For the fourth straight year, Frank P. Salzano, PE, and member of the civil engineering class of 1983, organized the “HOGS4HOKIES” (www.hogs4hokies.org) spirit ride, supporting the 32 named memorial endowments from April 16, 2007. Salzano’s efforts have netted thousands of dollars for the endowments, and the support of many including head football coach Frank Beamer, sporting a T-shirt in this picture from the previous year’s event.
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We found a way for everyone to grow with us, and a way to recognize everyone who gives so generously…

Trees have a varying abundance of gifts. And, like most any institute of higher learning, the Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering largely depends on the gifts we receive from our alumni, students, faculty and friends. These gifts help us achieve our goals in the areas of undergraduate and graduate teaching, research and public service.

We have found a way for everyone to grow with us, as well as a way to recognize those who generously give through our “Grove of Sharing” expandable tree sculpture beautifully displayed on the lobby wall of Patton Hall for all to see.

Eventually, each leaf on the tree will recognize every annual gift of $250 or more by engraving the name of individual donors. Every gift makes a difference and enables us to do more, be more and give more to our students, our nation and our world.

Gifts provide critical funding for:

- Teaching
- Student fellowships and scholarships
- A distinguished lecture series and professional seminars
- Faculty and student achievements and awards

- Recruitment support
- Student chapter leadership
- Cooperative education activities
- …and so much more

AS OUR GIFTS AND FAMILY OF ALUMNI GROW, OUR TREE WILL BECOME A GROVE.

Not only does the unique sculpture recognize our donors, but it becomes a part of the heritage of the Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and will remain a centerpiece for all to see for many years to come.

Pledge to make an annual gift of $250 or more and we will engrave the inscription of your choice on a leaf on the tree and you will become a part of the Grove of Sharing tree and the Department’s heritage.

Contact Sam Easterling at seaster@vt.edu to make your pledge today.
Greetings from Blacksburg!! I hope that your summer is going well. Once again, I have the pleasure to share this message with you as part of our summer newsletter. The newsletter provides a great way for us to share highlights of student activities and projects from the recently completed academic year, as well as give you just a snapshot of some of the many wonderful things with which your fellow alumni are involved. We also like to take the opportunity to share a few of the awards and honors that have been bestowed upon some of our faculty and staff. As you'll appreciate when you read about these awards, our department is blessed with many dedicated and talented faculty members. Virginia Tech students, as well as members of the broader civil engineering profession, benefit from their talents and dedication on a daily basis. I hope you enjoy reading about some of their activities and successes.

I want to call your attention to the updates, awards and news of some of your colleagues – Alumni of our department. One of the great pleasures I have in my job is being able to interact on a regular basis with some of our over 10,000 living alumni. These interactions range from working closely with members of our Alumni Board, meeting folks at departmental and university events and having the pleasure each year of being part of recognition dinners for some of our distinguished and young alumni award recipients. I hope you enjoy reading about some of them as well!

As I described in last year’s Summer Newsletter, our Student Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers had the honor and responsibility of hosting the 2012 Virginias Conference in March in Blacksburg. The conference was a resounding success and our students, faculty and staff did an exceptional job planning and managing the events associated with the conference. During the reception at the banquet on Friday night and as I wandered around the events on Saturday, several of the faculty advisors made it a point to tell me what a wonderful job that our team had done and was doing to make the conference a success and to make our nearly 400 student, faculty advisors and judges feel welcome. The success of the event was directly attributable to the outstanding support we had from our alumni and friends. The support of our generous sponsors let us put on a first class event and the support of the dozens of judges helped ensure that the events were professionally conducted. Thanks to all of you who made the effort to either support, judge or simply attend the 2012 ASCE Virginias Conference!

I want to take a few moments to pay tribute to two colleagues whom we lost in the past several months. Professor Richard Barker passed away on 19 December 2011 and Professor Don Garst passed away on 7 June 2012. Both of these gentlemen had a major influence on my professional development. If it were for only that reason, I would not be sharing this news with you. However, I have come to learn over the years that both Professors Barker and Garst had a profound influence on literally thousands of Hokies with whom they interacted. I have met many alumni in my professional travels through the years and I can tell you that almost without exception, folks ask about both current and former faculty. And I cannot recall a conversation of this type when Professors Barker and Garst were not mentioned with tremendous affinity and respect. They were exceptional educators, engineers and true gentlemen. We will certainly miss them but I know that their legacy and influence will endure for many years to come.

Finally, I want to thank Estela Moen for her work on the Summer Newsletter, as well as the many other alumni relations duties she has so adeptly overseen the past several years. I regret to have to tell you that Estela will be leaving Virginia Tech to pursue other opportunities. While I’ll miss working with her and I know you’ll miss her efforts on behalf of all our alumni, I hope you join me in wishing her the very best with her new endeavors.

I hope to see many of you on campus during the coming academic year. Please feel free to stop by the Departmental office when you’re on campus or to contact me by phone (540-231-6635) or email (seaster@vt.edu). I welcome the opportunity to catch up with those I know as well as meet those of you I don’t know.
During the summer of 2011, sixteen undergraduate and graduate CEE students took part in a four and a half week program to explore water management and transportation infrastructure engineering in the ecologically rich, tourist region of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Students completed a six credit hour curriculum including classes, field work, data analysis and reports, research within the local community, and presentations to local leaders.

What made this program different from any other study abroad that the CEE department had offered before was that the courses were taught by none other than CEE professors John Novak, Hesham Rakha, and Mark Widdowson.

Two courses were offered to students: Water Management in the Dominican Republic and Comparisons of Transportation, DR/USA. Unlike traditional study abroad programs, these were Virginia Tech courses taught by Virginia Tech faculty members. Faculty and students agreed that these two courses provided a relevant and effective way to expose students to “real life” engineering problems. Further, these classes brought interdisciplinary studies from the four walls of a classroom to a laboratory of global proportions.

This international educational experience was augmented by the location of the resort where students lived and studied. Punta Cana is a region known to be a popular tourist destination for travelers from the U.S. so it may be surprising to many to learn that there are vast educational opportunities that exist in the area.

The Punta Cana region actually consists of three tourist areas connected by a network of roads through the improvised town of Veron. Veron has grown sporadically over the years as a result of Dominican and Haitian resort workers settling near the tourism industry. The dynamic between the resorts and the town also made the progressive effects of infrastructure development that much clearer to the students.

“It was clearly easier for students to see the importance of the work of civil engineers,” noted Lindy Cranwell, CEE Graduate and International Programs Coordinator, who also accompanied students in this pilot study abroad experience. “They have the opportunity to physically see and experience the effects of a deteriorating infrastructure and how it affects the entire community.”

