

President's Perspective

By Marquea D. King

Greetings Fellow Colleagues:

This message should reach you well after our academic plight for 2001-2002 has begun. I trust we are all dusting off our bookshelves and attempting to get back on track with our academic endeavors. This message also reaches you at a time of greatly heightened global concern. I ask, how difficult is it to go to class, lab, or meetings each day at the micro level, when beyond that men and women have been removed from their pursuits of education, to protect us while we accomplish ours? I grapple with these feelings, thoughts, and concerns daily.



On September 11, 2001, the terrorist actions forever touched our lives. I send my sincere condolences to those who lost someone as a result of those tragedies, and to those who will lose someone, though we won't be certain for some time as to who will be touched in that most profound way. My heart aches for those that have been, will be, or who wait to be called upon to protect our sacred land. For all others, myself included, we will continue to teach and be taught, and attempt to function as "normally" as possible. While at Virginia Tech, try to be mindful of the scale on which we live...the micro world. Important as it is to us to secure our degrees – we must remain alert and well in order to do so. I urge us all to try and continue to be focused, while not losing sight of the battle that lies ahead – not just our personal pursuit but the more worldly one as well. Let us stay positive and at peace amongst ourselves.

I also applaud the innovative efforts of the Virginia Tech community. Organizations such as Hokies United have made their positive presence felt by all. The key here is consistency! Although it took a grave tragedy to bring us closer together as a family, WE DID IT! We have joined forces regardless of race, religion, creed, origin, or sexual preference. Face it- it was our differences that built this entire country, so why should it surprise us that it takes those same differences to help keep it standing?

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Graduate Student Of The Month

August: Andrew Whelton, Civil and Environmental Engineering

September: Chris S. Dula, Psychology

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Interview with Tim Copeland, Part One

Questions by: Chris S. Dula

Tim Copeland is a graduate student in the department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences at Virginia Tech. In May of 2000, he was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia. The following are excerpts from an email interview conducted with him recently.

Would you explain to the lay person, what is chronic myelogenous leukemia? Leukemia is cancer of the bone marrow or lymph system. Myelogenous means that this type of leukemia affects the marrow. Chronic means it is relatively slow acting; running its course in two to five years. CML is caused by an acquired chromosomal defect, often from exposure to radiation or carcinogens. The defective chromosome produces an aberrant enzyme causing the marrow to become cancerous. Marrow cells proliferate, producing ever-increasing amounts of white blood cells that are immature and non-functional. As it progresses, the immune system and the clotting mechanisms no longer work. Without treatment, patients will bleed to death or die of common sicknesses they can no longer resist. Not a pretty thought.

What changes occurred in your health before treatment? I had been blessed with good health most of my life. So, I knew something was wrong about six months before the leukemia diagnosis, but I couldn't put my finger on it at the time. I had a series of nagging colds. About two months before diagnosis, I noticed that bruises came easily and took a long time to go away. But I tried to tough it out. I had no health insurance and had always rebounded before from colds, etc., without medical attention. Finally, I tore something near my hamstring and bled several units of blood into my leg. This put me in the hospital where oddities in my blood lead to the CML diagnosis.

What was the most difficult thing to deal with when you first felt the effects of your disease or first received the diagnosis? That's hard to say because so many things went through my mind. In the short term, it was probably dealing with the fact that I had a terminal illness and might not survive. That tends to clear away all lesser considerations. After that, it took awhile (if ever!) to get used to my loss of independence. I was totally dependent on others while in the hospital, which was a new experience for me. When I got out after a week, I could barely walk. All the things I used to do and love were now out of reach. That was tough, too.

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From the Desk of the Dean

By Dr. Joseph Merola

As I sat down to write a short message for the graduate community, the only thing that kept going through my head was “9/11/01”. I think it will be a long time before any one of us can truly say we have worked our way through our feelings concerning the terrorist attacks that our nation suffered. Yet, the best advice has been given by many different leaders over the last few weeks is that we must get on with our lives. One thing we can all hope is that we look at our lives and the future we are creating with a different (and hopefully better) perspective than we had before September 11th. Perhaps we will create a much better future than we would have with our old slant on life. Scott Adams (yes, the Dilbert creator) wrote recently: “We lost so much. But it put life in perspective, and that might be the one good thing to come from this. Friends and family are more precious. I am grateful for every bite of food and every drink of water. My cats purr better. The first normal radio commercial in several days was deeply satisfying. I had taken so much for granted.” Graduate education is all about shaping the future. My wish for all of us is that, like Scott Adams, we realize the preciousness of everything we do.



