, pursuing a concentration in Graphic Design

Kearns spent his senior year as an exchange student in Rouen, France. He returned to the United States with a month at home before moving into Johnson Hall. He is "completely dreading" his introductory Drawing class.



Rex Kennedy
Hudson, Colo.
Dance and Choreography
Kennedy is relatively new to dancing. He began three years ago but quickly excelled. He's spent the last two summers at the American Dance Festival at Duke University where he's met other VCU dance students and some dance professors.



Brooke Marsh
Morganza, Md.
AFO, pursuing a double major in Photography and Mass Communications

Marsh decided to pursue photography in seventh grade after watching photographers at a My Chemical Romance concert. Since then, she's taken as many art classes as she could fit in her high school schedule but never took any Advanced Placement art classes. She'll be the first one in her immediate family to go to college.



Kate Rancka
Midlothian, Va.
Voice
With almost 15 years of musical experience, Rancka said she isn't nervous about any of her classes. She's been performing in musical theatre productions in the area since she was 9 years old and plans to continue at VCU. She'll be commuting to campus for classes and right now, is most concerned about parking and making it to her 8 a.m. classes.



Tricia Wiles
Ashland, Va.
Theatre
Wiles is a triple threat: she has pursued dancing, singing and acting in the past. She chose to come to VCU to study theatre to become a better actress to pursue a career in musical theatre. She'll also be commuting to campus but said her family has been talking about selling their home in the suburbs and moving within the Richmond city limits.

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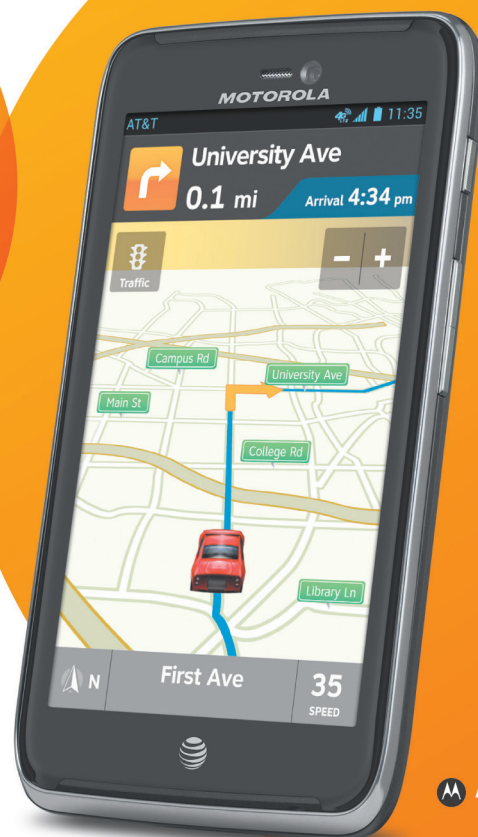
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Senior Gabby Wilson dribbles against Appalachian State in Fall 2011.

Experience key for women's soccer in 2012

Jim Swing
Sports Editor

*2011 record/conference record (CAA):
9-8-4/6-2-3 (reached conference tournament
finals)*

Overview:

After falling just short of escaping the Colonial Athletic Association with a conference championship in their final year, the VCU women's soccer team looks to find success in the Atlantic 10. The Rams have been ranked fourth in the A-10 preseason poll.

"I didn't know what to expect," co-head coach Tiffany Roberts-Sahaydak said. "We were happy because we didn't know how people were going to feel about us."

VCU loses six seniors from last year's campaign but still boasts a rather experienced roster with 16 upperclassmen. Roberts-Sahaydak said her team is experienced as far as age goes, but the challenge will be adjusting to new positions. Two games into the season, the Rams are 1-0-1 with a draw at home against High Point and a decisive 3-0 victory at Longwood.

Forwards:

Having battled injuries all throughout her career, senior Bre White is finally back in the starting lineup for good as she leads a strong group of forwards. Sophomore Maren Johansen earned CAA All-Rookie honors a season ago and coaches indicate her confidence is at an all-time high this season. Junior Courtney Conrad finished last season with six goals, one assist and 13 points for the Rams. Coaches say she is off to a solid start yet again, but the best is yet to come.

Midfielders:

Last year's CAA Rookie of the Year, Cristin Granados returns after turning in six goals last season, a team high. The Costa Rica native is one of VCU's premier playmakers and will be a key starter this season. Senior Gabby Wilson is a scrappy organizer who gets a starting nod once again this season for the Rams. VCU's third starting spot at midfield is currently wide open with senior Heather Hovanesian out with an injury. Junior Brianne Moore has stepped her game up and taken

advantage of the opportunity as has junior Taryn Cressy, who is a playmaking attacker that is more capable of stealing the starting spot. Once Hovanesian returns, however, she will vie for the position back.

