A portrait of coordinated care
Examining how each allied health profession touches the lives of those with dementia
Dean and Professor
Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D.

Senior Associate Dean and the Katherine L. Lantz Professor
Alexander F. Tartaglia, D.Min.

Associate Dean for Research and Professor
Brian T. McMahon, Ph.D., C.R.C., N.C.C., C.C.M.

Associate Dean for Fiscal Affairs
Delisa A. Ropelowski, M.B.A.

Assistant Dean for Development and External Relations
Jessica F. Gurganus, M.A., M.A.Ed.

Departments
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences:
Teresa Nadder, Ph.D., associate professor and chair
Department of Gerontology:
E. Ayn Welleford, Ph.D., associate professor and chair
Department of Health Administration:
Carolyn Watts, Ph.D., professor and chair
Department of Neuro-Anesthesia:
Michael D. Faulkner, D.N.A., CRNA, professor and chair
Department of Occupational Therapy:
Al Copolillo, Ph.D., associate professor and chair
Department of Pain Management:
Ronald Davis, Ph.D., professor and the Rev. Robert L. Lasor Chair
Department of Physical Therapy:
Mary Snyder Sall, Ph.D., associate professor and chair
Department of Radiation Sciences:
Jeffrey S. Ligg, Ph.D., associate professor and chair
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling:
Katherine I. Lantz Professor

VCU Allied Health is published annually by the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions. Send address changes or comments to: VCU Allied Health Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions 1200 East Broad Street P.O. Box 907035 Richmond, Virginia 23298-0235

©2014, VCU School of Allied Health Professions
An equal opportunity/affirmative action university and federal contract and grant recipient.

Building common ground

I am happy to share with you the fourth edition of our school’s magazine. I have received such positive feedback from you, our alumni, that it appears the magazine will be around for many years to come. Of particular interest is that we have received so many great personal and professional updates from readers, that we’ve added additional pages to this issue devoted solely to alumni and faculty news.

Our school is starting to realize the expectations of its motto, Strength through Diversity. More specifically, we will soon be able to implement our “hidden curriculum,” which is to facilitate student engagement among departments. Our students will be able to interact with the final common pathway of a better understanding of the professions represented in our school. It is my belief that this will enhance students’ total understanding of all the professions, which will better prepare them for clinical practice following graduation. This will all be made possible by our opportunity to occupy a new building. At this point, our new building is the university’s top priority in the 2014-16 capital outlay plan and is now awaiting capital project funding from the Virginia legislature. We have conducted a preliminary study to develop a conceptual design of the building. The footprint, or where the building is scheduled to be located, sits at the corner of 10th and Leigh streets, across from the MCV Campus bookstore and less than a block from Larrick Student Center. Alumni support is absolutely critical to make this building a reality. Political influence would be very much appreciated, so please share your voice of support with your legislators throughout the commonwealth of Virginia. When this new building becomes a reality, our students will become the beneficiaries and will realize their academic and clinical strength through the diversity of their professions.

Again, welcome, and I do hope you enjoy the magazine. I am sure that you will see that the quality of this publication sits at or above the quality of our rankings. Should you have any questions or concerns, please email me at sahpdean@vcu.edu or call me at (804) 828-3279.

Thanks for your support,

Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
By the time you reach the end of this sentence, someone in the world will have been diagnosed with dementia. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that the number of new dementia cases each year totals nearly 7.7 million, which equates to a diagnosis every four seconds.

Numbers, however, can only tell part of the story. The fact that WHO projects the population of people living with dementia to double every 20 years — reaching 65.7 million by 2030 and 115.4 million by 2050 — certainly provides a sense of scope, but it fails to portray the equally rising number of people taking on the responsibilities of caregiving, or the increased demand for skilled professionals throughout the health care system.

Despite such far-reaching implications, a diagnosis of dementia remains so deeply personal at its core because it impacts the organ we’ve trusted most in our lives to guide us. Such a diagnosis can leave people feeling helpless, afraid, angry, even ashamed. At every stage of progression, though, you’ll find an allied health professional there to help diagnose, educate, guide and care — not only for the people fighting these conditions, but also for the loved ones fighting alongside them.

Perception vs. reality

“There’s this assumption that everybody gets dementia as they get older, that it’s a normal part of aging, and that’s really not true,” says E. Ayn Welleford, Ph.D. (M.S. ’93/G; Ph.D. ’98), chair of the Department of Gerontology in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions.

That assumption, Welleford adds, can often lead people to see signs of dementia (such as forgetting one’s car keys or not immediately being able to recall a name) where there really aren’t any. Or, conversely, people may dismiss actual warning signs of dementia (such as not being able to engage in the processes of planning and acting out a day’s activities, or extreme forgetfulness) as just being part of the typical aging process.

When symptoms are interpreted improperly, dementia runs the risk of becoming a catch-all diagnosis, Welleford says, when there are so many other possible explanations for the cognitive impairments a person may be presenting. For example, based on the answers a person may give on a mental status exam, what might initially appear to be dementia may sometimes be more indicative of depression. Similarly, since common health complications like urinary tract infections or medication interactions can cause symptoms, Welleford’s department, as well as the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU and its Virginia Geriatric Education Center, can help to infuse a more intimate knowledge of the aging process through continuing education and training. That way, health care providers and staff at places like adult day care centers can better recognize and differentiate the symptoms of dementia to aid proper diagnosis.

Enlisting the work of clinical laboratory scientists early in the diagnosis process is also important, says William Korzun, Ph.D., DABCC, MT(ASCP) (Ph.D. ’88), associate professor in the VCU Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

“A physician often will order clinical laboratory tests for liver, kidney and thyroid function, because defects in those organs can lead to dementia-like symptoms,” Korzun says. “Likewise, vitamin B12 and folic acid deficiencies, as well as other anemias, have been associated with dementia symptoms, and if you treat those conditions, then the dementia recedes.”

Such tests have established reference ranges, and any results that fall outside those ranges could raise red flags to a physician, Korzun says. However, in the event that such tests fail to rule out other causes of the symptoms being presented, a physician may also request a series of brain imaging tests, which would fall under the purview of the radiologic technologist.

“With CT and MRI, we can look at different structures of the brain to see if there is a tumor or a stroke, and we can also look at the functioning of the brain to see if there is any lack of blood flow to an area or an infarction that may be causing these symptoms,” says Rebecca Keith, RT(R)(CT)(ARRT), assistant professor and clinical coordinator of radiography in the VCU Department of...
This can be a very devastating diagnosis for many people and their families to accept, because they know their lives are going to change in so many ways.

– KATHY BERRY, B.S. ’78; M.S. ’83/P; Cert. ’83/G; CHAPLAIN

Alzheimer’s disease, dementia and related conditions — What are they?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, dementia is a term used to describe a group of cognitive disorders marked by memory impairment and difficulty in the domains of language, motor activity, object recognition and executive function (the ability to plan, organize and abstract). Dementia typically impacts the lives of older adults and is not classified as a disease but rather as a group of symptoms that affect the mental and physical tasks listed above.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common cause of dementia symptoms and is marked by the progression of those symptoms, as well as brain-cell death. In addition to Alzheimer’s disease, there are several other conditions that are characterized by dementia symptoms. These include Huntington’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

The Department of Gerontology manages a webinar series, funded through the Virginia Center on Aging’s Geriatric Training and Education Initiative, titled “The Other Dementias: Virtual Training and Active Learning on Non-Alzheimer’s Dementias” to help health care providers throughout the state learn to better differentiate the symptoms and trajectories of these conditions. That way, they can tailor treatment plans even further and develop best practices moving forward.

Learn more and view the webinars at alzpossible.org.

As with any elderly individual, there is going to be a decline in physical function for people with dementia. However, there are unique physical challenges that dementia presents above and beyond the typical aging process, according to Sheryl Finucane, PT, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’93), assistant professor and coordinator of graduate education in the VCU Department of Physical Therapy.

“There tends to be a higher frequency of falls, some of which can be attributed to typical declines in general balance and muscle strength,” Finucane says. “But there is evidence that there are declines in gait associated with dementia, which can also lead to a fall. On top of that, a person with cognitive impairment may have difficulty identifying risk factors in their environment, they may not self-assess their own physical limitations as well as they used to, and they also may lose the ability to assess the risks around them.”

A physical therapist, then, will work with an individual in an exercise or activity regimen to help improve the balance, muscle strength and mobility needed to navigate his environment safely, which can be as minimal as going from a sitting to standing position 10 times a day, to light-weight or resistance-band exercises.

Meanwhile, an occupational therapist can work to modify an environment. Things like adding adaptive equipment such as grab bars in a bathroom can go a long way toward mitigating safety risks, as can working to reduce clutter, loose wires on a floor or ripples in a carpet, says Jodi Teitelman, Ph.D. (M.S. ’78; Ph.D. ’85; Cert. ’83/G), associate professor in VCU’s Department of Occupational Therapy. As the disease progresses, more modifications might be needed to avoid other dangerous risk factors, including wandering, which can entail adding stop signs to doors or other ways to distract a person from their initial urge to leave their environment.

Safety, however, isn’t the only role occupational and physical therapists play in the lives of patients and caregivers.

“Part of that challenge rests in assessing each individual’s ability to function on a daily basis, and while occupational and physical therapists are enlisted to perform such an assessment, oftentimes it’s the family caregiver who can provide the most insight,” says Finucane. “However, how can medical professionals be sure that the information a caregiver provides is accurate?”

That’s a question Catherine Verrier Piersol, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’13/HRS), examined closely during her time as a student in the Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences program, which has also helped inform her current work as a clinical director of Jefferson Elder Care in the Thomas Jefferson University School of Health Professions in Philadelphia.

A portion of this research involved developing a tool to measure caregivers’ abilities to accurately assess a patient’s functional capacity, which Piersol says can guide “targeted intervention planning and teach caregivers strategies for maximizing a patient’s participation in daily activities, while also ensuring safety” — a process that often involves physical and occupational therapists working in tandem.

The methods they use and regimens they prescribe are also aimed at helping patients maintain a sense of independence and enjoyment out of life. For example, a caregiver may report that their family member can no longer feed himself, when, in reality, an adjustment to a mealtime routine like placing the spoon in the person’s hand may trigger him to begin eating on his own.
keeping individuals with dementia engaged

Maintaining a sense of independence can be very important, particularly in the fragmented systems, and that just can't continue. It can mean organized religion (though, of course it can mean exactly that). It can mean other ways to interact with a person's loved ones. According to the Alzheimer's Association, 80 percent of care provided to those with Alzheimer's and related conditions is provided by unpaid caregivers, and in 2012, those caregivers provided 175 billion hours of unpaid care valued at $216.4 billion. The challenges caregivers face, though, revolve as much around the stress and emotional toll of caregiving as it does providing daily assistance. We have to understand that families are sometimes involved in a grief process, as the individual with the disease may not be 'the someone' they know and trust," says Karen Phipps (M.S. '81/RC), a licensed professional counselor and a licensed marriage and family therapist. "They have to be able to accept permanent change, which is very difficult and disruptive, and they'll need assistance in developing skills to cope with that." Helping caregivers requires building stronger support networks and simply getting information out there, which is something Ed Ansello, Ph.D., executive director of the Virginia Center on Aging, says continues to be a prime focus. Consequent to that, Ansello says, is the added challenge brought by the fact that more people with developmental disabilities are living long enough to develop these conditions as well, causing extra burden on even experienced caregivers who may be unused to dealing with dementia.

"Regardless of the specific condition or circumstances, you never want to lose family caregivers in the equation," Ansello says. "You want to find ways to build resources and conduct training to reinforce a caregiver's ability to continue what they're doing, because it's so extremely valuable. But you also have to help them think of themselves, too — how to care for their own health and find respite for themselves — because that's just as vital as the care they provide."

