Pamplin undergrad researchers picked for ACC Meeting of Minds

Aaron G. Kroll, a management leadership junior who is minoring in business leadership, and Michelle Klassen, a senior in economics, have been selected to present their research at the April ACC Meeting of the Minds conference at North Carolina State University. Their presentations will be among six from Virginia Tech at the event, which showcases undergraduate research.

Kroll, who is from Christiansburg, Va., will present a paper about his work with business law professor Janine Hiller on the impact of virtual world communities on intellectual property rights. The emergence of virtual worlds such as Second Life has led to an increasing number of intellectual property questions, Kroll notes. “There are unique challenges to intellectual property rights as the line between the virtual world and the real world slowly blurs.” His research focuses on the impact on traditional concepts and protection of trademarks, trade names, and copyrights.

Klassen, who is from Ellicott City, Md., will present her study of OxyContin abuse and diversion in the Appalachian region, the causes of the problem, and the actions needed to address it. OxyContin, she says, has become a major problem in Appalachia since its introduction in 1995, because of its relative availability and public disregard for the dangers of its abuse.

Identifying the drug’s appeal to users and sellers, she says, would allow actions to be taken to reduce the economic impact of the vast black market in those areas affected by the illegal activity. Klassen’s project advisor is history professor Peter Wallenstein.

Sattar Mansi, associate professor of finance, is being honored with the college’s 2009 Award for Research Excellence. His research has dealt with the effects of director issues, diversification, internationalization, CEO compensation, and managerial incentives related to the debt market. His current research focuses on the debt market, with applications related to corporate finance and financial markets and institutions (see p. 9). His major contribution has been in testing the impact of events on the debt market. He has examined, for instance, how U.S. multinational firms benefit or lose by doing business abroad and the latter’s effect on the cost of equity capital.

Jack Maher, the John F. Carroll Jr. Professor of Accounting and Information Systems, has been selected to receive the college’s 2009 Outstanding Faculty in Doctoral Education Award. Currently his department’s Ph.D. program director, Maher teaches a Ph.D. seminar, Capital Markets in Accounting, as well as courses related to accounting information systems.

Teaching Excellence: The following have been selected to receive 2009 Pamplin Excellence in Teaching Awards and Holtzman Outstanding Educator Awards: Patty Lobingier, accounting and information systems; Laura Clark, business information technology; Randy Billingsley, finance; Pierre Couture, hospitality and tourism management; Lorraine Borny, management; and Eloise Coupéy, marketing. Billingsley and Coupéy have been selected to receive university Certificates of Teaching Excellence.

Nancy McGehee, associate professor of hospitality and tourism management, has been selected to receive the college’s 2009 Award for Outreach Excellence. McGehee has combined her research interests in rural and volunteer tourism development with the university’s outreach mission through her work with the Virginia Tour-