Greetings from **Durban, South Africa**! This is a lovely city with rolling hills, lush greenery, and a gorgeous oceanfront.

As I write this I am nearly finished with my all-too-short term here in Durban at the [University of KwaZulu-Natal](http://www.ukzn.ac.za), one of VCU’s 15 International Partner Universities. As part of my [Fulbright](https://www.fulbrightprogram.org) research fellowship, I have been working to set up a long-term collaborative research study with colleagues here at the university, mentoring faculty in quantitative research methods, being mentored, in turn, in some qualitative methods, and absorbing as much as I can of the local culture. I’ve had time to read broadly and to reflect (a real treat!), meet some fascinating people, and see some of what this beautiful city and country have to offer.

The main goal of my time here in Durban has been to establish a long-term research partnership with colleagues in the Department of Behavioural Medicine at UKZN. To that end, we are in the process of initiating Project CARE: Community Assessment of Risk and Resilience, a longitudinal study of risk and resilience among 400 Durban youth and their caregivers. Based loosely on work I have conducted in Richmond (Project COPE), the overarching goal of this interview study, to be conducted in low-income areas of Durban, is to document links between risk factors and a wide range of adjustment outcomes—mental and physical health, risk-taking behaviors, such as substance use and risky sexual activity; social competence; neurocognitive processes like memory and cognitive control; and academic achievement. Durban has a very, very high crime rate, huge problems with substance abuse, and one of the highest incidences of HIV in the world, so there is a lot to learn here. One goal is to understand what is unique about those youth who show resilience in the face of risk—who not merely get by but really excel. I have a personal interest in understanding the role parents and families play in resilience. To achieve our research goals, we are trying to be comprehensive in our assessment through the use of physiological, psychological, and neuropsychological batteries to examine potential risk factors and a wide range of adjustment outcomes—mental and physical health, risk-taking behaviors, such as substance use and risky sexual activity; social competence; neurocognitive processes like memory and cognitive control; and academic achievement.

(Continued on Page 10)
Dr. Tom Eissenberg wins College of Humanities and Sciences’ Distinguished Scholar Award

The award is given for a product of scholarship that demonstrates significant depth and breadth of vision; creative and innovative development of theory, method or form; or extension of the frontiers of knowledge in a field that constitutes a substantial contribution to the intellectual community within or beyond the nominee’s field.

Dr. Tom Eissenberg is a faculty member in the Biopsychology Program and an affiliate member of the Health Psychology Program. His primary area of research is the behavioral pharmacology of drugs of abuse, focusing primarily on nicotine/tobacco. His current work, funded by the NIH, involves developing laboratory methods to evaluate potential reduced exposure products (PREPs) for tobacco users, and understanding the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and effects of waterpipe tobacco smoking. In addition, he tries to promote the responsible conduct of research, particularly with regard to interactions between local institutional review boards (IRBs) and behavioral scientists. He has served on VCU’s IRB since August 2000. He recently chaired the American Psychological Association’s Committee on Human Research and is a member of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco’s Policy Committee.

Dr. Linda Zyzniewski wins College of Humanities and Sciences’ Distinguished Service Award

The award is given for superior service to the College, the university, the profession and/or the wider community. This superior service can be marked by activities that extend beyond normal expectations, make unique contributions and/or provide longstanding leadership and have a significant impact on the College or beyond.

Dr. Linda Zyzniewski is director of undergraduate programs, a Dean’s Fellow in the College, and is a faculty member in the Social Psychology Program. Her training as an experimental social psychologist informs her teaching and administrative responsibilities in translating or framing information in a way that is meaningful to the target audience—students, faculty, staff, administrators, community members. Empirically, she is interested in intergroup processes, specifically linguistic intergroup bias as a strategic psychological process that influences ingroup affiliation and outgroup derogation as well as applying technology to enhance learning outcomes in undergraduate statistics.

Dr. Victoria Shivy wins VCU Community Engagement Grant

Dr. Victoria Shivy, of the Counseling Psychology Program, was recently awarded a $20,000 VCU Community Engagement Grant. The project, "Pixie's Pen Pals: A Program for Virginia’s Inmates," will develop a collaborative regional-state partnership among VCU faculty and students (from Psychology, the VCU School of Medicine’s Center for Human Animal Interaction, and the School of Business), staff from FETCH-a-Cure’s Pixie’s Pen Pals, and staff from the Virginia Department of Corrections. The focus of this project is to evaluate the Pen Pals program—a career re-entry-oriented program and a human-animal interaction intervention, with hypothesized organizational impacts.