Caring for the caregiver

In an ideal world, a physical therapist could come into the home of every person with dementia and work with them on strength-building exercises, anoccupational therapist could periodically come and observe a person in a series of particular activities and measure functional capacity, a counselor could come and talk about particular anxieties a person may be feeling. Unfortunately, however, the bulk of that care most often falls on a person's loved ones. According to the Alzheimer's Association, 80 percent of care provided to those with Alzheimer's and related conditions is provided by unpaid caregivers, and in 2012, those caregivers provided 175 billion hours of unpaid care valued at $216.4 billion. The challenges caregivers face, though, revolve as much around the stress and emotional toll of caregiving as it does providing daily assistance. We have to understand that families are sometimes involved in a grief process, as the individual with the disease may not be 'the someone' they know and trust," says Karen Phipps (M.S. '81/RC), a licensed professional counselor and a licensed marriage and family therapist. "They have to be able to accept permanent change, which is very difficult and disruptive, and they'll need assistance in developing skills to cope with that." Helping caregivers requires building stronger support networks and simply getting information out there, which is something Ed Ansello, Ph.D., executive director of the Virginia Center on Aging, says continues to be a prime focus. Consequent to that, Ansello says, is the added challenge brought by the fact that more people with developmental disabilities are living long enough to develop these conditions as well, causing extra burden on even experienced caregivers who may be unused to dealing with dementia.

"Regardless of the specific condition or circumstances, you never want to lose family caregivers in the equation," Ansello says. "You want to find ways to build resources and conduct training to reinforce a caregiver's ability to continue what they're doing, because it's so extremely valuable. But you also have to help them think of themselves, too — how to care for their own health and find respite for themselves — because that's just as vital as the care they provide."

What the future holds

The easiest explanation for the projected increase in dementia diagnoses referenced at the outset is that more people, in general, are living longer, and because people are living longer, hospital stays are also seeing an increase in elderly patients presenting for surgery — particularly in the field of orthopedics and cardiac surgery. "One of the things we're interested in, then," says Chuck Biddle, Ph.D., CRNA, professor and director of research in the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia, "is finding whether there are things we're doing in the OR that might accelerate or even precipitate cognitive decline. There are so many factors patients experience during surgical care, so we're looking at the different drugs used in anesthesia, the amount of blood loss, how long they're under anesthesia, what kind of operation they're having, what a patient's temperature is before, during and after operation, what time of day the surgery is performed ... [How do factors like these influence their postoperative cognition, both long-term and short term? And are there things we can change to improve that cognitive performance after surgery?"

Biddle and his team have made some inroads into answering those questions through an observational study, which can lay the groundwork for more pinpointed and intensive investigations into those areas. Biddle says, particularly concerning drug types and drug dosages. However, research into what roles surgery and anesthesia play in the onset of dementia is still very new, and Biddle is quick to point out that people shouldn’t avoid seeking the care they need for fear that a surgery might cause the onset of dementia or cognitive decline.

When it comes to dementia, however, fear is often a prevailing emotion — fear of becoming dependent on others, fear of not being able to remember various things, fear of needing assisted living services. With the projected increase in diagnoses, though, a higher demand for more and better integrated assisted living services seems unavoidable.

For Mike Rowe (M.H.A. ’91/HA), a long-term care administrator in training at Westminster Canterbury, this demand is going to expand not only the role of health care administrators, but also the approach of health administration education programs to include more long-term care emphasis. "Everyone’s looking at how we can better coordinate the care of this population of patients. Historically, these have all operated as very independent, fragmented systems, and that just can’t continue. Administrators in long-term care have to know what’s going on in all

In 2012, 15.4 million family and friends provided 17.5 billion hours of unpaid care to those with Alzheimer’s and other dementias — care valued at $216.4 billion — and due to the physical and emotional toll of caregiving, these caregivers accrued $9.1 billion in additional health care costs of their own.

— Alzheimer’s Association
One in every three seniors dies with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia, making it the second-largest contributor to death among older Americans.

— ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION

The stories of how we care for those with dementia are heard one at a time. They’re told through therapists coordinating better care systems and through scientists working to loss, and through therapists working to better detect and prevent these conditions. They’re told through therapists who work to build the physical, occupational and emotional strength needed to face a diagnosis and all of the days that follow. They’re told through gerontologists educating providers, families and communities, through administrators coordinating better care systems and through a school which supports that care at every turn. 

Andy Bates is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

Even as allied health professionals and researchers work to find better ways to treat dementia, the benefits of simply sitting with a person and providing a nonjudgmental presence in their lives will never change.

Funding Alzheimer’s research Two funds managed out of the School of Allied Health Professions provide support for research aimed at advancing our understanding of Alzheimer’s disease.

Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund: As an organization with its finger on the pulse of Virginia’s aging population and the people who serve that population, who better than the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU to recognize the need for research, no matter how seemingly small, into conditions that currently affect more than 5 million Americans. Since 1982, the VCoA has administered grants from the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund, which is appropriated annually by the state General Assembly and remains one of the most effective state-supported seed grant programs in the country. While these grants typically weigh in at less than $40,000 individually, from the $3 million in grants awarded since 1982, awardees have gone on to obtain an additional $32 million in funding thanks in part to findings secured through their ARDFAF projects. Since 1982, the VCoA has awarded 145 grants in total, with VCU researchers obtaining 43, or nearly 30 percent, of those awards.

Alzheimer’s Disease Fund: The Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, administered by the Department of Gerontology, was created in 1983 as a way to support graduate student education and research in the field of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions. Sparked by the efforts of the late Stephen W. Harkins, Ph.D. (M.P.H. ’09), who was instrumental in establishing the first support group for Alzheimer’s disease in Virginia, and his wife, Janice N. Harkins (M.S. ’84/PT), the fund has continued to grow and impact our understanding of these conditions, as well as establish best practices moving forward. To contribute to the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, visit support.vcu.edu/gerontology, or contact Jessica F. Gurganus, assistant dean for development and external relations, at (804) 828-3269 or sahp.loyal@vcu.edu.

Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund: As an organization with its finger on the pulse of Virginia’s aging population and the people who serve that population, who better than the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU to recognize the need for research, no matter how seemingly small, into conditions that currently affect more than 5 million Americans. Since 1982, the VCoA has administered grants from the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund, which is appropriated annually by the state General Assembly and remains one of the most effective state-supported seed grant programs in the country. While these grants typically weigh in at less than $40,000 individually, from the $3 million in grants awarded since 1982, awardees have gone on to obtain an additional $32 million in funding thanks in part to findings secured through their ARDFAF projects. Since 1982, the VCoA has awarded 145 grants in total, with VCU researchers obtaining 43, or nearly 30 percent, of those awards.

Alzheimer’s Disease Fund: The Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, administered by the Department of Gerontology, was created in 1983 as a way to support graduate student education and research in the field of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions. Sparked by the efforts of the late Stephen W. Harkins, Ph.D. (M.P.H. ’09), who was instrumental in establishing the first support group for Alzheimer’s disease in Virginia, and his wife, Janice N. Harkins (M.S. ’84/PT), the fund has continued to grow and impact our understanding of these conditions, as well as establish best practices moving forward. To contribute to the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, visit support.vcu.edu/gerontology, or contact Jessica F. Gurganus, assistant dean for development and external relations, at (804) 828-3269 or sahp.loyal@vcu.edu.

Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund: As an organization with its finger on the pulse of Virginia’s aging population and the people who serve that population, who better than the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU to recognize the need for research, no matter how seemingly small, into conditions that currently affect more than 5 million Americans. Since 1982, the VCoA has administered grants from the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund, which is appropriated annually by the state General Assembly and remains one of the most effective state-supported seed grant programs in the country. While these grants typically weigh in at less than $40,000 individually, from the $3 million in grants awarded since 1982, awardees have gone on to obtain an additional $32 million in funding thanks in part to findings secured through their ARDFAF projects. Since 1982, the VCoA has awarded 145 grants in total, with VCU researchers obtaining 43, or nearly 30 percent, of those awards.

Alzheimer’s Disease Fund: The Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, administered by the Department of Gerontology, was created in 1983 as a way to support graduate student education and research in the field of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions. Sparked by the efforts of the late Stephen W. Harkins, Ph.D. (M.P.H. ’09), who was instrumental in establishing the first support group for Alzheimer’s disease in Virginia, and his wife, Janice N. Harkins (M.S. ’84/PT), the fund has continued to grow and impact our understanding of these conditions, as well as establish best practices moving forward. To contribute to the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, visit support.vcu.edu/gerontology, or contact Jessica F. Gurganus, assistant dean for development and external relations, at (804) 828-3269 or sahp.loyal@vcu.edu.

Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund: As an organization with its finger on the pulse of Virginia’s aging population and the people who serve that population, who better than the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU to recognize the need for research, no matter how seemingly small, into conditions that currently affect more than 5 million Americans. Since 1982, the VCoA has administered grants from the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund, which is appropriated annually by the state General Assembly and remains one of the most effective state-supported seed grant programs in the country. While these grants typically weigh in at less than $40,000 individually, from the $3 million in grants awarded since 1982, awardees have gone on to obtain an additional $32 million in funding thanks in part to findings secured through their ARDFAF projects. Since 1982, the VCoA has awarded 145 grants in total, with VCU researchers obtaining 43, or nearly 30 percent, of those awards.

Alzheimer’s Disease Fund: The Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, administered by the Department of Gerontology, was created in 1983 as a way to support graduate student education and research in the field of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions. Sparked by the efforts of the late Stephen W. Harkins, Ph.D. (M.P.H. ’09), who was instrumental in establishing the first support group for Alzheimer’s disease in Virginia, and his wife, Janice N. Harkins (M.S. ’84/PT), the fund has continued to grow and impact our understanding of these conditions, as well as establish best practices moving forward. To contribute to the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, visit support.vcu.edu/gerontology, or contact Jessica F. Gurganus, assistant dean for development and external relations, at (804) 828-3269 or sahp.loyal@vcu.edu.

Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund: As an organization with its finger on the pulse of Virginia’s aging population and the people who serve that population, who better than the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU to recognize the need for research, no matter how seemingly small, into conditions that currently affect more than 5 million Americans. Since 1982, the VCoA has administered grants from the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund, which is appropriated annually by the state General Assembly and remains one of the most effective state-supported seed grant programs in the country. While these grants typically weigh in at less than $40,000 individually, from the $3 million in grants awarded since 1982, awardees have gone on to obtain an additional $32 million in funding thanks in part to findings secured through their ARDFAF projects. Since 1982, the VCoA has awarded 145 grants in total, with VCU researchers obtaining 43, or nearly 30 percent, of those awards.

Alzheimer’s Disease Fund: The Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, administered by the Department of Gerontology, was created in 1983 as a way to support graduate student education and research in the field of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions. Sparked by the efforts of the late Stephen W. Harkins, Ph.D. (M.P.H. ’09), who was instrumental in establishing the first support group for Alzheimer’s disease in Virginia, and his wife, Janice N. Harkins (M.S. ’84/PT), the fund has continued to grow and impact our understanding of these conditions, as well as establish best practices moving forward. To contribute to the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, visit support.vcu.edu/gerontology, or contact Jessica F. Gurganus, assistant dean for development and external relations, at (804) 828-3269 or sahp.loyal@vcu.edu.

Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund: As an organization with its finger on the pulse of Virginia’s aging population and the people who serve that population, who better than the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU to recognize the need for research, no matter how seemingly small, into conditions that currently affect more than 5 million Americans. Since 1982, the VCoA has administered grants from the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund, which is appropriated annually by the state General Assembly and remains one of the most effective state-supported seed grant programs in the country. While these grants typically weigh in at less than $40,000 individually, from the $3 million in grants awarded since 1982, awardees have gone on to obtain an additional $32 million in funding thanks in part to findings secured through their ARDFAF projects. Since 1982, the VCoA has awarded 145 grants in total, with VCU researchers obtaining 43, or nearly 30 percent, of those awards.