Meet the New GSA Vice-President of Membership

By Kasey Martin

My name is Kasey Martin, the newly elected Vice-President of Membership of the Graduate Student Assembly. I am a first year master's student in Human Development and my degree will be in Family Studies. I completed my undergraduate degree in Human Development at Virginia Tech in May of 2001. I am excited about continuing my education here at this fine institution. GO HOKIES! I look forward to working with the GSA, ensuring that we use our representatives to the committees and commissions at Virginia Tech as an effective voice. Please feel free to contact me about any issues concerning GSA membership at ksimmons@vt.edu

Be the Next Graduate Student of the Month!

The purpose of the Award is to recognize graduate students who have promoted the GSA's mission and/or contributed to the well-being of graduate student education and life at Virginia Tech. The only criteria are that you be a full or part-time graduate student on the Blacksburg campus. Any graduate student can apply and self-nominations are not only allowed, but encouraged! While you can only win one Award per year, multiple submissions are accepted, so if you don't get it the first time, keep trying!

Applications must be submitted 10 days (by 5:00 pm) before the GSA Monthly Meeting to the GSA office in 309 Squires Student Center. The top five applications as determined by the GSA Executive Board (who are not allowed to enter) are given to the GSA Advisor, who will then choose the winner. The winner will be announced at the following GSA monthly meeting and will receive \$75 and a certificate of recognition. The application and all further instructions may be obtained at: <http://gsa.uusa.vt.edu/>

Copeland Interview Continued

What has treatment entailed and how has it helped? The only proven cure is a bone marrow transplant. I think only about a third of CML patients are candidates for a transplant and many that do get one don't survive. Basically, doctors kill your marrow, which produces your blood and immune system, and substitute in cells from a matched donor. These stem cells are obtained either by removing whole marrow or causing the donor to release extra stem cells into their blood stream via hormone treatments, so they can be filtered out. They are then dripped into the blood of the patient. For some reason, no one knows why, the stem cells take up residence in the bones and begin to produce new marrow.

In my case, I entered the hospital at the National Institutes of Health in late January. After two days of final testing and evaluation, I received chemotherapy for two days and total body irradiation for three days. After a day of rest, I was given stem cells from my only brother. What a lucky coincidence that he was a match! The day I found out, I said a little prayer of thanks and went outside to dance on the lawn. I remained in the hospital until the end of February in a sterile room with round-the-clock medical attention. I had a few nasty infections and a high fever that were eventually purged by a multitude of antibiotics and other drugs.

After release, I had to live in the area until mid-June. I was fortunate that I remained on solid food and didn't have any infections that put me back in the hospital. The doctor would see me once or twice a week for a checkup and to administer any intravenous drugs or other substances I needed. The down side was that I had no energy and couldn't risk much exposure to others. I suffered a severe rash caused by my new immune system attacking my own body (graft vs. host disease, GVHD). That is still treated by steroids and immunosuppressive drugs. Better living through chemistry! The upside was that I lost all my hair and was able to perfect my Dr. Evil routine.

This whole mess has helped because the leukemia is no longer active. As of early August, I still had traces of the aberrant chromosome in my marrow but doctors said that is not unusual and my body should purge them in time. I am confident once I am able to stop my medications I will be able to continue a normal life.

What are the remaining short and long-term risks for you? In the short term, I am still on heavy medication that I need to quit. This is tricky because too quick a removal could cause onset of more GVHD. That happened once this summer. Not fun. However, medicines that combat GVHD reduce the disease-fighting functions of my new immune system. So, I have to be careful about exposing myself to people with colds, etc., until I am no longer taking the medications. In the long term, GVHD could follow me the rest of my life. That is troubling. Doctors also warn that my new immune system likely will never be as strong as my old one and there is always the risk of relapse. Typically, if a patient survives 5 years they are considered “cured.” Regardless, I now have a higher risk of developing other cancers as a result of the treatment. But I figure I have some good years left and now I have a chance to get them.

Who or what has been your greatest source of support during your illness? I have always been religious and that helped a lot. But, I couldn't have done it without my family and friends. The way they rallied behind me is truly humbling. My mother basically put aside her life for 6 months to take care of me. That's a lot of grouchiness to put up with. Thanks, Mom!

This Interview Will Be Continued In The Next Issue!

GSA Community Service

By Chris Dula

The terrorist acts of September 11th have generated an amazing response in the way of an outpouring of support and charitable donations from across our country and world. Here in the New River Valley, countless individuals and organizations have pitched in and given to the recovery efforts to help those in the areas hit by the violent attacks. While our sense of caring and giving is soaring, let us take a moment to consider the good we can do in our own community on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis.

