An update on the housing assignment process

By Jason Jakubowski, director of Housing Assignments

Over the last three months, nearly 4,800 undergraduates returning to campus for fall 2009 selected their housing for the 2009-2010 academic year. Seniority, personal choice and campus procedures provided the framework for students deciding the whos, wheres and hows of on-campus housing. Housing options include single rooms, double rooms, and established living-learning communities in traditional residence halls, suites for four or six students, and apartments for two, three or four students.

This past year, Vanderbilt’s commitment to student choice and enhancing the undergraduate experience produced a new living/learning option for upperclass students. The undergraduates and the office of the Dean of Students designed a new residential program based in Vanderbilt/Barnard Halls. Groups of five to 10 students had the opportunity to submit peer-initiated, faculty-directed living-learning proposals and reside in arrangements that support their shared educational interests.

Vanderbilt’s variety of living options positively impacts the learning communities in our residence halls and is the foundation for a vibrant campus environment. Diverse housing choices layered with our commitment to strong, principled programs enriches our educational atmosphere, further distinguishing Vanderbilt from other top 20 institutions.

The friendships that develop with faculty, colleagues and peers in a residential setting are guided by values declared in Vanderbilt’s Community Creed. Ideals such as honesty, accountability and compassion not only describe the members of our community, but also define the programs, events and services offered by the Office of Housing and Residential Education. (www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd)
Global Summer Fellows Program provides loans for study abroad

By Theo Samets, Vanderbilt Student Government director of public relations

It’s easier than ever for students and their parents to finance summer study abroad programs at Vanderbilt. The Global Summer Fellows Program, proposed by Vanderbilt Student Government leaders Joseph Williams and Wyatt Smith and funded by the Office of the Provost, will provide $250,000 in competitive financial aid for undergraduates in Vanderbilt summer abroad programs.

The program developed from a shared commitment among university administrators, student leaders and the Global Education Office to make study abroad experiences accessible to undergraduates whose academic requirements, on-campus involvement or personal constraints prevent them from going abroad during the normal academic year.

"Because of federal financial aid constraints, only loan-based financial aid has been available for students enrolling in summer programs until this year," says student government vice president Wyatt Smith, author of the proposal. "Having participated in a summer study abroad program in London, I know how much value that experience adds to an undergraduate education and am excited to have played a part in turning this idea into reality."

"It’s encouraging to have administrators hear the student voice," student government President Joseph Williams added. "This program represents yet another decision to open the full Vanderbilt experience to as many students as possible."

Students applying for a Global Summer Fellows grant are eligible for up to $8,500 in scholarship assistance. Scholarships will be awarded through a competitive allocation process based on financial need, application strength, program costs and merit. For more information, contact Ara Pachmayer at ara.pachmayer@vanderbilt.edu.

Moving on up at Vanderbilt

Carolyn Dever, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt, was named dean. Dever is a professor of English with expertise on Victorian literature and gender studies.

Beth Fortune was named vice chancellor of public affairs, a position she held as interim. She has been at Vanderbilt since 2000. Prior to joining Vanderbilt, she served as press secretary for former Governor Don Sundquist.

Vanderbilt football coach Bobby Johnson was selected to share the SEC Coach of the Year award with Nick Saban (Alabama) and Houston Nutt (Ole Miss). Johnson is in his seventh year coaching at Vanderbilt and is the fourth Vanderbilt coach to receive this honor. He was also elected to the American Football Coaches Association board of trustees.

Vanderbilt’s development alumni relations team includes some new faces. Susie S. Stalcup, formerly the chief fundraising officer for Columbia University Medical Centre, is the new vice chancellor for development and alumni relations. James E. Stefan is associate vice chancellor of alumni relations, and Christopher P. Toft has been named associate vice chancellor for university development.

H. Rodes Hart, a Vanderbilt alumnus, Quing and Board of Trust member who for nearly three decades has provided strong volunteer leadership for university initiatives, has taken on the chairmanship of Shape the Future, the university’s comprehensive $1.75 billion campaign. Hart celebrates his 50th Reunion this year.

Top 10 tips for commencement

By Kim Fuller, commencement director

1. Layer your clothing. It could be 50 degrees at 7 a.m. and 90 degrees by noon. No heels for the ladies! You’ll sink into Alumni Lawn. Commencement is at 9 a.m. on May 8.

2. Check out our Study Breaks from 1:30-4 p.m. on May 7. Talented faculty will discuss research and current events for a taste of the academics your student has at hand at Vanderbilt. Professors and topics will be on our Web site. (www.vanderbilt.edu/commencement)

3. No tickets are necessary for any Commencement ceremony, and seating is first-come, first-served. Arrive no later than an hour before to get a program and find a seat.

