The Power of Personal Philanthropy
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On the cover At a Sept. 27, 2007, celebration, VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., thanks the generous donors who made the Campaign for VCU a resounding success.

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VCU President-elect Michael Rao, Ph.D., greets Irene Lubker, research librarian at the Tompkins-McCaw Library, and her colleagues (from left) Shannon Jones, head of Outreach Services, and Barbara Wright, reference services librarian, at a March 5 campus forum.

VCU welcomes its fifth president, Michael Rao

The Virginia Commonwealth University Board of Visitors announced in late February that Michael Rao, Ph.D., president of Central Michigan University, will become VCU’s next president, president of the VCU Health System and a tenured professor July 1.

Rao, 42, comes to VCU with 15 years of successful service as president of universities of increasing size and complexity, including a large doctoral research university. He was also a college dean. He also has served in the private sector as a higher education academic program planner.

Rao earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the University of South Florida and a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Florida. “Michael Rao’s accomplishments are remarkable,” said VCU Rector Tom Rosenthal.

“Members of the board, the Presidential Search Committee and others representing university groups who have met Mike are excited about the energy, enthusiasm and intelligence he will bring to VCU as its fifth president.”

Rao sees a bright future for VCU, which has accomplished so much during its history. “I have enjoyed hearing my new colleagues share their visions and dreams for the university as we look toward making significant next steps together,” he said. “I look forward to helping the university team focus and prioritize goals for the near term and long term.”

Alumni and friends play a profound role in helping VCU achieve those goals, Rao said. “We have an important opportunity to reconnect with our alumni, from VCU, MCV and RPI, and to engage them in volunteer activities, student recruitment, annual and planned giving and more,” he said. “This university has a special relationship with its donors and alumni, and I look forward to continuing and strengthening this successful collaboration.”

— VCU Rector Tom Rosenthal
After serving at Virginia Commonwealth University for nearly two decades, Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., will retire June 30 as president of VCU and president and chair of the VCU Health System. He will remain at VCU as University Distinguished Professor.

Dr. Trani’s remarkable tenure has been marked by numerous advancements in education, research, community partnerships and infrastructure. The collaborations he formed with alumni, friends and corporate and community partners helped transform VCU into the largest university in Virginia. Likewise, Lois Trani’s service as first lady must be recognized. She has been a steadfast and proud emissary for VCU.

Here, donors and alumni share their thoughts and well wishes for Dr. and Mrs. Trani.
Under Gene’s leadership, VCU is now on the map. He has spearheaded an amazing expansion of facilities and programs. … Gene is very creative and thoughtful so when he paints a vision of what is needed and what is possible, you want to jump on the VCU train. … Our future is extremely bright. Thanks to Gene and his team, we have an incredible foundation for our future. I firmly believe that VCU is capable of anything that we set our minds to.

– Thomas G. Snead Jr. (B.S. ’76), member, VCU Board of Visitors, and founding trustee, School of Business Foundation board

Gene has transformed VCU and redefined the university’s role in our city. Whenever Gene set a goal, you could be confident that it would be achieved and would be proud to support it.

– Steven A. Markel, vice chairman, Markel Corp., and founding trustee and chair, VCU School of Business Foundation board

Dr. Trani has built VCU into a world-class institution with an international reputation. His legacy includes the creation of the School of Engineering, advancing the School of Medicine and increasing the student population. May you and Lois continue to be blessed with good health and happiness.

– Dianne and C. Kenneth Wright, longtime VCU benefactors

I was in the Siegel Center during the homecoming basketball game sitting with my 7-year-old daughter. She looked over at the student section and asked, ‘Daddy, is that where you sat when you went here?’ I said, ‘Well, Riley, this building wasn’t here when I went to school.’ She thought about that, smiled and said, ‘Well, it will be here for me.’ Dr. Trani, thank you for being there for us.

– Dan Massey (B.S. ’92), president, VCU Alumni Association
With the stock market continuing its difficulties, personal 401(k) accounts are not the only investments suffering. Universities across the country are watching their endowments shrink significantly, putting scholarships and other endowment funds at risk of not being awarded in the coming year and beyond.

In December, Yale University reported that its endowment had lost 25 percent, or $5.5 billion, in four months. Harvard University said its endowment had lost 22 percent and that it would likely post its worst returns in 40 years.

