The class of 2010 had their first clinical experience by performing histories at each of the 4 nursing homes associated with VCOM. Mike Sampson, Chair of Family Medicine, organized the event and our geriatric clinical faculty mentored the students. Students met with patients, took medical histories, and socialized. The students stated that they enjoyed the experience and were amazed by the wide range of histories and life experiences of the residents. The nursing home residents and staff were open and excited about the students’ visit and encouraged their return. Dr. Sampson expressed his delight with the professionalism and compassion of the class in their first month of medical school.

New Academic Practice to Open

Academic Primary Care Associates, LLC (APCA) is an independent subsidiary affiliated with the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine. The primary mission of APCA is to operate academic physician practices to serve as clinical training sites for VCOM students, interns and residents. A secondary purpose of APCA is to provide exposure to basic knowledge and skills required to effectively operate a medical practice.

The APCA, which is anticipated to open during 2007, will be located on the first floor of Montgomery Regional Hospital in Blacksburg. The office, comprising approximately

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Appalachian Community Embraces VCOM

The Southwest Virginia and the Southern Appalachian community has responded to the opportunity to train students at VCOM by providing more than 1300 month-long educational experiences with physicians and our Council of Teaching Hospitals. Our clinical faculty and staff, as well as, the teaching hospitals’ administration and support staff have done a tremendous job of not only educating our students, but allowing them to experience all there is to offer at their sites. Over 550 physicians now hold clinical appointments with VCOM and participate in clinical education throughout all four years of medical school training.

Left to right: Class of 2008 students - Stephen Hunter, Kristina Price, and John Lowe with Karen Tootle, MD, Deborah Hayter, MD and Jan Willcox, DO at Abingdon.

Dr. Cicenas and Mike Baze, 2008, at Bluefield.

Doralyn Jones, 2008, with Dr. Crandall at Allegheny.

Jamaal Shaban, 2008, at Lebanon with Dr. Dizon.

Left to right: Dr. Nida, Daniel Horrell, 2008, and Nancy Myers, at Norton.

Left to right: Matt Cage, Class of 2008, Dr. Cortellesi and Sam Deel, Class of 2007, at Clinch.

Dr. Brown with Jessica Mowry at Allegheny.
Class of 2007 – Gaining Further Knowledge and Completing Residency Applications

Our inaugural class (Class of 2007) recently completed third year rotations. They are now in the process of gaining further knowledge through medical and surgical specialty experiences as well as determining a specialty track and making residency applications.

During the fourth year, students complete three Medical Selectives, three Surgical Selectives and four Electives as part of their required curriculum. Selectives are done within the VCOM core sites and sites with American Osteopathic Association-approved residencies. Students on military scholarship (Health Professions Scholarship Program) have been allowed additional training at Department of Defense sites during their third year and this training will continue into their fourth year.

Class of 2009 – Experiences Beyond the Classroom

Second year VCOM students have weekly early clinical experiences ranging from Appalachian child health screening in Pulaski County elementary schools to mission medicine, free clinics and women’s health, clinical skills labs, primary care, geriatrics at area nursing homes, pathology, radiology, rounds with PharmD’s at local hospitals, palliative care and internal medicine. VCOM places emphasis on providing students with as wide a range of experiences as possible.

New Academic Practice to Open

Continued from page 1
7,000 square feet, will include 10 exam rooms, 4 rooms for OMT, 2 procedure rooms and a cast room.

APCA will provide care twelve hours a day Monday through Friday and one-half a day on Saturdays. Services to be provided include family practice, internal medicine, osteopathic manual medicine and sports medicine. The clinic will serve as the provider for VCOM Student Health.

Ward W. Stevens serves as the manager of APCA and is responsible for establishing and operating the practices. Mr. Stevens also provides assistance in physician recruitment efforts and projects for VCOM. Mr. Stevens, who has a Masters of Science degree in Health Care Administration from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, has over twenty years of experience in health care administration. His previous positions include CEO of Montgomery Regional Hospital and CEO of Alleghany Regional Hospital in Low Moor, VA.

Days in the Lives of the Class of 2008

Third year experiences began in September in our core hospital sites. Monthly rotations include Family Medicine, Rural Primary Care, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery and Geriatrics.