Cranwell believes the Punta Cana program is just a springboard for many positive changes to come for study abroad across not only the CEE department, but also the university. Study abroad programs have traditionally been thought of as opportunities for a student

Continued on next page
By taking coursework on site through the Punta Cana program, the students were exposed to real life engineering problems. The hope is this program will serve as a springboard for many positive changes to come for study abroad across not only the CEE department, but also the university.

"Students have the opportunity to physically see and experience the effects of a deteriorating infrastructure and how it affects the entire community." ~ Lindy Cranwell, CEE Graduate and International Programs Coordinator

to perhaps do more “playing hard” rather than “working hard.” Cranwell has become passionate about changing this perception. “Study abroad is a time when civil engineering students can find out about how their discipline operates in another culture. Even though some of the students had traveled before, working, studying and experiencing the infrastructure in a country such as the Dominican Republic gave students a real appreciation of the things they may take for granted here in the U.S.”

Student feedback supports Cranwell’s assertions with near-unanimous agreement that the coursework was challenging and intense, but the opportunities to experience the “lab of the world” were invaluable.

The program was such a success that the CEE department repeated the trip this summer (2012) and is investigating the feasibility of similar programs in Germany and China.
William Collins (B.S. ’06, M.S. ’10) is well known in the Blacksburg community for his ability and dedication to merging his two passions: community outreach and civil engineering. A current Ph.D. student in the CEE department, Collins was recognized for his dedication to serving others through programs both locally and internationally by receiving the 2012 Graduate Student Service Award.

Will has made it a priority to serve the community in many ways, including participation on the deacon board of his church, and leadership in the ASCE group Concrete for Kids and the community group Hearts and Hammers. He is also a driving force behind and graduate student advisor of the student group Bridges to Prosperity at Virginia Tech (B2PVT).

Featured in last year’s CEE News, B2PVT is the student chapter of the non-profit organization Bridges to Prosperity (B2P) that builds footbridges in third-world countries. B2PVT focuses their work in the country of Haiti. In many of these rural areas, villagers are separated from the necessities found in their local village by a river, but very few of these villages have a bridge spanning the river. Individuals who need the services of their village have to cross the potentially dangerous water by foot. Because of this, markets, schools, churches, and medical care are frequently inaccessible.

Will became involved with B2PVT in 2010 when the student group was getting off the ground. Since that time, he has been the design and construction advisor and consultant on bridge projects in two different Haitian villages and made a total of three trips to the country. One of the missions of B2PVT is to educate and empower local workers in developing countries, and Will did just that, working alongside Haitians and offering knowledge of construction and structural engineering.

“Will has three attributes that make him important, if not vital, to the [construction and design] team: construction experience in the U.S., a ‘get it done’ attitude, and a personal desire to help those less fortunate,” noted Dr. Tommy Cousins, the faculty technical advisor for B2PVT.

Will also went above and beyond, making adjustments to the “template” bridge design in the B2P manual to account for the local conditions at each site in Haiti and improve the bridges’ overall safety. He also formed a research group to perform materials testing on different aspects of a typical cable-suspended footbridge. He used it as a learning opportunity for undergraduate students as they mixed and tested concrete in an attempt to simulate construction site practices in Haiti.

“The idea of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) is one that I try to live by every day,” Will said, “and one that I try to instill in my son as I teach him about selflessness, hard work, and compassion for others.” In fact, though Will fully acknowledges that he and his wife Kate perform a daily “juggling act” to maintain a work/life balance, they do so for the benefit of their family. “I want our son to see that we try to be involved and give back to the community, so we try to include him whenever we can. Hopefully as he gets older he will understand that we’ve been given so many gifts and opportunities, that it is our responsibility to share with others.”

Once he is done with his Ph.D., Will wants to get a job in academia and continue in engineering outreach. “I’ve loved working with Concrete for Kids, and I hope to continue to expand that program with [grade school] students wherever I end up. I also would like to continue working with groups such as B2P and Engineers Without Borders (EWB). The entire profession of engineering is built around making life better for others, and opportunities through these groups are a great way to make a difference.”
DEAN'S AWARD WINNERS

Two CEE faculty members honored at Dean’s Awards

Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering held its fifteenth annual engineering faculty reception, honoring two dozen of its faculty for various awards in teaching, research, service, and outreach and two faculty from the Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering were honored at the ceremony.

Jesus M. de la Garza, the Vecellio Professor of Construction Engineering and Management at Virginia Tech, received one of the Dean’s Awards for Excellence in Research from the College of Engineering.

Among his other awards, de la Garza received two honors from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Construction Institute last year. He received the 2011 Peurifoy Construction Research Award for his “pioneering research contributions in Information Technology, Construction Scheduling, and Highway Asset Management.” He was also appointed chief editor of the Journal of Construction Engineering and Management.

de la Garza specializes in construction engineering and highway infrastructure management and is a member of the Virginia Tech’s Myers-Lawson School of Construction. As director of CHAMPS (Center for Highway Asset Management ProgramS) he has led efforts to identify innovative ways to measure the cost efficiency and level-of-service effectiveness of the performance-based road maintenance contracts that the Virginia Department of Transportation awards.

In 2010, de la Garza was inducted into the National Academy of Construction (NAC). He serves as member of the National Research Council’s Board on Infrastructure and the Constructed Environment. He has also served as program director of the Information Technology and Infrastructure Systems program for the National Science Foundation’s Civil and Mechanical Systems Division, and as co-chairman of the academic committee of the CII. In 2009, de la Garza received the CII Distinguished Professor Award and a Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Innovation. He earned his bachelor’s of science in civil engineering from Tecnologico de Monterrey in 1978, and his master’s and Ph.D. degrees in civil engineering from the University of Illinois in 1984 and 1988, respectively.

Russell Green was the associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, accepts his award from Richard C. Benson, dean of engineering at Virginia Tech.
Moewen receives Alumni Teaching Excellence Award

Cristopher Moen, assistant professor in the structural engineering and materials program area, is the 2012 recipient of the CEE Alumni Teaching Excellence Award. The CEE Alumni Board selects the recipient of this award based solely upon nominations received from the CEE alumni who have graduated in the past five years.

Moen’s background and interests within structural engineering have spanned from post-tensioned segmental concrete bridge design, to the analysis and design of cold-formed steel structural members and systems. He teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in cold-formed steel structures and structural stability and analysis as well as the theory of structures course. He was recently appointed chair of the ASCE SEI Committee on Cold-Formed Members.

Moen also seeks opportunities to apply his expertise in thin-walled structures to aerospace engineering. He and his students are collaborating with NASA-Langley and the aerospace industry on the development of elliptical carbon-fiber composite fuselage and wing structural components in blended wing military and commercial aircraft.

