Remembering
Serving
Healing
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Virginia Tech’s nationally ranked Pamplin College of Business offers undergraduate and graduate programs in accounting and information systems, business information technology, economics, finance, hospitality and tourism management, management, and marketing. The college emphasizes the development of ethical values and leadership, technology, and international business skills. A member of its marketing faculty directs the interdisciplin ary Sloan Foundation Forest Industries Center at Virginia Tech. The college’s other centers focus on business leadership, business diversity, electronic commerce, organizational performance and services innovation. The college is committed to serving business and society through the expertise of its faculty, alumni, and students. It is named in honor of Robert B. Pamplin (BAD ‘33), the former CEO of Georgia-Pacific, and his son, businessman and philanthropist Robert B. Pamplin Jr. (BAD ’64).

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Pamplin students and faculty member Lynette Wood have established the Virginia Tech student chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA).

The group, which has 20 members, is open to students majoring in accounting or finance or who have expressed an intention to enter the accounting profession. Wood, an assistant professor of accounting and information systems, said the chapter aims to promote group identity, promote the study of accounting, advance academic development, foster moral and ethical standards, cultivate a sense of professional and civic responsibility and service, and provide opportunities for association with other student organizations.

“I think that NABA will be a critical factor in providing a vision of professional success for African-American students,” she said. “Having an active chapter on campus will help more students develop successful accounting careers.”

Accounting firms PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG, she said, have been “extremely supportive in the establishment of our new chapter.”

The chapter expects to organize professional development workshops, networking opportunities, and social and community service activities. For more information, please contact NABA president Veronica Gentry, vpgentry@vt.edu.
New center, undergrad minor focus on diversity

To better prepare students for a diverse and multicultural workplace, the college has established a center and undergraduate studies program focusing on business diversity.

The Business Diversity Center, directed by Mary Connerley, associate professor of management, will focus on teaching and research regarding diversity issues. It will coordinate the business diversity minor, an 18-credit program for juniors and seniors that will be launched in fall 2008.

“The minor aims to help students develop a vocabulary and ideas around issues of gender, race, age, and cultural difference within a corporate context,” she said. “It would promote awareness of cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs — their own and others’ — and an understanding of how these influence behavior and interactions in the workplace.”

The program will explore the organizational challenges and opportunities created by the increased multiculturalism of the U.S. workforce and identify organizational factors that hinder or promote workplace diversity. The minor will be restricted to eligible business majors initially, Connerley said, but, with additional resources, it could be extended to non-business students. The enrollment goal is 40-45 students each year.

Connerley is a four-time winner of the GM Sullivan awards and a co-founder of the college’s diversity committee, which she said has facilitated and participated in diversity training and co-authored a book, Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment.

Executive MBA program partners with Booz Allen

The Pamplin College of Business and Booz Allen Hamilton, of McLean, Va., have established a partnership under which employees of the global consulting firm receive a tuition discount for Pamplin’s executive MBA program.

“Booz Allen, which has ‘learning partnerships’ with other universities, chose Virginia Tech’s executive MBA as its preferred program after reviewing proposals from several prestigious universities,” said Charles Jacobina, executive director of the executive MBA program, based at Virginia Tech’s Northern Virginia Center in metropolitan Washington, D.C.

“Virginia Tech’s program is a great fit for us,” said Katie Evans, university partnerships leader at Booz Allen. “Most of our employees who are interested in the program have a technical background and seek to enhance their leadership and communication skills.”

Under the agreement, up to five Booz Allen employees per class cohort will receive a 10 per cent tuition discount and a waiver of the application fee. Pamplin’s executive MBA program offers executives a graduate business program that accommodates professional travel and schedule demands without disrupting their degree progress. “The program is designed for busy, experienced professionals with or without business degrees,” said Jacobina.

Its broad curriculum provides an understanding of the major elements of business, examines the ethical and global implications of management, and prepares managers for making decisions in a rapidly changing world, he said.

The program is fully accredited. Classes, held at the Northern Virginia Center every other weekend over an 18-month period, are taught by doctoral faculty. Students enroll in cohorts each September and February.

The program’s current enrollment of 61 students in three cohorts, includes eight Booz Allen employees. Six of the company’s employees are graduates of the program.

NEW MBAs GET USBs

Students offered admission to the MBA program received a welcome gift in their information packets this spring: a 128 MB USB drive containing information about the MBA program and graduate student life at Virginia Tech.

The slide show, narrated by Steve Skripak, Pamplin’s associate dean for graduate programs, includes photos of the Drillfield, Burruss Hall, and other campus landmarks and information on class registration, courses, setting up a PID, housing, campus resources and the MBA Quest orientation (a series of team-building outdoor exercises).

For more information about the Pamplin MBA program, please visit www.mba.pamplin.vt.edu/.

Pamplin Dean Richard E. Sorensen has been appointed to serve on a panel of the Government Accountability Office. Sorensen, who was invited to participate on the Educators’ Advisory Panel by GAO head, U.S. Comptroller General David M. Walker, will serve for a three-year term.

“The panel’s primary purpose is to establish long-term, multi-dimensional, and mutually beneficial working relationships between GAO and leading deans, professors, and selected others,” Walker noted in his letter to Sorensen. The panel advises “on making GAO a model for the corporate social responsibility developed by the late Reverend Leon Sullivan. Co-chair of the college’s diversity committee, she has facilitated and participated in diversity training and co-authored a book, Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment.”
A new Pamplin research center is addressing the shift away from manufacturing by the United States and other economies. “The more we outsource our manufactured goods, the more our manufacturing companies become services companies,” said business information technology professor Robin Russell, director of the new Center for Services Science, Quality, and Innovation.

The multidisciplinary center focuses on the design and improvement of services. Service companies have to “manage a supply chain instead of the manufacturing process, becoming brokers between the customer and the outsource manufacturer,” she said. “And how well they do that brokering — how well they translate what the customer wants, how well they define it for the manufacturers — that’s what service systems is about.”

Information technology, said Russell, is one U.S. industry...
that has undergone significant transformation, with the outsourcing of basic programming to India, China, Ireland, and Eastern Europe. “IBM switched from being a computer manufacturer to being an IT company and then from being a software company to being a service provider. That’s a big change in emphasis — thinking in terms of providing a service to the customer instead of providing software code or programming the computers.”

