Vanderbilt prepares for next phase of College Halls

A big change in student housing is coming to Vanderbilt. Immediately after Commencement in May 2012, Kissam Quadrangle’s six residence halls—home to 582 undergraduate students each year for 55 years—will be demolished to make way for the next phase of the university's residential college system, College Halls at Kissam. Two residential colleges will be built and are scheduled to open in August 2014.

Approximately 330 students—a mixture of seniors, juniors and sophomores—will live in each of the two colleges, along with a resident faculty director. Each college will be divided into two halls led by resident graduate fellows. A resident area coordinator will support both colleges. Room types will include singles, doubles, suites and duplexes alongside amenities like informal dining, study and social spaces, music practice rooms and a classroom. The colleges will provide intimate and engaging settings for upperclassmen that leverage the sense of community that students encountered on The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt during their first year.

To increase on-campus housing options and capacity, the Office of Housing and Residential Education (OHARE) is acquiring and renovating a building located near Dudley Field next to the Vanderbilt Police Department. This new residence hall will house approximately 140 students beginning in the fall of 2012. OHARE also will create new student spaces in existing residence halls by converting underused spaces into student rooms.

These next two years also will see an increase in the number of juniors and seniors living off campus. In cooperation with OHARE, Vanderbilt University Real Estate will give first priority to Vanderbilt undergraduates among lease applicants seeking to live in its properties: Village at Vanderbilt, Wesley Place Apartments, Barbizon Apartments and 1808 Edgehill. Among undergraduate applicants, priority will be given to groups of students who will maximize the occupancy of these apartments.

Your student will hear more about these initiatives in the months to come. Parents can learn more by contacting OHARE at (615) 322-2591 or resed@vanderbilt.edu.
The Commons renamed in honor of Martha Ingram

The Vanderbilt Board of Trust has renamed the university’s living-learning community for first-year students in honor of Martha Ingram, who recently retired as chairman of the board. Located on the campus of Peabody College, The Commons is now known as The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt. A sculpture of Ingram, to be placed within the complex, also was commissioned by the university.

The board surprised Ingram with a resolution proposing the renaming of The Commons at her last meeting as chairman on April 29. “I’m really quite stunned,” said Ingram, who served as board chairman for 12 years. Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos also presented her with a gold and diamond brooch in the shape of a magnolia. “It has been a privilege to serve as chairman, and a life-altering experience that I have treasured,” she said.

The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt is the first phase of the university’s College Halls residential college system. Opened in 2008, it includes 10 houses, each guided by a faculty member who lives on site and serves as head of house and as a mentor. Ingram was a driving force behind the concept.

Parents host dozens of Summer Send-off Parties

A Vanderbilt tradition that dates back to 1968, Summer Send-off Parties bring alumni, current students and incoming students and their families together in a casual setting in their hometowns to celebrate the university’s newest arrivals and send them off to Vanderbilt in style. Past, current and future students are given an opportunity to connect with each other at these events, experiencing the “Vanderbilt community” together firsthand.

The following parents of past and current students served as volunteer hosts for Summer Send-off Parties this past summer, for which the university offers its hearty thanks:

Robert and Linda Akenhead
Daniel and Joanne Aronson
Darryl and Louellen Berger
Rob and Debra Bush
Perry and Liz Brandt
Mike McGee and Olga Castellanos
Poppy Clements
Lucian and Patrice Davis
Charles and Ivette Esserman
Brian and Jenny Gaston
Walt and Lynn Knauf
William and Barbara Macon
Steve and Julie Maroda
John and Leslie Moore
Michael and Judy Orkin
Gary and Cecilia Peters
Bruce and Tina Ross
Harold and Diane Smethills
Timon and Diana Sullivan
Burney and Lee Threadgill
Bryan and Tina Trigg
Giffen and Cigi Weinmann
George and Patti White
Larry and Caroline Wilson

From left to right, Executive Associate Vice Chancellor Randy Smith, Provost Richard McCarty, Parents Leadership Campaign Chairs Tina and Bruce Ross with sons Bruce (BA’10) and Bryant, Class of 2012, and Parents & Family Programs Director Suzanne Thigpen enjoy the party in Cincinnati.

New co-ed housing options for 2012-2013

Vanderbilt first offered co-ed housing in the fall of 1970: 12 women and 12 men living on separate floors of Landon House. Today, Cole and Tolman halls remain single-sex options for women and men, respectively, but all other residence halls house both women and men.

The most common co-ed arrangement has women and men living on separate floors or in self-contained suites and apartments.

Two of Vanderbilt’s oldest living/learning communities have offered variations on the co-ed theme for many years. Since 1981, McTyeire International House, composed entirely of single rooms, has students of both sexes living together on the same halls. The McGill Project has housed women on the fourth floor, men on the second, and both women and men on the third floor but separated into wings, each with its own communal bathroom, since 1993.