Moen’s background as a bridge engineer also keeps him active in infrastructure engineering research. He and his colleagues are using advanced finite element and statistical techniques to identify structural indicators of bridge deck degradation for the FHWA. He also received the 2011 Precast/Pre-stressed Institute’s Richard P. Jenny Research Fellowship to study precast girder instabilities during lifting, transportation, and erection.

Moen joined the Virginia Tech CEE department in 2008 after receiving his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University where he won the Graduate Student Service Award for his engineering outreach work in the Baltimore community.

DEAN’S AWARD WINNERS (continued from page 7)

recipient of a Certificate of Teaching Excellence. Green, an associate professor, joined the CEE department in 2008 and is a 2001 alumnus from Virginia Tech CEE department (Ph.D.) where he was the recipient of the prestigious Via Scholar Fellowship. His research interests include: paleoliquefaction analyses; seismic hazard analyses; scaling and/or site response analyses; liquefaction valuation; soil improvement; in-situ characterization of soil properties; dynamic soil-structure interaction, to include the influence of the structure on liquefaction potential.

This summer, Green was a Visiting Erskine Fellow by the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. As an Erskine Fellow, Dr. Green spent two months at the Department of Civil and Natural Resource Engineering, University of Canterbury, giving a series of lectures. As opposed to previous years where Erskine Fellowships were awarded to academics from a range of disciplines, the 2012 Fellowships were designated for professors whose research focuses on various aspects of earthquake engineering, with the goal of fostering increased collaborations between the Fellows and the faculty at the University of Canterbury.

Green also led two National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsored teams that performed post-earthquake investigations: the magnitude 7.1 event in September 2010 in Darfield and the magnitude 6.2 event in February 2011 which devastated the city of Christchurch and its environs.

Among his other honors and awards, he received a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Award in 2006 to research procedures for determining performance based design parameters in regions of low-to-moderate seismicity using paleoseismic techniques. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi, Tau Beta Pi, and Chi Epsilon Academic Honor Societies and the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society. He was named a College of Engineering Faculty Fellow in 2010. He has received several teaching other honors including: 2006-07 James M. Robbins Excellence in Teaching Award, Great Lakes District of Chi Epsilon, and the 2005-06 Professor of the Year Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers’ (ASCE) student chapter at the University of Michigan, where he was previously an associate professor. He is a member of ASCE, the Geo-Institute of ASCE, the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering, the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, the U.S. Universities Council on Geotechnical Education and Research, the Seismological Society of America, and the National Earthquake Engineering Simulation Consortium.

Green served on active duty in the U.S. Marines Corps from 1984 until 1988, serving in the U.S. and in Japan and being honorably discharged at the rank of sergeant. He earned his master’s in CE from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1994 and his bachelor’s degree in CE from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1992.
Gallagher selected for Loganathan Award

The G.V. Loganathan Faculty Achievement Award for Excellence in Civil Engineering Education was presented to Associate Professor Daniel Gallagher. This award is given annually based upon the voting of current undergraduate and graduate students in the CEE department.

Gallagher teaches computer and modeling-based classes including Computer Applications in CEE, Surface Water Quality Modeling and Environmental Monitoring and Sampling. While he continues to perform research related to drinking water, Gallagher’s current research is focused on risk assessment and modeling. He and his graduate and undergraduate research students are currently working on developing two large-scale predictive models for food-safety applications and protection of public health. They developed a “virtual deli” to track bacterial cross contamination within a retail deli. This model will guide USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in developing regulations for grocery stores, while another model will assess how the selection of various risk assessment metrics impacts regulatory standards.

Together with Renee Boyer and Susan Duncan, faculty in food science and technology, he started a new project to measure how different sanitation practices at grocery stores impact public health.

The G.V. Loganathan Faculty Achievement Award for Excellence in Civil Engineering Education, presented by the Virginia Tech chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), was previously named the CEE Faculty Achievement Award. The name was changed in 2008 in memory of G.V. Loganathan, who won numerous teaching awards in the department and university, including the University’s prestigious Wine Award in 2006, the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1998, and multiple College of Engineering Certificates of Teaching Excellence.
In 1998, the Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) and the CEE Alumni Board formally initiated the CEE Alumni Achievement Awards Program as a means of honoring both younger alumni and those who have graduated from the department years ago. Two award categories were created within this program: the Academy of Distinguished Alumni and the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

Alumni may be selected for induction into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni (CEE Academy) based upon a review of their overall career accomplishments and contributions to the profession, their community, and service to Virginia Tech. Younger alumni within 15 years of their undergraduate BS degree may be selected to receive an Outstanding Young Alumni Award. After this year’s induction, there are a total of 89 members in the CEE Academy and 41 Outstanding Young Alumni.

The Inductee Class of 2012 Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Mr. Douglas W. Burks, Class of 1979
Mr. Allen W. Cadden, Class of 1986
Dr. H. Randall Edwards, Class of 1964
Dr. George M. Filz, Ph.D. 1992
Mr. John G. Rocovich (Honorary Member), Class of 1966

Outstanding Young Alumni

Dr. James W. Bryant, Jr., MS 1999, Ph.D. 2001
Dr. Brian K. Diefenderfer, Class of 1996, MS 1998, Ph.D. 2002
Mr. Robert D. Moser, Jr., Class of 1997

Each year, candidates for these awards come from nominations submitted directly to the CEE department by our alumni. If you are interested in nominating someone for the CEE Academy or the Outstanding Young Alumni Award, please follow this link to the nomination form: [www.cee.vt.edu/alumniawards/](http://www.cee.vt.edu/alumniawards/)

Forms can be completed electronically through the website or printed and mailed with supporting documents to:

Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Virginia Tech
200 Patton Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061
By Steven Mackay

Ray Curry Jr., of Alexandria, Va., who earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Virginia Tech in 1954, is a 2012 inductee into Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering Academy of Engineering Excellence, joining an elite group of 112 individuals out of more than 58,000 living engineering alumni.

The Academy of Engineering Excellence was founded in 1999 by F. William Stephenson, past dean of the college of engineering, and the College’s Advisory Board. The inductees are engineering graduates of Virginia Tech who have made continuous and admirable engineering or leadership contributions during their careers.

This year marked the thirteenth anniversary of the first induction.

College was not Curry’s first plan. He started in the family construction business at age 14 working during summers and holidays. Many of his construction coworkers were World War II veterans who encouraged the high school teen to further his education.

