Keeping it in the family

School of Allied Health Professions attracts multiple generations
A unified space for learning

A new $87.3 million, 154,000-square-foot facility for the School of Allied Health Professions will bring all 11 of the school’s units under one roof. Construction of the building (see architect’s rendering above) is planned for 10th and Leigh streets, in the space occupied by aging residence halls. The project, which is part of VCU’s Master Site Plan, will allow for increased student enrollment and will enhance the school’s ability to recruit new faculty. VCU is seeking $76.5 million in capital outlay from the commonwealth to support the project.
Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Allied Health Professions is nearing five decades of serving the health care needs of patients in the commonwealth and across the world. As we approach that milestone, we are moving in the direction of realizing another important goal: housing all of our departments under one roof. In 2019, we hope to celebrate our 50th year in our new School of Allied Health Professions building.

This is an exciting time for our school, which is one of five outstanding schools on the MCV Campus. The VCU Health Sciences Center provides resources that will enhance our ability to offer interdisciplinary educational experiences that will be crucial in the coming years.

As I campaigned for a new building, I found it easy to “sell” our school to the various constituencies throughout the commonwealth. We have five programs ranked among the top 20 by U.S. News & World Report, with three of those programs ranked among the top 10. More than 75 percent of our graduates stay in the commonwealth. Graduating with degrees in the STEM-H focus, 90 percent of our alumni enter and are successful in high-demand health care professions within six months of graduation. We have seen a record number of applicants for all of our programs, and once we enter into our new building, it is anticipated that our enrollment will increase significantly.

As we cross the threshold into that new building, the School of Allied Health Professions is committed to maintaining the spirit of excellence that has been the hallmark of our academic and clinical programs. We continue to follow our school’s motto of Strength through Diversity.

I am so proud of our students and our world-class faculty. As the senior dean at VCU, I find it personally satisfying to have been involved in the selection of more than 95 percent of our faculty and all the department chairs. Because of their hard work, our students benefit in so many ways. Our alumni continue to flourish in their professions, and I am very grateful for all that they have given back to our school. We would not be where we are without their ongoing support.

Please enjoy reading this edition of our school magazine, as it reflects our dedication to excellence in all the components of higher education — demonstrating our leadership in allied health education.

Thanks for your support,

Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor

Correction from 2014 magazine

In the “Extracurricular Activities” feature on pages 18-19, the artist of the painting was misidentified. She is Dianne Simons, Ph.D., a pastelist.
The UCI Road World Championships in Richmond, Virginia, will attract professional cyclists from around the globe.
In September 2015, Richmond, Virginia, joins an elite list of cities — worldwide — as it hosts one of cycling’s premier events: Union Cycliste Internationale’s Road World Championships. Drawing the same athletes as competitions like the Tour de France, Giro d’Italia and Vuelta a Espana, Road World Championships is just one of two events (including the Olympics) allowing racers to separate from their teams in order to pursue the title of world champion. From the initial discussions that resulted in the event’s first stateside appearance in nearly 30 years, to the front lines of planning and medical provisions, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions alumni have their fingerprints all over the handlebars that are steering UCI through Richmond.

Meanwhile, those individuals say the event is not only changing the face of their careers, but also VCU’s identity as a world-class medical provider. In May 2014, the group proved strong in a warm-up, as they faced down CapTech USA’s Cycling Collegiate Road National Championship with flying colors.

THE FIRST SEEDS

Backtracking to the first moments that were responsible for bringing the UCI Worlds to Richmond shows that it all started with a bike ride, including two SAHP alums. "The real story behind this event, in my opinion, starts with the mayor," says Mark Cooper, D.Min. (Cert. ’75/PC), former chair of the Department of Patient Counseling and the inaugural Rev. Robert B. Lantz Chair, referring to Richmond’s Mayor Dwight C. Jones, a past student of the Department of Patient Counseling. “In his perceptions of what was happening around the nation, among cities poised to emerge, biking was an important component. Portland, Ore., and many other towns proved that having an infrastructure and culture for biking was the way to go.”

And so Jones, shortly after his inauguration, jumped on a bike for his first ride in many years, Cooper says, to pedal into City Hall as part of National Bike to Work Day. Cooper, an avid cyclist of 35 years, rode alongside the mayor. A year or so later, Jones struck out to form a committee aimed at organizing the city’s efforts to become a biking community. Cooper, a prominent figure in Richmond’s health movement and a 27-year member of Bike Virginia, a group that heads up daily rides and annual biking trips around the commonwealth, was a natural selection.

“I said, ‘Please, by all means — put me on it,’” Cooper says. After graduating from a committee to a 20-member Pedestrian Bicycle and Trails Commission, Cooper says an idea emerged amid one of the group’s monthly meetings: Why not bring UCI’s Road World Championships right here to Richmond? The goal was lofty, no doubt, as it would place the city among such elite names as Melbourne, Australia, Florence, Italy, and Madrid; but to Cooper, who says he was VCU’s unofficial representative on the commission, it was a no-brainer. Positioned at the confluence of major east-west and north-south interstate routes, poised over the backdrop of Class IV rapids, in a region that’s dotted with features like...
cobblestone roads and scenic by-ways — Richmond marked a prime spot for any world-class outdoor event. Add to that a Level 1 trauma center and major medical provider in VCU and causes for skepticism coast to a stop.

Exactly how the details unfold between the commission’s first efforts to bring Richmond to UCI’s attention and the city’s selection on Sept. 21, 2011, as the UCI Worlds host, Cooper admits is a bit murky. He says the task eventually transferred to “men and women in suits.” But the fact is, the plan worked. And come September 2015, more than 1,000 of the world’s most elite athletes and approximately 450,000 spectators will be landing in Richmond. All in all, the event is expected to pump approximately $158 million into Virginia’s economy.

“This is the Olympics of biking,” Cooper says. “And it’s coming right here to Richmond.”

And VCU Medical Center will serve as the event’s exclusive medical provider.

#Shift4Health

EVERYBODY’S DOING IT!

Theming its exclusive medical sponsorship of the UCI Road World Championships, VCU Medical Center’s university and citywide campaign, “Shift for Health,” encourages its team members, families and the entire Greater Richmond community to make small “shifts” in their usual habits for the sake of personal health. Campaign organizers say they’re aiming to create legacy effects, one participant at a time, to last far beyond the race’s finish line. Personal accomplishments may be shared via Twitter, Instagram and Facebook using #Shift4Health. Visit vcushift.com for details.

#Shift4Health suggestions:

**Walk it off:** Start with 1,000 steps a day, with the goal of building to 10,000

**Stress break:** Schedule five minutes per day to relax — every day

**Hit the bottle:** Substitute a bottle of water for one sugary drink per day

**Snack attack:** Keep healthy snacks at hand to stave off sugary competitors

**Attitude adjustment:** Challenge yourself to start each day with an outlook of gratitude and then find the good in everything you encounter

A lot of midnight candle wax must burn between the acceptance of VCU’s bid and its successful performance as an exclusive medical provider to a world-class sporting event. When John Duval, vice president for clinical services and CEO of VCU Hospitals, penned a deal with the event’s organizers, he knew this well. And two of the first individuals he recruited for the gargantuan task are SAHP alums.

“We took our strengths into consideration, and then we divided to conquer,” says Robin Manke (B.S. ’93/OT), manager of emergency management, VCU Medical Center, who accepted the responsibilities of planning logistics for VCU’s medical provisions, as well as university operations and emergency preparedness amid the event. She’s joined by Alexa Warner (M.H.A. ’14/HA), administrative project manager, VCU Health System, who serves as manager of communications for VCU’s medical sponsorship and the media strategist who spearheads the university’s efforts to capitalize on a worldwide audience. In May 2013, the duo faced a critical precursor when Richmond hosted another of cycling’s premiere events: the 2014 CapTech USA Cycling Collegiate Road National Championship, which is no world championship, but no small venue in its own right. The collegiate event included three days of racing, drawing approximately 400 athletes and several thousand spectators — a perfect testing ground for VCU’s abilities.

“That was a dress rehearsal for the whole city, ahead of the UCI event,” Warner says.

More than 50 athletes were treated amid the collegiate races, for needs ranging from cramps and dehydration to abrasions. Meanwhile, logistical challenges were faced down
throughout the university’s campus, including everything from patient transportation and access, to supply deliveries. Any hiccup would serve as a red flag for the world championship’s organizers, who were no doubt watching, but VCU passed with flying colors.

“It was a true success,” Manke says. “UCI said it was one of the best medical operations it had ever seen.”

The differences between collegiate nationals and UCI’s World Championships are no doubt exponential. At 1,000, the number of athletes is more than double, while the 450,000 spectators UCI is expected to draw to the region dwarfs the several thousand Richmond witnessed in its precursor.

“It’s forcing the university to review and evaluate everything from how it gets patients into its facilities, to communications throughout the university and city,” Manke says, who’s collaborating with law enforcement and emergency response officials throughout Richmond.

BUYING POWER

If you’re wondering what’s in it for the university, which, no doubt, paid a substantial sum to become the official medical sponsor, you should know that the move represents the largest media buy in VCU’s history, placing the university’s brand messaging before a global audience of approximately 300 million, via 500 media outlets.

“From a marketing standpoint, this is a huge opportunity, because we’re going through a rebranding process,” Warner says.

“In the absence of an event like this, getting that message out to a global audience is a hugely expensive — if not impossible — task. We have an opportunity here to spread our branding messages at the highest possible level. This is a game changer.”

But Warner points out that VCU’s role as the exclusive medical sponsor for a world-class event also offers a message to the university’s internal audience.

“We know what we’re capable of and what we do every day, but this is validation at the highest level that we are what we think we are,” she says. “This event will not only show the world, but also us, that we can do more than just provide top-flight health care and produce world-class education and research. We also can do event medicine at the highest level. That places us on a very short list of providers worldwide.”

And according to at least two physical therapists and SAHP alumni who participated in the collegiate event, staffing the university’s medical tents amid UCI’s Road World Championships marks a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for career advancement.

“In our clinic, all of our therapists hold the same goal of becoming sports clinical specialists within the next year,” says Rebecca Moran, D.P.T., a physical therapist in VCU’s Sports Medicine Clinic and a member of SAHP’s affiliate faculty. “In order to do that, you have to come in contact with a certain number of sports injuries. You also have to become a first responder. This a rare opportunity to move our goals way forward, almost instantly.”

Ahead of their volunteer services, Moran and other physical therapists from the sports medicine clinic crossed one of those hurdles by completing the Red Cross’s first responder program.

“This event is just part of the bigger picture for us, as we develop our sports center,” says D.S. Blaise Williams III, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy and director of the VCU Run Lab in the College of Humanities and Sciences, who organized the group’s participation in first responder courses. “That on-field opportunity to see acute injury situations, how we deal with them and what happens in the moment of the injury, helps us as therapists to understand what we’re going to deal with when it comes to rehabilitation. It’s somewhat unique for physical therapists to be involved in that acute phase and, so, that’s a tremendous learning opportunity.”
NO TIME FOR SLEEP

Moran and Williams attend monthly meetings in order to plan not only how they will serve in VCU’s medical tents, but also how they’ll continue to maintain hours of operation for their clinic’s patients, who can’t afford to put their treatments on hold because UCI is coming to town. That, they say, will require extending their schedules beyond the 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. hours of medical tent operations. At the same time, they’re plotting to accommodate a 24-hour care center.

“When it’s 10 o’clock at night and one of these athletes has a cramp or a pain in one of their limbs that they thought would be okay, they can come in and see sports medicine,” Williams says.

It goes without saying that, if the university had control over worse-case scenarios, those aches and pains would be the extent of necessary medical treatments. But the fact is, Manke says, that any time you draw thousands of spectators to a highly publicized and extremely accessible event, the worst has to be accounted for.

“We have nearly 500,000 people coming to downtown Richmond,” Manke says. “Aside from being the official medical sponsor, we’re critical infrastructure. This isn’t just putting up tents and taking care of cycling patients. As the region’s only Level 1 trauma center, our role is much larger than that.”

To define larger, she harkens back to April 15, 2013, when terrorists struck the Boston Marathon. For this reason, Manke says the university has its employees undergoing extensive training to prepare them for any situation. This includes Internet-based training by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as running simulations among VCU’s emergency medical departments and personnel. Going forward, it’s these preparations that she says will change the university’s operations, indefinitely.