Educational support at each of the core hospitals is provided by VCOM in the form of a physician named Director of Medical Education and a Site Coordinator, as well as online cases and videoconferencing. The live interactive videoconferencing extends the curriculum in the third year for the students in each of the core specialties and is available to the teaching faculty and physicians who may receive continuing medical education credits for participation.

All students return to VCOM at the end of their third year for comprehensive written and clinical standardized patient exams.
A Student Clinician Ceremony was held for the class of 2008 to mark their transition from the classroom to the clinical years. This would be the last time the whole class was together in the classroom until graduation. By providing insight, discussing expectations, and revisiting the Osteopathic Oath taken during the White Coat Ceremony, the Student Clinicians Ceremony (SCC) provided a reflection of the students’ experiences in medicine to date and helped prepare them for their experiences over the next two years.

The SCC is a transitional experience designed to provide guidance, information and support to medical students beginning their clerkships. Keynote speakers Rick Butler, DO, Director of Osteopathic Medical Education and Director of the Osteopathic Internal Medicine Program, Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and Sid Steinberg, MD, Chief of Staff, Veteran’s Administration Hospital - Salisbury, North Carolina provided insight into the clinical experience of “Becoming a Student Clinician.”

John G. Rocovich, Jr., Chairman of the Board of VCOM, welcomed the students and guests and presented the Humanism in Medicine Awards. The Arnold P. Gold Foundation and the Humanism and Excellence in Teaching Awards were provided from The Arnold P. Gold Foundation. The foundation fosters humanism in medicine. Programs that the Gold Foundation has supported include the White Coat Ceremony and the annual Student Clinician's Ceremony. Our Student Clinician’s Ceremony is also supported by a grant from Representatives from our Council of Teaching Hospitals. The Council participated in the event by attending the ceremony and providing informational displays.

**Awards**

Members of the Class of 2007 announced their Preceptor Recognition Awards. Astrid Radermacher, 2007, described the process of determining selection of the two excellence in teaching awards.

Biljana Simikic, 2007, presented the Medicine Preceptor Award to VCOM Associate Professor, Mark Greenawald, MD, Education Director Carilion Family Medicine Residency.
Laura Harvey, 2007, presented VCOM Associate Professor Joseph Downing, MD with the Surgery Preceptor Award.

The Directors of Student Medical Education from our teaching hospitals were awarded recognition for academic excellence. Ava Stanczak, DO, Chair of Pediatrics, provided an entertaining and highly useful presentation on Clinical Expectations.

The members of the Class of 2008 presented an award of appreciation for all of the hard work and support provided by the Office of Student Affairs.

Students are provided the opportunity to recognize outstanding residents and fellows who teach them during their clinical years through the Gold Foundation’s “Humanism and Excellence in Teaching Award.” Students from the Class of 2007 nominated and selected residents who exhibited particularly strong teaching skills and are role models for compassionate, relationship-centered care.

Two residents from the Norton Community Hospital Internal Medicine Residency, Donna Sanders, DO, and Michael Sanders, DO, received the awards presented by students Biljana Simikic and Mark Jankowske. Student doctors Simikic and Jankowske noted that Drs. Sanders selflessly taught even during the busiest of times on call (night or day) and post call, offered constructive criticism, provided guidance with board studying and fourth year rotations, and much more.

Dr. Cristine Nichols, MD, Transitional Resident in Ophthalmology, Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital (CRMH) Roanoke, VA was also awarded this recognition. Student Dr. Cliff Smith noted on the first day and every day after that, “Dr. Nichols is born to teach.”

Keith Proctor, Class of 2007, presented Richard “Reid” Heywood, DO, (Lieutenant, U.S. Navy), with the Arnold P. Gold Humanism and Excellence in Teaching Award. Student Dr. Proctor stated that his recommendation was based Dr. Heywood’s strong work ethic and his enthusiasm for teaching.

VCOM will like to thank Chas. Lunsford Sons and Associates for sponsoring a fabulous reception at the German Club and being in attendance to meet students and even assist in serving!

VCOM Adds New Training Sites

- **Southside Hospital** in Farmville, Virginia has been established as a core teaching hospital site this year. Southside Hospital has supplied Obstetric and Gynecology rotations over the last year. Now six students will spend their entire year at the Farmville hospital site.
- VCOM proudly announces a new pilot program in North Carolina. North Carolina is within the mission to provide primary care to the underserved in the Appalachian Region. The primary affiliate teaching site in North Carolina is the Salisbury Veterans Administration Medical Center and there will be some clinical experiences in primary care the third year in Charlotte and Asheville.

