

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**FUTURE FACULTY 2  
PROGRAM**

**ACADEMIC 3  
PIPELINE  
RESEARCH**

**ADVANCING 4  
DIVERSITY  
WORKSHOP**

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### UPCOMING EVENTS: SPRING 2010

#### Wednesday, March 3, 2010

**AdvanceVT Distinguished Lecture: Dr. Ellen Daniell**  
“Peer Mentoring for Professional Problem Solving”  
12:00 pm—1:30 pm, Inn at Virginia Tech

AdvanceVT welcomes faculty and university administrators to join us for lunch with **Distinguished Lecturer Dr. Ellen Daniell**. Dr. Daniell holds degrees from Swarthmore and the University of California at San Diego, and is an accomplished author and consultant. She is a past assistant professor in molecular biology at the University of California, Berkeley, and has held management positions in human resources and patent licensing for biotechnology. Her book *Every Other Thursday: Stories and Strategies for Successful Women Scientists* discusses her membership in a group of women who came together to overcome obstacles in pursuing their professional ambitions.

**AdvanceVT Graduate Student Seminar: Dr. Ellen Daniell**  
“Stories and Strategies from Successful Women Scientists”  
4:00 pm—5:00 pm, GLC F

### *Every Other Thursday*

STORIES AND STRATEGIES FROM  
SUCCESSFUL WOMEN SCIENTISTS



ELLEN DANIELL

Registration for all upcoming events is available at [www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu).

### Graduate Student Lunch Seminars

#### Balancing Motherhood and Academe

**Friday, March 19, 2010**  
12:00 pm—1:30 pm  
GLC F

Join our panelists for a discussion of issues related to balancing academic work and motherhood. Assistant Professors **Dr. Carla Finkielstein** and **Dr. Leyla Nazhandali**, and doctoral students **Anamaria Bukvic** and **Laurian Vega**, will share strategies for managing responsibilities at work and home. Lunch will be provided.

#### Tips on Writing for Publication

**Monday, April 12, 2010**  
12:00 pm—1:30 pm  
GLC F

Join **Dr. Fred Piercy**, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, for a discussion of strategies that can foster success when writing for publication. Dr. Piercy has written over 170 published articles, five books, and 35 funded grants. Lunch will be provided.

# TRANSFORMATIONS

## VIRGINIA TECH'S INAUGURAL FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAM

On January 10-13, 2010, Virginia Tech's Future Faculty Program made its debut. This new initiative was a recommendation of the university's Task Force on Race and the Institution, and was developed with funding from the Provost's Office. Convened in 2006, the Task Force on Race and the Institution and subsequent implementation team created a five-year plan for the implementation of initiatives aimed at strengthening, expanding, and enhancing the university's commitment to issues of race, inclusion, diversity, and community. The Future Faculty Program was designed to enhance the faculty pipeline by developing relationships with prospective candidates, especially those from groups underrepresented in the professoriate such as minorities and women.

For the inaugural Future Faculty Program, nine doctoral students and three postdoctoral scholars interested in pursuing careers in academe traveled to the Blacksburg campus to learn more about Virginia Tech and preparing for faculty positions. These 12 participants were selected from 157 applicants, and comprised a diverse group in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, geographic region, and field of study. The following universities were represented by Future Faculty participants: California Institute of Technology; Clemson University; Howard University; New York University; Pennsylvania State University; Rice University; Texas A&M University; University of California—San Francisco; University of California—Santa Barbara; University of Georgia; University of Kentucky; and University of Minnesota.

During their stay at Virginia Tech, participants were matched with host departments. This enabled participants to tour research facilities, meet with department heads and faculty members to gain a greater awareness of research and teaching opportunities in their field, and discuss career prospects, research interests, and academic work.



Future Faculty participants also had the opportunity to interact with Virginia Tech deans, administrators, and faculty members in sessions such as “The Academic Job Search” and “Surviving and Thriving as an ‘Underrepresented’ Faculty Member” and attend the 2010 “Advancing Diversity at Virginia Tech” workshop (see page 4 for more details).