“This is growing us as an organization, to a new level of preparedness,” she says. “That’s not going to go away once this event is over. We’re going to be on a new level from here out.”

Drew Vass is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

Gearing up for safety

AS ENTHUSIASM BUILDS AROUND CYCLING, ONE PT FACULTY MEMBER SEIZES THE MOMENT FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY

In addition to serving on the Pedestrian Bicycle and Trails Commission partly responsible for bringing the UCI Worlds to Richmond, Sheryl Finucane, Ph.D., assistant professor and graduate program director for the Department of Physical Therapy, now aims to convert Richmonders’ attention to cycling into increased awareness for traffic safety (among bikers and motorists alike). Biking has been a way of life for this PT instructor, who made two failed attempts at switching over to automobiles — once in college, then again in graduate school — before jumping back on a bicycle as her primary mode of transportation.

After tuning in to what she describes as “bizarre and often dangerous driving habits” over the years, Finucane set out to make Richmond a safer place to ride by becoming one of the city’s first League of American Bicyclists’ Traffic Skills instructors. Leading up to the UCI Worlds, she says she’s noticed an influx of course participants, which she intends to magnify through social media and other marketing efforts. “Getting people to think about driving while they’re driving and biking while they’re biking — that’s the goal that will keep us all safe,” she says.

Tips for bicyclists: Following the rules, using appropriate road positioning and hand signals, maintaining proper control of your bike and knowing how to navigate around hazards are your first line of defense.

Tips for motorists: Never pass bikers without first changing lanes, be patient (if you’re going to turn soon, stay behind) and always assume that you will encounter bicyclists or pedestrians.
NEW BUILDING, NEW IDEAS

The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions is poised to develop an $87.3 million, 154,000-square-foot facility that brings the school’s 11 programs under one roof for the first time. Currently, the school’s nine academic programs, the dean’s office and the Virginia Center on Aging are scattered among five buildings on two campuses. Creating a unified space for the school and its top-ranked programs is a priority in VCU’s Master Site Plan.

We checked in with the Dean’s Student Executive Board and asked:

“How do you feel the proposed new building will transform your program, the student experience and the school itself?”

“With all of us in the same building, we can easily tap into another department’s resources in the form of simulated consultations and case studies.”

— COFFEE BOURNE, NURSE ANESTHESIA, CLASS OF 2016

Interviews by Samieh Shalash, a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.
Our future work settings include hospitals, clinics, private practice, schools and community-based settings. This new learning environment will emulate a real interprofessional work environment.

— Allison Lee, Occupational Therapy, Class of 2016

“Creating this building will give all of us the opportunity to learn more about how we can work together to provide the maximum benefit to our clients.”

— Ashley Luchsinger, Occupational Therapy, Class of 2015

“Our careers are increasingly more contingent upon our ability to function in an interprofessional environment. Having a building where we can share space and conversation will help facilitate our success in future careers.”

— Douglas Eck, Physical Therapy, Class of 2016

“Our future work settings include hospitals, clinics, private practice, schools and community-based settings. This new learning environment will emulate a real interprofessional work environment.”

— Allison Lee, Occupational Therapy, Class of 2016
“Integrating of all of the disciplines in a new School of Allied Health [Professions] building will increase opportunities for cross-training and combining resources. It will take our well-respected programs to a new level.”

– CINDY RICHARDS (M.S. ’99/PT), HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, CLASS OF 2017

“Learning under the same roof will allow us to discover even more about how we all fit together on the same health care team. It will also continue putting VCU on the map.”

– RICKY PRICE, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, CLASS OF 2015
Keeping it in the family

VCU School of Allied Health Professions evokes loyalty from multiple generations

By Carla Davis
Generations of families share a special connection to the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions. They’re called “legacy families” — students and alumni with multiple generations that have attended VCU. These Rams often share a strong commitment to ensuring that the school thrives under their ongoing support, which includes everything from personal philanthropy to actively participating in the alumni association to recruiting and teaching students.

“I was fortunate to attend and graduate from a university that was rich with legacy families,” says Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., dean of the School of Allied Health Professions. “To me, that is the single most important measuring stick of institutional excellence. I have long maintained that our school is the best at providing an exceptional educational environment for students and faculty, and legacy families only serve to confirm this connection.”

In the stories that follow, you’ll meet a husband and wife, a father and son, and a grandmother and granddaughter — three among the many legacy families who have continued a tradition in the School of Allied Health Professions.

The Hills

Aaron Hill (B.S. ’03/CLS) and Emily Hill (B.S. ’03/CLS; M.S. ’07/CLS) met at VCU as undergraduates and bonded over their passion for microbiology.

Their mutual love of clinical laboratory sciences brought the couple together, and it’s what keeps them at VCU. Emily is an assistant professor of microbiology and assistant chair of the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences in the School of Allied Health Professions. Aaron is a medical technologist supervisor in the Department of Pathology at VCU Medical Center.

As clinical laboratory scientists, they work to provide physicians with the laboratory data needed to diagnose and manage diseases.

“We analyze a piece of body tissue and tell physicians what organism is infecting it and how to kill it,” explains Aaron. He has spent a decade in the field, moving up from technologist to supervisor in VCU’s clinical microbiology lab. Emily stayed in academia after earning both a bachelor’s and master’s degree at VCU. She trains students to do the work Aaron describes.

Together, the Hills have made a significant impact on the education of clinical laboratory science students in the school.

“Aaron and I have devoted our professional lives to CLS and promoting its visibility,” says Emily, who has represented CLS at VCU’s career days and has recruited students into the program. “We want students to know this can be a lifelong career.”

Aaron has spoken to the senior class of CLS students about the field and has mentored Emily’s graduate students. “Molecular biology is where my heart is,” he says.

CLS is a rigorous program, and the Hills wouldn’t have it any other way. “I really appreciated the education I received as an undergraduate,” says Emily, who won the prestigious Kupfer Award for all-around best CLS graduate. “The faculty was passionate about what they taught and got me excited about going into the profession. I take pride in educating future lab scientists and hope to instill in them what my professors instilled in me.”

Emily has been excited about science since middle school, where she excelled in science courses and eagerly participated in science fairs. “Math and science were my strong suits,” she says. “I was drawn to analytics.”

She found VCU attractive for its urban setting and strong sciences program. Once there, she enjoyed the diversity and culture, and discovered a new passion: teaching.

“The Hills

Aaron Hill (B.S. ’03/CLS) and Emily Hill (B.S. ’03/CLS; M.S. ’07/CLS) met at VCU as undergraduates and bonded over their passion for microbiology.

Their mutual love of clinical laboratory sciences brought the couple together, and it’s what keeps them at VCU. Emily is an assistant professor of microbiology and assistant chair of the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences in the School of Allied Health Professions. Aaron is a medical technologist supervisor in the Department of Pathology at VCU Medical Center.

As clinical laboratory scientists, they work to provide physicians with the laboratory data needed to diagnose and manage diseases.

“We analyze a piece of body tissue and tell physicians what organism is infecting it and how to kill it,” explains Aaron. He has spent a decade in the field, moving up from technologist to supervisor in VCU’s clinical microbiology lab. Emily stayed in academia after earning both a bachelor’s and master’s degree at VCU. She trains students to do the work Aaron describes.

Together, the Hills have made a significant impact on the education of clinical laboratory science students in the school.

“Aaron and I have devoted our professional lives to CLS and promoting its visibility. We want students to know this can be a lifelong career.”

– EMILY HILL
I thought teaching in the CLS school could intertwine my love of teaching and love of CLS,” she says. “The stars aligned.”

Aaron likewise decided early that he wanted a career in health care. He and Emily met at a friend’s house in 1999 and hit it off immediately. They married two years later. Now in their 30s and with two elementary-age children, the Hills feel like they have grown up together, they say. Photos of the couple and their children add a personal touch to Emily’s office, a testament to the years since they’ve met.

“When I think of our family and how it evolved,” Emily says, “it all started at VCU.”

Although their career paths diverged, both found a good fit in VCU, with its professional, like-minded faculty. “The School of Allied Health Professions leaders are very passionate about what they do,” says Emily, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in the SAHP’s Doctoral Program in Health Related Sciences, a blended and interdisciplinary program that involves the nine departments of the school, so she can become an associate professor and devote more time to research. “Even though there are nine departments in the school, they work really hard in interdisciplinary function and how we interact with others.”

Aaron says that having leadership and directors with expertise and experience in the field makes working at VCU all the more attractive to staff like him, who, with their specialized skills and training, would be in high demand by employers elsewhere.

He’s also excited about VCU’s commitment to excellence, which he sees reflected in the workplace. “VCU is so cutting edge,” Aaron says. “If there’s something we want that’s better for the patient, we bring it into the lab. You don’t get to do those things anywhere but somewhere like VCU.”

Grads times six

Between the two of them, Hattie Wiggins (B.S. ’91/RC; M.S. ’93/RC; Cert. ’06/RC; Cert. ’06/G) and her granddaughter Sumara Wiggins (B.S.W. ’11; M.S. ’14/RC) hold an impressive six degrees from VCU. Three are from the current School of Allied of Health Professions.

When Hattie came to VCU, the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling was housed in the School of Community and Public Affairs. In 1994, three years after she graduated with her bachelor’s degree in rehabilitation counseling and one year after she earned her master’s degree, the department moved to the School of Allied Health Professions. A decade later Hattie entered the post-master’s certificate program to get the classes needed for licensure, while she was simultaneously enrolled in the Certificate in Aging Studies program through the Department of Gerontology.

Hattie’s exceptional commitment to VCU made Sumara’s choice of colleges — and programs — easy. Following in her grandmother’s footsteps, she earned a master’s in rehabilitation counseling and will graduate with a post-master’s certificate in professional counseling in 2016.

When the time came for Sumara to choose a graduate program, she looked no further than VCU and zeroed in on rehabilitation counseling. “I saw how the School of Allied Health Professions program was...
“I saw how the School of Allied Health Professions program was flexible, and I wanted the same for myself.”

— SUMARA WIGGINS

flexible,” she says, “and I wanted the same for myself. I always knew I wanted to be in a helping profession.”

Sumara will graduate in May 2016 with a certificate in professional counseling that will allow her to become a licensed professional counselor and take on private clients. She’s currently working with children and adolescents as an instructional specialist at UMFS Charterhouse School in Richmond, Virginia.

Hattie, who retired in 2014 from a job counseling inmates at Peumansend Creek Regional Jail in Bowling Green, Virginia, currently volunteers in a program with Richmond Public Schools to help youth with self-esteem issues. She also wants to open a re-entry home to help inmates get the life skills needed to deter recidivism. She can’t get enough of helping others. “I’m always reaching out to people lacking self-esteem, people feeling bad about themselves,” she says.

Both Hattie and Sumara say that VCU offered the nurturing, supportive environment they needed to excel. Hattie, who arrived at the university with rusty study habits, found the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling especially welcoming at a time when she needed it most. She leaned on her professors and classmates, who helped her navigate the often-intimidating technology. “I remember being in a computer class and I didn’t know how to use a keyboard,” she says.

It’s precisely that kind of support that makes it easy for Hattie to recommend VCU and the School of Allied Health Professions to prospective students — and to her own granddaughter. And, it’s what keeps her coming back as a student herself. She might be seeing more of campus these days, if her busy schedule allows. Always one to learn more so she can do more, Hattie wants to audit classes.

“I don’t think baking cookies and rocking in a chair will be my legacy,” she says.

The Rothrocks

When Sam Rothrock (M.S. ’13/RC) was in eighth grade, he got a mandatory suspension from school for punching a classmate. His father, Jim Rothrock (M.S. ’78/RC), couldn’t have been more proud.

“The principal called and said Sam had been in a fight,” Jim recounts. “That’s not a call a parent wants to receive.” But then he learned the reason his son threw that fateful punch — Sam was standing up for a classmate with autism who was being bullied.

The compassion and empathy that led Sam to throw punches are the same qualities that drew him to a career in rehabilitation counseling.

“My parents made it clear that while they were not supportive of fighting, they stood behind what I was trying to do,” Sam says.