IT companies that have reconceived their roles as service providers now have to analyze the customer’s business thoroughly, find out what it needs, and translate those needs into an IT system.

“You look at how the work is currently being done. Then you design a more efficient, more customized, and more customer-friendly system that will be programmed in, say, Russia or China. Since we’re outsourcing the programming work, we’ve got to be able to define it more clearly so that someone else can do it.”

With research and teaching expertise in quantitative modeling, information systems/technology, and business processes, the Pamplin College is well positioned to take advantage of this new emphasis, said Russell, a specialist in operations management. The center’s associate directors are Steve Sheetz, associate professor of accounting and information systems, whose research interests are in software measurement and programming psychology, and Chris Zobel, associate professor of business information technology, who specializes in decision support systems.

The center’s current researchers are interested in collaborating with colleagues from other disciplines, including architecture, engineering, and hospitality and tourism management. “The IT field has a lot to learn from the hospitality industry, which has been about services for years,” Russell said.

Aside from IT, the center envisages potential projects in healthcare, banking, hospitality, homeland security, and disaster recovery. “These are all industries that need a new focus on the customer,” Russell said, “and we can help by designing service systems that not only provide efficiency gains for the company but really do end up benefiting the customer.”

Among the issues and challenges facing companies, she said, is the degree of automation or self-services. “What are the tasks that can be done automatically, or online, or don’t take much time? What are the tasks that need face-to-face interaction with individuals?” Self-service seems to be the trend, from grocery checkouts to sandwich orders. “But how much do you let the customer do?” she said. “When does it become a burden to them?”

Performance evaluations are another concern when companies become more service oriented. “How do you assess the value of more face-to-face communication with customers and reward your employees?” said Russell, who is helping to design a performance appraisal system for a company that is training its employees for more interaction with customers.

Industries may have different service problems or challenges. In banking, where customers can serve themselves online and at ATMs, the challenge for branch banks is to find ways to offer more personalized services.

In the healthcare industry, common complaints are long waits to see doctors and misplaced, outdated, or erroneous records. “Sometimes having information that can be efficiently accessed on an IT system,” she warned, “means you can make bad decisions faster, because the overall system lacks checks and controls.”

The center offers its assistance to businesses and individuals seeking to improve their services for industrial or consumer markets. For more information, please contact Robin Russell at rrussell@vt.edu; (540) 231-4532. Visit the center website at: www.ssqi.pamplin.vt.edu.

HOTELS’ “QUIET GOOD”

Hotels’ charitable and volunteer contributions were the focus of a study conducted by Nancy McGehee, associate professor of hospitality and tourism management.

The study, “The Quiet Good: Measuring Corporate Social Responsibility Within The Lodging Industry,” quantitatively measures the value of community contributions of lodging properties, corporations, and foundations. It also provides preliminary insights into the motivations and level of institutionalized policy behind these community services, McGehee said.

Motivations for contributions, she said, fell into two primary categories: return on investment and sense of community. “Many respondents based their contributions on what would give them the greatest return in terms of positive public relations or supporting a valuable client. For example, one respondent indicated that their property supported a specific golf tournament every year because the host organization was a valuable client. Others referred to the importance of supporting the community around them, so local charities and organizations were targeted. Many used phrases like ‘it’s just the right thing to do.’”

She noted that institutionalized policy regarding community contributions “was thin — only 31 percent reported having written policies directing the contributions of their hotel property.”

McGehee’s study is based on the survey responses of 469 properties and corporations and an analysis of 54 industry-related foundations. In 2005, the total national value of community contributions from the industry was $877 million, $815 million of which was at the property level.

At the property level, the survey revealed that 98 percent of responding properties reported making contributions of sleeping rooms, cash donations, restaurant gift certificates, and others to various individuals or organizations within their community; 68 percent reported tracking contributions to their community.

The study was commissioned by the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Foundation and the board of the International Society of Hotel Association Executives.
Bryan Cloyd, professor of accounting and information systems
For most of a week this past July, accounting and information systems professor Bryan Cloyd slept on the floor of a college gym in Barbourville, Ky., and ate meals in the fellowship hall of a church five blocks away. His days were spent with some of America’s poorest and most dispirited families — and some of its most compassionate and high-minded young people.

Cloyd and his wife, Renee, went to southeastern Kentucky to job-shadow five college students working for Appalachia Service Project, or ASP. He wanted to know more about the organization that performs free home repairs for low-income families in 25 of central Appalachia’s poorest counties. For four summers, its young volunteers had included their 18-year-old daughter, Austin, who was among the students and faculty members killed at Virginia Tech on April 16.

It was in talking about Austin and her interests and goals during media interviews after the tragedy that Cloyd recognized “the enormous role that service had played in shaping her world view and giving form to what she wanted to do with her life.”

The Cloyds requested that those offering condolences consider donations to ASP instead of flowers. Less obvious to him early on, however, was the role that his own service with the organization could play in helping him cope with his grief and work toward healing from it. That understanding would come later, as would other realizations — that grieving students and others in the Virginia Tech community could also find healing through volunteer work, and that he and his wife, even in their terrible loss and pain, have been “very fortunate.”

Community service, Cloyd says, is a powerful and fitting response to the tragedy on several fronts. It is consistent with the university’s tradition and values as well as the activities and aspirations of the 32 victims, whose biographies were all characterized by “how much they were doing to help others.”

Service, he says, also helps in the recovery process. “Many returning students may still be struggling with the effects of this tragedy. We need to facilitate opportunities for students to move beyond their grief by engaging in service and come away, hopefully, healed in part by that experience. By serving others, we can do something to bring hope to people who may have lost hope. And by doing that, we can restore the hope we lost on April 16.” (Continued on next page)
“By serving others, we can do something to bring hope to people who may have lost hope. And by doing that, we can restore the hope we lost on April 16.”

