

Perspectives



From the desk of
Dr. S.K. De Datta,
Director of the
Office of International
Research and
Development
(OIRD), University
Office for Outreach

and International Affairs, Office of the
Provost, and Associate Dean of the College of
Agriculture and Life Sciences

OIRD's goal has been to project the Land-Grant Mission internationally. What does this entail? First, raising faculty and student awareness on global issues. In the university community at Virginia Tech, a concern is often expressed that OIRD has only limited involvement with some of the colleges. It is entirely true that not all colleges are equally served. Success in involving the faculty of any college is determined by demand from the donor communities and the expertise available at Virginia Tech.

However, OIRD is committed to marshaling the total resources of the university. During the 11 years of my leadership, OIRD has sought involvement by faculty from all of the colleges. The gap in our success in engaging faculty from the broader university community is constantly being monitored. The reasons for limited involvement differ from college to college. In some colleges, for example, a nine-month academic faculty appointee needs support for the other three months, which certain projects will not pay. Where projects *do* allow for the payment of consulting fees, OIRD has engaged consultants from the university.

Some of these consultants have come from the Colleges of Business, Engineering, CNR, and Agriculture and Life Sciences. Some faculty with 12 month appointments donate their time in terms of cost sharing their salary, and are happy to receive resources such as the assignment of graduate research assistantships and re-

See PERSPECTIVES, Page 5

OIRD/Virginia Tech Awarded \$10 Million Contract to Lead Research and Development Project In Ethiopia

Virginia Tech's Office of International Research and Development (OIRD) has won a five-year, \$10 million contract to lead an agricultural research and extension project in Ethiopia.

The contract is with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Ethiopia and was signed in late June with initial startup activities already underway. OIRD/Virginia Tech partnered with Cornell University, Virginia State, and ACIDI-VOCA, a private sector, non-governmental organization, to win this highly competitive Title XXII project.

"Virtually every land grant university in the US teamed with one of eight consortia bidding on this project," explained S. K. De Datta, OIRD Director and Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"We were fortunate to win against such strong competition. The hard work of our OIRD/Virginia Tech faculty and staff and that of our consortium partners paid off in a big way. Our consortium clearly assembled the strongest team and wrote the best proposal."

The resulting ASPIRE (Assisting the

See ETHIOPIA, Page 6

University Outreach Expands to Include International Programs Leadersip

Virginia Tech's University Outreach has been expanded to include administrative leadership for the institution's international programs. The Office of the Vice Provost for Outreach has been changed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Outreach and International Affairs and will be headed by Vice Provost C. Clark Jones. The Office of International Research and Development, along with the Office of International Education (formerly University Office of International Programs [UOIP]) and the Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA) will be part of the expanded unit.

These units were consolidated in an effort to provide greater opportunity for all members of the university community to participate in the learning experiences designed to encourage intellectual growth and the appreciation for international cultures and economics. In addition, incorporating students into international research, education and development activities will provide them with a

better understanding of the complexities of the global marketplace and a competitive advantage in their professional careers.

The Office of International Education (formerly UOIP) is responsible for arranging programs for students abroad.

The program activity at the Center for European Studies in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, will be expanded, ensuring that all three mission areas of the university are represented. This expansion is intended to make the center a full-service hub of Virginia Tech in Europe.



C. Clark Jones, Vice Provost for Outreach and International Affairs

Notables *Faculty Involvement Around Campus*

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Edwin E. Lewis, Assistant Professor of Entomology, was a featured speaker at the first international workshop on entomopathogenic nematodes, which was sponsored by the US-Egypt Science and Technology Joint Fund and was held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. The workshop was designed to educate anyone who is in an advisory capacity to end-users of entomopathogenic nematodes for the biological control of insect pests. • **Dixie Watts Reaves**, Associate Professor of Agricultural & Applied Economics, accompanied a student exchange group to the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa, from January 28 through March 19. She made a presentation to the Young Farmers' World Congress – “A U.S. Perspective on International Agriculture,” and presented a departmental and college seminar – “Cooperative Success Stories in the U.S.: Lessons for South Africa; and Utilizing Youth Education Programs as Marketing Tools for the Faculties of Agricultural and Natural Sciences.”