Being there for others, especially at tough times, seems to be in the Rothrocks’ DNA. Jim, who has a 40-year career in human services, is commissioner of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Sam is a rehabilitation counselor at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (formerly Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center) in Fishersville, Virginia, a state administrative office for DARS and a partner with its Division of Rehabilitative Services.

Before working as a counselor, Sam spent three years as a disability claim adjudicator for Virginia. Then he decided he was ready for a change — specifically, to “be on the other side, helping people get back to work.” Sam asked his dad about the rehabilitation counseling program at VCU and, after doing some research, realized the School of Allied Health Professions would be a good fit. “I felt like I was going into a program where I’d be trained to be a professional in the field, and they’d give me the tools to get there,” Sam says. At Wilson, Sam helps people with disabilities navigate their vocational or life skills training. He describes his job as customizing programs to each student.

It’s a program Jim knows well. In 1965, Jim broke his back in a sledding accident and was paralyzed. He did his rehabilitation at Wilson, where he thrived — so much so that in 1971, he was offered a position there as a counselor and services coordinator.

That’s when he found VCU, which had a very close relationship to the center at the time. Faculty and staff at VCU and Wilson
encouraged Jim to earn a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling.

“I knew the basic skills of rehab and was hooked,” Jim says. “I found it rewarding to be a part of people’s rehab.”

As the first commissioner for DARS, Jim leads the agency’s efforts to provide and advocate for services that help older Virginians and those with disabilities have successful careers and independent lives. He also uses his position to nurture relationships between his alma mater and the agency. He has been an adjunct faculty member at VCU and continues to serve in a variety of advisory roles.

Sam admits that it’s not always easy to be a Rothrock, especially when your dad is “a big name in rehab” — and, in a technical sense, your boss.

But it’s just that connection that keeps this family close, especially around the dinner table, where they say they’re mindful to not always talk about “rehab stuff” so that their wives and children can be included in the conversation.

“I’ve always joked that rehab is in my blood,” says Sam. “I grew up having the idea that I should help people. It’s always been a family value.”

— SAM ROTHROCK

Carla Davis is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.
In public higher education, advocacy helps put a face to issues affecting the university and the field. At Virginia Commonwealth University, engaged constituents reach out to legislators to help raise awareness about how legislative decisions will impact both the university and the health system.

“Among our strongest supporters are our lawmakers and the 8 million Virginians who depend on us for leading-edge health care ...”

– MICHAEL RAO, PH.D., PRESIDENT OF VCU AND THE VCU HEALTH SYSTEM

Many departments and programs at VCU engage in advocacy at the state level, ranging from legislative breakfasts and visits during the annual General Assembly session to efforts taught within policy courses. Recognizing the importance of this advocacy, the Office of Government Relations staff often engages with faculty and students in training and skill-building sessions before departments hold legislative days at the General Assembly. Learning how to identify elected officials and effectively discuss issues with legislators is key to getting legislative support.

Karah Gunther, interim executive director of Government Relations, noted that encouraging constituent students to build relationships with their elected officials helps determine the success of their legislative visit. Gunther also encourages students to build relationships with alumni who are legislators. “They can become champions for the issue or the school,” she says.

Another consideration for Government Relations is involving VCU’s “true experts.” When meeting with legislators, Government Relations decides how to best fit in senior leadership from both the university and the health system.

“So many people support our mission as one of America’s premier urban public research universities. Among our strongest supporters are our lawmakers and the 8 million Virginians who depend on us for leading-edge health care, outstanding service, research that discovers causes and cures, and an educational experience that prepares the next generation of health care leaders,” says Michael Rao, Ph.D., president of VCU and VCU Health System. “Their great support comes thanks to the unrelenting efforts of our Government Relations staff and other tireless advocates for our wonderful mission.”

The School of Allied Health Professions is no stranger to this sort of advocacy. Each year, the Department of Physical Therapy supports the Virginia Physical Therapy Association legislative day at the General Assembly. VPTA develops messaging and engages students in a briefing session. Students are encouraged to meet with their representative.
This year, VPTA was successful in getting new legislation passed to allow the public more access to physical therapy without the strong limitations previously in place.

Students and alumni come from all over the state for the legislative day. “Students were very energized and excited by it,” says Shawne Soper, assistant professor and assistant director of clinical education in the Department of Physical Therapy. Students are able to see how legislative sessions work and have the opportunity to interact with their soon-to-be colleagues from across the state.

During the summer, they got involved with national advocacy by attending the American Physical Therapy Association’s NEXT Conference and Exposition, which includes “PT Day on Capitol Hill,” an opportunity for students to learn how to be effective advocates for the field.

“Legislative advocacy is one of the most impactful components of membership in a professional association,” says Soper. “Legislators like to see students … [They] like to see young people as their constituents.” Advocacy efforts are woven throughout the physical therapy curriculum, and the department ensures students have resources.

The occupational therapy department also partners with its state advocacy group, the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association. Over the years, student interest and participation has grown in these advocacy efforts. Now, these efforts are institutionalized, and Jodi Teitelman, associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, teaches a required course for occupational therapy students. “Occupational Therapy in Health Care” focuses in part on how occupational therapists can influence health policy and advocate for change. “A significant number of students recognize that occupational therapists are the best advocates for the profession and clients,” Teitelman says.

The legislative day includes a morning presentation by VOTA, which includes a briefing and is followed by a student visit. Students travel in pairs and make at least one legislative visit, where they make brief contact with an aide, secretary or the legislator in person. Students must submit a reflection paper on the experience, an official letter directly to the legislative office, a letter to the editor and a talking points paper.

“This has been an absolute win-win between our academic department and VOTA. It provides our students an enormous in-the-field experience. [It is an] extraordinary partnership [and] has worked well for two decades,” Teitelman says.

The VCU Department of Gerontology engages in similar activities. J. James Cotter, Ph.D., associate professor in the department, teaches a required course for gerontology students, which focuses on policy issues of interest to aging populations. Cotter identified a bill and related it to elder populations. When visiting the General Assembly, students meet with legislators to discuss their bills.

Unlike other departments in the School of Allied Health Professions, there is less direct advocacy involved, though Cotter says students still learn the educational aspects of advocacy. “Many of the students in our program have never approached the General Assembly before and they’re always surprised by how accessible the delegates and the aides are,” Cotter says.

In addition, students visit the General Assembly and advocate for optimal aging for individuals and communities. The Virginia Center on Aging, a state initiative based at VCU in the School of Allied Health Professions, sponsors an annual legislative breakfast where priorities are shared. VCoA works to improve the quality of life of older Virginians.

Raina Fields is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.
School of Allied Health Professions takes on leadership role in helping patients plan for end-of-life care

By Eric Beidel

In 1991, the year Ken Faulkner started working as a chaplain at Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center, legislation went into effect requiring hospitals and other health care institutions to inform patients about advance directives upon admission.

The Patient Self-Determination Act, passed by Congress, sought to crystallize the right of patients to make their own health care decisions, accept or refuse treatments and put their health care wishes in writing in what’s commonly known as a living will.

“I was young and naïve and thought, ‘This is great; now no one will have to wonder what Grandma would want,’” says Faulkner, now director of Advance Care Planning at VCU Health System and assistant professor in the Department of Patient Counseling in the VCU School of Allied Health Professions.

But advanced planning for death remains infrequent and unorganized.

The VCU Health System hopes to change that by partnering with the Richmond Academy of Medicine, Bon Secours Health System and HCA Virginia Health System on a program called Honoring Choices Virginia.

The initiative, announced in December 2014, seeks to get patients talking with family members and medical staff about end-of-life health care. The program is designed around the idea of advance care planning, the process of understanding, discussing and preparing for a time when people can’t make their own medical decisions and are unlikely to recover from injury or illness.

Officials in Virginia began training health care staff in December under the new program. Training is focused on facilitating conversations that are often uncomfortable. “It’s a subject we would not rather think about, so we avoid it,” Faulkner says. “Death is something that happens to other people.”

Each of the health systems involved in the program has chosen three pilot sites for initial training. For VCU, they are the VCU Parkinson’s and Movement Disorders Center, VCU Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Center...
Outpatient Clinical Service, and Center for Advance Health Management. The training is being given to doctors, nurses, social workers and chaplains like Tim Ford (M.S. '02/PC), who works with the Thomas Palliative Care Team at VCU Massey Cancer Center.

About half of the patients Ford sees are at the end of their lives. Fewer than 10 percent of them have created advance directives, the most tangible form of advance care planning.

“Our team often works with people just starting to make peace with the fact that they are going to die,” Ford says. “Filling this form out makes it real.”

The form can contain a variety of instructions and details related to a patient’s end-of-life wishes and preferred treatment, including appointment of a surrogate to make decisions when a patient can no longer do so and authorization of organ donation or donation of the patient’s body for medical research. The form is provided to family members, caregivers and medical staff, who keep it on file.

Ford’s team generally enters the picture as people transition from aggressive treatment to comfort care. He often facilitates deeper conversations with patients that address their hopes, ethics and definitions of quality of life.

“Having these conversations early does not decrease hope,” Ford says. “It helps to align health care with a patient’s goals and desires.”

Advance directives can and should be revisited and updated, officials say.

That means daily for a patient whose death is imminent. For someone in good health, it could mean changing his or her surrogate decision-maker after divorce or other life-altering event.

“Advance care planning makes a lot of sense for everyone,” says Russell Davis, Ph.D., professor and the Rev. Robert B. Lantz Chair of the Department of Patient Counseling in the School of Allied Health Professions.

Davis oversees the educational program at VCU that prepares chaplains to work with patients of every kind of faith or spiritual tradition. In addition to receiving a Master of Science degree from the university, chaplains must meet stringent requirements to become professionally certified.

“It’s often chaplains who are at the bedside helping patients of all backgrounds unpack these difficult thoughts,” says Davis, himself a chaplain. “Chaplains already are trained in a lot of skills needed to assist with advance care planning.”

There wasn’t much focus on advance care planning when Davis first became a chaplain more than 40 years ago. Over the years, he saw initiatives come and go, but the Honoring Choices model is the most effective attempt yet to tackle the issue, he says.

Honoring Choices is modeled after Respecting Choices, a program by Gundersen Lutheran Health Care System in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Those involved in the Virginia initiative have received training from experts in LaCrosse, where advance directives are now on file for 96 percent of residents in the surrounding county.

Officials with Honoring Choices Virginia hope the local program will have the same impact in the commonwealth. In the process, they aim to remedy a number of other issues related to advance directives, including lack of communication, vague instructions and complicated record keeping.

“Most people don’t have advance directives on file,” Faulkner says. “Those who do haven’t talked with their doctors and families about them.”

Honoring Choices Virginia doesn’t stop at patients and health care professionals. Program representatives meet with businesses, civic organizations, faith communities and government officials.

The hope is that the program catches on in central Virginia and then spreads, leading to an increase in the number of quality advance directives on file throughout the state.

“We’re trying to change the culture of avoiding advance care planning,” Faulkner says. “It’s a task that’s not going to be successful overnight.”

Eric Beidel is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

---

**Keys to effective advance directives**

- **Talk** about your wishes and decisions with family and friends.
- **Do** select an informed and trusted agent for health care decisions.
- **Share** copies of your directives with your family, physician, lawyer, best friends, clergy, etc.
- **Update** your directives regularly as life circumstances change.

---

**The Five Promises**

As partners in the Honoring Choices Virginia program, the three health care systems have each agreed to these five promises:

1. We will initiate the conversation with our patient about their preferences for future medical care.
2. We will provide assistance with advanced care planning to those patients who express an interest in addressing these issues.
3. We will make sure the plans are clear when the planning process has reached an end.
4. We will maintain and retrieve these plans whenever and wherever they are needed.
5. We will appropriately follow these plans when the patient can no longer participate in their own decision making.

---

Source: Honoring Choices Virginia
Motor skilled

Students collaborate in the Engineering and Biomechanics Research Laboratory to create devices today that will aid patients tomorrow

By Anne Dreyfuss
Peter Pidcoe, PT, D.P.T., Ph.D. (D.P.T. ’06/PT), picks up a tattered stuffed monkey and tosses it over a small, wheeled platform in the Engineering and Biomechanics Research Laboratory at Virginia Commonwealth University.

