Fifth White Coat Ceremony, Class of 2011

VCOM’s fifth White Coat Ceremony was held December 1, 2007 on the campus of Virginia Tech with over 1,000 people in attendance. During the ceremony, each of our 163 first year medical students was cloaked by two faculty members with his/her first white coat. Students also received the “Humanism in Medicine” pin, donated by the Arnold Gold Foundation, and a stethoscope engraved with their name, donated by the Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association (VOMA).

The ceremony included an inspirational speech by Dr. Eugene Zachary (former Dean at the UNTHSC- Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and VCOM Board member), the white coat cloaking and reading of the Osteopathic Oath. Students were supported by select members of the class of 2010 who were part of the procession, aided in cloaking and also participated in reading of the Osteopathic Oath.

Dr. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, explained the purpose of the White Coat Ceremony and tied the purpose of this ceremony, which is held on over 100 medical school campuses, to VCOM’s mission and VCOM’s values of: Duty, Compassion, Integrity, Patient-Centered Care, Knowledge and Altruism. Dr. Tooke-Rawlins also identified the need for caring and compassionate physicians in our society, noting recent trends in health care.

“We are pleased that so many families and friends could be with us to celebrate the achievements of our first year students” commented Dr. Jim Wolfe, President of VCOM. “We hold our ceremony at this time of the year so we can recognize the achievements of our students who successfully completed their first block of studies in the basic sciences and will now add early clinical experiences to their basic science education. This is an important milestone in the education of our Student Doctors.”

The Class of 2011 were recognized in a ceremony for their academic achievements. The first-year osteopathic medical students were awarded a VCOM White Coat – a symbol of the milestone that they have reached in their medical studies.
Message from the Dean

Continued from page 1

forth a framework that will promote translational and clinical research. While the NIH and other federal funds have decreased per institution, VCOM has demonstrated consistent growth in externally funded biomedical and clinical research. The addition of the National Center for Analysis of Healthcare Data (NCAHD) will allow us to look at not only physician workforce issues, but the environmental factors and epidemiology of diseases that affect Appalachia.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, D.O.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY

New Chair of Geriatrics

Dr. Don Noll, D.O., previously served as Professor of Internal Medicine at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine and holds a certificate of Added Qualification in Geriatric Medicine. He has also served as the Director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research at the AT Still Research Institute.

New Assistant Chair of Emergency Medicine

James Powers, D.O. is a graduate of the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Powers completed his Emergency Medicine Residency at Eastern Virginia Medical School where he served as Chief Resident. He is currently working as an attending physician in the Emergency Department at Montgomery Regional Hospital in Blacksburg.

Dr. Delmas Bolin delivered the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) exchange lecture during the 2007 American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine Annual Meeting in Calgary. Dr. Bolin spoke on “Clinical Implications of Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Use.” The topic was timely for the approximately 1200 sports medicine physicians who routinely use medications such as ibuprofen following sports injuries. The popular press has recently given tremendous attention to the cardiovascular risk profiles of these medications, and it is important to highlight when not to use the medications and the circumstances when the benefits far outweigh the risks.

Dr. Bolin was presented with a USA South Baseball Championship ring during a halftime recognition held by Ferrum College in September. Coach Abe Naff, who retired last year as one of the most successful college baseball coaches, presented the team and the staff with the rings. "It was truly an unexpected honor to be recognized by Coach Naff and to share in this team’s success.” Dr. Bolin has served as a team physician with Ferrum College since 2005.
Rebecca Davis, Ph.D. named “Friend of the Association” by VRHA

The Friend of the Association Award is given to recognize a program, institution or individual that has been an advocate in support of the Association’s mission.

