



Building on Differences

Teamwork was the name of the game this month as VHCC faculty and staff participated in exercises to recognize and appreciate diversity, while also contemplating ways to further diversify our campus.

The in-service held at the Abingdon Senior Center was led by Beth Duffield, workforce development coordinator, and began with a personality assessment using DISC®. Participants were given a letter representing their attributes, then divided into teams to work with those with different personality traits. Working together, they constructed models from sticks, paper, tape and string.

"This was a fun way to involve everyone in a team activity and challenge them to 'flex' to other peoples' styles in accomplishing their goal," Duffield explained.

Afternoon activities included a talk from Dr. Aris Winger, an African-American member of the math faculty at Emory & Henry College. He used personal photos to illustrate the racial and cultural diversity represented by his friends and co-workers. Understanding and appreciating their differences has been a lifelong process, he said. In fact, he said, some of his classmates from the all-Black high school he attended "didn't like White people very much."

Rather than adopt those views, Winger said he has taken time to get to know a diverse group of people of all races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and political views. Additionally, he mentors a group called the Men of Color Alliance on the Emory & Henry campus. Through this organization's work, the College has become more aware of Civil Rights issues and taken steps to further diversify campus.

VHCC can do the same, Dr. Winger said, by "knocking on doors" and personally inviting minorities to enroll and to apply for positions. A more diverse campus will help eliminate prejudices, he said, and create an environment of greater understanding and appreciation for individual differences.