“This is our mock baby,” he says, and then turns to the wheeled platform. “This is the baby robot.”

The device, formally called a Self-Initiated Prone Progressive Crawler, was developed by Pidcoe in collaboration with Thubi Kolobe, PT, Ph.D., FAPTA, at Oklahoma University, to facilitate crawling in infants with disabilities. Babies lie on their stomach on the scooter, and if they make an effort to move, the motor turns on to facilitate the movement. It was designed to encourage crawling in babies with disabilities including cerebral palsy, spina bifida and Down Syndrome.

“Babies who have cerebral palsy typically don’t crawl,” says Pidcoe, founder and director of the lab. “You put them down and they just roll over on their backs and look at the ceiling because they can’t coordinate their movements. As a result, they’re not exploring like normal kids. They don’t taste, play, lift and touch.”

The SIPPC was created to address that cognitive development delay that often dovetails with physical disabilities. As with many of the projects from the Engineering and Biomechanics Lab, it was ideated from a problem that a physical therapist wanted to have fixed. Over the past 16 years, physical therapy students at VCU have worked with students from biomedical engineering and other departments across both campuses to create, test and analyze the device that Pidcoe hopes to soon sell commercially.

The Engineering and Biomechanics Lab facilitates collaborative research among physical therapy, kinesiology and biomedical engineering students in the fields of motor control, biomechanics and human performance. Within the shared space of the lab, students work together to create, test and analyze projects that link engineering principles with physical therapy treatment and human performance measures.

“This engineering pocket within the School of Allied Health Professions is unique,” says Pidcoe. “There are few places in the country that provide this opportunity to D.P.T. students.”

Applied knowledge

Tucked in the basement of West Hospital, the 1,200-square-foot research laboratory looks like a working garage with engineering machinery scattered around deconstructed elliptical trainers and remote control cars. On a weekday afternoon in the spring, students work together tinkering with equipment, calculating equations on the blackboard and recording data on laptops.

In the back of the lab, rehabilitation and movement science Ph.D. candidate Matt Holman is learning how to solder from sophomore biomedical engineering major Manik Dayal.

“Coming to this lab was a natural progression for me,” Holman says, adding that he is working on a feedback system that will allow lower-extremity amputees to monitor their movements during rehabilitation. “I was interested in trying to understand human movement a little more,” he says.

As Holman builds the device, he applies what he has learned in his movement science classes and learns about the inner workings of the machines that he will one day use in a clinical setting.

“Matt is not an engineer, but he is in this space surrounded by engineers,” Pidcoe says. “He is watching them design hardware and getting immersed in something that he wouldn’t have if this lab didn’t exist.”

For Pidcoe, that hands-on learning experience is what makes the Engineering and Biomechanics Lab so invaluable to the School of Allied Health Professions and to the entire university.

“I could talk all day about gait and low-back pain in the classroom, but the physical therapy students can come in here and actually experience what they’re learning,” Pidcoe says. “We’re not changing the world, but one step at a time we’re crossing that interdisciplinary line. That’s what I find very powerful about having the lab here.”

Anne Dreyfuss is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

Seven graduate students currently work in the lab along with a few biomedical engineering undergraduates who help with research. The physical therapy students manage data while learning about the technology behind medical devices from the engineers. The engineering students learn about anatomy, physiology and clinical concepts from the physical therapists.

“The fact that we have that cross-over in this space makes their education more meaningful,” Pidcoe says. “VCU is way ahead of physical therapy programs in the country by doing this. Others have followed, but VCU has been the leader.”

Collaborative problem-solving

Pidcoe came to VCU in 1998 after graduating from the University of Illinois at Chicago with degrees in biomedical engineering and physical therapy. In addition to teaching in the VCU Department of Physical Therapy, he has joint appointments in the School of Engineering’s Department of Biomedical Engineering and the School of Medicine’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Science. He also sees physical therapy patients at VCU Medical Center for eight hours a week, which is where the ideas for many of the projects originate.

“Although the lab is open to all engineering students, they can only do what they’re ready for,” Pidcoe says. “This is an interdisciplinary lab. These are students who are excited about it. If you have a research question, design something new and talk to the physical therapists.”

”This engineering pocket within the School of Allied Health Professions is unique. There are few places in the country that provide this opportunity to D.P.T. students.” – PETER PIDCOE, PT, D.P.T., PH.D., FAPTA, AT OKLAHOMA UNIVERSITY, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE VCU ENGINEERING AND BIOMECHANICS RESEARCH LABORATORY
In

WITH Alan Lee

This young doctor sits in an interesting position, with his feet grounded in two worlds.
Lee came to Virginia Commonwealth University to earn his M.D. to become a surgeon. Thanks to a student orientation, a whim and an interest in business, Lee decided to pursue a dual degree in health administration that he says has given him amazing experiences, lifelong relationships and an invaluable understanding of health care’s two worlds: clinic and administration.

Why did you decide to apply to VCU’s M.H.A. program?
I guess it was kind of on a whim at first, honestly. I minored in business but I never really considered it for my profession. I always heard physicians complaining about the insurance world and papers and forms, and everyone said how surprised they were about how much business they had to deal with when they get out into the practice and field. When I was in orientation, the M.H.A. representative talked about the program. It stuck in my mind. It’s a great value. They take a three-year program and compress it into one year. You get really good training. You get really good opportunities. And it just jumped to No. 3 in U.S. News & World Report.

Talk a little bit about OB-GYN and how you found that interest.
That’s a funny story. I never thought I wanted to do OB-GYN. When I came to interview at VCU, I was asked what type of medicine I wanted to study. I said, ‘Anything but OB-GYN.’ I thought I really wanted to do plastic surgery. Then I got into my third-year rotations and I realized that I really didn’t like general surgery. Still, OB-GYN was far from my mind.

OB-GYN was my second to last rotation. My first two weeks of that rotation were night shift. The thing about night shift is that you get to do a lot more. I remember the first night. I had a great resident. She came to me and said, ‘Alright, you’re going to deliver this baby.’ And I thought, ‘OK ...’ She said, ‘Don’t worry. I’ll walk you through it.’ And I delivered the baby. I walked out of the room and said, ‘I need to do that again. That was amazing!’ But I was still in denial.

Here’s the thing: At the end of every rotation, you take a final exam called a shelf exam and then you go relax. I actually went back to the gynecology team and asked if I could scrub in for one more surgery. This was crazy. I think they all had knowing looks. Even my wife saw it before I did. It wasn’t until I received my evaluations and saw the feedback that I realized I needed to consider OB-GYN. I took away my prejudice and thought about it. I realized that it fit me really well. I actually really loved this field.

Talk about your experience co-authoring a study with Jon Perlin.
Jon Perlin, M.D., Ph.D. (M.D. ’90; Ph.D. ’91; H.S. ’96; M.S.H.A. ’97/HA), was at VCU making a presentation and I asked if I could scrub in for one more surgery. This was crazy. I think they all had knowing looks. Even my wife saw it before I did. It wasn’t until I received my evaluations and saw the feedback that I realized I needed to consider OB-GYN. I took away my prejudice and thought about it. I realized that it fit me really well. I actually really loved this field.

In one sentence, what did you learn from that experience?
There is great value for the patient when health care administration works collaboratively with the clinical side of medicine.

How has the M.H.A. program prepared you?
My biggest takeaway from the M.H.A. program is having a more complete understanding of health care. It isn’t just about clinic. It is also about administration. Having a foot in both worlds and being able to understand the two languages and translate between the two is really valuable — there are very few people who receive training to do that. It has also helped me be a better team member.

Interview conducted by Jennifer Carmean, a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.
When William Haugh (M.H.A. ’08/HA) was weighing his acceptance letters from graduate programs in health administration at two universities, including Virginia Commonwealth University, he received word that VCU was offering him the James Fleetwood Memorial Scholarship — full tuition for two years.

“When the program director called me with the news, I said, ‘Absolutely,’” recalls Haugh, now the CEO of Georgetown Community Hospital, a LifePoint Hospitals facility in Georgetown, Kentucky.

The need-based scholarship gives preference to students who are from rural areas or who have an interest in rural health care — a perfect fit for the native of South Boston, Virginia, who knew he wanted to end up in a community hospital in a rural market.

“In a community hospital, you serve as a leader in health care and economic development,” says Haugh, who first interned in a hospital setting as an undergraduate at Appalachian State University studying management and information technology.

“You really have the opportunity to improve the overall community that you live in, make it a better place.”

The Fleetwood scholarship provided Haugh with an easier path toward his career goals. “I look back on that time, and I never had to worry about how to make ends meet,” Haugh says. “When educational opportunities to take a trip, shadow a professional or attend a conference presented themselves, the scholarship allowed me to put school first all the time.”

In return for the financial support, the Department of Health Administration at VCU received a high-achieving go-getter. Haugh served as president of his M.H.A. Class of 2008, who voted him recipient of the Richard Bracken Leadership Award in 2007. The Richard Bracken Leadership award is given annually to an M.H.A. student regarded as having the greatest expression and potential of leadership in the profession of health administration. Last year, Haugh received the department’s Young Professional Award for exemplifying the M.H.A. program’s core values early in his career.

“Scholarships allow us to be competitive with other programs and to recruit the brightest and best incoming graduate students,” says Beth Williamson Ayers, director of alumni relations for the Department of Health Administration. “Because our department has a small cohort of anywhere between 20 and 30 students, we are looking for a diverse and very academically solid group of students. Based on the variety of scholarships that we can offer, we can typically recruit very talented individuals.”
Scholarships offered throughout VCU’s School of Allied Health Professions vary in size, but each one makes a difference to the student who receives it. Jennifer Longwell, D.P.T. (D.P.T. ’09/PT), paid out-of-state tuition during her three years in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program and greatly appreciated the $1,000 Jules Rothstein Scholarship she received during her final year.

“I jumped at the opportunity to pursue a scholarship for an out-of-state student,” says Longwell, now a physical therapist with Bon Secours in Richmond, Virginia. “Any funds that helped to offset the expenses for tuition, especially for out-of-state, I was thrilled to receive. Every bit helps.”

The $2,000 Marcia J. Lawton Quality of Life Scholarship gave Pennsylvania native Catherine Frey (M.S. ’13/RC) the financial confidence to pursue a Certificate in Aging Studies following her first year in the Master’s of Rehabilitation Counseling program.

“The aging studies certification was one of the reasons I chose VCU,” says Frey, now a vocational rehabilitation counselor with the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. “But it would have been challenging without that additional help, just because of the additional cost and being an out-of-state student.”

In her role helping individuals with disabilities find competitive employment, the aging studies certificate has provided her with an advantage, Frey says.

“Now, we see people living longer and staying in the workforce longer, so there’s a larger window of time where they may acquire a disability and want to continue to pursue competitive employment,” she says. “Because I understand the aging process, I feel like I’m able to give a more holistic approach to the people I’m dealing with. I see the field going in this direction. That additional education put me ahead of the game in some ways.”

The scholarship, which recognizes students in the department who have completed meritorious work or supported research in the field, also validated her efforts as a student.

“It showed me that faculty could see what I was putting into the program,” Frey says. “It was an honor to be chosen, and I knew it was going to help me get where I wanted to go.”

Feeling similarly honored, Haugh says he hopes to repay his scholarship to VCU in recognition of the great benefits he received from the financial support.

“I would not have had the same experience,” Haugh says. “Instead of working to better myself and soak up all the experience I could get, I would have been working to pay the rent and the bills. It allowed me to be a better student.”

Katherine Schutt is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.
Paying it forward

Each year, VCU alumni, faculty and friends choose to make a lasting mark on the lives of current and future students by creating or contributing to scholarships. Following are a few of the latest.

By Katherine Schutt

Department of Radiation Sciences

Elizabeth L. Meixner Scholarship in Radiation Sciences
Alumna and retired faculty member Elizabeth L. Meixner (M.Ed. ’81) made a commitment of $10,000 to endow the first student scholarship in the department. Meixner made this decision so she could continue contributing to the students and the department in her retirement. The Elizabeth L. Meixner Scholarship in Radiation Sciences will provide a $500 scholarship to a student demonstrating clinical and academic excellence.

