Bringing technology home

Virginia Tech is driving the research that will define how our homes, vehicles, and other devices can help us live better, more efficient, and even safer lives. We’re making bold moves to become a global leader in intelligent infrastructure.

Who do you want to be?
Meet some of the students, faculty, and alumni whose commitment to Virginia Tech’s Aspirations for Student Learning are helping them find ways to not just have more, but to be more.

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There are many reasons to be excited about Virginia Tech in 2017. National and international rankings confirm what Hokies already know, our university is a special place. We’re near the top of every ranking that focuses on value, the student experience, and broader outcomes. Niche, a website that conducts student surveys, recently ranked Virginia Tech 8th out of more than 600 public universities, and first among public land-grant universities. Princeton Review ranked Virginia Tech first in the country in the category of students who love their school. Washington Monthly, a magazine that measures school performance based on their contribution to public good, ranked Virginia Tech in the top 10 among public universities, and the top 20 overall. And in the traditional rankings of U.S. News & World Report, Virginia Tech made the top 25 among public universities, tied for our highest ranking ever. A number of our academic programs have achieved top-10 recognition in national and international rankings. These rankings reflect a unique Virginia Tech learning experience that works across boundaries, leads to unexpected places, and helps students discover and utilize their passions in the spirit of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Our growing strength would not be possible without the alumni, friends, and partners who have set new records for gifts and commitments to the university. Those gifts help support research and education that will transform our world and build the knowledge, skills, and character that prepare our graduates for the opportunities of the future. Thank you for everything you do to support Virginia Tech!

Tim Sands is Virginia Tech’s 16th president.
The art of communicating difference

In the spring Virginia Tech launched the Center for Communicating Science to create and support opportunities for scientists, scholars, health professionals, and others to develop their abilities to communicate and connect.

“Public engagement is a critical element to solving many of our most urgent problems,” said Patricia Raun, director of the new center.

The opportunities supported by the center will help faculty, students, and stakeholders build trust, engage public audiences, and bridge the gap of understanding.

According to Carrie Kroehler, associate director of the center, “Our focus goes beyond a mere translation of jargon. We want [our students] to learn to communicate lucidly and passionately, to use narrative to convey meaning. In essence, we want them to tell the stories their data reveal.”

For several years, Raun and Kroehler have offered an increasingly popular graduate-level course on communicating science, based in part on the principles of improvisational theater. “The performing arts have much to teach scientists about communicating their work to a broad audience,” said Raun, a theater professor and professional actor who recently stepped down as director of the Virginia Tech School of Performing Arts to lead the new center.

The Center for Communicating Science is supported by the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment; the Graduate School; and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

In September, Virginia Tech President Tim Sands announced a $15 million gift from the A. James and Alice B. Clark Foundation, the largest scholarship gift ever made to the university.

The gift endows the foundation’s signature A. James Clark Scholars Program, which provides students with a full-nation scholarship and a holistic approach to engineering education.

2017 Clark Scholars: Back row (left to right) Makenzie Moore, Ezekiel Volk, Nefetari Heath, and Richard Cotman. Front row (left to right) Trent Kinney, Julio Villarroel, Mia Taylor, Ricabell Pagara, Clemence Helday, and Erica He.

Donations to Virginia Tech topped $162 million, marking the second consecutive year of record-breaking philanthropy.

Hokies are driven to serve, and giving back is one of the most powerful ways that they show it. Our alumni, parents, faculty, staff, friends, and corporate and foundation partners create tremendous opportunities with their generosity. We can’t realize our potential without them. We can’t thank them enough.

—CHARLIE PHLEGAR ’78, ’87
Vice President for Advancement

FISCAL YEAR 2016-17 STATS

MILLION DOLLARS IN NEW GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS.

PERCENT INCREASE IN PHILANTHROPY RECEIVED COMPARED TO 2015-16.

DONORS INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS, AND FOUNDATIONS.

COLLEGES OR PROGRAMS RAISED AT LEAST TWICE AS MUCH AS THE PREVIOUS YEAR.
Clarke named interim provost

Virginia Tech President Tim Sands named Cyril Clarke interim executive vice president and provost effective Nov. 1. Thanassis Rikakis stepped down from the same position to become the Presidential Fellow for Academic Innovation (see below).

"Beyond Boundaries envisions Virginia Tech as a leading global university, deeply engaged with our partners in the spirit of the land-grant university to address the greatest challenges of the commonwealth, the nation, and the world," said Sands. "In Cyril, we have a dedicated and inspirational leader—one with broad knowledge of Virginia Tech. Not only is he deeply committed to our shared vision, but he also has a unique understanding of the environment and culture we must navigate."

Clarke has served as the dean of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech since 2013.

"As a member of this community the past four years, I can see that Virginia Tech is uniquely situated to move forward boldly in ways that will shape higher education and advance our university to even greater heights," said Clarke.

Under Clarke’s leadership, the veterinary college has achieved several recent successes. In 2018, the college plans to launch its first undergraduate degree program. Together with the master of public health degree program, the undergraduate program in public health will be an integral component of the college’s One Health initiative, which recognizes the close connections between animal health, human health, and the environment.

In 2017, more than 1,600 prospective students applied to enter the college’s doctor of veterinary medicine program, representing the second-largest applicant pool in North America for the third year in a row.

Gregory Daniel, professor and head of the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, will serve as interim dean of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine.

Virginia Tech will launch an international search for a new executive vice president and provost in the spring. ⚫

New deans take the lead

The 2017-18 academic year began with new deans in three Virginia Tech colleges: Rosemary Blieszner, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHs); Richard Bythe, College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS); and Julia Ross, College of Engineering (COE).

Blieszner, who previously served as interim dean, will continue to lead CLAHs through June 2019. A faculty member in the Virginia Tech Department of Human Development since 1981, Blieszner was named a Virginia Tech Alumni Distinguished Professor in 2002. Only 10 members of the university faculty hold these endowed professorships. For more than 30 years, Blieszner helped lead the university’s Center for Gerontology, and she served as an associate dean of the Graduate School from 2009 through March of this year. Recently, Blieszner chaired the Steering Committee of the university’s visioning initiative, Beyond Boundaries.

Bythe is an award-winning architect and educator with more than 25 years in higher education and architectural practice. Prior to joining Virginia Tech, he served as professor and dean of RMIT University School of Architecture and Design in Melbourne, Australia. Bythe, who lectured at the University of Tasmania for 14 years, was the vice chancellor’s representative on the Tasmanian government’s Building and Construction Industries Council. A founding director of the architecture firm TERROIR, Bythe continues to contribute to the practice.

As the College of Engineering dean, Ross will hold tenured appointments in the departments of Chemical Engineering and Engineering Education at Virginia Tech. Previously dean of engineering and information technology at University of Maryland Baltimore County, Ross researches the role of fluid mechanics in infection formation in the cardiovascular system. In October, Ross was elected to the executive committee of the Global Engineering Deans’ Council, which works closely with engineering deans from around the world. ⚫

Presidental Fellow appointed

Former provost Thanassis Rikakis has been named Presidential Fellow for Academic Innovation. In this role, he will further his research on organizational change in higher education, looking specifically at concepts related to the Destination Areas and the Partnership for an Incentive-Based Budget, and he will continue his long-standing research in interactive neurorehabilitation.

Rikakis holds a joint faculty appointment as a tenured professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics in the College of Engineering and professor of music in the School of Performing Arts in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

President Tim Sands expressed his gratitude for the transformative work accomplished by Rikakis since joining the university in 2015.

"Thanassis prepared this university to evolve in order to remain at the forefront of higher education," said Sands. "Thanassis impressed upon us that Virginia Tech has to embrace a much more collaborative, transdisciplinary approach in its teaching and research, and to make strategic investments to support these changes."

Virginia Tech Magazine fall 2017
Imagine thousands of people stampeding toward residence halls—eager students anxious to begin a new semester, emotional parents who are not quite ready to say goodbye, and siblings plotting room takeovers. That’s move-in at Virginia Tech.

Long before the first acceptance letter is mailed, before Hokie dreams become reality, Virginia Tech is working behind the scenes to ensure that the transition from home to campus is as stress-free as possible.

AUG. 20, 2016
Jean Smoot, project coordinator for housing services, records feedback from the 2016 move-in.

FEBRUARY 2017
Housing and Residence Life updates websites, begins drumming up volunteers, and reviews the budget.

MAY
A new order for Hokie Helper shirts is placed. The shirts are blue (as are tents and other equipment used during move-in) so that they stand out in the sea of maroon and orange. Each shirt has a white name patch, an innovation suggested by a frustrated student who kept losing name tags.

JULY
Staff coordinate campus communication. The Virginia Department of Transportation makes plans to minimize construction delays on I-81 and U.S. 460.

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TUESDAY, AUG. 22
A small tub with maps, registration notebooks, pens, scissors, trash bags, signage, and more is delivered to tents.

Midnight
Virginia Tech police close Washington Street.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 23
MOVE-IN STARTS!

6:30 a.m.
Vehicles packed with computers, clothes, fans, potted plants, books, full-length mirrors, lava lamps, game systems, refrigerators, microwaves—oh, and students and their families—line up.

7 a.m.
Police open Washington Street.

8 a.m.
Traffic on U.S. 460 at Southgate is backed up a mile, but the line is moving. Police officers and parking services employees keep traffic flowing to parking spots. The aim is to open this space again within 30 minutes. Hokie Helpers assist in getting belongings out of vehicles and up to rooms. Doors that automatically lock are opened by volunteers, and custodians help keep elevators moving.

By 10 a.m.
There’s a line for the highly coveted laundry bins and Hokie Helpers, but the mood is jovial. Strangers introduce themselves while they wait.

All day
Facilities department subcontractors set up extra trash containers and cardboard collection sites and ramp up collection schedules, moving out three times the normal weekly amount of refuse.

Late day
Highway traffic is monitored for tie-ups in case resident advisors are needed to stay past 5 p.m. to check in late arrivals.

by RICHARD LOVEGROVE
photos by CHRISTINA FRANUSICH

Helping hands: President Tim Sands and Professor Laura Sands help a student move items into her new residence hall.

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Helping hands: President Tim Sands and Professor Laura Sands help a student move items into her new residence hall.
While many Hokies may already know that shooting guard Justin Bibbs is a force on Tech’s basketball team, the rising senior’s skills extend well beyond the three-point line.