The families he encountered in Kentucky, Cloyd says, have endured their bleak circumstances for so long that they have little reason to hope for something better. “If that were me and my family living in those conditions for generations, I would’ve lost hope in ever having a better house, ever having a good job or a good education. Those things would not have occurred to me. The important thing that I’ve learned from this is that serving others means sharing hope and having hope in our own lives. Without hope, we really don’t have anything.”

He and his wife have been working with the office of the vice provost for outreach and international affairs on a major event this fall to encourage service activities by all in the Virginia Tech community as a way to honor those who died on April 16. As part of that effort, the Cloyds plan to take two groups, with 49 students each, on service missions on consecutive weekends in November to repair the homes of needy families in Lee County, Va., where ASP has a year-round center. The organization, which conducted its first home repair projects in 1969, is tweaking the typical one-week summer curriculum and activities for high-school volunteers into a pilot, weekend program for college students.

The response has been enthusiastic from student leaders of two campus groups the Cloyds targeted for participation — the International Relations Organization at Virginia Tech (IROVT) and the Constructor’s Consortium. Austin, an Honors Program student who was pursuing a double major in international studies and French, would have been an officer in IROVT this year, he says. “It’s a great pairing of students,” he notes, citing one group’s focus on different cultures and social justice and the other group’s primary interest in building construction. “We’d like to have teams that mix the ‘soft skill’ folks with the technical skill people; they can help each other.”

Directed action

Grief demands action, Cloyd notes, and for several weeks following April 16, he considered such causes as gun control, mental health reform, and privacy law reform. “All of those things were unsatisfying in the sense that they were complex and adversarial issues. If I went in any of those directions, I ran the risk of not being able to make any progress. And without making progress, I wouldn’t find any healing.”

He realized where he could direct his anguish and energies after ASP’s leaders suggested working together to decide how to use the $85,000 donated (so far) in Austin’s memory. The bigheartedness of so many people prompted him to take a greater interest in the organization’s work, he says, and eventually led him and his wife to focus on ways to support the college students who work as ASP summer staffers. These students play a critical role in ASP’s success by coordinating teams of mostly high-school age volunteers; working with families who need assistance; solving construction problems; and managing schedules, vendor relationships, and other logistics, he says. “The summer staffers we job-shadowed in July are among the most talented college students I have ever known. The skills they develop in this job are just amazing.”

The idea for weekend programs this fall emerged, he says, as an outreach initiative to students that could also help ASP expand its pool of summer staff applicants. “College is when your opportunity costs are low — you don’t have a mortgage to pay, kids to feed, a job that takes 50 hours a week. It’s a period in your life when you’re more likely to say, yeah, I’ll go spend a week helping people repair their homes.”

The weekend experiences are also aimed at inspiring college students to think more purposefully about their career choices, through being actively engaged in the process of helping other people and through evening discussions related to “vocational discernment.” Studies have shown that people are happiest, he says, in careers they perceive as helping other people.

The Cloyds hope to organize more “Collegiate Service Weekends” next spring and to develop a model that can be implemented at other universities in the Appalachian region. They are collaborating with Virginia Tech’s Service Learning Center to promote the program and recruit students. “Universities have thousands of students who would benefit from a meaningful service experience, and the needs are right in our backyard.”

Transporting Tech students three hours from campus to serve some of Virginia’s poorest residents, Cloyd says, gives students a “total immersion” experience that is hard to replicate locally. ASP’s housing services program will identify the local needs and provide a place to sleep and eat. “Our only remaining problem is coming up with the money to pay for training, transportation, food, lodging, and building materials, which are expected to run about $10,000 per weekend.” To keep student participation fees low ($75), he hopes to raise additional funds to cover the program’s costs. In the meantime, the Cloyds are devoting $30,000 of their allocation from the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund to pay for the initial year. The other $150,000 they expect to receive from the fund will be used to endow a scholarship in Austin’s memory.

Their summer experience with ASP affirmed his and his wife’s belief that “serving others is a path that will more surely lead to healing than the other paths we might have taken,” he says. “We cry every day. But most days are a little easier than the day before.”

Cloyd says he is working towards forgiveness of the shooter. “I still find it hard to look at his face, but I will eventually be able to forgive him. I know that Austin is in heaven. She is not angry.” Likewise, Cloyd is not angry with the university. “Whether the administration bore any responsibility for what happened is independent of doing the responsible thing now that it has happened,” he says. “We can’t reverse what happened, but we can do all that is possible to prevent it from happening again. And that is a very complex problem.”

He and his wife, who also have a son, Andrew, did not attend any of the public meetings of the governor’s panel, preferring to “let the professionals do their job.” But they have spoken with a handful of the other April 16 families in private meetings. Though he isn’t prescribing his chosen course as the right route to recovery for the other families — “I know only what direction is right for me” — Cloyd says he is concerned about some of the grieving relatives. “I worry that it may take them a long time to find peace.”

In early June, when a refurbished Norris Hall
The improbable find and the woman’s grace and kindness struck him as something of a miracle. The balloon was not, it turned out, from the Virginia Tech balloon-release ceremony. It was from another ceremony, conducted as a gesture of sympathy and support for Virginia Tech — at an institution almost 200 miles away from the woman’s garden, as Cloyd learned after receiving a package from West Virginia University that included a photo of the event. The improbable find and the woman’s grace and kindness struck him as something of a miracle.

The outpouring of sympathy from friends, acquaintances, and strangers has touched him and his wife. In particular, the many letters and cards sent by parents who have also lost children — “sometimes 20 years ago, sometimes six months” — “have given us hope that we will eventually work through our pain,” he says. “Renee and I realized that, as bad as it was to lose a child, in some ways we were fortunate, because this event — unlike, for example, a car accident — became known to so many people and inspired them to reach out and support us in so many different ways.” He is very grateful for the expressions of compassion and generosity — whether it was “a word of encouragement” or a contribution to ASP or the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund.

His daughter, a 6-foot redhead who played basketball in high school, was interested in international politics and environmental issues, Cloyd says, and loved working with children. That she was beloved and admired was evident from the heartfelt memorial tributes — to her caring nature, readiness to help others, and sense of purpose in life — that came from members of her extended family, high-school and college friends and teachers, and a little girl she had babysat.

