As president of VCU, I am privileged to lead a university that is recognized for its dedication to providing a world-class education while preparing future graduates to go out into the world and make a positive impact. When I received word that the Board of Visitors had approved my faculty appointment in the Department of Health Administration in the School of Allied Health Professions, I was enthused and honored to have the opportunity to work with faculty and staff members in such an exceptional school. Their expertise is the reason why the department is so highly ranked — among the best in the country by *U.S. News and World Report* — and so well-respected.

My journey to the role as an administrator in higher education is somewhat circuitous. With a degree in chemistry, I thought I would work in the sciences. However, a doctorate in higher education administration changed that. I am thankful for all the experiences I have had inside and out of the classroom. They are what led me to Richmond, to such an esteemed university, and to its community of learners.

Whenever I have the opportunity to teach and conduct research, I am happy to do so — it is something I of which will never tire. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to participate in an MHA course on strategic management taught by Cindy Watts. Dr. Watts’ students were preparing to go on their one-year administrative residency in a variety of healthcare organizations, including VCU Health. Discussing strategic plans in health care with the students left me encouraged: Our students are incredibly driven and dedicated to their studies and will do exemplary work outside of the classroom.

To be associated with a school that is the top in the nation at what it does and to witness the construction of facilities that will further reflect the school’s excellence leaves me humbled. I look forward to working with you in an educational capacity.
In the Grant House, December marks the end of the fall semester – the first one for our incoming class. This year’s entering class of 20 MHA students includes two MHA/MD students. The average incoming GPA of the group is 3.5 (our pretty steady average over the past few years), and all have had at least one year of full time work experience post-graduation. The sixteen members of the MSHA Class of 2018 come to us from all around the globe, including Scotland, Qatar, Australia, India, Peru, as well as closer to home from California, Ohio, Kansas, New York, and North Carolina. Eight have advanced degrees, including six MDs, one PharmD, and one MS. The PhD program admitted two new students to join nine students already in the pipeline, including four who are in the dissertation phase of their programs.

We are always delighted by the new energy our first year students bring, and we enjoy getting to know them. You will see from reading about their activities in this issue of Cardwell Comments that they, along with their more established peers, are a very active and engaged group.

Those of you who attended the Paul A. Gross Landmarks in Leadership alumni event in October got to hear from the latest addition to our Department faculty, Dr. Michael Rao. Dr. Rao has a rich leadership background both in academia and the field of practice. Since he is President of VCU and the VCU Health System, we will, of course, have to share him! However, it is quite a compatible match, and he won’t even need a new parking spot. You can read Dr. Rao’s thoughts about joining us in the Grant House on the front page of this issue of the newsletter and read more about him here.

Landmarks attendees also heard our bittersweet news that Ms. Suzanne Havasy is leaving the Department after 26 years of service in a variety of capacities, including Program Coordinator for the MHA program. Suzanne left shortly after the Landmarks event to provide support for Zach McCluskey (MHA ’07) and his administrative team at Parham Doctors Hospital. I am sure you join all of us here in wishing her the very best in her new role.

Whoever said democracy is for the faint of heart! The tumultuous election of 2016 leaves many questions in the minds of those of us who work in the healthcare field. I am thankful to be in a country where we can disagree openly, at a university where all voices can be heard, and in an industry where compassion is valued alongside profitability. There may be rough seas ahead for health care. Let’s navigate them together.

Thanks to our alumni and friends for your commitment and generous contributions to the Department. As we move forward into the new year with new challenges, your support is greatly appreciated. All gifts, from small annual gifts to major faculty and programmatic endowments, are absolutely vital to our mission of educating tomorrow’s healthcare leaders who will make a difference in our communities.

All of us in the Grant House wish all of you and your families a very peaceful holiday season.

DID YOU KNOW?...Our eyes can distinguish up to ten million color surfaces and take in more information than the largest telescope know to man?

Napolean Hill once said “Just as our eyes need light in order to see, our minds need ideas in order to conceive.”
At the beginning of fall semester, the Department kicked off a new Leadership Series designed to bring leaders on campus to share thoughts, experiences and ideas about their leadership journeys. Designed to offer practical views and valuable tips from successful leaders in our community, the seminar is open to all students in our programs.

