

Our Newest Recruits

For reasons rooted in the mists of time, in the language of our ancient royal charter, William and Mary calls itself a “College,” not a “University.” It is very much a university, however. We prize not just teaching but also cutting-edge research, and we have an elite set of graduate programs and professional schools that thrive alongside our superb undergraduate program. Let’s talk for a moment about how William and Mary the university has fared on the recruiting front this year.

Our largest cohort of new people will be, of course, the freshman Class of 2012. As always, they have compelling academic credentials. Almost 80 percent of them were in the top 10 percent of their high school class; their SAT scores were equally glittering. Over 160 of the new freshmen are the first in their families to go to college. Nearly a quarter are students of color, making the Class of 2012 the most diverse in the College’s history. They have sung back-up for a Grammy Award winner, danced with the Rockettes, started nonprofit organizations, raised guiding eye dogs, worked on a tiger reserve, interviewed veterans for the National World War II Museum, and biked across the continent from Virginia to Washington state.

Our newest graduate students are similarly impressive. The Lyon Gardiner Tyler Department of History, for instance, is welcoming a highly competitive class of master’s and doctoral candidates from all over the country — fledgling historians with backgrounds ranging from archaeology to musicology to physics. The newest graduate students in the American Studies program arrive with bachelor’s and master’s degrees from schools such as Boston College, Yale University and the University of London, and have worked for the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the office of a U.S. senator, and the Afghan embassy in Washington, D.C.

The department of computer science will have 14 new graduate students, three of whom are active-duty military; applied science will welcome graduate students from universities in Turkey, India and the Philippines — and two straight from William and Mary. Among the 15 newest graduate students in physics are an instructor in quantum mechanics from Russia and an engineer and aikido expert from Connecticut. And the Virginia Institute of Marine Science’s incoming class includes men and women who’ve already conducted marine research in Australia, Germany, South Africa, Turks and Caicos, and Costa Rica. VIMS enjoyed a 23 percent increase in applications this year.

The Mason School of Business expects 110 new M.B.A. candidates from a dozen countries, including a banking executive from Kosovo, an international affairs consultant from Japan, and an automobile marketing specialist from India. Our School of Education expects about 150 new graduate students, including an elementary literacy teacher, a swim coach, a former staffer at *USA Today*, and a veteran of two national political campaigns.

As I mentioned in an earlier column, the Law School had almost 4,600 applicants, the most ever, for its J.D. Class of 2011, which will number just over 200. This class includes students who graduated from 124 colleges and universities across the country. They have a median undergraduate grade point average of 3.64 and a median LSAT score in the 90th percentile. The class includes former legislative aides, journalists, union organizers, pastors and nurses — and more than a dozen current or former members of the armed services. The Law School is also adding to its num-



ber 17 master’s students from China, Georgia, Korea, Nigeria, Panama, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

On the faculty side, William and Mary continues to bring to campus extraordinary people. This fall, 28 new tenured or tenure-eligible faculty will join us. We’ll welcome, among others, Ravi Gupta, assistant professor of religious studies, an expert on Hinduism who took part in an interfaith colloquium with Pope Benedict XVI during his recent visit to the United States; Hannes Schniepp, assistant professor of applied science, a former postdoctoral fellow at Princeton, expert in nanotechnology, and jazz pianist; Alex Woods, a specialist in management accounting who spent 10 years with the Air Force Audit Agency; and two award-winning education professors, Pamela Eddy and Kyung-Hee Kim. Also joining us is Larry Palmer, who taught law at Cornell for nearly three decades, and who’ll head up the new Health Policy and Law Initiative, a collaboration between William and Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University.

These newest members of our community could have chosen to study or work at many other engaging places. They chose William and Mary. This is good. Of the countless factors that go into making a school great, the most crucial is the caliber of its people.

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