April 16, Cloyd says, really challenged him to think about his relationship to God. “My faith journey was pretty much in neutral, had been for a long while.” Through the counseling of his pastor and reading the writings of such authors as C.S. Lewis and Rabbi Kushner, Cloyd says he developed a better perspective. “I think God’s presence is known through the goodness in the hearts of people and how they reach out to help others in need.”

Cloyd, who holds the John E. Peterson Jr. Professorship and specializes in tax policy, is teaching a long-planned doctoral seminar this fall. Asked what he most looks forward to, he says that in early April, he could have responded with a long list: “whole categories of things I was looking forward to, with Austin or because of Austin — things like her study abroad or graduation, grandkids, building a house, different programs and objectives for the college or the department.” Now, he says, “those things are either impossible, or they just don’t seem like particularly high priorities.”

He expects to regain interest in some of those priorities eventually. Meanwhile, he is looking forward to being part of a renewed campus-wide commitment to service that exemplifies a productive response to April 16 and that, he feels, will help the university redefine itself in a “very positive, special way.” On a personal level, he believes that serving others will help him “get back on track to a new normal that is a happy place to be.”

“Tragedies like April 16 don’t have a meaning other than what we choose to give them,” Cloyd says. “If we look back at this and ask ‘why did this happen, why did this happen to me,’ I think we get stuck in questions that cannot be answered. The important question is: ‘how are we going to respond to this, how are we going to allow this to change our lives, what are we going to choose to do because this happened?’ I think the answer to that question will define Virginia Tech.

“We were so proud of Austin. We want her to be proud of us.”
On Rodd Hall’s computer screen around 9:30 a.m. on April 16 was a paper he was writing for an advanced class in higher education law. Hall (FIN ’86, MBA ’89), Pamplin’s associate dean for administration then and a part-time doctoral student in educational leadership and policy studies at Virginia Tech, had scheduled half an hour to write what he hoped would be the concluding paragraphs of the paper.

“I was pretty proud of that paper. I’d worked really hard all semester, and my goal was to get it published.”

But an e-mail from the university, about a shooting in West Ambler Johnston dorm, and later messages about a gunman loose on campus and the cancellation of classes, dispatched Hall from his desk, all thoughts about the paper suspended for the rest of that day and, as it would turn out, for months to come. For the rest of that morning, Hall was consumed by the urgent assignment of securing Pamplin Hall and protecting its occupants. The arrival of yet another brief e-mail, reporting a second shooting, in Norris Hall, with multiple victims, gave him pause: it was the building where he had worked for six-and-a-half years, as the College of Engineering’s associate dean for administration.

His office had been on the third floor. He had spent time every day on the second floor, sometimes meeting or chatting informally with members of the engineering science and mechanics department, which had faculty and administrative offices there. The second floor, which had also held classrooms, was where, it would later emerge, all the shootings occurred.

That Monday morning, victims were yet unidentified; little information was available. Hall pressed on with the tasks at hand. He and Dean Richard Sorensen managed to lock Pamplin Hall’s many entrances with Allen wrenches Sorensen had in his office. Although people were generally calm, the atmosphere in the building was tense. “We were on high alert,” Hall recalls.

A native of Christiansburg, Va., Hall has been described by Pamplin faculty members and colleagues as “a smart guy,” “unassuming,” and “steady and reliable.” He made his rounds briskly, stopping, in particular, by every classroom to remind...
students to call their families and friends and to urge people to move away from the windows.

He enlisted the aid of several cadets who had classes in the building at that time, who agreed to monitor the building’s entrances and check IDs. “The cadets’ uniforms created a sense of confidence,” he says, “that having someone at the door in a T-shirt and jeans just did not create.”

At one point, he dealt firmly with a balky instructor from another college, and at another, he gently asked a student, whose appearance and behavior had given him and others some cause for concern, to step outside a classroom for police questioning. “Rodd seemed to be everywhere you turned that day — indeed, that week,” one finance professor says appreciatively.

Long after the university closed at about noon, Hall and Sorensen remained in their offices — “we thought someone should still be here,” Hall says. At around 3 p.m., however, they were ordered to leave by armed policemen conducting a building search.

En route to his parking lot, Hall was greeted by a sight he says he’ll never forget: what looked like an army of about 30 men, dressed in camouflage and toting machine guns, coming toward him. “I was walking with my hands in the pockets of my black coat,” he recalls, when he was stopped by a member of the platoon. Hall nervously explained that he was simply trying to reach his car the way he usually did, by cutting through Hahn Hall. “He said, no — it’s locked. Then he added, ‘by the way, I would take your hands out of your pockets.’”

The day had shocked and saddened Hall. “I was mourning nameless and faceless students. I was also upset about what had just happened to Virginia Tech. Someone asked me how many people had been killed at Kent State, and I told them ‘only four.’ I realized then that the place at which I had spent so much of my life and loved so much had changed forever.”

On TV that night, he saw a friend, engineering science and mechanics professor Wally Grant. “He had been hit with shrapnel — and he looked to be in shock, but he didn’t appear to be badly hurt,” and Hall remembers feeling a bit reassured that “everything must be all right with people I know over there.”

That everything wasn’t became devastatingly clear early the next morning, when he read an e-mail written in the middle of the previous night by a colleague. It revealed that among the dead were engineering science and mechanics faculty members Kevin Granata and Liviu Librescu. “All of a sudden, it became very personal and very painful.”

Hall had worked closely with Granata on some projects when he served as term director of Virginia Tech’s Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science (ICTAS). Librescu, Hall recalls, was always the smiling face he encountered as he went about his errands in Norris. “I knew nothing about his history as a survivor of the Holocaust; I just knew that he was a well respected researcher and a nice guy.”

Hall didn’t know any of the others who were killed, but the tragedy stayed personal. Slain faculty member Jocelyne Couture-Nowak was the wife of horticulture department head Jerzy Nowak, whom Hall had gotten to know when they collaborated on several projects. Perhaps hardest of all was watching his best friend, Bill Knocke, head of the civil engineering department, go through the pain of losing nine of his students and another of Knocke’s closest friends, civil engineering professor G.V. Loganathan.

Hall sought comfort by attending the memorial services and ceremonies, including the balloon release and bell tolling on the Drillfield, a ceremony he found especially moving.