Neurosurgery Residency Announced at Carilion Roanoke

Carilion Health System has been notified that its application for an osteopathic neurological surgery residency program has been granted initial approval by the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons and the American Osteopathic Association. They will be recruiting one resident per year. Rick Butler, DO, Director of Osteopathic Medical Education at Carilion Medical Center has worked with VCOM and the neurosurgeons to develop this great opportunity. This is an exciting addition to the residency programs we sponsor through the Appalachian Osteopathic Postgraduate Training Institute Consortium (A-OPTIC).
Appalachian Medical Missions Make a Difference

While Appalachian Medical Missions are primarily second year experiences, all students participate when possible. Our Chair of Pediatrics, Ava Stanczak, DO, has championed the Appalachian Missions, which include holiday grocery delivery in December for 50 families in Grundy and Jonesville, scoliosis screening in Carroll, Pulaski, and Grayson County schools, and an effective parenting course for Head Start in Grundy and Jonesville.

Students also initiated a clinic with the physicians at the Caring Hearts Free Clinic in Stuart, Virginia. They meet bimonthly to use osteopathic manipulative medicine to treat patients with chronic pain. Appalachian Missions delivered toiletry baskets to 25 families in Jonesville and hosted Kid’s Day in Grundy in May, which included health screening, prevention education and adult blood pressure screening.

The students have also provided Teacher Motivation Training for Head Start and Kindergarten in Buchanan County, and a Patrick County High School Teen Health Fair in March. VCOM’s display at the Health Fair included the following topics: “Getting along With Your Parents,” “Nutrition for Teens,” and an anatomy display. Students and faculty have also worked with the Remote Access Medical (RAM) in Wise County and Grundy. All VCOM clubs and Lee Regional Medical Center sponsored a Health Fair for Lee County in May.

Dr. Ava Stanczak, DO, Chair of Pediatrics at VCOM, examines a patient.

New CME Director

Deborah Bourne has been named the Director of Continuing Medical Education at the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). In her new position at VCOM, Deborah will work with faculty in the development and delivery of continuing medical education programs.

Deborah previously worked at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia, where she served as the Director of Facility and Special Events for over nine years. She received a bachelor’s degree from Virginia Intermont College and a master’s degree from Radford University.

Deborah Bourne

Clinical News by Jan Willcox, DO

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Michael Sampson, DO, Elected Virginia Osteopathic Family Physician President

VCOM’s own Dr. Sampson, Department Chair of Family Medicine, Associate Professor of Sports Medicine/OMM, Medical Consultant to the VIATECH Health and Wellness Clinic, and the list goes on… After serving a two year term as the Virginia Osteopathic Family Physicians’ Vice-President, Dr. Sampson has been elected to serve a 2-year term as President of VA ACOFP. Congratulations to Dr. Sampson, who VCOM feels fortunate to have on faculty!

Mike Sampson, DO

Deborah Bourne

Deborah Bourne

Dr. Ava Stanczak, DO, Chair of Pediatrics at VCOM, examines a patient.
Off To A Good Start, The First Grants Awarded This Fiscal Year

The Mechanism of Brucella Induced Arthritis

Chris Reilly, PhD has received a Harvey Peters Research Center Foundation grant in the amount of $109,065. In this study, which began September 1st, Dr. Reilly will establish the mechanisms by which the facultative intracellular pathogen Brucella induces reactive arthritis in humans diagnosed with brucellosis. Reactive arthritis is caused by bacteria, which may cause a persistent, remittent inflammatory condition in individuals with a certain genotype. Brucella is a bacterial pathogen that can be transmitted to humans through contaminated animal meat or in some instances between humans through sexual contact. It is hypothesized that Brucella-infected susceptible individuals develop reactive arthritis. The mechanism of Brucella infection will be examined using a mouse strain susceptible to disease and determining the molecular mechanisms responsible for Brucella pathogenesis. Identifying these mechanisms will provide insight into the disease process and thus enable the development of specific therapeutics to target disease. In the next phase of this study, the research team will examine a human population in regard to genotype and Brucella infection.