College of Arts and Sciences

Geological Sciences Professor **Ross J. Angel** taught a short course on the use of crystallographic software at the University of New Brunswick in Canada on June 17 through 19. The course included lectures and practical sessions and was attended by 15 faculty, student and staff members from the university. • Philosophy Professor **Roger Ariew** gave a lecture, “The Teaching of Philosophy in Seventeenth Century France,” at the Wolfenbüttel Library Workshop, “The Universe of Learning in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, on June 2 through 5. He gave another lecture, “The Principle of Individuation in Early Modern Philosophy,” at the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Natural Philosophy Conference, “From Medieval to Early Modern Thought: The Historical Routes of Transmission,” at Nijmegen University in The Netherlands on June 6 through 8. In addition, he attended the meeting of the International Working Group on History of Philosophy of Science (HOPOS) in Montreal, Canada, on June 20 through 23. • **Anne Margaret Baxley**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, presented a paper entitled “Does Kantian Virtue Amount to Mere Conference” at a conference in Christchurch, New Zealand, on May 31 through June 2. The conference, “Virtue Ethics: Old and New,” explored themes in historical and contemporary virtue theory. Oxford University Press is publishing a book based on the conference. • Foreign Languages Professor **Jacqueline Bixler** participated in the annual AMIT (Asociación Mexicana de Investigación Teatral) conference in Xalapa, Mexico in May. She presented a paper in response to the keynote speech, as well as a talk to honor playwright Emilio Carballido. In July, she presented a paper at the Jornadas Metropolitanas in Mexico City, as well as a paper in Puebla at the X Jornadas Internacionales de Teatro Latinoamericano as part of a tribute to playwright Sabina Berman. • **Brian Britt**, Associate Professor and Director of Religious Studies in the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, delivered a paper called “Narrative Sacrifice in Ruth 1 and 2 Samuel 21” at the International Meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature in Berlin,

Germany, on July 18 through 21. • English Instructor **Simone Poirier-Bures** made two presentations on Western Styles of Business Writing to the MBA students at Dongbei University of Business and Economics in Dalian, China, on May 28 and June 4. She also did a reading from her short story collection at Dongbei University on May 29. • Psychology Professor **Helen Crawford** presented papers in two symposiums at the International Organization of Psychophysiology in Montreal, Canada, in July. • **T. Daniel Crawford**, Assistant Professor in the Chemistry Department, gave a lecture titled, “A Locally Correlated Equation-of-Motion Couple Cluster Approach for Excited States of Large Molecules,” at the 6th Congress of the World Association of Theoretically Oriented Chemists (WATOC) in Lugano, Switzerland, on August 3 through 9. • **Bruce H. Friedman**, Assistant Professor of Psychology, gave a presentation in July at the meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression in Montreal, Canada. The paper, “Autonomic nervous system correlates of the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study,” describes a study conducted with a former student to examine physiological correlates of a noted instrument used to assess aggressive responses to frustration. This is the first study that has included measures of autonomic nervous system activity. • English Professor **Peter Graham** and three Virginia Tech students traveled to Greece in May to attend the Messolonghi Byron Society's first International Student Byron Conference. The eight-day conference united students from throughout the world in their interest in Byron's life and works and enabled them to directly experience the Greece Byron knew and loved. • Geography Professor **Lawrence Grossman** conducted a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) training workshop for agricultural scientists in Uganda on February 19 through 21. Andy Roberts, Senior Research Associate in the Department of Entomology, helped present the workshop. Grossman obtained the grant for the workshop from the Integrated Pest Management Collaborative Research Support Program (IPM CRSP), which is managed by the Office of International Research and Development at Virginia Tech. Uganda is one of eight host countries worldwide involved in the IPM CRSP. • **Bernice Hausman**, Associate Professor of English, participated in the Second European Society for Literature and Science International Conference: Experimenting Arts and Sciences, in Aarhus, Denmark, on May 8 through 12. She presented a paper entitled “Is Breastfeeding Scientific?: Evidence as Discourse in Medical Breastfeeding Advocacy.” The paper is part of her just-completed manuscript, *Breastfeeding under the Sign of the Bottle: Essays on Feminism, Medicine, and Motherhood*. • **Lenwood S. Heath**, Associate Professor of Computer Science, was the keynote speaker at The Sixth International Symposium on Parallel Architectures, Algorithms, and Networks (I-SPAN'02), which was held in Makati City, Manila, Philippines, on May 22 through 24. His keynote address was entitled “Networks in Bioinformatics” and covered biological networks and the implied research opportunities for theoretical computer scientists. • **Matthias Imhof**, Assistant Professor of Geological Sciences, attended the 64th Conference and Exhibition of the European Association of Geoscientists &