This year’s recipient is a friend to many in the Association! The nomination letter that was submitted says it all: “In 2002, Rebecca Davis undertook the less than enviable task of rejuvenating the Virginia Rural Health Association. Rebecca was hired as the first ever Executive Director and spent four years establishing VRHA as a voice for rural health concerns. She undertook the typical new organization tasks (redo the bylaws, find any old records, determine who the board members are, etc.) with little if any assistance. But she also moved quickly into growing the membership and providing benefits for members. Under her guidance, the weekly update, web site and biannual newsletters were established. The annual conference was reinstated along with an expanded awards program. She acted as the representative for rural health in Virginia during the establishment of the Council on Rural Virginia, the Virginia Center for Rural Development and served on the Governor’s Task Force on Obstetrics in Rural Virginia. And when Rebecca moved on, she left a viable, capable organization. Rarely has VRHA had a better friend or advocate.”

Pictured here with husband Michael, Rebecca Davis is an Assistant Professor of Rural and Community Health at VCOM.

A Look into our Faculty: An Interview with OB-GYN Chair, Dr. Cathy Callahan

by Jennifer Czaplicki

How did you decide to go to medical school?
For my undergraduate thesis, I choose to collected a series of oral histories on Latina migrant women who had recently immigrated to North Carolina. The summer after graduation, I established an internship program for other students at the University to work with migrant workers in the areas of health care, education and law. I choose to participate in the internship program as a health care advocate in a Migrant Health Center. I loved working with Latina migrant women, but felt limited in the services that I could provide for them. It was then that I decided that it was time to go to medical school to expand my scope of care that I could provide for the women. Following medical school, my Master’s degree in Public Health focused on maternal and child health.

Do you know how to speak Spanish?
I am conversational in Spanish and French. When I was 18 years old, I lived in France for one year. I learned Spanish when I lived in Mexico for one year. In North Carolina, I interpreted Spanish for Spanish-speaking relatives of Mayan-only-speaking elders.

What are the biggest challenges facing your specialty at the moment?
The malpractice for obstetricians/gynecologists (OB/GYN) changes the day-to-day operations for the OB/GYN physician… Another challenge we face is the shortage of OB/GYN practitioners.

If you had to do it all over again, would you choose the same specialty?
Yes, I would because the field of OB/GYN holds my interest intellectually. It is an interesting specialty because it does not treat chronic disease. It is very hands on, and many of the patient problems are solvable, medically or surgically. There are many opportunities to educate your patients about their health, such as with sexually-transmitted infection counseling.

Do you have any children?
I have two children, a 3-year-old boy and a 5-year-old girl.

What advice can you give the students about choosing a specialty?
You have to be passionate about whatever you decide.

What is your advice for VCOM students, in general, as we become physicians?
Choose a program that is a good fit with the other residents. I would say that I had a great time with my co-resident class and that is a key for success. My other bit of advise is to maintain balance. Have weekly “date nights” with your significant other and plan time to play.

Dr. Cathy Callahan, M.D. graduated from the medical school at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. She completed her residency training at the University of Rochester.
Physicians experience and witness a broad range of emotions including sadness, joy, fear and regret in the practice of medicine. How doctors reflect on and respond to personal emotions and the emotions of others can either facilitate or hinder sound medical decision making. Emotional Intelligence or EI as it is abbreviated, is defined by psychologist and EI researcher John Mayer as the ability to perceive, express, regulate and assimilate emotion into good judgment and reasoning.

Although EI has not yet been widely researched in medicine, it has clear relevance because medicine requires sound reasoning and decision making in the context of often emotionally charged circumstances.

It is important that as medical students are acculturated into the profession, opportunities are provided to further develop emotional intelligence. VCOM medical missions provide students valuable practice in regulating and assimilating emotions into the professional physician role. Gaining experience in this psychological process is akin to learning other fundamental medical procedures such as taking vital signs or suturing a wound. Similarly, research tells us that when early-career professionals strengthen emotional intelligence they gain confidence in their ability to work effectively in stressful environments.

On a recent VCOM medical mission to the Dominican Republic, Dr. Miller saw first hand how mission trips enhance the emotional intelligence of our students. Thirty-two first and second year students, under the supervision of Dr. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, Dr. Jan Willcox and Dean Sutphin, Ph.D., worked in the VCOM clinic in Veron. There they assisted a VCOM Ph.D. student in providing scabies eradication treatment and conducted an outstanding first-ever VCOM outreach project into the rural sugar cane villages of the Dominican Republic.