Alzheimer’s Disease Fund: The Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, administered by the Department of Gerontology, was created in 1983 as a way to support graduate student education and research in the field of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions. Sparked by the efforts of the late Stephen W. Harkins, Ph.D. (M.P.H. ’09), who was instrumental in establishing the first support group for Alzheimer’s disease in Virginia, and his wife, Janice N. Harkins (M.S. ’84/PT), the fund has continued to grow and impact our understanding of these conditions, as well as establish best practices moving forward. To contribute to the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund, visit support.vcu.edu/gerontology, or contact Jessica F. Gurganus, assistant dean for development and external relations, at (804) 828-3269 or sahp.loyal@vcu.edu.
A university on the rise

An ambitious strategic plan, Quest for Distinction helps VCU gain national attention and paves the way for future achievement

By Katherine Schutt

Keep your eye on Virginia Commonwealth University. That’s the message from U.S. News & World Report, publisher of the annual Best Colleges list, pored over each year by high school students scrutinizing prospective colleges. In the 2014 issue featuring the college rankings, the magazine names VCU among the top 15 up-and-coming schools in the nation — the first time the university has received such recognition.

The ranking comes at the hands of peers who were asked to identify institutions that are making the most promising and innovative changes in the areas of academics, faculty and student life. VCU ranked 14th among national universities, tying with Boston University, Carnegie Mellon University, Tulane University and six others.

Certainly, the VCU School of Allied Health Professions’ five nationally ranked graduate programs — nurse anesthesia (ranked first by U.S. News & World Report), health administration (fifth); rehabilitation counseling (seventh), occupational therapy (15th) and physical therapy (19th) — helped pave the way for VCU’s ascent. “Being listed among America’s rising national universities is an honor that reflects our commitment to brightening VCU’s star on the national map,” VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D., says. “Our mission as a research university is to advance the human experience through education, innovation, service and a focus on human health, and our efforts have begun to attract national attention in countless ways.”

A strategic climb

This latest accolade may be the most visible endorsement so far of VCU’s strategic plan, Quest for Distinction (quest.vcu.edu), which launched in 2011. The ambitious six-year plan aims to transform VCU into one of the nation’s premier urban, public research universities. At its core are four guiding principles: a focus on student success at all levels, unparalleled innovation through research, a universitywide commitment to human health, and engagement and empowerment in the communities VCU serves.

“Our health sciences schools are developing curricula that promote the development of active lifelong learners who can self-assess and function in teams,” explains Quincy J. Byrdsong, Ed.D., associate vice president for health sciences – research and FACSMM, former provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, who oversaw the implementation of Quest. “This year I hope VCU begins to make that a true part of the institutional culture, not just an aspiration.”

Quest in action

For VCU’s five health sciences schools, Quest brings an enhanced emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration in the areas of academics and research. “Our health sciences schools are developing curricula and a strategic climb

A university on the rise

An ambitious strategic plan, Quest for Distinction helps VCU gain national attention and paves the way for future achievement

By Katherine Schutt

Keep your eye on Virginia Commonwealth University. That’s the message from U.S. News & World Report, publisher of the annual Best Colleges list, pored over each year by high school students scrutinizing prospective colleges. In the 2014 issue featuring the college rankings, the magazine names VCU among the top 15 up-and-coming schools in the nation — the first time the university has received such recognition.

The ranking comes at the hands of peers who were asked to identify institutions that are making the most promising and innovative changes in the areas of academics, faculty and student life. VCU ranked 14th among national universities, tying with Boston University, Carnegie Mellon University, Tulane University and six others.

Certainly, the VCU School of Allied Health Professions’ five nationally ranked graduate programs — nurse anesthesia (ranked first by U.S. News & World Report), health administration (fifth); rehabilitation counseling (seventh), occupational therapy (15th) and physical therapy (19th) — helped pave the way for VCU’s ascent. “Being listed among America’s rising national universities is an honor that reflects our commitment to brightening VCU’s star on the national map,” VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D., says. “Our mission as a research university is to advance the human experience through education, innovation, service and a focus on human health, and our efforts have begun to attract national attention in countless ways.”

A strategic climb

This latest accolade may be the most visible endorsement so far of VCU’s strategic plan, Quest for Distinction (quest.vcu.edu), which launched in 2011. The ambitious six-year plan aims to transform VCU into one of the nation’s premier urban, public research universities. At its core are four guiding principles: a focus on student success at all levels, unparalleled innovation through research, a universitywide commitment to human health, and engagement and empowerment in the communities VCU serves.

“Our health sciences schools are developing curricula that promote the development of active lifelong learners who can self-assess and function in teams,” explains Quincy J. Byrdsong, Ed.D., associate vice president for health sciences – research and FACSMM, former provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, who oversaw the implementation of Quest. “This year I hope VCU begins to make that a true part of the institutional culture, not just an aspiration.”

Quest in action

For VCU’s five health sciences schools, Quest brings an enhanced emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration in the areas of academics and research. “Our health sciences schools are developing curricula that promote the development of active lifelong learners who can self-assess and function in teams,” explains Quincy J. Byrdsong, Ed.D., associate vice president for health sciences – research and academic affairs. “Our focus on interdisciplinary collaborative research means we are equipping not only the next generation of health care professionals but the next generation of scientists and academicians as well.”

The bar is set high, but VCU seems poised to reach it. “Our ability to achieve our goals is attributed to the many faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends who personify the tenets of Quest,” Rao says. “Every day, our community continues to prove that these ideals are woven together inseparably to make up the rich educational experience and environment for discovery at VCU.”

Katherine Schutt is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

“More than simply a set of ideals, Quest is a true road map for how we seek to achieve our ambitions,” Rao explains. “It underlies everything we do here at VCU.”

In the years since Quest was launched, the plan has continued to evolve from broad concepts to focused strategies for implementation. The first years of Quest were dedicated to articulating the vision and determining high-level initiatives and the metrics to measure them.

Now in its third year, Quest is focused on turning the high-level initiatives into unit-level strategies. The expectation is that each unit within VCU — including individual schools and divisions — will develop its own plan for contributing to the success of Quest and measuring individual progress against common benchmarks.

In short, it’s a team effort, and VCU wants everyone involved. “Each of us has a role to play in the success of the values, vision and goals of Quest,” says Beverly J. Warren, Ed.D., Ph.D., FACSM, former provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, who oversees the implementation of Quest. “This year I hope VCU begins to make that a true part of the institutional culture, not just an aspiration.”

Quest in action

For VCU’s five health sciences schools, Quest brings an enhanced emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration in the areas of academics and research. “Our health sciences schools are developing curricula that promote the development of active lifelong learners who can self-assess and function in teams,” explains Quincy J. Byrdsong, Ed.D., associate vice president for health sciences – research and academic affairs. “Our focus on interdisciplinary collaborative research means we are equipping not only the next generation of health care professionals but the next generation of scientists and academicians as well.”

The bar is set high, but VCU seems poised to reach it. “Our ability to achieve our goals is attributed to the many faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends who personify the tenets of Quest,” Rao says. “Every day, our community continues to prove that these ideals are woven together inseparably to make up the rich educational experience and environment for discovery at VCU.”

Katherine Schutt is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

“The bar is set high, but VCU seems poised to reach it. “Our ability to achieve our goals is attributed to the many faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends who personify the tenets of Quest,” Rao says. “Every day, our community continues to prove that these ideals are woven together inseparably to make up the rich educational experience and environment for discovery at VCU.”

Katherine Schutt is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.
A new building for the School of Allied Health Professions that brings all 11 of the school’s units under one roof is at the forefront of Virginia Commonwealth University’s Master Site Plan.

The 2013 plan, developed by university officials with stakeholder input, includes development, renovation and construction on the MCV Campus that enhances academic instruction and health sciences research.

A new $60 million, 120,000-square-foot facility for the School of Allied Health Professions is VCU’s top priority in the 2014-16 capital outlay plan, says Russell Uzzle, VCU’s university planner and a key player in developing the master plan.

Construction of the building is planned for 10th and Leigh streets, across from the N Deck in the space occupied by the aging Bear, Rudd, Warner and McRae residence halls.

The master plan also addresses the need for new undergraduate student housing on the Monroe Park Campus and identifies new graduate and professional student housing on the MCV Campus.

Currently, the school’s nine academic units, the dean’s office and the Virginia Center on Aging are scattered among five buildings on two campuses.

On the MCV Campus, the departments of Occupational Therapy, Gerontology and Rehabilitation Counseling as well as the Virginia Center on Aging are scattered among five buildings on two campuses.

On the MCV Campus, the departments of Occupational Therapy, Gerontology and Rehabilitation Counseling as well as the Virginia Center on Aging are in the Theatre Row Building, which VCU leases from the city of Richmond.

Also on the MCV Campus, the departments of Nurse Anesthesia, Patient Counseling and Physical Therapy as well as the dean’s office reside in West Hospital. The Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences is in Randolph Minor Hall and the Department of Health Administration is located in the William H. Grant House.

On the Monroe Park Campus, the Department of Radiation Sciences is in the West Grace Street Housing building that also contains The Honors College.

A new building for the school was included in the original 2004 master plan, but Uzzle says competing priorities such as a $50.8 million renovation and addition to Cabell Library that’s currently underway preceded it.

“Now, it’s the School of Allied Health Professions’ turn,” Uzzle says. “They have some of the top-ranked programs in the country. There is certainly a crying need to put them all in adequate facilities co-located under one roof.”

The school’s programs have been in 13 different buildings since Dean Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., began leading the school in 1997.

He marvels at how well the school has performed despite limited classroom and research space and no unified home.

Five of the school’s nine programs are ranked among the nation’s top 20 by U.S. News & World Report, including nurse anesthesia at No. 1.

“We do the best we can,” Drain says. “We have really fabulously ranked programs. But we’re at a critical mass where we desperately need a new building.”

The school turns away qualified students each year in part because it doesn’t have seats for them, Drain says.

For example, the physical therapy program averages 800 applications per year and only enrolls 54 students. The nurse anesthesia program receives about 300 applications for its class of 35.

At 120,000 square feet, the planned facility is slated to have 12 percent more assignable space than the school currently occupies across its myriad homes. That will help expand enrollment, Drain says.

VCU’s top facility project is a new building for the School of Allied Health Professions

By Samieh Shalash
The school’s programs match some of the hottest careers in today’s market, Drain says, with seven of them producing graduates prepared for the best 25 jobs of 2013 as ranked by U.S. News & World Report. The list includes physical therapists, occupational therapists, substance abuse counselors, radiological technologists, clinical laboratory scientists and mental health counselors.

In addition to bolstering current programs, a new building will allow the school to consider adding high-demand programs that currently doesn’t have the space to accommodate, such as medical sonography and speech pathology, Drain says. There’s also a demand in the Richmond region for physician assistant programs that it currently doesn’t have.

“The new building also will allow the school’s ability to retain research faculty as major turnover looms,” Drain says — about 40 percent of faculty are projected to retire over the next seven years.

The current lack of dedicated lab and research space has hindered the school’s ability to retain research faculty. For example, the Theatre Row Building does not have wet lab space. That means occupational therapy researchers have limited ability to conduct instruction and research in the same building, and must seek out temporary space in other facilities.

It’s also challenging to recruit patients and conduct human subject research due to limited parking and building access, Drain says.

“ ‘This will open up the opportunity for us to have folks come to the building and to recruit them more easily,’ he says. ‘We will be over the by the [MCV Campus] bookstore so hopefully patients enrolled in studies can park at the desk there and come right in.’

PLANNING AHEAD

VCU began planning the new School of Allied Health Professions building in fall 2013 with a study led by a school-appointed committee that includes faculty, staff and student representatives.

It’s important to identify each program’s requirements before beginning detailed architectural design, says Uzzle, the university’s planner.