Two years ago, Vanderbilt’s living/learning communities again led the way in expanding co-ed options in response to rising student interest. McGill opted to allow women and men to live where they wished on the third and fourth floors, as McTyeire has done. Mayfield Lodges accepted applications from groups of students composed of both women and men.

In response to student demand, two new options that de-emphasize gender will be available for the 2012-2013 academic year. A floor of Lupton House in Branscomb Quadrangle will offer an equal number of double rooms for pairs of men and women. In Carmichael Towers, a small number of suites will be open to mixed-sex groups of students. The double rooms of the suites will be single-sex but students will decide on the composition of their suites. The housing assignment process for 2012-2013 will begin in February. Parents should discuss housing options with their students.

Boredom not allowed

One thing you’ll probably never hear from your Vanderbilt student is, “I’m bored, and there’s nothing to do here.” Thanks to the Vanderbilt Programming Board (VPB), opportunities abound to get involved.

The purpose of the VPB is to sponsor, integrate and provide social, cultural, educational, recreational and multicultural activities on campus for students. Leading the charge is Drayne V. Elliott, now in his eighth year as director for student campus events.

“I’ve enjoyed every exciting minute of my tenure here at Vanderbilt University,” Elliott says. “There’s truly an event for everyone. This year our first event was the VPB Palooza, which had more than 1,400 students in attendance.”

Elliott asks that you encourage your student to check out VPB events regularly online by visiting students.vanderbilt.edu/vpb. Also, because the organization is student-run, numerous leadership opportunities also are available for students. Those opportunities will be posted on the website in December.

Spring 2012 brings academic calendar changes

The academic calendar has been updated to reflect changes that take effect with the spring 2013 semester.

The first day of classes after winter break will be Monday, January 9, rather than Wednesday, January 11. Beginning spring classes earlier than the traditional Wednesday start will give students and faculty members the opportunity to commemorate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday while allowing the university to maintain the integrity of course schedules and program accreditation standards.

Also, the Academic Calendar Committee, which is composed of administrators, faculty and students, has approved Monday, January 7, as the start date for the spring 2013 semester. This change means the last day of classes for the spring semester will be on a Monday rather than Tuesday. However, Commencement will continue to be held the second Friday in May.

Although the university will be open for business on MLK Day, administrators chose to cancel classes following a student resolution asking that the day be set aside as a day of service to the community. The 2010-11 academic year marked the first time the university canceled classes to commemorate MLK Day, which is the third Monday in January. Various activities and volunteer opportunities were planned in honor of King’s legacy.
Faculty spotlight: David W. Wright

David Wright’s research lab is discovering simple solutions to some complex problems. “Everyone who has a child is familiar with late nights, high fevers, and not knowing why their child is sick,” says Wright, associate professor of chemistry. “Parents want to do what they should call the doctor at 2 a.m. or go to the emergency room.”

Because of the time required to get test results, often a child’s fever will break and he will be on the road to recovery before a diagnosis can be made. “The question we want answered was how to figure out what your little one is sick with—quickly,” says Wright.

“Nanotechnology offers not just one way, but several ways to do it.” Through a process that binds quantum dots to proteins, the time it takes to receive a clinical culture assay has been reduced from three days to one hour. And several viruses can be tested simultaneously with one tiny sample. “This is as close to off-the-shelf nanotechnology as a scientist can get,” Wright says. “We’re not talking five or 10 years down the road. We’re talking today.”

Wright earned his Ph.D. degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 2001.

Student Spotlight: Patrick Thomas

Patrick Thomas

For as long as I can remember, I have led two different lives: One is defined by schoolwork and extracurricular activities. The other is defined by music.

These two lives have always coexisted with few conflicts until this past March when I was forced to choose one over the other. It seemed a simple decision at first, particularly for someone like me who has dreamed about a career in the arts for years. However, once I arrived in Hollywood, Calif., on the set of NBC’s new hit reality show, The Voice, I began feeling the anxiety.

I had spent nearly four semesters working to maintain a high GPA, staying involved in Sigma Nu and the Vanderbilt community, and balancing that with the responsibilities of being an R.A. and a voice major in a classical program. I was not ready to throw it all away on a chance to make it on The Voice. So I spoke with Dr. Jonathan Retzlaff, my voice professor and chair of the voice department, about my hesitations, and he reminded me that I go to Vanderbilt and that my school is different from others. Francille Bergquist, associate dean of the College of Arts and Science, encouraged me further: “Take the chance while it’s there, give it your all, and don’t look back.”

I did just that. As I prepare to balance school and a publishing deal, as well as various performance dates. I am thankful that I was blessed enough to attend this university. I do not know many schools where I could have found so much support, so much wisdom and so much integrity. Vanderbilt is truly in a league of its own. This university has proven to me just how important an education can be, and has challenged the traditional belief that the “boy in the band” can’t go to school.

Thomas made it to the top 16 on the inaugural season of NBC’s The Voice. He has since landed a major publishing deal and is working on an album.