Notables Faculty Involvement Around Campus

Engineers in Florence, Italy. He participated in a workshop and presented two posters at the conference. • Chemistry Professor **Harold McNair** and two of his Ph.D. students attended the 25th International Symposium on Capillary Chromatography on May 12 through 17 in Riva del Garda, Italy. McNair served on the Organizing Committee, presented a plenary lecture, and chaired one technical session. • Philosophy Professor and Department Head **Joseph C. Pitt** attended a planning meeting of the international research group, *Techne*, at Eindhoven Technical University in the Netherlands on June 12 and 13. He then presented a paper, "When Knowledge isn't Knowledge," at "Technological Knowledge," a conference held in Boxmeer, Netherlands on June 13 through 16. • Geography Professor **Bonham Richardson** presented a paper entitled "Sugar Cane Fires in the Eastern Caribbean in the 1890s" at the meetings of the 34th annual conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians in Nassau, Bahamas, in April. • Associate Professor **Mary Beth Rosson** and Professor **John M. Carroll** of the Computer Science Department attended the Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS 2002), which was held at the British Museum in London on June 23 through 28. They presented a full-day tutorial on scenario-based usability engineering, based on their book *Usability Engineering: Scenario-Based Development of Human-Computer Interaction* (Morgan-Kaufmann, 2002), and a technical paper, "Community design of community simulations," which was co-authored with Computer Science graduate students. • **John Ryan**, Professor and Chair of Sociology, was a visiting professor at the World Leisure and Recreation Association's International Centre of Excellence, at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, on February 4 through 8. He conducted a week-long graduate seminar for students from 14 different countries on the topic of "mass media and development." • **Angela Scarpa**, Assistant Professor of Psychology, presented two research studies at the XV world meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression in Montreal, Canada, on July 28 through 31. The two studies were "Emotional and behavioral correlates of reactive and proactive aggression in children" and "School-based group intervention for aggressive adolescents: Treatment outcomes and implications." • **Dennis Welch**, Associate Professor of English, presented a paper at the annual international meeting of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism at the University of Western Ontario in Canada on August 22 through 25. The paper focused on William Blake's artistic and literary responses to famine and to political as well as economic policy during wartime in late eighteenth-century England.

College of Business

Brian Mihalik, Department Head of Hospitality and Tourism Management, taught a one week class module at the Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne, the oldest hospitality program in Europe. Twenty-five European students enrolled in his class, "Special Event Management: Staging the Modern Olympic Games." Mihalik further continued his study of the modern Olympic Games by conducting research in the IOC library in Lausanne.

