

Students plan protest against professor's departure

by **Michael Sutphin**
Senior Reporter

In any business, decisions to hire or fire an employee are often controversial. And the business of higher education is no different.

A coalition of about 50 Virginia Tech students made initial plans for a protest last night. Sparked by recent news about the departure of political science professor Chris Clement, students amassed to plan a Wednesday afternoon protest for what they described as institutional racism and underhanded hiring policies within the Department of Political Science.

"I think we need to stress that this is not just about Chris Clement," said Greg Sagstetter, senior philosophy and political science major and next year's undergraduate representative to the Board of Visitors. "This is about institutional and systemic discrimination."

Despite recent diversity efforts on the part of the university administration, Sagstetter and others said the Clement situation shows that Tech has made little progress.

"The department's willingness to let him go shows a lack of commitment to the Principles of Community," said senior accounting and sociology major Shalim Basnayake.

Clement, who could not be reached for comment Monday, circulated an e-mail to his colleagues and other members of the Tech community that aimed to hold the Department of Political Science "accountable for the unscrupulous and dishonorable practices behind my firing."

In that letter, Clement describes a hiring process in which the department found two qualified applicants

for a single, tenure-track opening for a professor specializing in international relations. Although only one slot for the position existed, Clement wrote that the department hired one of the applicants and then planned to get a job position for the other using a "target of opportunity" process — that is, hiring a prospective employee with a newly created job title.

And Clement wrote that the decision not to continue his employment related to the creation of this new position.

Jerry Niles, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, declined to comment on the specifics of Clement's claims, citing a college-wide confidentiality policy regarding hiring decisions. But he did shed light on the search process for tenure-track faculty.

"It is not unusual for us at all to take two people out of a search," Niles said.

The CLAHS administration has received four requests this year from various departments to hire more than one candidate during a search for a single opening, Niles said. But when an opening in an individual department happens, this vacancy goes to the college, not a department.

"Departments don't go around making their own positions," said Niles, who has the final authority in hiring decisions within his college.

Ilja Luciak, professor and head of the Department of Political Science, also declined to comment on the specifics of Clement's written complaint, but he confirmed he had read the letter.

"This is a personnel matter, and I cannot release any information about it," Luciak said.

Despite this, Luciak did insist that the political science department had not broken any hiring policies.

"I can only say that the department followed all of the university regulations," Luciak said.

In his open letter to colleagues, Clement charged the political science department with creating a hostile working environment.

"From the start, fellow faculty members made me aware that they saw my dissertation as sub-par, my Howard University education as poor, and my mentors there as inept," Clement wrote.

Shawn Braxton, a graduate student in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, said Clement's Ph.D. at a historically black university caused problems for him at Tech.

"His scholarship has been marginalized. Not only that, but his education has been marginalized," Braxton said.

But this wasn't the only issue that students cited as a problem. Stressing the importance of using Clement's story as a flash point, junior economics major Devin Stone said Clement's activism may have influenced the Department of Political Science's decision to deny tenure.

"We believe there's a larger, larger issue at hand," Stone said. "We believe that his political activism played a role. We also believe that possibly racism played a role."

Clement, who serves as an editor for Latin American Perspectives, made the news last week for organizing an event dealing with the CIA's interrogation tactics.

Students at last night's meeting

See **PROTEST**, page 2



SHAOZHUO CUI/SPPS

Students sign up to participate in Wednesday's protest. The potential protesters expressed concerns that a professor may have been denied tenure because of his race and activism.

UVa students released from jail

by **Sarah Larkins**
Day Editor

The University of Virginia students arrested Saturday for staging a four-day sit-in were released Monday on a personal recognizance bond. The 17 students involved were released after a court hearing held Monday morning and are required to attend trial May 5.

The students were arrested for trespassing after staging a protest in Madison Hall, an academic building on UVa's campus and demanding a wage increase to at least \$10.72 an hour adjusted to inflation annually, said Todd Rosenbaum, press contact for the University of Virginia's living wage campaign.

Students at the sit-in knew there would be a risk of being arrested, but it was definitely not their intent, Rosenbaum said.

"They went into the sit-in with the intention of conducting negotiations with the administration," he said.

According to the UVa living wage campaign's website, the sit-in was an act of peaceful civil disobedience undertaken with the best interest of the university at heart.

Last month UVa raised the minimum wage to \$9.37 an hour, but the students were requesting more saying the amount was not enough to support the cost of living in Charlottesville.

Other universities have recently given wage increases as well. Virginia Tech employees received a February pay increase to \$8 an hour for employees who have worked in selected position for less than



COURTESY OF ANDREW TUTTLE/CAVALIER DAILY

A UVa student is arrested after protesting for wages in an academic building.

one year.

The campaign will continue in their efforts to engage the university and administration in the issue, in actions both similar and dissimilar to the sit-in, Rosenbaum said.

"We've brought out a lot more supporters," Rosenbaum said. "This issue is something that's not going away."

SGA welcomes in new leaders

by **Jonathan Pillow**
Senior Reporter

Last night the Owens banquet hall filled with over 200 students and administrators to dine in honor of the Student Government Association's achievements over the year and to inaugurate next year's incoming officers.

Steve Schneider, the SGA advisor, began the evening's speeches by pointing out how far the SGA had come since his first year of advising when the SGA inauguration had only 14 people in attendance. Now SGA membership exceeds 200 students, he said. Schneider attributed much of the SGA's success since 2001 to the precedent of commitment and service catalyzed by a previous SGA president Brian Montgomery.