Department of Rehabilitation Counseling

Anne L. Chandler Scholarship in Rehabilitation Counseling
The Department of Rehabilitation Counseling’s Anne L. Chandler, Ph.D., a long-time faculty member, has pledged a gift of $100,000 to establish a graduate student endowed scholarship. The gift creates the department’s largest endowed scholarship to date.

School of Allied Health Professions Dean Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., describes Chandler as an “outstanding educator” with a core value of “students come first.”

“With the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling now being ranked third in the country by U.S. News & World Report, Dr. Chandler’s gift only magnifies the excellence the department enjoys,” he says. “I cannot thank Dr. Chandler enough.”

Department of Health Administration

Tom D. Jordan Student Enrichment Fund
The M.H.A. Class of 1964 pledged a class gift of $14,259 to create and endow the Tom D. Jordan Student Enrichment Fund in honor of retired adjunct faculty member Tom D. Jordan. Initiated to mark the class’s 50th reunion, the fundraising efforts received 100 percent participation from class members and their spouses. The fund’s first distribution will take place in fall 2015 to support graduate students who need financial assistance to attend professional meetings, seminars or other professional development opportunities.
Dr. Dolores G. Clement Community Service Scholarship Fund
The M.H.A. classes of 2015 and 2016 raised more than $25,000 to create and endow the Dr. Dolores G. Clement Community Service Scholarship Fund in honor of Dolores G. Clement, Dr.P.H., FACHE. Students sold custom-made wine glasses and coffee mugs and raised donations from alumni, faculty and friends. The first scholarship will be awarded to an incoming first-year M.H.A student with a strong commitment to community service and a minimum 3.5 undergraduate GPA in fall 2015. Clement, a professor in the health administration department, serves as program director for M.H.A. dual degrees.

Department of Nurse Anesthesia
Faresa Sims Nurse Anesthesia Endowment Fund
Alumna Faresa Sims, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. '12/NA; D.N.A.P. '13/NA) pledged $10,000 to establish a fund in honor of department chair Michael Fallacaro, D.N.P., CRNA, and Suzanne Wright, Ph.D., CRNA (M.S.N.A. '02/NA; Ph.D. '09/HRS), vice chair of academic affairs. Once fully funded, the endowment will be used for departmental expenditures at the discretion of the chair.

“My pledge was an expression of gratitude for the department chair and faculty’s unrelenting commitment to excellence,” says Sims. “I wanted to honor them because they sacrifice tremendously to offer students the best education and training.”

Melissa Sherrod Nurse Anesthesia Endowment Fund
Alumna and affiliate faculty member Melissa Sherrod, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. '10/NA; D.N.A.P. '11/NA) pledged $10,000 to establish a fund to promote networking and community engagement in and beyond the local community. Once fully funded, the endowment will be used at the discretion of the chair to promote relationship-building both locally and worldwide.

“It’s a way I can leave my legacy and show my appreciation for the department that dedicated so much of themselves to me,” says Sherrod, a staff nurse anesthetist at VCU Medical Center. “I established the endowment in hopes that the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia would continue to expand their links in the local community and beyond, opening new doors for opportunities for career advancement, business and personal growth.”

Michael J. and Jennie L. Kammerman Clinical Simulation Fund
Michael J. Kammerman, simulation coordinator in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, made a commitment of $4,000 to purchase medical and surgical supplies and products used during hands-on training in the clinical simulation laboratories. Hands-on training is essential education where learners practice how to take care of patients presenting for surgery, responding to unanticipated outcomes and patient safety.

Mildred Anne Poitevin Scholarship Fund
Dana Sharp, D.N.A.P., CRNA, affiliate faculty member in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, pledged a gift of $10,000 for a student scholarship to be awarded annually. Students applying for and receiving the award must be U.S. citizens and honorably discharged U.S. military veterans or active-duty U.S. military personnel or their spouses enrolled in the nurse anesthesia program.

VCU institutes new endowment minimums
Last summer, VCU instituted new endowment minimums, marking the first increase in decades. The new minimum for scholarship and general endowment funds is $25,000, up from $10,000 and more in line with other universities.

“While our gift recipients are incredibly appreciative of any financial assistance they receive, the new endowment levels will magnify the gifts’ impact by increasing the spendable income they produce,” explains Chris Ritrievi, senior associate vice president for campaign leadership and constituency relations in the VCU Office of Development and Alumni Relations. “This change means our deserving scholarship students and endowed faculty members will receive more philanthropic support in the future.”

Donors can still make gifts over a five-year period and do it in combination with planned giving. For more information, contact Jessica Gurganus, assistant dean of development and external affairs, at jfgurganus@vcu.edu, or call (804) 828-3269.
When anesthesia providers encounter potentially unsafe conditions and breaches of protocol, the results can be catastrophic for patients. To raise awareness of the conditions and circumstances that lead to mistakes and harmful incidents, the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia created Anesthesia e-Nonymous, a mechanism that allows anesthesia providers to share information about real events they have experienced with other providers across the U.S. These personal stories reveal how a wide array of factors can lead to complications in patients undergoing procedures that require the use of anesthesia.

Using a secure online portal, providers submit their narrative, which includes an analysis of factors that might have contributed to the event. Department of Nurse Anesthesia faculty review and anonymize the information, then prepare and post a case presentation that captures the essence of the event on the Anesthesia e-Nonymous website.

“If we can help avoid harm to just one patient by sharing these stories, we have accomplished our goal,” says Suzanne Wright, Ph.D., CRNA (B.S. ’87; B.S. ’97; Ph.D. ’09/HRS), an associate professor in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia.

Almost 10 years ago, nurse anesthetist Chuck Biddle, Ph.D., CRNA, had an experience he will never forget. By sharing his story, he hopes others will remember, too. “I have been practicing for more than 28 years, caring for over 17,000 patients, but I carry around with me those few, rare instances where I’ve witnessed a serious error in the OR,” he says. “There is a great deal that can be learned by sharing these experiences with other anesthesia practitioners. This kind of exchange has the potential to significantly improve patient safety over the long run.”

If you are a CRNA, SRNA, or M.D., you can help improve patient safety. Register today at anesthesiaenonymous.org.
Radiation sciences students earn national honors

Three students in the Department of Radiation Sciences took home national awards. Nuclear medicine technology student Julie Rivas, and Taek Oh, a radiation therapy major, were chosen as Virginia representatives to the American Society of Radiologic Technologists’ Student Leadership Development Program. The sophomores will learn about the nation’s largest radiologic science professional society, attend educational sessions and network with medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals. Both students traveled to the June Educational Symposium and Annual Governance/House of Delegates meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Radiography junior Aneta Budych was awarded a scholarship from Lambda Nu, a national honor society for the radiologic and imaging sciences. There are currently 166 Chapters in 43 states; Budych is an active member of the VCU chapter, Gamma Chi.

Radiation sciences offers new course this fall

In fall 2015, the Department of Radiation Sciences will be offering a new course, “Introduction to Ultrasound,” a two-credit course taught by Danielle Hardin, RT, RDMS (B.S. ’08/CRS), will be offered as an elective to current radiation sciences students. Individuals outside the university who work in imaging are also invited to enroll.

Nurse anesthesia welcomes new partnerships

The Department of Nurse Anesthesia, through the help of Beverly George-Gay, CCRN, assistant director of Clinical Education for the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, and Thomas “Corey” Davis, Ph.D., CRNA (B.S. ’91; M.S.N.A. ’97/NA; Ph.D. ’11/HRS), vice chair of clinical affairs for the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, obtained several new clinical sites for its distance-learning program, including the Virginia Hospital Center and Fort Belvoir in the Northern Virginia region, and the University of Virginia ambulatory surgery center as an elective site for any student. The department also celebrated 10 years of affiliation with the Southwest Higher Education Center and Rachel Fowlkes, Ed.D., agency head and executive director, graduating more than 50 students in the past 10 years, the majority of whom have taken jobs within the region. In addition, a partnership formed with the department and HCA’s Advanced Orthopedics in Glen Allen, Virginia. Simulation training was held in January for nearly 40 attendees.

HCA gift enables creation of professorship

The VCU Department of Health Administration, with a generous $500,000 gift from Hospital Corporation of America, created the HCA Distinguished Executive in Residence Professorship as a tribute to HCA’s many VCU graduates, including Richard M. Bracken (M.H.A. ’77/HA). After a 30-year career with HCA, Bracken, who retired as CEO, stepped down from the role of chairman at the end of 2014. The professorship will allow the Department of Health Administration to engage top health care executives with the department and its students so that their academic preparation can be applied to the rapidly changing field of health care administration practice.

Richard M. Bracken (right), former president and CEO of HCA, was honored in October 2014 with the HCA Distinguished Executive in Residence Professorship. Also pictured is Milton Johnson, current president and CEO of HCA.

KEVIN GRAHAM, grad student in the Department of Patient Counseling, earned the VCU Medical Center recognition, Week of the Nurse Award for True Collaboration, given to a non-nurse member of the health care team. Awardees demonstrate positive interdisciplinary relationships, work in collaboration with nurses to improve patient care and exhibit a sense of mutual respect among the disciplines. Graham was nominated by one of his nursing units in cardiology. He is also the first recipient of the Dr. Alexander Tartaglia Scholarship in Patient Counseling.
OT honors retiring faculty member with scholarship

The Department of Occupational Therapy has created a student scholarship in honor of Shelly Lane, Ph.D. Lane, who received the 2015 Distinguished Faculty Award for Service from the School of Allied Health Professions, retired from VCU in June after 19 years, 13 as chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy and six as director of post-professional education. She is now professor and mentor of research and teaching in occupational therapy at the University of Newcastle in Australia.

Lane came to VCU in 1996, becoming the program’s seventh department chair and program director. Under her leadership, the department moved the entry-level program from the bachelor’s to master’s degree level, initiated online and hybrid post-professional masters and occupational therapy doctoral degree programs, and graduated 10 Ph.D. students on the occupational therapy track of the School of Allied Health Professions’ doctorate in Health Related Sciences. The department also received full ACOTE accreditation for the entry-level master’s degree in 2002. In addition to the administrative responsibilities she held, Lane was the recipient of the first endowed research laboratory in the department, the Kathryn Lawrence Dragas SPASE Laboratory, which is dedicated to the study of sensory processing and stress evaluation.

To support the Shelly Lane Scholarship Fund, send your contributions to The MCV Foundation, Shelly Lane Scholarship Fund, 1228 E. Broad St., P.O. Box 980234, Richmond, VA 23298-0234, or call (804) 828-9734. To donate online: 1. Go to support.vcu.edu/give/occu; 2. Select “Occupational Therapy Fund” and the amount you would like to contribute; 3. Under No. 2, select giving option: “Tribute”; 4. Write in: For the Shelly Lane Scholarship Fund. For more information, contact Jayne Shepherd, jshepherd@vcu.edu or (804) 828-1564.

Two CLS students receive Kupfer Award

Clinical laboratory sciences students Linh Duong and Solange Duong were recognized with the Kupfer Award. This award was first presented in 1965 in memory of Henry Kupfer, Ph.D., medical director of the School of Medical Technology from 1952 until his death in 1964. It is presented to the student (or students) considered to be the best all-around clinical laboratory scientist. Throughout the program, the student must demonstrate an outstanding sense of responsibility in all phases of clinical laboratory science, show a keen concern for patients and demonstrate a desire for personal and professional growth. Instructors from each clinical affiliate select the recipient of the award.

Henry Kupfer is the father of Phyllis Kupfer Flax (B.S. ’73/CLS), the sister of David L. Kupfer, Ph.D.

PT students finish second in fundraising event

Students in the Department of Physical Therapy won two awards at the Foundation for Physical Therapy Miami-Marquette Challenge. They finished in second place among the 146 schools by raising $24,330 to support their professional association. In addition, the students joined the Foundation Philanthropy Circle’s Challenge Society, recognizing continued giving over at least 10 years with total gifts exceeding $100,000.

Professor retires, takes home service award

William Hartland, Ph.D., CRNA, was awarded the School of Allied Health Professions Dean’s Medallion for Meritorious Service. Hartland, who retired in 2015, was director of education and chairman of the Admission and Academic Standing Committees for the Department of Nurse Anesthesia.