“When I was a kid, I used to draw action shots of basketball players,” said Bibbs, a Dayton, Ohio, native majoring in multimedia journalism with a minor in graphic design. “They would always have some type of funny face that they do. I always just focused on that.”

As with most activities, the practice paid off—quite literally. “In high school, it was a big thing to get tattoos early. My mom would never let me do that,” Bibbs said. “A lot of people would ask me to draw them up something, like a cross or some religious thing, and I would.”

His mother, however, was not a big fan of his giving away his work to other people. “She was mad because she thought my artwork was worth more than 5 or 2 dollars,” Bibbs said, “but it was easy money for me.”

Besides, Bibbs genuinely enjoys drawing. “It makes me feel good,” he said. “You know the feeling you get when you’re hungry—like I need to go to the kitchen and get a snack—it’s like that. I just get a feeling and pull out a piece of paper and start drawing. My dad tells me to never ignore that feeling because a lot of people can’t do it. So every time I get that feeling, I just do it.”

Bibbs describes his approach to drawing as visual, not unlike a talented guard’s ability to “see” the court. “A lot of times, I just look at a picture and draw the picture,” he said, “but sometimes there could be a deeper meaning from that.”

Although he has two uncles who played in the NFL—one of them is College Football and NFL Hall of Famer Michael Haynes—Bibbs understands that a career in professional sports can be a tough route. Basketball may be his focus for now, but his future will likely be filled with plenty of pencils and paper.

Juliet Crichton is the web manager for the Office of Communications and Marketing in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Justice Smith, a junior majoring in multimedia journalism, was a summer intern with Virginia Tech. 

Sketch point

by JULIET CRICHTON
and JUSTICE SMITH ’19

Swish:
For more about Justin Bibbs on and off the court, go to vtmag.vt.edu.

Off the rim: Justin Bibbs, a senior majoring in multimedia journalism, found a way to combine his artistic skill, intellect, and athleticism at Virginia Tech.
Beef, pork, and lamb—they’re more than what’s for dinner. At Virginia Tech’s Meat Science Center, the products are part of a partnership of learning that connects students with the community. A fully equipped meat processing program with classroom, production, and retail experiences, the center is associated with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ animal and poultry sciences department. Between 10 and 15 undergraduate students and a graduate assistant coordinate operations each academic year.

Quality first
The Virginia Tech Meat Science Center is inspected by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in accordance with USDA standards.

A marketable commodity
Agriculture is Virginia’s largest industry, providing more than 334,000 jobs with an economic impact of $70 billion annually.

Sell by and freeze by dates
The sell by/freeze by date indicates how long the product can stay in the fresh case before moving to a freezer. Once frozen, meats hold their quality for up to a year in vacuum packaging.

Payment
The Meat Science Center accepts checks and most major credit or debit cards. They do not handle cash.

What do students learn?
• food safety
• personal safety
• proper use of equipment
• production process
• critical thinking
• customer service

Location
The retail market is located in Room 107 of the Food Science Building at 360 Duck Pond Drive.

Most popular products
Hickory smoked bacon and ground beef.

Availabilty
A general product inventory can be found online. Not all items listed are available every week.

A weighty experience
From fall 2016 to spring 2017, the center processed 36,600 lbs. of pork, 15,000 lbs. of beef, and 3,060 lbs. of lamb.

What’s your beef?
The USDA defines eight quality grades for beef, with consideration for tenderness, juiciness, and flavor.

Pork quality
Grades of pork are determined by back fat thickness and muscling.

Lamb quality
Lamb grades are based on age, conformation, and quality factors, such as color.

Learn more:
For more information about the Virginia Tech Meat Science Center, visit vtmag.vt.edu.

“I grew up on a commercial beef cattle farm, so I learned from an early age about raising livestock. The center has brought that knowledge full-circle in helping me better understand how raising livestock translates into quality retail products for consumers.”
— Madison Slaven, senior, Weyers Cave, Virginia

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Drillfield | infographic

Major implications
Animal and poultry sciences offers three degree options: science, pre-veterinary, and production-business.

Students who choose the production-business option gain the knowledge to:
• own and manage livestock, equine, poultry, or companion/lab animal enterprises;
• work in the sales and marketing of animals or associated products, such as feed and pharmaceuticals;
• pursue a career in public relations with livestock publications, trade associations, or commodity groups;
• assist and teach others through rewarding, people-oriented careers in agri-science education or Extension;
• work in other agribusinesses or government agencies, such as the USDA.

Virginia is for livestockers
Beef, chicken, turkey, and other livestock account for four of the top six agricultural commodities in the commonwealth.

Custom cuts
The center offers custom butchering, following specific guidelines. Contact the center to learn more about this service.

Dining centers
The center supplies many products to Virginia Tech Dining Services, such as fresh hams, pork loins, beef rounds, and ground beef.

Available
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O

e of the native woodlands’ smallest mammals is offering big answers for Virginia Tech researchers studying climate change and forest conditions in the Southern Appalachians.

Two subspecies of tiny northern flying squirrels are being carefully monitored by Mark Ford, associate professor of wildlife and leader of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Virginia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Virginia Tech, and Corinne Diggins, who earned her doctorate in fish and wildlife conservation from Virginia Tech and is now a post-doctoral research associate in the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

"Red spruce and northern flying squirrels in the Southern Appalachians cannot move further up the mountains to escape climate change," Ford said. "So we monitor the subspecies to see where both passive and active forest management can work to perpetuate and enhance this forest community while we develop strategies to cope with changing conditions."

Flying squirrels don’t really fly. A stretchy membrane and rudder-like tail help the little mammal sail through the treetops, avoiding land-bound predators and navigating from den sites to foraging areas. Today, the patches of red spruce atop the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains mark the only habitats south of the Adirondacks for the rare Virginia and endangered Carolina subspecies of northern flying squirrel.

"Monitoring the squirrels tells us about the health of the red spruce forest and the whole high-elevation ecosystem," Ford said. Both subspecies eat truffles—the fruiting bodies of fungi that live symbiotically with the roots of spruce. The fungi help the tree take up nutrients, and the tree provides carbohydrates for the fungi, which in turn depend on the squirrels to disperse spores. Diggins’ research helped highlight this three-way dependency between the squirrels, spruce, and fungi, which is essential to their survival.

Promoting peak performance

Stretch out: Calleigh Fangmeyer, athletic trainer, helps cadet P.J. Bourden with proper stretching techniques. Bourden is a junior from Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania, majoring in mining engineering and serving in Naval ROTC-Marine Option.

Physical fitness is a big part of cadets’ daily lives. Calleigh Fangmeyer’s job is to help keep them training at their best.

Fangmeyer, a certified athletic trainer employed by Carilion Clinic, joined the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets staff in fall 2016. Her position is a first for the corps.

“We are delighted to have Calleigh as a partner with our team. Because of the military’s emphasis on lifelong wellness, having her here to educate our cadets about the best ways to train properly and avoid injury will benefit them for decades to come,” said Maj. Gen. Randal Fullhart, commandant of cadets.

Fangmeyer works with the corps as part of Carilion’s sports medicine program. She provides consulting and assistance to cadets, works with the cadet EMT group, and provides advice to the corps and ROTC staffs.

Cadets seeking a military career must be able to perform at the peak performance level with their respective branches. In addition, all cadets attend group workouts a few times a week, practice military drill, train on the corps’ obstacle course, and participate in two 13-mile Caldwell Marches. Fangmeyer attends those activities, making sure cadets are training safely and addressing any injuries that arise.

Adding Fangmeyer to the staff “shows that the corps realizes the ties of a certified athletic trainer, to provide safe and effective health care, to educate on body awareness and mindfulness, and to create an environment of trust and effective healing,” Fangmeyer said.

“My goal is to demonstrate the role and professional responsibilities of a certified athletic trainer; to provide safe and effective health care, to educate on body awareness and mindfulness, and to create an environment of trust and effective healing,” Fangmeyer said.

“Returning the cadets to full activity is very rewarding because it is not so far away, and they know that they will be educated on how to recover more efficiently,” Demyanovich said.

Fangmeyer earned her bachelor of science in athletic training from James Madison University in 2014 and completed her athletic training graduate assistantship at Harvard University, in conjunction with her master of education from Boston University, in 2016.

“More cadets are willing to seek help because it is not so far away, and they know that they will be educated on how to recover more efficiently,” Demyanovich said.

Fangmeyer keeps an office in New Cadet Hall, making it easy for cadets to see her.

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Calleigh Fangmeyer, athletic trainer, helps cadet P.J. Bourden with proper stretching techniques. Bourden is a junior from Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania, majoring in mining engineering and serving in Naval ROTC-Marine Option.

High-flying: For more images and further information about the flying squirrel research, visit vtmag.vt.edu.

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A materials scientist, Steve McKnight (materials science and engineering ’90) was motivated by asking the right questions. “At the National Science Foundation, I can remember sitting in strategic research planning workshops and thinking to myself, ‘The National Capital Region (NCR) is in our neighborhood,’” said McKnight. “They have the intellectual engines to inform national research, priorities, and decision-making. Why isn’t Virginia Tech in the room?”

In 2014, Virginia Tech offered McKnight the key to drive the efforts to answer that question, naming him vice president of the NCR. Today, the university isn’t just in the room, it’s leading the way.

According to McKnight, Washington, D.C.—a city that includes 177 diplomatic embassies, is home to several Fortune 100 companies, and serves as the seat of our government—offers a world of opportunity. “Our goal is to establish a portal that brings Virginia Tech to the world and that world to Virginia Tech,” he said. “We are poised to address some really pressing societal problems, thanks to our growing urban presence. Our efforts in NCR strengthen what we do in Blacksburg and vice versa.”

McKnight, who grew up in a home that recognized the value of technical science and engineering, credits his family for inspiring his career. “My parents are both Ph.D. scientists, and they helped me develop an appreciation for how science and technology can improve people’s lives. It was up to me to find an intersection between study and action,” he said. “How could I use science and technology for good?”

As a student at Virginia Tech, McKnight began to discover the answers.

“My personal aspirations are and were aligned with Ut Prosim,” said McKnight, who also earned a doctorate from the University of Delaware. “In graduate school, I was right at the cusp of how new discoveries change the world. We were encouraged to ask the big questions. ‘What are the really important problems? How can we make an impact?’ At Virginia Tech, I learned that when you strive to serve others, you should look at the outside world, be willing to get your hands dirty, and tackle the big problems.”