College of Engineering

The College of Engineering recently entered into an agreement with the Turkish Air Force Academy to exchange graduate students and faculty in an effort to develop research collaboration. As a first step in this initiative, Turkey will be sending 15 to 20 graduate students from the Air Force Academy to earn their Masters' Degrees in aerospace, mechanical, and electrical engineering. The students will be chosen from the top academic graduates of the academy. • Electrical and Computer Engineering Professor **David de Wolf** was a guest researcher at the International Research Centre for Telecommunications-Transmission and Radar of the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands during the month of June. This cooperative effort has been continued yearly since 1988. • **Malcolm J. McPherson**, Interim Dean for the College of Engineering, gave the keynote address at the North American/Ninth U.S. Mine Ventilation Symposium, which was held on the campus of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada from June 8 through 12. McPherson discussed the Westray Mine Explosion in Nova Scotia, which killed 26 miners in 1992. • **Tom Novak**, Professor and Department Head of Mining and Minerals Engineering, served as Session Chairman for the 1st International Conference on Rapid Mine Development in Aachen, Germany, on May 22 and 23. • **Hanif D. Sherali**, Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, was invited by the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals on March 23 through 28 to be part of a three-person international delegation to present a seminar on an engineering design problem with water distribution systems. • **Robert J. Trew**, Department Head and Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, gave a keynote presentation entitled "mm-Wave AlGaIn/GaN HFET's," at the Fourth Topical Symposium of Millimeter Waves held at the Yokosuka Research Park in Yokosuka, Japan, on March 14 and 15. He also gave two keynote presentations, one entitled "Wide Bandgap Semiconductor Devices for RF and Microwave Communications Applications," and one entitled "Nanotechnology and the Emerging Revolution in Next Generation Electronics," at the International High Tech Forum: Integrated Circuit Designs and Applications to Communications, which was held in Zhuhai City, China, on June 26 through 28. • **Joseph J. Wang**, Associate Professor of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering was an invited planetary speaker at the "23rd International Symposium on Rarefied Gas Dynamics" held in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada, on July 20 through 25. Wang's lecture was entitled "Ion Thruster Modeling: Particle Simulations and Experimental Validations."

College of Human Resources and Education

M. David Alexander, Professor and Department Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, served as Director of the Educational Leadership and Ethics Conference on March 16 through 23 at Exeter College, Oxford University. He also served as Director of the Educational Leadership China 2002 Conference on July 5 through 17 in Beijing and Xian, China. • **Don G. Creamer**, Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs, presented two papers at the European Association for Institutional

Notables Faculty Involvement Around Campus

Research (EAIR) 2002 Forum in Prague in the Czech Republic on September 8 through 11. His papers were entitled "The CAS Approach to Quality Assurance: Self-Assessment and Self-Regulation" and "The Role of Student Affairs in Distance Learning."

College of Natural Resources

Harold E. Burkhart, University Distinguished Professor and Department Head of Forestry, and **Ralph L. Amateis**, Senior Research Associate, made invited presentations at a conference of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) held in Sesimbra, Portugal, in June. Their symposium on "Reality Models and Parameter Estimation – the Forestry Scenario" was organized around four themes. Burkhart was the keynote speaker for theme one – "Forest Reality and Modeling Strategies," and Amateis delivered the keynote address for theme two – "Mathematical Approaches and Reasoning." Both Burkhart and Amateis also served as moderators and as discussion leaders at the breakout sessions of the conference, which was attended by 90 individuals coming from 27 different countries. • **Wolfgang Glasser**, Professor of Wood Chemistry and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, is serving a 6-month Jubilee Visiting Professorship at Chalmers University of Technology (Department of Polymer Technology) in Gothenborg, Sweden. He will be presenting several lectures in France, Germany, and Sweden. • Associate Dean of Outreach and Forestry **Jim Johnson** made his second trip to Arras, France, where he has been working to develop and implement an ecological monitoring system for two national parks. He is working with Public Works and Government Services in Canada and the Canada Heritage Conservation Program on the two Canadian parks, which were a gift to the government of Canada following the First World War. • **Marcella J. Kelly**, Assistant Professor of Wildlife, gave a presentation at "Belize and the Wider Caribbean," a combined conference constituting the 4th International Belize Conference and the 4th British Caribbean Geography Seminar in San Ignacio, Belize, on July 7 through 10. Her presentation was titled, "Using camera-traps to monitor jaguars in western Belize." Rainforest carnivores, such as the jaguar, are extremely difficult to study due to their elusive, wide-ranging, and nocturnal habits, and Kelly employs infrared, remotely-tripped cameras in the jungles of Belize to "capture" jaguars.



