

May 4, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake in Haiti destroyed the lives of students, staff, faculty, facilities, and infrastructure in most of its universities, nearly all of which were located in Port-au-Prince. Much like the selfless outreach in other extreme times of need, I am most proud and grateful for the many ways that the Virginia Tech community has responded to this tragedy, especially through the generous donations and outpouring of support to the various agencies working on relief and recovery efforts in Haiti. Thank you.

As you know, we were honored earlier this month to host the Haitian Ambassador on our campus. While he was here, we were able to discuss our commitment to the long-term recovery of Haiti. He was grateful and encouraging. Because of Virginia Tech's existing relationships with Haitian universities [for example, L'École Supérieure d'Infotronique d'Haïti (ESIH), Faculté d'Agronomie et de Médecine Vétérinaire of the state university of Haiti (UEH)], and major non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Haiti [such as Partners in Health/Zanmi Lasante and Zanmi Agrikol], our university is well positioned to provide an innovative and effective program of assistance to the higher education system of Haiti, while at the same time expanding the global perspective and knowledge of VT students in a manner consistent with our strategic goals ([Virginia Tech Strategic Plan 2006-2012](#)) and core values of Ut Prosim.

In support of our outreach and engagement programs, at an institutional level, Virginia Tech is creating a partnership with the Haitian Education and Leadership Program (H.E.L.P.) and up to five Haitian universities to form the VT Haiti Intern Program. Additionally, on a more personal level, this program represents an opportunity and commitment of individual students, faculty, university administrators, and community members to make a positive difference in shaping Haiti's future.

The VT Haiti Intern Program will bring 20 Haitian undergraduates who are at the senior thesis-stage to Virginia Tech for one semester during the 2010-2011 academic year utilizing our existing J-1 "intern" visa program. Working under the guidance of Virginia Tech faculty (and possibly junior-faculty from the home universities), these interns will complete their undergraduate thesis projects in the context of our on-going or planned research and/or service projects in Haiti. To have the greatest impact on Haiti's rebuilding efforts; this program will focus primarily on academic areas and projects that can generate solutions to Haiti's immediate problems, such as agriculture, computer science, engineering, entrepreneurship, and forestry. Upon returning to Haiti, the interns will receive diplomas from their home universities. In addition, up to five junior faculty members of these universities will also participate in this program for the purpose of enhancing their research and teaching skills, thereby strengthening the instructional capacity of our Haitian university partners.

Faculty and community support is critical to the success of this program. Faculty volunteers are needed to mentor and supervise Haitian interns and junior-faculty members. In the ideal situation, involving these individuals in Haiti-related research and/or service projects will contribute to the overall success and impact of these projects, thereby enhancing the faculty member's productivity. Financial support

***Invent the Future***

from the community is needed to pay the direct cost of this program, which is estimated at \$100,000. The Community Foundation of the New River Valley and the [YMCA of Virginia Tech](#) are serving as the fiduciary agents to support this effort.

Please contact Dr. Bryan Cloyd ([bcloyd@vt.edu](mailto:bcloyd@vt.edu)) or Dr. Patrick Guilbaud ([Guilbaud@vt.edu](mailto:Guilbaud@vt.edu)) if you are interested in participating in this special demonstration of the university's global commitment to *Ut Prosim*.

Best wishes,



Mark G. McNamee  
Senior Vice President and Provost