“ ‘We need to understand what their design requirements are department-by-department and sometimes room-by-room,’ he says.

Drain has a long list of both needs and wishes for the facility. Among them is additional space for patient simulation centers such as the one used by nurse anesthesia students, which he says is one of the finest in the country but is missing a bedside simulation component.

He also wants to make sure there are dedicated areas for students to expand the informal curriculum and mingle, as well as areas where faculty can exchange ideas to promote interprofessional education and research opportunities.

“The school’s faculty members are marooned in their own buildings so they don’t know each other too well,” he says. “Just think of the things that can happen if they’re all under one roof — they can discuss research, spawn new ideas, develop courses and so much more just by being provided this new opportunity of space.”

Collaboration and increased program space are just some of the perks of giving the school its own building. Uzzle says, Consolidation will reduce duplication of space and staff and give the school more prominence.

“ ‘For the first time ever, it gives the School of Allied Health Professions a front door to the world and an opportunity to establish a place on our campus,” Uzzle says. “It improves their posture and their image, and it improves the quality of the built environment on the MCV Campus as a whole.”

Samieh Shalash is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

PlANS for a new School of Allied Health Professions building are among a slate of improvements slated for the MCV Campus in VCU’s Master Site Plan. Here’s a look at complete, current and upcoming projects.

Sanger Hall Renovations – Ongoing renovations upgrade academic and research spaces and equipment in a four-story addition of the structure

McGlothlin Medical Education Center – Opened in spring 2013, this 200,000-square-foot, 12-story facility is located on the former site of the A.D. Williams Clinic, at the corner of 25th and Marshall streets. It houses the dean’s office for the School of Medicine and allows for increased enrollment for the school.

Past to Future Walkway – This walkway unites historic, symbolic campus places with the newest, state-of-the-art teaching and research spaces on the MCV Campus. It provides high-quality outdoor open space to accommodate collegiate meeting and interaction. The walkway provides opportunity for interaction that will always be difficult on the busy streets surrounding the MCV Campus.

Randolph Minor Hall restoration – This historic structure, formerly known as First African Baptist Church, will be renovated to serve as conference and meeting space for health sciences programs.

For an overview of plans for a new building, view pages 78-79 of VCU’s 2013 Master Site Plan at mld.vcu.edu/evu_master_plan.pdf.
Support for those who serve

Veterans don’t always get the help they need when they return home. Researchers in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling are trying to change that.

By Katherine Schutt

Tom Waterworth (B.A. ’10) may seem an unlikely advocate for the practice of mindfulness. A veteran of the Army National Guard, Waterworth spent more than a year serving in the combat zone of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. But he’s a true believer having tried the stress-reduction technique during a Virginia Commonwealth University pilot study on resilience in veterans. “I loved it,” says Waterworth, now a partner with Veteran Tech Brigade, which helps returning soldiers find jobs. “I thought it was going to be really weird and kooky but gave into it and found it to be hugely helpful.”

Mindfulness is just one of several activities Amy Armstrong, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’02), and Carolyn Hawley, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’06/HRS), chair and assistant professor, respectively, in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, have incorporated into a training model designed to enhance resilience skills in returning soldiers. Approximately 30 percent of returning soldiers are affected by mild brain trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder, which can make it difficult for them to reintegrate into society. These soldiers may experience issues ranging from unemployment to depression and suicidal thoughts. With a little assistance, Armstrong believes they can integrate into society and be contributing members to their community.

“Resilience is not extraordinary,” Armstrong says. “Most of us have it to some degree, and research has shown that it can be learned. There are times when we may need additional supports or strategies in order to learn and implement that skill.”

“This is the type of research that can help these veterans get back into a productive life.”

— Joice Nash, Grant Committee Chair, Sheltering Arms Physical Rehabilitation Hospital

Armstrong and Hawley tested out evidence-based strategies during a 2011 pilot study funded by the VCU Presidential Research Quest Fund. Now they are about to expand their research, thanks to a $49,000 grant from the Sheltering Arms Fund, a component fund of The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia.

“We think it’s important that people with ongoing disabilities learn how to get acclimated back into the community and become productive citizens,” says Joyce Nash, grant committee chair for Sheltering Arms Physical Rehabilitation Hospital, which offers a full range of rehabilitation and wellness services for adults with disabilities. “This is the type of research that can help these veterans get back into a productive life.”

The grant will allow the researchers to conduct several seven-week trainings for a total of 30 veterans, allowing them to further test and hone the model. The ultimate goal is to establish a national program.

“Veterans have so many skills and talents to offer the community,” Armstrong says. “It’s a matter of learning how to identify their strengths and assisting them in communicating those strengths and learning how to apply them in employment settings.”

The study emphasizes job-seeking skills, recognizing the relationship between employment and overall well-being.

“In our society we often define ourselves by what we do,” Armstrong says. “If you have career well-being, research has shown that you are more than twice as likely to have physical, financial, community and social well-being. Once you get a job, then those other parts of your life may fall into place a little more seamlessly.”

Waterworth will serve as the facilitator for the veterans, providing credibility and relatability to the study participants.

“We think the veterans will be able to identify with me and see that it is indeed something that a vet would subscribe to,” says Waterworth, who helped VCU establish its Military Student Services Center in 2011. “And I do. I absolutely believe in the potential of this program. If veterans are able to give it a chance and just subscribe to it, they’ll find they’re better prepared to enter the workforce.”

Armstrong and Hawley have also taken their interest in resilience overseas where they are co-leading a pilot study with researchers from the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. Originally funded by a $30,000 grant from the VCU Global Education Office, the project examines the resilience and post-traumatic growth of individuals who suffered injury as a result of politically motivated acts of violence in Israel 10 years ago.

“The whole intent of this research is to make a difference,” Armstrong says. “We believe that if you are introspective and self-aware and learn these skills, it can make a positive difference in your life.”

Katherine Schutt is a contributing writer for VCU Allied Health.

What is mindfulness?

While more commonly associated with yogis and fans of alternative medicine, mindfulness is a proven stress-reduction technique in which individuals focus on the present, observing thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judgment.

“There’s a lot of business that goes on in a veteran’s head,” explains Tom Waterworth, a former sergeant with the U.S. Army National Guard. “We’re wired to focus on a task, get it done and move on. When you don’t have direction, your head is clouded with a lot of uncertainty and questions. Through mindfulness, you’re able to quiet the other voices in your head and focus on the one that gives you direction.”

TOP SCHOLARS

In a study that looked at scholarly productivity of rehabilitation counseling departments nationwide, the VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling came out on top. Read more about this No. 1 ranking on Page 28.
Extracurricular activities

Faculty members engage in unique hobbies outside the School of Allied Health Professions

Remarkable at their day jobs and dedicated to the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions, faculty members’ talents extend beyond their university roles. Side pursuits, from the casual to the serious, enrich life both in and outside a primary occupation. After teaching classes, chairing departments, conducting research or handling administrative duties, the following 12 faculty members engage in these unique extracurricular activities.

Pastel painter
Dianne F. Simons, Ph.D. (M.S. ’85/OT), assistant professor, Department of Occupational Therapy
“For more than a decade after receiving a B.A. in art, I worked as an illustrator. A career change eventually led to occupational therapy and academia. Five years ago, I led a graduate study-abroad course in Ontario and was captivated by a series of pastel paintings of the Canadian landscape. Those paintings inspired me to explore the medium of pastels. A weekly class is the fastest two hours of my week, and I recently ‘went pro’ again and began showing and selling my work.”

Robot builder
Jonathan P. DeShazo, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Health Administration
“I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t interested in robots and motorcycles. My motorcycles have usually been older, requiring frequent attention, and there is a lot of trial and error with robots. When my family moved further from VCU, I couldn’t scoot to work anymore, so I am back on a ‘regular’ motorcycle. My current robot, named Booger, can wander around without running into anything and can recognize people. It may not sound impressive, but it takes a lot of work for small behaviors.”

Expert Lego builder
Leland “Bert” Waters, Ph.D. (B.S. ’87; M.S. ’02/G; Ph.D. ’12/HRS), assistant professor and assistant director, Virginia Geriatric Education Center, Virginia Center on Aging
“I started collecting electric train and town sets with my son in 1993. Adult enthusiasts have our own lingo, including AFOL (Adult Fan of LEGO), MOCs (My Own Creations) and LUG (Lego Users Group). I have been a member of the local RichLUG since 2000. We have displayed at national BrickFair conventions, the Science Museum of Virginia and the Virginia Aviation Museum. One of my favorite RichLUG MOCs is a model of our state Capitol, built by Tim Freshly.”

Architectural photographer
Russell Davis, Ph.D., chair, Department of Patient Counseling
“Architectural photography, for me, represents the intersection of the divine and the human — human creation in the matrix of God’s creation. The contours of the Egyptian Building, in this photograph, are softened by the dappling of early morning sunlight. The blue of the near-dawn sky colon the back of the Monumental Church and transforms the façade of the Virginia Department of Transportation.”

Revolutionary War re-enactor
William Hartland Jr., Ph.D., CRNA (Ph.D. ’93), associate professor and director of interprofessional education, Department of Nurse Anesthesia
“When not working in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, I enjoy traveling back to the 18th century to portray the regimental surgeon for the First Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line. During events, I live the 18th-century lifestyle and interact with the public concerning life as a Revolutionary War soldier and surgeon. I continually research my persona and enjoy reproducing period equipment on my blacksmith forge. If you attend one of our events, be sure to look me up.”

Sculptor
Terence C. Karselis, faculty emeritus, Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
“I have always been fascinated by sculpture, from classical Greek and Roman to the Western subjects of Frederick Remington and Charles Russell. From my teens until my late 30s, I made a part-time income painting with oil pastels. In the mid-’70s, I began woodcarving and was fortunate enough to win two awards at the 1977 Canadian National Exhibition. Then took up sculpting editions in bronze and pewter. My first life-size bronze was a Virginia state trooper created in 1990.”

From top, clockwise: Robot designed by Jonathan DeShazo; Lego model display by RichLUG and Bert Waters; photography by Russell Davis; Sculpture by Terence Karselis

Above: Pastel painting by Dianne Simons
Nature photographer
Christine A. Reid, Ph.D., CRC, professor, Department of Rehabilitation Counseling
“Nature photography takes me out of the office and everyday tasks and focuses my attention on beauty in life. Before taking the butterfly and bee photograph, I spent hours following butterflies through a long lens as they dined on zinnias in my backyard. I learned to anticipate when to shoot as they landed, so I could catch each at a relatively still point. When I tracked one butterfly and fired as its proboscis extended to gather nectar, a bee almost crashed into the butterfly; the fraction of a moment that I clicked, the bee halted in midair, which allowed for a crisp photographic image.”

Photographer
Brenda R. Morris, CRA (B.S. ’94), director of research administration, dean’s office
“With my husband, a professional photographer, I help produce keepsakes, like memory books, and videos of crucial life events like weddings and christenings. Photography and videography is hard work. However, the end product is absolutely worth the effort, knowing that you have captured someone’s special moment in a tangible and memorable way. My role is one of moral support — counseling those being photographed — in addition to the technical aspects of event shoots.”

Knitter
E. Ayn Wellesford, Ph.D. (M.S. ’93/G; Ph.D. ’98), chair and associate professor, Department of Gerontology
“Knitting is my therapy. Handwork, for me, is both personal and charitable. As one of the younger members of From the Heart stitchers, I call them my ‘naturally occurring inter-generational group.’ The enjoyment and learning extends beyond the handwork we do together. This group of talented and generous souls connects me to many lifetimes of experiences and builds a bridge to future generations. It’s also why I became a gerontologist — the secrets of the (s)ages are held in these women’s hands.”