In each of these settings, Dr. Miller observed students effectively utilizing emotional intelligence. VCOM students accurately perceived and responded to the emotions of patients, despite there frequently being a language barrier. Students reached out to patients and to one another through reassuring touch, comforting words and sound advice, in a fast-paced and emotionally challenging environment. This required them to set aside personal reactions and needs, at times, in order to serve others. The students talked openly with one another and the faculty about their emotional reactions, recognizing that doing so was acceptable and productive.

Emotional intelligence is an important element of the “hidden curriculum” in medicine. Our mission programs provide valuable medical care to persons in need and have the added value of giving VCOM students insight which can be used throughout their careers. To provide effective medical care, physicians must achieve a balance between engaging patients emotionally and maintaining healthy boundaries. During the mission experience, students demonstrated a clear understanding of this dynamic.
The Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) celebrated the inauguration of its third international clinic in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in December 2007. The Honduran clinic, along with international clinics previously established in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador, compliments an extensive outreach program VCOM has locally throughout Southwest Virginia.

Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, D.O., Dean and Vice President of the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), noted, “This initiative will provide medical students with experiences in compassionate care of patients and will bring high-level medical care to those who need it the most. There is a strong parallel with the experiences students gain in our Honduran and other international clinics with the skills needed to be effective in rural and underserved areas in the U.S. Our students will be better physicians here in Virginia and in other under served areas of Appalachia as a result of these international experiences.”

Graduates who experience this international exposure as part of their medical education will be better prepared to work with culturally diverse populations, fine tune their Spanish language skills and gain cultural exposure which will be critical in serving a rapidly increasing Hispanic population in the U.S. And, since infectious diseases have no geographical boundaries, VCOM students will have experiences which will translate later in their careers.

Preparing Global Health Leaders

VCOM is working closely with the Honduran Government, the World Health Organization and the affiliated Pan American Health Organization to develop strong research and health care programs in the regions. The Baxter Clinic is also a significant affiliate partner of VCOM in the region.

Some of the VCOM medical students who have rotations at the clinic are concurrently enrolled in a PhD program in Global Health Leadership. This dual doctoral degree program is unique. Two VCOM students are conducting research at the clinic: one on children’s nutrition and another on osteopathic manipulation to enhance health. This on-going research program will improve knowledge development in Honduras, leading to better health care and enhancement of health care knowledge in developing countries.

Those in attendance at the Inauguration and related activities included many dignitaries in Honduras, including the Dean of the Medical School in Honduras and Amicus Foundation Board of Directors, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Health, Physician’s Professional Association, Rotary International of Honduras, Millennium Challenge Corporation of the US and other important representatives of foundations and agencies. Formal agreements with key partners have been developed to establish working relationships and other similar agreements are in process.

Tegucigalpa, Honduras is home to over one million and is also where the VCOM clinic is located.
Nobel Laureate Professor Richard R. Ernst was the Keynote speaker at the Fourth Annual Via Research Recognition Day on October 17, 2007. Ernst set the tone for the research day event with his visionary speech “The Responsibility of Scientist in Our Time.”

Professor Ernst was awarded the 1991 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his contributions to the development of the methodology of high resolution nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy.

The Fourth Annual Via Research Recognition Day featured research by VCOM and Virginia Tech faculty members in the area of Imaging and Diagnosis. There were two other invited speakers; Dr. Christopher Kramer, M.D. from UVA spoke on heart imaging and Dr. H. Kim Lyerly, M.D. from Duke spoke on cancer imaging. Several VCOM faculty and the Virginia Tech President also gave short oral presentations.

Over 100 people attended the conference and several M.D.s and D.O.s received up to 6.5 hours in CME credits in category 1A. The participants had the opportunity to attend the scientific posters and oral presentations offered by biomedical and clinical faculty.

The success of the day’s events was made possible by the hard work of many of VCOM’s dedicated staff, administrators, faculty, students, presenters and participants.
**The Rocovich Gold Medal**

The Rocovich Gold Medal is sponsored by VCOM in honor of Mr. John G. Rocovich, Jr., J.D., Founder and Chair of the Board of Directors for the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine. During his tenure as Rector and member of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Tech, Mr. Rocovich was instrumental in taking the University to new levels of accomplishment and recognition in education, research and intercollegiate athletics.