4. If your family requires mobility or other assistance, be sure to call the Opportunity Guide for parents before and during their student’s trip. It provides a Vanderbilt experience to as many students as possible.

5. Videos of the main ceremony and undergraduate ceremony will also be available.

6. We’ll take close-ups of each graduate holding their diploma and shaking hands with the chancellor. A proof and order information will be sent to the graduate’s permanent address. Videos of the main ceremony and undergraduate ceremony will also be available.

7. Check the commencement Web site frequently for the latest information, including the 2009 Nicholas-Chancellor’s medalist, who will speak on Senior Class Day (Thursday, May 7).

8. Official graduation announcements may be ordered at www.herffjones.com/college. Orders must be placed by April 1 to be received in time to be mailed before commencement.

9. Get tickets to the outdoor dance party! It’s set for 9 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6. Graduates receive one free ticket. Additional tickets will be available online for $20.

10. Remember—our office is here to help. If you need assistance, please call us at 615/322-4788, toll free at 866-3VUGRAD or email kim.fuller@vanderbilt.edu.

1. Take a deep breath and take it all in. Your student is almost a college grad!
Vanderbilt Dining’s culinary team cares for your student
by Laura Nairon, director of Business Services

Vanderbilt Dining is much more than food service. The chefs think of themselves as your student’s “kitchen away from home.” From the director of dining to the catering chef, dining has recruited amazing culinary talent.

The career of Chef Bill Claypool of The Commons includes stints at Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, the Biltmore Hotel, Sunset grille and Cheddarhead. He also teaches cooking classes in nearby Franklin at the Viking Culinary Center. Recently Claypool won two bronze medals in industry cooking competitions.

Chef Kip Bennet of the cowboy-themed barbecue restaurant C.T. West in Carmichiel Towers has 23 years experience in hotel, resort and full-service restaurants. Prior to Vanderbilt, Kip owned The Crossroad BBQ restaurant in Nashville.

Dining Director Camp Howard, Tom Allen of Vanderbilt Catering, and Gary Rawson of Rand Dining Center are all certified executive chefs and graduates of the Culinary Institute of America—the highly decorated school of the culinary arts. These chefs have won multiple awards, including Chapter Chef of the Year, National Regional Champion–Seafood Challenge, Silver Medal–College Chefs Conference Culinary competition and many others. Learn more at www.vanderbilt.edu/dining.

Assistant director joins Parents and Family office

Anna Krueger has joined the Parents and Family Programs office as the new assistant director. Prior to joining the office in December, Anna worked in residential education at Emory University. Most recently, Anna completed her master’s degree in education at Peabody College and a practicum at the Vanderbilt Psychological and Counseling Center.

Anna is a Nashville native and she also serves as the house director for Pi Beta Phi on campus, which provides her the opportunity to stay connected with the student body.

Vanderbilt University focuses on overall student health and wellness

The Office of Student Health and Wellness, part of the office of the Dean of Students, is designed to enhance students’ overall well-being, including emotional, physical, social and spiritual health. Key programs include the Psychological and Counseling Center; the Office of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention; the Student Health Center; and Office of Religious Life.

Vanderbilt uses a comprehensive approach aimed at fostering a culture of health, wellness and responsibility. Our emphasis on prevention and wellness promotion makes it more likely that fewer students will require treatment for physical and psychosocial problems, such as eating disorders, sexual violence, and alcohol/drug addiction.

For more information, visit the Student Health and Wellness Web site at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/health sottoles/.

Help, support available at Psychological and Counseling Center

Over VU interviewed Rhonda Venable, Ph.D., director for the Psychological and Counseling Center, about the services offered at the center.

How many counselors do you have? How many students do you typically see?

We have the equivalent of 20 full-time staff members. Every year we see between 10 and 15 percent of the student body for new psychotherapy services at our office.

Why will students seek assistance from the center?

College can be a complex, transitional time in student’s lives. Their issues may include body image, depression, anxiety, academic performance and adjustment. Families go through tremendous growth and transition, and it goes more smoothly for some than for others. Almost all make it through their time here at Vanderbilt with great success. As parents, please remember to let your student know you are there for them and that you love them even if they stumble. Let them find their way and know that you are there.

Parents would like to know about the services offered at the center.

The center provides a number of services to full-time Vanderbilt students, including individual, group and couples therapy. Additionally, the center handles personality testing and testing for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, career assessment services, individual reading and study skills counseling. All services are completely confidential, and information will not be released without the student’s written consent.

What is MAPS?

MAPS stands for Mental Health Awareness and Prevention of Suicide. The counseling center started this program to assist in preventing suicide on campus while promoting mental health awareness through education and outreach in the campus community. We offer training to staff, faculty and students to help them recognize and identify those in need of help.