Assistant Professor of Wildlife Marcella J. Kelly has been using camera-traps to monitor jaguars in western Belize. By compiling individual capture histories and using mark-recapture statistics, Kelly can determine the density of jaguars in the area surveyed.

on a prospective cancer biomarker in feline adipose" at the meeting, which attracted distinguished cancer researchers from around the world. • Small Animal Clinical Services Professor **Peter K. Shires** recently spent three weeks in South Africa, where he served as the external examiner for three graduate students in small animal surgery at Pretoria University. He also presented one-day lectures on hind-limb lameness to about 180 veterinarians at different seminars in Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, and collaborated with administrators and clinicians at the Onderstepoort University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. • **Stephen A. Smith**, Professor of Aquatic Medicine and Fish Health, gave two presentations at the 33rd annual conference of the International Association for Aquatic Animal Medicine on May 4 through 8 in Albufeira, Portugal. His presentations were entitled "Pathology Associated With Mixed Bacterial Infections in Weedy Sea Dragons (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*) and Leafy Sea Dragons (*Phycodurus eques*)" with co-author Kathleen P. Hughes of the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, and "Horshoe Crab (*Limulus polyphemus*) Hemolymph Biochemical and Immunological Parameters" with co-author **James Berkson**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. As the President-elect for the IAAAM, he was the Program Chair for this year's meeting in

College of Veterinary Medicine

transfusion medicine, and clinical hemostatic disorders, and chaired the two-day clinical laboratory diagnostics session. In Tokyo, Japan, Feldman attended the annual meeting of the Japanese Animal Hospital Association and spoke on various topics in clinical hematology. Feldman also attended the Italian Annual Veterinary Congress in Milan, Italy, where he presented a three-day course on clinical hematology and a one-day course on clinical exfoliative cytology. • Thomas J. Inzana, Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology and Director of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine's Center for Molecular Medicine and Infectious Diseases, presented nine papers at the 2002 International Pasteurellaceae Society Conference in Banff, Canada, on May 5 through 10. • Michael J. Murray, Adelaide C. Riggs Chair in Equine Medicine at the Equine Medical Center, presented "Endoscopic duodenal biopsy: histologic and endoscopic characteristics in foals and horses" at the Seventh Equine Colic Research Symposium in Manchester, England, on July 14 through 16. • Korinn Saker, Assistant Professor of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, presented several papers at the 6th International Symposium on Predictive Oncology & Intervention Strategies at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. Saker made presentations entitled "Influence of PUFA on immune cell MAPK: A prospective cancer biomarker" and "Influence of PUFA

Bernard Feldman, Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, recently spoke at international meetings in Canada, Japan and Italy. He spoke at the World Veterinary Congress, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on clinical hemopoiesis,

Portugal, and was also inducted as the President of the IAAAM for 2002-2003. • **Nathaniel A. White**, Theodora Ayer Randolph Professor of Surgery and Assistant Director of the Equine Medical Center, was a program coordinator and on the program committee for the Seventh Equine Colic Research Symposium in Manchester, England. He was also the co-editor of the special issue of the *Equine Veterinary Journal*, which was dedicated to scientific papers on colic.

Centers, Institutes, Labs, and Other Units

Charles Bostian, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering; **George Morgan**, Professor of Finance and Center for Wireless Telecommunications (CWT) Director; **Robert Trew**, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering; and other CWT members met with Francisco Javier Mendieta Jimenez, Director General and Roberto Conte, Associate Researcher of Centro De Investigacion Cientifica Y De Educacion Superior De Ensenada, Mexico, (CICESE). The principals signed an Agreement for Scientific and Educational Cooperation. CICESE and Virginia