And so, the construction worker became the first to attend college in his family. “I was the first person [in my family] to have that opportunity,” Curry said. “I never really had an interest. They told me to go to college and make something of myself.” He did, focusing his studies on structural engineering and graduated from Virginia Tech in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

After college, Curry served in the Army Corps of Engineers from 1955 until 1957 as a project engineer in Okinawa in the continuing post-World War II rebuilding efforts in Japan. He supervised the building of airfields, highways, radar bases, fire stations, water and sewage treatment facilities, and apartment buildings.

After his overseas experience, Curry returned to the family business, MOSES-ECCO, a high-rise concrete construction company. His father co-owned the company with three other men, purchased from a man with the surname Moses. The men kept the name Moses as a sign...
of respect, while “ECCO” comes from the initials of each of the owner’s last names.

Curry worked his way up from engineer to superintendent and shareholder. One of his earliest projects was the Watergate Complex, a series of office buildings, condos and a hotel, plus a shopping center that sported a then-groundbreaking post-tension concrete job, and was designed by Italian architect Luigi Moretti as a series of curved buildings, with no straight angles. Curry poured 17,500 square feet of concrete per day and completed a floor every four days.

In 1970 Curry started his own company, SMC Concrete Construction Inc. He chose the high-rise concrete industry in keeping with his education and prior family work experience. He spanned his business clientele out to Richmond, Va., and Baltimore, Md. He also traveled to Saudi Arabia several times in the late 1970s, working as a consultant for Aeromaritime Ltd., on precast plants and precast houses along the Yemen border. But as late 1970s Middle East turmoil grew tumultuous, he terminated his work there and returned home.

Curry also formed Curry Development Inc., during the 1980s, focusing on the office and apartment sectors, townhouses, single-family houses, retail centers, and an industrial park. His company built what he calls the first affordable housing projects in Fairfax, Va., for lower income families. The company also renovated abandoned apartment buildings inside the Beltway.

The entrepreneur then jumped into banking in the 1990s with Bank of Alexandria, first as a stockholder and buyer, then president and chairman of the board. It was a different way to learn a business. Curry grew the bank, and then sold it to F&M Bank.

His career-favorite project is the 1-million-square-foot Market Square in Washington, D.C., located directly across from the National Archives, and designed to blend in as a historical building. Other landmarks Curry was involved with: The Library of Congress’s National Audio Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Va., and Tyson’s Corner Shopping Mall — one of the nation’s larger shopping malls, and Jefferson Square, a multi-use high-rise complex. His buildings have won numerous awards.

Curry and his wife, Madelyn, are members of the Ut Prosim Society, and have given several donations to scholarship funds, established the Raymond and Madelyn Curry Graduate Fellowship, and helped fund the expansion of the university’s structural engineering lab.

Originally opened in 1990 and expanded several times, Curry’s donation helped build offices and meeting rooms for graduate students working in the lab. The facility was rededicated as the Ray and Madelyn Curry Education Wing and the Thomas M. Murray Structural Engineering Laboratory in 2009.

Curry is a member of the Virginia Chapter of Associated Builders & Contractors, the D.C. Metropolitan Subcontractors Association, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, Alexandria Building Industry Association, District of Columbia Building Industry Association, National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, American Society for Concrete Construction, American Concrete Institute, Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, and Metropolitan Washington Chapter of Associated Builder and Contractors.

He is starting his second term on the Alumni Board of the Charles E. Via Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at Virginia Tech. He was inducted into the department’s Academy of Distinguished Alumni in 2007.

Curry retired from SMC Concrete Construction, Inc. in June 2011. He lives in Alexandria, Va., and has four daughters and seven grandchildren.

“I never really had an interest. They told me to go to college and make something of myself.”
Note from the Alumni Board Chair  
By Rick DiSalvo  
“No pain, no gain!”  
So what has your Alumni Board done that makes a difference?  

One of the things that comes to mind is the development of a meaningful mentoring program. Board members help better prepare our talented students by interacting with them in classroom settings, holding informal one-on-one discussions in evening gatherings at the Inn, and opening our firm doors for student visits. We have reviewed course content for ABET certification, provided a review and recommendation for the continuation of survey (CEE Measurements) course continuation, and weighed in on capping enrollment in the CEE program, to mention a few.  

Our input covers a broad spectrum of civil engineering experiences. Under the leadership of Department Head Sam Easterling, a remarkably well grounded, approachable and capable leader, our meetings have briefings, time for input on important department decisions and open discussion time to address issues of concern from the members. We meet twice a year during the Fall and Spring semesters. Rarely is there an empty seat as many former members still attend and contribute.  

Now, if you are still reading, you may have a genuine interest in serving the department in some capacity. I challenge you to contribute in a way that is meaningful to you. There are numerous opportunities – find one that sparks your interest. Of course your financial support is welcomed as the level of state funding continues to dwindle; but your support can also come in the form of attendance at alumni events in your area or in Blacksburg. Although many of our board members contribute as panelists in the classroom to answer questions from inquisitive students, you too can reach out to the faculty to offer your expertise as a guest lecturer and / or to offer research collaboration opportunities. How about opening your firm doors to coops and interns? The benefits to the student are immeasurable and your firm can benefit as well – it is a win-win situation. When your company has an opening, contact the department so they can advertise it to our students/alumni first.  

Do you know exemplary peers to nominate for Distinguished Alumni or Outstanding Young Alumni recognition? And of course, please inform the department of your accomplishments, and / or VT outreach (concrete for kids, university fairs at high schools, etc.)  

This coming academic year, I have been asked to serve as the Alumni Board Chair. To be honest, when asked I hesitated at first, weighing my existing commitments. I thought back on the saying, “No pain, no gain,” and knew after some reflection that I could only say “yes!” I accepted, as I want to give back to this fine University and outstanding department that helped prepare me for the career I have today.  

I am humbled knowing it is such an honor to serve and look forward to contributing as Chair. With all due respect knowing how much we tend to pile onto our plates, I hope you too will reflect on your career, and the university and department’s role in your preparation. Then, I hope you will join me in finding a way to participate.  

NEW BOARD CHAIR  
Richard M. DiSalvo, PE, is the Chief Operating Officer for Draper Aden Associates, a civil, environmental and surveying consulting firm headquartered in Blacksburg with offices in Charlottesville, Richmond and Newport News.  

Draper Aden Associates has consistently been listed in the Virginia Business Review as one of the top ten architectural and engineering firms and in ENR’s top 500 national design firms.  

Rick began his career in 1977, after graduating with his B.S. in Civil Engineering and began working for the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Division of Water Programs in Richmond, Va.  

Given the opportunity for VDH and EPA financing to pursue a master’s degree, he did so in 1978/79, studying wastewater treatment.  

In the mid 1980s, Rick helped to establish a newly opened Richmond branch of Dewberry and Davis where he worked until taking the Blacksburg office manager position with Draper Aden Associates in 1991.  