At Virginia Commonwealth University, the situation is similar. The VCU Foundation and the School of Business Foundation have seen their investments shrink almost 23 percent since July 1, 2008. The MCV Foundation’s endowment dropped 24 percent from July to December 2008. The School of Engineering Foundation’s endowment dropped about 18 percent.

Each of these foundations is adapting to the downturn in differing ways.

“A good number of our individually endowed funds have a market value below their respective historic dollar value,” said William P. Kotti, Ph.D., president of the MCV Foundation. “The MCV Foundation uses a three-year averaging formula, which provides a leveling effect for the peaks and valleys of market performance.

“We are confident that we will be able to cover the payout demands on all of our endowed funds on the MCV Campus for the next fiscal year. However, we are closely monitoring the situation, for if the financial markets continue to drop, sustaining the same level of support through the endowment will become more challenging.”

The VCU Foundation manages about 400 endowment funds for schools on the Monroe Park Campus and employs a similar formula, said Thomas C. Burke, executive director, but many of the funds are fairly new and do not have a lot of cushion.

“Each endowment fund’s performance is affected by when it was established,” Burke said. “All scholarships that have been created at the VCU Foundation since 2000 — over half of those on this campus — have less money than the original gift amount. We are in an unprecedented place. I hope our funds will recover over the next two years; however, it could take longer depending on the economy.”

That’s where donors can make a difference.

“Donors have called to offer additional gifts to keep important research moving forward and making sure that outstanding students on both campuses can continue receiving assistance,” Kotti said.

John Seibert (B.S. ’72), president of Manchester Marketing Inc. and Seibert’s Family of Companies, stepped up to the plate this winter when he learned the Seibert Family Scholarship, which he and his wife, Shirley, created in the School of Business, might not be awarded this fall.

“We created the Seibert Family Scholarship because we are committed to supporting the School of Business in attracting outstanding students,” Seibert said. “We did not want to interrupt that momentum because of the economic situation, so we made an additional gift.”

The other campus foundations are calling on donors and alumni to help, too.

“We’ll work through this, and our alumni and friends will help ... as they always have,” said Ken Blaisdell, executive director of the School of Business Foundation. “The students’ financial welfare comes first, and we will do all we can to ensure that they receive the support due them.”

To make a scholarship gift, visit www.givenow.vcu.edu/centraladvancement.
Growing up in Ibadan, Nigeria, taught 25-year-old Dr. Jemilat Badamas (M.D. ’09) the importance of good health care.

“I remember when the neighborhood kids stopped showing up to play in the streets, you are told they passed away, but nobody can tell you why or what happened, not because they do not want you to know but because there is nobody to explain it to them,” she said.

The daughter of a college professor and a school board director who had both attended college in the U.S., Badamas always knew she was bound to study in America. At 18, she moved to the States to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor.

First, she earned an undergraduate degree in biology, financed entirely by scholarships, at Morgan State University in Baltimore. When the time came to choose a medical school, Badamas chose the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine for a number of reasons.

“I was immediately drawn to the relaxing yet stimulating atmosphere and the diverse student background. I thought the curriculum was what I needed,” said Badamas, who graduated in May. “I wanted to be at an institution where I felt all doors were open in both clinical and research aspects of medicine.”

In addition to its versatile program, VCU offered financial support. For all four years of her medical education, Badamas received the Anne Marie and Jonathan Seth Perel Medical Scholarship, which was a deciding factor in her selection of the out-of-state school.

The scholarship was established in 1989 by the Jonathan Seth Perel Foundation in honor of Jonathan Seth Perel, a former MCV Foundation board member.

“It made my tuition comparable to what it would have been if I stayed in my home state,” Badamas said.

Last year, Badamas was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society, which recognizes medical students who have excelled academically and show promise of becoming leaders.

Though Badamas admits that “medical school has been a full-time job since the first day,” she still finds time for community service. She has tutored students, has volunteered at area homeless and remote-area clinics, has mentored high school students and has been a presenter for Tar Wars, a VCU-sponsored tobacco-free education program for Richmond public schoolchildren.

Badamas is training in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. She hopes to complete a gastroenterology fellowship and a master’s in public health and to continue working toward better health for those around her.

The School of Medicine’s capacity to attract students like Badamas to meet the growing needs of the community is limited by the availability of financial assistance, explained Dean Jerome F. Strauss III, M.D., Ph.D. Not surprisingly, student scholarships have been a priority for Strauss since his arrival three years ago.

