



SUMMER 2009

College Announces Interim Provost and New Dean of Admissions



Randolph-Macon College President Robert R. Lindgren has appointed **William T. Franz, Ph.D.**, to serve as interim provost of R-MC. A professor of physics, Franz has extensive experience in administration, including previously serving as interim dean from 2006 to 2007 and as associate dean of the college from 1990 to 1999.

Franz's appointment as interim provost will officially begin in late August. He will hold the position for a minimum of two years until a permanent provost is appointed. "Randolph-Macon College is all about making a difference in the lives of the young men and women who come here to learn," said Franz. "I am looking forward to this new challenge to make a difference in the life of the college."



President Lindgren also announced recently that **David Lesesne** has been selected as the college's new dean of admissions and financial aid. Lesesne, who has more than 20 years of experience in higher education, comes to R-MC from Sewanee: the University of the South, where he has served as the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid since 2001.

"R-MC has so much to offer," said Lesesne. "It's located in a charming and unique town and is ideally situated between Richmond and Washington, D.C. The college is also an excellent value and I'm eager to help families understand how affordable this education is, even in today's economy."

Summer SURFing

The 2009 Schapiro Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program at R-MC was in full swing this summer. With the guidance of their professors, thirty-five SURF students spent the summer diving into research in subjects from mathematics to chemistry to religious studies.

A sampling of this year's SURF topics includes *Teaching Shakespeare: The Art, the History and the*

Classroom, which Chris Lambert '10 researched with English Professor Marisa Cull, Ph.D. and *Ethics and Risk Management Among the Corporate Stakeholders in the Mortgage Crisis*, which Becky Johnsen '10 researched with Economics/Business Professor Ed Showalter, Ph.D.

This year, ten SURF students sent blog entries (virtual "diaries") back to the college so that readers could get a

glimpse of the exciting research being done at R-MC. Students shared their challenges, research methods and outcomes, and many included photos in their blog entries.

The SURF program was established in 1995 and is supported through the generosity of Ben '64 and Peggy Schapiro. You can read all of this summer's blog entries by visiting <http://news.rmc.edu/surf/>

Send your suggestions and feedback about The Buzz to: thebuzz@rmc.edu

The Buzz: Helping Build Community Through Communication

Your News



Michael Fischbach (history) is the author of *Jewish Property Claims Against Arab Countries* (Columbia University Press, 2008), which recently received one of two second-prize awards in the British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize.

Carroll Lattaye (athletics) and basketball forward Renee Stein '10 traveled to Vienna, Austria, where they joined a team put together by the organization USA Athletes. The group competed on the international level.

Traci Stevens (biology) received a five-year award of \$880,000 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) through its Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER). Stevens' project, *CAREER: Investigating Abl kinase signaling pathways that regulate actin dynamics during development*, aims to characterize the molecular pathways that Abelson (Abl) kinases use to regulate cell migration

and other actin-based processes *in vivo*.

Brian Sutton (mathematics) was awarded first place in the 14th Leslie Fox Prize in Numerical Analysis, for his research in applied mathematics. Sutton competed against five finalists from Britain, France, Belgium, China and the United States.

Debra Rodman (sociology) was featured in the July 2009 issue of *Skirt!* magazine. Rodman also writes a monthly column on immigration for *El Centro*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch's* Spanish-language newspaper.

Michael Fenster (environmental studies) and seven of his students traveled to Iceland in June 2009 in conjunction with the course, *The Geology of Iceland: A Seam on the Coat of the World*. While in Iceland, Fenster sent blog entries back to the college as he chronicled his experiences. Visit <http://bit.ly/1TeZL>

College Welcomes Fulbright Scholar



Dr. Tang Hao

Randolph-Macon College will welcome its first Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence (SIR), **Dr. Tang Hao**, associate professor of economics at South China Normal University, for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Tang will teach courses at R-MC and give public lectures on campus and in the greater Richmond area.