Wanting to help in any way he could, he ended up performing a small but unexpectedly significant service — directing the crowds from the convocation at the already-full Cassell Coliseum to an inconspicuous entrance at Lane Stadium, which helped enable thousands of people, many in tears because there was no room for them at the coliseum, to watch the broadcast ceremony there and feel a part of the Virginia Tech family.

Weeks after the tragedy, Hall was asked to accept the assignment as the university’s associate vice president for research. “It would have been much more comfortable to continue working in my own college,” says Hall, who has spent all but two years of his career at Virginia Tech, in various capacities. “I was in a job that I had always dreamed of holding. My first reaction was to reject the offer.”

Eventually, he recognized that “the most comfortable choice was not necessarily the right choice ... After the shooting, there were a whole lot of administrators who were called on to do things more uncomfortable than I could ever imagine. It was time for me to step up and do my part, even if it had nothing to do with the recovery effort.”

As for the project that he was trying to wrap up that April 16 morning, the paper lay unfinished as of late July. The day after the tragedy, Hall sent the incomplete paper to his professor with a note saying that he doubted he’d get back to it right away. Hall admits that it was “three months before I could even go back to it and begin to think about writing those last few paragraphs, it was that difficult for me to go back to that moment in time.

“I was never in danger like so many of my friends in Norris were — didn’t get shot at, didn’t hear the shots, didn’t see the carnage. But people on the fringes like me have still been significantly impacted, even though our pain is insignificant compared to the suffering of so many others.”

He feels a need to complete that semester’s work and says that he will. “It’s almost like I have to put that paper behind me before I can move on — it’s an analogy to dealing with the emotions that are still so raw. It’s never going to get completely better. But, at some point, I’m going to get that paper done.”

And that, he says quietly, “is going to be a pretty big milestone.”

R odd Hall, Pamplin’s former associate dean for administration and research, and Ellen Krupar, college librarian, read some of the messages of sympathy sent to the college. The scrolls and banners, along with the thousands of other memorial items that the university received, are being tagged, sorted, digitally photographed, and described. From them, items will be selected that will become part of the Virginia Tech archive related to April 16. The college is deeply moved by these heartfelt expressions of caring and greatly appreciates the kindness of everyone who sent messages of support, said Dean Richard Sorensen.
Hokies United, an informal student group, moved quickly into action last April to help the Virginia Tech community. From left, are three of the leaders, Pamplin students Ryan Gleeson, Sarah Saxton (who graduated in May), and Adeel Khan.

Working for the recovery of a community

ORDINARY STUDENTS

EXTRAORDINARY ACTION
Involved in student government at Virginia Tech since her freshman year, Sarah Saxton (MKTG ’07) was no stranger to campus activism and community service last spring. “I have to admit, though,” she said, looking back at the student response to the April 16 tragedy, “I think that week we even surprised ourselves.”

It’s not that what the students demonstrated — described by various observers as “maturity,” “leadership,” and “resilience” — came as news to her. “To me, it was never about discovering the strength of our community — that has always been there,” Saxton said. “For the first time, we had to demonstrate to the world how strong our community is.”

A native of Newport News, Va., Saxton went to high school in Glen Gardner, N.J., where her parents, also Tech alumni, still live. Her family and extended family, she said, are all from Virginia.

Last spring semester, she was president of the Order of the Gavel Leadership Society, vice president of the Student Government Association, and a member of Delta Sigma Pi, a fraternity for students pursuing careers in business. She had volunteered with Hokies United campaigns to support victims of Hurricane Katrina and the 2004 tsunami in Asia and, last fall, helped coordinate the student effort to raise funds for the families of a police officer and a hospital guard who were slain in off-campus shootings at the start of the school year.

But there is nothing she is prouder of, Saxton said, than helping to organize the Hokies United response to April 16. The series of activities — a candlelight vigil, “writing walls,” a memorial of Hokie Stones, a community picnic, a balloon release and bell tolling — was conceived to allow people to gather together to mourn, express their grief and sympathy, and work toward healing.

Saxton participated in all the organizational meetings and, except for the balloon release and bell tolling, helped plan all the activities and attended all the events. Some of the meetings lasted hours and late into the night, she said, “so it was a very sleepless first (and second and third) week.” But there was no place the students wanted to be more, she said, than at those meetings and the events themselves.

The planning began early. That Monday morning, Saxton slept in, until 9 a.m. “When we received that first e-mail about a shooting on campus, our network of campus leaders immediately created a chat room. The phone networks were clogged by that point and we didn’t feel it was safe to come to a central location yet.”

Among the many participants in the online discussion were management senior and former SGA president Sumeet Bagai; accounting and information systems sophomore Adeeel Khan; mathematics senior Scott Cheatham; management senior Kellie Gleeson; hospitality and tourism management major Ryan Gleeson; Tom Quigley, an architecture student; and Vikram Narayan, a computer engineering student.

The conversations focused initially on information exchange. The students had more updated information than the TV stations they were watching, Saxton said, as their sources included dispatches from contacts in the Blacksburg Police Department and the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad as well as instant messaging from a student in one of the two Norris Hall classes not under attack and who confirmed that the situation was far worse than the initial news reports.

“We then shifted our focus to action. It became clear very early on that we were going to have to respond quickly.”

The vigil on the Drillfield was a collective idea, she said. The group “agreed that at the very least, a vigil was in order — there were no questions or debates, we knew we had to organize a candlelight vigil in the center of campus — but that more had to be done as well.” At a meeting at Bagai’s apartment that evening, the other ideas emerged.

The idea of an arrangement of Hokie Stones, one for each victim, around the pass and review stand, for example, came from Ryan Gleeson (see sidebar p. 15). Inspired by the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., Saxton proposed the writing walls — “people were going to need a public way to display their sympathy, sorrow, and support for our community” — and worked with industrial and systems engineering student and German Club president Brian Torgersen. Torgersen, she said, designed the white painted plywood structures that were built overnight by other German Club members at their manor, with donated materials from the local Lowe’s and Home Depot stores.