The first seminar was led by Mr. Alan Lombardo, FACHE. He is the Associate Director and COO of the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, VA. Mr. Lombardo is responsible for the operations of the 300 bed medical center, which supports 60,000 Veterans in Central Virginia. He has a BS from Slippery Rock University, an MS in Physical Therapy from Shenandoah University, and an MHA and an MBA from Army-Baylor University. He was the recipient of the Department of Health Administration’s Preceptor of the Year award in 2016. After presenting background information on the VA, its mission and values, and the leadership structure within the organization, Alan spoke about population health management.

Suzanne Beauvoir Jackson, FACHE, was the second speaker in our series. She is CEO of John Randolph Medical Center, a 147 bed HCA hospital in Hopewell, VA. Ms. Jackson spoke about the values of an impactful leader and the importance of mentors and sponsors in a career. She shared her journey and encouraged students to have clarity about their vision, to find their values, and to be authentic. She offered thoughts about the differences in leaders and managers and provided ideas about ways to operate as a leader. Ms. Jackson holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois-Champaign and a master’s degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan.

The third speaker in our fall series was Coleen Santa Ana (MHA ’05). She is the President of Sentara’s Albemarle Medical Center in Elizabeth City, NC. Ms. Santa Ana discussed the impact of leadership, and ways to strengthen the workplace by setting expectations of the team and leading by example. When she accepted the position at Albemarle, the facility was not profitable. She outlined the strategic plan the organization has followed to create change and achieve success over the past several years. She provided Sentara’s strategic plan going forward and discussed the priorities of patient safety and importance of the Sentara culture. Ms. Santa Ana holds a BS in Health Services Administration from James Madison University and a 2005 MHA from VCU. You can also read more about Ms. Santa Ana in the Alumni Spotlight on page 15 in this issue.

We would also like to thank all of the guest speakers who spoke to our students in our classes this year. You can see a full list of Spring 2016 here and Fall 2016 here.
The fall Paul A. Gross Landmarks in Leadership Lecture Series was held in October at the Hotel John Marshall. A record 130 alumni and guests attended this annual dinner and alumni awards event, including Dr. and Mrs. Tom Barker, Dean Emeritus of the School of Allied Health Professions, and Dr. Larry Prybil, former Chair of the Department. The evening began with a reception, followed by dinner, then opening remarks from VCU President (and newest member of the Health Administration faculty!), Dr. Michael Rao, and Dean Cecil Drain. Attendees included a number of alumni from Sentara, who were there to support CEO Emeritus David Bernd (MHA ’73). Mr. Bernd was not only the featured speaker, but also the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement and Service Award. Mr. Ed Smith (MHA ’64), and Dr. Dolores Clement, Sentara Professor of Health Administration, offered their own congratulations as well as those of Paul A. Gross (MHA ’64), Jeff Dorsey (MHA ’73), and Richard Bracken (MHA ’77), previous recipients of the Lifetime Award who were unable to attend.

David Bernd (MHA ’73), CEO Emeritus of Sentara Healthcare in Norfolk, VA received the Lifetime Achievement and Service Award, which was presented by Mary Blunt, Senior Corporate Vice President of Sentara Healthcare. This award recognizes an alumnus or alumna for his or her lifetime of strong dedication and contribution to the Department, its faculty, and its students.

Sheryl Garland (MHA ’88), Director of the VCU Office of Health Innovation and Vice President of Health Policy and Community Relations at VCU Health in Richmond, VA was awarded the Alumnus of the Year Award, presented by Marilyn Tavenner (MHA ’89), President and CEO of AHIP. This award recognizes an alumnus or alumna who shows uncommon excellence in his or her healthcare career and service to his or her community and to the Department.

Tiffany Wasiuk (MSHA ‘14), Healthcare Consultant at Optum in Richmond, VA was awarded the Young Professional Award, presented by Shirley Gibson (MSHA ’90), Associate Vice President of Nursing for VCU Health. This award acknowledges an alumnus or alumna who exemplifies the Department’s core values early in his or her career in service to his or her community and professional organization.
The Department participated in six local graduate fairs in the Virginia area this fall. Thank you to Nathaniel Arnold (MHA ’15), Brandon Burrow (MHA ’13), Katie Golob (MHA ’14), and MHA Class of 2017 students Alexa Osborne and Valerie Mondestin for manning the tables. Thanks also to Suzanne Havasy for coordinating all of the fairs as well as matching up students and alumni to run the tables and answer questions from potential candidates.

In early August, Dr. Cindy Watts and Tracy Kemp Stallings (MSHA ’95) went to Nashville to visit alumni Richard Bracken (MHA ’77), Jon Perlin (MSHA ’97), David McClellan (MHA ’83), and Jess Judy (MHA ’77). One aspect of the visit was to begin planning for a major event in the fall of 2017 sponsored by the recent HCA endowment in honor of Richard’s retirement. Stay tuned!

The Department held a retreat for faculty and staff at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in September. Participants began the morning with an ice breaker where they had to “find their pair.” Attendees were joined by John Martin, President of the Southeastern Research Institute (SIR), and his associate Rachel Burgess. Their presentation, “Future of Education Through a Generational Lens,” led to an engaged and energetic conversation on generational differences and their implications for both higher education and the healthcare workforce. SIR’s work on generations is based on several years of data collection and analysis, and was the basis of the 2007 book, Boomer Consumer.

Beth Williamson Ayers and Chuky Spivey represented the Department at the Mid-Atlantic Interprofessional Leadership Conference at the Richmond Marriott Hotel in October. The 13th Annual Leading the Way conference attracted leaders from many local and regional healthcare organizations. As a conference sponsor, VCU Health invited the Department to share information about our programs with conference participants. Shirley Gibson (MSHA ’90), Associate Vice President of Nursing at VCU Health and a graduate of our very first MSHA class, provided the opening remarks for the conference.
Announcements continued

The Grant House, built in 1857 and acquired by the Sheltering Arms Hospital in 1892, has been the home to the Department of Health Administration for several decades. With such a rich history, the Grant House is no stranger to ghost stories. For Halloween, VCU University Relations conducted interviews around campus and included a few spooky stories from Department staff who were brave enough to share their encounters. You can read the chilling stories and watch the video here.

Dr. Cindy Watts and Beth Williamson Ayers attended the annual fall meeting of the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA) at The Homestead in early November. As a sponsor of the event, the Department exhibits during the conference and has the opportunity to connect with many alumni. Terrie Edwards (MHA ’84), Corporate Vice President for Sentara Healthcare posed with Alexa Osborne (MHA Class of 2017), Administrative Fellow at Sentara’s Blue Ridge Region. Dr. Watts stood with Art Layne (MHA ’76), Executive Vice President at Cognetyx.

Suzanne Havasy, MHA Program Coordinator, announced in early November that she had accepted a position with Parham Doctors’ Hospital to provide administrative support for Zack McCluskey (MHA ’07). While we are sad to see her go, we are excited for her new opportunity. The MHA 2018 and 2019 students hosted a pizza party for Suzanne to wish her well in her new endeavor.

The Department partnered with the VCU Division for Health Sciences Diversity in November for VCU Healthcare Quest, a program that exposes middle school students to different healthcare careers. Program assistants Alexandra Hoffman (MHA Class of 2018) and Katie Caruthers (MHA Class of 2019) represented the Department.

Anthony Stanowski, President of CAHME, visited the Grant House in late November. Mr. Stanowski attended the NAHSE conference in Las Vegas and watched our students present in the case competition (see page 10). He was so impressed with the team, he asked Dr. Jon DeShazo if he could visit the program and meet with the rest of our students. CAHME is the national organization that accredits our two masters programs.
**Chris Accashian** (MHA ’01) was featured in a Richmond Times Dispatch article in November about becoming CEO of Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center in Midlothian, VA.

**Karen Cameron** (MHA ’87), director of the Virginia Consumer Voices for Healthcare, was quoted in the September 2016 issue of Virginia Business’ article on health insurance mergers. Please visit the publications’ site to read the full article.

**Dr. Cindy Watts** paid a visit to **Ron Galonsky** (MHA ’92) during a November trip to the Los Angeles area. Ron is the CEO of South Coast Global Medical Center and Chapman Regional Medical Center in Orange, CA. Ron’s focus at his hospitals is on creating strong working relationships with his medical staff, something that is particularly important in California since physicians cannot be employed by health care delivery organizations.

**Jonathan Perlin** (MSHA ’97), Chief Medical Officer at HCA, was quoted in a Wall Street Journal article for adopting a new regimen in HCA hospitals after studying the best ways to reduce infections resulting from antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Read the full story here.

**Marilyn Tavenner** (MHA ’89) joined a panel of distinguished VCU alumni at the VCU James Branch Cabell Library to reflect on their careers and the influence of their alma mater. The event was a centerpiece of the launch of a $750 million Make It Real Campaign for VCU, the largest fundraising campaign in the university’s history. Please visit the article to read the full story.

**Roberta Tinch** (MHA ’09) was in the Fredericksburg Regional Business Magazine as part of a Women in Business series. Roberta is the COO and ECO for Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center. You can read more about her and her success here.

**Michael Zucker** (MHA ’91) wrote a commentary that was published in the San Antonio Express-News. He was responding to an article previously written about hospital disparities. You can read Michael’s commentary here.

**Lisa Beard** (MSHA ’16) accepted a position as Assistant Director of Operations at Legacy Care, LLC (formally Adaptive Geriatrics) in Richmond, VA. Legacy Care, LLC is the largest geriatric practice in the state of Virginia. Lisa was previously Weekend Radiology Supervisor at Bon Secours Health System in Mechanicsville, VA.

**Brandon Burrow** (MHA ‘13) accepted a position as Director of Professional Billing for Carillion Clinic in Roanoke, VA. Brandon was previously with Stryker as a Trauma Sales Representative.

**Preston Callison** (MHA ’14) assumed the role of Chief Operating Officer at Wilson Medical Center in Wilson, NC. Preston served as Assistant Administrator of UP Health System, a Duke LifePoint facility in Marquette, MI prior to his new appointment.
David Carter (MHA ‘16) has accepted a position as Compliance Manager for HCA Physician Services Group in Brentwood, TN. David’s previous position was Project Consultant at Carilion Clinic in Roanoke, VA.

Bridget Fitzpatrick (MHA ‘14) accepted the role of Director of Operations at Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center in Richmond, VA. Bridget was the Director of Operations at the Hospital of Medicine at Ochsner Health System in New Orleans, LA.

Katherine Fowler (MHA ‘01) has a new position as Executive Director at Vanguard Medical Group Primary Care in Fairfield, NJ. Katherine’s previous position was Vice President, Outpatient Services at Barnabas Health in Livingston, NJ.

Chesapeake Regional Hospital in Chesapeake, VA announced that Reese Jackson (MHA/JD ‘92) will be the new President and CEO effective December 1st. Reese has two decades of leadership experience in health care settings and organizations across the country, most recently as president and CEO of Forbes Hospital in Monroeville, PA.

Peter Kennedy (MHA ‘10) is the new Chief Operating Officer at Northside Hospital and Tampa Bay Heart Institute in Tampa Bay, FL. Peter previously served as the Associate Chief Operating Officer at Centennial Medical Center in Nashville, TN.

Amos Mburu (MHA ‘15) was offered a position in Washington, DC as Health System Specialist in the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Office of Nursing Services. Amos’ most recent position was the Administrative Officer for Facilities Management Service at the Salem VA Medical Center in Salem, VA.

Sentara RMH Medical Center in Harrisonburg, VA named Douglas J. Moyer (MSHA ’98) as its new president. Douglas served as Chief Executive Officer for CHS Virginia Hospital Network and CHS/Southside Regional Medical Center in Petersburg, VA. He will start at Sentara on January 3rd.

Matt Radle (MHA ‘12) is now a Market Administrator for HCA Physician Services Group in Brentwood, TN. Matt’s previous position was Area Practice Manager.

Laura Vanasche (MHA ‘13) is the new Director of Marketing and Communications at CHI St. Luke’s Health in Houston, TX. Laura’s previous position was Director of Business Development at Resolute Health in New Braunfels, TX.

Adria Vanhoozier (MHA ‘13) has a new position as Vice President/Administrator at Riverside Doctor’s Hospital of Williamsburg in Williamsburg, VA. Adria was the Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Service Line Administrator at Riverside Health System in Newport News, VA.

Drew Walker (MHA ‘14) will be returning to Bon Secours as the Richmond market’s Administrative Director of Orthopaedics. Drew was previously with OrthoVirginia as Assistant Administrator.

William Giermak (MHA ‘76), who led St. Mary’s Home through expansion to care for adults as well as children with severe disabilities, retired in October after 12 years as the nonprofit’s CEO and a 40-year healthcare career devoted to making a difference in the community. You can read more about Mr. Giermak’s career here.

A board meeting for AUPHA took Dr. Cindy Watts to Las Vegas, where she joined dinner host and AAC member, Alan Keesee (MHA ’09), COO of Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center; Laura Hennum (MSHA ’07), Chief Strategy Officer for Dignity Health’s St. Rose Dominican Hospitals; David Hoffenberg (MHA ’14), VP of Operations at Sunrise; and Jay Shen (PhD ’98), Professor and Associate Dean at UNLV’s School of Community Health Sciences. There was no gambling, but lots of great conversation about the healthcare market in Las Vegas!

Calling all Alumni!