A recent headline in The Roanoke Times read, "Charities hope community won't forget local needs," reflecting the steady decrease in donations to local food banks. The Second Harvest Food Bank serves 26 counties and 11 cities in southwest Virginia, and has seen donations drop from 947,000 pounds in July, to 720,000 in August, to an all time low for the month of September at 400,000 pounds. Other organizations are reporting similar decreases in support. The United Way for instance, serves 79 local health and human service programs in the area, and their monetary intake is down 15% from this point last year. At the same time, residents in the area are estimated to have sent more than \$600,000 to American victims of terrorism in the last few weeks. This is a great accomplishment, and we need to capitalize on the spirit of giving to parlay this from a reactive phenomenon to a proactive one.

Last year, following an appeal by Yvette Quintela, a GSA delegate from the Department of Psychology, the GSA passed a motion to create a standing GSA Community Service Committee. I now chair that committee and am looking for you to help further the cause. We need your ideas, resources, and efforts to make a difference in the local communities surrounding Virginia Tech. The mission is a simple one: identify some pressing needs in our area and apply the talents and dedication of Virginia Tech graduate students toward the amelioration of the problems. So far, we graduate students have been applying our efforts individually. We want to organize the collective graduate student body to effect even greater changes for the positive.

We have a committee, but it's up to us to make it work. The next meeting is Thursday, November 1st in Derring Hall, Room #5077 at 4:00 pm. Please mark that in your calendar and become a member if you can. If you can't join, please email me at cdula@vt.edu and let me know your ideas for community service. Email me especially if I can put your name on a list of people who may be called upon in the future to help run GSA-sponsored helping programs. I thank you in advance for the good work we will accomplish together.

Hokies United Gathering Support

Taken from <http://www.unirel.vt.edu/news/>

Members of the university and Blacksburg communities are being urged by a student group to assist victims of the Sept. 11th disaster. Virginia Tech students have banded together to form a fund-raising campaign to send relief to those in need in Washington D.C. and New York City. Calling themselves Hokies United, the students have pledged to create a united student front to mobilize the community to help the victims. "After the attack, we had a wish to help, to do something, but had few outlets. It is our hope that by creating a large-scale fund-raising campaign, we will provide an avenue for students to contribute to the cause," commented a Hokies United spokesperson. The group has created a T-shirt with the university motto: "Ut Prosim." All proceeds from the T-shirts and community donations will be presented to the American Red Cross. If you or members of your organization would like to offer your support, please email: hokiesunited@yahoo.com

Board Of Visitors Representative Point-of-View

Dear Graduate Students,

I would like to introduce myself to you - my name is Gunnar Lucko, and this Spring I was appointed to serve you as the 2001-2002 Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors. Prior to this, I already served in the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) as a delegate for my department; and I was and am active in student organizations like CISO (Council of International Student Organizations) and as an International Orientation Mentor. Currently, I am a doctoral student in the Construction Engineering and Management Program, where I already received my M.S., after completing my undergraduate studies in my home country of Germany.



The Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors is a service position at the interface between the graduate student population and university governance. The Board of Visitors is the governing authority of Virginia Tech.

As your representative, it is my responsibility to bring our viewpoints before the Board and to report back to the graduate students through the GSA. Moreover, the Graduate Student Representative participates in several other committees and interacts with the administration on a regular basis. Topics that traditionally are worked on include graduate student housing, healthcare, compensation, multicultural and International issues, and other services and programs for graduate students here and at our extended campuses.

Serving the large community of graduate students at Virginia Tech, it is vital for my successful work in this position to obtain as much input from you as possible. Please feel free to contact me by email, gunnar@vt.edu, with any questions, concerns, or ideas that you might have on issues that affect your life as a graduate student. You can also make use of the Discussion Forum to express your thoughts, which you find under <http://www2.cyber.vt.edu/cgi-bin/netforum/bovgraduate/a/1>. I would also like to encourage you to become active through the student organizations on campus, like the GSA and many others.

Sincerely,
Gunnar Lucko

Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors, 2001-2002

President's Perspective Continued

It is not a surprise to me, nor does it shock me that ignorance still consumes us...but, I tell you what would be a pleasant surprise- the continuance of organizations developed with the sole purpose of keeping the most positive and peaceful attitude possible in the worst of situations. As a community, we need to work with nation-wide groups offering relief and aid to individuals stricken with horrid, unfortunate dilemmas.

I thank you for your time and attention and I hope to have you visit our website (www.uusa.gsa.vt.edu) and attend our monthly delegate meetings to keep up with the on-goings within the Graduate Student Assembly. Especially focusing on activism and service, we have and will continue to give to Virginia Tech and the surrounding community. I also employ you to send us any feedback, ideas, compliments, or comments that you feel will help to uplift and promote graduate education at Virginia Tech.