The students were able to round up about 1,000 candles, donated by local businesses, but they needed many, many more. They decided to take advantage of the media hordes around campus. “A few of us who had media experience went to the Alumni Center where the parking lots had turned into a satellite-van tailgate. We gave a few interviews and made sure to mention the need for candles.”

“The next morning, the shipments began arriving. Via overnight delivery, we received everything from Yankee Candles donations, church altar guild stashes, candles from entire communities as far west as Idaho. Individual families even cleaned out their closets and sent us their half-used candles. Pepsi and Coke donated wax cups to use with the candles, and we took up residence in the German Club Manor to assemble over 75,000 of them. By the end of the day, we had over 100,000 candles.” They were, to Saxton, “quantitative proof” of people’s need and desire to help.

“I can think of few, if any, moments in my life that compare to that candlelight vigil.” As speeches had been given at that afternoon’s convocation, the student coordinators decided to keep their vigil speeches short, to about 10 minutes in total, said Saxton, who stood behind the speakers on the review stand. (Continued on next page)
Members of the media, she recalled, “were very aggressive.” They ignored student pleas to remain behind the curb — at which point, Saxton said, “First Lady Kaine came to my rescue and started physically pushing reporters away.

“When the last speaker finished, cadets played echo taps across the Drillfield. The crowd fell silent when it ended, but after a few minutes, a group of people yelled, “Let’s go!” to which the rest of the crowd replied, “Hokies!” This continued for a minute or so, and then it turned into everyone singing our fight song, with candles raised in the air. A group of people began singing the Star Spangled Banner after that, which everyone joined in on too.

“Until that moment, I hadn’t cried about what had happened, because I had been so focused on the response efforts. After the crowd started those cheers, however, there was no way I could keep it in. I turned around and found that every Hokies United coordinator as well as each administrator was doing the same.”

Saxton was amazed at the outpouring of support. “Businesses contacted us and offered any service we needed.” That night on the Drillfield, she said, “we realized there were more than just our Hokie classmates, professors, and neighbors there. Students from Radford, the University of Virginia, Liberty University, George Mason, Clemson, and Ohio State came to support us — and those were just the students I met.”

Many alumni had driven all night to be there — including, she heard, an alumnus from Minnesota.

Saxton and SGA President James Tyger, a management senior, received hundreds of e-mails from student governments all over the world and phone calls from many of their presidents. On Wednesday morning, students who had driven through the night from Auburn University arrived with a message board. Students at other campuses organized their own vigils in support of Virginia Tech. “On Facebook, students from all around the country were changing their profile picture to one of a black ribbon with the Virginia Tech symbol emblazoned on it.”

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when Ryan Gleeson proposed a simple arrangement of 32 Hokie Stones on the Drillfield to honor the fallen Hokies of April 16, he had no idea that it would quickly turn into a shrine, much less inspire a permanent memorial.

“It was just a concept,” said Gleeson, a hospitality and tourism management major who was among the two dozen or so students from across the university brainstorming at a meeting in the apartment of management senior Sumeet Bagai a few hours after the tragedy last spring. “When you’re in a situation like this, all you want to do is help out where you can,” said Gleeson, a junior this fall from Fairfax Station, Va., and vice president of the Student Government Association.

“It wasn’t ever planned to be a memorial,” he said. It became one, he said, through the efforts of the students, the families and friends of the victims, and other members of the Virginia Tech community who left name tags, photos, and other mementoes of their loved ones at individual stones.

“It’s the people who went there every night to pray, who brought flowers, who lit a candle in their memory,” he said, who made the semi-circle of stones a place to gather, mourn, and reflect. “Without those thoughts, those prayers … they’re just stones.”

The 32 Hokie Stones were “borrowed” from a construction site late that Monday night and arranged on the Drillfield, around the viewing stand.

The design and location were later adopted by a university committee of faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

What became the permanent memorial was dedicated on August 19. The 32 stones of the new memorial, weighing 300 lbs. each and engraved with the names of those who lost their lives, are positioned in the same order as the Hokie Stones of the original memorial. Those original stones were placed in custom-made mahogany boxes and given to families of the victims.

Accounting and information systems professor Bryan Cloyd, father of Austin Cloyd, said he and his wife, Renee, will incorporate their daughter’s Hokie Stone in the fireplace of the new home they are building in the Blacksburg area.
If they were exhausted after a 40-hour journey from New Delhi, the 22 visiting Indian engineers didn’t show it. Despite only a few hours of sleep upon arrival in Blacksburg at 3 a.m. — some four hours past their scheduled arrival, thanks to flight delays — the group plunged enthusiastically into their first morning’s activity at Virginia Tech: a workshop on advanced leadership led by Wanda Smith, associate professor of management.

Smith, who does research in group dynamics, diversity, and human resources retention in information technology careers and studies, led a workshop designed to enhance the participants’ global leadership skills.

An experienced workshop conductor and management consultant, she sought to engage and sustain the interest of her sleep-deprived audience through a lively presentation that included a variety of interactive exercises aimed at demonstrating various styles of leading, following, coaching, and communicating.

The engineers, all mid-level managers with 15-20 years of experience, work for India’s Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), a state-owned exploration and production company. The engineers are also currently earning their MBA through employer sponsorship, at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) in New Delhi.

They came to Virginia Tech in February for the Executive Energy Management Program, a week-long series of energy and business seminars at the university and organizations in Washington, D.C., organized specifically for the group by Pamplin’s Management and Professional Development office and the Department of Finance.

Management and Professional Development specializes in custom-designed, faculty-led training for organizations, including Fortune 500 companies and federal agencies. “We also offer individual consulting to meet a variety of organizational needs in business and state and federal government agencies,” said the unit’s director, Frank Smith. The program for the Indian engineers, Smith said, was somewhat unusual. Not only was it the first one developed for a foreign institution by his office, but the program was also developed as an integral part of the participants’ MBA studies.

The IIFT is also a partner of Virginia Tech — in 2004, both institutions signed agreements to exchange faculty, students, academic information, and materials and to organize joint research programs, conferences, and other academic exchanges to promote research and learning.

ONGC, headquartered in Dehra Dun in northern India, is among the world’s largest oil companies. George Varghese, a superintending engineer of instrumentation at ONGC’s Mumbai office, said that the company ranks 28th in the world in percentage of oil reserves. (Saudi Aramco is number one; ExxonMobil is 12th.)