“The escalating cost of a medical education is a challenge for creating a pool of physicians who are dedicated to primary care and are working in communities that are underserved by medical professionals,” Strauss said.

To make a gift to the School of Medicine, contact Tom Holland, associate dean for development, at (804) 828-4800, (800) 332-8813 or tehollan@vcu.edu.
Virginia Commonwealth University junior Ian Bennett is a standout in the School of Business. Studying financial technology, economics and statistics, Bennett has maintained a 4.0 grade-point average throughout his college career. In 2008, his hard work was rewarded. He won a Charles G. Thalhimer Family Scholarship.

Raised in Midlothian, Va., Bennett comes from a family of five children with divorced parents. For him, financing his education has been a struggle. With the aid of the Thalhimer Family Scholarship, however, Bennett said he has more time to devote to his studies, his community and his future.

“Since I don’t have to worry about finances, I can talk to more industry professionals, working on my career,” he said.

The Thalhimer Family Scholarship was established in 1986 as a part of the Thalhimer Family Endowment Fund. The scholarship provides recipients with funding for one year’s tuition and fees as well as a stipend.

Charles G. Thalhimer Sr. had recently retired from Thalhimer Brothers when then-president of VCU Edmund F. Ackell, M.D., D.M.D., asked for his help raising funds for the university. Thalhimer’s wife, Rhoda, who passed away in 2003, had served on the board of the VCU Foundation for more than 20 years and had encouraged his participation. Thalhimer accepted Ackell’s challenge, beginning with a significant gift of his own, which created the Thalhimer Family Endowment Fund.

“I know how vital VCU is to the community,” Thalhimer said. “It’s been a great part of my life, seeing things develop the way that they have and staying involved.”

The Thalhimer Fund also allows the school to bring in an annual scholar-in-residence and an executive-in-residence for lectures.

Each year, Thalhimer and his son, Harry, try to meet with the recipients of their family scholarship. “Meeting them has been incredibly impressive,” the younger Thalhimer said.

Bennett said he was honored to meet Thalhimer family members at a number of events held to honor scholarship donors and their recipients.

“They seemed genuinely interested in my success, my future outlook. I felt overwhelmingly thankful more than anything,” he said.

The Thalhimer family has been extremely generous to the university over the years, not only aiding the School of Business but also providing support elsewhere, from creating an endowed chair in the School of the Arts to providing crucial funding throughout the School of Medicine, including research at the VCU Massey Cancer Center.

“Our university is fortunate to have such an extraordinary family take an interest in our students and our programs,” said Ken Blaisdell, executive director of the School of Business Foundation. “When the history of VCU is written, the Thalhimer family will be seen as playing a pivotal philanthropic role, literally helping to change the character and reputation of the institution.”

To make a gift to the School of Business, contact Ken Blaisdell, executive director of the School of Business Foundation, at (804) 828-1487 or kcblaisdell@vcu.edu.
Dr. Richard W. Cottrell (D.D.S. ’98) began his academic path later than most. Originally from Forked River, N.J., Cottrell moved to Virginia in his early 20s in search of work, because opportunities were slim in New Jersey in the 1980s. He found a job installing flooring and quickly recognized that he needed to do something more.

“I realized it was a hard job, and it didn’t seem like I could ever get ahead, so I decided to go to college,” Cottrell said.

He began his education at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College at age 26 and graduated from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry in 1998. Cottrell then went to work establishing a dental practice in rural King George, Va., which was experiencing a shortage of dentists at the time.

Things were tough in the beginning, mainly because he was doing all the work himself. His experience with floor installation came in handy then, he said.

“I put the walls down on my practice, put my floors down, built it myself,” he said.

Cottrell’s practice has grown considerably since those lean early days. He now operates offices in King George, Fredericksburg, Bowling Green and Callao. He attributes the quick growth of his practice to his active role in the communities he serves. These days, Cottrell volunteers at the Moss Free Clinic, a public health clinic that provides dental care to underserved individuals in Fredericksburg.

“You have to be trusted as a dentist — once patients feel like you care, then they’ll come to you,” he said.