Defense:

VCU brings a new-look defense in 2012 with many new pieces that will be implemented. Senior Lauryn Hutchinson gets a starting nod after having not been a starter in her first three years. She was recruited as a forward but has been training as a defender. Hutchinson will be tested early on as she has not had a lot of game experience throughout her career. She will play alongside Carly Edgcomb and newcomer Wendy Acosta who has played on the Costa Rican national team since 2007. Junior Bex Kunz has been in and out of the starting lineup as a forward in her first two seasons, but Roberts-Sahaydak said that she is one of the strongest defenders the Rams have to offer. Kunz's insertion into the starting lineup as a defender comes much in part to fill the void that Molly Allen left behind. VCU's defense

boasts four talented defenders, but the key will be finding a way to successfully work together.

Goalkeeping:

After leading the CAA with a 0.68 goals against average last season, Kristen Carden was a lock for the starting spot once again this year until she went down with an injury. Now the position is up for grabs with junior Megan Lynch and freshman Emma Kruse vying for the spot. Kruse earned the starting nod in VCU's first two games of the season, posting five saves and one shutout before being named A-10 Rookie of the Week. **CT**



VCU was picked fourth in the A-10 preseason poll

2012 VCU Women's Soccer Schedule			2012 VCU Men's Soccer Schedule		
Aug. 24	5:30 PM	vs. Akron @ Knoxville, Tenn. (Tennessee Lady Vol Classic, Knoxville, Tenn.)	Aug. 24	7:30 PM	Bucknell VCU Tournament
Aug. 26	3:00 PM	at Tennessee (Tennessee Lady Vol Classic)	Aug. 26	7:30 PM	William & Mary (VCU Tournament)
Sept. 2	1:00 PM	Villanova	Aug. 30	7:00 PM	at UMBC
Sep. 7	2:00 PM	at American	Sep. 1	7:00 PM	at Navy
Sep. 9	1:00 PM	Pittsburgh	Sep. 7	4:30 PM	vs. Winthrop @ Norfolk, Va. (ODU Tournament)
Sep. 14	7:00 PM	UMBC	Sep. 9	12:00 PM	vs. Seton Hall @ Norfolk, Va. (ODU Tournament)
Sep. 20	7:00 PM	at William & Mary	Sep. 14	7:30 PM	at Fla. Gulf Coast
Sep. 23	1:00 PM	at Old Dominion	Sep. 18	7:00 PM	at James Madison
Sep. 28	7:00 PM	at Charlotte *	Sep. 25	7:00 PM	Virginia
Sep. 30	1:00 PM	at George Washington *	Sep. 29	7:00 PM	Northeastern
Oct. 5	4:00 PM	Fordham *	Oct. 5	7:00 PM	Charlotte*
Oct. 7	1:00 PM	La Salle *	Oct. 7	4:00 PM	George Washington*
Oct. 12	7:00 PM	Saint Louis *	Oct. 12	7:00 PM	at St. Louis*
Oct. 14	1:00 PM	Butler *	Oct. 14	2:00 PM	at Butler*
Oct. 19	7:00 PM	Richmond *	Oct. 19	5:00 PM	at Fordham*
Oct. 26	6:30 PM	at Xavier *	Oct. 21	1:00 PM	at La Salle*
Oct. 28	1:00 PM	at Dayton *	Oct. 26	7:00 PM	Xavier*
Nov. 1	TBA	vs. Atlantic 10 Championship @ Rhode Island	Oct. 28	1:00 PM	Dayton*
Nov. 9	TBA	at NCAA Tournament	Nov. 2	7:00 PM	at Richmond*
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Home games in bold
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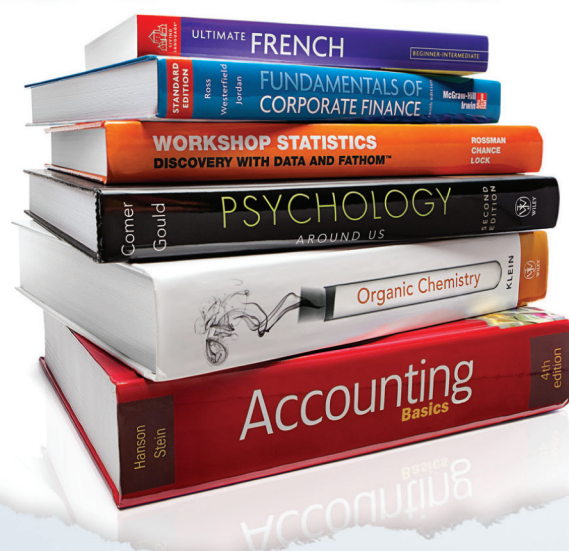