Yours in Service,
Marquea D. King

5th Annual “Innovative Perspectives in History” Conference Call For Papers

History Graduate Student Conference in Memory of Brian Bertoti
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
April 5-6, 2002

The History Graduate Program at Virginia Tech invites submissions to present current research at the Brian Bertoti “Innovative Perspectives in History” Conference April 5th and 6th 2002, at the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, VA. The organizing committee is seeking graduate and undergraduate students from all disciplines to submit proposals that address historical topics. Chairs and discussants will be selected from among the faculty at Virginia Tech and other regional universities. The conference will feature Joel Williamson, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as the keynote speaker. Please mail a one-page abstract including the paper’s topic, sources, and conclusions to the address below. E-mail submissions will be accepted as well. Include a brief biographical statement that also indicates your academic status along with a return address, and current e-mail address.

The deadline for submissions is **January 1, 2002**.

Mail to: Graduate History Conference
Department of History
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0117

Or, e-mail as an attachment to Jonathan Hoganson: jhoganso@vt.edu

For more information about the conference, please contact Jonathan Hoganson or refer to the History Graduate Student website, accessible November 1st, at <http://www.majbill.vt.edu/history/graduatestudent/index.html>

Graduate Student of the Month Profiles

August Winner: Andrew Whelton, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Andrew won the honors for August for his contribution to the drinking water industry and strong academic performance as a graduate student. Under the guidance of Dr. Andrea Dietrich, Andrew Whelton has trained water treatment utility personnel on new drinking water odor detection methods intended to make drinking water odor detection more efficient and practical. Andrew has trained utility personnel in New Jersey, Virginia, and Illinois. In November 2001, Andrew will continue training water industry personnel along with a team of researchers from around the country. His research deals with water temperature and how it affects consumers’ perception of drinking water odors, and he seeks to aid drinking water treatment plants in their efforts to reduce/minimize and understand drinking water odor problems and complaints. Andrew will be graduating in December 2001 with a Master of Science in Environmental Engineering. His academic performance has been consistently above average throughout his graduate study.

September Winner: Chris S. Dula, Department of Psychology. Chris won the honors for September because of his service to the Virginia Tech community and his academic achievements. This is the second year Chris has been a delegate to the GSA for his department. He is active as the Chair of the GSA Community Service Committee and as the Editor of the APEX. He also serves his department as the Graduate Student Representative to the American Psychological Association Graduate Student organization. In the last year, he has been active in fund raising for the American Cancer Society and he is a regular Red Cross blood donor. Arriving last year with his M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Appalachian State University, he has already passed his preliminary exam and proposed his dissertation. His research interests are dangerous and aggressive driving and social influence processes. Chris has had a few publications in the past year and hopes to achieve several more before finishing his degree here at Tech. He lives in Christiansburg with his lovely wife Karen and he is the father of two wonderful children, a 17-year-old daughter named Nikila, and a 5-year-old son named Daelin.

Graduate Student Assembly 2001-2002

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GSA Delegate Meetings

October 25th at 5:30 pm in 341/345 Squires

November 29th at 5:30 pm in 341/345 Squires

Meetings are open to all interested parties and free food and soda are served at each meeting.

For More Information, Contact the GSA

Office: 309 Squires Student Center, 231-7919

<http://gsa.uusa.vt.edu>

About the APEX: Please send comments, questions and/or article ideas to: cdula@vt.edu

Upcoming Events

Tue, 10/23/2001 8:30am- 11:30am –3310 Torgerson
Research Funding Search Workshop.

Wed, 10/24/2001 2:00pm- 8:00pm –Donaldson Brown
Hotel, Alumni Hall

Transportation & Parking Fair to solicit input and reaction
to future plans. Come out and be heard!!!

Thu, 10/25/2001 9:00pm- 10:00pm –Alumni Hall Lawn
Pep Rally - Beat Syracuse! Show your Hokie Spirit!

Sat, 10/27/2001 12:00pm –Lane Stadium
Syracuse Football Game

Thu, 11/01/2001 12:00pm - 1:00pm –Brush Mtn. Room A
Academic Job Search - Preparing a Vita

Thu, 11/08/2001 12:00pm - 1:00pm –Brush Mtn. Room A
Academic Job Search - Finding Jobs in Academia

Thu, 11/15/2001 12:00pm - 1:00pm –Brush Mtn. Room A
Academic Job Search - Interview

Thu, 11/29/2001 12:00pm - 1:00pm –Brush Mtn. Room A
Academic Job Search - Salary Negotiation