Rick has served as a member of the CEE Alumni Board since 2007 and was part of the team that developed the current Alumni Board Mentoring program which involves interactions with students in the classrooms, one-on-one in social gatherings, and on the job.  

Outside of work, Rick is chair of the Montgomery County Board of Zoning Appeals and is the past chair (2009/2010) of the Virginia Section of the American Water Works Association.  

He is active in Saint Mary’s Catholic Church and is called upon for various town and university ad hoc committees (most recently the Stadium Woods committee).  

Rick is married to Susan Guthrie DiSalvo (VT Class of ’77), a Montgomery County school teacher, and they have 3 children: Michael, a police officer in Richmond, Betsy, a Montgomery County teacher, and Peter, who currently pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy.
Eric Lundberg (B.S. ’86, M.S. ‘89) is the founder and currently CEO of Vesper, Inc. which provides a range of tooling and inspection services to the Wind Energy and Aerospace industries. Notable projects include: work on wind turbine blade production in the U.S., Europe, India and China, and production support on the tennis court-sized Sunshields for the upcoming James Webb Space Telescope (replacement to the Hubble).

Prior to Vesper, Eric was co-founder of Spatial Positioning Systems, Inc. (now part of Nikon) that created a laser-based Indoor GPS system which was based on his graduate CEE research. Eric led basic research, product development and marketing efforts. Notable commercial projects include systems for the manufacture of aircraft, hazardous-waste clean-up, and the creation of special effects for motion pictures.

In addition to his two CEE degrees, Eric also holds an MBA from George Washington University. He is an inventor on twenty-six U.S. and foreign patents, and two pending patents, for position tracking, automation, and green energy technologies. Eric currently lives and works in Reston, Virginia.

Kord J. Wissmann, Ph.D., P.E., D.GE (BSCE ’87; Ph.D. ’95) is President and Chief Engineer of Geopier Foundation Company, Inc., a design/build specialty contractor specializing in the engineering and construction of soil reinforcement solutions for commercial, industrial, and transportation structures. Kord joined Geopier in 1998 as Chief Engineer. In 2001, he became President and Chief Engineer, responsible for company operations, business planning, engineering, design approach development, and research/development.

Throughout his more than 25 year geo-professional career, Kord has held various positions across the country, specializing in geotechnical engineering and ground improvement. He earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1987, an M.S. in Civil (Geotechnical) Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley in 1988. He returned to Virginia Tech and achieved his Ph.D. in Civil (Geotechnical) Engineering in 1995. Kord received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award from the Virginia Tech Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in 2000. He has served and led multiple committees and task forces within ASCE, ASFE and the Geo-Institute. In 2010, Kord was inducted as an Academy of Geo Professionals Diplomate. He has authored or co-authored more than 30 published technical papers and journal articles.

Kord, his wife Kavita, and their two daughters Natasha (17) and Leela (14), live in Mooresville, North Carolina. He is a recreational sailor and bike rider who enjoys spending time with his family and visiting his Alma Mater in Blacksburg.
1960s
Delohery, Pete – B.S. ’66 – Authored the book *Lamb to the Slaughter*, which provides a glimpse into the world of boxing and “what life in the ring is like.”

1970s
Lippy, Stephen – B.S. ’72 – Retired after 40 years with the Baltimore County Bureau of Solid Waste Management and was the recipient of the 2012 Stanley E. Kappe award from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers.

1980s
Johnson, Pat – B.S. ’81 – Featured, along with his brother Chuck Johnson (Psychology ’70), in Virginia Tech’s Outreach NOW magazine, for their company Acrylife and their V2T venting system. This vent is designed to minimize roof damage in hurricane-force wind conditions.

Fischer, Alison – B.S. ’88 – named Head Coach of the D.C. Divas, one of the most successful teams in women’s full-contact tackle football. Over its ten-year history, the Divas won a Championship in 2006, seven division titles, and a 73-22 win-loss record. Fisher has played for the Divas since its first season in 2001. Off the field, Fisher is a civil engineer working at Dulles.

1990s

Papa, Dennis – M.S. ’94 – Joined REMSA, Inc., an environmental and engineering consulting firm based in Hampton, Va., and celebrating its 25th year in business, as its Vice President and COO.

Beamon, Courtney A. – B.S. ’95, M.S. ’96 – Selected as the President of Delta Airport Consultants, Inc. Beamon also serves as the Chair of the Airport Consultants Council.

Kranbuehl, Donald D. – M.S. ’99 – Was lead design architect for the Park Shops project, which won a 2011 American Institute of Architects’ Committee on Architecture for Education Design Award.

2000s
Frank, Scott S. – B.S. ’00, M.S. ’01 – Earned his PE license and was promoted to Vice President of Operations at Ranger Construction Industries, Inc.

Dominguez Henriques, Ines – M.S. ’02 – Named CEO of Ynvisible.

Stephen Powers (kneeling, left) and volunteers get ready for a restoration at a boundary stone on the Arlington/Falls Church Border.

CEE Alum works to preserve 220-year-old monuments in Washington, D.C.

Stephen Powers (B.S. ’87) has made it his mission and passion to restore and protect the sites for the 40 original stones that mark the original limits of Washington, DC. The monuments, originally numbering 40 and laid in 1791 and 1792, are the oldest monuments in the District of Columbia, and according to Powers, they are believed to be the oldest monuments purchased by the U.S. government.

What started in 2007 as a fun trip to help his daughter with her second-grade homework assignment ended with Powers embarking on a multi-year labor of love. He went on to survey each stone, taking more than 3,500 photos. His findings inspired his fellow civil engineers and others in the community to work to restore the protective fences around the stones and perform other restorative measures. Stephen and his group are working to restore all 36 remaining sites.

While they were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, Stephen and his group, the Nation’s Capital Boundary Stones Committee, are pushing for the sites to be designated as National Historic Landmarks.

Stephen notes, “With that designation, the national Park Service would have to take care of them. They’d have to be funded, maintained – and they’d get awareness through that.”
Carlson named Hokie Hero at football game

CEE (BS ’10) and Corps of Cadets alumna Tavia (Cawley) Carlson, U.S. Air Force, was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech versus East Carolina University game in September 2011.

The Corps of Cadets Hokie Hero program started in 2006 by IMG College and sponsored by the University Bookstore, honors Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets alumni who are currently deployed. Recipients of this honor are highlighted by Bill Roth and Mike Burnop during the radio broadcast of Virginia Tech football games.

Carlson is currently stationed in the Middle East as a member of the 405th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron. She serves as the Civil Engineering Operations Flight Commander, providing infrastructure and facilities necessary to support the U.S. and coalition forces in the region. She is from Winchester, Va., and this is her first combat deployment.