The Development and Implementation of a Tobacco Use Prevention Model for Youth with Psychiatric Disorders

Marty Wunsch, MD is the VCOM PI on a grant awarded to Virginia Tech by the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation. VCOM will receive $43,856 for this three-year project that began July 1st. Dr. Wunsch is the Substance Abuse Consultant for this project, which is led by Dr. Peggy Meszaros, Director of the Center for Information Technology Impacts on Children, Youth, and Families at Virginia Tech. The grant team will use the Community Development Process to design interventions and develop a program to address onset of smoking in youth with mental health issues.

A Two-Phase Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial of Buprenorphine/Naloxone Treatment plus Individual Drug Counseling for Opioid Analgesic Dependence

VCOM will be participating in a community-based clinical trial sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Clinical Trial Node. VCOM will receive $75,000 during the three-year project. As VCOM PI, Dr. Wunsch is the Clinical Site Director for this study, which compares interventions using increased levels of counseling in the medication assisted treatment of opioid addiction. The project is located at ARS Pantops Opioid Treatment Program in Charlottesville, VA. ARS Pantops is a teaching site for VCOM third and fourth year medical students.

Congratulations to Dr. Reilly and Dr. Wunsch!
First VCOM Outreach Clinic Paves Way for the Future

By H. Dean Sutphin
Assistant Vice President for International Outreach.

International outreach at VCOM made history August 10, 2006 with the first inaugural opening of a VCOM medical clinic in the town of Veron, Dominican Republic.

Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, DO indicates the significance of launching a full scale program in the Dominican Republic within one year from initial identification of prospective sites. Moreover, this initial site is providing a model to open two other clinics this year, one in Honduras and another in El Salvador. These three clinics will meet the immediate need for fourth year students who elect the international mission track.

The Veron clinic is significant because it represents the core features and values for all the international mission track sites. Yet, each location has unique strategic qualities to serve different needs of our students and create a well-rounded program for VCOM.

Examples of core values include: a) location in a medically underserved region where service to the poor is inadequate; b) local partners within country to assist with community relations and selected management; c) government partnership or agreement to support or endorse medical practice and, d) safety and security for students and staff.

The Veron Regional Primary Care Clinic, located in the Punta Cana region of the Dominican Republic serves a community of primarily construction and hotel service workers, where the community has swelled over the past 5 years from a few hundred to over 8,000. Unfortunately, the medical care provided by the government cannot keep pace with the need, nor can...
the low-wage residents afford private health care.

In February VCOM signed an agreement with the Dominican Ministry of Health to partner with the government in operating a Clinic. The Punta Cana Foundation will provide community relations and assist in selected human resources and fiscal management, and community leaders in Veron to care for the facilities and assist in defining the greatest needs. August 10 was the celebration to culminate months of planning, discussions and negotiations with key partners to launch full implementation.

Dr. Joe Cacioppo, Mission Chair with responsibility for orientation of VCOM students and their rotation experience indicates overwhelming success for this first clinic launch. VCOM students have been on 30-day rotations at the Veron Clinic since April 1 working during extensive renovation and phase-in of program initiatives. Now VCOM students will enjoy a newly remodeled and better equipped facility.

As Assistant Vice President for International Programs and Outreach, I am delighted with the fast track roll out of these medical mission facilities and the team effort to make it happen.

Southwest Virginia Student Health Association Organizes

The first meeting of the Student Health Association for VCOM students from Southwest Virginia along with Southwest Virginia students attending the University of Appalachia Pharmacy School was held at the Hemlock Haven Conference Center at Hungry Mother Park in Marion, Virginia on July 29th. This organization is for students who plan, after completing their education, to return to the underserved area to practice health care.

Several students from both institutions attended and enjoyed a reception, but most of all, were inspired by an informal presentation given by Frank Kilgore, an attorney from Buchanan County. Mr. Kilgore is the founding chairman of the University of Appalachia and currently a board member. His presentation spoke to the medical and social needs of residents of far Southwest Virginia, who will suffer without sufficient care and education if the trend continues for health care professionals to shy away from practicing in underserved regions. He emphasized the importance of educating our youth to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The organization, in this regional effort, will now include students in good standing from any health professional school who plan to practice in the area. Students are encouraged to join.