The vast majority of feedback received from Future Faculty participants was positive, with nearly all of the student respondents indicating that they were “very satisfied” with the program. Most of the student participants also indicated that they planned to keep in touch with Virginia Tech faculty and/or administrators to further develop relationships that were initiated on campus.

The Provost's Office would like to thank the following departments for hosting 2010 Future Faculty participants: Agricultural & Applied Economics; Biological Sciences; Biomedical Engineering; Civil & Environmental Engineering; Computer Science; Engineering Education; Engineering Science & Mechanics; Geography; Human Development; Industrial & Systems Engineering; Mathematics; Mechanical Engineering; Music; Sociology-Africana Studies; and Teaching & Learning.

### Future Faculty Program Objectives

- Enhance the faculty pipeline by establishing and developing significant meaningful relationships with prospects, especially those from groups underrepresented in the professoriate, such as minorities and women.
- Provide the opportunity for prospects to gain a greater awareness of Virginia Tech, which will enhance their ability to envision themselves as members of our community.
- Develop a network of faculty candidates who could be recruited for future vacancies.

RESEARCH ON THE ACADEMIC PIPELINE

In November of 2009, The Center for American Progress presented new research findings on the academic pipeline in its report “Staying Competitive: Patching America’s Leaky Pipeline in the Sciences.” While previous studies have found that women who earn Ph.D.s in the sciences are less likely than their male counterparts to pursue academic research positions, this publication sheds light on both *when* and *why* up-and-coming researchers decide to steer away from or leave careers at research-intensive universities.

One of the report’s major findings is that “family formation, particularly marriage and childbirth, is the most important reason why women with Ph.D.s in the sciences do not begin academic careers with tenure-track jobs” (p. 13). Findings also indicate that both marriage and children, rather than marriage alone, are influential in whether women receive tenure. For more details, see Figure 1 from the published report below.

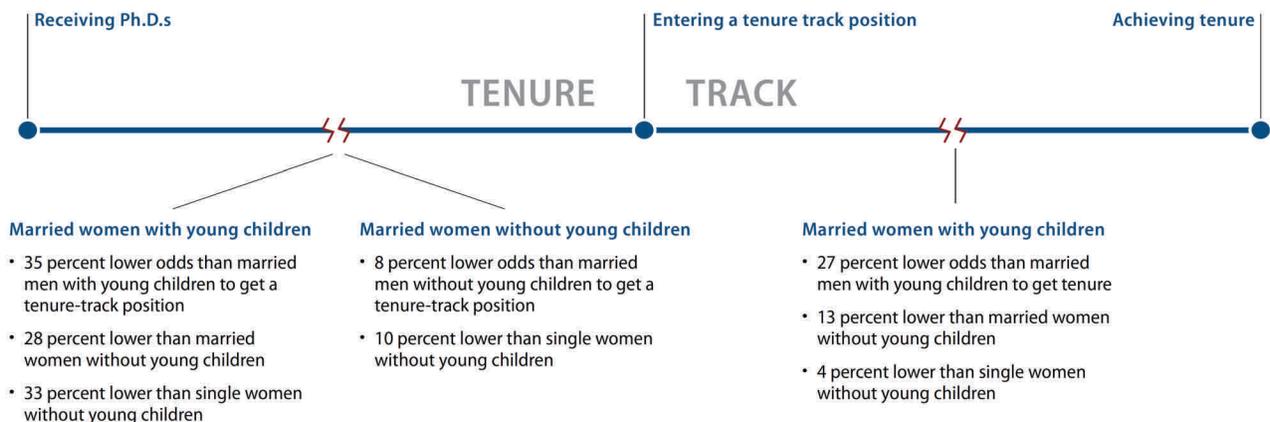
This research suggests that a primary reason for current leaks in the academic pipeline is that many women who are in a position to enter tenure-track faculty positions at research-intensive institutions (i.e., doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars) do not find this career path to be family friendly. In fact, only 28% of the female doctoral students and 36% of the female postdoctoral scholars surveyed agreed that tenure-track careers at research-intensive institutions are family friendly. As a comparison, 44% of male doctoral students and 52% of male postdoctoral scholars reported similar attitudes.