If you and your classmates would like to hold a class reunion next year, please let us know. The Department is happy to help you organize an event. Over the past few years, we have helped coordinate a number of reunions in Richmond. Many of you enjoyed the time to reconnect and reminisce about your time in the program, get an update from the Chair on happenings in the Department, and take a tour of either your old classroom building or the Grant House or both. If you are interested in help planning a class reunion, please contact Beth Williamson Ayers at bwayers@vcu.edu for information. In 2017, we will celebrate the classes ending in “7’s” or “2’s,” so please let us know if you want to get together.

We look forward to hearing from you!
Dr. Mike McCue was interviewed by WCVE News regarding Aetna Health Insurance pulling out of the Affordable Care Act health insurance exchanges. You can hear his comments [here](#).

Dr. Cindy Watts led a study requested by the Department of Corrections to explore various models of delivering health care to offenders in state prisons. The team included MHA Class of 2017 student Hunter Byrnes and MHA Class of 2018 student Antoine Ransom. You can hear her interview on WCVE News [here](#). Dr. Watts also presented her work to a joint meeting of the Commonwealth’s Subcommittees on Public Safety of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees. The meeting, held at Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, also featured presentations by Karah Gunther (MHA/JD ’09), and Steve Herrick (MSHA ’04). Steve became Director of Health Care for the Virginia Department of Corrections in the spring of 2016.

Dr. Jon DeShazo published an article on his blog HealthDataKnowledge.com titled “Use LinkedIn To Find The Best Health Management Program For You.” You can read the full article [here](#).

Tracy Kemp Stallings (MSHA ’95) attended the VA-DC Chapter of HFMA’s Fall Education Conference in Virginia Beach in September as a representative and exhibitor for the Department.

Dr. Gloria Bazzoli, along with Department of Health Behavior and Policy faculty Andrew Barnes, co-hosted the Southeastern Health Economic Study Group Conference in October. Roughly 40 people attended the two-day conference on the MCV campus.

Dr. Yasar Ozcan attended the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) annual meeting in Nashville, TN in November where he gave a presentation at the Health Applications Society (HAS) business meeting.

Dr. Jon DeShazo collaborated on a poster with VCU’s Division of Community Engagement titled “Smashing Silos: Community Engagement Maps: A VIVO Extension.” The poster was presented at the VIVO Conference in Denver, CO in August.

Dr. Cheryl Rathert was a co-winner of the John Becker Faculty Research Award, University of Nebraska – Kearney, College of Business & Technology for the paper, Fleig-Palmer, M. M, Rathert, C., & Porter, T. “Building Trust: The Influence of Mentoring Functions on Perceptions of Health Care Managers’ Trustworthiness” (2016). The paper will appear in Health Care Management Review.

Dr. Cheryl Rathert was appointed to a three year term as the Chair of the Academy of Management’s Health Care Management Division Teaching Committee.

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**Faculty Publications**


The MHA Class of 2019 kicked off orientation in August with a ropes challenge course. The next day they gathered in the Grant House to meet the professors and staff they would be interacting with over the next three years. On day three, the Class of 2018 worked with the incoming class at Great Shiplock Park as part of a community development volunteer project. They ended the day at Byrd Park with a picnic and cornhole competition.

The MHA, MSHA, and PhD programs all held information sessions in the Grant House over the last few months. The program directors, coordinators, and current students discussed eligibility requirements and benefits of joining the Department as well as answered questions from potential applicants.

Congratulations to MHA Class of 2018 students Jennifer Eguzoro, Abdul Nur, and Danielle Scott for taking 4th place at the NAHSE case competition that was held in Las Vegas, NV in October. Class of 2019 student Ciara Jones also traveled with the team as an observer. The NAHSE case competition provides a platform for students to display their skills before prospective employers and build their professional network. Dr. Jon DeShazo accompanied the team.

MHA Class of 2018 students Christine Galligan, Sarah Heldreth, Lizzy Magrath and MHA/MD Class of 2019 student Katie Pumphrey traveled to Waco, TX to participate in the invitation-only Robbins Case Competition in Healthcare Management at Baylor University. The competition provides a forum for master’s level students to participate in a national case competition in healthcare management with a distinct financial/quantitative emphasis. Dr. Jon DeShazo traveled with the team to Baylor.
PhD students were joined by faculty and staff at Sine Irish Pub for a relaxed, casual get-together in September.

The Department held a Preceptor Day in October. Representatives from various healthcare organizations around the country came to the Grant House to conduct first round residency interviews with our MHA Class of 2018 students. Several sites conducted interviews virtually because they were grounded by Hurricane Matthew.

