



SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE



VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR  
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

UPDATE

WINTER 2023 • VOL. 20 • ISSUE 2

## VFIC AWARDED \$350,000 GRANT TO SUPPORT STUDENT TRANSFER PROGRAM

THANKS TO A \$350,000 GRANT from the Teagle Foundation and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges can begin to implement their plan to better serve community college transfer students on their campuses.

“Building Transfer Pathway Connections will engage faculty and staff from thirteen VFIC schools directly through the Transfer Virginia initiative,” says Matt Shank, president of the VFIC. “The consortium has a great opportunity to build its collective transfer capacity and raise student awareness about the opportunities our independent colleges offer.”

Working in partnership with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), the transfer pathways grant will focus on three activities. The first is to develop transfer guides that provide transparent and consistent academic information to students attending Virginia’s community colleges. Second, the initiative supports the onboarding of all thirteen participating VFIC institutions as full partners in the Transfer Virginia portal. Finally, the grant enables the VFIC and the VCCS to implement a plan that will not only improve the VFIC’s ability to engage with

transfer students but also address the challenges many of these students face when they arrive on a new campus.

“We believe this increased awareness among transfer students will directly and positively impact the number of students choosing an independent college as a transfer destination,” says Shank.

“Not only can we help students attain their four-year degree, but we can also enhance the efficiency of that process as it relates to transferring degree credits and course hours. That saves students time and money.”

“

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MATT SHANK  
PRESIDENT OF VFIC

# RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE: THE H. HITER HARRIS FAMILY AWARDS

On November 3, three VFIC faculty from our consortium of colleges and universities received H. Hiter Harris Family awards at a special awards presentation. These awards were created by the Harris family to recognize faculty whose professional history reflects a strong and abiding commitment to excellence in classroom teaching within the undergraduate liberal arts and sciences.



**Michael Wolyniak, Ph.D.**, McGavacks Professor of Biology, Hampden-Sydney College, received the **2022 Libby and Hiter Harris Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award**. Wolyniak received his B.A. from Colgate University in 1998 and his Ph.D. in genetics from Cornell University in 2004. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth from 2004-2009. At Hampden-Sydney College, he has received the Cabell Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2012, the John Peter Mettauer Award for Excellence in Research in 2013, the Thomas Edward Crawley Award for service to the College and its ideals in 2017, and the Senior Class Award in 2019. Wolyniak's research focuses on the implementation of research experiences into undergraduate coursework and has been supported by several grants from the National Science Foundation. He has played a leading role in the development and implementation of the VFIC's "Heat Watch" project, a thirteen-institution joint undergraduate research project for better understanding and responding to the effects of heat islands across Virginia.



**Mary Jane Carmichael, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies, Hollins University, received the **2022 H. Hiter Harris III Rising Star Award**. Carmichael began her career as a high school science teacher in 2004 in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Schools. After six years in the secondary classroom, she pursued an advanced degree with a goal of becoming a faculty member at a small, liberal arts institution. She received an M.S. in biology from Appalachian State University in 2012 and then returned to her alma mater, Wake Forest University, where she earned her Ph.D. in biology in 2017. Carmichael joined the faculty at Hollins University in 2017, and she was this year's recipient of the Herta T. Freitag Faculty Legacy Award. As a microbial ecologist turned biogeochemist, she is broadly interested in the direct and indirect links between above- and below-ground processes. Understanding the connectivity between these two systems is a critical component of our ability to predict the response of ecosystems to global climate change.



**Eric Bubar, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Engineering, Marymount University, received the **2022 H. Hiter Harris III Excellence in Instructional Technology Award**. Bubar has a formal degree in applied physics from Clemson University with a research concentration in stellar astrophysics. He now applies these general research skills as the founding Associate Professor of Engineering at Marymount University in the development of open source solutions for individuals in need of assistive technologies by using hobbyist microcontrollers, electronics and 3D printing/design. Through this work, Bubar has collaborated with individuals worldwide (largely through eNABLE and the Alliance for Project Based Learning Solutions) to create and deploy upper limb assistive devices in situations where medically validated devices are unavailable. Through his research lab at Marymount University, Bubar creates solutions to problems as diverse as adapting devices to allow children with limb differences to play musical instruments and creating tools to aid police officers with rehabilitation exercises.

## ANNUAL FUND ADVANCES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Your support each year makes great things possible. If you have already given to the 2022-2023 Annual Fund for Academic Excellence, thank you. If not, we hope you will consider joining our Honor Roll of Donors by initiating, renewing, or increasing an investment that will enrich lives across Virginia. Contributors help provide funding for scholarships for underrepresented students, educational programs, faculty research fellowships, library and technology acquisitions, capital projects, and so much more. Each tax-deductible gift benefits every one of the distinctive member colleges in a meaningful way.