In Virginia, 13,068 offenders returned to community life in 2010. Inmates who experience rehabilitative and educational programming during their incarceration typically find re-entry less challenging. Members of Shivy’s team believe that the Pen Pals program offers researchers and practitioners alike a powerful means to help inmates transition back to society.
ALUMNI….. We Want YOU!

Click HERE and give us an update on what you have been up to lately. We will include your latest and greatest news in an alumni section of an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

Can’t wait to hear from you!
The Biopsychology Program hosted the fifth annual Brain Day Conference in conjunction with National Brain Awareness Week. The conference featured two guest speakers and a poster demonstration session by 200 local high school student participants. Brain Day is a unique, one-day conference on topics related to the brain and behavior and is a partnership between our Biopsychology Program and Henrico County Public Schools. In attendance were Advanced Placement psychology students from Hermitage H.S. and Godwin H.S. and the VCU dual-enrollment students at the Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School who take the VCU psychology course Physiological Psychology (PSYC 401). This year’s featured speakers were Jill Bettinger, Ph.D., assistant professor in VCU’s Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, who spoke on the topic, “What Drunk Worms Can Tell Us about Drinking: The Molecular Neurobiology of Ethanol Response,” and Kelly G. Lambert, Ph.D., professor and chair in the Department of Psychology at Randolph-Macon College, who spoke on the topic, “Prehistoric Prozac: Lessons From the Trust Fund Rats.” The student participants presented more than 50 posters on various topics related to the neurobiological basis of behavior, such as depression, synesthesia, emotions, addiction, taste preferences, visual procession, attention, and the brain’s response to music. Of special interest were the student demonstrations of the neural firing of cockroach limbs using “spiker boxes” in which students could hear neuronal firing and visually see it on computer sine wave programs. The conference was directed by Dr. Joseph H. Porter, director of VCU’s Biopsychology Program, and Tim Donahue, biopsychology graduate student.

Right: Dr. Joe Porter, director of the Biopsychology Program, discusses new directions in brain research with local high school students.

Below: Students discuss one of the many poster presentations.

Right: Our hope is that some of the student participants will bring their energy and good ideas to our undergraduate community one day very soon!
Dating is a normative experience that gives adolescents a chance to learn about interacting and communicating with romantic partners and can subsequently influence patterns of behavior with intimate partners in adulthood. It is a common experience among both younger and older adolescents. Dating also provides opportunities for recreation and companionship, to gain reputation and status, and to form close emotional bonds. A variety of problem situations can arise in dating experiences and relationships, however, that will require skilled navigation on the part of the teen. Such situations range from dealing with the anxiety of approaching others to initiate dates to the conflicts during relationships and the emotional distress that may surround break ups. Situations that place youth at risk for dating violence, including perpetration and victimization, are a key area of concern. A better understanding of problem situations that occur in dating contexts would benefit prevention efforts that focus on helping adolescents successfully master challenges they may face in developing healthy dating relationships. Qualitative studies, such as those including student interviews, are especially useful for providing an in-depth understanding of problem situations related to dating.

My colleagues and I have conducted a series of qualitative studies designed to examine the dynamics of problem dating situations in adolescence. In the first of these studies, seventh- and ninth-graders were asked to identify and describe recent problem dating situations - situations that did not feel good or comfortable or that made them feel angry, sad, scared, disappointed, or worried. Our analysis identified six categories of problem situations facing our teens:

1. approach and initiation
2. conflict, conflict resolution and break ups
3. communication, connection, and emotion
4. aggression and victimization
5. the role of others
6. media and technology

In the next study, adolescents identified strategies and goals in response to the problem dating situations above. The six resulting response strategies included:

1. changing relationship dynamics
2. leaving the situation alone
3. talking it out
4. being assertive and setting limits
5. being aggressive
6. seeking adult support

Six themes of goals related to these response strategies were also identified:

1. protection of self and others
2. avoiding conflict and emotional tension
3. instrumental goals
4. relationship maintenance
5. image maintenance
6. seeking justice

The final study in this series identifies individual-level factors and those within adolescents’ peer and family relationships that make it easier or harder for them to engage specific response strategies in dealing with problem dating situations. Examples of individual-level, peer, and family themes included beliefs and values, peer status and reputation, and families’ support, advice, and messages, respectively (Sullivan et al. 2011). We hope the results can inform dating violence prevention efforts at the middle and high school levels by identifying the dynamics of relevant problem situations.