"It is important to know and commit to a purpose bigger than yourself and to make sure that the purpose is in alignment with the organization and with the students that you serve," he said.

Schneider also urged students to realize that they cannot do everything as individuals and that the ultimate outcomes of their decisions

may not show up till later, but that every decision they make will make an impact in the future.

"It is your dedication and passion that has led to some of the greatest steps forward for the SGA," he said.

Outgoing SGA President Sumeet Bagai, a senior management major, and outgoing SGA Vice President Devin Weller, a senior industrial and systems engineering major,

outlined many of SGA's accomplishments over the last two years such as establishing an active judicial branch for the first time, leading the state in Virginia 21 registration percentages, selling more than 55,000 shirts for Hokie Effect, and establishing The Big Event as the third largest in the nation.

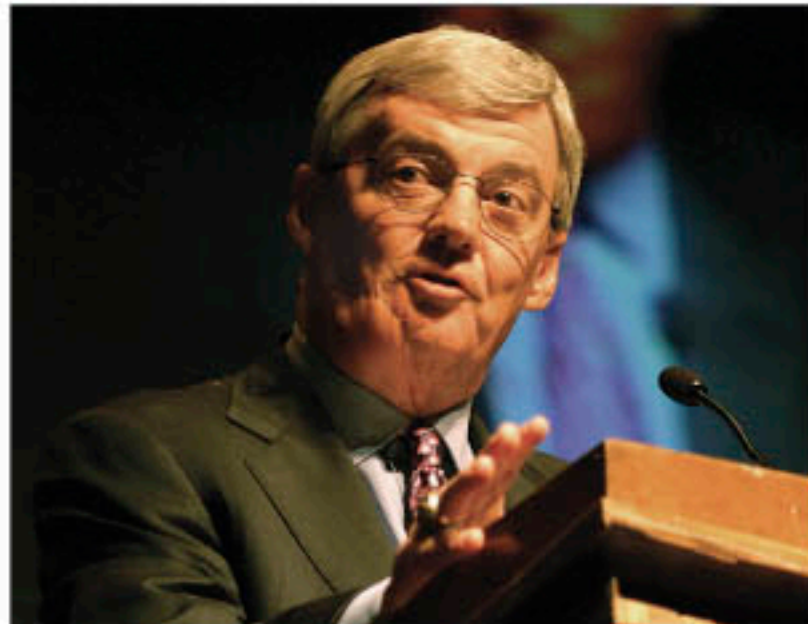
See **SGA**, page 2



SETH PETERSEN/SPPS

Sumeet Bagai, outgoing president of SGA presents an award to David Jarvis, director of technology.

Coach Frank Beamer joins players, others to celebrate Easter Holiday



GAYLE RUDDICK/SPPS

Head Football Coach Frank Beamer spoke to a crowd about the meaning of Easter.

by **Taris Mullins**
News Reporter

A bunny, an egg, a man and a sacrifice have come to symbolize Easter to many.

"I have trouble giving my roommate a dollar for food, yet Jesus died for our sins," said Cory Price, junior human nutrition, food and exercise major and member of the Virginia Tech football team.

The message behind these words resounded through a packed Burruss Auditorium this past Sunday.

In a service that was the result of many hours of work and collaboration between various community churches and Christian groups, the Easter festivities touched many that took part in it. Melding contemporary and traditional music of worship, much of the service was spent singing and praising.

The major event of the evening was the appearance

of football coach Frank Beamer, who delivered a rousing reflection about what Easter meant to him.

"It was cool to hear our football coach talking about the resurrection of Christ," said Chris Poch, a junior computer engineering major.

In the words of Frank Beamer, "Easter is about a new beginning and starting over."

Throughout the service, the idea was spread that to simply say Easter is about bunnies, eggs and candy would be to downplay a sacred holiday for Christians because it means so much more than that.

"Easter means Jesus Christ rose and gave us all an opportunity to receive eternal life," said Torria Beckham, a freshman animal and poultry sciences major.

The sacrifice made by Jesus Christ was a major aspect of the discussion about Easter during the service. Drawing upon personal experiences and ideas, senior apparel, housing, and resource management

major and Hokie football player Ryan Hash said, "Christ's sacrifice changed the way that I relate to others and has given me a reason to share God with others."

One moment during the service began with the trickling of bells from throughout the room until the entire auditorium resounded with the ringing of small silver bells held by each person. The historical purpose of the bells originated during the middle ages when the recently-deceased were buried with a small bell so the accidentally-buried could let those on the surface know that they needed to be rescued.

At the service, the bells represented Christians' freedom from burial in sin through Jesus Christ. The ringing of the bells stood for Christians' belief in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice to save them, which, to them was the meaning of Easter.

[I N S I D E]



■ **FEATURES**
Two groups will be celebrating Shakespearian works as the month of April draws to a close



■ **SPORTS**
Virginia Tech chooses local high school coach Kevin Dresser as their new head wrestling coach

■ **TODAY AROUND TOWN**
Baseball vs. Marshall (English Field, 7 p.m.)
■ **IN TOMORROW'S CT**
What store in University Mall will be closing its doors for good?

Blacksburg Weather

TUESDAY

67°

41°

Patchy Fog

■ Extended forecast, page 2.