A new seminar program fills a gap in the undergraduate experience.

As second-year students face the daunting prospect of selecting a major, they often find themselves with few opportunities to enroll in small seminars. First-years have USEMs, COAs, and ENWR*, and third- and fourth-years are required to enroll in seminars for their majors, but second-years don’t have as many opportunities to get to know faculty members in a seminar setting.

A new second-year seminar program is aimed at changing that, beginning this semester. Funded by the Parents Committee, the program promises to expose a larger number of second-year students to small classes where they can delve more deeply into disciplines in preparation for declaring a major. The more intimate classroom environment will also allow them to build a closer faculty support network, according to Lori Schuyler, assistant dean of Arts & Sciences.

“The best way to ensure that students have the best experiences in the College is to promote meaningful student/faculty interaction,” Schuyler says. “Typically, students find their academic mentors in the classroom. These seminars will grant the students the opportunity to find the right faculty member to inspire them and guide them during their University experience.”

Faculty members in the program opt to teach the second-year seminar in addition to their normal semester teaching load and teach the second-year seminar in addition to their normal semester teaching load and teach the second-year seminar in addition to their normal semester teaching load.

Rachel Most’s archaeology class is one of the College’s new second-year seminars. The small class size allows second-year students, whose classes are generally large lectures, to learn in a seminar environment.

“I was interested in the second-year seminar program because U.Va. is such a big school, and I was drawn to the fact that [the program] offered a small, intimate setting and covered really exciting and interesting topics,” Fried says. “A lot of second-year students don’t know how to get to know their professors in large classes, and having these opportunities makes the University feel smaller.”

Students in the program have the opportunity to choose from eight three-credit courses focusing on subjects such as anthropology, studio art, biology, environmental sciences, American politics, comparative politics and comparative literature. Each class meets once a week for about two and a half hours, and enrollment is capped at 18 students.

“University Seminars, College Advising Seminars, and Expository and Creative Writing.

Dear Friends

I could measure my investment in the University of Virginia in various ways. I might define it as a quarter of a century or as an entire career; I might say since I was 27 years old or during the entire time Abby and I have raised our family. By any measure, my involvement in this university and this place has defined much of my life and it has all been good.

I have been dean now for six years — remarkably, almost a fourth of the time I’ve been at U.Va. Those years are something like dog years, needing to be counted on a different scale. They have hurled past even though quite a few of them bore the imprint of sitting on the tarmac at LaGuardia or idling on I-66 trying to get into or out of D.C.

The biggest surprise of the last six years has been my slow developing understanding of the breadth, complexity, and strength of the network of people who love this place, many of whom have been involved with it far longer than I have been. The emeritus board members at the center of that network. You are the people who have kept the faith in the College and in the liberal arts; you are the people who created the possibility for us to shape our own future. I am deeply grateful for your friendship, for your generosity, and for your kind words. I will never forget any of those gifts. Thank you. — Edward L. Ayers
Dear Emeritus Trustees

As my term on the foundation board and my role as chairman of the Emeritus Society come to an end, I have a greater appreciation for the opportunities the foundation offers. Emeritus trustees are among the College’s most valuable assets. The size of the current group, its projected growth, its history of engagement and interest, and its high level of financial support and leadership will continue to be critical if the College is to realize its current and future aspirations.

The foundation continues to believe there are many ways the College can benefit from successfully reconnecting with its emeritus group. Early emeritus engagement initiatives are off to an encouraging start and more are planned. Juliana O’Reilly is the unanimous choice to assume the emeritus leadership role this spring. Her enthusiasm, experience on the board, commitment and leadership qualities will assure success with current and future emeritus initiatives.

Personally, my time on the College Foundation board has been an enormously rewarding and meaningful experience. There have been many highlights including participating in the formation of the foundation, serving as the first treasurer and finance committee chair, and organizing the initiatives undertaken to re-engage our emeritus trustees as chairman of the Emeritus Society. Surpassing all this, however, is the tremendous personal satisfaction I have received from working with a group of exceptionally dedicated and passionate fellow trustees and seeing that our efforts have truly made a difference to the College, its faculty and leadership, and the students — things very close to all our hearts.