Equestrian
Timmerie F. Cohen, Ph.D., RT(R)/CT(AART), CMD (A.S. ’95/RTE; B.S. ’97/CLS; Ph.D. ’13), clinical coordinator, Department of Radiation Sciences
“Timmerie F. Cohen, Ph.D., RT(R)/CT(AART), CMD (A.S. ’95/RTE; B.S. ’97/CLS; Ph.D. ’13), clinical coordinator, Department of Radiation Sciences
“I have been interested in horses and riding them since I was 9 years old. I currently own two Morgan horses (including Green Bay Kindred Spirit, pictured). When I am with my horses, the stress of my day melts away and I go home from the barn feeling renewed. They even received mention in my dissertation acknowledgments! While I do compete, I most enjoy spending time with my horses exploring the beautiful Virginia countryside.”

Woodturner
Mary Snyder Shall, PT, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’91), professor and chair, Department of Physical Therapy
“Last summer, a cedar came down in the backyard. My fiancé has a lathe and invited me to try my hand. I took a class at Woodcraft and I was hooked. I really enjoy revealing the beautiful effects of the grain and the branches, as I release the bowl from inside the tree! Most recently, we found some oak with dark lines. I discovered it was ‘spalted.’ In other words, a fungus attacked it, leaving these black lines, not along the lines of the grain. The lightweight result is a thing of beauty.”

Basketball coach
Paula K. Kupstas, Ph.D., program director, Ph.D in Health Related Sciences
“Paula K. Kupstas, Ph.D., program director, Ph.D in Health Related Sciences
“I assist coaching my 10-year-old daughter’s fifth-grade basketball team in part because on my high school team, immediately following the implementation of Title IX, this lone girls’ sport often got bumped by the coaches of the boys’ teams, even if they were from a nearby school. It’s very gratifying to see how far things have come since then, and I’m thrilled that my daughter and her classmates have so many more opportunities. It’s great to watch the girls learn and practice the fundamentals and work as a team, all while having lots of fun!”

Photographer Brenda Morris
Photography by Christine Reid
Basketball coach Paula K. Kupstas coaching her daughter’s fifth-grade basketball team
From top, clockwise: Timmerie Cohen on her Morgan horse Green Bay Kindred Spirit; knitting by Ayn Wellesford; wooden bowl by Mary Snyder Shall
An influx of new scholarships and endowments is strengthening the stance of the School of Allied Health Professions at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Recent gifts include support for the nurse anesthesia department and the first-ever endowed scholarship for students in the patient counseling department. It’s a crucial time in higher education to establish new funds, says Anne Hoffler, VCU’s senior director of donor relations. As state funding continuously shrinks and more students seek financial support, there’s an omnipresent need for donors to create new scholarships or support existing ones.

“More students are competing for scholarships and there’s a greater need for financial-need-based awards,” Hoffler says. “Seventy-five percent of students graduate with significant student aid debt and many hold jobs while they’re in school to help pay for college. Scholarships allow our students to focus on their studies rather than working or worrying about debt.”

Recent gifts to the school include five endowments, which are established with a minimum investment of $10,000. Awards are given using a portion of the earnings, ensuring that the principal is an ongoing source of financial support.

While endowments are important to the lifeblood of an institution, Hoffler says all support is an integral part of sustaining academic success.

“If someone can’t create an endowment but wants to make a gift of $500 or $1,000 and make a difference in a student’s life, they can do that,” Hoffler says. “There are 500 scholarships already established at VCU that they can give to and therefore increase the amount awarded to students each year.”

Donors can give to existing scholarship funds as well as to named endowments. Those who give specifically to the School of Allied Health Professions boost its ability to recruit the best and brightest students by offering competitive scholarships, Hoffler added. The number and size of a school’s endowments can also factor into national rankings.

Here’s a look at new scholarships recently created at the school.

**Alexander F. Tartaglia Student Scholarship**

The VCU Department of Patient Counseling created its first-ever endowed scholarship in April 2013 thanks to a $10,000 gift from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. The donor is a graduate of the patient counseling department who later served as a professional chaplain, according to Russell H. Davis, Ph.D., professor and the Rev. Robert B. Lantz Chair of the department.

Davis says the donor created the Alexander F. Tartaglia Student Scholarship to call attention to the specialized ministry of hospital chaplains and the in-depth training required to serve as one. Hospital chaplains respond to all traumas and provide extensive bereavement support to patients, their families and health care staff members. The scholarship is named after Tartaglia, senior associate dean for the School of Allied Health Professions and the Katherine I. Lantz Professor of Patient Counseling. It will provide an annual need-based award to an intern enrolled in the department’s graduate certificate or M.S. programs.

“The donor hopes to inspire others to give and add to the endowment,” Davis says. “In a time of rising tuition costs, this gift is huge.”
Bernard A. Kuzava Scholarship in Nurse Anesthesia

Bernard A. Kuzava founded the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia in 1966; served as chair for seven years and has stayed in touch with his successors ever since.

Since leaving the school in 1977, Kuzava has seen the department grow and evolve into the nation’s No. 1 nurse anesthesia program for the past eight years as ranked by U.S. News & World Report.

“I’m very proud of that and I wanted to leave a little bit of a legacy in the form of a scholarship endowment,” says Kuzava, who gifted $10,000 to the department in July 2013 to create the Bernard A. Kuzava Scholarship in Nurse Anesthesia.

The former chairman says he held like the scholarship to support need-based awards to students in the department.

Kuzava continues to be invested in nurse anesthesia through the Institute for Post-Graduate Education, a company he founded after leaving VCU. IGE provides continuing education programs for nurse anesthetists around the world.

“It’s gratifying to see what the (department chair) after me have done,” he says about the program’s national reputation. “I’m just thrilled.”

Beverly George-Gay Scholarship Fund

Nurse anesthesia students from underserved areas such as Southwest Virginia sometimes travel 70 miles or more to work at assigned clinical sites.

In fall 2012, Beverly George-Gay decided to help offset the financial burden on those students by pledging $6,000 to the Department of Nurse Anesthesia to create the Beverly George-Gay Scholarship Fund.

The department added an additional $4,000 to yield the $10,000 needed to create an endowment for the scholarship.

George-Gay, an assistant professor and assistant director of clinical education in the department, says she’d like the fund to award one $500 scholarship per year. Awards will go to students completing their first year in the program as they begin to increase their time at clinical sites.

Christian R. Falyar Endowment for the Advancement of Regional Anesthesia

Christian R. Falyar, D.N.A.P, CRNA (M.S.N.A ’09/NA; D.N.A.P. ’10/NA), worked in private practice as a staff nurse anesthetist before joining VCU’s faculty in January 2013. His initial clinical interest was in regional anesthesia, which involves injecting medicine to numb a specific area of the body, such as an epidural used in labor.

Now Falyar, assistant director of doctoral education and an assistant professor in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, is working to generate attention to that specialty.

In spring 2013, he created the Christian R. Falyar Endowment for the Advancement of Regional Anesthesia with a $10,000 pledge to the department. The endowment supports activities related to the advancement of regional anesthesia through camp, many say they wish they could attend twice because what they learn there is so valuable.

Anatomy camp is a weeklong intensive workshop focused on regional anesthesia, which Howell says few students have been introduced to prior to enrolling in the program. It’s invaluable for students to see the anatomical locations of where they’re performing procedures, she says.

Other labs are important too because they allow students to practice skills such as intubation and central line placement. The experience gives them confidence when they’re actually working with patients, she says.

Dr. William Hartland, Jr. Fund

With nearly 35 years of experience as a certified registered nurse anesthetist, VCU faculty member William Hartland Jr., Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’93), is passionate about supporting both the field and the school.

In 2013, he gifted $10,000 to create the endowed Dr. William Hartland, Jr. Fund, which supports educational opportunities and programs for development of teaching skills for faculty, clinical faculty, adjunct faculty and students.

The gift allows him to give back to a department and institution that has played a positive role in his life, says Hartland, who has taught at VCU since 1984.

“My love and passion has always been assisting nurse anesthesia students achieve their career goals along with helping clinical and didactic faculty in their quest for teaching excellence,” Hartland says.

“I decided that this would be a great opportunity to continue my commitment to teaching now and after my retirement.”

Samieh Shalash is a contributing writer for VCU, Allied Health.
Taylor Neighbors regularly runs in Richmond’s Fan District, a place she calls home after living in Florida for five years.

The avid runner was introduced to physical therapy as part of her treatment for two pelvic stress fractures. She later became familiar with occupational therapy through her work teaching students with learning disabilities.

Her interactions with these professions sparked her interest in joining the field, and Neighbors’ family ties led her to pursue graduate school in Virginia. In June 2013, she enrolled in Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Allied Health Professions to earn a graduate degree in occupational therapy.

Neighbors says the field appeals to her because of its emphasis on helping patients with everyday activities, a struggle she can truly empathize with.

Why did you decide to apply to VCU’s occupational therapy program?

My dad received treatments at the VCU Medical Center for a few years and as I traveled back and forth from Florida to see him, I found out it was a No. 1 hospital in Virginia. I also saw how the doctors interacted with the staff, from the occupational therapists to the nurse practitioners. I really like that the VCU Medical Center is a teaching hospital.

How much did the OT program’s ranking as 15th in the nation play into your decision to enroll?

That high ranking was very important to me. I could have gone to school in Florida and paid way less since I was a resident of that state, but then was like, “OK, I can pay a little more and go to a more highly ranked school.” When I talk with people in the health care field they often tell me, “Call me when you complete the program, we love people who graduate from VCU.”

That has to be good to hear.

Yes, it’s nice to know there’s a job on the other end.

What touch points did you have with VCU during the application process?

I came in August 2012 and met with Dianne Simons (the department’s director of entry-level programs) to make sure I was on the right track, in terms of what I needed to apply to the program. Before that, I emailed back and forth and talked on the phone with her. She was very accessible, accommodating to my schedule and quick to respond to my questions or concerns. It’s nice to have that personal touch.

What has your experience been with your classmates?

My classmates and I are all very motivated, we all have aspirations of what we want to do when we become OTs and we’re all goal-oriented. It’s like family; we help each other out when someone is having a tough day or difficulty with an assignment. We are all pretty smart and worked hard to get into a school like VCU, so we don’t really compete with each other; we’re just there to help each other. If someone is sick, we’ll take them extra handouts.

How about your professors?

They’re all very amiable; if we have a suggestion or concern, they address it right away. We really are on the same playing field and are even on a first-name basis. They’re all very positive and very knowledgeable; they are constantly going to conferences and presenting their research. They’re involved in OT associations nationally and at the state level. They have a lot of their personal experiences with how to use a skill we’re learning about.

What is your experience been with your classmates?

They’re all very amiable; if we have a suggestion or concern, they address it right away. We really are on the same playing field and are even on a first-name basis. They’re all very positive and very knowledgeable; they are constantly going to conferences and presenting their research. They’re involved in OT associations nationally and at the state level. They have a lot of their personal experiences with how to use a skill we’re learning about.

What has your experience been with your classmates?

My classmates and I are all very motivated, we all have aspirations of what we want to do when we become OTs and we’re all goal-oriented. It’s like family; we help each other out when someone is having a tough day or difficulty with an assignment. We are all pretty smart and worked hard to get into a school like VCU, so we don’t really compete with each other; we’re just there to help each other. If someone is sick, we’ll take them extra handouts.

How about your professors?

They’re all very amiable; if we have a suggestion or concern, they address it right away. We really are on the same playing field and are even on a first-name basis. They’re all very positive and very knowledgeable; they are constantly going to conferences and presenting their research. They’re involved in OT associations nationally and at the state level. They have a lot of their personal experiences with how to use a skill we’re learning about.

What is your experience been with your classmates?