Prior to joining Virginia Tech in the NCR, McKnight spent five years as division director for civil, mechanical, and manufacturing engineering innovation within the NSF’s Directorate for Engineering. He established a reputation for promoting interdisciplinary research collaborations and cultivating interagency partnerships. Earlier in his career, he worked at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory, progressing through a number of leadership positions, from team leader in the polymers research branch to serving as chief of the materials division. McKnight’s research focused on advanced polymer composite materials and polymer adhesion science.

Not surprisingly, McKnight’s move to the university began with a question. “I asked myself, ‘How can I make a bigger impact?’” he said. “The role at Virginia Tech gave me the chance to do more, solve more, engage more, and give more.”

Nearly 58,000 Virginia Tech alumni live within an hour’s drive of Washington, D.C., and numerous students participate in classes, internships, and other educational programs in the region annually. “You can’t go anywhere without seeing maroon and orange,” said McKnight. “Our strong presence is a differentiating factor. We are bringing our ethos and culture—the things that make Virginia Tech great—and sharing them on a globally visible stage. We are poised to address some really pressing societal problems, thanks to our growing urban presence. Our efforts in NCR strengthen what we do in Blacksburg and vice versa.”

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Virginia Tech’s Campus-to-Campus Bus links Blacksburg, Roanoke, and the National Capital Region

Virginia Tech’s Campus-to-Campus Bus launched over the summer to provide employees, students, and their guests with safe and convenient transportation between the university’s campuses in the Blacksburg/Roanoke and Ballston/Arlington areas.

Each of the three Abbott Transportation buses in service is equipped with free Wi-Fi and have electrical outlets at each seat. The full-size charter buses have seatbelts, reading lights, reclining seats, and a restroom.

The bus departs from and arrives in Blacksburg and the National Capital Region twice each weekday and once each weekend day. It operates year-round, except on university holidays.

To learn more about the bus, including details about reservations, visit vtmag.vt.edu.

The bus stops here:

An innovative event: About 36,000 people passed through the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., for the three-day ACCellerate: ACC Smithsonian Creativity and Innovation Festival held Oct. 13-15. Virginia Tech’s Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology and Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation hosted the festival. It showcased connections between art, science, engineering, and design from 15 universities from the Atlantic Coast Conference. Virginia Tech’s Design Robotics: Robot Assisted Fabrication exhibit featured this six-axis robotic arm. To learn more about the event, go to vtmag.vt.edu.
The squad’s 40 to 50 members respond to an average of 1,200 calls a year, staff nearly every major event on campus, run educational programs for students and the community, and maintain all automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) on campus. Not only do the members regularly garner national awards and recognition during drills and competitions, they earned respect for their response during the April 16, 2007, tragedy.

“I’ve been in awe of what we as a group have achieved,” Smallwood said. “It’s so good to see that the university has acknowledged how special the squad is.”

Students who choose to join the rescue squad share a collective experience that sets them apart. “They’re generally more mature than average students. They’re incredibly professional— incredible people,” said Richard Hirsh, a history professor who has been the faculty representative to the squad and an associate member since 1988. “The rescue squad is the epitome of Ut Prosim and community service at Virginia Tech.”

For those not already focused on a career in health services, membership may also lead to unexpected career paths. Rescue squad members frequently find themselves “funneling” toward medical, military, or public safety fields, according to Michael Geary, current chief of the squad and a wildlife conservation major who is leaning toward such a role after he graduates in 2019.

Building brotherhood and sisterhood

People who describe the rescue squad’s culture and camaraderie liken the experience to being part of a large, extended family. Members eat, sleep, and train in a cozy station in an old mail room in the Military Building’s basement, and they support each other on what can be high-stress emergency calls.

“It’s very much a brotherhood and a sisterhood . . . those relationships are for a lifetime,” said Jim Key (education ’97), who chose to attend Tech for computer science, but changed course after joining the squad. Now a fire/EMS battalion chief in Prince George’s County, Maryland, he said, “It’s [VTRS] where I cut my teeth.”

When Nick Mattheisen (interdisciplinary studies ’11) was training for the squad, his probate class was assigned to write an essay on one of the Pylons. “I picked Brotherhood,” said Mattheisen, who is business development manager for Carilion Clinic Life-Guard in Roanoke and is a volunteer medic on the Vinton (Virginia) First Aid Crew. “I still think about how much Brotherhood and Ut Prosim go together . . . to know that you can count on one another to get through tough times.”

The rescue squad recruits each semester as members graduate. According to Geary, the group receives about 200 applications to fill between five and 15 spots. Not everyone has prior experience. Successful candidates are well-rounded with diverse backgrounds. “It’s very selective,” Hirsh said.

Once accepted, new members begin emergency medical technician training at the basic level (EMT-B). Although EMT-Bs can handle 95 percent of the squad’s calls, Geary said, quite a few elect to train further, earning EMT advanced, paramedic, or advanced life support certification.

Required to serve a minimum of one night per week, members may average 20 hours a week, while officers log more like 35 to 40, Geary said. The squad covers all home football and basketball games, ACC baseball and softball games, and any large event.

“The Virginia Tech Rescue Squad members don’t go to football games; they work football games,” Key said. “And they don’t always get to go home for breaks” because the station is fully staffed every day of the year.

VTRS also “prides itself in being a training agency,” Geary said. Squad members who staff the station each night also participate in one hour of related training. As a result, the group is always a strong competitor at the National Collegiate Emergency Medical Foundation Services conference. This past year, the Tech squad earned first place in basic life support skills and mass casualty incident skills and second in advanced life support skills. “911 doesn’t take a break, and so it is important to stay ahead of the curve,” said Geary.

The make-do, early months of the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad were more ad hoc than sophisticated.

Rejected for membership in a local first-aid crew, the four students who founded the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad (VTRS) had to persuade multiple layers of administration, including University Center, rescue squad members often stashed first-aid kits and other paraphernalia above ceiling tiles. Cooperation with other area squads was minimal.

In 1971, denied permission to sleep or store equipment in their “own room” at 342 Squires Student Center, the four cruised campus during the unrest over Vietnam, putting out fires and helping anybody who needed aid.

In fall 1970, squad founders had no other members, no money, and no headquarters, so they recruited and trained the first cadre. Members drove their own cars to calls and were not allowed to transport patients. (It would take two years of determined lobbying to procure that first ambulance.)

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Humble beginnings

Smallwood, Modena, Paul, and Spain each had rescue squad experience in their Virginia home communities before they came to Tech. All wanted to continue their service, and they were further convinced of the need for a campus rescue organization when, in fall 1969, nearly 45 minutes passed before emergency personnel were able to reach a student injured playing flag football on the Drillfield, Smallwood said. Once approved by UC, as a student organization, the group was awarded a $2,700 budget and a space in 320 Squires. Today, that allocation totals about $160,000, supported in part by student fees and contributions.

Over time, the foursome recruited more members; requisitioned a backboard from a local lumber company; and printed 10,000 green stickers advertising their hours—5:30 p.m. to midnight. “We worked largely the residential side of campus,” Smallwood said. “The Hokie Nation came together, and the rescue squad nation came together. … It grew the rescue squad as an organization, during the spring of his sophomore year.

“The squad is where I found my family away from home,” Geary said. “For the university, the rescue squad is an invaluable resource for students, faculty, and anyone who wishes to visit Virginia Tech’s campus.”

During a trauma drill, rescue squad members transfer a patient to a medical helicopter for transport.

That first class of recruits included future fire chiefs, EMS directors, and three physicians. Another early member, Cassandra “Sandy” Jones (marketing, housing, and family development ’72), was the first female ambulance driver on the squad. She is also Smallwood’s wife.

Smallwood went on to serve in various biomedical engineering roles, including working on a team that developed the first home glucose monitor, the Glucometer, for diabetes. “I’m now using an insulin pump and a backboard from a local lumber company; and printed 10,000 green stickers advertising their hours—5:30 p.m. to midnight. “We worked largely the residential side of campus,” Smallwood said.

After graduation, Smallwood negotiated some rough patches, including avoiding a closure in 1973 by becoming a unit of the Blacksburg First Aid Crew (BFAC). Back on its own in 1980, VYRS began running shock-trauma calls and graduated its first cardiac technicians. In 2010, the squad received the Governor’s Award for Outstanding EMS Agency in the commonwealth.

Through the years, the squad has been bolstered by the support of the VYRS Life Member and Alumni Association, which numbers more than 250 life members.

Never was that support more apparent—or needed—than in the days following April 16, 2007.

“The Hokie Nation came together, and the rescue squad came together. … It grew the rescue squad as an organization, as tragic as it was,” said Key, who traveled from Maryland to Blacksburg following April 16 to support the squad.

That reaction to the campus tragedy sums up why Geary chose to invest the hard work and sacrifice necessary to become chief during the spring of his sophomore year.

“The squad is where I found my family away from home,” Geary said. "As for the university, the rescue squad is an invaluable resource for students, faculty, and anyone who wishes to visit Virginia Tech’s campus.”

Every second counts: To learn more about the student-led Virginia Tech Rescue Squad, go to vtmag.vt.edu.

We’ve got your back

Erica Corder is the College of Engineering’s communications manager.

Four suits are currently in use by the Lowe’s stocking team in Christiansburg, Virginia. “This is a way to help keep our associates from being as worn out,” said store manager Joe Sirico, for whom employee safety is a top priority.

Asbeck and his team will work with Lowe’s to assess the physical impact of the suits and to better understand their impact on work experiences. “This project really pairs a company like ours that has been doing business and has been a part of this community for many, many years with an institution like Tech, and takes those two worlds and smashes them together, and we both come out stronger,” Sirico said.

Erica Corder (marketing, housing, and family development ’72), was the first female ambulance driver on the squad. She is also Smallwood’s wife.

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Fifteen years later, the rescue squad is a critical component to the university. “The effort needed to load an appliance or move a heavy box of supplies is anything but simple. Lifting and carrying require an intricate system of finely tuned body mechanics that combine moving body segments, changing joint angles, tightening muscles, loading the spinal column, and balancing under a shifting center of gravity.

Recently, Lowe’s Innovation Labs, the disruptive technology hub for home improvement retailer, joined forces with robotics expert Alan Asbeck, an assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Virginia Tech, to design a prototype of an exosuit to make lifting safer and easier.