Cottrell said he is eternally grateful to his alma mater for giving him the education he needed to be where he is today. Cottrell appreciated VCU’s diverse student body — as an older student, he didn’t feel so out of place, as he had with the teenagers in his classes at Reynolds. The School of Dentistry “taught me to be a great dentist,” he said.

His wife, Pamela, is also a VCU School of Dentistry graduate who earned a dental hygiene degree in 2002. Cottrell and his wife met when she was an undergraduate at Radford University. She was unsure if dentistry was for her so she decided to get a job in the field, working for him as an assistant. Eventually, she completed her education and married Cottrell.

To show his gratitude to the university that helped him rise from his humble beginnings, Cottrell recently pledged $100,000 to the school.

“Dr. Cottrell has worked hard over the years in all he has done, and he and his family have reaped the benefits,” said Ed Kardos, director of development for the School of Dentistry. “He is a perfect example of how furthering one’s education can make all the difference in the world. His generosity helps inspire others to follow suit.”

Cottrell hopes his gift will help the school survive these tough economic times.

“I know they need the money to keep things going. I hope they can pay people better, keep the technology modern and state-of-the-art and move forward instead of backward,” he said.

To make a gift to the School of Dentistry, contact Ed Kardos, director of development, at (804) 828-0324 or egkardos@vcu.edu.
Gloria Oates’ late husband, baseball great Johnny Oates, spent the last four days of his life in the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center’s Thomas Palliative Care Unit. He lost his battle with a brain tumor on Christmas Eve 2004.

The days he spent in the palliative care unit were the most serene of his illness, Gloria Oates said.

“The palliative care staff was so skilled and compassionate. He was peaceful, and we were able to just stand around him and love him,” she said.

Oates realized some of the pain her husband had endured before moving to the unit could have been relieved sooner had she known about palliative care.

Palliative care deals with pain and symptom management in patients with serious illnesses. The main goal is to improve quality of life for these patients.

Oates also became a champion for the cause. She began by contributing funds and energy toward sprucing up the 11-bed unit and its family room.

But her philanthropy did not stop there. Oates met with Massey’s palliative care program co-founders, Thomas Smith, M.D., and Pat Coyne, R.N., to discuss their needs. As leaders of this fast-growing form of care —Massey is one of six model training sites for palliative care in the nation— Smith laid out the case for creating an endowed chair in palliative care, which he now holds.

“It helps enhance the prestige of palliative care to the same level of cardiology and oncology,” said Smith, director of the palliative care unit. “It keeps getting harder and harder to do all the clinical care alongside the need for research and teaching, and one of the best ways to free up time for research and teaching is to have an endowed position.”

Fundraising began with a substantial gift from the now defunct Thomas Hospice Palliative Care Foundation, led by former trustee Barbara Hughes. With the aid of many other grass-roots contributors, the goal of $1 million was reached. Oates was one of the leading contributors, providing support through personal funds and raising money through an annual golf tournament, sponsored by the Prince George Ruritan Club.

The Massey Endowed Chair in Palliative Care Research will enable Smith’s research to advance the field. Smith said he is excited to see palliative care becoming more widespread.

“I’ve always considered pain and symptom management and good communication as core skills of oncology as opposed to just treating the disease,” he said. “Luckily the field of medical oncology has moved substantially toward that direction.”

Rosemary LaVista, executive director of development for Massey, explains that the palliative care chair is unique because, while most endowed chairs are created by a single donor or by a family, more than 100 people made a gift to support this initiative.

“That speaks to the commitment of so many people to the need to recognize and support this model palliative care program — and to the conviction that Dr. Smith should receive this high honor,” LaVista said. “Even the staff and volunteers, led by Barbara Geer, who offered a matching gift challenge, got involved. The endowed chair in palliative care is a wonderful example of how private support can move important research forward as government funding is harder to secure.”

To make a gift to Massey Cancer Center, contact Rosemary LaVista, executive director of development, at (804) 828-1452 or rlavista@vcu.edu.
Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter Director Rick Boyko believes that radio advertising, which he calls “theater of the mind,” has long been overlooked in the industry.

“I think for a long time the medium’s been under-leveraged. It’s a great form to tell stories in a serialized way,” he said.

Now Boyko can champion this cause thanks to a new partnership with the Radio Advertising Bureau, an organization that aims to organize and improve sales and marketing in the radio industry. To that end, the bureau has pledged $250,000 over the next five years to fund a new curriculum in radio advertising at the Brandcenter.