Did you know that you can commemorate a friend’s or family member’s special achievement with a gift in their honor to VCU Psychology?

Click HERE for more details.
Dr. Mary Beth Heller joined the Center for Psychological Services on Jan. 3, 2011, as the clinic’s new associate director. Heller has extensive experience providing psychotherapy and assessment for children, adolescents, and adults. She conducts assessment of learning, attention, and emotional disorders across the developmental span, particularly as they pertain to difficulties in school adjustment and success. In addition to psychoeducational assessment, special areas of interest include treatment of depression and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and parenting and relationship issues.

Heller has more than 20 years of experience providing psychological services in the Richmond metropolitan area. She received her undergraduate degree at James Madison University and completed her school psychology training at JMU in 1988. After working as a school psychologist for many years, Heller returned to graduate school at the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education. She completed her Ph.D. in clinical psychology in 2005 and completed her clinical internship and postdoctoral fellowship at the Virginia Treatment Center for Children.

Heller has worked in public school, community mental health and in-patient settings as well as more traditional out-patient services. She served on the Board of Directors of the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists from 2000 to 2004 and currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Institute for Pastoral Care. She is a member of several state and national organizations, including the American Psychological Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies.

Heller has been brought on board to strengthen child assessment training and supervision at the CPSD. We are all extremely excited to have her on our team and know that her guidance and leadership will significantly enhance our students’ training as well as our child services to the community.

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Steve Geissinger (B.S. Psychology ’10) has been a departmental regular for some time now, but we are most recently welcoming him on board as our receptionist and administrative assistant. During fall 2009, he worked as a volunteer research assistant on a longitudinal couples study for Drs. Jeff Green and Jody Davis and went on to briefly volunteer in another lab on a study of narcissism in reality TV with Green and graduate student Jess Barber. Steve also completed two research internships as an undergraduate. One was with Davis on studies looking separately at individuals’ commitment to the environment and workplace attitudes. The other internship involved work on three different studies—one with Dr. Natalie Shook and Barber on an examination of intergroup linguistic biases in political speech and two health disparities-focused studies with graduate student Kristina Hood.

With a minor in criminal justice, Geissinger also became interested in forensic science. As a result, his goal is to attend graduate school for psychology, but with a cross-disciplinary focus that incorporates aspects of criminology. In particular, he is interested in research that would improve the judicial system, aid in the rehabilitation of non violent/low-recidivating offenders, and identify predictors and personality characteristics of sexual and violent offenders. He would also like to examine the cognitive, psychological, physiological, and personality discrepancies between violent and non violent people with psychopathy and to what degree, if any, psychopathy can be affected through early intervention (i.e. Can violent psychopathy be mitigated into non violent psychopathy if identified soon enough?).

His hobbies include playing the guitar and the piano, traveling, exploring the city (especially the Fan District), and soaking up information about his other favorite science, physics.

Geissinger has made himself indispensable to the department with his cool demeanor and irresistible brand of humor during critically busy periods during the semester. We look forward to watching him grow and learn in this new position and beyond.

- JLE
Please give our readers a brief overview of your career at VCU – years of service, courses taught, fulfilled initiatives, and any other accomplishments you would like to highlight.

I was hired as a full professor in the clinical program in 1976 after teaching at the University of North Carolina for 15 years. My first contact with VCU was as one of the American Psychological Association’s accreditation site visitors for the initial accreditation of the clinical program. After APA accreditation was awarded, then-Chair of the department, Bill Ray, asked me to visit for a job interview. It was a time when the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was putting a lot of pressure on universities to hire women, and I did turn down several full professor offers before agreeing to join VCU’s all-male clinical faculty.

I taught in the clinical program for 25 years, retiring in 2000. The program needed to produce Ph.D. graduates, and one of my strengths was the mentoring of doctoral students. I chaired 50 doctoral dissertations and a comparable number of master’s theses. Most of my teaching was at the graduate level: child assessment, child psychopathology, child practicum, ethics; at least once a year, I taught an undergraduate course on children’s behavior disorders that I designed and for which I had written a textbook. In addition to several textbooks in my field, I authored or co-authored (with graduate students) about 70 research articles in refereed journals.