“Over the past couple of years, human assistive devices have become an area of interest,” Asbeck said. “Our technology is different in that it includes soft and flexible elements, and our approach is unique in that we are putting our prototypes in a real-world environment for an extended period of time.”

Erica Corder is the College of Engineering’s communications manager.

During a trauma drill, rescue squad members transfer a patient to a medical helicopter for transport.
ON A DAY IN THE NEAR FUTURE, in the dark hour just before dawn, automated lights illuminate the room, waking you gently. You summon your digital assistant to review the day’s schedule and to monitor your home’s energy consumption. Ready for work, you step into an autonomous car that slides into a self-organizing caravan on the interstate, giving you time to read email and catch up on the news.

At the office, after a busy morning, you order lunch. The meal arrives at your desk minutes later, delivered by drone. Later that evening, as you return home, sensors recognize your arrival, bringing up the lights. You prepare dinner, remembering to scan each ingredient. The grocer will deliver a new order on Friday.

Before settling in for the night, you check in with your digital assistant, confirming that your elderly mother has taken her medicine. As you slip into bed, the lights dim automatically, and soothing music pipes in to help you relax.

Once dismissed as science fiction, such a scenario is an advancing reality. Smart devices, including digital assistants and home energy monitors, are already available. Businesses are field-testing the digital networking of the not-so-distant future, and lawmakers are wrestling with policies to manage consumer security, safety, and privacy in this changing environment.

Capitalizing on existing strengths, Virginia Tech is driving the research and technology even further, becoming a global leader in the field through the university’s Destination Area known as Intelligent Infrastructure for Human-Centered Communities (IIHCC).

Last year, the university announced it plans to invest $78.45 million over five years to build capacity in intelligent infrastructure disciplines, such as smart design and construction, and autonomous vehicles that navigate land, air, and water.

“The commitment across campus to create a unique and valuable living-learning experience for our students is extraordinary,” said Virginia Tech President Tim Sands. “We expect more than 2,000 students to be involved in intelligent infrastructure study and research by 2022.”

More than 230 faculty members from multiple colleges and institutes are involved as the university ties new assets into existing programs and research facilities across the Blacksburg campus to create an unparalleled educational experience.

“When someone is doing research or getting a degree or coming to work on a topic, we’re not specializing with a widget—we are now solving a problem,” said Myra Blanco, advanced-vehicle researcher at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute; director of the Center for Public Policy, Partnerships, and Outreach; and former chairwoman of the IIHCC stakeholder group.

“Students come to Virginia Tech for its reputation and then get immersed into the Virginia Tech way,” said Blanco (M.S. industrial and systems engineering ’99, Ph.D. ‘02). They can participate in a real project funded by the government, and they are also able to participate in proprietary research. “We’re allowing them to participate in all of that with professors and researchers who are exposing them to something more than just being in a classroom. When they graduate, they are going to be well prepared to tackle any problems they may have in real life.”

The Destination Area is based around four themes: energy, robotics and autonomous vehicle systems; smart design and construction; and ubiquitous mobility—anywhere connectivity that brings the world to the individual who may be hindered by physical limitations.

“Everything is glued together with human-centered communities,” said Blanco. “It’s not pushing technology for technology’s sake; it’s to improve quality of life, to improve equality, and to ensure at the end of the day that we have a healthier community.”

Energy is similarly important as an underlying concept. As communities become increasingly mobile and data-driven, how will they be powered in a sustainable way? Virginia Tech faculty and students already engage on the cutting-edge of energy research through competitions like the Solar Decathlon and institutions such as the Virginia Tech Center for Power Electronics Systems, which partners with more than 90 industrial affiliates.

“With all of the activities involved, energy must be available and flow seamlessly and transparently between systems,” said IIHCC Program Manager Tracy McElroy. “Energy ties all of this together.”
In late July, Torc Robotics’ Lexus RX hybrid completed an autonomous drive of more than 4,300 miles from Virginia to Seattle and then back to Richmond. Gov. Terry McAuliffe was there to greet its return. “I am proud to see a homegrown engineering firm develop self-driving technology and introduce it to the rest of the country on a coast-to-coast drive,” McAuliffe said. “This technology is coming, and we want to be in front of it here in Virginia. We want to be the leader.”

Virginia plans to install about 85 miles of sensors for autonomous vehicles along I-95 near the National Capital Region. The private company, Uber, invested millions into a real-world test of driverless cars in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, over the past two years, and commercial car makers are investigating the use of automated driving systems as well.

Hokie-run, Blacksburg-based Torc is making a big splash in this world. Tech publication TechCrunch noted Torc’s arrival among the businesses offering self-driving car technology to carmakers, indicating that “this one likely has a bit more experience than most.”

Torc’s vehicle traveled across 20 states as part of the Seattle trip. The car drove all but about 1,000 miles; occasionally, one of three standby drivers took the wheel because of traffic obstacles or varying autonomous vehicle certification requirements in each state.

More than half of the Torc’s employees are Virginia Tech alumni, including its CEO, Michael Fleming (mechanical engineering ’02, M.S. ’03). Fleming co-founded Torc in 2005, after participating on a Virginia Tech team that won an intelligent ground vehicle competition five years in a row, as well as placing two vehicles in the top 10 among 195 entrants in the 2005 Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Grand Challenge. Fleming remained in Blacksburg to break that pattern and continue the work.

“The autonomous vehicle team worked right beside the Baja team, right beside the sub team and the bridge team,” Fleming said. “We spent endless nights and weekends building and breaking and rebuilding things. That’s where a lot of education takes place. It takes place in the classroom, too, but it’s also important for students to apply engineering know-how and for teams to figure out what works and what doesn’t work.”

Virginia Tech and Torc have collaborated on more than $10 million worth of research and development that could lead to driverless cars entering the consumer market in a matter of years.

But technology development is just one aspect of the growing autonomous vehicle industry. The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) plays a significant role in related research, testing not just vehicle capacities but also the social effects of driverless cars. VTTI research on the reaction of motorists to driverless cars went viral in August, when an apparently driverless gray van drew the attention of people in Arlington, Virginia. A reporter chased down the van, exposing the driver, who was disguised as the seat.

Although there has been tremendous progress in the industry in recent years, Virginia Tech and allied partners like Torc have only begun to scrape the surface of what’s possible.

“I’ve worked in this space for a decade,” Fleming said. “I think about self-driving impact in society every day, and I still don’t comprehend the impact it’s going to have. Who would’ve thought that we could pay our taxes, order pizza, and find a date when cell phones were first invented? Self-driving vehicles will have that similar impact.”
The flights marked two firsts for Project Wing—involving external users in the U.S. and collaborating with a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved unmanned aircraft systems test site. In June, Virginia Tech and Project Wing, along with other partners, field-tested technology developed by NASA that is designed to allow multiple aircraft to safely share the same airspace.

There is no shortage of “dull, dirty, and dangerous” tasks that drones can handle much more safely and efficiently than a human in a helicopter—jobs like inspecting bridges and powerlines or delivering emergency medical supplies after natural disasters. As use of the UAS becomes more common for commercial and other purposes, a variety of aircraft controlled by different operators conducting unrelated missions will increasingly share airspace. The rigorously choreographed June operation explored scenarios that may arise as UAS flights become commonplace.

The test site at Virginia Tech is one of seven in the U.S. approved by the FAA for tests of unmanned aircraft. The Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP), which runs the site, works with researchers, government agencies, and companies ranging from UAS startups to major corporations like Intel and Dominion Energy.

“These aren’t speculative research projects that may come to fruition 15 or 20 years in the future—these are companies who want to operate this year or next year,” said Mark Blanks, director of the Virginia Tech MAAP. “It’s not an overstatement to say that Virginia Tech is the laboratory where we’re proving by the FAA for tests of unmanned aircraft. The Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP), which runs the site, works with researchers, government agencies, and companies ranging from UAS startups to major corporations like Intel and Dominion Energy.

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For a physical manifestation of the university’s commitment to UAS research, you don’t have to look any farther than Oak Lane, where a netted, 80-foot-tall drone park now overlooks the golf course. The structure will offer nearly three million cubic feet of outdoor flight space that gives researchers access to real-world wind and weather conditions, enclosed by a net that means the airspace isn’t subject to FAA regulations. A space for education and research in addition to recreation, it will be adjacent to classroom and lab space where students can work on original projects and learn how to use drones safely for applications from journalism to agroforestry.

“Mapping out the future of unmanned systems. It’s an incubator not just for the technology, but also for the regulations and guidelines that will determine what operations people are going to be allowed to do.”

MAAP is collaborating with Virginia Tech’s world-renowned injury biomechanics program to quantify the injury risk associated with drone-human impacts. The FAA won’t allow commercial drone flights over people until companies can demonstrate that there’s little or no risk to people on the ground—a major roadblock for applications like package delivery. Currently, the empirical data to assess such risks doesn’t exist. MAAP and the injury biomechanics team are designing test methods and running the experiments that will begin to answer those questions.

“It’s not an overstatement to say that Virginia Tech is the laboratory where we’re mapping out the future of unmanned systems.”

—Mark Blanks, director of the Virginia Tech MAAP
Picture a high-tech, high-quality LEGO kit that allows you to build a home within the cost and spatial parameters of your lifestyle. That’s what a team of faculty-student researchers led by Professor Joe Wheeler in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS) has been developing. But unlike LEGO kits, the effort is not child’s play. “We’re working on housing solutions to meet a world population and climate change crisis,” Wheeler said.

“Our planet will grow by over 2 billion people before 2050, and we need to be ready with practical, affordable housing,” Wheeler, co-director of Virginia Tech’s Center for Design Research, calls the solution the “cartridge concept.” The concept borrows the best of factory and assembly line processes to connect modular building with sleek futuristic design, smart technology, and sustainability.

The research is being explored for uses ranging from homes and condos to hospitals, hotels, and disaster relief shelters, attracting interest from world-leading architecture firms, consumer brands, and foreign and domestic governments.

In July, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development met with the team to learn how Virginia Tech’s research could be adapted for disaster relief shelters and low-income single and multifamily homes. At the event, a student-led demonstration showcased the benefits of the concept. The students unloaded components and deployed a 288-square-foot disaster relief prototype house in under two hours.

Nelson Bregon, associate assistant deputy secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, was effusive. “The Virginia Tech students are stepping to the forefront of technology and innovation,” he said. “I think that this concept is a concept that will be taken to scale eventually. We’ll have a product that will be very marketable—not only in this country but internationally.”