The Rocovich Gold Medal award is presented to a distinguished scientist who has made a major impact on science and public policy toward the understanding of human disease.

The recipient of the 2007 Rocovich Gold Medal award was Professor Richard R. Ernst, the 1991 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry for his contribution to the development of the methodology of high resolution nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy.

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**VCOM Sponsors “The Rocovich Gold Medal”**

From left to right: Hara Misra, D.V.M., Ph.D., VCOM President Dr. James Wolfe, Ph.D., Professor Richard R. Ernst, Mr. John G. Rocovich, Jr., J.D. and VCOM Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, D.O.

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**Poster Contest Awards**

**Students:**

- David Goodwin, Jeannine Strobl*, Shelia Mitchell and David Lindsay: “Evaluation of the Mood Stabilizing Agent Valproic Acid as a Preventative for Toxoplasmosis in Mice and Activity against Tissue Cysts in Mice.”
- Paige Gilbert, Wesley Hendricks, Christopher Larson, Meghan Rosenquist, Christine Taylor and Samuel Wilson, Arben Santo* and Igor Danelisen*: “A Case Study of Barrett’s Esophagus and Metastatic Esophageal Adenocarcinoma.”
- Kelly Holder: “Birthing support and breast feeding initiation in Somaliland.”
- Jessica Naff, MPH; Michele L. Coté, Ph.D; Angela S. Wenzlaff, MPH; Ann G. Schwartz, Ph.D.: “Racial Differences in Cancer Risk Among Relatives of Early-Onset Lung Cancer Cases.”

* Indicates VCOM faculty

**Faculty:**

- Zhenquan Jia, Seema Hallur, Hong Zhu, Yunbo Li, Hara P. Misra: “Alpha-Lipoic Acid Upregulates Glutathione and Nad (P) H: Quinone Oxidoreductase 1 in Human Neuroblastoma Sh-Sy5y Cells: Molecular Mechanism & Neuroprotection.”
Danville Regional Medical Center’s Bloodmobile Gets New Life

The Danville Regional Medical Center bloodmobile that serviced the hospital for 18 years was donated on February 13th, 2008 to the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine to be outfitted as a mobile clinic to bring healthcare to underserved areas.

“As proprietors of healthcare in Southwest and Southside Virginia, we feel it is our responsibility to help our neighbors who may not be able to afford the services or have transportation to get the care they need,” stated Dixie Tooke-Rawlings, D.O., Dean and Vice President at VCOM. By donating its retired bloodmobile, Danville Regional Medical Center, where third and fourth year students rotate monthly, has enabled us to move one big step forward to launch these outreach efforts. Once remodeled into a mobile clinic, the former bloodmobile can be used by VCOM doctors and students to serve those in need of medical attention by providing free clinics and outreach services in the region.

VCOM Partners with Bluefield Regional Medical Center For Internship Program

VCOM is excited about the opportunity to partner with Bluefield Regional Medical Center (BRMC) for a formal medical Internship Program. Since 2005, BRMC has aligned with VCOM’s third and fourth year students to provide a core clinical curriculum and a hospital training site for elective clinical rotations.

Dr. Ryan Cicenas, Bluefield Family Medicine, was also thanked for his work as the Director of Student Medical Education for the third and fourth year students. These students work with area physicians on a daily basis in the fields of Family Practice, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgery.