Throughout my career I was active with local, state, and national psychological groups and continue to be active with the APA.

You were among the first female professors at VCU to achieve tenure status. Based on your experiences, what practical tools might you suggest for today’s administrators of higher education struggling to simultaneously achieve both demographic and productivity equity in academic appointments with presumably the best of intentions, but oftentimes with the thorniest of results?

I’m not sure that it is possible for most administrators to truly understand all of what happens to the person on the receiving end, particularly if their experiences have not included these issues. The problems that I encountered as the first or “token” woman have been largely overcome in contemporary academia. In my time, there was no support system; in fact, during my interview, it was not mentioned that I would be the only female full professor in the entire College, and I didn’t know enough to ask. Believe it or not, in graduate school, I didn’t notice that none of my professors were women!

Not only are you an expert in child psychopathology with regard to etiology, assessment, and intervention, but you also provided the foundation upon which our current clinical child and adolescent program is built and flourishes. What has surprised you the most about its evolution over the years?

When I started my career in clinical child psychology, all of the practicing clinicians were psychodynamically oriented. My training at Brown and the University of Washington was very broad with strong emphases on normal child development, experimental, and physiological psychology. At U of W, I was fortunate to be able to participate in the beginnings of applied behavior analysis research with children. At UNC-Chapel Hill, I taught the first behavior therapy course and was the only empirically oriented clinical child psychologist on the faculty during most of the 1960s. It took almost my whole career length for empirically based assessment and treatment to become the gold standard in the field.

What have you been doing since retiring from VCU?

Having had several years to plan for retirement and being able to complete my work with graduate students and research projects, I was free to explore new activities. After 40 years of intense focus on clinical child psychology, I decided to enlarge my worldview, primarily by taking courses in almost every subject ex-

(Continued on Page 13)
GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

CAROLINE COBB, BIOPSYCHOLOGY

As the daughter of a clinical psychologist specializing in the treatment of children, Caroline Cobb is no stranger to the study of human behavior. When asked if this was a difficult dynamic for her as a youth, she reported that though her mother was indeed an adept clinician and undoubtedly “had her number” more times than not, it was her father, a correctional officer in a juvenile detention facility, who had the real insight into her mischievous ways! Cobb is a proud local, raised in Powhatan, and a graduate of Trinity Episcopal School. As an undergraduate at American University, her love of research was inspired by an opportunity as a research assistant in a smoking lab.

Cobb is in her fourth year in the Biopsychology Program under the guidance of faculty adviser, Dr. Thomas Eissenberg. After defending her thesis in early 2009, she wrote and submitted a grant proposal that same spring. By February 2010, the announcement was made that Caroline had been awarded a prestigious F31 training grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to study the acute effects of caffeinated waterpipe tobacco among waterpipe users.

The design of her study incorporates both subjective and physiological measures. For example, she gathers self-reported data from her participants like whether they feel “lightheaded,” but she also takes physiological measurements for comparison like blood pressure, heart rate, and blood samples to examine plasma levels of nicotine and caffeine. Her research goals are to characterize the acute effects of volatilized caffeine and to see if the combination of caffeine and nicotine produces greater stimulant like effects than nicotine alone.

To date, Cobb has achieved more than two-thirds of her recruitment goals and hopes to complete the study in July and graduate this coming December. She hopes to obtain a post-doctoral fellowship somewhere local in addiction-related studies.

Cobb espouses the virtues of her interdisciplinary opportunities here at VCU. She has enjoyed diverse training in pharmacology, toxicology, epidemiology, and genetics in addition to the traditional rigorous curriculum of study as a biopsychology graduate student. In her precious little spare time, Cobb enjoys hiking, trips to the Outer Banks, and painting watercolors (because the strokes are faster and thus better suited to her busy lifestyle!).

The department has benefitted in many ways from Cobb’s time in the program. She is an energetic and gifted scholar with a wonderful spirit of volunteerism for departmental initiatives. We wish her the best as she completes her studies and we look forward to hearing about wonderful accomplishments from this rising star!