Tech will develop cooperative research in activities involving Electrical and Computer Engineering. The agreement allows students and faculty of each to visit and work with the other. • Research Assistant Professor and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Biochemistry **Pedro Mendes** of the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute was an invited speaker in the First International Conference on Plant Metabolomics, in Wageningen, The Netherlands, on April 7 through 11. He gave a presentation on “Analysis and Visualization for Metabolomics.” Dr. Mendes was appointed as a member for the International Committee on Plant Metabolomics. In addition, he was an invited speaker at the conference “Dynamics Days in Europe” in Heidelberg, Germany, on July 15 through 19. His presentation was “Swimming in a sea of data: forward and inverse modeling of biochemical dynamics.” • Virginia Bioinformatics Institute Director **Bruno Sobral** spoke at the Virginia Tech facility in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, on April 1 through 6. He presented a talk entitled, “Bioinformatics and the Role of Computing in Understanding Host-Pathogen Interactions.”

PERSPECTIVES Continued from Page 1

search dollars. Similarly, about 10-12 fully paid graduate research assistantships OIRD has garnered have greatly helped augment graduate programs in international issues in some colleges.

Over the last 11 years, OIRD has garnered almost \$52 million in contracts and grants for the university. This year alone, OIRD was able to get grants and contracts amounting to \$11.4 million, mostly in research funds in IT, agriculture, watershed management, extension and micro-enterprise development. Most of this \$11.4 million is counted in Virginia Tech’s research portfolio in the National Ranking by NSF. Out of a total of \$170 million in research expenditures at Virginia Tech, OIRD is considered to be one of the ten best contributors towards these funds. In the CALS, out of its \$64 million in research expenditures, OIRD is a significant contributor, thereby helping the college to be ranked nationally through its international agriculture programs. In all of these projects, all three missions of the land-grant university are served.

What has made these successes possible is OIRD faculty and staff. Our nine faculty are well experienced with complementary expertise and front line experience in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the rest of the world. They have education in the social sciences, communications, and technical subjects. Furthermore, these faculty have language facilities in French and Spanish which are of great help in West Africa and Latin America. In addition to these two most useful languages, OIRD faculty speak Russian, Indonesian, Japanese, and many other languages. Six strong staff members with excellent training and experience help in supporting different donor-funded projects. Our Business Manager has over 30 years of Virginia Tech experience, with excellent knowledge of USAID regulations. She is supported by an Associate Business Manager with strong computer skills and an MBA degree. Other staff hold MBA, B.S., and M.S. degrees in Accounting and other relevant subjects. One staff member is a CPA. These complimentary skills are highly relevant to keeping excellent financial records which conform to Virginia Tech’s Banner system and USAID’s reporting requirements.

While OIRD takes pride in its past accomplishments, it must look to the future and make strategic decisions. Three areas of growth which OIRD/Virginia Tech plans to pursue but does not

have technical leadership expertise in are: Information Technology (IT), Biotechnology, and Business (micro-enterprise development, economic enhancement through private sector involvement, and marketing). It is true that we cannot foresee new faculty positions available to OIRD to narrow these gaps. However, we must always strive to move “from calamities to opportunities.” Difficulties have arisen because of looming and recurrent budget cuts in the university. In spite of these challenges, we may achieve the university’s goals by redeploying current positions to new opportunities in growth areas.

Often our President, Dr. Charles W. Steger, has reminded the university community that we must continue to keep focused on our goal to become a top 30 research university. Abandoning this goal now will only result in a further sliding of our national ranking, which we cannot afford. In order to offset some of the financial difficulties for the internationalization of our university, OIRD is aggressively pursuing newer alliances, particularly with successful private sector groups in order to move the program to the next higher level.

The University Abroad is prepared by the Faculty and Staff of the Office of International Research and Development (OIRD) at Virginia Tech, University Office for Outreach and International Affairs, Office of the University Provost.