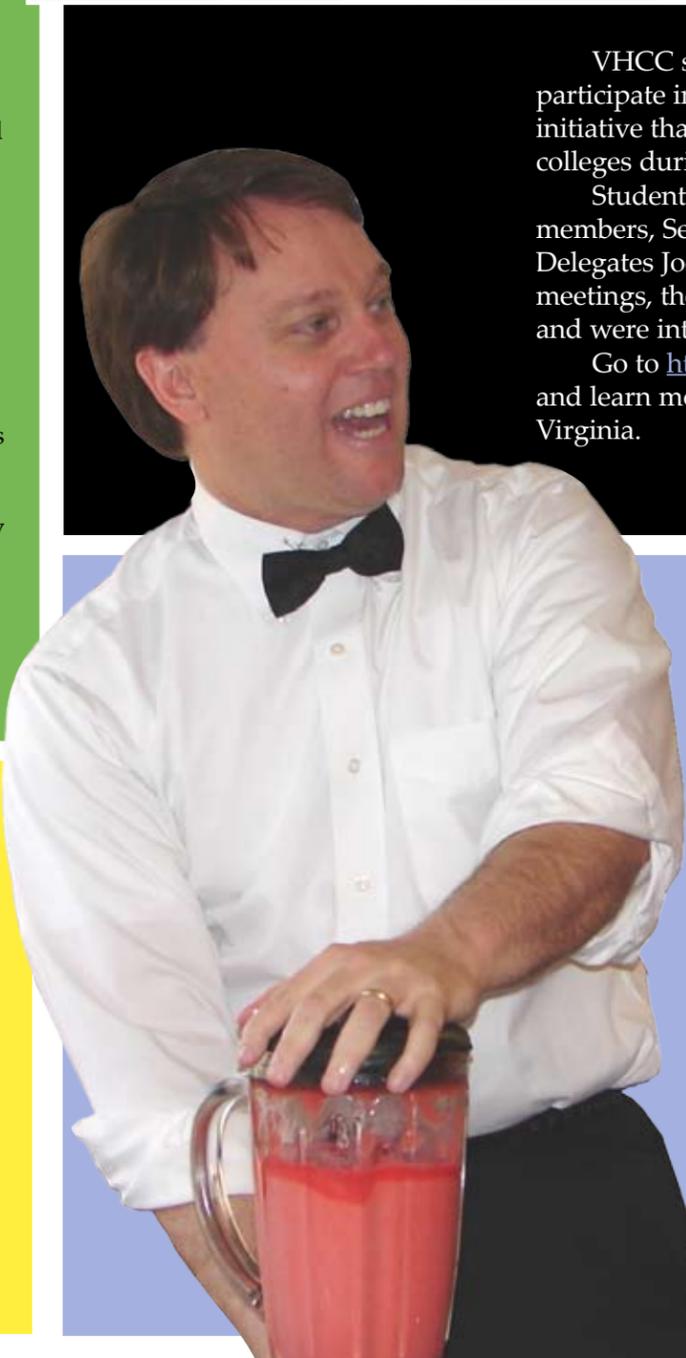


Above (L to R): VHCC Students Phillip Blevins, Kimberly Furgerson, Dana Dotson and Nick Booher met Senator William Wampler (center) during their Feb. 4 trip to Richmond. At left (L to R) Students Stacey Blevins, Darren Miller, Trey Johnson and Randi Minton spent time with Delegate Joe Johnson (seated) during their Feb. 19 visit.

VHCC students traveled to the state capitol this month to participate in "Every Day is Community College Day," a VCCS initiative that allows students to tout the importance of community colleges during face-to-face meetings with their elected leaders.

Students met with VCCS Chancellor Glenn DuBois and staff members, Senators William Wampler and Phillip Puckett, and Delegates Joe Johnson, Bill Carrico and Terry Kilgore. Following their meetings, they attended a session of the Virginia House of Delegates and were introduced in the House Chambers by Delegate Johnson.

Go to <http://vahighered.com> to track bills, read student stories, and learn more about legislation that impacts higher education in Virginia.



Mocktails, Anyone?

Tim Harrison of the Student Success Center was one of several bartenders who blended sweet concoctions with ice and poured them in fancy glasses during VHCC's annual Mocktail Party.

While enjoying daiquiris and pina colodas, sans the alcohol, participants also received useful information about the ill effects of alcohol on the mind and body.

The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism estimates that alcohol is responsible for killing 1,700 college students per year. In addition, alcohol also plays a significant role in the following:

- 500,000 unintentional injuries
- 70,000 sexual assaults
- 150,000 alcohol-related health problems such as alcohol poisoning and depression.



VHCC News is produced each month by Anne Dunham of the Office of Institutional Advancement. If you would like to suggest information for the newsletter, please send your ideas to adunham@vhcc.edu or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

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SIFE Making a Difference

By Philip Ferguson

In its first semester at Virginia Highlands Community College, the new student organization SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) is already making an impact. Led by motivated and intelligent students from multiple majors, the VHCC SIFE team proves that quality knowledge and ingenuity can be used to make a noticeable difference in society.

What is SIFE? Active on more than 1,400 college and university campuses in over 40 countries, SIFE teams are creating economic opportunity for millions of people around the world. The concept is simple—working as teams, SIFE students design educational outreach projects that help individuals in their communities develop a better understanding of the principles of free enterprise and how to use this information to empower themselves and achieve their personal and professional goals. The student members decide what projects to conduct (large or small) and they serve as team leaders, guiding the members through each project's completion. The only requirement is that an "educational" component is involved in each project (so that students pass on knowledge in a "pay it forward" manner), teaching one of the following principles:

1. Success Skills
2. Market Economics
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Financial Literacy
5. Business Ethics
6. Environmental Sustainability

VHCC SIFE elected graduating Business major, Daniel Jones, as organizational President and first-year Business student, Michael Doss, as Vice President. These students, along with all other SIFE team members, are the driving force behind this endeavor.

Some of the ongoing and upcoming SIFE projects include teaching supply and demand principles to local elementary/middle schools through creative hands-on activities, working with mortgage companies to develop "mortgage risk" workshops for home-buyers, establishing after-school community clean-up programs for high school students, working with local writers to assist in publishing their works, etc. Projects can range in size, from helping one family budget its monthly expenses to helping a village in another country develop better farming techniques.

Each Spring, the SIFE puts together an audio/visual presentation of its projects/collected data and competes in Regional and (if successful) National competitions with other schools' SIFE teams. At this competition, SIFE members network with other students and business professionals, giving SIFE members a foot in the door towards future professions.

Membership in this organization is free to VHCC students (of all majors), and new members are being sought. More than just a "free" experience, participation in SIFE will enhance each student's academic and social leadership skills, build up his/her resume for future college admission or employment, and most importantly, provide needed assistance and knowledge to those who would most benefit from it.

Please contact Philip Ferguson at pferguson@vhcc.edu or (276) 739-2459 for more information.

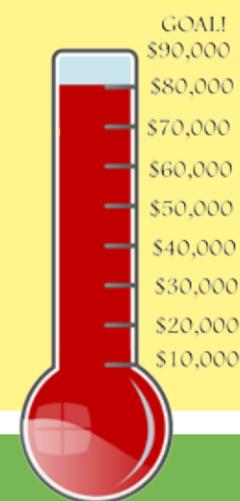
VHCC Mascot Sought for Sports Teams

The Student Success Center is inviting students to offer suggestions for a mascot to represent the College at intercollegiate sporting events next year. Both a mascot name and a design are needed.

VHCC currently has a women's volleyball team and will add men's basketball to its sports offerings next year. The teams will compete against teams from New River, Wytheville, Southwest Virginia, and Virginia Western community colleges.

Those interested in submitting an idea and design should send their entries to ssc@vhcc.edu or visit the Student Success Center for additional information.

We're getting close, but the Keyser-Aday Campaign still needs your help to reach it's goal! Your tax-deductible contribution will help establish the Keyser-Aday Theatre at VHCC and provide an endowment to support student scholarships and the arts on campus.



"Crab Nebula: A Dead Star Creates Celestial Havoc" is one of 12 photographs taken by the Hubble Telescope that is now on display in the LRC. The display is part of the rotating art exhibit on campus. Many thanks to the Town of Abingdon for printing these magnificent photos!

Options Help Plan for Retirement

By Debbie Hale

The Virginia Retirement System offers a number of options for retirement planning. On the VRS web site at www.varetire.org (under the Member tab), members may register in myVRS which offers access to the member's VRS account information including total service credit, account balances and purchases of prior service. myVRS also includes a feature that allows members to run retirement estimates based on current account information.

VRS offers local sessions of the Retirement Education Seminars (RES) and Group Counseling Sessions (GCS). The Retirement Education Seminars provide general retirement information including estate and financial planning. The Group Counseling Sessions are for VRS members planning to retire within the next five years. Both of these sessions will be offered at VHCC on April 8, 2009. Preregistration is required. For more information and to preregister, go to the VRS web site and click on Planning for Retirement under the Members tab.

As an additional resource, the FYI section of the VHCC Human Resources web page now offers an entire section on Retirement Planning, including a link to the Social Security benefit estimator site. If you have any questions about the retirement planning resources, please contact Debbie Hale at dhale@vhcc.edu.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend a day-long Strategic Planning event on Friday, April 24. Participants will review the campus Mission Statement, help develop a Vision Statement, and begin setting priorities based on input provided during the Fall in-service. Details about the event are still being finalized. For more information, please contact Jennifer Addison at jaddison@vhcc.edu or (276) 739-2458.



Although she's enjoyed living the life of a **KING**, rumor has it that a member of the VHCC family is currently planning a July wedding. No specific details were available at press time and, despite what you might think, there are no details available on the **WEBSITE** either. Tune in to campus gossip for more information!

Fling into Spring!

Put on your dancing shoes and get ready to party with the VHCC Student Government Association, the VHCC Alumni Association, and deejay Blake Frazier during Spring Fling 2009 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

Advance tickets go on sale beginning March 2 in the Career Center during the day and in the Learning Lab in the evenings for the bargain price of \$8 per person/\$15 per couple. All tickets at the door will be \$10 each.

The dance begins at 8 p.m., but those who arrive early will be treated to a free dance lesson from 7-8 p.m.

Mark your calendar now, schedule a babysitter, buy a ticket, and get ready to shake your booty! For more info, call (276) 739-2574.