Hartland has dedicated his life to the education of nurse anesthetists. In 2013, he gifted $10,000 to create the endowed Dr. William Hartland Jr. Fund to support educational opportunities and programs for the development of teaching skills for faculty, clinical faculty, adjunct faculty and students.
RUN LAB director adds new role, wins grant

D. S. Blaise Williams III, PT, Ph.D., director of the VCU RUN LAB, was elected vice-president of the Sports Physical Therapy Section of the American Physical Therapy Association. The role, which has a three-year term, is responsible for the educational opportunities provided by the section to its members. Williams also received a $50,000 Center for Clinical and Translational Research grant for his research project “Impact of healthy aging on stiffness and inter-limb symmetry during running.”

Nurse anesthesia celebrates 45th anniversary

The VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia celebrated its 45th anniversary Nov. 1, 2014, at the Williamsburg Lodge in Williamsburg, Virginia. Special guests included former chairmen Bernie Kuzava, CRNA, Col. Herbert T. Watson, School of Allied Health Professions Dean Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., and current chair, Michael D. Fallacaro, D.N.S., CRNA. Guests enjoyed a cocktail reception and dinner including a special commemorative anniversary video and remarks by the VCU Nurse Anesthesia Alumni Advisory Council Vice Chair Melissa Sherrod, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. ’10/NA; D.N.A.P. ’11/NA).

New faculty and staff members

Courtney Holmes, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. She received her Ph.D. from the College of William & Mary in counselor education and supervision and her master’s from Gonzaga University in mental health counseling. Her experience includes work with individuals, families and couples on mental health issues. Holmes currently serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Counselor Practice and is a recipient of the Outstanding Supervisor Award from the North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

Jenica Harrison, Ph.D., MT (ASCP), joined the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences as an assistant professor in July 2015. Her primary teaching responsibilities include hematology, urinalysis and body fluid analysis. Harrison brings over five years of experience as a principal investigator in the Cell-Based Assay Laboratory at Pharmaceutical Product Development (PPD, LLC). She previously worked as a medical technologist at Bon Secours Health System and Southside Regional Medical Center.

Jessica Mittler, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Health Administration. She previously served as an associate professor at Pennsylvania State University’s Department of Health Administration and Policy. Mittler’s research program focuses on understanding the nature of consumer engagement and its role in improving health care, and how to transform the delivery system into one that provides high-quality, coordinated, patient-centered care.

Chad Taylor, PT, D.P.T., SCS, ATC, CSCS, serves as assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy. Orthopedic and sports physical therapy are Taylor’s primary teaching responsibilities. He also treats patients at Henrico Doctors’ Sports Medicine and is a member of the APTA sports section. His research interests are in the areas of biomechanics of the lower extremity, biomechanics of the shoulder and scapula, and sports physical therapy.

Cheryl Rathert, Ph.D., joined the Department of Health Administration as an associate professor. Before joining the department, Rathert worked in the Health Services Management program and Center for Health Ethics in the University of Missouri School of Medicine’s Department of Health Management and Informatics. She served on the editorial board of Health Care Management Review from 2009 to 2014 and was the research committee chair of the Academy of Management Health Care Management Division from 2009 to 2012.
Virginia Center on Aging receives $2.6 million

The Virginia Center on Aging has received a $2.6 million federal award to support interprofessional geriatrics training from preclinical to practice levels. The center was one of more than 200 top-flight applicants for the three-year award, which was granted to 44 organizations by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration through the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program.

The Virginia Center on Aging, based in the School of Allied Health Professions, leads a consortium that includes the University of Virginia and Eastern Virginia Medical School. Together, they comprise the Virginia Geriatric Education Center.

The center’s project has a special focus on medically underserved areas, from Virginia’s Eastern Shore to far Southwest Virginia. It will work to prepare family caregivers for dementia care by partnering with Senior Navigator, which maintains Web-based training sites at more than 700 community settings across Virginia.

The project includes evaluation of an EVMS program that trains geriatric physicians and other health professionals; development of an online team-learning geriatrics course at VCU for pre-clinical students; and creation of faculty development, “train the trainer” and evidence-based practice programs as well as creating continuing medical education and community college training sessions.

School’s graduate programs rank among best

Several graduate programs have improved their rankings among the top 50 of the nation’s best in the 2016 edition of U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Graduate Schools.” The VCU School of Allied Health Professions ranks No. 3 for its health administration program and No. 4 for its rehabilitation counseling program. In addition, nurse anesthesia is No. 4 in its updated ranking.

In total, VCU boasts 22 graduate programs ranked in the top 50 by U.S. News & World Report. More than 1,900 graduate programs were analyzed as well as reputation surveys from more than 13,700 academics and professionals in the disciplines.

Doctoral candidate receives $53,000 grant

Arnethea Sutton, MLS (MS/BS ’06/CLS), a doctoral candidate for the Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences, was awarded a grant by the Virginia Blood Foundation to conduct her dissertation research. The grant, worth more than $53,000 for a two-year period, will support the development, implementation and assessment of “A Targeted Approach to Increasing the African American Blood Donor Pool.” Bill Korzun, Ph.D., DABCC, MT, associate professor in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, is chair of her dissertation committee and co-investigator on the project.
Professor receives counseling grant
Christopher Wagner, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, received a $750,000 long-term training grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Division. The five-year grant helps colleges and universities provide scholarships to students interested in pursuing careers as rehabilitation counselors specializing in mental health. Wagner’s project, “Long-Term Training Rehabilitation of the Mentally Ill,” begins October 1. Wagner, a licensed clinical psychologist, focuses on motivational interviewing and interpersonal processes in mental health and substance abuse treatment.

OT professor awarded autism-study grant
Stacey Reynolds, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’07/HRS), was awarded a grant from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation to conduct a feasibility study investigating the therapeutic use of deep pressure vests for individuals on the autism spectrum. The study, “Effects of Deep Pressure on Arousal and Performance in Persons with Autism,” begins July 2016 and will take place in the Department of Occupational Therapy’s Katherine Lawrence Dragas Sensory Processing and Stress Evaluation Lab. Its goal includes establishing parameters under which the Vayu Vest, by Therapeutic Systems LLC, can be most effective as an intervention for individuals on the autism spectrum.

AOTA names OT professor fellow
Dianne Simons, Ph.D., was named a fellow by the American Occupational Therapy Association. The award recognized Simons, an assistant professor in the occupational therapy department, for 29 years of leadership in the field, her contributions to the profession and in higher education and community service, and her representation of occupational therapy as an interprofessional educator and collaborator. Simons serves as the AOTA representative for the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association. Her professional interests include technology in mental health occupational therapy.
CLS professor pursuing GI-autism study

Ruth Ann Luna, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’10/HRS), adjunct professor in the Ph.D. program in Health Related Sciences and instructor of health informatics (ALHP 718), is part of a Texas Medical Center research team awarded a $1.4 million, three-year grant from Autism Speaks. The research focuses on potential connections between gastrointestinal problems and autism, which is of great personal and professional interest to Luna, the mother of a child with autism who suffers from significant gastrointestinal problems. Luna is director of medical metagenomics within the Texas Children’s Microbiome Center at Texas Medical Center.

RC adjunct professor receives state recognition

Sherrina Sewell was honored with the State Rehabilitation Council 2015 Employee Leadership Roy J. Ward Recognition Award for outstanding service and contribution to the field of vocational rehabilitation and the disability community. The award honors Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services vocational rehabilitation employees who distinguish themselves by the quality of service they provide their clients as well as their contributions to advance the employment and independence of people with disabilities. Sewell, a unit supervisor in the Chesterfield, Va., office, supervises and leads a team of three specialty transition counselors. As an adjunct faculty member in the VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, she taught graduate-level coursework in multicultural counseling.

Gerontology grad named Innovation Fellow

Devin Bowers (M.S ’15/G) has been selected by the Virginia Center for Health Innovation as one of its first Innovation Fellows. In this capacity, Bowers will assist with content development and overall community management of the Innovation Network. This includes curating online content under LEARN, within communities and the Virginia Health Innovation Network (VHIN) blog. Additionally, she will be writing original content for the VHIN blog on VCHI’s initiatives, including core strategies of the Virginia Health Innovation Plan and other topics relevant to VCHI’s mission. Bowers will also be assisting the chief innovation officer with monthly “Innovator Interviews,” including identifying candidates and drafting questions.

PT professor recognized for research

Daniel L. Riddle, PT, Ph.D., FAPTA, Otto D. Payton Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, received the Marian Williams Award for Research in PT from the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The award recognizes outstanding basic clinical and/or educational research that pertains to physical therapy, sustained for at least 10 years, and makes a meaningful contribution to the scientific basis of physical therapy. The award was given at the APTA NEXT conference held in June 2015. Riddle served as PI on year two continuation of “Knee Arthroplasty Pain Coping Skills Training (KAST-pain): A Randomized Trial,” funded by a $1,072,152 grant from the National Institute of Arthritis Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases/NIH, grant No. UM1 R062800-02.

PT professor recognized for research

Daniel L. Riddle, PT, Ph.D., FAPTA, Otto D. Payton Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, received the Marian Williams Award for Research in PT from the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The award recognizes outstanding basic clinical and/or educational research that pertains to physical therapy, sustained for at least 10 years, and makes a meaningful contribution to the scientific basis of physical therapy. The award was given at the APTA NEXT conference held in June 2015. Riddle served as PI on year two continuation of “Knee Arthroplasty Pain Coping Skills Training (KAST-pain): A Randomized Trial,” funded by a $1,072,152 grant from the National Institute of Arthritis Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases/NIH, grant No. UM1 R062800-02.

Pictured, left to right: APTA president Paul Rockar Jr. PT, DPT, MS; Daniel Riddle, PT, Ph.D., FAPTA; and Gail Jensen, Ph.D., PT, FAPTA.
Alice Goodwin (B.S. ‘66/MET) and her husband, William, were named a "power couple" by Virginia Business on its list of “50 Most Influential Virginians.”

David Bernd (M.H.A. ‘73/HA), CEO of Sentara Health System, was named one of the “50 Most Influential Virginians” by Virginia Business.

Barbara Coverdale (B.S. ‘70/OT) works with Chesapeake Regional Home Care, but is looking forward to retirement in about two years. She has three adult children and two granddaughters.

Otis Johnson (B.S. ’77/OT; Cert. ‘94/G) and his wife, Lucille, proudly announced the birth of their grandson, Rahmal Jr., on Sept. 8, 2014. They also have three granddaughters and enjoy quality time with all of their grandchildren.

Mindy Buckner (M.S. ’87/OT) works for the Fairfax County Public Schools System. She developed therapiststreetforkids.com, an informational website for OTs in and outside of school systems.

Angela Carter (B.S. ’80/OT) works at the Golden Living Center: Surry Community in Mt. Airy, N.C.

Kathy Coppa, O.T.D. (B.S. ’81/OT; M.S. ’13/OT; O.T.D. ’13/OT) presented a poster at the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference in April 2014.

Margie Kwait (M.S. ’87/OT) works in acute care at INOVA Fairfax Hospital in Northern Virginia. She became a Certified Aging in Place Specialist through National Association of Home Builders.

Jeffrey S. Legg, Ph.D., RT(R)(CT)(QM) (A.S. ’87/RT; B.S. ’89/CRS; Ph.D. ’02/HRS), director of the radiologist assistant track in the VCU Department of Radiation Sciences, serves as vice chair of the ASRT Education and Research Foundation’s Research Grants and Advisory Panel. He also serves on the editorial review board of Radiography.

Tammie (Armstead) Pulliam (B.S. ’87/RS, B.S. ’93/OT) lives in Richmond, Va., and is working as a travel OT.

Michelle (Bouldanger) Thompson (M.S. ’88/OT; Cert. ’11) has worked as an OT specializing in early intervention, school-based therapy, pediatrics and home health for the past 25 years. She’s currently working with children aged 2 to 22 at Richmond Public Schools. She and her husband have three “wonderful” children.

Sonya Barsness (M.S. ’99/G) took part in reinvigorating the Virginia Culture Change Coalition. Since 2002, the VCCC has been active in supporting person-centered care and culture change throughout the commonwealth. Those interested in the VCCC should contact agingstudies@vcu.edu.

Timmerie Cohen, Ph.D., RT(R)(T)(ARRT), CMD (A.S. ’95/RT; B.S. ’97/CRS; Ph.D. ’13), clinical coordinator of radiation therapy in the VCU Department of Radiation Sciences, and Melanie Dempsey, RT(R)(T), CMD, radiation therapy program director, assistant professor and assistant chair in the VCU Department of Radiation Sciences, are researching clinical preparedness of baccalaureate radiation therapy students across the nation.

Nickie Damico, Ph.D., CRNA (B.S. ’97; M.S.N.A. ’99/NA; Ph.D. ’14/HRS), assistant professor and director of professional practice in the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia, completed her Ph.D. program in the VCU School of Allied Health Professions and graduated in December 2014. Her completed dissertation was titled “Factors that Predict Incident Reporting Behavior in Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists.” She presented “Difficult Airway Management in the Age of the Videolaryngoscope” at the Virginia Association of Nurse Anesthetists District V winter workshop Feb. 7, 2015.

Robert Graboyes, Ph.D. (M.S.H.A. ’98/HA), adjunct faculty in the Department of Health Administration, won the Reason Foundation’s 2014 Bastiat Prize for Journalism, which honors the writing that best demonstrates the importance of individual liberty and free markets with originality, wit and eloquence.

Susan Lin (M.S. ’90/OT) received the 2013 Boston University Alumni Award. She served reviewer for the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute and continues in her position as director of research for the American Occupational Therapy Association.

William McGrath (M.S.O.T. ’99/OT) lives in Silver Spring, Md., has two sons and works for the Montgomery County schools system. He was at the American Occupational Therapy Association conference in 2014 to present a paper.
Lisa Carter (M.S.O.T. ’02/OT) lives in Christiansburg, Va., and is working in acute care and outpatient settings.

Annie (Ripper) Clark (B.S. ’00/OT) pursued a career in pediatrics, serving most recently as an autism coach and trainer for the Colorado Department of Education. She continues to teach yoga and has adapted aspects of her practice to the Telluride Adaptive Ski Program for children with disabilities, especially autism. Her son, Charlie, was born in September 2012.

Charles Elam IV, CRNA, D.N.A.P. (B.S. ’06; M.S.N.A. ’10/NA; D.N.A.P. ’11/NA), received a $40,000 post-doctoral fellowship for his research project "Postoperative Orthopedic Ambulatory Surgery Pulse Oximetry and Patient Experiences Study" from the AANA Foundation. He is a student in the Doctoral Program in Health Related Sciences, and his research is for his dissertation.

Fiona Bessey-Bushnell (M.S.O.T. ’01/OT) is complementing her career in occupational therapy with her involvement as a writer. Her October 2014 article in the Richmond Family Magazine highlights the ways in which work and school environments are being designed to encourage less sitting, and more standing and movement.

Derrick Glymph, D.N.A.P., CRNA (M.S.N.A. ’04/NA; D.N.A.P. ’10/NA), clinical assistant professor of anesthesiology nursing at Florida International University’s Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences, was appointed to the Florida Board of Nursing by Gov. Rick Scott.

Kacie Hopkins (M.S.O.T. ’09/OT) and her husband, Jeff, relocated to Portland, Ore., in 2014.

Deborah Kahrs (M.S.O.T. ’03) works as a PRN OT at Sheltering Arms in Richmond, Va., and for the VCU occupational therapy department as adjunct faculty. She and her wife, Andy, got married in "a very fun, unique ski wedding ceremony in New Hampshire in March 2011."


Kim Van Eck, CT, CDP (M.S. ’09/G), is a community resource specialist for Humana Inc. in the Humana at Home division on the Life Assistance Line, which works in an interdisciplinary approach with other teams of nurses and social workers to support the most medically compromised members of Humana.

Enid Walker Butler, CT (M.S. ’14/G) received a Certification of Thanatology from the Association for Death, Education and Counseling. She also taught a class in death and dying for the VCU Department of Gerontology.

Erin (Wagenhorst) Conner (M.S.O.T. ’10/OT) worked at a Riverside nursing home in Virginia Beach, Va., for two years after graduation where, as initially the sole OT, she helped build the OT program. She married on Oct. 15, 2011, and the couple recently moved to the Washington, D.C., area. Conner has been working in acute care at Virginia Hospital Center to improve the early mobility of patients on ventilator support.

Dani Kastner (M.S.O.T. ’11/OT) is working full time at a Burke Health and Rehabilitation Center, Medical Facilities of America and PRN for Genesis.

Elise Kirby (B.S. ’09; M.S. ’11/OT) works full time at Atlanta Medical Center, a trauma 1 and stroke-certified hospital. She primarily treats patients with SCI, TBA, CVA, gunshot wounds, and general/medical
and elective orthopedic conditions, and treats patients in the ICU and Neuro ICU as well. Kirby got married earlier this year.

John Moossa (M.S.O.T. ‘13/OT) accepted a position with Aegis Therapies to work at a skilled nursing facility in Petersburg, Va., after successfully passing the NBCOT exam.

Linda M. Olson, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ‘11/HRS), serves as acting chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at Rush University. She was appointed to the board of directors of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Foundation, which works in partnership with the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association to promote wellness and recovery.

Vanessa Pralle (M.S.O.T. ‘13/OT) celebrated passing the NBCOT exam in February 2014 by spending a week in Nevada hanging out with family, mountain biking and enjoying the beautiful desert scenery.

Faculty, staff and students

Awards and distinctions

ASCLS Graduate Research Grant and Scholarship: Emily Hill, a Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences student and assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, received an American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science Graduate Research Grant and an ASCLS Graduate Scholarship to conduct research related to her dissertation, “Cystic Fibrosis Patients at Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center.”

Lucy Blair Service Award: Thomas Mayhew PT, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, won the Lucy Blair Service Award from the American Physical Therapy Association in June. The award recognizes outstanding service to the organization at the state or national level.

Mary Bontly (B.S. ‘15/G) successfully completed Chronic Disease Self-Management Program Leader Training in spring 2014. CDMSM is an evidenced-based program/workshop developed at Stanford University Patient Education Research Center. Program methodologies and strategies have helped older Americans with chronic diseases learn how to better manage their conditions.

Leader-to-Leader Program: Dolores Clement, Dr.P.H., FACHE, professor and director of dual degree programs in the Department of Health Administration, was an American College of Healthcare Executives’ 2014 Leader-to-Leader Program award winner in the Academic Category.

Tracey Gendron, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Gerontology, was named a Top 10 Finalist for the Ernest A. Lynton Award for Community Engagement (2014); a Service-Learning Faculty Fellow (2013-2015); and an ASPIRE Faculty Fellow (2013-present).

Molly Long, Rosquinne Mangawang and Katrina Pineda, Clinical Laboratory Sciences students in the Class of 2016, were awarded three $10,000 scholarships by the Department of Pathology in return for a two-year work commitment. In addition, the University of Virginia Medical Laboratories awarded CLS senior Gillian Agyemang a $10,000 scholarship in return for a two-year work commitment post-graduation.

Two Clinical Laboratory Sciences students from the Class of 2016 were selected to receive summer fellowship research grants from the VCU Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP).

Molly Long will be completing the project titled, “The Effect of Cannabinoids on Pro-Inflammatory Chemokines/Cytokines Produced by Macrophage-Like Cells in Response to the HIV Proteins Tat and Gp120” under the mentorship of CLS faculty member Melissa Jamerson, Ph.D. Pacifique Munezero will be completing the project titled, “The Evaluation of the Measurement of Cholesterol and Triglycerides in Chromatography Fractions by the Cobas c311 Chemistry Analyzer” under the mentorship of CLS faculty member Bill Korzun, Ph.D.

Rebecca Matthews, Clinical Laboratory Sciences Class of 2016, was awarded one of five American Proficiency Institute scholarships.

Pacifique Munezero, Clinical Laboratory Sciences Class of 2016, is the recipient of scholarships at the national and university levels. Munezero was selected to receive an Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity Scholarship for fulltime undergraduate study. The VCU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi awards committee also selected Munezero as the recipient the Wayne C. Hall Scholarship in March 2015.


The VCU-Sheltering Arms Neurological Physical Therapy Residency program was recently accredited by the American Board of Physical Therapy Residencies and Fellowship Education. Cheryl Ford-Smith is the program director for the residency. It is in partnership with VCU Health System and Sheltering Arms.

Jay White, MSG, director of professional and community development in the gerontology department, was named a Service-Learning Faculty Fellow (2015-present).

News

Mark Crosthwaite, CNMT, FSNMMI-TS, nuclear medicine program director in the Department of Radiation Sciences, presented at the VSRT Student, Educators, and Technologists Annual Seminar.

Melanie Dempsey, RT(R)(T), CMD, radiation therapy program director, assistant professor and assistant chair in the Department of Radiation Sciences, and Timmerie Cohen, Ph.D., RT(R)(T)(ARRT), CMD (A.S. ’95/RT; B.S. ’97/CRS; Ph.D. ’13), clinical coordinator of radiation therapy in the VCU Department of Radiation Sciences, are researching clinical preparedness of baccalaureate radiation therapy students across the nation.

Terri L. Fauber, Ed.D., RT(R)(M), associate professor in the Department of Radiation Sciences and director of the radiography program, serves as a trustee for the ASRT Education and Research Foundation. She also serves on the review board of Radiography and Radiologic Science and Education. Additionally, Fauber presented at the VSRT Student, Educators, and Technologists Annual Seminar.
Rebecca Kieth, director of admissions and assistant professor of radiography, serves on the editorial review board of Radiologic Technology. She also presented at the VSRT Student, Educators, and Technologists Annual Seminar.

Jessica Mittleller, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Health Administration, co-wrote the online article “Taking the Long View: How Well Do Patient Activation Scores Predict Outcomes Four Years Later?”


Chris Wagner, Ph.D., L.C.P., CRC, associate professor in the radiations sciences department, recently provided two plenary lectures and four training workshops at two coordinated conference events, “Asia-Pacific Symposia on Motivational Interviewing,” in Hong Kong and Singapore regarding his model of group therapy based on motivational interviewing.

Appointments
Dolores Clement, Dr.P.H., FACHE, professor and director of dual degree programs in the Department of Health Administration, was named the Sentara Professor of Health Administration. This professorship, endowed with a gift from Sentara Healthcare in 2007, is intended to support distinguished faculty for the graduate training of men and women for eventual leadership roles in health care.

Conferences
Thomas “Corey” Davis, Ph.D., CRNA (B.S. ’91; M.S.N.A. ‘97/NA; Ph.D. ’11/HRS), assistant professor of nurse anesthesia, presented two lectures at the Kentucky Association of Nurse Anesthetists State Meeting in October 2014.

Stacy Dusing, PT, Ph.D., PCS, associate professor, collaborated on the platform presentation “Supporting Play, Exploration, and Early Development of Infants born preterm (SPEEDI): A pilot randomized clinical trial” at the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology Conference in San Diego in September. She also presented “Positioning changes problem-solving behaviors in a young child with severe motor delay: a case study” at the APTA Combined Section Meeting.

Benjamin Darter, PT, Ph.D., assistant professor, presented “Treadmill Walking: Discover How Treadmills Can Do More Than Help People Break a Sweat” at the Center for Clinical and Translation Research Discovery Dialogues in Richmond, Va. Daniel L. Riddle, PT, Ph.D., FAPTA, Otto D. Payton Professor, had two presentations, “Pre-operative Optimization with Physical Therapy” and “Mobilization on the Day of Surgery and Rehabilitation at Home” at the IMUKA Conference, Current Concepts in Outpatient Arthroplasty in the Netherlands. He also gave the commencement address and Grand Rounds lecture “Physical Therapy versus Surgery for Select Musculoskeletal Disorders” at Florida International University.