Carlson is a Class of 2009 graduate of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets and was the Kilo Battery Executive Officer and the Golf Company Commander during her senior year. She is married to James Carlson, U.S. Air Force, a Corps of Cadets graduate from the Class of 2010.

For three years of her Corps of Cadets experience, Carlson was the recipient of the Patty and Rock Roszak Cadet Scholarship. The corps’ Emerging Leader Scholarship program is one of the largest scholarship programs at the university, paying out about $1.5 million each year to recipient cadets.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please send your updates and announcements such as marriage, births, career accomplishments, retirement, awards and recognitions, by email to Donna Sanzenbach at donnac@vt.edu or by mail to the address below:

Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Virginia Tech, 200 Patton Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Please be sure to include the following information: name (and maiden name, if applicable), address, phone number, and email address.

Mailing or email address updates should be sent to alumnidata@vt.edu
Dear CEE Alumni,

The concept of “earning hours” is common to track a student’s academic progress throughout his or her college experience. At Virginia Tech, every undergraduate civil engineering student must acquire a minimum of 132 credit hours to graduate. These hours are tracked and recorded according to subject and course level.

Though academic hours are important to mark academic success, how are the thousands of other hours spent in college? My “other hours” included physically strenuous hours competing in intramural sports and training for the Virginia State Powerlifting Championships; intellectually challenging hours mastering difficult concepts in undergraduate research and preparing for the ASCE Hardy-Cross competition; and spiritually intense hours participating in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes’ Bible studies and serving at GraceLife Baptist Church.

I have discovered that although the 132 required credit hours qualify us for a degree and train us to be technically competent civil engineers, it is the thousands of “other hours” that mold us into the person who can truly make the most of a civil engineering degree.

Over the past four years, several of my “other hours” were spent on two mission trips to Haiti. It was not the extreme poverty, environmental disaster, or dire need for stable infrastructure that stood out to me most; rather it was the fact that the only difference between my Haitian brother, Bony, and myself was our place of birth.

That was when Jesus Christ’s statement, “To whom much is given, much is required” really hit me. My fellow classmates and I have been given an incredible opportunity to attend one of the finest universities in the United States to study a subject that has extreme potential to positively benefit the world. The question is: will we use this blessing for selfish ambition or altruistic service?

My classmates have dreams that can change the world. Some of them want to discover new knowledge through cutting edge research and create revolutionary designs that are more sustainable and environmentally responsible. Others want to travel to Africa or Latin America and serve the oppressed and less fortunate directly.

What is interesting is that to my understanding, not one of my classmates’ goals is to only make a lot of money, live a comfortable life, and then retire. We all want to make an impact that will positively benefit humanity and outlive us. My prayer is that as we go into engineering practice or continue in the world of academia, we will not forget that this life is not about how much we can get, rather it is about how much we can give. May we always remember that the only reason we have been abundantly blessed is so we can give even more.

Many of you have set an example for us and we recognize that we follow in some amazing footsteps. The class of 2012 will not let you down! Go Hokies!

Allen Bowers. Virginia Tech CEE Class of 2012

Allen Bowers is the 2012 Outstanding Senior in the Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. He is also the 2012 College of Engineering valedictorian, graduating with a 4.0 GPA. He is continuing on in the CEE department where he has been selected for a Via Fellowship as he pursues his master’s degree in geotechnical engineering.
It has been another exceptional year for the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Virginia Tech (VT) student chapter. In fact, the year was quite dynamic! The most notable event of the year was hosting the annual student ASCE conference (details below).

The academic year began with a change in faculty advising. After many years of immeasurable service, Dr. Randel Dymond transitioned from being the main advisor in order to focus on planning the regional ASCE Virginia's conference. As an advisor, Dr. Dymond helped create a solid organizational structure, and ASCE is much better now because of his efforts. The new faculty advisor, Dr. Paolo Scardina, has tried to uphold the same high standards set forth by all the preceding faculty advisors.

Our organization was privileged to host an interesting array of professional speakers throughout the past year. Described by students as “engaging and encouraging,” a small sample of topics included how to successfully move a full-size bridge to considering the pursuit of an MBA. Students greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn directly from practicing civil engineers.

Students also enjoyed some social activities including a fall icebreaker and year-end picnic gathering. Field trips throughout the year provided firsthand illustration of civil engineering in practice.

The biggest ASCE event of the year was when Virginia Tech hosted the annual Virginia's conference on March 29-31 with 14 regional universities, over 350 in attendance, and approximately 50 judges. Virginia Tech administered 11 different student competitions (largest in recent memory), covering most of the civil engineering disciplines, as well as some fun events for underclassmen. The first day of the conference was located at Claytor Lake, in order to facilitate the concrete canoe competition. The weather, which is always an uncertain variable, was nothing short of perfect. The remainder of events were scattered throughout the VT campus on Saturday. There was a formal banquet on Friday evening, where the keynote speaker was Anne Ellis, VP at AECOM and VP of ACI.

Virginia Tech students excelled once again at this conference, placing 2nd overall in the Geotechnical, Sustainable Land Development, and Marr technical paper competitions. The canoe team placed 3rd in both the races and the technical paper submission. Two VT students also placed 1st and 2nd, respectively, in the Hardy Cross oral presentation. In addition to receiving award plaques, the first place in this competition allows VT to retain and display the coveted Hardy Cross trophy until the next conference! Virginia Tech students also got honorable mentions during the awards ceremony for the surveying and environmental competitions, and VT's steel bridge was noted for its stiffness. It is obvious that the VT students have a large breadth of knowledge in civil engineering principles!

Many in attendance noted that this was a very well-conceived and administered conference. While there were many volunteers, whose efforts were certainly needed and invaluable, Dr. Dymond and student lead organizer, Chris Dianora, are rightly deserving of the bulk of credit. Chris Dianora had been very active in ASCE while he was a student, and since he recently completed his graduate studies, his involvement will be missed.

This past year, ASCE enjoyed some of the most prolific fundraising in recent years. To all of our friends and supporters, we extend the grandest of thanks and appreciation. It is your sponsorship and continued support that creates activities that foster the next generation of leaders in our field of civil engineering. The next cabinet of ASCE officers have already been planning an ambitious agenda for next year, so please look for our fundraising brochure sometime early in the next academic year.

We welcome any encouraging thoughts or ideas for ASCE related activities. Comments or suggestions can be forwarded to the faculty advisor, Paolo Scardina (paolo@vt.edu). We have already entertained a wealth of suggestions, which are starting to be implemented. Together, all of us can make ASCE into the vehicle for professional development and scholarship.
B2PVT

Bridges to Prosperity continues to grow and serve

During the 2011-2012 academic year, Bridges to Prosperity at Virginia Tech (B2PVT) has been very productive. There has been a successful leadership transition and the club is continuing its service in Haiti.