Do you have a hotline students and parents can use in an emergency?

For a life-threatening emergency, call the Vanderbilt University Police Department at 615/322-9111 or go to the nearest emergency room. The Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s emergency department can be reached by dialing 615/343-6186. For other urgent situations after hours, our phone number (615/322-2571) connects to our answering service, which then contacts the clinician on call. Our Web site is www.vanderbilt.edu/pcc.
Senior Class Fund encourages participation

It’s no secret that alumni support is crucial to Vanderbilt’s continued success. Alumni gifts provide scholarship support for deserving students, help recruit and retain top faculty and give Vanderbilt’s deans discretionary funds that can be used to fill their most pressing needs.

The Senior Class Fund is a gift to Vanderbilt from graduating seniors. It is their tribute to the school and marks the legacy of the class.

This year, Katherine Tennis, Class of 2009, is the Senior Class Fund chairperson. Katherine, of Menlo Park, Calif., began working in the Commodore Calling Center as a freshman—contacting parents about supporting Vanderbilt. Over the years, she’s learned a lot about fundraising and the power of alumni participation.

“I’ve become very passionate about giving back,” Katherine says. “I thought that leading a united effort from my class would be a great way to finish up my four years here. It’s my way of saying ‘thank you’ and a way for our class to leave a little bit of ourselves with the school.”

In past years, the Senior Class Fund has only been managed by seniors, but Katherine made some changes in 2009.

“We’ve added members of the junior class who will help out this year and then will take over next year. That way it’s more of a tradition passed on from class to class,” she says.

One of the main goals of the Senior Class Fund is to educate seniors about the importance of giving. Most students are surprised to learn that alumni giving participation rates play a role in Vanderbilt’s rankings. That’s why participation is stressed with this group rather than the size of the gift.

Additionally, students may designate their gift to the school, department or even club that has meant the most to them. Parents may also contribute to the fund in their child’s name.

“You can look back on your time and think about what you really loved here. The whole idea of giving back is so personal,” Katherine adds.

The Senior Class Fund is overseen by the Vanderbilt Fund office in the Development and Alumni Relations department.

“Every year we see greater numbers of seniors participating,” says Elizabeth K. Wilson, executive director of the Vanderbilt Fund. “It’s gratifying to know that these young men and women have already embraced the idea of giving back to Vanderbilt,” she says.

If you’d like to know more about the Senior Class Fund, please visit www.vanderbilt.edu/seniorclassfund.

Diana M. Hudson Scholarship opens doors

Diana Hudson, BA’73, and her husband, Lee Kaplan, took their son to visit many colleges during his junior year in high school. Will, Class of 2012, was initially very impressed with Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. But when they came to visit Vanderbilt, Diana had a secret weapon—the grilled cheeseburgers at Rotier’s Restaurant. That meal capped off a great visit that included Will sitting in on two history lectures, and Vanderbilt vaulted into No. 1 spot on Will’s list. Diana is gratified that her son is following in her footsteps.

“I feel like I had so many opportunities at Vanderbilt. It provided me with a wonderful foundation for my work, my personal life and my social life,” she says. Diana and Lee, who live in Houston, are both attorneys.

Once Will was settled, Diana and Lee decided to go through with a project they had been contemplating—pledging to endow the Diana M. Hudson Scholarship to the College of Arts and Science.

“My husband and I have always contributed financially to the schools we attended,” Diana says. “My gifts were already approached the amount that would be necessary to endow a scholarship. So the point was, as long as you’re giving at this level, why not do something that’s permanent and has a little more bang for the buck?”

Now that she’s made the commitment to a scholarship, Diana encourages others to do the same.

“If we are really serious about competing in a global economy, we have to ensure that more financial aid is awarded to students,” she says. “Doesn’t open to doors.”
Key Dates:

April 21
Spring semester classes end

April 22–30
Examinations and reading days

May 7
Senior Class Day

May 8
Commencement

May 9
Residence halls close at 1 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE
October 2–4
Family Weekend

Key Links:

Parents & Family Programs
www.vanderbilt.edu/families

Parents and Grandparents Campaign
www.vanderbilt.edu/pagcampaign/

Dean of Students
www.vanderbilt.edu/deanofstudents/

Housing and Residence Life
www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd/
main/index.php

Student Health
www.vanderbilt.edu/student_health/

Athletics
www.vucommodores.com

Vanderbilt Visions
http://commons.vanderbilt.edu/visions/

Greek Life
www.vanderbilt.edu/greek_life/

Bookstore
www.vanderbiltbookstore.com

SGA Shuttle Service
http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/vsg

University Calendar
http://calendar.vanderbilt.edu/