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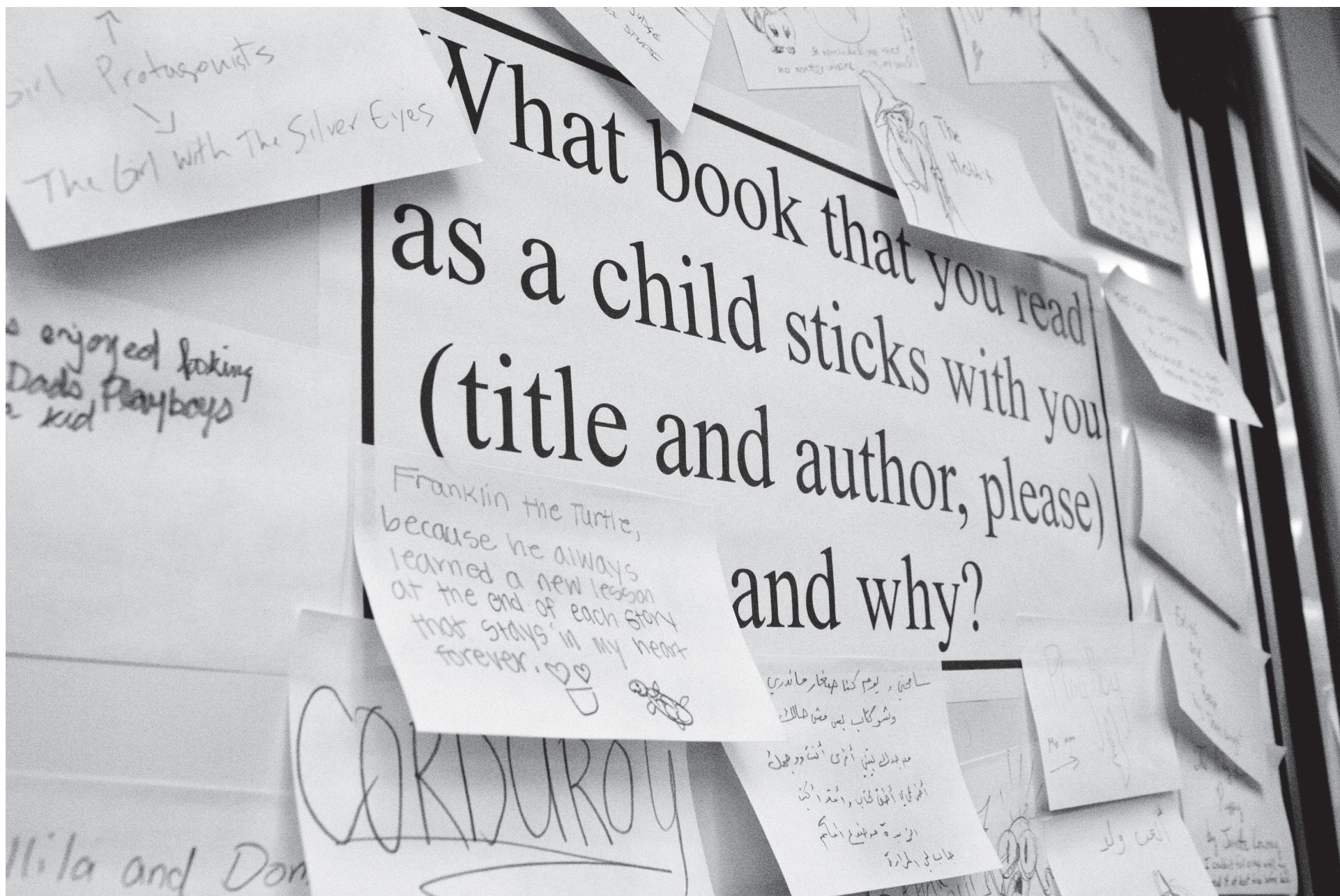


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In this section:

Revisit your childhood memories with the library exhibit, *Books You Carry With You* (cont'd) • 17
We review the worst summer movies so you don't have to • 18



The touring library exhibit, "Books You Carry With You," encourages students to add their favorites to a white board at the front of the Cabell Library.