The reception concluded with VCOM President, Dr. James Wolfe, on behalf of VCOM, presenting the late Mrs. June O. Schott with a plaque recognizing her for providing funding to renovate and furnish the student dormitory, located conveniently across from the hospital. The late Mr. Schott was responsible for building the BMRC and was the first patient.
The Under Served Care (USC) Department of the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine is dedicated to the Mission of the College to prepare Osteopathic Primary Care Physicians for the rural and medically underserved areas of Virginia, North Carolina and the Appalachian Region. The USC experience, under Linda Frasca, M.D., begins in the second year with the Appalachian Medical Mission (AMM) Early Clinical Experience on Fridays. Currently, two AMM experiences take place: Mini-Med Schools for high school freshmen in southwest Virginia, where ten second year medical students travel with Dr. Frasca to the schools to teach high school freshmen the true anatomical and physiological effects of drugs, including methamphetamines, marijuana, prescription drug abuse, alcohol and smoking. The students also teach about the drug related problems of STDs, hepatitis, cervical cancer and HIV.

VCOM students set up five stations at each high school, with two VCOM students assigned to each of the five stations. The impact of smoking is illustrated using a human heart with a pacemaker from the anatomy lab. A second group demonstrates the possible dangers of alcohol, tattoos and piercings by using an actual liver. The VCOM team also brings a plastinated brain and an intubation station with a real endotracheal tube and laryngoscope. The freshmen are taught what would happen to them if they stopped breathing from street drugs and required the intubation. The VCOM students at the Drug Station also discuss methamphetamines, marijuana and prescription drug abuse.

At the fourth station, VCOM students demonstrate what different STDs look like under the microscope. Freshman view slides of gonorrhea, syphilis, trichomonas and candida. HPV, Cervical Cancer and the means of prevention, including the new vaccine are discussed. Finally, the fifth station offers freshman an opportunity to read a chest x-ray of a HIV patient with severe pneumonia and severe HIV and compare it to a normal chest x-ray. Through this interactive exercise, VCOM students help educate high school freshman about the modes of transmission, risk factors and symptoms.

The mini-med school has been well received, garnering praise from several high school principals and the superintendent of schools in Narrows, Virginia. This is a wonderful program and a great opportunity for VCOM students to foster public health knowledge in the next generation.

VRHA News

The Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA) held their annual conference in Staunton, VA at the historic Stonewall Jackson Hotel & Conference Center November 8-9, 2007. Highlights of the conference included:
• Director of the Office of Rural Health Policy, Dr. Marcia K. Brand, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Brand discussed the issue of access to oral health care in rural America.
• Aryana C. Khalid, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Health & Human Resources of the Commonwealth of Virginia, reviewed the Report from the Governor’s Commission on Health Care Reform.
• Dr. Michael Royster, Director of the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Minority Health and Public Health Policy (OMHPHP) led a special post-conference workshop about the PBS Documentary “Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?”
• A post-conference workshop in Advanced Grant Writing allowed 15 participants to interact with Caroline Herbert of the Foundation Center, Julie Jones, formerly with the Virginia Health Care Foundation and Julia Bryan, Grants Program Manager for the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

Seven representatives from VCOM attended the conference, including 2nd year student Continuing on page 12, see VHRA
UNITY by SOMA

In life, there are so many ways to have a great time such as going to the beach, traveling to other countries and hiking the trails of Appalachia. However, it was a different type of fun when Osteopathic medical students focused on community service in the heart of New York City. The experience that VCOM students gained at the SOMA New York City Unity Project 2007 was invaluable. Many of these underserved communities of New York were desperately in need of our help and for VCOM students it was an unforgettable experience. “My experience with the Virginia Rural Health Association in serving the underserved communities in rural southwest VA was easily translated into serving in any underserved area such as Brooklyn, NY,” said Shelly Sansbury, President of VRHA. Students from VCOM in attendance were Nnemdi Baird, Sally Beazlie, Joseph Koo, Elizabeth Lee, Matthew Loichinger and Shelly Sansbury.

VCOM, DCOM and UNECOM students thoroughly enjoyed speaking with the residents of the women’s shelter at HELP New Horizons in Brooklyn, NY. Students used their experience and medical education in nutrition to provide residents with helpful tips on making healthy food choices. Residents chose topics to discuss such as healthy ways to diet and how to avoid diabetes. More topics of discussion included finding ways to avoid fast food pitfalls and planning ahead for meals to help keep their families healthy.