PT conferences: Sheryl Finucane, Ph.D., assistant professor and coordinator of graduate education, presented “Mechanism of Interleukin-1β (IL-1β) Release From Macrophages Treated With Specific Levels of Therapeutic Ultrasound (TUS)” at the American Physical Therapy Association NEXT Conference and Exposition in June 2014. Finucane and Emma Wheeler PT, D.P.T., director of clinical education and admissions, presented “Use of Essential Competencies for Evaluation of an Entry Level Geriatric Physical Therapy Course and Assessment of Student Self-Perceived Competence in February at APTA’s combined sections meeting. Wheeler presented “A Faculty Development Program to Improve the Partnership for Health in Aging” at the Gerontological Society of America’s 67th Scientific Meeting last fall in Washington, D.C. She also collaborated in a platform presentation of “The Virginia Geriatric Education Center (VGEC): Interprofessional Collaboration to Develop and Implement Interprofessional Education in Geriatrics” at the Emswiller Interprofessional Conference in Richmond, Va., in March 2014.

Wheeler, along with Thomas P. Mayhew, PT, Ph.D., associate professor, Dixie H. Bowman, PT, D.P.T., Ed.D., assistant professor, and Shawne Soper, PT, D.P.T., assistant professor and assistant director of clinical education, presented “Use of the Practice Exam and Assessment Tool (PEAT) to Predict Success on the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE)” at the 2014 APTA Education Leadership Conference in Kansas City, Mo.

Teresa Nadder, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and Emily Hill, a Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences student and assistant professor in the clinical laboratory sciences department, presented “Using a Theater Approach to Develop Professionalism in CLS Students,” based on a study supported by an American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science E&R member grant received by Hill in 2012.

Invited presentations: D. Blaise Williams Ill, PT, Ph.D., associate professor of physical therapy, presented: “Lower Leg Injuries: Equipment, Foot Orthoses and Training Considerations,” “Therapeutic Interventions for the Foot and Ankle,” and “Examination for Runner’s Injuries” at the APTA Sports Section Team Concepts Conference; “Running Around in Circles: Pitfalls and Pearls in the Evaluation and Treatment of Runners,” a VCU PT lecture series to Benefit the Miami-Marquette Challenge; the annual Joe Johnson Lecture for Allied Health Sciences; “Coordination, Coupling and Control in Human Running: Implications for Injury and Performance,” at Oklahoma University Health Sciences Center; the tutorial lecture, “Variability in Biomechanical Systems,” at the American College of Sports Medicine annual meeting: “Run a Mile in my Shoes: Running Shoe Recommendations for Patients,” “Taking the...
Faculty spotlight

Blick Scholars Program created by alumni recognizes faculty

Two “rising star” faculty members from the School of Allied Health Professions were named 2015 Blick Scholars for their medical research efforts.

Benjamin J. Darter, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, and Jonathan P. DeShazo, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Health Administration, will each receive $15,000 annually over four years to support their research.

The awards began July 1.

The Blick Scholars Program is made possible through the George and Lavinia Blick Research Fund, created with a $2 million bequest from Lavinia Blick as a gesture of gratitude for the care she and her family received at what would become VCU Medical Center. The Blicks, who lived in rural Rawlings, Virginia, developed a fondness for VCU Medical Center through repeated visits over the years. George Blick earned a master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the VCU School of Allied Health Professions in 1974. In giving the gift, Lavinia Blick’s only stipulation was that it be used to fund research on the medical campus.

“Given the impact the Blicks have had in support of our junior faculty members, I would encourage our alumni to consider making a provision in their estates to further the scholarly work by our school’s faculty,” says Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., dean of the School of Allied Health Professions.

The Blick Scholars program endowment is awarded every four years to a maximum of 10 junior faculty members on the medical campus. Blick Scholars are selected through a highly competitive nomination process that includes documented growth toward achievement of national or international recognition, a developing record of obtaining external research funding, collaborative scholarship and a primary faculty appointment in one of the health sciences schools.

“Our faculty members from the School of Allied Health Professions who received the Blick Scholarships are rising stars, not only in our school but in their professions,” Drain says.

Darter’s primary research and clinical interests are in the areas of rehabilitation following extremity amputation, optimization of gait performance and overall health promotion. His scholarship will support research that examines how impaired function of the lower extremity impacts a person’s ability to adapt their walking strategy. The results of the research will have potential to impact the design of prosthetic and orthotic devices, as well as techniques used in gait (walking) training.

“Dr. Ben Darter is a very fine example of the next generation of leaders in the profession of physical therapy,” Drain says.

DeShazo, an expert in the area of health informatics, will use Blick funding to support his line of research that studies health care data, and specifically, bias and other issues related to data analysis.

“Dr. DeShazo’s much-needed work in the area of electronic health records will be of great benefit to health care communities across the nation,” Drain says.

Lowe J., Biddle C. Analysis of simulated anesthesia crisis: deconstructing latent hazards. AANA Foundation. 2014.


Powell, D.W., Williams, D.S., Scruggs, C.E., Willson, J.D. Effect of gender and increasing treadmill velocity on peak ankle plantarflexor powers in females compared to males during level walking. 61st Annual Meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine, Orlando, FL, 2014.

Stulce J., Biddle C. Exhaled breath analysis of free radical formation in home COPD users of oxygen. AANA Foundation and Webster University. 2011 and 2015.


Abstracts


Bowen, M., Cupka, C., Neidermyer, B., Pidcoe, P.E. Advanced technology in inpatient rehabilitation for upper extremity neuro recovery. AOTA: Baltimore, MD, 2014


Devers, A., Pidcoe, P.E., Chan, A., Wilks, M. A pilot study to increase the number of steps achieved in stroke survivors during inpatient rehabilitation. APTA CSM: Indianapolis, IN, 2015.


Kardouni, J, Pidcoe, P.E., Shaffer, S., Finucane, S., Cheatham, S., Michener, L. Thoracic spine manipulation in patients with subacromial impingement syndrome does not immediately alter thoracic spine kinematics, thoracic excursion, or scapular kinematics. APTA CSM: Indianapolis, IN, 2015.


Nuckols, K., Sandlin, J., Bowen, M., Pidcoe, P.E. Comparison of rehabilitation outcomes before and after implementation of a clinical practice guideline using advanced technology for upper extremity recovery. APTA CSM: Las Vegas, NV, 2014


Publications


The gift of support
Gifts from estates of our alumni and friends have always been an important source of support to the VCU School of Allied Health Professions. Health care professionals often give what they can during their lifetimes, but sometimes their most significant gift may be a bequest to the school.

Private funding from alumni and friends is making a lasting difference to the school as state budget support declines. The generosity of planned giving donors strengthens opportunities for our students, faculty and programs. Gifts made from donors’ estates have enabled the university to recruit talented faculty members, establish innovative programs, fund lifesaving research, cure ailing patients and construct new buildings to accommodate growth. These deferred gifts enable us to plan for the future with confidence and provide the resources to ensure the long-term success of the VCU School of Allied Health Professions.

You have the opportunity to play a vital role in our future by establishing a bequest in your will or trust. Your bequest may be restricted for a specific purpose such as a named endowed fund for a scholarship, fellowship or professorship, or left unrestricted to allow the school to direct the funds to its greatest needs.

Estate gifts from retirement plans, wills, living trusts and insurance policies are only a few of the gift planning options available. To learn more, visit mcvfoundation.org/giving/planned.html. You can also learn about the MCV Society, which recognizes donors who have included the university in their estate plans.


Journal articles


Books
Jayne Shepherd (M.S. ‘81/OT), associate professor and assistant chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy, is revising her 2008 book, “Collaborating for Student Success: A guide for school-based occupational therapists.” She is seeking reflections, examples and stories that illustrate the essence of collaboration. If you’d like to share your success stories related to school-based collaboration, email Jayne Shepherd at jshepherd@vcu.edu.

Book Chapters


Grants
Gloria Bazzoli, Ph.D., Bon Secours Professor in the Department of Health Administration, along with Dave Harless, Ph.D., professor in the VCU School of Business, and Askar Chukmaitov, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’05/HSO), from the Department of Healthcare Policy and Research, were awarded a large research grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality — under the purview of the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services — to study the development and effectiveness of Accountable Care Organizations.

Benjamin Darter, PT, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, served as PI on “Effects of impaired limb function on gait adaptability,” funded by a $9,850 grant from the Endowment of VCU.

Stacy C. Dusing, PT, Ph.D., PCS, associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, served as PI on “Supporting Play, Early Exploration and Development in Infants born preterm (SPEEDI) Feeding and Parent Child Interaction Extension Project,” funded by a $5,000 research grant from the Children’s Hospital Foundation.

Jill Stulce, CRNA, a student in the Doctoral Program in Health Related Sciences, was awarded a $20,000 AANA Foundation grant and a $10,000 Webster University Faculty Research Grant as an investigator on “Exhaled breath analysis of free radical formation in patients with COPD who use oxygen therapy at home.”
In memoriam

Otto D. Payton, Ph.D., former faculty member and chair of the Department of Physical Therapy, died Sept. 4, 2014, at age 84. He was a member of the department’s faculty for 28 years and served as chair from 1982 to 1987.

Payton was regarded as an exceptional physical therapist, teacher and researcher. He was internationally known as a lecturer and author, as well as for his expertise in geriatrics, the psychosocial aspects of patient care and higher education.

He came to VCU as the director of the Department of Physical Therapy’s master’s degree program in 1971. During this time, he organized the Master of Science program and began two combined doctoral programs with the departments of Anatomy and Physiology that were nationally recognized for producing strong graduates in the teaching and research fields of physical therapy.

In an interview with the alumni publication, Scarab, Payton was asked what he loved most about his profession. “I enjoy helping people live at the highest level of functioning of which they are capable,” he replied. “And physical therapy students are fun to teach because they are truly interested in what they are doing.”

The Otto D. Payton Professorship of Physical Therapy was created at VCU in 2004 by an anonymous donation from a former student. Daniel L. Riddle, Ph.D., assistant chair and department coordinator in the School of Allied Health Professions’ Ph.D. distance-learning program, was the first appointed Otto D. Payton endowed professor in 2005 and still holds the position today.

---

Honor a loved one
Express sympathy and respect for a loved one by giving a gift in that person’s memory. Gifts can be made online at support.vcu.edu/give/AlliedHealth.

1940s
Margaret A. Hukill (B.S. ’49/PT; M.S. ’57/RC), of Columbus, Ohio, July 25, 2014, at age 90.

Marjorie Thornton (B.S. ’48/MET), of Richmond, Va., June 6, 2015, at age 89. In 2007, Thornton, a medical technologist, and her husband, John Thornton, M.D. (M.D. ’49; H.S. ’54), established The John L. and Marjorie L. Thornton Scholarship with a $100,000 gift. The scholarship is awarded to a School of Medicine student who shows merit as well as financial need.

1950s

1960s

1970s


1990s


2000s


2010s
Joy Bruce, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’11/HRS), of Atlanta, April 25, 2015, at age 43.


Faculty and staff
George R. Jarrell, Ph.D., of Kilmarnock, Va., June 4, 2014. He served as professor and assistant dean in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and retired in 1993 as professor emeritus.

Friends of VCU
Hon. Franklin “Frank” P. Hall, of Richmond, Va., May 25, 2015, at age 76. Hall provided 34 years of service to the Virginia House of Delegates. He served on the MCV Authority’s board of directors and on Jan. 30, 1978, was one of several delegates to offer House Bill 503, a bill to create a Virginia Center on Aging to be located at VCU School of Allied Health Professions where he served on the advisory council. He was also a member of the VCU Board of Visitors. Gov. Terry McAuliffe has appointed Phoebe P. Hall to the VCU Board of Visitors to serve the unexpired term of her late husband, Franklin “Frank” P. Hall. He was the father-in-law of Dan Johnson (M.H.A. ’08/HA).
By the numbers

Measures of our success

At the School of Allied Health Professions, the quality of our student body and their achievements is evidence of the school’s success in educating knowledgeable, innovative and clinically competent health professionals.

95+%
School retention rate

90+%
Students who graduated in the past three years did so on time or within one year of their initial anticipated date

95+%
Pass rate on national certification or licensing examinations

90+%
Students employed in the field within six months of graduation

Graduates of the School of Allied Health Professions find careers in health care that require specialized knowledge and often intensive academic preparation at the undergraduate, master’s or doctoral level.
Building for sustained excellence

Creating a unified space for the School of Allied Health Professions’ 11 units is a priority in VCU’s Master Site Plan. Five of the school’s nine programs are ranked among the nation’s top 20 by U.S. News & World Report.