Interview by Jennifer Elswick

This red-tailed hawk has recently adopted a tree outside our headquarters on Franklin Street as its lookout point. We believe this handsome young male chose the particular location for its proximity to behavioral experts. Undoubtedly, his thinking is that these generous scholars could, if the mood (or beak) strikes, occasionally decide to impart vital expertise on pertinent matters such as the successful attraction of mates or the navigation of the changing roles for modern fathers. -JLE

Pictures courtesy of Diana Pauley
Ingredients and quality of psychological treatments for children and adolescents are two of the several areas of interest addressed in a federally-funded research project spearheaded by Drs. Bryce McLeod and Michael Southam-Gerow. The recent emphasis on evidence-based treatments has led to a multitude of important studies documenting the efficacy of a variety of treatments for many problems affecting children and adolescents. As the research agenda has steamed forward, however, some important gaps have emerged. One such gap is the fact that although we know that many different treatments appear to work well, we know much less about why they work. That is, we do not know which ingredients in the treatments are critical for promoting positive outcomes; how well one must deliver the critical ingredients for them to be effective; or the relative importance of the so-called common factors of therapy, such as the alliance.

These constructs of ingredients, dose, and quality comprise what has been broadly called treatment integrity. This concept includes the three components of treatment adherence, treatment differentiation and therapist competence. The study by McLeod and Southam-Gerow is designed to develop state of the science measures of treatment integrity through the establishment of psychometric properties and assessment of the research applications of observational measures designed to tap these components. Specifically, four measures will be developed and validated to assess treatment integrity in cognitive-behavioral treatments (CBT) for anxiety in youths including

(a) an adherence measure designed to gauge the extent to which a therapist has delivered the core CBT interventions;
(b) a measure designed to assess treatment differentiation capable of identifying which of a diverse array of therapeutic interventions across multiple theoretical approaches (e.g., behavioral, psychodynamic) are used in a given therapy session; and
(c) two competence measures that will provide data on the skillfulness of intervention delivery, with regard to:

i. specific technical skills relevant to CBT (e.g., quality of exposure), and
ii. more general skills common to many treatment approaches (e.g., interpersonal skills).

Establishing the psychometric properties of these measures is goal one. As all of our alumni recall, by psychometrics, we mean that the reliability and validity of the measures will be examined carefully to ensure that the measures gauge the constructs reliably (e.g., across multiple raters) and validly (e.g., correlate with other measures, as predicted).

After establishing the psychometric properties of the four measures, the project proposes to assess the research applications of the measures. As one example, the project will test whether or not treatment integrity is related to client outcomes by asking whether clients receiving a higher dose of specific ingredients fare better than those who receive lower doses of those ingredients. Similarly, do clients whose therapists deliver the ingredients with more competence fare better? Although it may seem surprising, these questions have not been addressed heretofore.

To study these important questions, McLeod and Southam-Gerow will use data from three separate randomized controlled trials involving manual-based CBT programs for anxiety in youths. A major goal of the project is to produce four reliable and valid measures to serve as gold standards for treatment integrity measurement. Longer term, developing strong integrity measures will aid efforts to (a) refine and optimize the effectiveness of CBT, (b) evaluate the success of CBT clinician training efforts, and (c) develop less time- and cost-intensive integrity measures.

For more information on McLeod’s or Southam-Gerow’s research, please visit

http://www.people.vcu.edu/~bmcleod/research.htm

and

http://web.me.com/msgphd/MSGVCU/Research.html
Discovering the Major of Psychology: New Online Course for Undergraduates

As part of VCU’s initiative to advance the quality of online learning opportunities for its students, Psychology has created a new one-credit online course: HUMS 291 - Discovering the Major of Psychology for second-year students majoring in psychology. This advising course was created to engage our students by introducing them to the vast array of opportunities our department has to offer. It serves as an extension of the support that the University College offers to first-year students at VCU. HUMS 291 - Discovering the Major of Psychology introduces students to topics such as:

* What is psychology’s uniqueness?
* How does that uniqueness mesh with the student’s unique characteristics?
* What are some barriers that could hinder academic success, and how can those be overcome?

Students enrolled in the pilot course gave positive feedback about learning in the online environment:

“VCU has so many resources available to us students, but I didn’t know about many of the resources before watching this lecture…”

“That lecture had a lot to cover / say about VCU. The things I think I can take most away from it . . . I need to visit the writing center, learning center, and learn more about the study-abroad opportunities they have to offer…”

(Continued from Page 1: Letter from Chair)

relationships between risk factors and adjustment. We’ve just received word that our application for an International Partnership Major Initiative Award from VCU was funded, which means that with support from the Global Education Office and the College of Humanities and Sciences at VCU we will be able to launch the study in July.