Radio Advertising Bureau President and CEO Jeff Haley sees this new partnership as a step toward bringing radio advertising into the 21st century.

“People are listening to radio on their cell phones, desktops, audio on Blackberrys, etc., and the ads haven’t necessarily kept up. … [Radio advertising] hasn’t challenged itself to shift with the way the culture has shifted,” he said. “Through these efforts with the VCU Brandcenter, we’re going to do something that’s going to kind of solve that.”

Radio advertising offers many advantages over other advertising media because it relies on the imagination of the listener and the creativity of its developers, Haley said.

“You can create things in radio that would be incredibly costly to create in other media. I can talk about eating ice cream on Mars and people can imagine what that’d be like. That wouldn’t be easy to create compellingly in a visual ad. I think it is that imagination and those images can be brought to mind individually across many listeners at once that is very compelling,” he said.

The new curriculum at the VCU Brandcenter will introduce students to the advantages of radio advertising and will foster the creative thinking that should help them create more imaginative and effective ads as professionals, Boyko said. The changes will occur in an existing class, which will offer the additional material beginning this fall.

“They’ll get a better understanding of how the medium can be used and challenge them to challenge the industry to look at radio as a great form of storytelling and a mass communication tool,” Boyko said.

The Radio Advertising Bureau is proud to have partnered with VCU, Haley said.

“VCU stands clearly at the forefront as one of the best portfolio schools in the country. They’re focused on doing real work and have one of the best breeds of creative staff on faculty. It’s really unique. We recognized that and wanted to take advantage of it,” he said.

To make a gift to the VCU Brandcenter, contact Beth Harrington, senior director of development, at (804) 828-8384 or ekharrington@vcu.edu.
The Power of Personal Philanthropy

The Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center’s 14th Annual Women & Wellness Forum Series celebrated another success Feb. 10 when nearly 700 people gathered at The Jefferson Hotel to hear breakfast and lunch talks by Anne Thompson, chief environmental correspondent for NBC News and a breast cancer survivor. Thompson shared insights from her international coverage of the environment. Thompson, who was diagnosed with stage III cancer in 2006, continued working throughout her yearlong battle with breast cancer. Her work was “part of the cure,” she said. “It gave me purpose. It made me feel normal.”

Presenting sponsor The Jenkins Foundation and speaker sponsor Wachovia were among the many generous local businesses, organizations and individuals that supported the fundraiser, which netted $210,000 for breast cancer research at Massey.

The Virginia Commonwealth University Athletics made a splash last semester with the introduction of the Student Ram Athletic Fund, a program that rewards students for supporting the department with a small donation. The program has raised more than $3,000 and has inducted 65 student members.

Now, VCU Athletics plans to extend the benefits of the student group to young alumni. Both the student and young alumni funds are part of the Ram Athletic Fund, which primarily provides scholarship aid for student-athletes while offering benefits to donors. The new effort provides rewards to alumni who have graduated since 2005. The campaign, however, isn’t limited to only VCU alumni — young alumni from any college or university are welcome to participate.

“We have so many people who love VCU basketball who have gone to Virginia Tech or U.Va. … if they really want to support us, why would we turn them away?” said Justin Jannuzzi, assistant director of ticketing and donor relations for VCU Athletics.

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The Robins Foundation donated $75,000 to support the Edulead program in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education. Edulead is a partnership between the University of Richmond’s Center for Leadership in Education and VCU’s Center for School Improvement that strives to improve K-12 school leadership, instruction and student achievement in greater Richmond.

The School of Social Work received $40,000 to supplement the Anne R. Fischer Scholarship via a bequest from Fischer’s estate. Fischer (M.S.W. ’44) died in April 2008 at the age of 105 and was a refugee from Nazi Germany.

Lisa and Steven Goodwin, along with son Connor, founders of Connor’s Heroes, visited the VCU Massey Cancer Center’s Goodwin Research Laboratory in December and presented a check for $60,510.40 to be split between the Jamie Hess Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Fund and the Pediatric Cancer Research Endowment Fund. Connor is a six-year survivor of acute lymphoblastic lymphoma, and the foundation is dedicated to providing support and raising money for pediatric cancer research.

Connor Goodwin proudly presents a donation on behalf of Connor’s Heroes. He is joined (from left to right) by his parents, Steven and Lisa Goodwin, Dr. Gordon Ginder, director of the VCU Massey Cancer Center, and Dr. William Moskowitz, chair of the VCU Division of Pediatric Cardiology.