At the HELP Daycare in Brooklyn, NY, a facility for families that live in the shelter and are either working or getting an education, students engaged in recreational activities with the children, helped with serving lunch and read stories to children as they were tucked in for nap time. Students from VCOM and DCOM also donated art supplies, toys, and warm winter hats and gloves to the needy children.

Additionally, students from WVSOM, PCOM-GA and VCOM collaborated to make St. Paul’s home in Manhattan a place where residents could be proud to live. The students served breakfast to residents in the shelter and helped clean and repaint the neglected facility. The staff was so appreciative of the great work acheived by the students. They can now take pride in their revitalized facility.

The SOMA New York City Unity Project saw students come together as a family to help and educate the underserved. At each shelter they visited, the students were able to donate much needed time and services. There was gratitude exhibited at each shelter for the students’ efforts in taking time to improve the lives of the residents. This experience provided an amazing sense of accomplishment for all those who participated. It was remarkable to witness the camaraderie, teamwork and outreach to these communities from osteopathic students across the nation and it made us proud to be part of the osteopathic community.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT
Amy Wetzel Doolan, D.O.

Amy is a 2007 Graduate of VCOM. Before she came to VCOM, she attended Virginia Tech from 1996-2001. Amy was named a member of the Virginia Tech 1,000-point club. Amy finished her basketball career with 1,444 points, ranking sixth on the school’s all-time scoring list. Virginia Tech’s career leader in games, she played (129) with (4,129) minutes played. Amy leads the school with 489 career made free throws, ranks second with 235 steals and third all-time with 399 career assists. Amy was named to the GTE District III Academic All-American team in 1999 and 2000. She was also recognized as the A-10 Defensive Player of the Year in 2000 and was named to the All-Atlantic 10 second team in 1999 and 2000. Amy led VT to its highest-ever win total in 1999, when the team posted a 28-3 record.
VCOM Announces Student D.O. of the Year

Student Doctor John Casey served as the elected first year and now the fourth year President for the Class of 2008 at VCOM. He has been active in key national positions with the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) including being elected this year, on the national level, to represent osteopathic medical students nation-wide as SOMA Vice President and Speaker of the House. He has also served on three national selection committees and as editor and now chief editor of the SOMA national journal.

John has been the recipient of several scholarships including the Paul Ambrose Leadership Scholarship and scholarships targeted toward rural health care and southwest Virginia health care. He is a member of Sigma Sigma Phi Honor Society, which recognizes top students in both academics and community service. Casey will be graduating in June and will be entering an emergency medicine residency program at Doctor’s Hospital in Columbus Ohio.

John Casey joins previous VCOM awardees, Bhaba Misra and Raul Mirza in being selected for this outstanding honor. The award is made at each College of Osteopathic Medicine through a selection process established nationally by the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents, and official council of the American Association of College of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM). The award is based on the student’s demonstrated commitment to their school, to the community and to the osteopathic profession.

VCOM’s selection process was rigorous. Eight nominations were made and the selection committee, composed of the dean, faculty and students, narrowed the field down to five, then three finalists. The three finalists: John Casey, Sumeet Goel and Adam Greenblatt were announced to the VCOM Community. The final selection was made at the VCOM SOMA Gala, held on the campus of Virginia Tech.

SOMA’S Roaring 20s’ GALA Kicks Off The New Year in Style

Once again VCOM started the new year off with class and style, Roaring 20’s style. The ballroom at The Inn at Virginia Tech was transformed into an elegant setting fit for dinner, dancing and an all around first class time. The ambience was created with dramatic centerpieces, a six person jazz/swing band and a caricaturist – that’s right I said caricaturist. But it was not the decorations, dinner and entertainment that made the event. The students, faculty and administration pulled out all the stops as well. The night was clad with zoot suits, boas, flapper dresses and fedoras. If you were not in line trying to get a coveted caricature, you could probably be found on the dance floor which was rocking all night with a little help from the Dee Jay and a lot of help from some happy feet. There seemed to be something for everyone. Erin Deihl, ’11, summed up the evening when she stated, “With all the hard work that we do it was awesome to get dressed up, go out and enjoy good food, great friends and fun times.”