"We are fortunate to host a scholar of Dr. Tang's caliber at Randolph-Macon College. He has traveled in Europe and the United States and will bring a unique global perspective to our campus," said R-MC President Robert Lindgren. "This is an exciting opportunity for our students and we are enthusiastically awaiting his presence on campus."

During his tenure at Randolph-Macon College, Tang's lectures and courses will focus on the economic relationship between China and the world and China's contemporary economy and politics.

Friday, Sept. 11

Richmond-based artist Suzanna Fields shares her vibrant works at this public opening reception at 1:00 p.m. in the Flippo Gallery. For more information call (804) 752-3018.

Saturday, September 19

A Faculty Recital will take place at 7:00 p.m. in St. Ann's Performing Arts Building.

Christopher Ryder (baritone) and **Andrew McEvoy** (guitar) will perform music by John Dowland, John Rutter, Mattys Sieber and Diego Luzuriaga. For more information call (804) 752-3798

Sunday, September 20.

Classical guitarist Gabriel Bianco will perform at **4:00 p.m. in St. Ann's Performing Arts Building**. This event is free and open to the public. (804) 752-3712

Tuesday, September 29

The Science of Happiness Applied to Your Life presents **Dr. Ed Diener, co-author of Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth**. **The lecture takes place at 4:00 p.m. in Copley 100**. This is the first installment in the Mike McKay Lecture on the Mind series. For more information call (804) 752-3712.

Saturday, October 3

The Hanover Concert Band 20th Anniversary Concert will take place at 6:00 p.m. at the Frank E. Brown Fountain Plaza. The band, known as the "Musical Ambassadors of Hanover County," is under the direction of Karla Bloom. **They will be joined by the R-MC Concert Choir**. For more information call (804) 752-3798.

The BUZZ on faculty member Bryan Giemza, English Department

From early in the morning until about 6:00 p.m., Assistant English Professor **Bryan Giemza, J.D., Ph.D.**, is either teaching, heading to the library to get some research and writing done, or in his office, hard at work. "I get wrapped up in something and lose track of time," Giemza admits.

Before joining the English department, he taught environmental law and literature for nine years. "I decided on R-MC because it's a place where people come first. Happily enough, the school was hiring in Southern literature, my specialty," he says.

"I like the human scale of R-MC, the sense of local culture and the fact that I get to know everybody. I enjoy teaching American and Southern literature in a range of historical periods. But the best part about teaching is getting someone to take a second look at literature. Students always help me to see it anew. All of philosophy is there, and the larger

pageant of history, the joy and wonder of life. Rediscovering literature is about realizing that your individual perspective, paradoxically, is someone else's."

When he's not on campus, Giemza is at home with his wife, Kristi, and their children, John Paul, 3, and Vera Rose, 1. "We go to museums and to Poor Farm for walks," he explains. "I took John Paul to the Smithsonian and his favorite part of the trip was the popsicle they gave him at the hotel."

He also makes time to relax. "I enjoy archery, traveling and kayaking, especially swamps. Swamps aren't on most people's list of places to go, so they offer a mixture of solitude and beauty. I like to fish from my kayak; I've been towed by a 3-foot fish, which I caught afterwards."

Giemza's project of the past year has been a literary history of Irish Americans in the American South; he also wrote

articles about the Irish in the Civil War, the North Carolina novelist Thomas Wolfe, jurisprudence and historical memory, and Hemingway's Indians.

When most people look at a penny, they might think they see Abe Lincoln, but according to 3-year-old John Paul, they'll find his daddy. "The first time he said, 'Daddy, that's you!' I didn't want to disabuse him of that notion, so on the D.C. trip I pointed to the Memorial and said, 'What do you think of that, Kid?'"



Bryan Giemza

-Chris Lambert '10

The BUZZ on staff member John Conkright, President's Office

Depending on the time of year, **John Conkright** is working on numerous projects, attending board meetings—which sometimes fall on weekends—or discussing concerns with parents, students and R-MC colleagues alike. "There are no predictable days for me," says Conkright.