One overarching observation I have made is that the problems facing Durban, although greater in magnitude than what we see in Richmond, are not qualitatively different. Second, as in many cities, it is hard to get different stakeholders all working together, even though they have very similar goals. Third, there is very little emphasis, relative to other types of interventions, on working with parents to prevent youth substance use or violence. As a developmental and prevention scientist, I think parents and families are a first line of defense against behavior problems in youth, and an underutilized resource in most prevention efforts. I’m looking forward to having more conversations with people I meet about their perceptions of the problems here and what they see as the solutions.

It’s not all work and no play here, however. There is immense natural beauty in the city, and I’ve enjoyed parks, markets, and the beach. During my time here I took a fabulous trip to the famous Kruger National Park, home of Africa’s “Big Five.” What a once-in-a-lifetime experience! I was also fortunate to take long weekend trips to both Cape Town and the Drakenburg Mountains, and day trips to the Midlands and Hluhluwe, a game park a few hours north of Durban. South Africa has so much to offer, and it has been a privilege to be able to live and work here these past six months.

Wendy Kliewer, Chair of Psychology
Psi Chi, International Honor Society of Psychology, recognizes undergraduate and graduate students who have focused their studies in the field of psychology and who have reached a level of academic excellence. Our chapter at VCU currently honors more than 160 undergraduate and more than 100 graduate students who meet these qualifications. Together, they strive to maintain the mission of the honor society by promoting excellence in education, research, and service through regularly sponsored events and engagement in university- and community-based projects.

The Mentorship Program was created to meet the goals of both education and research advancement. Currently in its third semester, the Mentorship Program is run in collaboration with the Society for the Advancement of Psychology. Participating mentees are undergraduate students interested in expanding their general knowledge of psychological science and preparing themselves for a career in the field. Mentees attend monthly workshops and meet regularly with a paired SAP graduate mentor from one of our six departmental programs. Topics covered include careers in psychology, graduate school application processes, interview preparation, research internship opportunities, and CV/resumé building. Additionally, mentees can shadow their mentor at events such as departmental colloquia, laboratory meetings, and poster symposia. Undergraduates who fulfill these basic requirements earn a certificate of completion and can tout this experience on their résumés.

Another successful event sponsored by the VCU chapter is the All About Psychology Fair, held each spring semester. The fair offers undergraduates the opportunity to speak with representatives from various educational programs (e.g., Psychology, Social Work, Education Counseling) as well as from community programs looking for student volunteers. This past spring, they hosted guests from ChildSavers and the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority.

To meet their service goals, the VCU chapter participates in the regular collection of nonperishable food items for the Central Virginia Food Bank. In fall 2008, they collected 600 pounds of food and secured a matched donation of 600 pounds from Aramark, VCU’s food-service provider. This initial drive led to collaboration with VCU Dining Services and Aramark on Waste Week, where students eating at Market 810 in Shafer Court were encouraged to think about and actively reduce the amount of food often wasted at meal times. The amount of waste saved, relative to that during the week before, was matched by Aramark for another donation to the food bank.

At the community level, the VCU chapter sponsors the Carver Elementary School Greenhouse Project. One of the science classrooms at Carver includes a greenhouse that has been recently renovated after a decade of inactivity. Last spring, VCU Psi Chi members began visiting the greenhouse to help with these updates and soliciting gardening supplies to facilitate its use. They also coordinated days that could be dedicated for mentorship. Specifically, members visit Carver weekly to mentor first- and second-grade students on projects that involve the greenhouse. Lessons covered through this project assist students in meeting their Virginia Standards of Learning goals, while improving self-esteem and communication skills.

Other projects from the spring semester include collection of supplies for Virginia National Guard teams serving in Afghanistan and for Rubicon Substance Abuse and Mental Health Center, and dissemination of information about stress and anxiety for National Safety Week. Individuals interested in assisting with or suggesting ideas for any service project can contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Geri Lotze at lotzegm@vcu.edu.
CONGRATULATIONS, MAY GRADUATES!

Doctor of Philosophy
 Jessica L. Johnson
 Anh B. Nguyen
 Daryl R. Van Tongeren
 David M. Walentiny

Master of Science
 Shelley B. Avny
 Carrie E. Bair
 Chelsea L. Greer
 Hannah G. Lund
 Kathryn E. Maher
 Krista R. Mehari
 Alexis M. Quinoy
 Chelsea A. Reid
 Vivian M. Rodriguez
 Andrea Shamaskin
 Katherine A. Taylor
 Demica K. Titchner
 Lisa J. Ulmer
 Nikola R. Zaharakis

Bachelor of Science
 Dacia C. Aguon
 Toskie K. Ahluwalia
 Sara J. Ahn
 Jane K. Albertson
 Elizabeth A. Albrecht
 Brittanly L. Andres
 Sumal Anees
 Tracy M. Bailey
 Brittanly A. Barkley
 Brianna M. Belcher
 David A. Belton
 Heaven Berhane
 Anna R. Bezemier
 Rachel L. Billmyer
 Elena V. Black
 Tanja T. Bolden
 Tonya B. Bost
 Joshua K. Brevard
 Emily V. Brooks
 Ryan J. Brown
 Ellen E. Buerker
 Vanessa D. Burney
 Whitney A. Burton
 Arielle D. Butler
 Darcy C. Byrd
 Jason E. Call
 Jarvis J. Carter
 Shayla A. Cashwell
 Vilna P. Celis
 Vickie Chaing
 Catherine Chang
 Bryan Chim
 Sarah N. Chumney
 Jaleesa V. Claiborne
 Elizabeth M. Clark
 Bridget L. Coleman
 Shanice L. Coleman
 Lauren L. Coogler
 Angel M. Copeland
 Jared R. Cosgrove
 Vanessa V. Coutchrey
 Stefanie P. Crawford
 Matthew W. DaRoja
 Carrie A. Davis
 Devon K. Davis
 Diamond N. Davis
 John D. Del Re
 Vanessa H. Dorbin
 Joshua D. Deddleton
 Vanessa J. Elam
 Kimberly M. Epps
 Lauren E. Faszewski
 Yann Faye
 Christina M. Fleet
 Steven D. Forbes
 Lakesha S. Foster
 Laura A. Francis
 Jessica A. Frierson
 Sarah E. Gaarder
 Katherine R. Gates
 Patrick J. Genova
 Tiffany N. George
 Abigayle M. Gilley
 Jenna M. Glennenden
 Eloni A. Glenn
 Lorraine J. Gotham
 Demetrius J. Green
 Katelyn Hale
 Hosam Hamidi
 Dustin C. Hancock
 Kenneth W. Heising
 Mitchell A. Heller
 Michelle M. Hodges
 Katherine A. Holcomb
 Malcolm L. Houston
 Joseph K. Howard
 Thomas R. Hughes
 Ember P. Hummel
 Madalyn L. Humphreys
 Trina Jackson
 Laura M. James
 Kenya L. January
 Robert A. Jarrell
 Kaile G. Jenkine
 Gabriel T. Jessee
 Elizabeth N. Jimenez
 Angela A. Johns
 Javon A. Johnson
 Kalinda Johnson
 Zuzanna Kaczmarek
 Rupinder Kaur
 Carrie J. Keller
 Kristen A. Keys
 Soo J. Kim
 Morgan R. Krug

The Estate of Nicholas W. Rettig
 Cynthia M. Roberts
 Anise K. Robinson
 Rachel H. Robinson
 Stephen E. Robinson
 Holly N. Rod
 Andrea D. Rodrigues
 Dwan K. Rogers
 Alma V. Romero
 Brandon L. Rozzell
 Selam Sahlu
 Abdul Samad
 Adam B. Santos
 Anastasia V. Semenova
 Jeremy D. Semmeng
 Shrinal B. Shah
 Kathryn E. Shook
 Austen E. Siebenaler
 Candace D. Sipos
 Mary M. Sisk
 Alexis M. Skipper
 Adam Smith
 Ashley A. Smith
 Christin D. Smith
 Christine A. Smith
 Candace L. Sneed
 Kelley A. Snowa
 Whitney L. Spears
 Charri S. Stewart
 Gary T. Taylor
 Rediat E. Tefera
 Shadie Teymourian
 Courtney L. Thompson
 Usavadee A. Thompson
 Amanda D. Toomey
 Jessica A. Townes
 Susan Tran
 Amy L. Urban
 Flore L. Van Dessel
 Zolandria S. Vega