From start to finish the 2008 GALA was a great success. A special thanks must go out to all those who participated in the vision and execution that made this year’s formal better than ever. VCOM’s SOMA chapter continues to set the bar higher and higher with this very special event. We can only wait with anticipation to see what next year’s GALA has in store for our VCOM family.
VCOM’s Surgery Club Scores Big at National Convention

In October, Dr. Harry Simmons and a group of students in the class of 2009 won 2nd place in the scientific poster contest in San Francisco at the National Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Surgeons (ACOS) annual convention. The medical students were competing against surgical residents and fellows in a competition with 90 entries in all categories! VCOM’s poster was well received by the physicians attending the conference as well as the judges of the competition. The poster was awarded 2nd place among the scientific entries. The subject of the awarded poster was Rapid Endoscopic Gastro Intestinal Irrigation Systems or (R.E.G.I.I.S.).

Congratulations to VCOM’s Surgery Club. After placing second in the competition, the team is now focused on publishing the results in the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) Journal.

VCOM’s SAA Supports Roanoke’s YWCA Women and Children’s Shelter

Austin B. Sansbury, III, VCOM SAA President – 2010

This past December, 2007 the SAA conducted a paper goods drive at VCOM to support the vast needs of the YWCA Women’s and Children’s Shelter in Roanoke. The students and faculty generated a large volume of much needed paper goods. In addition to the goods collected from the students and faculty, the VCOM SAA personally contributed an additional 60 packs of toilet paper and 40 rolls of paper towels to the paper goods collection. According to the YWCA’s Executive Director, Melissa Woodson, the donated quantity will support the shelter for an entire month! This donation would also free up the shelter’s limited funds that could be applied to other operational expenses.

Besides providing the shelter with paper supplies for a month, the VCOM SAA provided the residents with a catered lunch, which was special considering the residents do not receive meals within the shelter. The VCOM SAA members also gave out Christmas toys to the residents’ children who were in attendance. Everyone was very appreciative of the donated paper goods, lunch and the toys for the children.

This truly helpful event was conducted by VCOM SAA President, Austin B. Sansbury, III, YWCA Board of Directors member, Fran Hodges, YWCA Executive Director, Melissa Woodson, VCOM SAA Vice President, Kathy Lokale and VCOM SAA Member, Bria Bentz.

VHRA

Continued from page 9

Shelly Sansbury, who was awarded one of three student scholarships for the conference registration fees.

The Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA) is a diverse group of individuals from communities spread across Virginia - individuals who care about improving the health of Virginia’s rural residents. VRHA members provide care, plan for the delivery of care and are consumers of health care services. They are individuals and families who desire and need high quality health services close to home.

The VRHA office is located on the 3rd floor of VCOM. Learn more about VRHA and the Annual Conference at www.vrha.org.
In March of 2007, the Undergraduate American Academy of Osteopathy (UAAO) at VCOM was awarded Most Improved Chapter at the national meeting in Denver. Scott Leggoe ’09 was appointed to the office of National Secretary. And, this spring (2008) saw even more achievements for VCOM. At the annual National Meeting held in Dallas in March, 2008, VCOM was represented by fifty students. While there, VCOM received national awards for Outreach Chapter of the Year and Chapter of the Year! The following individuals are to be congratulated:

- **Scott Leggoe**, re-elected to the National Executive Council as Secretary/Treasurer

VCOM also had the greatest number of students from the COMS attending the Convocation.

UAAO also acknowledge the OMM mentors in their contribution to the students enthusiasm.

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**VCOM UAAO Leaders:**

**Officers:**

Claudia Dal Molin, *President*

Eric Eberhardt, *Vice President*

Amber Stroupe, *Secretary*

Jessica Pritchard, *Treasurer*

Empress Oramas, *National Representative*

Nic Branscomb, *VP of Clinical Years*

**Committee Chairs:**

Leslie Ching, *Chair, Outreach Committee*

Brad Ramsey, *Chair, Education Committee*

Eileen Conaway, *Chair, Social Committee*

- **Empress Oramas**, selected to be a Regional Coordinator and awarded as a Volunteer of the Year
- **Angelica Perry**, recipient of a Participation award for the Hollis Wolfe Presentation Competition.
- **Eileen Conaway**, recipient of a scholarship from the Cranial Academy Foundation
- **Amber Stroupe**, for winning the Convocation “Design a T-Shirt” Contest
VCOM IDOL ’07 Benefits
“The Hokie Room”

This October 2007, at Christiansburg High School, ACOFP sponsored the 3rd annual VCOM Idol program. The show is modeled after television’s very popular “American Idol” where anyone can sing to the judges in the hopes of becoming a star!