Conkright has been a staff member at Randolph-Macon for 29 years. Conkright spent 25 years as dean of admissions, and he now serves as the executive assistant to



John Conkright

President Lindgren as well as a liaison for the Board of Trustees; he is also a member of the President's cabinet. Conkright's advice and counsel are very much appreciated by his colleagues.

Before coming to R-MC, Conkright worked in admissions at Virginia State University and at Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York. In addition, he taught English after earning a B.A. and M.A. in English from Ohio State. Conkright has secondary teaching certification in English and has been in higher education for a total of 35 years.

He values the relationships and knowledge that he has attained through age and experience. "I continue to realize what is truly important," says Conkright. "Family, friends, relationships: I don't let work overshadow those." He spends a great deal of his time with his wife and two daughters, the youngest of whom recently graduated and transitioned into a nursing career.

His eldest daughter will start law school in the fall of 2009.

Conkright loves to exercise, walk and "read....a lot," he comments. Moreover, he is an avid boater and golfer.

The R-MC community is important to Conkright. "I love the sense of humanity and genuine caring nature campus-wide," he says. "This is an environment that makes a difference and it provides everyone with a chance to make a difference."

While he considers himself a slightly introverted person, Conkright has been involved in marketing and admissions positions for almost 30 years, interacting on a daily basis with dozens of people. "I provide a service that people value and need," he says proudly. "I know that my hard work will contribute to the future of the college and its people."

-Chris Lambert '10

Friendly Competition: Summer Fest 2009

Staff and faculty joined forces on June 10 during the 9th annual Summer Fest. Participants chose among a variety of activities, including ping pong, softball, volleyball and Wheel of Fortune. The Oaks were led by Jojo McDuffie (admissions) and the Maples were led by Debra Rodman (sociology).

In the end, the Oaks prevailed and were declared the winners during the closing ceremonies, which culminated in the ever-popular prize giveaways.



Tennis, anyone?

The BUZZ on this month's department: Office of International Education

-- Submitted by Mayumi Nakamura, International Programs Coordinator

Director Aouicha Hilliard, Assistant Director Kim Cressy and International Programs Coordinator Mayumi Nakamura work to make sure that students and faculty are well-prepared for J-term travel and study abroad. The Office of International Education (OIE) ensures that international students' information is up-to-date and conducts Study Abroad sessions and fairs.

What are your department responsibilities?

We distribute the *Instructor's Guide to J-term Study/Travel Courses* and the *J-term Student Handbook*, conduct general pre-departure orientation sessions, gather student liability forms and provide course participants with travel-related information. We also enroll R-MC travelers in mandatory medical health insurance and provide them with emergency contact cards to make sure that safety and security standards are met.

Our office also provides Campus Safety with emergency contact information materials as well as class itineraries and Embassy information for all J-term study/travel courses and international

internships. In addition, we keep the Provost's Office and Campus Safety apprised on the safe arrival and return of our J-term travelers. Finally, the OIE organizes and conducts a post J-term session and a post-program survey, gathering feedback from instructors and students.

What are the recent accomplishments in your area?

During J-term 2009, 175 students traveled to 11 countries as part of the college's study/travel program. We also held our 4th annual photo contest, showcasing the camera-wielding talents of our student travelers. The OIE also hosts an annual Spring Study Abroad Fair to attract more students to J-term and semester/year abroad programs.

We look forward to collaborating with faculty in the planning of our study-travel programs. By doing so, we'll continue to provide the high-quality, safe and exciting opportunities that are hallmarks of Randolph-Macon College's J-term. The J-term study/travel program began in 1972 and it gets better every year!



Go team, go!



**Randolph-Macon
College**
Ashland, Virginia

The Buzz is published monthly for the faculty and staff of Randolph-Macon College. **Please submit your information, news, suggestions and calendar items via e-mail to Pam Cox at: pamelacox@rmc.edu.**