CAUS has long worked ahead of the smart construction and design curve. With Virginia Tech’s 2010 world-winning Solar Decathlon home, Lumenhaus, and, more recently, FutureHAUS, the School of Architecture + Design has brought smart, sustainable housing solutions to the world stage.
The FutureHAUS prototype was lost a month later in a fire that destroyed its construction and fabrication shop at the Prices Fork Research Station. However, the research lives on. FutureHAUS Dubai, a net-positive energy solar home will be unveiled at the Solar Decathlon Middle East in October 2018. Virginia Tech is the only U.S.-based college team invited to the worldwide competition.

The Myers-Lawson School of Construction is also leading the charge in smart construction and design, supported by leading industry partners and federal grants. The school’s projects range from research on the use of drones and robots for building inspections, to wearable technology for enhanced worker safety, to augmented reality that improves construction site efficiency. In addition to National Science Foundation and federally funded projects, the research involves industry partners, including W.M. Jordan, HITT, Hourigan Construction, Clark Construction, and the Associated General Contractors of America.

“The construction industry is ripe for incorporating new production processes and technologies,” said Brian Kleiner, director of the Myers-Lawson School of Construction. “Our faculty and students are inventing the future of construction with a human-centered approach. There is a natural assumption that increased automation yields improved productivity, efficiency, safety, and cost control. But without human-centered design, humans are left to perform ‘leftover functions’ that can be inefficient, boring, or even dangerous. Myers-Lawson is working with industry to ensure that automation supports human health and efficiency.”

In January, the team traveled to KBIS Orlando, the world’s largest kitchen and bath industry expo, to exhibit the final phase of a three-year research project presenting the smart home of the future. The team’s conceptual bedroom and home office, with their flexible spaces, moveable walls, and integrated, user-responsive technology, drew nearly 40,000 spectators during the three-day show.

Six months after Virginia Tech President Tim Sands announced an investment in intelligent infrastructure, several major donors jumpstarted the project by contributing $25 million toward construction of a $50 million, two-building Intelligent Infrastructure Complex and other projects that total about $28.45 million, including an Autonomous Systems Park, Intelligent Infrastructure Corridor, and Smart Village. The donor group includes John Lawson (geophysics ’75), president and CEO of W.M. Jordan Company and a namesake of Virginia Tech’s Myers-Lawson School of Construction; Brett Hitt and Russell Hitt, co-president and chairman of HITT Contracting Inc.; and others.

“Virginia Tech is a national leader in construction education, but today’s fast-moving technology demands a broader view,” said Lawson. “By combining knowledge of smart construction with expertise in autonomous vehicles and energy systems, Virginia Tech can be the world’s leading source of expertise in intelligent infrastructure.”
Over the next five years, Virginia Tech intends to build upon an existing network of facilities across Blacksburg to maximize opportunities for intelligent infrastructure initiatives. These additions, renovations, and expansions will be the background against which students, faculty, and university partners will discover new technologies and develop practical applications to make a meaningful impact on the quality of life in communities around the globe.

**Smart Investments**

The $45.5 million Intelligent Infrastructure Complex will include two new interdisciplinary research and education buildings and smart dining facilities.

The $1 million "drone park" near the Duck Pond will provide a place for students to experiment with autonomous land vehicles and unmanned aircraft.

The $9 million Advanced Design and Construction Facility on Plantation Road will feature a hangar-like facility where faculty and students can connect basic research to practical applications in areas ranging from smart houses to smart energy.

The $2 million Automation/Intern Hub at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute will enable students to work directly with industry leaders to drive innovation and entrepreneurship.

The $1 million Intelligent Infrastructure Corridor will connect with existing facilities on Plantation Road for automated vehicle experiments.

The $10 million Rural Roadway Expansion and a $3.5 million Surface Street Expansion, along with existing smart road facilities, will result in a test-bed for self-driving cars and unmanned aircraft systems.

The $3 million expansion at the Urban Living Lab in the National Capital Region will enhance study opportunities in the metropolitan environment.

Marya Barlow is the CAUS communications director. Eleanor Nelsen is the communications manager for the Institute of Critical Technology and Applied Science.
Virginia Tech Student Affairs, which includes two-dozen departments, is dedicated to providing a rich co-curricular experience and essential services for students. In 2011, Student Affairs introduced the Aspire! Awards. The awards recognize students who represent one of the Aspirations for Student Learning—committing to unwavering curiosity, pursuing self-understanding and integrity, practicing civility, preparing for a life of courageous leadership, and embracing Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) as a way of life.

“In a time when college is often associated with jobs and careers, we wanted also to accentuate the importance of character development,” said Frank Shushok, senior associate vice president for student affairs. “We want our students to find a career, but we also want them to find a life full of meaning and purpose. That’s the biggest gift an education can provide.”

The purpose of the award program resonated with Robert Julius (management ’07) and his wife Kara Julius (music ’07). The couple credits co-curricular involvement with enhancing their time at Virginia Tech and molding them into who they are today.

Robert, Kara, and their four children live just south of Pittsburgh, more than 300 miles away from the university, but the couple’s connection to Tech easily spans the distance. To help provide enriching experiences for students, Robert and Kara created an endowment to support Student Affairs.

“We just really wanted to support something that provides those opportunities of learning beyond the classroom in a...
Preparing for a Life of Courageous Leadership

LaMont Livingston’s face lit up as he watched the video. “That’s Sept. 14, 2015. That’s crazy,” said the Virginia Tech senior.

The recording showed Livingston’s then-22-month-old son, Jaiden, at a desk drawing during a lecture. It was Jaiden’s first university classroom experience and a milestone for his father, who spent more than a year battling homelessness and single parenthood on his quest to get back into school.

Livingston came to Virginia Tech on an academic scholarship in 2012. In the spring of that year, his world changed when he learned he would soon become a father. “Then it was pretty much like, what do I do now? So that semester, I pretty much did nothing,” Livingston said.

Livingston’s GPA dropped to 0.4, he lost his scholarship, and that summer he returned to Newport News, Virginia. He bounced between the homes of friends and family and the streets, even taking refuge on the porches of strangers.

Jaiden was born in November 2013. The child was the catalyst for a change. “It’s like I just woke up one day and was like, this is not for me,” Livingston said. “I was basically in defeat mode . . . if I stay in defeat mode, I’m basically putting him in defeat mode and not even giving him a chance to enjoy life.”

Livingston reached out to friends in Blacksburg, where he took a fast food job. He enrolled in classes in fall 2015, adjusting his course load to balance his responsibilities. By spring 2016, he had worked his way onto the Dean’s List, raised his GPA to 2.65, and earned back his scholarship.

Livingston hopes to graduate in spring 2018 with a 3.3 GPA. “I believe it is not what we know. It is what we are able to use,” he said. “I feel a duty to serve the immense need in Appalachia, to build bridges between people. Rehman believes that more bridges built equals more problems solved. “It’s kind of like turning on the lights and seeing that there is nothing to be afraid of,” he said. A two-time recipient of the Warren W. Hobbie Scholarship and a former research assistant at the Virginia Tech Carillion Research Institute, Rehman served as president of the Muslim Student Association and as a web designer and manager of the Appalachian Foodshed Project. He also participated in Tech’s first international interfaction service trip. “I’ve had a lot of opportunities at Tech that I wouldn’t have had other places,” he said.

In fall 2015, when negative graffiti on campus targeted Muslim students, Rehman found opportunity in the midst of adversity and helped organize an event to bring people together. “Standing in Solidarity: A Gathering Against Hate,” spurred a series of activities that would demonstrate support across campus.

A native of Pakistan, Rehman moved to Clifton, Virginia, when he was four. He developed friendships with people from various backgrounds. These relationships, combined with his faith and the leadership he cultivated as an Eagle Scout, nurtured a desire to build bridges between people. Rehman believes that more bridges built equals more problems solved. “It’s kind of like turning on the lights and seeing that there is nothing to be afraid of,” he said. Following his 2016 graduation from Tech, Rehman spent a year studying Islamic faith at the Tayseer Seminary in Knoxville, Tennessee. In July 2017, he enrolled in the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. “I believe that in medicine there is a sacred bond between the patient and doctor. I believe in thinking globally and acting locally as a way to bring about change in the world,” he said. “I feel a duty to serve the immense need in Appalachia, my backyard growing up and the place I’ve called home for the past five years.”
For as long as he can remember, Patrick Goley (electrical engineering '13, M.E.E. '15) has been itching to learn more about how things work. “I had a curiosity. I was curious about science. I was curious about technology. It was like an itch, you know,” Goley said.

A Northern Virginia native, Goley took a full-time job as a line cook shortly after high school. The job was good, but limited his opportunities to satisfy his craving for knowledge. By the age of 25, he’d had enough. “The curiosity kept snowballing. It was like, I can’t live without knowing anymore,” Goley said. He enrolled at Northern Virginia Community College in 2008 and later transferred to Virginia Tech.

Goley, who is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Georgia Tech, has worked two summer internships at the United States Naval Research Laboratory and presented at this summer’s Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ Nuclear and Space Radiation Effects Conference.

Though his curiosity was long-present, Goley said it was his admission to Tech that allowed him to put it to use. “It’s the place that gave me a shot. They were willing to take some kid, a non-traditional student who took a few classes at a community college … and Virginia Tech said, ‘Hey, we want you here,’” Goley said.

Although the rigorous engineering curriculum pushed his limits, it also helped alleviate self-doubt. “By being immersed in that environment, that’s what gets you started down the road. That was where I wanted to be,” he said. Goley said he’s not sure exactly what direction that road will eventually lead, but he’s now confident his ability to use his curiosity will serve him well. “I think curiosity was where I wanted to be,” he said.

Goley said he’s not sure exactly why he applied to Virginia Tech. “It was like an itch, you know,” Goley said. “I was curious about science. I was curious about technology. It was like an itch, you know.”

Effects Conference.

An opportunity to excel
In 2016, Jorge Del Alamo relocated to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan, a mass exodus of more than 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children. He was traveling without parents and understood just a few English phrases, it was a world away from everything he knew. "I thought, you know, I'll just knock it out. I'll tell a lot of people at once," Bresson said.