The class of 2010 officers Adam Greenblatt and Marcee Vest played the parts of Simon Cowell and Paula Abdul, while VCOM’s own William King acted as Randy Jackson. Joey Castro, class of 2010, was the highly entertaining Ryan Seacrest. Christine Taylor directed the show with a crew of over fifteen VCOM students and two students from Christiansburg High School.

Tributes were sung for various artists, including Stevie Wonder, Disney’s “The Little Mermaid” and Martina McBride, while special dance performances wowed the audience. The judges gave their praise or criticism, but the audience voted for the winner!

Proceeds this year went toward the “Hokie Room Project” at Heritage Hall Nursing Home. The Hokie Room open house was March 8th, so look for a recap in the next newsletter. ■
Response to President of AOA’s Call to Action: The D.O. Jingle Dash 5K

When the President of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), Dr. Peter Ajluni, visited VCOM he spoke about the “D.O.’s: Fit for Life” campaign. He encouraged students to do “fun runs” and organize fitness activities. His talk was truly inspirational and saw three VCOM first year students immediately accept his challenge. Arlene Zelinkas, Kimberly Skelton and Aimee Riley organized the first annual, “D.O. Jingle Dash 5K” in Black Mountain Park in Asheville, North Carolina, the very next month. They took on the challenge to promote fitness and combined that goal with promoting the osteopathic profession to the communities surrounding Asheville. Funds were raised for their student trip to assist underserved patients in El Salvador.

Arlene Zelinkas, Kimberly Skelton and Aimee Riley organized the first annual, “D.O. Jingle Dash 5K” in Black Mountain Park in Asheville, North Carolina, the very next month. They took on the challenge to promote fitness and combined that goal with promoting the osteopathic profession to the communities surrounding Asheville. Funds were raised for their student trip to assist underserved patients in El Salvador.

The student organizers chose the location of Asheville because it fit well with VCOM’s mission to educate and train physicians for both Southwest Virginia and North Carolina. The student organizers also had personal ties with the area, making support and promotion of the event a natural choice for them. The students contacted local businesses McDonalds, Bi-Lo, High Gear USA, Black Mountain Mailboxes and Graphic Four Print Shop who all contributed to the race by donating supplies.

The first race was a success. There were over sixty participants ranging from age 8 to 60, many of whom were first time racers. Community volunteers from the Montreat College Cross Country Team and other individuals helped. VCOM students staffed information tables to talk about the profession to members of the community. The event raised over $700 for VCOM students to participate in a medical mission program to El Salvador. VCOM students plan to make the “D.O. Jingle Dash 5K” an annual event.
The President, Dean and Faculty of the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine are proud to announce the Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2008.

Saturday, the Seventh of June, Two Thousand and Eight
Ten o’clock in the morning at Burruss Hall on the Campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

VCOM View

VCOM View is the newsletter produced by the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine to keep faculty, staff, friends and supporters of VCOM informed of the most recent events and changes at the College.

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April 30-May 3, 2008
The National American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine Conference in Kansas City, MO

May 1-4, 2008
VOMA Spring Conference at the Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg, VA.

June 10-14, 2008
WMS Dive Conference in Cozumel, MX

July 26-30, 2008
WMS 25th Anniversary Meeting in Snowmass, CO

November 1-4, 2008
Wilderness, Travel and Marine Medicine Conference to be held in Maui, HI

November 13-15, 2008
Christian Medical and Dental Association: Global Health Missions Conference to be held in Louisville, KY

A special thank you to all contributors of photos and other information.

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