Touring library exhibit invites students to revisit childhood memories

Michael Todd
Staff Writer

The touring exhibit "Books You Carry with You" gives VCU students an excuse to procrastinate reading textbooks and writing essays just a little bit longer in favor of a stroll down memory lane to revisit childhood favorites.

Created by and on loan from the Friends of the Richmond Public Library, "Books You Carry with You" features approximately 50 titles selected by prominent Richmond figures who then contributed personal essays about how these books shaped their childhood and adult lives.

The aim was to have a cross-section of Richmond's various professions," said Kelly Kyle, the Exhibit Chair for the Friends of the Richmond Public Library.

VCU President Michael Rao, basketball coach Shaka Smart and singer/songwriter Jason Mraz are just a few of the individuals who opted to share their childhood favorites, like *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein.

The exhibit title was inspired by Anita Silvey's "Everything I Needed to Know I Learned From a Children's Book." Many of the books featured in the exhibit can be found in the children's book collection of the Martha

Davenport Special Collections Room in the Richmond Public Library. With recognizable titles that seem to transcend generations, the exhibit appears to be achieving its goal of appealing to as broad an audience as possible.

"A lot of the same titles...seem to kind of resonate and are lasting across generations," said Sue Robinson, the director of communications and public relations at Cabell Library. "It's kind of a nice way to bring people together."

The interactive exhibit encourages the participation of the entire Richmond community, ranging from VCU students and faculty to all those who viewed the exhibit at its first home at

the Richmond Public Library.

Sophomore sculpture student Elizabeth Henderson, who contributed to one of the white boards open to library visitors, was surprised by the number of both the titles of books and names of Richmond leaders she recognized.

Free and open to the public, the exhibit is currently housed on the first floor of Cabell Library, which can see up to 10,000 visitors a day.

According to Robinson, Cabell Library is an excellent display venue because of its location on campus, which exposes it to a youthful demographic that Richmond Public Library might not have reached.

Participants are invited to contribute their own thoughts on personal favorites via commenting on the Cabell Library Facebook page, twitter (@VCUcabell, #VCUreads), completing the short survey listed on the library's page for the event or contributing a Post-it note to one of the white boards located just inside the library's front doors.

"(These stories) have the power to shape us and... our future," said University Librarian John Ulmschneider. "(They) can make a real difference in how we understand the world around us."

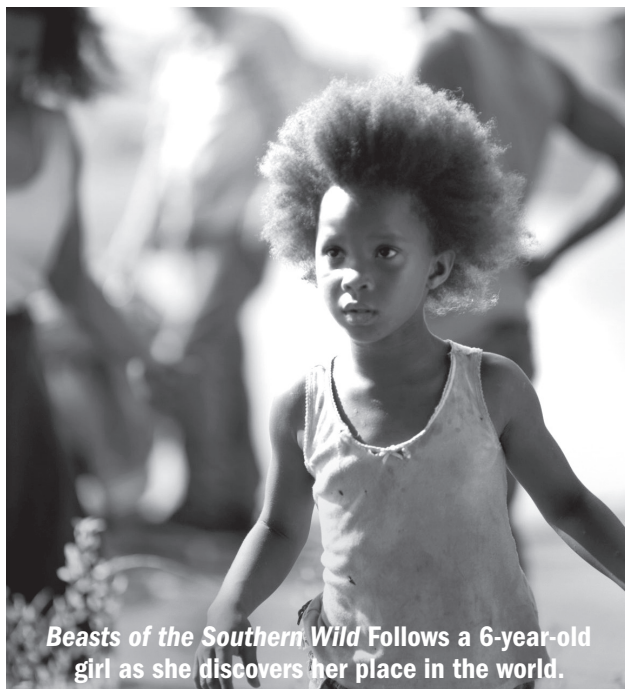
"Books You Carry with You" will be on display from now until Sept. 27. **CT**



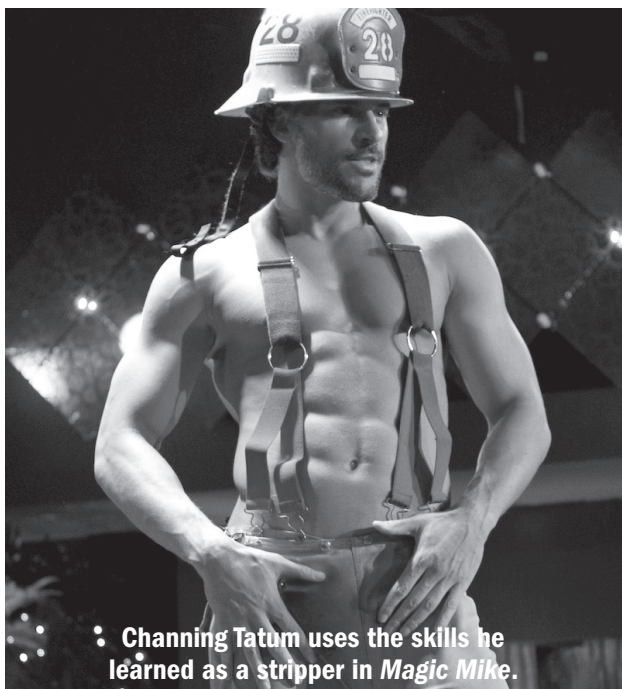
Students touring the library during Library Fest also have a chance to see the touring exhibit.



Freshman Ameorry Luo adds her favorite childhood book, "Sherlock Holmes" by Sir Arthur Connan Doyle, to the interactive white board.



Beasts of the Southern Wild Follows a 6-year-old girl as she discovers her place in the world.



Channing Tatum uses the skills he learned as a stripper in *Magic Mike*.



Despite being beautifully shot, the bad acting in *Prometheus* inspires drinking games.

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Summer blockbusters offer a “buffet of men” to viewers

Cory Johnson
Staff Writer

There is the Oscar movie season and then there is the summer movie season, which juxtapose each other in every way. One is typically filled with movies that award shows tell you to pay attention to and the other is overflowing with lazy afternoons of dragging your kid cousin away from his parents' house so they don't have to deal with his inexhaustible summer energy.

Yes, some blockbusters are left out of the following list. And yes, some of them were amazing, like “The Dark Knight Rises”, “Ted”, and “Moonrise Kingdom.” When these movies come to the Byrd, show up in your Netflix cue or are available at the nearest Redbox, check them out.

Beasts of the Southern Wild

Raw power emits from every pore of the main character's face as she stares down across the waters of The Bath-tub, a fictitious bayou island located on the sinking side of a levee. Based on the short play “Sweet and Delicious,” the movie follows Hushpuppy, a 6-year-old girl, while she finds how she fits into the universe.

The film is immediately captivating. You are introduced to this lively sinking ship of a community from the eyes of Hushpuppy, who cites her father as her source of wisdom. Shots are slightly out of focus; the contrast in colors is heavy and lights seem brighter as you see the world through the young girl's eyes.

This form of visual storytelling is used through most of the movie. Only when the scene is fully plump with energy and life does narration come, in Hushpuppy's voice, reminding the audience of the adolescence behind the strong face.

As she learns about her world, listening to its heartbeat, glaring at it straight-on with the intensity of bull, the scene becomes clearer and hues subdue.

Through her learning to survive, director-writer-composer Benh Zeitlin teaches the audience both how to live and how to let others live.

Crying in this movie is not optional; it wears its heart on its sleeve.

Magic Mike

This is a good movie. Period. Whether you watch it for the stripping, which there is just enough to get the housewives going, or you watch it for the direction, handled by Academy Award-winning Steven Soderbergh of “Traffic” and “Erin Brockovich”, it doesn't matter. Like I said, it's a good movie.

From the beginning, *Magic Mike* lets you know the stripping is just a show. Dallas, played by Matthew McConaughey, teases, letting the audience know what they can and can't touch, setting the tone for the movie and pandering just enough to keep the ladies (and fellas) waiting for the next skin show.

Smash cut to real life. Channing Tatum, in the lead role of Mike, wakes up naked before heading to a construction job. If the moves he lays down as *Magic Mike* aren't a clue, Tatum was a stripper before he became an actor. But even outside his night job, Tatum proves that he can maintain a presence as a leading man, being the highlight of most scenes he's in.

There are no empty scenes in this film. No random pans of Florida. No perspective shots without important dialogue. The most lucid scene, a skillfully executed drug binge, is put together well, signaling the turn of the movie with electric blue and pink piglets.

Yes there are dancing boys, a “buffet of men,” if you will, but the movie has heart and an ending that is both endearing and saddening all at once.

Prometheus

It wouldn't be summer without aliens, and while the super-extraterrestrials of “The Avengers” are a lively bunch, if you haven't seen that movie by now, you won't after reading a review of it.

“*Prometheus*” is a prequel to Ridley Scott's “*Alien*” and begins with a promise of creation. A giant, ivory skinned humanoid watches a ship leave the planet before drinking a dark liquid and dissolving, breaking down cell by cell, before the cells begin to divide and grow again. And while the movie is visually inspired, the writing of this film is angering.

Drinking games could be constructed in honor of the poor script. Every time the aliens are mentioned, take a drink. Every time the characters know something they shouldn't, take a drink, every time you want to yell at the screen, take a drink, every time logic doesn't exist, take a drink.

The true beauty of this film lies in the visuals.

Ridley Scott has been around the block enough times to know how to compose a shot and tell a story visually. The planet wheezes a thick fog, leaks black goo and beckons to the cast like an eerie library, full of knowledge but

haunting. A massive spaceship, in post-modern space-age style, inhabited by scientist in skintight bio-suits is set opposite an organic mausoleum with the ability to touch the stars, humanoid ol-mecs towering stories with the tale of an ancient race, acres and acres of dust and rock and poisonous air.

The acting, considered visual, because the things that come out of the actors' mouths are ridiculous, does the best it can with a weak script. Michael Fassbender is blonde-haired, blue-eyed mechanical perfection as the organ-envious robot, David and Charlize Theron owns her role as the movie's villain.

But despite the potent potable appeal and stunning landscapes, the reason to watch “*Prometheus*” is because it's the only movie, that I can think of, where an entire species becomes and evolves seamlessly and it could go completely unregistered. **CT**

'Live at Gathering of the Vibes Music Festival' by STS9: Just as energetic in concert

Patrick Maguire
Contributing Writer

Sound Tribe Sector 9, otherwise known as STS9, has been back to their usual summer hustle, hitting all of this summer's liveliest music festivals. Sound Tribe made stops at the Hangout Music Festival, High Sierra Music Festival, a stop at the legendary Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Colorado and earned a headlining spot at Electric Forest Music Festival with two performances.

STS9 is an electronic jam band that was formed in Atlanta, Ga. STS9 has released 11 full-length albums since 1998. Sound Tribe concerts are a visually intricate experience combining their unique sound with a visualizer that displays a multitude of sensory images.

One of the recordings that STS9 has

released recently was their recording from Gathering of the Vibes.

Gathering of the Vibes is an annual music festival in Connecticut. It was founded after The Grateful Dead's singer and songwriter, Jerry Garcia, died in 1995 and is held annually to celebrate his life.

STS9 founded their own record label, 1320 Records, that boasts an assortment of artists like Big Gigantic, a hip-hop and jazz instrumental group. STS9 releases many of their live recordings on an album, like their most recent "Gathering of the Vibes."

STS9 is an electronic jam band that was formed in Atlanta, Ga. STS9 has released 11 full-length albums since 1998. Sound Tribe concerts are a visually intricate experience combining their unique sound with a visualizer that displays a multitude of sensory images.

"Gathering of the Vibes" showcases many of their own songs, but have also included a few cover songs.

Sound Tribe opened up their performance with exceptional energy with "Rent." It was a high-fire jam with an exceptionally pleasant beat and a fast tempo on the drums.

"Kamuy" is a groovy song that has an especially vibrant rhythm from the guitar. The drums that accompanied the song had a tribal feel. The live version of the song was shorter than other versions but was performed exceptionally well.

STS9 also covered "Shakedown Street" by the Grateful Dead. It was interesting to hear an electronic version of a Grateful Dead song, but the song was played with upbeat rhythm.

One of STS9's most well known songs, "Circus," began with a very smooth intro. The song crescendos into

a faster paced jam as the song goes on. This recording is slightly more electronic than other versions, but not lacking in any quality.

A psychedelic infused song "Hidden Hand, Hidden Fist" really showcases STS9's original electronic sound. This song is a mystifying ballad from start to finish and leaves the listener feeling a plethora of emotions. It is hard not to want to get up and dance to this one.

STS9 finished off their performance with an encore of "Moon Socket," giving a maximum amount of effort. It was a mind-bending dance song from start to finish. It was a first-class way to end their performance for the evening. **CT**

STS9 will be in Richmond for a Halloween-themed show at the National on Oct. 30



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OPINION

In this section:

A Student's Choice: to eat or not to eat • 21

What can Coursera do for you? • 23

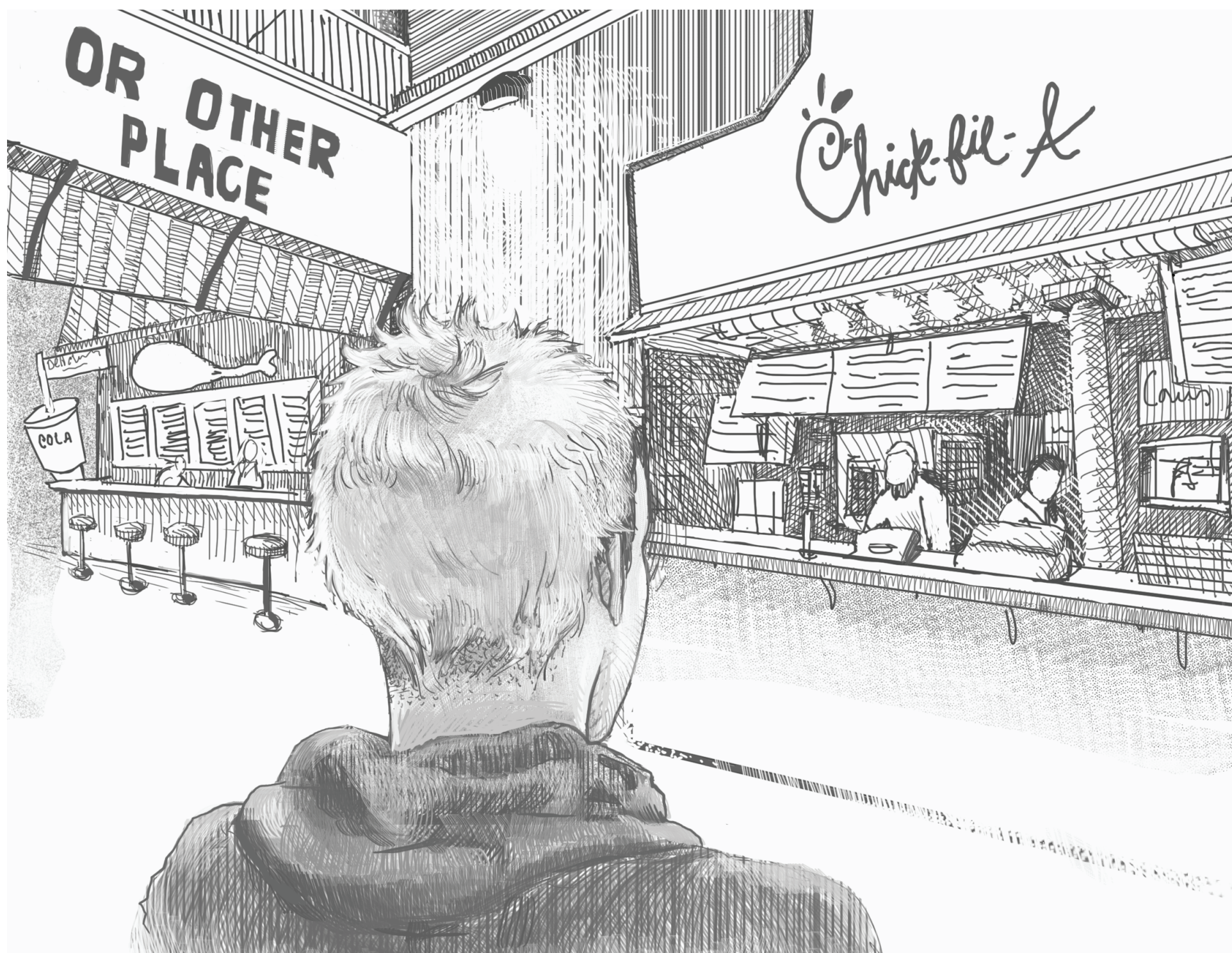


ILLUSTRATION BY DAN MACU

CEO's stance won't stifle Saturday swipes at Chick-Fil-A

Katherine Johnson
Staff Writer

Chick-Fil-A's spicy sandwich wasn't the only thing heating customers up this summer. After Chick-Fil-A president Dan Cathy announced his anti-gay marriage stance, fierce debate ensued.

Numerous customers have pledged to take their business elsewhere until Cathy apologizes. Some vow not to

return at all, while others are electing to keep their political views and waffle fries separate. With these ranging opinions, VCU should not intervene and remove the on campus Chick-Fil-A.

As a supporter of gay rights, I do not share the same views as Dan Cathy. I will not, however, pass up my opportunity to swipe at Chick-Fil-A each Saturday, a choice I suspect many other VCU students will make as well.

While Cathy's comments have offended customers, the majority of students will look past the comments and instead to their taste buds. Cathy's remarks won't suddenly make Chick-Fil-A's food less desirable to students.

VCU Dining Services should not cut ties with the restaurant; students that choose not to support Chick-Fil-A don't have to dine there. If the university were to cut ties with the business,

they'd be taking an obvious stance on the issue. This is not the school's responsibility.

Additionally, in doing so, VCU would also take a larger risk of attempting to speak for all students, when in fact there is diversity of opinion.