They’re all very amiable; if we have a suggestion or concern, they address it right away. We really are on the same playing field and are even on a first-name basis. They’re all very positive and very knowledgeable; they are constantly going to conferences and presenting their research. They’re involved in OT associations nationally and at the state level. They have a lot of their personal experiences with how to use a skill we’re learning about.
Rehabilitation counseling ranks No. 1 in research

The volume of published, peer-reviewed research produced by authors from the School of Allied Health Professions’ Department of Rehabilitation Counseling significantly exceeds the volume from any of its peer programs in the past decade, according to an article published in Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin.

Of the top 20 institutions ranked by weighted authorship scores between 2000 and 2009, VCU’s Department of Rehabilitation Counseling ranked No. 1 with a score of 77.6. The second-ranked institution was given a score of 55.7.

“This level of productivity supports the vision of VCU to be a premier urban research institution,” says Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., dean of the VCU School of Allied Health Professions.

“Quality research informs practice; as such it is beneficial to the public and those who serve or support people with disabilities. It is also of benefit to the education of students who wish to pursue a rewarding career in the profession.”

The department’s current research includes exploration of workplace discrimination and disability for the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. Previous areas of research include deafness and deaf-blindness, disability management in the workplace, well-being and community reintegration of veterans and individuals who experienced politically motivated acts of violence, and interpersonal processes in mental health and substance abuse treatment.

“We have a large and productive rehabilitation/disability research team here at VCU, and we are very excited about these results,” says Amy Armstrong, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’02), chair of the rehabilitation counseling department. “Although the article focuses upon our department, the rehabilitation services community at VCU works well together and it has supported us. With our excellent faculty, and in conjunction with these relationships and networks, we have been able to thrive in our scholarship.”

“The article, "Scholarly Productivity in Rehabilitation Counseling: A Review of Journal Contributors from 2000 to 2009," can be found at rcb.sagepub.com/content/current.

Graduate programs rank among the nation’s best

Five graduate programs in the School of Allied Health Professions ranked among the nation’s top 20 in U.S. News & World Report’s 2014 edition of Best Graduate Schools, with the nurse anesthesia program taking the top spot in the country. Health administration ranked No. 5 and occupational therapy ranked No. 15 in these latest rankings. The physical therapy and rehabilitation counseling programs carried over their previous rankings of No. 19 and No. 7, respectively.

“These rankings of our graduate programs reinforce the world-class reputation of our faculty and students,” says VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D. “They also reflect the academic excellence of VCU as we take our place among the top 50 public research universities.”

Awards support two innovative faculty members

Physical therapy and clinical laboratory sciences faculty members received 2014 Quest Innovation Fund awards. Receiving a venture capital fund for the VCU community, the fund provides seed money — from non-public university funding sources — for projects that advance the university’s strategic plan, Quest for Distinction. VCU rewards projects that provide enhancements to the classroom or laboratory experience, create efficiency improvements and employ novel uses of technology, among other possible realms.

Peter Pidcoe, PT, D.P.T., Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, received $45,313 for his study “Developing an Interdepartmental Cross-Campus Model for Entrepreneurial Development of Clinical Tools Program.”

William Korzun, Ph.D., DBACC, MT(ASCP) (Ph.D. ’88), associate professor in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, serves as an investigator on “Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST) Program,” which received a $50,000 award. The School of Pharmacy’s Susanna Wu-Pong, Ph.D., serves as principal investigator on the study.

Patient counseling celebrates double anniversary

The Department of Patient Counseling celebrated two milestones this year: 70 years as the Department of Pastoral Care in the VCU Health System and 55 years as an accredited clinical pastoral education program.

Three events were held in April, including a tour of the MCV Campus and a celebration event at the Virginia Historical Society with keynote speaker Rev. James A. Forbes Jr., founder and president of the Healing of the Nations Foundation and senior minister emeritus of The Riverside Church in New York City. The keynote address was followed by remarks from VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D. Afterward, a panel compressing all past departmental chairs presented highlights of the department’s history. The day was capped off by a banquet at The Bull and Bear Club. Rev. Robin Brown-Haithcock, president of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Inc., spoke at the banquet.

Additionally, the Department of Patient Counseling, in cooperation with the Department of Pastoral Care, sponsored the annual Good Grief Conference at the Jonah L. Larrick Student Center. The program attracted a record attendance of 160 people. The patient counseling department also hosted the Virginia subregional Summer Clinical Pastoral Education Day, which was attended by 100 students and faculty from all over Virginia.

Gold Line Call Center continues fundraising effort

If you see an incoming call from (804) 828-3863, don’t be afraid to answer. It’s your alma mater!

More than 60 current VCU students have been hired and trained to call on VCU alumni in an effort to reconnect them with the university and to ask for an annual gift.

“Our students are doing a fabulous job of fundraising and representing VCU,” says Michael P. Andrews (M.S. ’05), director of annual giving. “Their job is not easy, but they are our best ambassadors. The front-line work they are doing is critical to bolstering VCU’s ranking in U.S. News & World Report in terms of alumni participation.”
News

Stay connected with the School of Allied Health Professions, its faculty, staff, alumni and friends, by joining us on Facebook and LinkedIn!

Last year, the Gold Line Call Center accounted for more than half of the university’s annual giving pledges, and this year the expectation is the same.

So when you get a call, please take a few minutes to reconnect to the students on the other end may be asking you to make a gift, but more importantly, they are asking you to help us change lives.

Health administration invests first Bracken chair

In December 2012, Richard M. Bracken (M.H.A. ’77), chairman of Hospital Corporation of America and supporter of the School of Allied Health Professions, and his wife, Judith, established the Richard M. Bracken Chair in the Department of Health Administration with a $1 million gift to support the department’s efforts to foster excellence in its teaching and research initiatives.

The Brackens’ gift is matched by the Glasgow Trusts, which were established in the 1950s before the deaths of Arthur and Margaret Glasgow. Sixty years later, the couple’s trusts totaled $125 million, $45 million of which was bequeathed to VCU to support cancer and other specific areas of medical research, and became the VCU Glasgow Endowment.

In October 2013, Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., dean of the School of Allied Health Professions, invested the first Bracken Chair.

In honor was bestowed on Carolyn “Cindy” Watts, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Health Administration.

Family, university leadership, colleagues and friends gathered at the VCU Scott House at the October investiture event to honor Watts and the Brackens and to celebrate their professional accomplishments.

“We honor those who advance our great mission as a research university — helping people,” VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D., said at the event. “Richard and Judith Bracken have generously given their resources to make a difference so many. Cindy Watts, as one of the most distinguished health administration researchers in Virginia, is the ideal candidate to inaugurate the Bracken Chair.”

Nurse anesthesia faculty, students receive awards

Nurse anesthesia faculty members and students received national awards at the 2013 American Association of Nurse Anesthetists annual meeting in August 2013.

Leomont “Monty” Kier, Ph.D., affiliate professor in the Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science and senior fellow in the Center for the Study of Biological Complexity, received the Didactic Instructor of the Year Award.

Kier teaches medicinal chemistry to nurse anesthesia students in the School of Allied Health Professions and also serves as a capstone advisor to several nurse anesthesia practice doctoral students.

Col. Herbert T. Watson, professor emeritus and past chair of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, was given the Helen Lamb Outstanding Educator Award. Watson founded Nurse Anesthesia Faculty Associates, a continuing education organization that he donated to the Department of Nurse Anesthesia. His philanthropy was recently recognized with the creation of the Herbert T. Watson Professorship.

In addition to the faculty awards, students Tony Amato, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. ’13/NA; D.N.A.P. ’14/NA), and Rocky Cagle, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. ’13/NA; D.N.A.P. ’14/NA), received Sheridan Healthcare’s National Allied Health Scholarship for Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists. The $5,800 scholarships recognize SNAs enrolled in nationally accredited anesthesiology programs for exemplary clinical and leadership skills.

$4.4 million grant helps the physically disabled

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research awarded a $4.4 million grant to VCU to conduct advanced research, training and technical assistance that helps people with physical disabilities find jobs.

The VCU School of Medicine’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the VCU School of Education’s Rehabilitation Research and Training Center will use the five-year grant to establish the RRTC on Employment of People with Physical Disabilities. The new RRTC will also involve the School of Allied Health Professions’ rehabilitation counseling, physical therapy and occupational therapy departments.

In May 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the percentage of individuals with disabilities in the labor force was 18.2 percent, well below the employment-population ratio of 64.3 percent for people without a disability. Researchers will examine several clinical interventions and their effects on employment outcomes. They will study technology, individual and environmental factors, the effects of government practices, policies and programs, and interventions for transition-aged youth and young adults with physical disabilities.

Nurse anesthetists make a difference in Belize

Nickie Damico, CRNA (B.S. ’97; M.S.N.A. ’99/NA), assistant professor and director of professional practice in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, and Maritza Gallegos-Mahmood, CRNA, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. ’99/NA; D.N.A.P. ’10/NA), traveled to Belize with the World Pediatric Project plastic surgery team. Over the course of four operating room days, anesthesiologists and surgeons performed surgeries on a total of 37 patients, many of whom have had procedures during previous missions.

Study abroad course returns under new grant

Stacey Reynolds, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’07/HRS), associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, received a $20,000 International Strategic Initiative Award from the VCU Global Education Office to re-establish a study abroad course to Ghana. The ISA program funds proposals from academic units to develop new programming in support of the internationalization goals set forth in VCU’s strategic plan. Quest for Distinction.

Reynolds plans to use the grant to integrate the course, “Child Development and Disability Culture in West Africa,” into the OT curriculum, re-establishing in-country relationships

Summer 2014

New faculty and staff members

Rebecca Keith, RT(R)(UCCT) (B.S. ‘84), joined the Department of Radiation Sciences as an assistant professor. Keith, who is president of the Virginia Society of Radiologic Technologists, previously served as an assistant professor at Northern Virginia Community College.

Heather Millar (M.B.A. ’08) serves as the director of development in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia. Prior to this role, Millar was working on special projects in the VCU Department of Health Administration, including fundraising strategies, alumni relations and marketing.

Shawn S. Soper, PT, O.CT, is the assistant director of clinical education in the Department of Physical Therapy. Before joining the department, Soper served as therapy services director at Sheltering Arms Physical Rehabilitation Center where he oversaw more than 70 staff members in three clinical disciplines located in six facilities.

D. Blaise Williams III, PT, Ph.D., joined the Department of Physical Therapy as an associate professor and director of the Sports Medicine Research Laboratory in Health and Human Performance. Williams previously served as director of rehabilitation and research at Commonwealth Health and Physical Medicine. Prior to that position, he was an associate professor in East Carolina University’s Department of Physical Therapy.

D. Blaise Williams III, PT, Ph.D., joined the Department of Physical Therapy as an associate professor and director of the Sports Medicine Research Laboratory in Health and Human Performance. Williams previously served as director of rehabilitation and research at Commonwealth Health and Physical Medicine. Prior to that position, he was an associate professor in East Carolina University’s Department of Physical Therapy.

Rebecca Keith

Heather Millar

Shawn S. Soper

D. Blaise Williams III
and establishing a cadre of faculty to lead and co-lead the course in subsequent years.

Reynolds first led five students on a successful study abroad course to Ghana in 2019. In 2018, she was awarded a National Institutes of Health career development grant, which necessitated a 2½-year relocation to Gainesville, Fla.—a move that required her to cancel the 2019 study abroad course.

During the initial trip, the VCU team conducted developmental screenings and provided consultation on feeding, behavior and IEP goal writing. “The screenings are something we hope to continue in the future since they can be useful for teachers, caregivers and potential adoptive parents,” Reynolds says. The group also identified a clear need for teacher and caregiver education on topics such as ergonomics, seating and positioning, wheelchair repair/configuration, safe transfer techniques, and development of fine-motor and problem-solving skills for children who do not have opportunities for manipulative play.

**Business school adds health-focused programs**

The VCU School of Business is partnering with the schools of Allied Health Professions and Medicine to offer new health-focused concentrations and a dual-degree program within three business graduate programs.