The Association will serve as a network among emerging and new health care professionals for mentoring by experienced health care providers in the region, to access legal advice regarding how to set up businesses, negotiate partnerships and discuss the wide spectrum of legal issues relevant to their professions, learn about employment opportunities, some of which feature education debt reductions. Organizing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to preventive health care and community outreach, particularly to the youth of the service area will also be a goal of the Association.

The official organizational meeting was held on October 7, 2006, 1:00 p.m. at the Hardware Restaurant meeting room in Abingdon, Virginia. Food, refreshments and speakers were provided by the partner sponsors.

Class of 2007 – First VCOM Alumni Network Planned

The College is in the process of creating an alumni and friends’ network. VCOM is developing projects and activities that hold potential interest to individuals, foundations and agencies. We will be keeping you informed of these strategic interest areas.

We welcome your ideas, suggestions and expressions of interest. Please contact Diane Sutphin, Associate Director of Outreach and Development by e-mail at djsutphin@vcom.vt.edu or call 540-231-4000.
Melissa Weimer ‘07 and J. Eric Sutherland ‘07 were awarded $1,000 grants by the Medical Society of Virginia Foundation’s Diabetic Self-Management Education Program.

Through this program, medical students will use the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education to create a program to work with diabetic patients at the New River Valley Free Clinic. The goal of this program is to increase patient knowledge of diabetes and to teach and emphasize the importance of daily exercise and appropriate nutrition in controlling the side effects of diabetes.

Joshua A. Rodocker ‘08 of the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine’s Pediatric Club for his project titled “Childhood Obesity: Assessing Risk and Implementing Change in Rural Virginia.” $1,000 Award.

Amanda Hale Reese of the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine to support the VCOM medical student organization in their hosting of a 5k race to benefit the American Cancer Society. $500 Award.

The Medical Society of Virginia Foundation is pleased to announce that four grants were awarded at its April Board of Directors Meeting. These grants were awarded to:

Melissa Weimer
J. Eric Sutherland
Joshua A. Rodocker
Amanda Hale Reese

Congratulations Benefactor Scholarship Recipients for 2005-2006

THE FRIENDS TO OPTOMETRISTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND
John Casey ‘08
Justin Parker ‘08

THE MARGARET PALMIERI RURAL HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP
Erin Connor ‘08
John Casey ‘08

THE BIRELEY BLUEFIELD SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Ashley Asbury ‘08
Amanda Hale Reese ‘08

THE CHAS. LUNSFORD SONS & ASSOCIATES RISK MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP
Michelle Jacobs ‘07
Martin Elected to AOA Board of Trustees

This past July, Sean Martin ’07 took office as a full member of the AOA Board of Trustees. Although he is a student member of the AOA, this position entails all of the duties and responsibilities of a typical Board Member. This includes multiple meeting attendance, conference call attendance, correspondence via e-mail, representation of all student AOA members and practicing AOA members to the Board, input and voting on AOA administrative decisions, etc.

Every year there is one student who sits on the Board. The Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) and the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP) alternate year to year on being able to nominate someone to that position. Sean was elected first through SOMA and then through the AOA House of Delegates.

This year, Martin also serves on the AOA’s Committee on Osteopathic Post-Doctoral Training Institutions. Last year, he served on the AOA’s Council on Strategic Planning.

VCOM is honored to have a student serving on the AOA Board of Trustees!

SOMA Update

By Melissa Bunnel, SOMA President

With the beginning a new year here at VCOM, the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) is excited for the class of 2010 to join the VCOM family as the school enters its fourth year of existence. SOMA has collaborated with students from all the different classes and organizations in order to compile what it considers to be the foremost compendium for survival both at VCOM and in the town of Blacksburg. Copies of our new handbook as well as the latest edition of Netter's Anatomy are two items SOMA plans on giving to each new student. This is made possible by VCOM’s generous sponsorship to make every student a member of national SOMA. We certainly hope that all our new members will take advantage of this gift by participating in some of the activities we have in store, including, but not limited to:

- Osteoblast (the annual new class welcome party)
- A Halloween Party
- The Annual Holiday Gala
- DO Day on the Hill
- A.T. Still Memorial Clean Up Day
- An Annual Charity Golf Tournament

VCOM SOMA has a special commitment to our members’ educational advancement with the following projects:

- An Exam Test Bank
- Sponsoring Board Preparation Lectures
- Students receiving Shadowing Scholarships

We also have undergraduate chapters (PreSOMA) at different local universities such as Virginia Tech where we work to educate and interest students in Osteopathy.

