A heartfelt congratulations to David Urban as he assumes the Interim Dean position for the VCU School of Business (see page 2). At the same time, I will serve as Interim Chair of the Marketing Department. In my 25 years in the VCU School of Business, I have served as faculty advisor to the evening MBA and Fast Track Executive MBA programs, the associate dean of graduate studies, and a professor of marketing. I am excited to be working with students, faculty, and the business community in my new role.

Continuing innovation is as important as ever in today’s global economy, and innovative firms must develop new products to meet consumer needs. This past summer, 20 graduate students in the MBA and Master of Science in Global Marketing Management programs had the opportunity to work with the Virginia Bioscience Commercialization Center (VBCC) to determine the market potential of a new medical product. Students met with VBCC Executive Director Donna Edmonds (see page 7) and interviewed VCU Medical School physicians.

Professors Van R. Wood, Frank Franzak, and I met regularly with these students as part of the Marketing Plan & Market Research Field Projects class. These are examples of the many ways that VCU School of Business students interact with clients and participate in the commercialization process. We look forward to building on these successes in the coming year.

Michael W. Little, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing and Interim Chair
MARKETING CHAIR DAVID URBAN NAMED INTERIM DEAN OF VCU SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Dr. David Urban, longtime professor and former chair of the Department of Marketing, steps in this year as interim dean of the VCU School of Business. Dr. Urban replaces Michael Sesnowitz, Ph.D., who retired as dean on July 1 to join the Department of Economics as a professor.

“These are tremendously exciting times for VCU and for the School of Business. We have a lot to build on, based on the leadership provided by Dr. Eugene Trani and Dr. Michael Sesnowitz. I look forward to my new role with a great sense of humility and enthusiasm,” he says.

In his 20 years with the VCU School of Business, Dr. Urban has been honored with 8 national and international awards for teaching excellence. In 2001, he received the Outstanding Faculty Award in 2001 from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the highest honor for faculty at Virginia’s colleges and universities. As interim dean, Dr. Urban will still teach courses. This semester, he is leading a new course, a senior marketing seminar. In the course, students do research on area companies and interact with their chief marketing executives.

“I am very happy that I will continue to teach in the Department of Marketing. Interacting with students is one of the best parts of an academic career,” says Dr. Urban.

Dr. Urban has been interviewed by the Associated Press, Business Week, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Washington Post and USA Today. This year presents exciting opportunities to apply insights from the classroom and boardroom. “The best thing that we can do for our students and alumni is to continue to improve our programs and our reputation as a business school and as a university, because doing so adds value to the VCU degree,” says Dr. Urban.

NEW MARKETING PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Incoming Marketing Program Coordinator Rebecca Jones is a 1986 alumna of VCU School of the Arts. Before joining the VCU School of Business, she was managing editor of WORK-Magazine. There, she saw firsthand what a vibrant role the VCU School of Business plays in the Greater Richmond business community. Jones can be reached at (804) 828-1614 or at mktgdept@vcu.edu, or in the MKTG Department office suite, B3185 on the 3rd floor of Snead Hall.

MELANIE BOYNTON IS NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COORDINATOR

Former Marketing Program Coordinator Melanie Boynton, whose administrative expertise shaped the department, is now the VCU School of Business’s Strategic Initiatives Coordinator. While working in the Department of Marketing, Boynton also earned a spot in VCU’s Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute and is working on a Master of Public Administration.

MARKETING DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

The Department of Marketing welcomes Kenneth B. Kahn, Ph.D. as director of VCU’s da Vinci Center for Innovation in Product Design and Development. Dr. Kahn is a nationally recognized scholar and consultant in the field of product development.

He comes to VCU by way of Purdue University, where he was a Professor of Industrial Technology and the Avrum and Joyce Gray Director of the Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship. His research and teaching center on product development, product management, and demand forecasting for current and new products. Dr. Kahn’s marketing and engineering background is well suited to the da Vinci Center, which houses cross-disciplinary programs that foster collaboration among VCU’s Schools of the Arts, Business, and Engineering.
GRADUATE MARKETING COURSE GOES ONLINE -- AND GETS HIGH MARKS

Undergraduates have taken Introduction to Marketing online for a number of years, but summer 2009 marked the first time graduate students could take an online marketing course. Based on student feedback, Associate Professor of Marketing Dr. Deborah Cowles’ online version of Concepts & Issues in Marketing (MKTG 570) was a hit.

“This was one of the most helpful classes I have taken at VCU, and it was definitely the most convenient class I have taken...period. I would suggest it to my peers in a second,” says Danielle Wilson, a Dominion Resources, Inc. tax accountant who is in the Master of Accountancy program.

MKTG 570 provides a survey of all of the major principles and functional areas of marketing. Dr. Cowles also incorporated a social media marketing module, given the growing importance of blogs, online communities, and social networking sites in marketing strategy development. “This special topic also seems well-suited to the online setting of the course,” Dr. Cowles says. Course enrollee Christian Craft, who works for VCU Health Systems as an RN in the Surgery Trauma ICU, agrees.

“This online class not only met my expectations of what an online class should be, but also surpassed all expectations regarding everything I learned about social media marketing and Web 2.0,” says Craft, noting that the format also fit well into his family’s summer schedule, which included the birth of a baby daughter in July.

“The online version of MKTG 570 is a rewarding course that forces students to develop new study techniques in order to be successful. Not only do students learn up-to-the-minute, real world marketing strategies, but they also learn how to adapt to an online classroom setting,” says MBA student Adam Haywood, a mine planning engineer for Iluka Resources, Inc. who had previously taken online classes at Virginia Tech.

Dr. Cowles received excellent suggestions from students enrolled in the 8-week summer section to improve the MKTG 570 course offered in the fall. The course also features a 43-question online course-evaluation survey for anonymous student feedback, an instrument Dr. Cowles helped develop two years ago with the Faculty Learning Community “Developing Engaged Online Learners.”

MARKETING RESEARCH FOR MORE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LABELING

Assistant Professor Haeran Jae’s research project may help low-literacy consumers make better – and in some cases, life-saving – choices. It was born in a familiar place.

“I was walking through the grocery store and I saw a bottle of fabric softener with a picture of a mother and baby on the label. But when I read the back of the bottle, I saw the words, ‘Do not use on children’s sleepwear,’” says Dr. Jae, noting that the fabric softener contains a chemical that breaks down the flame-retardant required in children’s sleepwear.

This inconsistency between image and wording piqued the interest of Dr. Jae, whose research focuses on marketing communication with low-literacy consumers. The significant role pictures play in consumer decision making is well established. Dr. Jae’s current research extends knowledge in this area by suggesting that pictures in print advertisements may potentially degrade low-literacy consumers’ purchase decisions, especially pictures that are emotionally appealing.

Dr. Jae believes that this research will enable companies and policy makers to enact more effective labeling guidelines, possibly including more icons to convey warnings and safety precautions.

Assistant Professor of Marketing Dr. Haeran Jae and the bottle that inspired her research project
MARKETING MAJOR GABRIEL WALKER ELECTED STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT

Gabriel Walker, a junior majoring in marketing, has been elected President of the Monroe Park Student Government Association (SGA). Walker’s marketing background, knowledge, and skills proved to be good preparation for his campaign.

“A campaign is marketing and as such I took the initiative to be the first candidate to announce my candidacy and campaign publicly. A large part of effective marketing is about being the first,” says Walker. His campaign utilized traditional materials including flyers and posters. He also used viral advertising techniques such as videos and websites. Walker also understood the value of face-time in marketing and personally reached out to students throughout the campaign.

Balancing the demands of academics and running a campaign was the biggest challenge that Walker faced. He attributes his success to the skills he has cultivated in the VCU School of Business and to effective teamwork. He thanks all the students who supported him and the others on his ticket and is grateful for the chance to demonstrate his leadership skills.

In the future, Walker wishes to pursue a Doctor of Jurisprudence and eventually practice law. SGA strives to serve the general student population as well as voice their concerns and issues to the administration and the university as a whole. Supporting student initiatives and increasing awareness about the SGA are the two main goals that Walker will focus on during his presidency.

“I feel that we, the reps, can truly make a significant impact in the lives of VCU students if the students recognize our organization and its purpose,” says Walker.

VSEAKING MAJOR GABRIEL WALKER ELECTED STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT

Gabriel Walker believes a solid foundation in marketing gave him the winning edge in his quest to be SGA President.

SPEAKERS, SERVICE, AND MKTG BLOG LEAD AMA AGENDA

VCU’s collegiate chapter of the American Marketing Association has planned a full line-up of speakers and community service activities. Stay up-to-date on these and other projects by following the new MKTG blog. On September 30, Mark Worrall of the US Postal Service shares his expertise on multi-channel marketing. On October 7, the AMA presents Necole Simmonds of Johnson, Inc., Virginia’s only full-service, minority-owned marketing and communications firm. AMA volunteers will help with the Children’s Museum of Richmond Halloween and Richmond Folk Festival activities. The AMA’s food drive for the Central Virginia Food Bank runs Oct. 26 through Nov. 13. If the standing-room-only crowd at the AMA Fall Meet & Greet is any indication, they will have plenty of help. AMA students will also manage a marketing student blog on the new website. The interactive blog features real-world marketing stories from students, alumni, and professionals and interviews with industry pro’s.

AMA Officers (L—R): Chris Saunders (Vice President), Svetlana Korenman (VP of Promotions and Activities), Brittany Gary (President), Tyler Owens (VP of Recruitment and Membership), Eliza Robinson (Secretary), and Dr. Jodie Ferguson (Faculty Advisor).
ERIN FITZPATRICK (‘07): Meet Saatchi & Saatchi’s new member and VCU alumna

When Erin Fitzpatrick looks out her office window, she can see the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and the Statue of Liberty. Fitzpatrick, a 2007 graduate of the VCU School of Business Department of Marketing, credits VCU with giving her the skills and knowledge to handle big accounts as an Assistant Account Executive in Saatchi & Saatchi’s flagship office.

“VCU’s marketing program gave me the foundation I needed to succeed in this industry. Being able to present work to clients in the classroom was valuable experience, since I work with clients on a regular basis,” says Fitzpatrick. One of those clients is model Cindy Crawford. Crawford has recently partnered with national retailer JCPenney to create a line of home furnishing and accessories called Cindy Crawford Home.

With a September 2009 launch, Fitzpatrick has been busy supporting the pre-production, production, and post production of television and print for the Cindy Crawford line. Fitzpatrick’s broadcast support responsibilities include preparing upper management and creative’s for presenting concepts, timeline management, pre-bidding the job, awarding a director, and presenting casting and locations. For the line’s print campaign, Fitzpatrick is responsible for concept presentation, awarding a photographer, and coordinating pre-production, retouching, and approval.

“New product development with Dr. Franzak was a great way to challenge my creativity to come up with new products,” says Fitzpatrick. “And having multiple projects going on at the same time helped me manage my time and work under pressure to meet deadlines.” She also cites honing her communication skills and having the opportunity to work with real clients as a VCU undergraduate as a valuable learning experience.

“Communications Behavior with Kim Gower helped me perfect my communication skills during presentations and to write professionally, which I am extremely thankful for as I write emails constantly and speak often in client and agency meetings,” she says. Fitzpatrick advises other undergraduates who are hoping to work in big agencies to gain as much experience as they can, both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to coursework in the School of Business, Fitzpatrick regularly attended speaker programs at VCU’s BrandCenter. She also interned with local companies such as Punch and Richmond Magazine.

“Enjoy college while you can,” says Fitzpatrick. “Find your passion and apply it.”

WHERE WE STAND: THE MKTG DEPARTMENT AT A GLANCE

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Dr. Thomas Myers is Assistant Professor in the VCU School of Business and has been an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Marketing for 32 years. He talked with us about the rewards of the classroom, the impact of the Internet, and the work ethic of “The Boss.”

Where were you born? Where did you go to school? I am a native of Richmond, Virginia and received my BA, MS and PhD from Virginia Commonwealth University. I completed additional undergraduate and graduate coursework at University of Richmond and University of Maryland.

Why did you settle in Richmond? After going to school and working in the Washington, D.C. area, I decided to return to Richmond. The overall quality of life led me to settle down in Richmond. Richmond has many of the attractions of a big city, yet it maintains some of the charm of a small town. There is an abundance of cultural, educational and business opportunities here as well as a reasonable cost of living.

What political or world event has most shaped your life and experience? As a member of the “Baby Boomer” generation, my life experience was largely shaped by events tied to the Cold War. For me, there was always some expectation that world war and global destruction were clear and present dangers. That led me to appreciate life one day at a time and to try to get the most out of each day.

What recent political, world, or local event has been the most interesting to you? The rise of the Internet has been the most interesting event for me. More than anything else, it has revolutionized many aspects of my social and business life. I am excited to see where we go from here with related technological innovation.

What has been your favorite thing about living in Virginia? My favorite thing about living in Virginia is that I am always close to the beaches and the mountains. Fall is especially beautiful here and there is a nice change of seasons.

Why did you become a professor? Teaching is attractive to me because every semester there is an opportunity to meet many interesting people and make friends from all over the world. Classroom interaction with students is both entertaining and intellectually challenging.

What are you most passionate about in life? I am most passionate about my family. I also enjoy sports, cinema, and music. I’m an avid guitar player and enjoy playing and recording music.

What interested you in your field of study? I was initially attracted to marketing because I felt it was an area that many organizations misunderstood and misused. I believe that effective marketing is the key to success for any organization. Much of my work and research has been in the area of public sector and non-profit organization marketing because these are areas in which I feel marketing has great untapped potential.

Who has been your greatest inspiration? There are so many family members and friends who have inspired me over the years. However, Bruce Springsteen has probably been the single most inspirational figure for me. Springsteen has an extraordinary work ethic and an unmatched ability to “rock the house” night after night, year after year. His music is tremendously uplifting and his live concerts are like spiritual revivals.

Did you expect to be here for 32 years? What has been the most rewarding thing about being at VCU for so long? At first, I didn’t expect to be teaching at VCU for more than a year or so. I was told it would only be a temporary position but I kept getting re-appointed year after year. After I while, I figured it was probably my “calling” to be here and I welcomed the opportunity to continue my service. The most rewarding thing about teaching here is that I have made so many life-long friends. In fact, I still keep in touch with some students who were in my classes more than 30 years ago.

What cause is particularly important to you right now? World peace is the most important cause to me. Most of our global problems are derived from warfare and related hostilities. We all need to learn how to get along better. I see higher education as part of the solution.

World peace is the most important cause to me. Most of our global problems are derived from warfare and related hostilities. We all need to learn how to get along better. I see higher education as part of the solution.
The Virginia Biosciences Commercialization Center makes tomorrow’s cutting-edge technologies commercially viable. This past summer, VBCC Executive Director Donna Edmonds helped VCU School of Business MBA graduate marketing students participate in that process through two projects.

“Thrilled to be asked,” is how Edmonds describes her reaction to the proposed partnership, which paired graduate business students with two international biotechnology companies working with the Center. “The quality of interface is exceptional and the student body is high quality and interested in maximized opportunity,” says Edmonds.

One group of students partnered with Slimedics, an Israeli firm founded in 2007. Slimedics is developing a device for the treatment of obesity that can be temporarily implanted in a patient’s stomach through a minimally invasive procedure. Once implanted, the device slows down the stomach’s emptying cycle and makes the patient feel full and therefore indirectly reduces food consumption. With Professors Frank Franzak and Michael Little, MBA students researched the field of obesity, interviewed physicians, and prepared marketing data resulting in financial projections for the next 3 years. Their work culminated in a comprehensive marketing plan that they presented to Edmonds in August.

A second group of MS in Global Marketing Management students, with Professor Van Wood, did a global analysis of life science clusters and potential target regions for VBCC expansion. Students worked to determine which of 14 VCU partner universities seemed most compatible with the VBCC’s mission and goals. The team’s analysis showed that 4 schools had the greatest potential for the VBCC: University of Oxford’s Harris Manchester College, University of West of England, University of São Paulo, and Indian Institute of Technology.

Edmonds thinks projects like this provide experience that is crucial to marketing biotechnologies. “Partnerships like these can give access to companies in all stages of international research projects and all areas of business and globalization. Healthcare has a world-wide environment with global implications,” says Edmonds. “Partnerships like these can give

**VCU STUDENTS EXPLORE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES**

**GENWORTH FINANCIAL’S JOEL MIER**

Joel Mier is Vice President of Global Customer Insights for Genworth Financial and a regular guest speaker in marketing classes.

How has your career evolved? In Silicon Valley, I worked with leading firms such as Adobe and Netflix. I was drawn to marketing because of the challenge. If I want to create awareness or action, I need to understand the target audience, position the right product, and execute across appropriate mediums. That’s really hard, regardless of industry, geography, or product. That’s what I love about the field—no two days are alike.

How did you get involved with VCU’s Department of Marketing? I wanted to reach out to of marketers to add to my skills and execute across appropriate mediums. That’s really hard, regardless of industry, geography, or product. That’s what I love about the field—no two days are alike. I try to listen more than I talk. Sharing firsthand experiences, we create a powerful dynamic. And tactically, I get to see Richmond’s next-generation marketers, which helps me think about staffing needs at Genworth.

What are you most passionate about? Data should drive decisions.” Know the target audience, develop a range of ideas, and find the optimum solution. The most common way to do this incorrectly is having the senior person on a team dictate the decision based on “experience and gut,” but that’s not grounded in the target customer. As we sit in our marketing chairs, we need to commit to the notion that we are NEVER the target customer and can’t act as proxy. Experience and gut are important, but they shouldn’t guide the ultimate decisions. The market should.

What are you most proud of? At Netflix, we built a Top Ten digital brand from a mere idea in less than a decade. That’s what excites me about Genworth: helping a Fortune 200 company become more focused on its constituencies as it develops. What we’ll accomplish here at Genworth will be even bigger than what we did at Netflix. Changing a global, established company has a unique set of opportunities that don’t exist when starting a company from scratch. I’m very excited about where we’re going.

How has your connection with VCU benefitted you? When I interact with students, I learn how and what the next generation of marketers is thinking. I believe that “if you’re talking, you can’t be listening.” I try to listen more than I talk. Sharing firsthand experiences, we create a powerful dynamic. And tactically, I get to see Richmond’s next-generation marketers, which helps me think about staffing needs at Genworth.
If you are a manager or business owner, customers are discussing you and your product or service online. We call it Social Media. How can online forums, blogs, and other social networking sites help you spread your message and optimize your market share? Find out at “Leveraging Your Social Media Networks,” Nov. 5. Presented by the VCU School of Business Center for Corporate Education and Department of Marketing.

This interactive seminar will equip you with information and insights from Richmond’s social media marketing experts. Dave Saunders (President, Madison+Main, Advertising & New Media) looks at social media game-changers and helps you leverage the “Holy Trinity” of social media: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Media General’s Butch Sarma (Senior Marketing Director) and Brad Nimmons (Director of Research) will show you how to develop and implement new media strategies. And Interim Marketing Department Chair Dr. Michael Little will lead a panel discussion featuring Sandy Fowler-Jones (Director of Public Relations and Communications, Swedish Match), David van Blaricom (Marketing Manager, getloaded.com), Jonah Holland (Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden) and Tammy Berwanger (PR and Marketing Manager, VCU).

“With nearly 2 million members, Facebook is the 5th largest country in the world. Social media is now bigger than email. Engaging customers and prospects online is too big to be ignored,” says Saunders.

For details on how to enroll in this seminar, contact mktgdept@vcu.edu