Ross Airington (MSHA Class of 2017) led a session for Internal Medicine in September that focused on leadership styles, communication, and conflict management. Ross also facilitated a number of icebreaker and team building games during an all-day Sunday retreat.

Class of 2018 student Antoine Ransom was featured on the back page of VCU’s Impact Magazine. The publication features stories of donors and the impact of their gifts on VCU students and programs. The magazine is published quarterly by VCU’s Office of Development and Alumni Relations and is mailed to donors and friends of VCU. You can read Antoine’s quote about receiving the Fleetwood Scholarship, and great news about VCU alumni here.

Aaron D. Anderson and David S. Leong, authors of Keep it Short and Simple: How to Give a Great Presentation conducted a presentation skills workshop in Dr. Cindy Watts’ MHA health policy class. They addressed topics such as how to become a confident presenter, how to design compelling slides, and how to keep an audience interested and engaged.
Dr. Cindy Watts’ MHA health policy class went to Washington, DC the Monday after the election to see policy in action. They met with Marilyn Tavenner (MHA ’89), President and CEO of AHIP, and her Executive Vice President, Aryana Khalid (MHA ’06); Jared Wyrick, Military Fellow in Congressman Randy Forbes’ office; Sylvia Johnson, Senior Leader for Government Affairs, UAW; and Rob Childers and Michael Barnard, senior legislative staff for Senator Robert Menendez. The weather was perfect, and the city buzzing with -- well, energy -- following the election.

Jaya Khushalani (PhD student) has successfully defended her dissertation proposal entitled "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Receipt of Immediate Breast Reconstruction: Do Hospital Characteristics Matter?" Congratulations and great job!

The Class of 2018 hosted the 1st Annual Department of Health Administration Chili Cook-Off at the Grant House in November. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends attended the event that raised over $700 for the Children’s Hospital Foundation. Liz Veasey and Joanna Folwer, both 2016 MHA graduates, won the popular vote and Jennifer Eguzoro and Danielle Scott, MHA class of 2018 students, won the judged contest. The judges consisted of faculty member Dr. Cindy Watts, MHA Class of 2018 student Allen Jang, and MHA Class of 2019 Courtney Harlow. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to MHA class of 2018 students Carter Crawford and Abdul Nur for organizing the event!
**Staff Spotlight**

**Suzanne Havasy** arrived in the Department of Health Administration in May of 1990. She will never forget the excitement watching the MHA Class of 1990 gathering in the lobby of Randolph Minor Annex as they discussed their futures, took pictures, and tried on their caps & gowns. It was at that moment she realized she had made the right choice in accepting the position in the Department of Health Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University. She never looked back.

Prior to her career at VCU, Suzanne worked at the University of Virginia in the Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering. When her husband became a Virginia State Trooper, they were transferred to New Kent County and she began her job search. She remembers interviewing with Jerry Norville and Chuck Breindel, not really knowing very much about Health Administration. But she needed a position so she was more than happy to figure things out.

Suzanne began her tenure with the Department as the assistant to the MHA Program Coordinator, Ms. Annette Henry. After being in the Department a few years, she was asked to help Scott Stegall with the MSHA Online Program. In 1994 after Mr. Stegall and Mr. Breindel left and Ms. Henry retired, the MHA and MSHA programs were brought together under the leadership of Dr. Dolores Clement and Dr. Ken White. Suzanne became the Program Coordinator for both programs. When Dr. Clement left for the Dean’s Office, Suzanne worked for Dr. Jan Clement and Dr. White. As the programs continued to grow, their leadership was split. Suzanne remained with the MHA Program working with Dr. White. From 2007 to 2014, she worked with Dr. Dolores Clement when Dr. Clement became Director of both the MSHA and MHA Programs. During the last two years, Suzanne worked with Dr. Jon DeShazo, MHA Program Director since late 2014.

Suzanne was surprised and honored to receive the Dorris Douglas Budd award in 2008. Established in 1981, the Dorris Douglas Budd Award honors a VCU or VCU Health support staff member who demonstrates exemplary performance.

Suzanne stayed active outside the Department. She has been on the Service Award Committee that recognizes VCU employees for their years of service with the University. She served as the Department contact for the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign, and as the ambassador for the University’s Wellnote newsletter. She has also served on VCU’s Staff Senate for five years.

Suzanne is happily married to her husband, Rick, a Virginia State Police Sergeant. She loves to cook, bake, and read. Her most favorite pastimes include spending time with her family (including her two dogs) and going to the beach.