The company produces 1 million barrels a day of oil and oil-equivalent gas from recoverable reserves of 1.1 billion metric tons. It operates in 15 countries in Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia. “Among all Indian companies, ONGC has the highest net worth, net profit, and market capitalization.”

The company’s goals demand a “continuous skill building” of its employees for “emerging new challenges,” Varghese said.

Coming to America was essential, said K. Rangarajan, a management professor who accompanied the engineers on their visit. “In the global energy sector, the United States and U.S. companies like ExxonMobil play an important role in terms of setting standards and business practices.”

Virginia Tech was chosen, he said, because of its strong finance program, its “good track record of research, and excellent academic inputs.” The program included seminars on oil and gas exploration strategies, renewable energies, and future energy scenarios by faculty members from across the university.

Norris Chamberlain (MKTG ’76), an executive of Energy Systems Group in Richmond, Va., and a member of the Pamplin Advisory Council, helped arrange for a presentation on the use of landfills as renewable energy sources.

The engineers toured the Roanoke Gas Company’s control center and liquefied natural gas plant and traveled to the Washington, D.C., area, where they visited Virginia Tech’s Advanced Research Institute, the World Bank, the American Petroleum Institute, and ExxonMobil.

The engineers, all of whom were in the United States for the first time, were also given a taste of American culture, including a Virginia Tech-Boston College basketball game.

In evaluations submitted at the program’s close, the participants expressed their appreciation for the “attention to details,” “caring about even minor sensitivities,” “100 percent hands-on approach,” and “tailor-made topics.”
SUPPORTING OUTSTANDING MARKETING STUDENTS

The family of Emily C. Specchio (MKTG ’06) has established the Emily Carrigg Specchio Memorial Scholarship in the Pamplin College of Business.

Emily’s parents, John and Eileen Specchio, of Chester, N.J., and her sister, Katharine Specchio, of Durham, N.C., recently presented Pamplin Dean Richard E. Sorensen a check for $20,000, bringing the total raised in the scholarship fund to $77,000. The goal for the endowment is $100,000.

The scholarship supports students who are outstanding marketing majors or members of the Phi Sigma Pi honors fraternity at Virginia Tech and who have a record of community service. Preference is given to participants of the college’s semester-long study-abroad program in Lugano, Switzerland.

To date, scholarships have been awarded to Megan Walker, a communication major from Winchester, Va.; Mary Peck, a marketing student from Richmond, Va.; and Molly Fagan, a marketing student from Wilmington, Del.

Emily Specchio passed away suddenly on May 15, 2006 from a brain aneurysm. Earlier that day, she had graduated cum laude with a bachelor’s degree. She had been accepted as a graduate student in marketing and had begun taking graduate classes.

“Emily loved Virginia Tech and was passionate about the virtues of scholarship, leadership and fellowship that serve as the foundation for Phi Sigma Pi,” said John Specchio, a professor of food science at Montclair State University. Eileen Specchio, an associate professor and director of the nursing department at the College of Saint Elizabeth, said her daughter sought to embody the spirit of her fraternity and alma mater through her commitment to community service and academic achievement. Emily’s sister, Katherine Specchio, is a doctoral candidate in pharmacology at Duke University.

Celebrating Emily’s life in a ceremony the family members described as “moving,” Dean Sorensen expressed the college’s appreciation for the family’s gift, while Marketing Department Head Kent Nakamoto and Marketing Professor David Brinberg discussed their memories of Emily and the marketing and Lugano programs.

Nakamoto recalled, “She was not only an extraordinary able student but a delightful young lady.” Her experiences in the marketing and Lugano programs, he said, are “emblematic of the rich experiences we seek to provide to our students.”

The Lugano program has grown, he said, enrolling 40 students each year. “Our relationship with the University of Lugano has expanded to include joint faculty and graduate-student research as well as graduate-student exchanges, many involving alumni of the Lugano program. Thus, this scholarship will have an impact on our graduate and research programs as well as our international activities for undergraduates.”

Brinberg discussed Emily’s interests, her “zest for life, and caring about others.” He noted that the Lugano program now includes such components “as a greater focus on nongovernmental organizations, particularly those working with children in South Africa, that, I believe, would have delighted Emily.”

The Specchio family has established the Emily C. Specchio Foundation, which will hold a benefit each year on May 15. The proceeds will support the memorial scholarship as well as Phi Sigma Pi’s sponsorship of Teach for America and Relay for Life.

Learn more about the Emily C. Specchio Foundation by visiting http://EmilySpecchioFoundation.googlepages.com.

OTHER MAJOR GIFTS

Byrd accounting scholarship

Thomas R. Byrd (ACCT ’80) and Daisy H. Byrd, of Richmond, Va., have made a $1 million pledge to establish the Thomas R. Byrd Endowed Scholarship in Accounting and Information Systems. Recipients must be a student in accounting and information systems in the Pamplin College and a resident of the Delmarva Peninsula. Preference will be given to students based on academic merit, demonstrated leadership skills and community service.

Buerger scholarship for international studies

Hermann Buerger (ECAS ’69, MBA ’70) and Michele Buerger, of Williamsburg, Va., have pledged $100,000 to establish the Hermann and Michele Buerger Scholarship in the college. Preference will be given to students based on academic merit, demonstrated leadership skills and community service, financial need, and an interest in studying international business.

Center funding professorships

The Russell V. and Arlene F. Oliver Center for Study of Investment Management has been established in the Pamplin College with a bequest and other prior gifts totaling $2.4 million from the estate of Russell V. Oliver (BAD ’33) and Arlene F. Oliver. The center will operate as an umbrella for individual endowments funding five professorships in investment management created over the years. The first of these — the Russell V. and Arlene F. Oliver Professorship in Investment Management, established in 1999 — is held by finance professor Raman Kumar. The other two professorships have not yet been filled.
The Virginia Tech student chapter of Phi Beta Lambda (Future Business Leaders of America) won an Outstanding Chapter award at the state leadership conference in Richmond this past spring. The team of 14 students collected 23 awards in the various events, said chapter president Brian Tajo, a senior in business information technology from Virginia Beach, Va., who received the Mary B. McGinty Scholarship Award.