The chapter saw an increase in membership compared to previous years. Growing from no more than 7 members two years ago to over 25 members this year, B2PVT looks forward to continuous expansion in the future. In addition, membership now consists of students ranging from freshman to graduating seniors to graduate students.

B2PVT worked intensely with several campus organizations and began to raise campus awareness about the club. B2PVT participated in events involved with the Student Engineers’ Council (SEC), including Freshman Major Mixer and E-Week.

Besides developing a relationship with the SEC, B2PVT has also taken part in numerous on campus awareness functions. By assisting The College of Engineering International Programs in the Engineering Open House, B2PVT was able to give a presentation to prospective students about our projects and the international opportunities. The chapter also participated in the annual CEEP welcome picnic that was held by the Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity. Additionally, working with the Student Engineers’ Abroad Council (SEAC), the chapter joined the SEAC and a few other engineering students in the Study Abroad Poster Showcase and Panel Discussion.

Logistically, the chapter cannot carry on its service without the help from the Civil Engineering department and partnerships with Bridges to Prosperity International and Rotary Club. B2PVT is very grateful that the CEE department continuously shows its support to the club and provides valuable advice on both technical and non-technical problems.

The chapter has two on-going bridge projects in Haiti as mentioned above. They are located in the towns of La Chambre and Lougou. The 60 meters long suspended bridge in La Chambre is near completion and should be completed by summer 2012. Following its completion, the bridge is expected to serve the 10,000 inhabitants of La Chambre and provide a safe access across the dangerous river. The members of B2PVT understand that without a footbridge, a six month rainy season will inhibit local access and isolate them from basic needs such as jobs, markets, hospitals, and education. Therefore, the chapter has begun work on a third bridge, even as the project in La Chambre is still under construction. As a chapter, everyone involved in B2PVT is willing to put in more effort to help and serve the less fortunate.

The chapter has also worked on its membership engagement this academic year. Although B2P International has provided a very beneficial bridge design manual for students to follow, continuous design improvements are also required as the site conditions change greatly. Thus, during general meetings, students use the manual as a foundation for learning the design process and make modifications as needed. In addition, each student member participates in a variety of tasks devoted to developing professional skills such as: the production of AutoCAD drawings, the creation of computer SketchUp models and a real-life scaled model.

This April, B2PVT hosted its second annual fundraising dinner. This event was a great way to connect community members, the chapter and students. Community members have heard about the bridge projects in Haiti and the fundraising dinner provided an opportunity for them to support the club.

Finally, the chapter held an end-of-semester cookout before final exams. It gave chapter members an opportunity to interact with other members, have fun, and celebrate a year of hard work.

CMAA

2011-2012 Chapter Advisor & Officers:
Back row: Dr. de la Garza, Max Charamella, Berk Uslu, Anit Abraham Antony.
Front row: Moshe Zelkowicz, Fabian Capra, Hooman Rouhi, Ankur Rathor. (For more CMAA news, see page 20.)
CMAA continues strength and career networking

The CMAA Student Chapter at Virginia Tech has completed its sixth successful year. We continue to develop a diverse member base from a variety of undergraduate and graduate majors. We are continuing to hold strong relationships with the National Capital Chapter and the National Chapter to help students get ready for their construction management careers. Please visit us online at http://www.cmaa.org.vt.edu.

Rising Construction Managers Conference
The most notable event this year for our student chapter was the inaugural Rising Construction Manager Conference in Washington, D.C. on November 5-6, 2011. Our chapter led the first-ever conference session dedicated exclusively to CMAA student chapters. This conference helped to engage student leaders in discussions of how we can learn from each other and continue to promote CMAA to the future generations of CM professionals.

This two day event concentrated on issues of major interest to new Construction Managers and students planning to enter the professional workforce. The conference program included panel discussions of Construction Managers In-Training (CMIT), recently licensed Certified Construction Managers (CCM), and industry Senior Executives. The conference closed with presentations from the individual CMAA student chapters.

We will start early to plan our attendance for the upcoming Rising Construction Manager Conference to be held in Chicago.

Holder & MBP Construction Guest Lecture
This past fall semester we entertained Holder Construction and MBP Construction at one of our members’ meetings. This gave our student members the opportunity to learn about the Center for the Arts Project that Holder and MBP are working on at the Virginia Tech Campus. Bob Campbell from Holder and Kevin Wills from MBP spoke about the relationship they share on the project site as representatives of the General Contractor and Owners Representative roles respectively.

They also spoke about the Construction Management process and how we could get involved as students. These guest lectures provide a networking platform for both the industry representatives and our student members. The students enjoy the opportunity to speak with professionals and potentially line up future career plans.

Heidi Obie CMIT Lecture
The Construction Manager-In-Training, or CMIT, program is a great way to start your career as a professional in the construction field. The program will help you gain a comprehensive understanding of the foundations of Construction Management. The two phases of the program are the Capstone Assessment and the Mentor-Protégé Relationship. The Capstone Assessment consists of preparing for and taking an online assessment. The Mentor-Protégé Relationship involves receiving continuous guidance and support for staying on the right track to qualify for the CCM certification.

Our chapter had the privilege of receiving a lecture from Heidi Obie, a Vice President at CH2M Hill, in November 2011. She spoke to our group about the steps to become a CMIT as well as the benefits from the credential. Heidi also encouraged our members to pursue becoming a CMIT as a way to distinguish ourselves as professional construction managers.

CMAA National Capital Chapter (NCC) Scholarship Recipients
CMAA NCC presented scholarships to five of our student members at the 2012 Project Achievement Awards and Scholarship Dinner on March 27 at the National Press Club.

Congratulations to John Charamella, Teni Ladipo, Moshe Zelkowicz, Fabian Capra and Youngjib Ham. Congratulations to all!

These results speak volumes regarding the quality and dedication of the VCEMP students and the overall strength of the program itself.
Trenchless technology is critical for pipelines

The Virginia Tech student chapter of North American Society for Trenchless Technologies (NASTT) has been engaging the industry and providing an educational outreach in several ways, including field trips to construction sites, and campus lectures to introduce trenchless technologies and their important role for pipelines.

In Fall of 2011, the Virginia Tech NASST student chapter had a field trip to a construction site at the Town of Blacksburg. This project was to install new sewer lines using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) technology. Through watching the actual installation and listening to explanations provided by the construction crew, students were able to gain a good understanding and appreciation for the important role this trenchless technology plays in their daily lives.