On December 5, 2016, Suzanne will begin a new chapter as the Administrative Assistant to Zach McCluskey (MHA ’07) and his administrative team at Parham Doctors Hospital. She is going to miss VCU, the Department of Health Administration, and especially her students.

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**In the next issue...**

- Faculty Teach Abroad
- MSHA December On-Campus Session
- VHHA Spring Events
- Accreditation
- KMU Workshop
- MHA Program Interview Days

**Contact Us!**

We want to hear from you! If you have ideas for stories, or want to learn about specific updates, please let us know!

If you move or change jobs, you can update your profile at [had.vcu.edu/alumni/members/index.php](http://had.vcu.edu/alumni/members/index.php)

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Mike McNeely, Adjunct Professor in the Department, is the Administrative Director of Finance for Richmond East, Bon Secours Richmond Health System, actively leading a team of finance professionals and operational leaders with executive leadership at multiple locations (Memorial Regional Medical Center, Richmond Community Hospital, Rappahannock General Hospital, and the BSHSI Finance Institute). This is a role he has risen to after holding several finance positions since arriving at Bon Secours Richmond in June 2004. As the AD of Finance, Mike functions as a strategic partner to the Richmond East CEO, Mark Gordon and the executive management team that leads with him. He is responsible for organizing, planning, directing, and evaluating the Bon Secours Richmond East financial plans, investments, and results.

Mike has over 20 years of professional experience in health care finance, manufacturing, and operations with an emphasis on financial accounting, managerial accounting, financial planning and analysis, corporate financial management, and investments. He is a “graduate” of BSHSI’s Ministry Leadership Formation, and has a Masters of Business Administration degree and an undergraduate BS Accounting degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a Fellow in the Healthcare Financial Management Association and was a former VA/DC HFMA Chapter Treasurer, and holds an active CPA license in Virginia.

Mike teaches the Financial Management in Healthcare Organizations course for the first year MHA students. He says this about his teaching role:

“I have always enjoyed working in the adult learning community. I share financial principles and applications with the BSHSI clinical leaders. They help provide me with improved/clearer applications and great stories to share in the classroom. I continually learn from them.

I find it a privilege to instruct the VCU HAD finance class. Drs. DeShazo and McCue are such great support. I've learned a lot about methods in adult learning and have refreshed up my own understanding of core material.

What motivates me, aside from being a VCU alumnus and doing what I enjoy, is making an impact on our aspiring student professionals in the HAD program. I feel I can bridge the practical world with the great VCU HAD academic instruction to bring a different richness to the learning environment that helps students as they transition to the work world of healthcare. I want to prepare them with better context, application of the material, networking and overall career advice/planning to further ensure their success.”

“What motivates me, aside from being a VCU alumnus and doing what I enjoy, is making an impact on our aspiring student professionals in the HAD program.”
**Alumni Spotlight**

**Coleen Santa Ana** (MHA ‘05) became the President of Sentara Albemarle Medical Center (SAMC) in Elizabeth City, NC. In 2014. The newest addition to Sentara’s facilities, SAMC is a 182 bed hospital, an ambulatory center and the region’s medical practices.

Through Coleen’s leadership, the medical center has experienced many positive improvements during this integration phase, including achieving a positive operating margin of $4.3M in 2015, a net gain for the first time since 2007. Other achievements include institutionalizing a total culture change to reflect increased patient centered care, increases in employee and physician satisfaction, a 20% increase in patient emergency department satisfaction, an increase of 60% in new primary care patients, a multi-million dollar reduction in vendor and physician contracts, and most importantly implementation of multiple Sentara clinical standards. Coleen also worked to recruit more than 25 new providers, including rebuilding a general surgery program, and opened five new clinics.

Coleen has more than 18 years of healthcare experience. She started her career in healthcare as a clerk for Sentara at age 18. Following graduate school, she completed her fellowship with HCA in Denver and grew her hospital executive experience during her employment with Universal Health System. Coleen is a hospital representative to many key community organizations in Northeastern NC, including the board of directors for the Elizabeth City Chamber of Commerce, College of The Albemarle, and Montero Medical Missions International. She also participates with the Hampton Roads CIVIC leadership institute and serves on the policy development committee for the North Carolina Hospital Association.