S.K. De Datta, Director, OIRD
1060 Litton-Reaves Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0334 USA
Tel: (540) 231-6338
Fax: (540) 231-6741
E-mail: dedatta@vt.edu
<http://www.oird.vt.edu>



Please direct submissions to the staff editor: Susan Light
E-mail: sulight@vt.edu

The Office of International Research and Development would like to thank all those individuals who submitted information to the University Abroad Newsletter. Regrettably, some submissions could not be included due to space constraints.

ETHIOPIA Continued from Page 1

Shift in Paradigms in Agricultural Research and Extension) Project will support agricultural research and extension, watershed management, and micro-enterprise development in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) of Ethiopia.

The ANRS, home to the source of the Blue Nile and the center of a rich culture extending back millennia, is one of the most food insecure regions of Ethiopia. Of the estimated 6 million people in the ASPIRE-targeted zone of the ANRS, approximately 40% are classified as chronically food insecure, lacking the means to produce or purchase sufficient food, even in normal years.

The food security challenges facing the ASPIRE Project are severe and complex. Agriculture, the backbone of the ANRS economy, is characterized by low productivity with small subsistence farms averaging between 0.60 and 1.0 hectares.

Past deleterious agricultural policies coupled with a rapidly growing population, chronic poverty, and capricious rainfall are major contributors to the rapidly degrading natural resource base and related rural livelihoods. Long-term food security is further challenged by HIV/AIDS, gender issues, poor nutrition, and disaster mitigation strategies that complicate rather than support community resiliency and growth. Micro-enterprise opportunities that would reinforce rural community livelihood strategies are extremely limited due to lack of credit and business skills.

Through the ASPIRE Project, the OIRD/Virginia Tech Consortium will strengthen agricultural research and extension, watershed management capacity, and micro-enterprise development in the ANRS by institutionalizing a participatory, community-driven development approach. Inspired by the service-oriented U.S. land-grant university model of integrated extension, research, and education, and using the collaborative modality of USAID's Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSP), ASPIRE will adopt peer-to-peer collaboration between Ethiopia and

U.S. counterparts to define and address problems using, and simultaneously institutionalizing, participatory methodologies. ASPIRE will upgrade human resource capacities among regional and community service providers and reinforce the institutional relations between the local research and extension services through an on-farm research program. In addition, ASPIRE will establish credit and savings cooperatives and develop public and private sector business development services practitioners at the local levels.

The ASPIRE pilot watershed management areas will serve as

"The hard work of our OIRD/Virginia Tech faculty and staff and that of our consortium partners paid off in a big way."

S.K. De Datta, OIRD Director and Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

sites for integrating research, extension, and micro-enterprise development efforts. In these areas ASPIRE will harness the resources and expertise of other

USAID projects to build community capacity and develop showcase examples that are transferable to the broader ANRS region.

Under the overall OIRD project management umbrella, Virginia Tech will lead the agriculture research and extension components of the project, assisted by Virginia State University; Cornell University will provide leadership for the watershed management component, and ACDI-VOCA will lead the micro-enterprise development component.

Three of the four long-term technical assistance experts for ASPIRE are current or past faculty from Virginia Tech. They are Brhane Gebrekidan, Integrated Pest Management CRSP Program Director (ASPIRE Chief of Party and Senior Research Advisor); Angela Neilan, Extension Agent for Albemarle County (ASPIRE Extension Communications Advisor); and Kent Reid, former IPM Assistant Program Director (ASPIRE Watershed Extension Advisor). There are outstanding opportunities to involve many faculty from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in short-term assignments responding to the demand-driven needs of ASPIRE.

The ASPIRE project in Ethiopia is classified as a research project and consequently will contribute to Virginia Tech's sponsored research portfolio and national ranking.

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, sex, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. Anyone having questions concerning discrimination should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office.

VT/016/0801/3.4M/220762

Editor, *The University Abroad*
Office of International Research and Development
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0334 U.S.A.
Phone: (540) 231-6338
Fax: (540) 231-6741
Web: www.oird.vt.edu
E-mail: dedatta@vt.edu
Forwarding Service

Non-Profit Org.
BULK MAILING
U.S. Postage
PAID
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Permit No. 28