The chapter also organized a visit to Baltimore County to observe the use of the PipeDiver technology to evaluate the condition of the pre-stressed concrete cylinder pipe (PCCP) sewer mains. The PipeDiver is an electromagnetic tool used to detect the number and location of broken prestressing wires in PCCP. It is propelled through the sewers by the wastewater flowing in the pipeline. Students listened to explanations provided by the technology company’s staff and were able to watch the entire condition assessment process.

Additionally, student members of our chapter visited WSSC to watch a demonstration conducted by EchoLogics. This leak detection tool has very high accuracy and is very sensitive to the noise from leaks in drinking water pipelines. It can also be used to estimate the average thickness of the pipe.

Lastly, the Chapter was invited to a seminar held at Hansen Pressure Pipe to see how they repair bar-wrapped pipe. The engineers introduced the design, installation and maintenance of this type of pipe. A demonstration was conducted to showcasing the repair process.

At the No-Dig conference in Nashville, Tennessee, in March 2012, the Virginia Tech NASST chapter won third prize for the student chapter presentation. Two chapter members were awarded scholarships at the conference, Stephen Welling won the NASTT Michael E. Argent Memorial Scholarship, and Kristi Steiner won the Rain for Rent Scholarship. Our student members also showed their on-going research in the poster section.
GSO primes geotechnical graduate students for success

The Virginia Tech Geotechnical Student Organization (GSO) has had another remarkable year.

The GSO is affiliated with the Geo-Institute of ASCE and works closely with the Center for Geotechnical Practice and Research at Virginia Tech. With a large and enthusiastic membership of about 50 CEE graduate students, we knew that some great events and experiences were possible.

The GSO has developed a tradition of organizing top-notch field trips. In October 2011, a large group of students traveled to Wolf Creek Dam in Kentucky to witness one of the largest ongoing dam rehabilitation projects anywhere in the world. In April 2012, we visited Kimballton Mine, a deep limestone mine located in nearby Giles County, where we observed mining operations as well as the massive rock crushers and kilns used in lime production.

The GSO has been fortunate to receive generous financial support from individuals and organizations including: Virginia Tech Emeritus Professors James K. Mitchell and J. Michael Duncan, Virginia Tech Professor George Filz, the Center for Geotechnical Practice and Research, GeoSyntec Consultants, the Organizational Members of the Geo-Institute, and Mr. James Gunberg.

These donations allowed 32 GSO members to travel to Oakland, California, for GeoCongress 2012. GeoCongress is the premiere gathering in the US for practitioners, researchers, students, vendors, and contractors associated with the geotechnical engineering profession. The focus of the conference this year on the State of the Art and Practice in Geotechnical Engineering provided many valuable out-of-classroom learning opportunities. In addition to benefitting from the outstanding technical content, GSO members made lasting connections with potential employers and students from other institutions at the many networking functions held during the conference.

“The GSO, with a large and enthusiastic membership of about 50 CEE graduate students, is affiliated with the Geo-Institute of ASCE and works closely with the Center for Geotechnical Practice and Research at Virginia Tech.”

The sense of community among GSO members and faculty is one of the truly remarkable aspects of the GSO and the inclusive nature of our program. At least once a semester, the GSO organizes social functions that include the faculty as well as graduate students. In addition to our more ‘formal’ social functions, the GSO organizes many impromptu activities such as hikes, football games, basketball games, and white water rafting trips.

The GSO is also primarily responsible for organizing the annual open house weekend for prospective students interested in graduate studies in geotechnical engineering at Virginia Tech.

“Outreach to K-12 students is one of the core functions of the GSO. In September 2011, GSO members traveled to the Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy to give presentations and hands-on demonstrations to high school students in a traditionally underserved community in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This experience was very positive for both the student audience as well as the GSO volunteers. In November 2011, the GSO hosted activities dealing with reinforced soil walls at Blacksburg High School. In April 2012, the GSO rolled out our built-from-scratch liquefaction tank for the first time to demonstrate the effects of earthquakes on buildings at Virginia Tech’s Kids Tech University program.

We are working to further expand our outreach efforts in many ways; including by working with Montgomery County Public Schools to install a seismograph in the new Blacksburg High School.

The GSO also works to maintain a connection with the undergraduate civil engineering population at Virginia Tech and promote geotechnical engineering.

As part of the ASCE Virginia Conference held at Virginia Tech this year, the GSO hosted a reinforced earth wall competition called “Geo-Challenge” modeled after the national competition organized by the Geo-Institute.

Feedback from the participants was quite positive and the GSO enjoyed working with the student ASCE Chapter at Virginia Tech to put on the event. Each semester, we also sponsor a GeoChallenge activity in the undergraduate soils lab.

In closing, we want to thank our supporters and loyal VT alumni for providing the GSO with ideas and financial resources. Your generosity is evident by our ability to remain so active. Thanks for helping make the GSO’s great experiences possible this year.

To learn more about the GSO’s activities, or to offer a suggestion for a geotechnical field trip or other opportunity, please contact our president, Mike Nolden, at mjolden@vt.edu.

You can also follow the GSO on Facebook by searching VT-GSO.
Congratulations to the Top 25 Graduates for the 2011-2012 Academic Year

Congratulations to the following students who finished in the Top 25 of all CEE graduates (215 students) completing their undergraduate degree requirements between Summer I 2011 and Spring 2011.

Kevin Aswegan  Jacob Douglass  Erin Murphy
William Ayers*  Natalie Driskill  Kevin Pocta
David Blake  R. Miles Ellenberg  Caitlin Proctor
G. Allen Bowers**  Robert Heitz  Bradley Rieland
Brett Buckland  Christine Horner  R. Garrett Wilcocks
Jacob Buttz  Patrick Joyce  Karim Youannis
W. Lake Carter  Erin Littleton  Katherine Young
Daniel Cazenias  Lauren McAnallen
Samantha Dorrell  Edmund Mueller

** Valedictorian, * Salutatorian
SHOW YOUR VIRGINIA TECH CEE PRIDE!

Looking for some new Virginia Tech apparel? Check out the newest polo shirts, button-down shirts and baseball caps embroidered with the “VT” logo and the department name. Polo shirts and baseball caps are available in both maroon and black, and button-down shirts are available in khaki only. Shipping and handling are included in all costs. Complete the form below or call (540) 231-6635 to place your order.

Modeled by Claire McKenzie White (BS ’10), Kyle Lawson (BS ’09, MS ’10), and Paul Zheng (BS ’10)

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If you need further information, please call Donna Sanzenbach or Val Dymond at (540) 231-6635.

Checks should be made payable to “Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc.” and mailed along with this form to the following address:

Donna Sanzenbach
Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Virginia Tech
200 Patton Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061

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