Colton L. Walker
 Daniel Walton
 Heather C. Warren
 Jamie L. West
 Lauren E. Wheeler
 Matthew P. Wheeler
 Austin W. White
 Lisa M. Whitlock
 Ashley D. Williams
 Ashton N. Williamson
 Sean M. Williamson
 Jennifer A. Wood
 Jacob R. Worley
 Kiara L. Wyatt
 Tiffany M. Yates
 Crystal M. Young

Commencement speaker, Dr. Jody Davis
Continued from Page 7 - Emerita Faculty

Spotlight on Dr. Marilyn Erickson)

cept psychology. These courses have given me a much better understanding of cultures other than my own and have led me to travels around the world, including Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, and China as well as most of the European countries, Australia, and South America.

I decided before retiring that I wanted to become more involved in the community as a volunteer, and several opportunities were offered. I’ve served on a private school board, several terms as a board member of the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (currently a founding member of a foundation for the RBHA) and am currently in my second term on the board of Central Virginia Planned Parenthood. For the past two years, I have also served as a CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate) for children and adolescents who have been neglected and/or abused and have been temporarily placed in the custody of social services or relatives. Visiting with the children in their environments and writing recommendations for the court is often challenging, but I love it.

Through the years I have also completed programs in becoming a master gardener and a tree steward. These programs involve donating services to people and public spaces. I am also currently on the board of the Friends of Bryan Park, leading an effort to rejuvenate its Azalea Garden.

You have remained active with APA (American Psychological Association) and have advised on many national issues facing the psychological community today. What are some examples of these issues and how have you specifically been able to move those conversations?

My involvement with APA started naively with a letter complaining about the lack of standards for training in clinical child psychology. I was very quickly put on a committee that was charged with assessing APA’s involvement with children’s issues and elected to the board of Social and Ethical Responsibility. APA’s involvement was found to be deficient by the committee, and the council of representatives voted to create a standing committee on children, youth, and families. That committee has been at the forefront of many important issues (e.g., abuse and neglect, poverty, bullying). During my term as president of the clinical child section in 1998 of APA’s Division 12 (Clinical), the executive committee and membership voted to petition APA Council to create a new division for clinical child and adolescent psychology (Division 53). In 2009, I completed my second term on APA Council representing Division 53. I am continuing my involvement with the division as chair of the new history committee and adding historical information to our website.

APA has definitely increased its commitment to children and their families, but training standards at the predoctoral level still remain incompletely articulated.

Please share with our readers a favorite anecdote from your years at VCU – a classroom experience that left an impression, an unforgettable student encounter, etc. If your tale involves the playful prodding of a current faculty member, all the better.

Since I am still a recipient of department email (at my request), I want all of you to know that Jim McCullough has always been the way he is.

When I joined the clinical faculty, all of us smoked during our weekly meetings, and we could hardly see across the room. I was the first to quit – hardest thing I ever had to do. Almost everyone else subsequently decided to quit as well.

I took a gun away from a suicidal graduate student and kept it in my filing cabinet.

I was able to relieve a child client of pot paraphernalia and kept it in my filing cabinet.

Last words: I have had a wonderful and fulfilling career as a teacher, researcher, and clinician. In my “other” life, I had two sons in graduate school and adopted a third for tenure, and they have careers as a pediatric cardiologist, an oriental medicine practitioner, and a DNA botanist with the Smithsonian. They collectively have shared five grandchildren with me – at least one of whom I’m sure will be a psychologist.

“My sons] collectively have shared five grandchildren with me—at least one of whom I’m sure will be a psychologist.”
The department would like to thank our friend, colleague, and tried-and-true leader, Dr. Scott Vrana, for filling in for the semester as interim chair while Dr. Kliewer is in South Africa on her Fulbright Fellowship. Given that this particular semester brought with it an especially hefty workload for the department chair—three faculty searches, 10 candidate visits, a search for a new dean in the College of Humanities and Sciences, and a search for a new university provost—Dr. Vrana could hardly be blamed for incomplete attention to any one facet of the activities over the past months. True to form, though, he not only gave of himself completely to each initiative as if they were his own, but his sage guidance and patient leadership through the busy days provided our department with just the right blend of humor and perspective. Dr. Vrana, we wish you the best on YOUR sabbatical next spring.