Being a member of SOMA is worthwhile both as a diversion and as a group interested in the future of osteopathic medicine and health care, on national and local levels. VCOM has an active chapter with many of its students serving on the national board. Current events can be seen on the SOMA webpage at http://www.vcomstudent.com/soma/.

AACC Awards Sherry R. Arnstein Minority Student Scholarship

Congratulations to Nnemdi Baird ’09 who submitted a winning essay to win a $1,000 scholarship! Tamara Thompson-Johnson, the minority scholarship coordinator, stated that many outstanding essays were received and how impressed the selection committee was with the students’ strong commitment to encouraging and maintaining diversity within our colleges of osteopathic medicine.

More information may be found on the VCOM web site at http://www.vcom.vt.edu/resource/scholarships.html to learn of this and other scholarship opportunities.
As Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, DO was completing her presentation on VCOM’s 2005 Emergency Relief Effort Response to Hurricane Katrina, the eleventh lecture on Bioterrorism and Disaster Responses program given to second year students over two days, police sirens could be heard wailing outside the lecture hall. Within a minute, the combined Virginia Tech and Montgomery County Special Weapons And Tactics Team (SWAT) burst through the doors of the lecture hall. Fully armed and dressed for action, they announced that there had been a terrorist attack at the Avian Research Facility at Virginia Tech involving the release of a non-lethal gas and that they believed that the perpetrator may be in the medical school building. Students and faculty, still finishing their lunches, were immediately escorted out of the building and were required to show their VCOM identification cards. Those without proper identification were restrained by the SWAT Team until Drs. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins and Jan Willcox, Associate Dean for Clinical, Academic and Research Affairs were able to positively identify them and authorize their release.

Although this drill had been planned for almost a year, neither students nor faculty were aware of the events about to take place during the afternoon.

Although this drill had been planned for almost a year, neither students nor faculty were aware of the events about to take place during the afternoon. Once outside, students organized into six color-coded 25-person specialty teams with tasks which included: triage; emergency and trauma responses; biological, chemical and nuclear agent identification; patient isolation and quarantine and security, communication and legal responses. In the middle of the campus a STIP unit had been set-up while students were in lecture (STIP stands for “Stabilization and Treatment in Place”) serving as a headquarters for the afternoon activities.
Within minutes, several EMS vehicles arrived with victims who were then quickly moved into the isolation areas within the STIP unit. Fully armed SWAT Team members guarded the facility from both the ground and from the rooftop. Forty-five minutes into the drill, Dr. Joe Cacioppo, one of the co-organizers of the program, announced that the gas attack had been a diversion and that the avian research animals had been infected with a genetically altered human-to-human strain of avian-flu virus.

Ten guest lecturers from VCOM, the local medical facilities, the local NBC affiliate and the CIA gathered to present information to approximately 160 students on topics ranging from: bioterrorism; emerging infectious diseases; psychosocial and psychiatric epidemiology; mass trauma; triage; hospital planning; public health infrastructure; and the importance of communication between local, state and federal agencies during a disaster.

Once the tasks had been completed, students regrouped and received a debriefing from faculty and the SWAT team members on tasks successfully completed and on those areas in need of improvement.

Reiterating lessons acquired during the Emergency Relief Effort Response to Hurricane Katrina, student doctors learned first hand that security is a vital component in establishing a safe facility to practicing medicine when responding to a natural or man-made disaster. Both faculty and administration at VCOM agree on the importance that our students must understand the complexity when responding to any disaster within their community. Whether a biological attack or a natural disaster, it will always begin in someone’s neighborhood and we want VCOM graduates to be well prepared as potential first responders whether in rural Virginia, in a large medical center. The statement given by Dean Tooko-Rawlins during her lecture that this may be the single-most important thing learned by students while at VCOM, probably summarized the true importance of the two-day event.

“Both faculty and administration at VCOM agree on the importance that our students must understand the complexity when responding to any disaster within their community.”
The Fourth Orientation at VCOM

By Bill King
Assistant Vice President for Student Services

One hundred sixty (160) students in the Class of 2010 participated in Orientation on August 16-18, 2006. Students began their day with greetings from VCOM President Dr. Jim Wolfe; Chairman of the Board Mr. John Rocovich; and Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, DO. Highlights of the program included PowerPoint slides of each of the new students so fellow classmates could learn more about their common hobbies and interests.