Bresson, who spent the remainder of the spring semester and most of the summer, learning about her condition, was inundated by messages of concern from teachers and friends. "I thought, you know, I'll just knock it out. I'll tell a lot of people at once," Bresson said.

So, she did, via YouTube. The response was overwhelming, inspiring her to create nearly a dozen awareness-building videos. "It stinks when you don't understand. It can be scary or confusing," Bresson said. "I like talking about those things because then other people realize it's OK."

Bresson will graduate in December and hopes to pursue a career that will allow her to guide other students to Virginia Tech. "I'm currently an ambassador for my department [dairy science], so if I could be an ambassador for the entire university—that would be amazing," she said.

"I always say that at Virginia Tech, you're not just a number. Yeah, we're a school of 30,000, and when you go to a football game, you feel that. But when you go to your department or you go to your classes, you realize you're an individual, not just a student," Bresson said.}

Bresson said. "It's kind of like, at 14, this is a great adventure. This is kind of fun," said the Cuban native. "But it didn't turn out exactly the way I expected."

Del Alamo relocated to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan, a mass exodus of more than 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children. The minors fled to Miami between 1960 and 1962, shortly after Fidel Castro became Cuba’s prime minister. For the Del Alamo family, “the plan was, OK, you guys get away from here. The Bay of Pigs will come. Castro is going to fall. We’re going to get a new government, and then you guys come back,” he said.

Instead, ongoing political strife extended Del Alamo’s brief adventure to a lifetime—eventually leading him to Southwest Virginia and, ultimately, Virginia Tech. Del Alamo credits his university experiences with propelling him into a successful accounting career that’s spanned more than four decades. "The education and experience at Tech have allowed me to do the things I did,” Del Alamo said. "I don't think I could have gotten a better education anywhere."
Operation Pedro Pan was created in 1960 by the Catholic Welfare Bureau (Catholic Charities) of Miami to assist Cuban parents seeking to protect their children from the increasingly volatile political environment. After arriving in the United States, some of the children were reunited with family or friends, some were cared for by the Catholic Welfare Bureau, and others were placed in temporary shelters and later relocated.

Del Alamo, his sister, Isa, and cousin, Jose, remained in Miami for a brief time but were eventually sent to Buffalo, New York. The experience helped him learn to be self-reliant.

Although diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba were restored in 2015, Del Alamo said he’ll likely never return to the country of his birth. The U.S. is home. “I have good memories of my parents’ house and my grandparents’ house, and they’ve been destroyed, so I haven’t got a lot of desire to go back,” he said. Instead, Del Alamo’s current adventures include visiting family in Charlotteville—where he always attempts to wear maroon and orange—and traveling to Blacksburg for Hokie football games.

Del Alamo embraces his role in helping provide opportunities for current and future Hokies, and he encourages students to make the most of what’s available. “Find a program you enjoy, and that will provide you the means to live. Work as hard as you possibly can,” he said. “At Virginia Tech, you’re going to get the education you need to succeed, but it’s up to you to take advantage of it.”

Jeevanth Hun is the communications director for the Pamplin College of Business.

At home: Anna Bolton ’07 scored a dream job as the translator for the Cleveland Indians. Her role takes her from the team’s home base, Progressive Field in Cleveland, Ohio, to practice locations and major league venues across the nation.

A nna Bolton dodged the cooler of Gatorade aimed at her. A Cleveland Indian’s shortstop José Ramírez, but she couldn’t avoid the cooler of water that followed. “Bienvenida al equipo,” Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor said. Welcome to the team.

Soaking wet but undaunted, Bolton (Spanish ’07), M.A. Spanish and second language education ’08) carried on in her role as the Indian’s Spanish translator by working with Ramírez, who was being interviewed about his game-tying home run in August. An Indians fan while growing up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina (her cousins were from Cleveland), Bolton has been building toward this job ever since she first went to the Dominican Republic at age 15. The dream position got even better in 2016 when the team played in the World Series.

“Because of the language barrier, fans often do not have the opportunity to get to know Latino players on MLB teams the same way that they know English-speaking players,” Bolton said. “I love that I am able to give fans a chance to hear the more in-depth responses that [the Spanish-speaking players] are able to give in their first language, and that fans are able to see a bit more of their personalities.”

Battling 1.000

Alumna Anna Bolton combined her love of baseball and passion for languages for a winning career. Learn more at vtmag.vt.edu.

Alumni, we want to hear what you’ve been doing. Mail career, wedding, birth, and death news to Class Notes, Virginia Tech Alumni Association, Holtzman Alumni Center, 901 Prices Fork Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24061; email the notes to feature@vtedu, or submit the notebook online at vtmag.vt.edu/submit-classnotes.php, where photos may also be uploaded for consideration.

Alumni mailing addresses may be viewed online at alumni.vt.edu/ directory by logging in with your Virginia Tech PID and password. For assistance, call 540-231-6285.
Smiling selfie: (top) Matt Weston '90, vice president of alumni relations, snaps a selfie with Reginald Sroblo M.A. '74 and Junny Oshay '86, while Lisa Carter Ellison '86 (alumni relations) snaps a selfie with Reginald Stroble M.A. Black Alumni Reunion Engineering Diversity • This year’s reunion will recognize: the 50th anniversary of the Center for the Enhancement of the Human Relations Council; the 25th anniversary of the National Pan-Hellenic Council at Virginia Tech; the 40th anniversary of the Black Student Alliance; and to honor the achievements of black alumni.

April 13-15, 2018 Black Alumni Association Every other year, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association hosts its Black Alumni Reunion to celebrate diversity at Virginia Tech and to honor the achievements of black alumni.

April 13-15, 2018 | Virginia Tech campus the 25th anniversary of the Center for the Enhancement of the Human Relations Council the 40th anniversary of the Black Student Alliance the 25th anniversary of the National Pan-Hellenic Council at Virginia Tech and to honor the achievements of black alumni.

Let’s celebrate: Learn more about plans for the 2018 Black Alumni Reunion by visiting alumni.vt.edu/2018.

class notes
Honoring excellence

Tom Titie’s dedication to the advancement of higher education throughout his 46-year career at Virginia Tech was recognized by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) during the organization’s Summit for Leaders in Advancement held in July. At the event, the former vice president for Alumni Relations, who earned a bachelor’s in 1969, a masters in 1978, and an Ed.D. in 1993, was presented with the Frank L. Ashmore Award.

Spirited giving

Supporting student organizations makes a difference

The Commonwealth Kiddush Cup is an online giving challenge that enables alumni, students, and friends of the university to directly support project and programs across campus. The goal of Kiddush Cup is to raise funds for scholarships, financial aid, and academic supports that help students achieve their academic and personal goals.

In spring 2017, the university initiated a new platform for giving that enables alumni, students, and friends of the university to support student organizations and programs across campus. The goal of Kiddush Cup is to raise funds for scholarships, financial aid, and academic supports that help students achieve their academic and personal goals.

Joining in the friendly competition is just one way for Hokies to support student organizations.

At Virginia Tech, there are approximately 800 student organizations that bring programs and community to campus. They encourage students to get involved, provide opportunities for service and learning, and enhance the university experience.

In addition to maintaining strong connections to the university after graduation, many alumni continue to give back to the organiz-

Advertise your business in Class Notes! Contact us at vmag@vt.edu for rates and more information.

Restricted to alumni-owned businesses.

Promoted to alumni-owned businesses.

Byron E. Wash Jr. (SHORT), Clar-

town, Va., 3/14/17.

G. Budy Wight Jr. (BAD ’70), Con-ven, N.C., 5/13/17.

Michael S. Olson (ENG), Blad-

estown, Va., 5/14/17.

Michael K. Armstrong (BAD ’78), Staunton, Va., 3/15/17.

Susan “Susie” K. Darra (IE), Mon-

ton, Utah, 10/15/16.

Robert A. Davis (GCC), Johns-

ville, Va., 4/30/17.

J.D. East Jr. (BAD), Houston, Texas,

5/12/17.

Susan A. Feeney (CTRA, EDVT ’76),


Richard Alley Jr. (BIOL), Clarksville,

Va., 4/18/17.

Linda K. Patton (EDAD), Christiansburg,

Va., 2/12/17.

Linda Ratcliffe Ayers (HNF ’73), Man-akin Sabot, Va., is presi-
dent of the National Garden Club, Inc.

Sanat “Santu” K. Dutta (CHE ’72, CHE

IE), Missoula, Mont., 4/14/17.

Stephen C. Kenyon (ASE), Charlot-
ton, Calif., 1/20/17.

Joseph D. Molzhon (EE), Broken

Fire, W.Va., 2/10/17.

George P. Dyson (MKTG ’75), Virgin-
a Beach, Va., 3/25/17.

William W. Hedrick (MKTG ’78), Roanoke, Va., 4/6/17.

William M. Naff (CE ’75), Glen


Kathryn Garland Onshuusen (EDSU, Chem-

istry, Va., 3/21/17.

Boeny P. Pefio (EDBS), Alexandria,

Va., 1/30/17.

Seth W. Wilson (CE), Southport,

N.C., 3/19/17.

James E. Winters III (BAD), Jenson

Beach, Fla., 3/7/17.

Richard D. Chuises Sr. (MGT ’91),

Roanoke, Va., 4/6/17.

Charles R. Leonard (ME), Pulaski,

Va., 3/12/17.

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2018 Alumni travel tours

LIVE, LOVE, and TRAVEL

Join the Traveling Hokies on a journey of exploration, learning, and discovery this year. For nearly 45 years, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association has offered quality group travel to alumni and their family and friends. Our trips will allow you to broaden your horizons and breathe in adventure.

For a full list of the 2018 destinations, visit us on the web at alumni.vt.edu/travel.

Gateway to Sunshine, April 6-22
The sunny scenery of Central America awaits you after you embark on the luxurious Marina in iconic Los Angeles. Visit Cabo San Lucas, Acapulco, Puerto Quetzal, San Juan del Sur, and other amazing destinations before you disembark in Miami.

Expedition to Antarctica | Jan. 4-17
Tahiti and French Polynesia | Feb. 6-16
Great Trains and Grand Canyons | March 18-23
Gateway to Sunshine | April 6-22
Southern Grandeur | May 6-14
Riviera Rhapsody | May 9-17
Gems of the Danube | May 14-24
Virginia Tech Grad Trip | May 20-June 6
Isle of Enchantment | June 7-18

For more information about this trip and other Alumni Association travel tours, go to alumni.vt.edu/travel.
The power of your alumni network

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association has more than 100 chapters across the country and around the world. Our chapters build strong relationships among alumni, students, parents, and their local communities. Several chapters host alumni career fairs, including our largest chapters—the National Capital Region and Richmond.

