

The Campus Fall 2006

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First-Year Students Bring Diversity, High Scores

VANDERBILT'S 2006–07 enrollment of first-year students represents dramatic increases in quality, diversity and academic excellence, according to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions' annual 10th-day enrollment report.

Applications were up 4 percent from the 2005–06 academic year, rising from 11,688 to 12,192. Of those who applied, 1,590—or 33.9 percent—were admitted, down from 35.2 percent last year, a testament to Vanderbilt's increasing selectivity.

“We continue to be more selective and have a more robust pool as we make our selections,” says Douglas L. Christiansen, associate provost for enrollment and dean of admissions.

More than 77 percent of Vanderbilt's first-year students were in the top 10 percent of their graduating classes, representing an average GPA of 3.73 and an average SAT score of 1370.

“Our academic quality remains strong,” Christiansen says. “The entering class is the most prepared in Vanderbilt's history. Twenty-five percent of the entering class scored above 1470 on the SAT, and that is remarkable.”



A record number of underrepresented students—African American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American—enrolled at Vanderbilt this year. In 2000 just 18.2 percent of the first-year class was made up of minority students. In 2006 that number has increased to 28.6 percent.

“It went from less than a fourth to almost a third of the entering class comprising minorities,” says Christiansen. “We are making a concerted

effort to recruit underrepresented students.”

Financial aid also has increased. This year 59.4 percent of new students are receiving financial aid from Vanderbilt. In 2000, 52.4 percent received aid.

“When you look at the whole undergraduate class, more students are receiving need-based aid than no aid at all,” Christiansen says. “That goes against the notion that Vanderbilt students all come from wealthy families. Next fall they will spend one

“Although we do have that, it's important to know that if you are academically prepared and you can't afford Vanderbilt, that shouldn't be a deterrent.”

Of the 1,590 first-year students, 983 are enrolled in the College of Arts and Science, 313 in the School of Engineering, 236 in the Peabody College of education and human development, and 58 in the Blair School of Music. The first-year class comprises 840 women and 750 men.

Math and Science Whizzes to Study at VUMC

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY Medical Center will host a one-day-a-week science and math high school for the brightest public-school students in Nashville beginning next fall. A collaborative project of VUMC and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the science and math school will be funded by grants and other sources outside the public school budget.

Beginning next spring, students who are currently enrolled in eighth, 10th and 11th grades in Metro Nashville schools will be selected for the program based on grades, standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, interviews, written statements and original projects.

Next fall they will spend one

day a week at Vanderbilt, attending classes, conducting laboratory research, and participating in discussions and videoconferences with scientists and other students across the world.

“The school will serve those students who excel in science and math and [who] enthusiastically seek an advanced curriculum that will challenge them to go beyond traditional instruction,” says Virginia Shepherd, director of the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach, which is designing and implementing the school.

Within one year a curriculum will be provided for all four high school grades. Up to 25 students will be enrolled in each grade. Students who enroll following completion of eighth grade will be required to commit to a four-year program that will include increasingly intensive academic-year and summer programs.

Students also will be required to keep up with their studies in their home schools. “This won't excuse them from required work in their regular classes,” Shepherd says. “These students will have to commit to extra time.”

Shepherd, professor of pathology and medicine and associate professor of biochemistry, says the project recognizes the need to improve math and science education so the United

States can remain competitive in the global marketplace of technologies and ideas.

Web site:
www.vanderbilt.edu/cso

Owen Students Learn Business Side of Transplants

FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS, Ed Zavala, administrator for the Vanderbilt Transplant Center, has been thinking about the benefits of a specialized education program for health-care management students interested in transplant administration. This fall his determination is

finally paying off. A specialty program in transplant administration at the Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, established in conjunction with the Vanderbilt Transplant Center, is the first of its kind in the country.

Targeting second-year health-care M.B.A. students, the program will allow for in-depth training in clinical administration and the economic aspects of transplant. “Students will be able to do just about everything—oversee staffing, contract with managed care, Medicare reimbursement and compliance, profitability, regulatory



compliance, and organ availability and allocation,” says Zavala, research assistant professor in the Department of Surgery at Vanderbilt for the past three years. “The role of the transplant administrator has evolved along with the complexity of organ transplantation. These students will be



“We cannot be ignorant of fact, we cannot be ignorant of issues, we cannot be ignorant of things that happen past the borders of our immediate reach if we are to be engaged in a truly vital, self-actuating civil society.”

—Kevin Klose, president and chief executive officer of National Public Radio, in a Sept. 27 address at Vanderbilt

QuoteUnquote

Inquiring Minds

The Downside of Community College Credits

Just 14 percent of students who start out at a community college with the goal of transferring and getting a four-year degree actually meet that goal. William Doyle, assistant professor of higher education, reached that conclusion after studying U.S. Department of Education statistics.



Doyle, who summarized his findings in July for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, says that 79 percent of community-college students planned to get a four-year degree and 66 percent of that group had transferred to a four-year institution within six years. Whether those students in fact earned a bachelor's degree, however, appears to be linked to how many credits transferred to the four-year school. The odds of graduating diminish the longer a student is enrolled.

Juices May Reduce Alzheimer's Risk

In a large epidemiological study, researchers have found that people who drank three or more servings of fruit and vegetable juices per week had a 76 percent lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease than those who drank juice less than once per week. The study by Qi Dai, assistant professor of medicine, and colleagues appeared in the September issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*.

Originally, researchers suspected that high intakes of antioxidant vitamins might provide some protection against Alzheimer's disease, but recent studies have not supported this hypothesis. Dai began to suspect that another class of antioxidant chemicals, known as polyphenols, could play a role. Polyphenols are non-vitamin antioxidants common in the diet and particularly abundant in teas, juices and wines. Most polyphenols exist primarily in the skins and peels of fruits and vegetables.

Researchers Map GI Disorders' Effect on Magnetic Fields

A team of Vanderbilt researchers has won the 2006 Nightingale Prize from the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine for the best 2005 paper published in the journal *Medical and Biological Engineering and Computing*. Their paper describes a new way to process information from tiny magnetic fields produced by electrical activity in the stomach and small bowel. The goal is to develop noninvasive techniques for diagnosing gastrointestinal diseases.

The Vanderbilt team developed a method for projecting three recorded magnetic-field components or "vectors" in different directions. By doing this, "you can separate out the fetal heart signal from the maternal heart when monitoring a pregnancy, and the stomach signal from the small bowel signal in a patient with a gastrointestinal disorder," says L. Alan Bradshaw, the paper's lead author and a research assistant professor of surgery, physics and astronomy, and an adjunct assistant professor of biomedical engineering.

able to spend an entire academic year learning the essential aspects of the job."

Zavala, along with Jon Lehman, associate dean of the Owen Graduate School of Management, will lead a small group of students in the first year of the program.

"This is a very real opportunity for these students," Lehman says. "We have the transplant center here, the specialized health-care M.B.A., and a group of people with the ability to take the concept and run with it."

"Our students will be well grounded in many aspects in transplant administration and will be able to go into a transplant center and be immediately productive," Zavala says. "Many places train transplant surgeons and physicians, but no programs exist for administrators."

The Owen transplant administration program joins two other transplant training programs: the transplant pharmacy residency program and the transplant nurse practitioner program, which is offered in conjunction with the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

VU Ranks Among World's Best

VANDERBILT MOVED UP 61 places to No. 53 in the 2006 World University Rankings by *The Times* of London, the most comprehensive and respected worldwide ranking of universities. The rankings were released Oct. 6. Vanderbilt, which was ranked No. 114 last year, was the sole university from Tennessee to make the list.

"*The Times* represents per-

haps the gold standard of university rankings," says Chancellor Gordon Gee. "Vanderbilt clearly stands side by side with the very best universities in the world, which is a tribute to the quality of our faculty and students."

Vanderbilt's improved ranking was buoyed by a strong score of 81 out of 100 for faculty/student ratio. The rankings also considered peer-review scores, graduate recruiter reviews, citations of academic papers, and percentage of international students and faculty.



Vanderbilt also was ranked the No. 26 university in North America, up from No. 53 last year, and the No. 9 university in the world for academic staff-to-student ratio. As of the fall 2005 semester, Vanderbilt had a 9-to-1 ratio of students to faculty.

The top 10 universities in the world as cited by *The Times* of London are, in order, Harvard University, Cambridge University, Oxford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale University, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology, University of California-Berkeley, Imperial College and Princeton University.

Vanderbilt also has performed well recently in a num-



Alumni and Friends Get Plugged In

www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni

The Alumni Association has ramped up its Web site to better connect alumni, parents and friends. Check out the redesigned site to find Vanderbilt Chapter events in your area, network for your career, search the Dore2Dore online directory, take advantage of alumni discounts and more. All comments are welcome as the Alumni Association works to be a more valuable resource for the Vanderbilt community.

Virtual Vanderbilt

ber of other rankings. Kaplan/*Newsweek*, publisher of the *How to Get into College* guide, has selected Vanderbilt as one of the "New Ivies" for the 2007 edition of the guide. The "New Ivies" list was created this year to recognize the growing reputation and heightened selectiveness that academically outstanding schools have achieved in light of growing popularity among top students. Schools that made the list were selected based on admissions statistics as well as interviews with administrators, students, faculty and alumni.

For the fourth straight year, Vanderbilt ranked among the top 20 national universities in *U.S. News & World Report* magazine's annual "Best Colleges" rankings. Vanderbilt ranked 18th among national universities and again was recognized for its value, economic diversity and service-learning programs.

Moreover, despite a recent tightening of the federal research budget, Vanderbilt University Medical Center has maintained its position among the nation's top medical schools for National Institutes of Health funding for the fiscal year 2005. VUMC ranked No. 15 out of 123 med-

icals schools in the United States, according to the agency's most recent figures. VUMC received 586 awards totaling \$244.2 million, an increase from \$226.8 million in 2004.

Research by Vanderbilt mathematicians is also getting increased recognition via one of the top industry standards—the frequency of which published papers are cited in major mathematics journals. According to a recent analysis by *Essential Science Indicators*, Vanderbilt ranks in the top 1 percent in terms of journal citations. The number of citations a paper receives is generally considered an indication of its quality and importance.

An Oasis in the Nutritional Desert

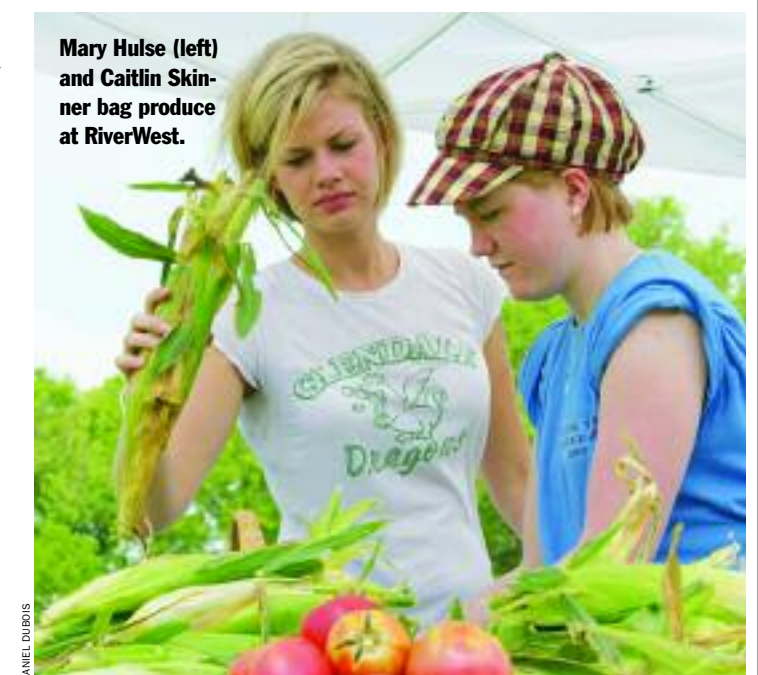
SANDWICHED BETWEEN North Nashville's gas stations and fast-food restaurants, an organic produce stand piled high with fruits and vegetables gave residents of three nearby neighborhoods the chance to buy healthy, affordable foods during the summer.

The RiverWest Produce Stand was the result of a partnership among Vanderbilt's

North Nashville Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC), the RiverWest Community Development Corp., and several other Nashville organizations. Darcy Freedman, a doctoral student at Vanderbilt, organized the project. The produce stand is an example of the action-research project model in practice at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, she says.

Freedman spent her first year at Vanderbilt and in the Nashville community researching methods for addressing

childhood obesity and consistently heard how difficult it was for some local residents to purchase high-quality, fresh produce in their neighborhoods. Last summer Freedman learned that COPC, in partnership with RiverWest Community Development—comprising the Preston Taylor, Hadley Park and Tomorrow's Hope neighborhoods—also was concerned about the dearth of healthy foods available in these neighborhoods. The three neighborhoods, along with several other areas in Nashville, are what



Mary Hulse (left) and Caitlin Skinner bag produce at RiverWest.

DANIEL DUBOIS

organizers call “food deserts”—areas without ready access to nutritious food.

“There are places where you can buy chips, beer, cigarettes and soda,” Freedman says. “If there are fruits and vegetables at those stores, they’re often poor quality and they’re very expensive.”

The produce stand offered residents a chance to purchase organic or locally grown produce in their own neighborhood. Produce came from the Nashville Farmer’s Market, a co-sponsor, as well as from local farms. Delvin Farms in Williamson County provided organic fruits and vegetables to the produce stand at no cost. Says owner Cindy Delvin, “We could sell this produce other places, but we felt this was such an important endeavor that we couldn’t take money for it.”

With ongoing support from the community, organizers hope to continue the RiverWest Produce Stand and branch out into other areas of Nashville in need of better access to healthy food.

“There’s tangible evidence that something good is happening here,” Freedman says.

Ladies of the Club Hang Up Their Dibles

THE VENERABLE VANDERBILT Garden Club for Campus Beautification—the organization that helped grow a campus lush with magnolias, manicured lawns, and carefully tended flowerbeds and shrubbery—is dissolving after nearly 80 years of service. In recent years a sizable crew of full-time grounds workers has made the need for a garden club less compelling, but the group has

played an important role in Vanderbilt’s history.

In the decades after Vanderbilt’s 1873 founding on 75 acres of farmland, campus aesthetics were not a priority. Timber was cut from campus grounds and sold to supplement the university’s income from tuition, according to *The Real Dirt: A History of the Vanderbilt Garden Club for Campus Beautification*. Because money was scarce in the years after the Civil War, early administrators deferred maintenance on grounds and building upkeep.

In 1927, Mary Henderson



Vanderbilt Garden Club members (from left) Sharon Hogge, Virginia Holladay and Jean Wright.

Kirkland, wife of Vanderbilt’s second chancellor, James Kirkland, founded a group for wives of faculty members and trustees. “It was originally a very hoity-toity invited group of ladies who wore gloves and hats and had tea,” says Sharon Hogge, president of the Garden Club from 1996 to 1998, who compiled and edited *The Real Dirt*. From its inception, however, the focus was on improving

the appearance of the campus.

The Garden Club’s efforts gained a champion in Margaret Branscomb, wife of Harvie Branscomb, Vanderbilt’s fourth chancellor. She was the force behind one of the most significant tree-planting projects ever attempted by the university. In 1954 she proposed planting magnolia trees along West End and 21st avenues to create a natural barrier between campus and the city streets beyond. By 1959 two-thirds of the then-campus’ periphery was lined with magnolias.

Around the time Vanderbilt

merged with Peabody College in 1979, Board of Trust member Hall Thompson gave \$1 million toward a proposed \$2 million endowment to improve the “aesthetic qualities” of the grounds. Current Garden Club members credit the administration of Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt, which began in 1982, as the time when the university began its serious commitment to improving the grounds. The campus

was designated a National Arboretum in 1988.

Today the design of Vanderbilt’s grounds falls under the auspices of Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Planning Judson Newbern, who is assisted by Pam Sevy, the university landscape architect. “The women in the club have taught me a lot about Vanderbilt’s history, and their love of and desire to improve the campus landscape has certainly rubbed off on me,” says Sevy.

Today’s grounds maintenance shop comprises 45 employees, including an irriga-

tion specialist, two tree-maintenance specialists and two horticulturalists. And the Garden Club is closing its roll book. “When I am asked about the Vanderbilt Garden Club,” Hogge remarks, “I say ... it is a group of fine, crusty old ladies—and I certainly am included in that—who have affected the appearance of this campus over the last 80 years.”

Center to Study How Financial Incentives Affect Achievement

DO FINANCIAL incentives for teachers, administrators and schools affect student achievement? The new National Center on Performance Incentives at Peabody College, established through a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, will address that question.

“This center will give us hard data we can use to finally understand the relationship between performance and incentives and give policymakers real input on how best to invest resources to improve student learning and success,” says Camilla Benbow, the Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody College.

The center’s first project will examine the effect of student achievement-related bonuses for teachers on individual and institutional behavior and dynamics.

James Guthrie, professor of public policy and education; chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations; and director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy, is the executive director of the new center. Matthew Springer, research assistant professor of public policy and education, is the center’s director.

“As a national research and development center charged by the federal government with



James Guthrie (left) and Matthew Springer

exercising leadership on performance incentives in education, our team is committed to a fair and honest evaluation, not some predetermined outcome,” Springer says.

Joining Vanderbilt in the center’s work is the RAND Corp., a nonprofit public policy research institute based in Santa Monica, Calif. The center is also working closely with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the Metropolitan Nashville Public School Board, the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell, the Nashville Alliance for Public Education, and the Tennessee Education Association.

The new center makes Peabody the only education school in the country to host two national research and development centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences. Peabody College is also home to the National Center on School Choice.

Top Picks

Neuroscientist Receives MacArthur ‘Genius Grant’

Kenneth Catania, a neuroscientist who studies odd-looking mammals for clues about the workings of the human brain, has been named a MacArthur Fellow. More commonly known as “genius grants,” the fellowships are awarded annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for creativity, originality, and potential to make important future contributions. Each recipient receives a total of \$500,000 “no strings attached” support over a period of five years. Catania, associate professor of biological sciences, is one of 24 individuals to receive this year’s awards. He was recognized for his study of the sensory systems of insect-eating mammals, particularly the star-nosed mole. His research could lead to a better understanding of how complex skills are learned and how the brain can recover from injury or strokes.



Vermund to Lead International HIV Trials



Sten Vermund, director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, has been selected to lead one of six new clinical-trial units created by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to combat HIV/AIDS worldwide. As primary investigator of the newly formed HIV Prevention Trials Network, Vermund will guide prevention trials around the world. Vermund’s own NIH-funded research projects involve the AIDS epidemic in Africa, India and China. He is the Amos Christie Chair in Global Health and a professor of pediatrics, medicine, preventive medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology. Total funding for the six new clinical-trial units is expected to reach \$285 million during the first year of operation.

What Is the Sound of One Hand Scraping?

The first week of October brought Centennial Professor of Psychology Randolph Blake two signal honors. On Oct. 7 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences with former U.S. presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, and former poet laureate Rita Dove. Just two days earlier, Blake received the “coveted” Ig Nobel Prize from the Society for Improbable Research for a 1986 study that examined why nearly everyone cringes at the sound of fingernails scraping on a chalkboard. (His hypothesis: The offending sound mimics chimpanzees’ warning cries.) Perhaps he should consider a collaboration with Ig Nobel Peace Prize winner Howard Stapleton, who won for inventing an electro-mechanical teenager-repellent device, which makes an annoying noise designed to be audible to teens but not to adults.