In other giving news . . .

New staff members join advancement team

Rob Brodsky
Director of Membership and Marketing
Office of Alumni Relations
(804) 828-1672
rebrodsky@vcu.edu
Formerly president of Sabre Marketing in Houston

Cinthia Satornino
Director of Gifts and Records Management
Advancement Services
(804) 828-4739
csatornino@vcu.edu
Formerly associate director of operations at the University of Central Florida Foundation

James Wasilewski
Assistant Director of Annual Giving
VCU Massey Cancer Center
(804) 828-1466
wasilewskijr@vcu.edu
Formerly assistant dean of admissions at Stetson University
In December, Virginia Commonwealth University’s 40th Anniversary celebration culminated with a performance by entertainer Bill Cosby.

About 6,500 students, alumni, faculty and community members gathered in the Alltel Pavilion of the Stuart C. Siegel Center to hear Cosby’s talk, which inaugurated the L. Douglas Wilder Lectureship Series. A special pre-event reception honored board members, donors and other special guests.

Thanks to Cosby’s generosity, tickets to the event were free. The Dominion Foundation gave $25,000 to establish the lectureship series, which will bring to campus renowned figures from all facets of government and public affairs and will provide curricular enrichment for students and community members.

School launches VCU Business Society at game

The alumni organization for the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business, the VCU Business Society, welcomed about 720 alumni and friends to a “tip-off” event Jan. 17. The crowd gathered in the Stuart C. Siegel Center Auxiliary Gym for a pep rally with the VCU cheerleaders, dance team and pep band before the VCU Rams rolled to a win over the Old Dominion Monarchs.

The purpose of the VCU Business Society is to help further the educational and career goals of School of Business students and graduates. The society is led by an alumni board and is supported by alumni annual giving.

Anyone holding a degree or post-graduate certificate from the business school is a member. Active society members host events and mentor students while helping to strengthen the relationship between alumni and the school. The group works closely with the VCU Alumni Association to offer campuswide programs and events.

Annual event recognizes pharmacy school donors

Nearly 100 Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy alumni, faculty, students and friends gathered in November for the annual Galen Society dinner. The Galen Society recognizes benefactors who donate $500 or more. A reception featuring a string quartet and the dinner, followed by remarks from Dean Victor A. Yanovich, Ph.D., took place at The Jefferson Hotel.

VCU School of Pharmacy alumus John W. Hasty (B.S. ’56) and his wife, Pat, enjoy the Galen Society dinner. Pat’s daughter, Kelly, earned her B.S. in pharmacy in 1985 and the couple endowed the John W. Hasty and Kelly Hasty Kale Scholarship.
About 300 students, faculty and advertising practitioners met in late January for Google Campus Day at the Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter’s new state-of-the-art facility.

Representatives from Google set up kiosks to present in-depth tours of new Google tools, such as Google Analytics and Google Trends, which can be used in the advertising and marketing industries.

The Martin Agency, based in Richmond, also worked with Brandcenter students in idea “jam sessions.” Top students at the Brandcenter and Martin Agency employees were split into groups and given specific products for real clients. The groups were asked to solve marketing issues for the product in a limited amount of time.

Google Campus Day, arranged by the Brandcenter, Google and The Martin Agency, was designed to let participants become familiar with new forms of technology and to consider new ways of research and execution in advertising.

The partnership between the VCU Brandcenter and Google continues to grow with such initiatives as a class project for the search engine company and the Googlers guest lecture in the creative technology track.

Bow Tie Cinemas’ Movieland theater celebrated its Feb. 26 grand opening with a premiere of “Sunshine Cleaning,” starring Amy Adams, Emily Blunt and Alan Arkin. More than 200 people flocked to the new theater, the only one within the Richmond city limits, for a reception and the screening, which also featured an introduction by screenwriter and Richmond native Megan Holley.

Guests at the event contributed more than $9,000 to benefit the Virginia Commonwealth University Children’s Medical Center, which is a state-of-the-art, family-centered, full-service “hospital within a hospital.” Each year, the center provides more than 100,000 outpatient visits, 450 air and ground transports, 19,000 emergency room visits, 1,000 intensive-care admissions and 3,500 acute-care admissions.