Virginia Tech also hosts networking events across the globe that provide opportunities to connect with fellow alumni and industry experts in a variety of career fields and regions—from Silicon Valley to Wall Street. Through these events, alumni share experiences, build professional networks, and explore industry trends.

The Alumni Association LinkedIn Group and the university LinkedIn page provide immediate access to over 200,000 Hokies. Through these online resources, alumni are able to connect by vocation, company, industry, or region.

Candid videos

The Office of Career and Professional Development has partnered with CandidCareer.com to offer a free resource for students and alumni. Candid Career hosts thousands of videos featuring informational interviews with professionals from varying industries. The videos offer tips to give you an edge in your employment search. Visit career.vt.edu/exploring/candid_career for more information.

You’re hired

The cover feature of the fall 2015 issue of Virginia Tech Magazine highlighted the networking power of the Hokie Nation. Learn more about how alumni, students, and the university work together to create jobs, usher Tech graduates into the professional world, and build the reputation of the Hokie Nation at vtmag.vt.edu.

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Be present

The individuals interviewed frequently described how meaningful it was when leaders made time to truly focus on them at key moments. They weren’t distracted or rushed, but prioritized the person in front of them. ‘The amount of time involved wasn’t as significant as the willingness to be in the moment.’

‘It blew me away to hear how many times something said in 10 minutes was carried by another entire lifetime,’ Hedges said.

Listen well

Open, attentive listening was the most-cited inspirational behavior in Hedges’ research. When we listen, we create space for another person to have their own insights. We don’t make it our agenda, but let it be their agenda,” she said. For the person speaking, listening feels like care, and attention feels like respect.

Called out potential

The simple act of highlighting the capacity we see in another person can change what they see as possible for themselves. According to Hedges, most of us understand the specific skills of the people around us, but we just have to remember to recognize those attributes often and out loud. Calling out someone’s strengths supercharges their growth.

Show emotion

Perfection, reserve, stoicism—none of those motifs like authenticy. ‘We’re inspired by people who are real and can connect on a human level no matter their stature,” Hedges said. “We need to see how much our leader cares to determine how much we should care.”

Talk about purpose

Inspirational leaders engage in a larger conversation about purpose and help others to connect the threads between what they’re doing now and what they want for themselves moving forward. They model a purpose-driven life, serving as catalysts for meaning, which encourages others to follow suit.

Kristi Hedges ‘92 writes about leadership for Forbes, and her work is periodically featured in Harvard Business and The Wall Street Journal and on CNBC. She founded and manages The Hedges Company and is a faculty member of the Georgetown University Institute for Transformational Leadership. At Virginia Tech, Hedges was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and was selected as the Outstanding Senior for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

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Virginia Tech Alumni Association 2016-17 chapter awards

Outstanding Chapter Award
- Bronze
  - Dallas/Fort Worth
  - Knoxvile
  - North Alabama
  - Orange County
  - Southeastern Michigan
  - Southwest Virginia
  - Triangle
- Silver
  - Allegheny Highlands
  - Baltimore
  - Chicago
  - Faquier
  - Frederickburg
  - Great Seattle
  - Minnesota
  - New England
  - New River Valley
  - San Diego
  - Williamsburg
- Gold
  - Atlanta
  - Central Florida
  - Central Pennsylvania
  - Central Virginia
  - Charlotte
  - Charles Town
  - Midco Tennesse
  - National Capital Region
  - N.C. Triad
  - Delaware
  - First State
  - Jacksonville
  - Memphis
  - Montgomery
  - Orange County
  - Dallas/Fort Worth
  - Tidewater

Outstanding Chapter Event
- Chicago Chapter
- Virginia Tech vs. Notre Dame Bus Trip
- Tidewater Chapter
- Tidewater Tailgate for Coach Beamer

Outstanding Community Service Project
- Tidewater Chapter
- Salvation Army Christmas Depot

Outstanding Fundraising Event
- Pittsburgh Chapter
- Virginia Tech vs. University of Pittsburgh Tailgate

Outstanding Chapter Networking Event
- National Capital Region Chapter
- Graduate School Alumni Networking Event

Outstanding Chapter Marketing Program
- Jacksonville Chapter
- Innovation Award
- Shenandoah Chapter
- Hole-in-one Newsletter

Broadcasting Akron Engagement Award
- Faquier Chapter
- Warmorton Spring Festival

Most Improved Chapter
- Central Virginia Chapter

Outstanding Chapter Volunteer
- Patricia Scharfen "93, Richmond Chapter

Outstanding Chapter Officer
- Brent Blevins "03, National Capital Region Chapter

Outstanding New Chapter
- Vandala Chapter

Superlative Awards

Marc T. Steiner (ECAS), Chesapeake, Va., was honored with the third annual Franchise Action Network of the Year Award by the International Franchise Association.

Audrey L. Anderson Riggs (ENG), Dubuque, Ia., 1/15/17.

Snow M. Hatchett (FIN), Abil- lam, Va., 9/24/17.

Taylor R. Johnson (LAS), Richmond, Va., 5/28/17.

Joseph W. Guthrie (AGRC), Dubuque, Ia., is senior instruc- tor in the agricultural technology program at Virginia Tech.

Robert C. Lawrence (PG), Glen Allen, Va., is director of Magick L. Widdow Governor’s School for Govern- mental and International Studies in Richmond, Va.

E. Austin Shaw III (FOR, ‘93), Georgetown, Del., is deputy secretary of agriculture for Delaware.

Jennie C. Perrine Stewart (COMM), Portsmouth, Va., earned her Ed.D in higher education from Regent University.

In December, the 2017 Award of Excellence for Outstanding Ed.D. Graduate

Jennifer E. Hooper (FIN)

Sarah Brown Beaneyville (FOR)

Jennifer R. Lawrence (FIN, ACCT), Vienna, Va., was named a 2017 Top Young Professional by ENR MidAtlantic.

Susan R. Lawrence (FCD, “99), Chesapeake, Va., a son, 4/30/17.

Morgan Beck (ECE, ‘10), Lexington, Va., was named 2017 Virginia Farmer of the Year. A

Robert J. Mills Jr. ’94, from Briar View Farm in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, has been named the 2017 Virginia Farmer of the Year. A

Laura M. Canella (LASC), Roanoke, Va., a son, 4/3/17.

Alejandra L. Lopez (VEH), San Antonio, Texas, 4/30/17.

Sarah Brown Beaneyville (FOR), Blaine, N.Y., 9/19/17.

Michael A. Ryan (ENG), Roanoke, Va., received his degree from the University of Tennessee with a con- centration in healthcare leadership.

Milena R. levamov (EDAD, EDMAD ’97), Suffolk, Va., 2/2/17.

Shanaan A. Billing (CM), Chanhassen, Minn., received the Wom- en in Manufacturing STEP Award from The Manufacturers Institute.

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  - Minnesota
  - New England
  - New River Valley
  - San Diego
  - Williamsburg
- Gold
  - Atlanta
  - Central Florida
  - Central Pennsylvania
  - Central Virginia
  - Charlotte
  - Charleston
  - Charles Town
  - Midco Tennesse
  - National Capital Region
  - N.C. Triad
  - Delaware
  - First State
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Taylor R. Johnson (LAS), Richmond, Va., 5/28/17.

Joseph W. Guthrie (AGRC), Dubuque, Ia., is senior instruc- tor in the agricultural technology program at Virginia Tech.

Robert C. Lawrence (PG), Glen Allen, Va., is director of Magick L. Widdow Governor’s School for Govern- mental and International Studies in Richmond, Va.

E. Austin Shaw III (FOR, ‘93), Georgetown, Del., is deputy secretary of agriculture for Delaware.

Jennie C. Perrine Stewart (COMM), Portsmouth, Va., earned her Ed.D in higher education from Regent University.

In December, the 2017 Award of Excellence for Outstanding Ed.D. Graduate

Jennifer E. Hooper (FIN)

Sarah Brown Beaneyville (FOR)

Jennifer R. Lawrence (FIN, ACCT), Vienna, Va., was named a 2017 Top Young Professional by ENR MidAtlantic.

Susan R. Lawrence (FCD, “99), Chesapeake, Va., a son, 4/30/17.

Morgan Beck (ECE, ‘10), Lexington, Va., was named 2017 Virginia Farmer of the Year. A

Robert J. Mills Jr. ’94, from Briar View Farm in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, has been named the 2017 Virginia Farmer of the Year. A

Laura M. Canella (LASC), Roanoke, Va., a son, 4/3/17.

Alejandra L. Lopez (VEH), San Antonio, Texas, 4/30/17.

Sarah Brown Beaneyville (FOR), Blaine, N.Y., 9/19/17.

Michael A. Ryan (ENG), Roanoke, Va., received his degree from the University of Tennessee with a con- centration in healthcare leadership.

Milena R. levamov (EDAD, EDMAD ’97), Suffolk, Va., 2/2/17.

Shanaan A. Billing (CM), Chanhassen, Minn., received the Wom- en in Manufacturing STEP Award from The Manufacturers Institute.

Richard A. Collie (ECON), Ilsing- ton, Va., a son, 4/14/17.

Matthew J. Lanz (FIN) and Stephen J. Korving (ACCT) and

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The fatigue, dizziness, and inability to focus overshadowed his senior year and continued to nag at him for four years after he graduated. The doctors in Jacques' native Canada, however, weren't convinced the tumor was behind his troubles and declined to operate, deeming the brain surgery too risky. Jacques, who was accustomed to overcoming challenges on the court, refused to accept that this would be his lot in life. Instead, he poured his efforts into researching the problem online.

In 2014, Jacques' commitment paid off. Through his online research, he found a doctor in Santa Monica, California—Daniel Kelly—with extensive experience in the kind of surgery needed to remove the tumor. With the Canadian health care system unwilling to pay for the procedure, Jacques embarked on a campaign to raise the funds himself. Ultimately, his friends, supporters from the tennis community, and members of the Hokie Nation contributed $110,000 toward the surgery.

So it was that Jacques began to walk across America. His goal was simple: to raise awareness of the power of persistence, one step at a time. His trek started in his native Canada with a walk from Magog to Montreal and then to Quebec City. Then, on April 21, Jacques started across the United States with a plan to traverse from Virginia Beach to California.

In early May, Jacques reached Blacksburg, walking up Beamer Walk cheered on by a group of about 25 people, including his old friends. Jacques hopes his story will inspire others during tough times. “If you’ve got your health, you’re good to go,” Jacques said. “You can make it, even if you’re just taking it one day at a time.”

As Jacques' new co-workers and students learned about his experiences, he was invited to speak to families facing serious health issues. Inspired by how his experiences might offer hope to others, Jacques began to think about how to take his message to an even larger audience.

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“This is absolutely amazing,” said Jacques, beaming, as he embraced old friends.

The moment marked a homecoming, but also a turning point in his journey. Jacques' mom had followed him by car as he walked with a stroller to carry supplies that bore a sign reading “Walk Across America,” along with his website and social media handles. After Blacksburg, however, he’d be on his own, moving at a pace of about 25 miles per day. Jacques ended his 3,000-mile trek in September walking into Santa Monica, California. He arrived at Providence Saint John’s Health Center, where he had received the life-changing surgery.

Jacques hopes his story will inspire others during tough times. “If you’ve got your health, you’re good to go,” Jacques said. “You can make it, even if you’re just taking it one day at a time.”

To learn more about Joe Parr and to view a gallery of his living sculptures, visit vtmag.vt.edu.
M ore than a decade removed from crafting his way to the end zone in Lane Stadium, Kevin Jones (industrial ‘14) is still helping design wins for Virginia Tech.

Since founding JoBa Design in 2015, Jones and co-founder Alex Barrette (industrial design ‘14) have sold thousands of “Gokies,” a design-inspired product that has come to represent a long-standing tradition for their company. “That’s how JoBa was— that holistic experience—and we’re trying to help engineering students with real-world experiences through internships,” Jones said.

The desire to stay connected to their alma mater drove their 2016 decision to relocate to the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Today, that office is buzzing with employees and interns working on everything from building interiors to utensils for toddlers.

Jones and Barrette became friends when Jones returned to Virginia Tech in 2010 after his NFL career. As part of an industrial design class, the pair partnered on a project.

Imagine that: Over the summer, Kevin Jones ‘14 (below), a founding member of JoBa Design, interacted with rising seventh- and eighth-grade students during the Imagination day camp organized through the College of Engineering’s Center for Engineering Diversity.

In addition to developing their own ideas, JoBa Design works with clients to breathe life into entrepreneurial visions. Such was the case when Kiyah Duffey, co-founder of Kizingo LLC, had an idea for a spoon that would encourage successful self-feeding. In 2017, the spoon JoBa designed with Duffey was named a silver award winner in the European Product Design Awards held annually in Brussels, Belgium.

Associate Professor of Industrial Design Brook Kennedy, who taught both Barrette and Jones, said JoBa’s award-winning work is an asset for the New River Valley’s growing startup environment and current Tech students.

“So often our students leave right after graduation for jobs in the Silicon Valley, Chicago, New York, and other cities, so it is great to see [Kevin and Alex] stay and help contribute to building the local economy,” Kennedy said.

If Barrette and Jones have it their way, paying it forward will become a long-standing tradition for their company. “That’s what JoBa is—that holistic experience—and we’re trying to help students get that locally,” Jones said.
“Our Hokie family traveled from Seattle, Richmond, and Boston to celebrate with us.” — Christine Hirschberg Manfredo, ’09

David Machaj ’07 and Erin Ricker Machaj ’08, Redmond, Wash., a daughter, Clara Leigh, 11/16/16.

Behnaz Bonyadian ’08 and Brian Akinyanju ’08, Washington, D.C., 3/31/17.

Kristen Moreno Westover ’08, Fairfax, Va., a daughter, Kennedy Amelia, 5/15/17.

“Our Hokie family traveled from Seattle, Richmond, and Boston to celebrate with us.” — Christine Hirschberg Manfredo, ’09

Who knew two Hokie acquaintances would later reconnect to live a life with passion, grace, and gratitude? The initial sparks we felt were destined to remain with us for a lifetime.” — Behnaz Bonyadian, ’08

“I’m a proud Hokie and longtime member of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association’s Board of Directors. As the recently appointed board president, I want all Hokies to know that staying active and remaining engaged is essential to our university’s success. You help tell our story. You help move us forward. Virginia Tech depends on you. How can you help? Here’s how:

• Be an ambassador for the university that has supported you by sharing what makes our community special and advocating for issues that support higher education.

• Mentor other Hokies. Give back to a new generation and offer guidance to those beginning their journey.

• Connect with your local alumni chapter. Meet Hokies in your area, volunteer with them, have fun with them.

• Make a gift. Alumni generosity fuels research, teaching, and innovation. It’s also one of the most watched indicators of quality in higher education. When you give, it helps all Hokies, present and future. It’s living Ut Prosim and building a better Virginia Tech.

• Visit campus often. You’ll have a new opportunity to do that this summer as we make a change to how we hold reunions.

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association will hold its first-ever reunion weekend, June 7-10, 2018. It’s a new tradition for us and one we know will be a destination for alumni. We expect it will be one of the largest on-campus gatherings of Hokie alumni.

The new reunion weekend will not affect Homecoming or the 50th reunion, which will still occur each fall. Specialty reunions and college tailgates will also take place as usual.

We believe hosting one large weekend, rather than a handful of weekends throughout the fall, means a better experience. It’s a chance to spend more time in Blacksburg connecting with more Hokies and experiencing campus like never before.

Please join us. We can’t wait.

Mark S. Lawrence (business administration ’80) is vice president of governmental and external affairs at Carilion Clinic and president of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Reunion 2018: our first ever reunion weekend

Join us June 7-10, 2018
Learn more online at: alumni.vt.edu/reunion2018

Always Hokies: Cynthia D. Lawrence ’84 and Mark S. Lawrence ’80 of Roanoke, Virginia, enjoy leading and participating in activities through the Virginia Tech Alumni Association.
Thomas J. Grizzard, Jr. (civil engineering ’68, M.S. ’72, Ph.D. ’77), professor emeritus of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech and former director of the Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory, died on June 24. Grizzard worked at the university from 1974 to 2014—an impressive 40-year span that included three decades also serving as director for civil and environmental engineering graduate programs in the National Capital Region.

James Beverly “J.B.” Jones (mechanical engineering ’45), a William H. Ruffner Medal recipient and former mechanical engineering department head at Virginia Tech, died on May 17. Jones earned the American Society of Mechanical Engineers’ James Harry Potter Gold Medal for contributions in thermodynamics, and in 2008, he was awarded the William H. Ruffner Medal, Virginia Tech’s most prestigious honor.

Fernando Ruiz, associate professor emeritus of architecture in the Virginia Tech College of Architecture and Urban Studies, died on July 10. Ruiz traveled extensively, collecting visual information and experiencing significant works of architecture in the U.S., Central America, Puerto Rico, Europe, and the People’s Republic of China, where he served as a visiting faculty member at the Department of Architecture at Zhengzhou Institute of Technology.

Kevin S. Jones Sr. (IDS), Blacksburg, Va., is a co-founder of Jolfa, a design firm that was named a silver award-winner in the European Product Design Awards for the Bungo toddler stroller.

Benjamin A. Shryock (WSCI), Blacksburg, Va., is a park ranger for Alaska state parks.

Kevin C. Jones Sr. (IDS), Blacksburg, Va., is co-founder of JoBa, a design firm that was named a silver award-winner in the European Product Design Awards for the Kizingo toddler spoon.

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Still life

Alumni eclipsed: On Aug. 21, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association hosted a solar eclipse watch party on the Holtzman Alumni Center lawn. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, and the larger Southwest Virginia region fell within the 90-percent range for the eclipse. To view a gallery of photos of eclipse-watching across campus, go to vtmag.vt.edu.

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Our motto—Ut Prosim (That I May Serve)—and the deep history and traditions of Virginia Tech create a sense of community pride and purpose that are readily apparent. Hokies are genuine and kind. They have grit and determination. They apply their minds to solving the world’s biggest problems. And they are proud—proud of where the university has been and where it is going.

These qualities will sound familiar to you, as alumni and friends—and these are the qualities that are driving Virginia Tech forward. President Tim Sands and other Virginia Tech leaders are guided by the Beyond Boundaries roadmap, the Destination Areas model of transdisciplinary problem-solving, and a deep commitment to building a welcoming, inclusive community. This is the foundation of how we have evolved the Virginia Tech brand.

Behind the scenes, we have worked in earnest to reshape the university’s brand in a way that captures the energy and momentum of Virginia Tech. In our words and imagery, you’ll notice a more cohesive and vibrant expression of the role we claim as a community.

Perhaps the most visible change you will see is in the new university logo. To evolve our logo, we leveraged the external awareness of, and our attachment to, the “flying VT” athletics logo that our student-athletes proudly wear, using that recognizable shape to create a university logo that both relates to and stands apart from the athletics logo. We have not changed or replaced the athletics logo for a few important reasons—the most important being that the university logo must represent the full breadth of our community and represent the institution at the highest level. The university logo now appears on vt.edu pages and many printed materials, and in 2018, you’ll see a revitalized Virginia Tech Magazine in your mailboxes.

Throughout the process of developing a new brand platform and logo, we purposefully engaged with various audiences, including alumni, to guide our strategy and thinking. And we certainly welcome additional feedback as we continue to evolve our creative platform. Please feel free to write to me at tracyv@vt.edu.

Amid the changes, please know this: Our tradition stands strong. Chicago maroon and burnt orange are our colors, even as we introduce more contemporary colors to our palette. The beloved HokieBird will always have a roost in Blacksburg, even as we continue on the path of becoming a global land-grant university with a deep commitment to research and service. And Hokie Stone will always reflect the golden sunsets of Southwest Virginia, even as our campus footprint grows in Roanoke, the National Capital Region, and around the world.

Now is truly a great time to be a Hokie. It is a moment to claim who we are and who we want to be. Our commitment to serve is stronger than ever. And, as you know, any time you put orange and maroon together, good things happen. Let’s go, Hokies!

Tracy Vosburgh is the senior associate vice president for University Relations.
At Virginia Tech, we’re dedicated to connecting diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. Why? We know that real change is rooted in empathy and driven by embracing differences.

Our role in creating that change is to empower courageous and compassionate leaders for our ever-evolving world.