Inspired by her mother’s career as an oncology nurse, Coleen knew she wanted to pursue a career in healthcare. She began that career at 15 volunteering at a local hospital. Although she expected to follow her mother’s footsteps into healthcare as a nurse, Coleen realized her talents for strategy, planning, problem solving and leadership and chose instead to pursue a path in healthcare administration. She earned her B.S. in Health Services Administration from James Madison University before completing her MHA at VCU in 2005.

The time Coleen spent in the Health Administration Department at VCU provided her with the skillset to handle challenges that arise and to continue to improve the quality of healthcare delivery. Throughout her career, many VCU alumni have been mentors to Coleen and have played an important role in her success. Dave Bernd and Howard Kern, previous and current Sentara Healthcare CEOs, and Jeffrey Dorsey, former Division President of HCA were all instrumental in influencing and shaping her career.

“I continue to promote and encourage future hospital leaders to apply for the healthcare management programs offered at VCU. I was recently honored to speak to current students as part of a speaker series and am inspired by the next generation of healthcare leaders from VCU. I am so impressed by the work of Dr. DeShazo and the faculty and staff to continue to elevate and execute such a well-rounded and exciting education program.”
Dear Alumni,

I want to thank Eric Young, Alumni Advisory Council (AAC) Past President for his service. Also, I would like to thank the current AAC members and officers for their continued service. I want to acknowledge the leadership of the rest of the AAC presidents for their hard work and accomplishments. Lastly, I want to thank Dr. Cindy Watts, Chairman, and Beth Williamson Ayers, Director of Alumni Relations, and Megan McDermott, Executive Assistant, for their help and support.

As the rate of change in the healthcare services marketplace continues to accelerate, the field of healthcare administration is slowly catching up with patient and provider demands for value, quality, and information. Healthcare Administration education has been evolving as well. It is no longer the case that all graduates will become hospital CEOs.

The VCU Health Administration Department now prepares graduates to assume responsibilities in a full range of roles. It offers a spectrum of degrees (MHA, MHA/MD, MHA/JD, MHA/MSIS, MSHA, and PhD), and continues to distinguish itself, with about 2,531 alumni throughout the country and the world. And, as you know, its national ranking increased from 5th to 3rd recently.

As alumni, we share this rich background and accomplishment. To enhance the strength of our program and success of our graduates, we should work together to increase our efforts to help alumni connect with each other and engage with the Department. The potential benefits for all of us are tremendous.

As I assume the privilege and responsibility of President of the AAC, I view this year as the Year of Engagement. I look forward to vitalizing the AAC’s efforts to identify where alumni work, build stronger communication among the alumni and with the Department, and solidify an AAC framework that will serve our collective interests for years to come. My vision and goals for this year require everyone’s involvement as the AAC focuses on the following:

- **Strength.** Strengthen the AAC as a resource for the alumni and the Department to accomplish their respective goals guided by our Constitution and Bylaws.
- **Infrastructure.** Establish an AAC infrastructure and succession plan that is responsive, nimble and self-regenerating for years to come.
- **Database.** Improve the accuracy of the alumni database so that communication is delivered with confidence.
- **Communication.** Establish fluid and ongoing channels of communications among the alumni, and between the alumni and the Department.
- **Expectations.** Improve input from the alumni to the AAC to better set, understand, and clarify expectations, preferences, priorities, thoughts and interests.
- **Engagement.** Focus on improving alumni engagement based on alumni input and the Department’s needs.
- **Participation.** Encourage and solicit the participation of alumni in the AAC and its subcommittees.
- **Recognition.** Continue to promote the recognition of alumni and Department accomplishments.
- **Excellence.** Continue to promote excellence in teaching and connections with current students, preceptors, and alumni.
- **Preceptorship.** Continue to cultivate opportunities for residency and fellowship sites for the students.
- **ACHE.** Enhance and encourage the connections with the American College of Healthcare Executives.
- **VCU Alumni.** Increase coordination and collaboration with the VCU Alumni Association and VCU Development Office.
- **Enjoyment.** Have a fun year of engagement and rewards.

I kindly encourage each one of you to log on to the alumni link and make sure that your contact information is up to date, including your preferred phone and e-mail addresses. This would help tremendously in expediting the communications in a timely and cost effective manner. Working very closely with the Department’s leadership, faculty and students, I trust that the AAC will be successful in accomplishing these goals. If we can have your participation, we will.

Let us work together to make this year a Year of Engagement.

Respectfully,

Bassam A. Kawwass, FACHE, MHA ’80
President, Alumni Advisory Council
Alumni Advisory Council
September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017

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Your gifts totaling $148,650 provided scholarship support to our HAD students and helped send them to three professional meetings and four case competitions!