Donor levels fit all types of budgets.

\$100,000+ Modlin/Gaines Founders Circle  
\$50,000+ Benefactor's Circle  
\$25,000+ Capstone Circle  
\$15,000+ Chairman's Circle  
\$10,000+ Lea Booth Society  
\$5,000+ President's Society

\$2,500+ Commonwealth Society  
\$1,500+ Trustee's Circle  
\$1,000+ Millennium Society  
\$100+ Century Club  
\$1+ Friends

**Make your gift to VFIC today!**

901 E. Byrd Street, Suite 1625  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.vfic.org/donate](http://www.vfic.org/donate)

# ETHICS BOWL

2023

## **“Ethics and Digital Media”**

JANUARY 29-30, 2023

Virginia Wesleyan University  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

**Dinner Honoree**  
George Y. Birdsong  
CEO, Birdsong Corporation

## SUPPORT THE VFIC ETHICS BOWL

The VFIC Ethics Bowl is a nationally recognized two-day event that began in 2000 with a focus on a simple topic: “Ethics in General.” Since then, students from VFIC schools have gathered annually to address the most compelling, even controversial ethical issues of the day, from “Ethics and War” in 2004 to “Ethics and the Family” in 2015. The range of topics has been comprehensive, the presentations never dull.

“Ethics and Digital Media,” this year’s topic, provides an opportunity for VFIC member schools to compete and deliberate on ethical dilemmas of the utmost immediacy. You can support this dialogue by sponsoring a table and purchasing tickets for the 2023 Ethics Bowl Dinner. Proceeds from the dinner will provide scholarships for VFIC students with demonstrated financial need and academic promise from the Southeast Virginia/ South Hampton Roads Region.

Sunday’s reception and dinner will honor George Y. Birdsong, the current CEO of Birdsong Corporation. Community engagement and leadership have always been a primary focus for George as he has served on the boards of civic organizations, educational institutions, and philanthropic foundations. George received his bachelor’s degree from Washington and Lee University and his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1964. The dinner will be held at 6:00 p.m. at Brock Commons on the campus of Virginia Wesleyan University.

Please contact Mary-Beth Johnson at [johnson@vfc.org](mailto:johnson@vfc.org) if you are interested in sponsoring a table or purchasing tickets for the Sunday dinner. Sponsorship packages start at \$1,000 and individual tickets are \$150. The success of this annual event is made possible, in part, by our volunteer judges and moderators. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these roles, please contact Dawn Gregg at [greggs@vfc.org](mailto:greggs@vfc.org).

RANDOLPH COLLEGE

## SCHOLARSHIPS

The VFIC is profoundly grateful for the financial support provided by the following companies, philanthropists, and trusts for the current academic year. Their investment in today’s students pays dividends for decades to our communities and our schools. If you would like to create a Brighter Futures scholarship, please contact Mary-Beth Johnson at [johnson@vfc.org](mailto:johnson@vfc.org).

AEP Foundation  
Altria  
American Association of University  
Women – McLean Branch  
Anonymous (3)  
Eugene M. Bane Charitable Trust  
Bank of America Charitable  
Foundation  
A. Lea Booth Fund  
Camp Foundation  
Ruth Camp Campbell Foundation  
Ted and Laura Lee Chandler

Council of Independent Colleges  
Scholars through its CIC/UPS  
Educational Endowment  
Walter and Beese Craigie Fund  
Dollar Tree  
Dominion Energy  
Ferguson Enterprises  
Bob and Charlotte Gammon Fund  
The Sam and Marion Golden  
Helping Hands Foundation  
HRH Endowed Scholarship Fund  
Landmark Foundation

Thomas J. Lennon Fund  
Luck Companies  
Markel Corporation  
Mars Foundation  
T. Justin Moore Fund  
John D. Munford Fund  
New Horizons  
New River Electrical  
Moses D. Nunnally, Jr. Charitable  
Trust and Family Endowed Fund  
Anne Carter & W.R. Robins, Jr.  
Foundation

Robins Family Fund  
Sentara Healthcare  
Newton B. Shingleton Foundation  
Donald G. and Barbara B. Smith  
Fund  
The J. Edwin Treacle Foundation  
Truist Foundation  
Universal Corporation  
Virginia Bankers Association  
Education Foundation  
VFIC 50th Anniversary Fund  
Williams Mullen



# NEWS FROM OUR MEMBER COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

## BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE

Bridgewater College announced it will officially launch an engineering major in the fall of 2023, pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, with its first cohort expected to graduate in 2027.

## EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE

Emory & Henry College dedicated The van Vlissingen Center for Career and Professional Development on November 2, honoring John and Marine van Vlissingen. Their gift to create the Center supports students and alumni toward their professional paths and transforms their college experience so they are “Career & Life Ready.”

## HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

This past fall, Hampden-Sydney College’s Pauley Science Center, the new state-of-the-art science facility, was dedicated during the 247<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school’s founding. The facility, made possible through a gift from Stanley F. Pauley via the Pauley Family Foundation, includes classrooms, laboratories, equipment, and interactive spaces to support first-class science teaching, research, and scholarly activity.

## HOLLINS UNIVERSITY

Hollins University was recognized for National Excellence in Educator Preparation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The University is among 55 institutions from 28 states to receive this program accreditation in the Fall of 2022.

## MARY BALDWIN UNIVERSITY

Sixteen Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and two Coast Guard officer candidates from Mary Baldwin’s class of 2022 commissioned into the military as officers, setting a new university record. Each participated in MBU’s Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership, the nation’s only cadet corps just for women.

## MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Marymount University has received an award from the U.S. Department of Education’s Strengthening Institutions Program, providing over \$2 million in grant support over a five-year period to enhance the institution’s student academic support infrastructure. This funding will allow for the implementation of new high impact practices aimed at improving student learning, retention, and four-year graduation rate at the university.

## RANDOLPH COLLEGE

Sue Ott Rowlands, Randolph’s 11th president, began her tenure July 1, 2022. Randolph College launched the new Master of Fine Arts in theatre, the school’s fourth graduate program. This two-year, low-residency, intensive degree is designed for working and aspiring theatre artists, educators, and leaders to build healthier, more inclusive theatre communities.

## RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE

On October 21, the Randolph-Macon community celebrated the installation of Grace Lim-Fong, Professor of Biology, as the Stephen H. Watts Professor in the Physical Sciences, and Joan L. Conners, Professor of Communication Studies, as the Charles J. Potts Professor in Social Sciences.

## ROANOKE COLLEGE

Frank Shushok, Jr. became the 12th President of Roanoke College on July 1, 2022. President Shushok has recently been named one of The Aspen Institute’s inaugural Senior Index Impact Fellows whose work will advance research, interventions, and strategies necessary to accelerate youth leadership programs nationally.

## SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY

Shenandoah University celebrated the planned renovation of the former National Guard armory located on its main campus, which will serve as the university’s new Hub for Innovators, Veterans and Entrepreneurs, at a groundbreaking ceremony on Veterans Day, November 11.

## SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

Sweet Briar College has received a \$5 million lead gift to renovate the Guion Science Center, its science and engineering building, from an anonymous alumna. The building will receive technology upgrades in its labs, classrooms, and faculty offices. Classrooms will also be given enhanced multimedia immersive capacities.

## UNIVERSITY OF LYNCHBURG

The University of Lynchburg’s Ethics Bowl team defeated several large state schools at the Mid-Atlantic Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl on its way to a third-place finish, earning the team a trip to nationals in Portland, Oregon, in March 2023.

## UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) has awarded the University of Richmond a \$625K grant that will support efforts to create an inclusive experience for students and enhance student belonging. The HHMI Inclusive Excellence 3 grant is a six-year program and will be led by biology professor Angie Hilliker, who will work with ten other UR faculty from across STEM disciplines to implement this project.

## VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY

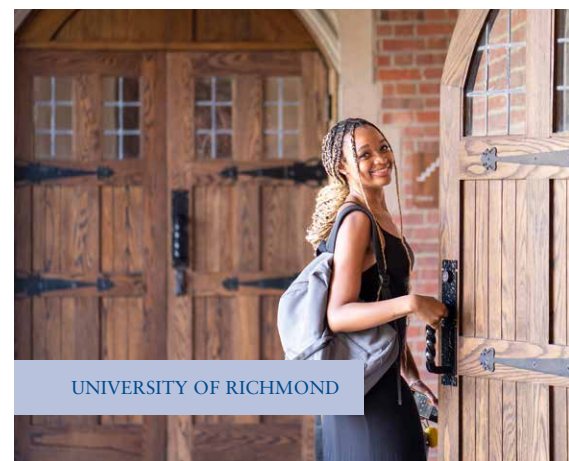
Virginia Union University welcomed Dr. Charletta H. Barringer-Brown as next Dean of The Evelyn Reid Syphax School of Education. Dr. Barringer-Brown is an experienced educator, public administrator, and policy research analyst who has been recognized for her leadership and has received numerous awards, appointments, and honors, such as being selected as a member of the National Humanities Center Teacher Advisory Council (2022-2023).

## VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Virginia Wesleyan University opened the newly constructed Brock Commons, completed in spring 2022. Improvements included updating the Boyd Dining and Jane P. Batten Center to enhance the student experience.

## WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

Tahrington (Tahri) Phillips ’23, a cognitive and behavioral science and English double major, became Washington and Lee University’s 18th Rhodes Scholar. Phillips, 20, of Wrightsville, Pennsylvania, was one of 32 scholars chosen this year to begin graduate studies next fall at the University of Oxford in England.



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

# MEET NANCY AGEE VFIC Chair (2022-2024)



## CAREER/EMPLOYMENT

President and CEO  
Carilion Clinic

## EDUCATION

MSN, Nursing  
Emory University, Atlanta GA

BSN, Nursing  
University of Virginia

Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters:  
Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Roanoke College  
Jefferson College of Health Sciences

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Past Chair, American Hospital Association  
Chair, American Hospital Association Coalition to Protect America's Health Care  
Immediate Past Chair, American Hospital Association Committee on Nominations  
Chair Emeritus, Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association  
Chair, Go Virginia (VA Growth and Opportunity)  
Member, Governor's Advisory Council on Revenue Estimates  
Member, Governor's Medical Advisory Team  
Member, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

## VFIC LEADERSHIP

Chair, 2022-present  
Executive Committee

Carilion CEO and President Nancy Agee recently shared her thoughts on why our schools are so special and discussed her goals as the new chair of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges.

“

## WHAT DISTINGUISHES VFIC SCHOOLS?

*What makes VFIC schools so special to me is that they are uniquely positioned at the intersection of the humanities and skills-based education model. Each one of our schools demonstrates the true and valuable balance between educating students for the real world while being faithful to some of the tenets of liberal arts and humanities. It's those tenets that develop critical thinking in our students and make them well-rounded human beings.*

## WHAT CHALLENGES ARE THE SMALLER, INDEPENDENT COLLEGES IN THE VFIC FACING TODAY?

*The challenges facing VFIC schools are multifactorial and difficult to solve.*

*First, there's demographics. The population is changing, and there's a relative decline in students who are age-eligible for college education. That means competition for students will accelerate. Second, the understandable push to have students graduate with job skills can sometimes conflict with the value our schools place on a liberal arts education. Third, and no surprise, is the cost of education. That's the cost both to the student – tuition and fees – as well as the administrative cost to run the school. Both are escalating. That expense is a problem our schools are facing . . . and will continue to face.*

## WHAT ISSUES WILL YOU FOCUS ON DURING YOUR TERM AS CHAIR?

*The enormous value of the VFIC is that we thoughtfully and intentionally raise funds to help our schools attract the best students, develop rigorous, timely programs, and impact their communities. The more we can successfully raise funds, the greater our value to the schools we serve. That may be goal one, two, and three. Another goal is to encourage our board members to internalize the values of our schools, to get to know them better and to see the incredible work they do.*

*Finally, our schools do a really fine job of selecting students who are often first generation. As a first-generation college student myself, I want to make sure we give students with a hunger to learn a leg-up in their ability to earn a college degree and secure meaningful employment.*

## ANY ADVICE FOR A FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENT?

*Lean in! Take advantage of the opportunities that you have – academic, athletic, co-curricular. Explore opportunities. Get involved and get engaged. That's how you'll find your own path.*

”

## NEW VFIC STAFF, TRUSTEES, AND SCHOOL PRESIDENTS



Dawn Gregg  
Special Events &  
Communications Manager  
VFIC



William L. Murray  
Senior VP-  
Corporate Affairs &  
Communications  
Dominion Energy Services



Sue Ott Rowlands  
President  
Randolph College



Frank Shushok, Jr., Ph.D.  
President  
Roanoke College



John H. Wick IV  
Senior Vice President  
Wells Fargo Private Bank



VIRGINIA FOUNDATION  
FOR INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

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Richmond, VA 23219



804.288.6609  
vfic.org

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



**HANNAH C., '24**  
Randolph College  
Major: Environmental  
Science and Chemistry

*Hannah was recently chosen to serve on the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's Student Advisory Committee. She is also the first Randolph student chosen to be a junior representative for the Council for Independent Colleges in Virginia, advising the council on system-wide issues of concern to Virginia college students.*