In a collaboration among the schools, graduates can now receive an Executive M.B.A. with a concentration in health care management, an M.A. in Economics with a health economics specialization or a dual degree with an M.H.A. and an M.S. in Information Systems.

The multidisciplinary approach to these health-enhanced program options provides opportunities to business students that they would not otherwise have in a traditional business graduate program.

**Cross-disciplinary research results in mobile app**

Emily M. Hill, MLS(ASCP)CM (B.S. ’09; CLS; M.S. ’07); CLS), assistant chair and instructor of immunology and immunohematology in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and Diane Dodd-McCur, D.B.A., associate professor in the Department of Patient Counseling, presented “Embracing the Common Core of Professionalism Across Allied Health Disciplines: Developing the AHP App” at the 2013 Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions conference in Orlando, Fla.

The poster highlights the ongoing development of a mobile smartphone app, funded by the School of Allied Health Professions, aimed at achieving health care professionalism. The app incorporates professionalism content that may be applied across different allied health professions. It also promotes evaluation and communication between entry-to-professional-level students and their clinical fieldwork advisors.

The project team also included Dianne Simons, Ph.D. (M.S. ’97); assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, and Alexander Tartaglia, D.Min.; the Katherine I. Lantz Professor in the Department of Patient Counseling and associate dean in the School of Allied Health Professions, in collaboration with Diane Panukh, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering in the VCU School of Engineering, and her students.

**OT collaborates to develop learning community**

The Department of Occupational Therapy and the School of Education’s early childhood special education program, together with Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU, have partnered with the Children’s Museum of Richmond to address its expressed need to improve access, participation and learning for all children, including those with disabilities.

Faculty and students from the department and program, as well as staff from CHoR, are working with the museum in assessment and adaptation of the physical and learning environment, collaborative training to support the engagement of young children with disabilities and their families, and marketing to the community.

This program will enhance the social and learning experiences at the Children’s Museum of Richmond for children with disabilities and their families so that all children, regardless of ability, will discover and continue to engage in inclusive opportunities at the museum. This program is supported through a VCU Council for Community Engagement grant.

**Two local companies support students’ academic dreams**

Health Diagnostic Laboratory Inc. recently renewed two scholarships awarded to Jasmine Walker and Michael Lacy, seniors in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences. The pair received their initial $10,000 scholarships as juniors in 2012.

HDL Scholarships also were awarded in 2013 to juniors Madison Franks, Alexandria Sheler, Miquhy Tran and Robert Greenwood, who each received $10,000. The HDL Scholars Program, started two years ago, has provided $80,000 in student support.

Two other community institutions awarded scholarships last year to clinical laboratory science students. The VCU Medical Center Department of Pathology awarded a $10,000 scholarship to Anasthesia Amponsah; and the Medical Laboratories at the University of Virginia Medical Center awarded a $10,000 scholarship to Joshua Belamra.

Estes Express Lines, a Richmond, Va., shipping solutions company, has supported VCU for decades and that includes the VCU School of Allied Health Professions. For more than two decades, the family-owned company, along with family members, has provided almost $125,000 in support to the university, with more than $150,000 of that gift providing student support in the School of Allied Health Professions.

“WE are fortunate for the commitment local businesses, like Estes Express and HDL, have shown the VCU School of Allied Health Professions,” says Cecil B. Drive, Ph.D., dean of the School of Allied Health Professions. “Unlike state appropriations and allocations from the government, corporate support provides a margin of excellence that separates one institution from another. Corporate gift giving is serious business and it’s often an essential part of their mission and marketing strategy. And when we work in partnerships, together, gift giving is a cost-effective way to build valued relationships that benefit the entire community.”
Keep in touch! Let us know about your accomplishments by emailing your news to classnotes@vcu.edu or submitting them online at www.cahp.vcu.edu/alumni. Or, mail your news to Virginia Commonwealth University, MCV Alumni Association of VCU, P.O. Box 980156, Richmond, VA 23298-0156.

1960s

Connie L. Harasymiw (B.S. ’66/OT) is retired and living in Newington, Conn. She has three children and enjoys volunteer work, knitting, reading and gardening.

1970s

Michael King, FACHE (M.H.A. ’78/HA), was decreed to serve on the board of governors of the American College of Healthcare Executives. He took office in March 2013 as the Council of Regents Meeting preceding ACHEx’s 56th Congress on Healthcare Leadership and is serving a three-year term. King is president and CEO of Camden Clark Medical Center in Parkersburg, W.Va.

J. Thomas Ryan, M.D. (M.D. ’72), H.S. ’75, M.H.A. ’94/HAE, was appointed to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. In June 2013, Ryan retired as a state vice president and chief medical officer of Mary Washington Healthcare in Fredericksburg, Va., a position he held for 16 years. As an executive, he was involved in the planning of a 450-bed replacement hospital in Fredericksburg and the addition of a 100-bed hospital in Stafford, Va.

1980s

Hugh Greene (M.H.A. ’84/HA), president and CEO of Baptist Health in Jacksonville, Fla., received Modern Healthcare magazine’s 2013 Community Service Leadership Award.

Mark Hudson, FACHEM (M.H.A. ’83/HA), received the North Carolina Office of Rural Health and Community Care 2013 Board Member Award for his service on the board of directors of the CLECO Primary Care Network, based in Shelby, N.C.

Marlyn Taverner (B.S. ’83; M.H.A. ’89/HA), administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, was recognized as one of Modern Healthcare magazine’s 2013 “Top 25 Women in Healthcare” and served as the keynote speaker at the 2013 Modern Healthcare Women Leaders in Healthcare Conference in August.

1990s


Katherine Overman (B.S. ’98; M.S.O.T. ’93/OT) accepted a position with Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers in Maryland. Overman previously worked at Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore and Children’s National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Jonathan Perlin, M.D., Ph.D. (M.D. ’90; Ph.D. ’91), H.S. ’96; M.H.A. ’97/HAE, president of clinical services and chief medical officer at HCA Healthcare in Nashville, Tenn., was named one of Modern Healthcare’s 50 Most Influential Executives for 2013.

Elizabeth Brown Snyder (M.S. ’91/OT) resides in Beaumont, S.C., and is working in home health occupational therapy.

2000s

Nicole Baenza (B.S. ’99; M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) serves as an occupational therapist in Henrico Health and Rehabilitation in Highland Springs, Va.

Joseph Brown (M.H.A. ’99/HA), director of the oncology service line at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano in Texas, along with the entire hospital team, received the 2013 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the nation’s highest presidential honor for performance excellence through innovation, improvement and visionary leadership.

Jackie DeSouza (M.H.A. ’01/HA), CEO of Lee’s Summit Medical Center, was honored by the Kansas City Business Journal in its inaugural class of NextGen Leaders. DeSouza, selected to the list of 25 by a panel of judges from an applicant pool of more than 250, was chosen for her proven success as a business leader and for her involvement as a volunteer leader in her community.

Katie DeWeerd (M.S.O.T. ’07/OT) presented at the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association annual conference in October 2013.

Courtney English (B.S. ’05; M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU and its Petersburg, Va., therapy center.


Erin Lafoon (B.S. ’09; M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at Hopewell Healthcare in Hopewell, Va.

Christina Mason (B.S. ’09; M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Petersburg, Va.

Sheri Michel, O.T.D. (M.S.O.T. ’91/OT; O.T.D. ’08/OT), battalion occupational therapist with the U.S. Army’s Warranties Transition Battalion at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, received the Department of the Army’s Occupational Therapist of the Year award for the Southern Regional Medical Command. She also received the Warrant Care and Transition Program Award for Excellence.

Kaitlin Myers (B.S. ’09; M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at VCU Medical Center’s inpatient rehabilitation unit.

Megan S. Stratton (M.S.O.T. ’07/OT) received the North Star Award at the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association annual conference in October 2013.

2010s

Dierra Bradford (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at Hopewell Healthcare in Hopewell, Va.

Jessica Brown (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working in acute care at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md.

Cindy Bruce (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at the Virginia Treatment Center for Children at VCU Medical Center.

Meg Cook, O.T.D. (O.T.D. ’10/OT), serves as the assistant dean of the occupational therapy assistant program at Northern Virginia Community College, which enrolled its first class of 15 students in 2013.

Nicole Daddio (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at Early Intervention Colorado.

Chelsey Hall (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working in Richmond, Va., at Westport Health Care Center and Integrated Therapy Services.

Jack R. Hester (M.S. ’11/CLS) presented “Blood Ammonia Stability Revisited” at the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Sciences annual meeting in Houston in 2013.

David Jordan, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’13/PHS), accepted a faculty appointment in the School of Business at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania.

Peter K. Kennedy (M.H.A. ’10/HA) accepted a position with HCA Healthcare in Chesterfield, Va., to participate in its COO training program, having served as associate administrator of business development with MCV Physicians for the past two years.

Cody Larue (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Petersburg, Va.

Mary Hart MacLeod (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working for Fairfax County Schools in Fairfax, Va.

Sarah Sutton (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working at Medical Facilities of America in Hanover, Va.

Dorothy Watson (M.S.O.T. ’12/OT) is working in inpatient rehabilitation at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Petersburg, Va.

Abbreviation key

Allied health professions degrees are noted with year and department; other VCU degrees are designated by year. A single asterisk (*) identifies members of the MCV Alumni Association of VCU.

Degrees

A.S. Associate of Science
B.A. Bachelor of Arts
B.F.A. Bachelor of Fine Arts
B.S. Bachelor of Science
Cert. Certificate
D.N.A.P. Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice
D.P.T. Doctor of Physical Therapy
H.S. House Staff
M.A. Master of Arts
M.H.A. Master of Health Administration
M.S. Master of Science
M.S.A. Master of Science in Administration
M.S.N.A. Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia
M.S.O.T. Master of Science in Occupational Therapy
O.T.D. Post-professional/Occupational Therapy Doctorate
Ph.D. Doctor of Philosophy

Departments and programs

CLS Clinical Laboratory Sciences
G Gerontology
H Health Administration
HAE Health Administration Executive
HCM Health Care Management
HRS Health Related Sciences
HSO Health Services Organization and Research
MRA Medical Records Administration
MET Medical Technology
NA Nurse Anesthesia
OT Occupational Therapy
PC Patient Counseling
PT Physical Therapy
RC Rehabilitation Counseling
RS Radiation Sciences
RTI Radiologic Technology
Faculty, staff and students

Awards
Nuclear medicine fellow: Mark H. Crosthwaite, CNMT, FSNMMI-TS, program director and assistant professor in radiation sciences’ nuclear medicine technology concentration, was named a Fellow of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging-Technologist Section for his excellence and commitment to the society and profession. Crosthwaite, recognized for his nearly 30 years of work in nuclear medicine technology, has held several national positions, including chair of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board.

APTA research award: Lori Michenoff, Ph.D., PT, ATC, SCS, professor of physical therapy, received the American Physical Therapy Association-Sports Section Excellence in Research Award in June 2013 for her contributions to research on shoulder screening in the project titled “Preseason shoulder ROM screening as a predictor of injury among youth, adolescent, and professional baseball pitchers.”

Distinguished service award: Daniel Riddle, Ph.D., PT, FAPTA (M.S. ’86/PT; Ph.D. ’97), Otto D. Payton Professor and assistant professor of physical therapy, received the 2013 Charles M. Magistro Distinguished Service Award. Named for the first chair of the Foundation for Physical Therapy, the award is presented annually to an individual for outstanding service and steadfast commitment toward promoting the goals of the foundation.

News
Timmerie Cohen, Ph.D., RT(T)(ARRT), CMD (A.S. ’95/RT; B.S. ’97/CRS; Ph.D. ’13), assistant professor of radiation sciences, graduated with a Ph.D. in 2013 from the VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. Her dissertation was titled “Human Papillomavirus: Identifying Vaccination Rates, Barriers, and Information Gaps among College Women Ages 18-26.”