Dr. Bill Anderson, AOA Past President, Associate Dean at KCOM and VCOM Board Member, gave a keynote inspirational speech which concluded with a standing ovation by the new medical students. AOA Adopt-a-Campus representative, Dr. Boyd Bowden, provided information about the AOA and Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, DO addressed professionalism.

2010 Student Doctor Fielding Fitzpatrick commented about the experience, “Student Orientation Week at VCOM was a great chance to meet new friends and experience all that VCOM has to offer its students. The slideshow presentations of my classmates and the stirring call to arms from Dr. Bill Anderson set the stage for a life-changing experience.” Fitzpatrick, a proud member of the Class of 2010, is from Roanoke, Virginia and a graduate of Hampden Sydney College. The Class of 2010 is fifty seven percent (57%) female. Twenty-two (22) hold advanced degrees and ten (10) have military scholarships.

The largest number of students come from Virginia (58), followed by Tennessee (19), North Carolina (13), New Jersey (11), Maryland (8), and South Carolina (6). The undergraduate institutions sending the most students to VCOM are: Virginia Tech (21); University of Virginia (7); Virginia Commonwealth University (5); and East Tennessee State University (5).
On July 30th, the Class of 2008 celebrated a new tradition at the Inaugural Ring Ceremony. Over 100 people gathered as members of the Class of 2008 were presented their new rings at The Farmhouse Restaurant in Christiansburg, Virginia.

Over 20 months of work went into the planning, design and creation of this first ever VCOM ring. The official VCOM ring features design elements that make it distinctive from most other colleges and universities, with each ring showcasing both a “College Side” and a “Class Side.” An entirely new ring collection will be offered to every class, with class members creating the design featured on their respective “Class Side.” The “College Side” will remain unchanged from year-to-year, embodying the unity all VCOM students will embrace as alumni.

Class of 2008 members celebrated with their family and friends and were joined in celebration by VCOM faculty, staff and administrators. To begin the program, students were greeted with addresses from Mr. John Rocovich, Jr., VCOM’s Chairman of the Board, Dr. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, DO, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Mr. Bill King, Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Marketing.

The Keynote Speaker for the night was Dr. Jon Sprague, Professor of Pharmacology who urged the students to “never forget what that ring really represents. It’s a symbol of honor and significance, so serve your patients well.” After a wonderful evening, the program was concluded with the much anticipated “Donning of the Rings,” where Class of 2008 members opened their boxes to reveal their new rings.

Ring Committee Chairman Troy Akers, ’08 offered these parting words, “This ring will serve as a constant reminder of the pride and loyalty every student shares in their profession and their alma mater, and this ceremony will be a lifelong tradition remembered by all VCOM students.”

While VCOM continues to grow, shaping the way that medicine is practiced and developing its own traditions, it’s clear that the Official VCOM Ring and Ring Ceremony will remain a time-honored tradition.
November 16-17, 2006
VRHA Annual Conference

The Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA) is busy planning their 11th Annual Conference. The conference will be held November 16-17 at Natural Bridge, VA. Topics this year include:

- Ethics for Non-Profits
- Quality in the Workplace
- Navigating the ACS Referral System
- Community Collaboration
- Recruitment & Retention
- Virginia Telehealth Network Update
- Colorectal Cancer Prevention
- Marketing on a Shoestring
- Life Beyond the Grant
- Insulin Resistance

The VRHA is a diverse group of individuals from communities spread across Virginia - individuals that 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.

December 1, 2006
Hospital Day

The VCOM Winter 2006 A-OPTIC and Core Hospital Day will be held on Friday, December 1. For more information, see our web site in the General section under News & Events: http://www.vcom.vt.edu/general/news/.

December 1-2, 2006
SNMA Regional Conference

The 2006 Student National Medical Association (SNMA) Region VI Annual Medical Education Conference “Celebrating Diversity in Medicine: Bridging the Gap for the 21st Century” will be held at VCOM on December 1-2, 2006. For more information see our web site in the General section under News & Events: http://www.vcom.vt.edu/general/news/.