Sincerely,
Don Laing, ’69

I am honored to have been asked to serve as the next chair of the Emeritus Society. Don has done such a terrific job as the first emeritus chair — taking a great idea to keep the College’s most loyal alumni involved and making it a successful reality. I will have large shoes to fill, and I will do my best to fill them — but please don’t look for me to turn in my pumps for wingtips!

One of the things I’m looking forward to doing is getting to know all of you. Although we all have something important in common — our love of the University of Virginia and our commitment to the continued growth and success of the College and its graduates — we are a diverse group. We represent three decades of service to the University. And we come from all parts of the country. With such great diversity, we are faced with the challenge and opportunity to engage everyone in this group. That’s why I’m looking forward to hearing from you regarding the Emeritus Society and how we can best keep you engaged for the benefit of the College.

One of my first opportunities to meet many of you and reconnect with my former foundation and council colleagues will be at the next Emeritus Society meeting on Friday, Oct. 12, and Saturday, Oct. 13. We officially begin Friday morning at Farmington Country Club, but I encourage those who can to informally gather on Thursday evening for drinks or dinner. On Friday, we will hear from a number of senior University officials including, hopefully, the new dean of the College. The dean and faculty will update all of us on developments at the College, the South Lawn and elsewhere on Grounds. Friday evening, we will move onto Grounds for cocktails and dinner in Special Collections at the Harrison Institute. On Saturday, we will begin with a pre-game brunch at C'mar's Hill and then move to Scott Stadium to watch U.Va. beat the University of Connecticut.

In support of the newly launched $500 million capital campaign, Alison Traub, assistant vice president for development at the University, has been named interim executive director of the College development office.

As part of this arrangement, Traub divides her time between University development and the College development office, where she reports to Edward L. Ayers, dean of Arts & Sciences, and Adam Daniel, senior associate dean and chief operating officer. Traub is expected to remain as interim executive director until the new Arts & Sciences dean appoints a permanent executive director.

Sincerely,
Juliana O’Reilly, ’86

The College faces a deadline of June 30 to complete fundraising for the first phase of the South Lawn Project. To date, the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences has raised $52 million in cash gifts and pledges. An additional $16 million is needed by June 30 to reach the project funding goal.

The South Lawn Project will provide a new academic center for the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. The expansion will add more than 100,000 square feet of academic space and will be the home of the history, politics and religious studies departments. Utility preparations are under way, with site work slated to begin this summer.

For more information contact Alison Traub, interim executive director of the College development office, at (434) 924-4493 or alisontraub@virginia.edu.

The Annual Fund Supports Student Career Services

CAREER SERVICES FOR ARTS & SCIENCES

Students are among the many programs that receive Annual Fund support. During the fall semester, three panels of graduate school alumni offered tips and advice to today’s graduate students. Panelists spoke on career options in the sciences beyond academia, and other sessions described opportunities in the humanities and in the social sciences.

In hosting these panels we aim to stimulate the imaginations of graduate students in considering their career options. Wendy Perry, assistant director for graduate Arts & Sciences career services, “The panels provide graduate students an opportunity to network with recent graduate alumni in the professional world and learn from their insights and advice on the job search process. We received tremendously positive feedback from the students who participated.”

Panelists at the graduate alumni panel for the life, physical and mathematical sciences were David Wilkowski (MS, Microbiology ’00); John McCune (PhD, Physics ’01); Claire Kaufman Brown (PhD, Biology ’03); Michael Torok (PhD, Biochemistry ’06); Andrea Stith (PhD, Biophysics ’01); Michael Krems (MS, Public Health Sciences ’03); and R. Michael Broad (PhD, Pharmacology, MBA Darden ’04).

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