Continued on page 22

This was the risk Chick-Fil-A took by mixing chicken and politics, and students with strong views against the establishment have every right to take their business elsewhere.

But what about the people like me that can't resist Chick-Fil-A's food, despite being strongly against their personal views? For those that feel strongly on the matter, it may be hard for them to believe that others just don't care or at the other end, may agree with Dan Cathy.

These students also equally have the choice of where they'd like to dine on campus, meaning that to appease both sides of the argument, the university should leave it up to the students.

In addition, the campus offers various other dining locations that are compatible with students' meal plans. With the plethora of options, the university should not cater to one side of the argument by removing Chick-Fil-A.

It's also important to note that by not making any remarks regarding the event, VCU Dining Services is giving students a choice, as they should.

"Like his customers, Cathy has every right to voice his views; only he may have to suffer losses because he voiced his opinions."

While Cathy's announcement caused quite a stir, it's hard to imagine that a business started in the South with an openly religious background would feel any differently about gay marriage. Was Cathy's opinion really a shock to anyone or was it just something that would have been better left unsaid? I'd have to go with the latter.

At the end of the day, Chick-Fil-A's president spoke for himself. His opinion doesn't represent those of his employees or many of his customers, for that matter. It's a patron's choice whether they choose to overlook the comments or cut ties with the fast food restaurant.

Like his customers, Cathy has every right to voice his views; only he may have to suffer losses because he voiced his opinions. If VCU students choose to boycott the on-campus location, it will hurt its bottom line, and as a result, VCU Dining Services may be forced to ditch the eatery. **CT**

COMICS | Fanatics

Eman Kim



Evaluating the value of free, online college courses

Shane Wade
Opinion Editor

If you've ever taken an online course, you know how dry and unfulfilling they can be. But what if you could take such courses taught by professors at the country's top institutions of higher learning.

And what if they were free?

Coursera is such a venture, offering classes that range from subjects like Game Theory to Introductory Astronomy to Computational Neuroscience. Currently the courses offer no college credit and are purely academic in nature.

Recently, the University of Virginia entered into a partnership with Coursera, offering four courses through the online education venture. In "UVA Today," President Theresa Sullivan expressed that the venture would "in no way diminish the value of a U.Va. degree, but rather enhance our brand."

Here, Sullivan strikes at one of the most beneficial parts of Coursera: brand advertising. While more traditional students, fresh out of high-school, will be less likely to slight 4-year institutions in favor of free online courses, Coursera does have a valuable appeal to the non-traditional student populace. But these students are the fringe populace.

While online learning is certainly not a new venture for companies, Coursera innovates the field by having legitimate ties to accredited and well-known universities. Although Coursera courses won't give you credits and you can't earn any sort of degree from them, they're unique when compared to other similar education ventures. Coursera's game-changing, but not so much as to disrupt the status quo of higher education in America.

To start with, college is more than attending classes, getting grades and receiving a diploma; it's a deeply interactive and personal experience that shapes and consumes an individual. College is made up of social interactions, clubs and organizations, networking, life lessons and much, much more. To that end, the brick-and-mortar institutions are here to stay.

Furthermore, while students of Coursera might view the same lectures as typical students might, they are deprived of the opportunity to delve more in-depth in terms of engaging in open, instantaneous classroom discussions. An online forum isn't remotely equivalent to a classroom setting.

Coursera is not going to have a Napster-like effect on colleges. While higher-education courses might be more accessible and open to the public, the higher-education experience is, for better or for worse, still limited. It'll be interesting to see how, in a decade or so, colleges will adapt to these venture projects in terms of tuition rates and policies regarding professors, but as of now, physical institutions have nothing to fear from virtual ones.

According to Dean of Student Affairs, Ruban Rodriguez, VCU's administration currently has no plans to join with Coursera. While it is a fine service to extend to the public, it takes away valuable time and resources from the providing institution. The three-hour minimum office hours a typical VCU professor would spend creating coursework and uploading PowerPoints for Coursera classes is better applied

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+ *Analytic Combinatorics, Part I and II*

University of Virginia
+ *How Things Work I*
+ *Know Thyself*

"College is more than attending classes, getting grades and receiving a diploma."

here, at a physical location with physical students. VCU offers a comparatively unique service for students by making our professors so readily accessible.

The proliferation and expansion of higher education to the virtual world isn't the revolution that those working in the education have been waiting for. Use Coursera as a supplement to your more legitimate and substantial educational pursuits.

In education, you get out what you put in; a free course and a free education might sound alluring, but it won't reward you with a degree. **CT**

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Opinion Editor

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