Barry L. O’Donnell, associate director for the MBA program, received the 2006-07 MBA Outstanding Faculty Member Award. The award is given to the faculty member “who has done the most to add value to the educational experiences of the MBA students.”

Abon Mozumdar, associate professor of finance, received the Northern Virginia MBA program 2006-07 Teaching and Service Award.

**Jesse G. Clowers Jr.** (MGT ’03), a staff sergeant with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, based in Fort Bragg, N.C., was killed in Afghanistan on August 12 by an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during a patrol. He was 27. Clowers, a Virginia Tech cheerleader, had joined the Army to serve his country and prepare for a future career in law enforcement. Clowers, who is survived by his wife, Kaytie, and their two young children, was deployed in March.

**Ernest J. Pavlock**, 77, professor emeritus of accounting and information systems, died on August 23. Pavlock joined Virginia Tech in 1980. He taught in Blacksburg until 1986, when he moved to the Northern Virginia campus to teach MBA students. He retired in 2000. In September 2002, his department established the Ernest J. Pavlock Scholarship in Accounting and Information Systems, which is awarded annually to an undergraduate or graduate student in accounting and information systems.


He received a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, an MBA from the Wharton School, and a bachelor’s degree from Duquesne University. He was an Air Force veteran. He is survived by his wife, Vivian Botti Pavlock, and their three children.
Kay P. Hunnings has been appointed associate dean for administration at the Pamplin College of Business, effective Aug. 27. Hunnings, formerly director of accounting and financial reporting of Virginia Tech’s Corporate Research Center, has worked in various positions at the CRC since April 2001. She was previously a senior accountant at the Virginia Tech Foundation and an internal auditor at the university.

Hunnings earned a bachelor’s degree in horticulture in 1979 and an MBA in 2007, both at Virginia Tech. She is a member of the Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. She succeeds Roderick A. Hall, who has been appointed as Virginia Tech’s associate vice president for research.

Mark L. Begly has been appointed the college’s director of development. Working closely with the dean of the college and the university’s central development office, he will plan and implement the college’s fundraising efforts.

Begly joined Virginia Tech in June 2006 as its regional director of major gifts, where he was responsible for identifying, cultivating, and soliciting major donors across all disciplines of the university. He had worked for seven years at Regent University, as a marketing director at its education school and the Washington, D.C., campus, before being appointed executive director of advancement and university relations.

Begly received a bachelor’s degree in human services from Springfield College in 1992 and an MBA from Regent University in 2002.

HONORS

Brennan Shepard, an MBA student from Roanoke, Va., has been appointed as the graduate representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors for 2007-08. Shepard earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Virginia Tech in 2002 and has worked for the campaigns of Virginia Governor Mark Warner and Congressman Rick Boucher and in the Virginia General Assembly for Delegate Bob Brink. President of the MBA Association, Shepard has managed several stores for AutoZone, the national retailer of automotive parts and accessories, and is a private pilot.

Jim Littlefield, professor of marketing, has been named VT KnowledgeWorks’ inaugural Strategic Fellow for 2007-08. The Strategic Fellows program, sponsored this year by FNB Corporation, provides one-on-one professional assistance to emerging companies as they fine-tune their planned approaches to market opportunities. Fellows serve a one-year appointment from July through June, and are selected from among the faculty, alumni, and associates of the Pamplin College of Business.


Parviz Ghandforoush, professor of business information technology, director of the MBA program in Northern Virginia, and managing director of the master of information technology program, gave the commencement address to students receiving diplomas in systems management at the S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research in Mumbai, India. The students graduated from a partnership program that awards a Virginia Tech master’s degree in information technology and a diploma in systems management from S.P. Jain.

Drew Weaver, a junior in marketing management from High Point, N.C., and member of Virginia Tech’s golf team, won the 2007 British Amateur Championship. The victory — the first by an American in the event since Jay Sigel won the competition in 1979 — earned him an automatic spot in the British Open this past summer. Weaver was one of six amateurs — and the only American amateur — in the field of 156 at Carnoustie, Scotland. He was ABC News’ “Person of the Week” on July 20.

The Virginia Tech chapter of Beta Alpha Psi was recognized internationally as a “superior chapter” for excelling in “academics, professionalism, and leadership” during the 2006-07 academic year. It was also named the “most improved chapter.” Greg Jenkins and Patty Lobingier, accounting and information systems faculty members, were cited for their guidance and leadership as faculty advisors.

All-Academy Symposium

Michael Badawy, management professor in the MBA program in Northern Virginia, organized and chaired a session, “How Can Business Schools Do Well By Doing Good? An Action Agenda for Re-Focusing Management Education,” at the annual Academy of Management meeting in Philadelphia in August. The “All-Academy Symposium” featured top management scholars from McGill University, Harvard, and the London Business School. It was the only session from more than 1,600 to be webcast live. The speakers addressed strategies for refocusing management education and responded to questions from a live, international audience.
If you named your fall 2007 entering class of executive MBA students the “Chesapeake Cohort,” where else could you take them for orientation but the Chesapeake Bay?

That’s where the program’s executive director Charles Jacobina — with a little help from the captain and crew of the schooner Woodwind — conducted the last two days of an orientation for the 16 students in the seventh executive MBA class.

Setting out from Annapolis, Md., Capt. Ken Kaye and his two crew members sailed the 74-foot schooner for the first hour of the four-and-a-half hour trip, while providing the students a primer on sailing. “They learned about the various parts of the schooner, how to make the most of wind direction, how to read the maps and navigate — and most important, when to duck when the booms come over their heads!” said Karime Shamloo, executive MBA assistant director.

Working in teams of four, the students completed tasks that included adjusting the various sails: the main sail in the back of the boat, the fisherman and stay sails in the middle, and the jib sail in front, Shamloo said.

The students, only one of whom had prior nautical experience, sailed back to the dock with some guidance and supervision from Capt. Kaye and his crew. The first two days of the orientation were conducted at Virginia Tech’s Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church, Va., where the program included presentations by faculty members and alumni.