Vanderbilt partners with Barnes & Noble to operate bookstore

Vanderbilt announces the grand opening of Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt University, the new university bookstore, at 2525 West End Ave. Formerly located in Rand Hall, Vanderbilt Bookstore has partnered with the national book retailer at its spacious new location, where it continues serving students in-store and through convenient online ordering of textbooks and course materials. As always, students are guaranteed to receive accurate materials, and they will have access to a wide variety of textbook options.

In addition to serving the Vanderbilt campus, Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt University serves the surrounding community with items typically found in Barnes & Noble retail stores: more than 60,000 trade book titles, literary events, magazines, and a full-service cafe featuring Starbucks coffee. Vanderbilt sports fans will enjoy the extended line of emblematic apparel and gift items.

The 2525 West End location offers ample parking and expanded hours of operation. It will also be added as a Vandy Vans stop. Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt University continues to offer the popular “Hugs from Home” program to Vanderbilt parents who wish to brighten their son or daughter’s spirits with a care package. The packages are seasonal and include such themes as birthday, Halloween and Valentine’s Day. To learn more, visit www.vanderbilt.edu/bookstore or call (615) 322-0241.

Frequently asked questions

Q: What academic resources are available for my student as the semester progresses?

A: If your student needs some academic assistance, you may find these resources helpful:

The Writing Studio is a free, confidential writing resource for Vanderbilt students. Students meet individually with trained consultants and discuss writing concerns and projects. Call (615) 343-2225 or visit vanderbilt.edu/writing.

Tutors offer assistance to students who wish to enhance their academic performance in classes offered by the College of Arts and Science and the School of Engineering. For Arts and Science, call (615) 322-5518 for more information. For Engineering, call (615) 343-8061.

The Psychological and Counseling Center helps students who are having difficulties with classes, wish to improve their grade point average, or simply want to get up to speed on study techniques. Call (615) 322-2571 for an appointment with Rosanne Awbrey, reading and study center coordinator.

Q: Does the university provide airport shuttles during major holidays or breaks?

A: Yes. Vanderbilt Student Government operates an airport shuttle service during Thanksgiving breaks and spring break. For more information and a list of shuttle operation times, visit studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/vsg/services/airport-shuttles.
Parent giving sets new record

Now nearly halfway through the academic year, our students are already thriving members of the Vanderbilt community. Each year Vanderbilt welcomes these talented individuals and offers them exceptional opportunities due in part to the generosity of parents, alumni and friends of the university.

Many thanks to all our supporters for their gifts to the Vanderbilt Parents Campaign during the past year. Your participation has played a vital role in its growth and success. The result of your giving was a record-breaking year for the Parents Campaign, with $67.2 million in outright gifts and $8.3 million in new pledges for a total of $15 million in new commitments from parents—a 6 percent increase over the previous fiscal year! Whether responding to appeals in letters, emails, by phone or in person, many of you answered the call from the Vanderbilt Parents Campaign Office.

The Parents Leadership Committee (PLC) also deserves a round of applause for providing a strong foundation for the Parents Campaign. Gifts from PLC members were up 36 percent, totaling an impressive $6.88 million. Throughout the year they also waved the black and gold high in their communities by hosting events, participating in community outreach, helping students to find jobs and internships, and volunteering for events in their areas and on campus.

The great successes of the past year could not have been reached without the gifts and efforts of each and every person. Thank you for your support. Now the bar is set higher, and this year we seek even more parent and family involvement.

To learn more about the Parents Leadership Committee or the Parents Campaign, please contact Amy Jarvis or Rebekah Rohrbach in the Parents and Grandparents Campaign Office at (615) 343-3120 or pag.campaign@vanderbilt.edu.

2010-11 Parents Campaign at a glance

Parents Leadership Committee Facts
• Total PLC membership: 202 families
• Number of new PLC members last year: 52
• Total amount given by PLC members in fiscal year 2011: $6.88 million

Overall Parents Campaign Totals
Total received in gifts and pledges in fiscal year 2011: $6.7 million in gifts
$8.3 million in pledges

Ways to give

For your convenience, Vanderbilt provides a number of ways for parents, grandparents, alumni and friends to make gifts. Specific information is available online at http://giving.vanderbilt.edu.

• Gifts, pledges and pledge payments may be mailed to Vanderbilt Parents and Grandparents Campaign, Gift Processing Office, PMB 407725, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240

• Credit card gifts may be made on our secure website at vanderbilt.edu/giveonline.

• For specific instructions on making a gift of stock to Vanderbilt, please call (615) 322-4987 or email stockgifts@vanderbilt.edu.

• To make an anonymous gift, tell the Parents and Grandparents Campaign Office of the request—(615) 343-3120—and it will be processed accordingly.

• If you’re considering a planned gift such as a charitable gift annuity or bequest, please contact Anthony Barley in the Office of Planned Giving at (615) 343-3113.