Appointments
Angela Plack, Association of Clinical Pastoral Education supervisor and assistant professor of pastoral counseling, was elected co-chair of the Accreditation Committee of the Mid-Atlantic Regional of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. She also was elected convener of the Virginia Sub-Region of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

Jeffrey S. Legg, Ph.D., RT(R)(CT)QM (A.S. ’87/RT; B.S. ’89/CRS; Ph.D. ’02/HSRS), associate professor and chair of radiation sciences, was named associate editor for Radiography-North America, the peer-reviewed journal for the U.K.’s Society and College of Radiographers.

Conferences
Faculty presentations at national CLS conferences: Several clinical laboratory sciences faculty spoke at national conferences. Teresa Nadder, Ph.D., MLS/ASCP/CLC (B.S. ’78/MET; M.S. ’90/MET; Ph.D. ’98), associate professor and chair of the department, and Maria Deloit, Ph.D., MLS/ASCP/CLC (Ph.D. ’05/HRS), presented “Selecting a Research Topic and Getting it Published” at the Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference in San Jose, Calif., in February 2014. Nadder also served as a roundtable discussion moderator at the conference and presented “Transforming VCU: A Progress Report.” Lisa M. Perkins, MLS/ASCP/CLC (B.S. ’08/CLS; M.S. ’08/CLS), instructor, also was a roundtable discussion moderator at the conference; presenting “The Advantages of a Separate Full-time Faculty Position Dedicated to Laboratory Instruction.”

William Korzun, Ph.D., DABCC, MT(ASCP) (Ph.D. ’81), associate professor, presented “Chemistry Mini Review for Certification” at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists in Chicago in September 2013.

Symposium on the science of occupational therapy: Occupational therapist’s Stacey Reynolds, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’07/HRS), associate professor, and Shelly Lane, Ph.D., professor, were invited to speak at the Occupational Science Symposium at the University of Southern California. They co-presented “Sensory Processing and Integration: From Cages to Clinics.” Reynolds also published “Effects of environmental enrichment on repetitive behaviors in the BTBR Tff1 mouse model of autism” in the journal Autism Research.

Research in patient counseling: Patient counseling’s Diane Dodd-McCue, D.B.A., associate professor, and Alexander Tartaglia, D.Min., Katherine J. Laree Professor and associate dean, joined others in presenting the workshop “Introducing Research in Level II Programs of CPE” at the 2013 Association for Clinical Pastoral Education annual conference in Indianapolis.

School of Allied Health Professions’ 2013 Alumni Star

M.H.A. alumnus Arthur Layne credits his health care legacy to the people he mentored

Arthur W. Layne (B.S. ’72; M.H.A. ’76/HA) sat in his office in the A.D. Williams Memorial Clinic on the MCV Campus when he found out he had been accepted into the Master of Health Administration program in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professions. Even though he was already working in a hospital setting and had developed a base of knowledge, he says his heart started to race. “I knew then that my life and career would be changed forever, and it was,” he says.

Layne immediately distinguished himself in the program, being elected class president and earning the Charles P. Caldwell Leadership Award in 1976. And, like most students in the M.H.A. program can attest, Layne says the hands-on experience he gained as a student (and in his professional work before enrolling) truly left an indelible mark.

“That foundation and my administrative residency taught me that every individual can impact patient care and satisfaction,” he says.

After leaving Richmond, Va., Layne went on to work as an administrator at hospitals in North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Arizona, where he now works as president of Intermountain International Corp. The company provides strategic planning data and marketing solutions to help health care providers better understand their service area and competitors. When asked what he does at work, Layne replies that he “mostly gets paid to go visit his friends.”

Layne provides students and faculty in the School of Allied Health Professions access to Intellimed data to use in class projects, dissertations and scholarly publications. He also spends one week each year mentoring students and working with faculty in the M.H.A. program as an executive-in-residence. Throughout the year, he is contacted by students and alumni when they need access to data, a market analysis or help in a job search.

“It’s this connection to his alma mater that remains the highlight of his job, he says, because he gets to share his experiences with those who will go out and make a difference of their own.

“I learned many years ago that my health care legacy would be the people who I mentored,” he says. “Helping others reach their potential is a special kind of reward.”
George P. Polk championed diversity, inclusion

Decades after completing the Medical College of Virginia’s clinical pastoral education program, George P. Polk (’56/PC) lives on through his legacy as a pioneer in the field. Polk was the first black graduate of the program, which was established in 1958 at MCV under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. A. Patrick L. Prest Jr. It continues today in Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Allied Health Professions.

Prest vividly recalls his first encounter with Polk, who was an attendant at MCV Hospital when the program first launched. “He came into my office, sat down with his white coat on and asked if I needed any help [with the new program],” says Prest, who offered Polk a spot as its first resident soon after. Polk told Prest that he’d been hired primarily to work with patients at St. Philips Hospital, which treated black patients, where it was Prest’s job to take care of white patients at MCV Hospital. “The unusual thing is that he and I integrated just fine,” Prest says.

After earning his Certificate in Clinical Pastoral Education, Polk left MCV to serve as senior chaplain for Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Va., and then returned to the college for supervisory training. In his ministry, Polk was a strong advocate for the profession and served among the nation’s first clinical pastoral education supervisors.

His work took him to hospitals in Virginia, New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. In 1983, he was the first black nominee selected to serve as president of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. In the 1990s, Polk founded the ACP’s Racial Ethnic Minority Task Force (now the Racial Ethnic Multicultural Network) as part of his tireless work to recruit minorities to the profession.

Polk credits Prest, who died in January 2010, for being a pioneer who championed inclusion and diversity in the field. “We had an open program and George Polk was the beginning of that openness that continued for years,” Prest says.

Radiation sciences honors: Terri L. Fauber, Ed.D., RT(R)(M), associate professor and director of the radiography program in radiation sciences, was selected by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists as a recipient of the 2013 ISRA Award program.

Publications


Legg, J.S., Aaron, L., and Dempsey, M.C. (2013). “Patient Safety Perceptions Among Vascular Interventional Technologists.” Journal of Allied Health, 42, 106-111. The research was supported by a grant from the American Society of Radiologic Technologists Education and Research Foundation. The manuscript and related research published in Radiation Therapy represents some of the first studies in patient safety culture among the radiation sciences profession.


Grants

Loi McKenzie, Ph.D., PT, ATC, SCS, serves as co-investigator with Paul Minkten, PT, Ph.D., on “Validation of a Clinical Prediction Rule to Identify Patients with Shoulder Pain Likely to Benefit from Corticosteroid Infiltration: A Randomized Clinical Trial,” funded by a $25,000 grant from the American Physical Therapy Association Orthopedic Section.

William Korzen, Ph.D., DBACC, MTS(ASCP) (Ph.D. ’88), associate professor of clinical laboratory sciences, received a $4,100 American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science E&R Fund Member Research Grant for his project “Biological Variation of Free serum in Healthy Subjects.”

Kelli W. Gary, Ph.D., OT(KN) (Ph.D. ’06/HRS), assistant professor of occupational therapy, was appointed co-principal investigator of “Project Empowerment,” a $1.78 million grant funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, to evaluate current practice and methods in the conduct of minority disability research and to begin to increase capacity in this area.

Peter E. Pidcoe, Ph.D., DPT, (Ph.D. ’06/P), assistant professor of physical therapy, serves as primary investigator on “Development of a clinical decision tree for use in a rehabilitation setting,” funded by a $100,000 Shefileld-Arms Foundation grant.

Alumni spotlight

The first class to enter MCV’s Clinical Pastoral Education program graduated in 1960. Front row (left to right): Shelia Kutz, George P. Polk, Patricia Paul (this program’s founder) and Mickey Sayles. Back row (left to right): Bill Navas, Skip Blair, Ray Bearson and Jan McLaughlin.

Harold Barnwell, R.N., a student in the combined Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia and Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice program, was featured in the November 2013 American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Foundation news bulletin “Student Spotlight.” The section recognizes student registered nurse anesthetists who have captured attention through their dedication to education, professional excellence and overall commitment to advancing nurse anesthesia.

James Elisa Taneti, a master’s student in patient counseling, published “Caste, Gender, and Christianity in Colonial India Telugu Women in Mission.” The book, released in December 2013, identifies what Telugu Biblewomen believed their mission to be and how they practiced it. It also examines the impact of Telugu cultural and socio-political dynamics, such as caste, gender and empire, on the theology and practices of the Telugu Biblewomen. Taneti, an adjunct professor at Campbell University Divinity School, is also the author of “History of the Telugu Christians: A Bibliography.”
Since the School of Allied Health Professions’ inception about 45 years ago, it has lacked a place to call home. The school’s 11 units — nine academic departments, the dean’s office and the Virginia Center on Aging — use space in five different buildings on two campuses.

Virginia Commonwealth University’s Master Site Plan lists a new facility for the school as its No. 1 capital project for 2014-16. A $60 million, 120,000 square-foot building that the school can call home is in the planning stage.

In the meantime, the school’s units are scattered among the following locations.

**MONROE PARK CAMPUS**
- West Grace Street Housing/The Honors College
- Department of Radiation Sciences
- Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
- Department of Health Administration
- Department of Occupational Therapy
- Department of Physical Therapy
- Office of the Dean

**MORDEO PARK CAMPUS**
- West Grace Street Housing/The Honors College
- Department of Radiation Sciences
- Department of Occupational Therapy
- Department of Gerontology
- Department of Rehabilitation Counseling
- Virginia Center on Aging

---

**In memoriam**

1940s
- Anne S. Allen (B.S. ‘41/MET), of Charlottesville, Va., Aug. 18, 2013, at age 94.

1950s
- Beverly M. Brown (B.S. ’56/OT), of Morristown, Tenn., Sept. 20, 2013, at age 79.
- Joanne Higinbotham** (B.S. ’57/MET), of Denver, Sept. 28, 2013, at age 78.
- B. Elizabeth Kingsley (B.S. ’55/OT), of Bennington, Vt., Nov. 3, 2013, at age 94.
- Betty R. Landen, Ph.D.** (B.S. ’53/PTE), of Evans, Ga., July 2, 2013, at age 84.
- Viola M. Stoick (B.S. ’50/PT), of Farmington, Mich., April 19, 2013, at age 87.
- Herman L. West* (B.S. ’56/PT), of Chesapeake, Va., Oct. 13, 2013, at age 89.
- Regina C. Whitehead (B.S. ’51/PT), of Birmingham, Ala., Sept. 11, 2013, at age 83.

1960s
- Maurice S. Brubaker (B.S. ’64/OT), of Stetson College, Pa., Aug. 9, 2013, at age 77.
- Martha M. Tennant (B.S. ’65/MET), of Farmville, Va., July 14, 2013, at age 93.

1970s

1980s

2000s

Faculty and staff
- June M. Brown, of Richmond, Va., Aug. 7, 2013. Brown was a retired staff member of the Department of Occupational Therapy.

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.

By the numbers

Since the School of Allied Health Professions’ inception about 45 years ago, it has lacked a place to call home. The school’s 11 units — nine academic departments, the dean’s office and the Virginia Center on Aging — use space in five different buildings on two campuses.

Virginia Commonwealth University’s Master Site Plan lists a new facility for the school as its No. 1 capital project for 2014-16. A $60 million, 120,000 square-foot building that the school can call home is in the planning stage.

In the meantime, the school’s units are scattered among the following locations.
Who are we?

As individuals, we’re grounded health care professionals driven to improve the lives of every person we encounter. We’re teachers and researchers called to expand the minds of our students, and the scopes of our fields. We’re learners immersed in experience and expertise, ready to make our mark.

As a school, we’re all of these things, and through the generous dedication and support of every individual, we continue to separate ourselves as a national leader in the allied health professions.

To see faculty and alumni share who we are, visit go.vcu.edu/ahpwhoweare.