Although survey results show that both male and female scientists-in-training are shifting their career goals away from faculty positions at research-intensive institutions to positions such as tenure-track faculty at teaching-intensive institutions, non-tenure track faculty, and work in government or industry, this shift is more pronounced for women. While issues involving children, or future plans to have children, are the most influential factor in women’s change in plans, other reasons include feelings of isolation and a lack of mentoring and support.

These findings illustrate the importance of family friendly policies not only for faculty members, but students and postdoctoral scholars. Many students and postdoctoral scholars who have negative experiences during their training at research-intensive universities are pursuing other types of careers. With women comprising a larger and larger percentage of the talent pool, it is critical that their contributions are not lost to research-intensive universities. For a complete copy of the report, including recommendations for universities and federal agencies, visit: [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/11/women\\_and\\_sciences.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/11/women_and_sciences.html).

FIGURE 1  
Leaks in the pipeline to tenure for women Ph.D.s in the sciences\*

Married women with young children are less likely to enter a tenured-track position or become tenured



## 2010 ADVANCING DIVERSITY AT VIRGINIA TECH WORKSHOP

The seventh annual “Advancing Diversity at Virginia Tech” workshop hosted by *AdvanceVT* and the Office for Equity and Inclusion was held at the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center on January 11, 2010. Approximately 290 people from across the university attended. Participants included A/P faculty, tenured and tenure-track faculty, research faculty, staff, department heads, instructors, library faculty, and students.



Keynote Speaker Dr. Freeman Hrabowski

The highlight of the day for many participants was the keynote address on “Creating a Climate of Success for All Students and Faculty” by Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, President of the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). Dr. Hrabowski currently chairs the National Academies’ Committee on Underrepresented Groups and the Science & Engineering Workforce Pipeline.

During his speech, Dr. Hrabowski highlighted initiatives that have proven successful at UMBC and shared components of his personal philosophy for advancing diversity in higher education. UMBC is currently at the forefront of efforts to increase the diversity of future leaders in science and engineering. Nearly 300 graduates of its nationally recognized Meyerhoff Scholars Program are currently pursuing graduate and professional degrees in STEM fields.

Many participants commented on the energy that Dr. Hrabowski brought to the day and found the workshop to be an energizing or re-energizing experience. In the words of one participant, *“I’m committed to diversity at Virginia Tech and attending such meetings helps to stay focused on our goals and not take our past and even present successes for granted. We can do better.”*

The seventh annual “Advancing Diversity at Virginia Tech” workshop also featured university status reports: one on *AdvanceVT* from Mark McNamee, Senior Vice President and Provost, and another on the Office for Equity and Inclusion from Karen Eley Sanders, Interim Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. In the afternoon, participants were able to attend one of five breakout sessions on faculty mentoring, UMBC’s Meyerhoff Scholars Program, work/life balance, dealing with differences in the workplace, and Virginia Tech’s Employment Climate Survey. The day’s events concluded with a poster session.



Workshop Poster Session Participants

*AdvanceVT* is a comprehensive program to promote and enhance the careers of women in academic science and engineering at Virginia Tech through institutional transformation.

Elements of *AdvanceVT* include:

**Pipeline: Advancing Women into Faculty Careers**

**Recruitment: Increasing the Representation of Women**

**Leadership: Empowering Women as Leaders and Scholars**

**Institutional Change: Updating Policies and Changing Culture**

*AdvanceVT* publishes university statistics annually and newsletters bimonthly. To view previous newsletters and university statistics, please visit [www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu)