ARTS + HEALTH
Groundbreaking collaborations at Virginia Commonwealth University
It gives me great pleasure to share with you some of the numerous combined efforts from the last few years between VCUarts and the Medical Center Campus. On the surface, one might wonder what common ground artists, designers and performers have with healthcare researchers. Apparently, not only is there common ground, but these teams have broken **new ground** in a variety of areas, varying from empathy training to surgical molds.

> “The world is filled with opportunity if only you have the talent, tools and will: collaboration between medicine and art help equip the broadest range of people for that world. They share space and ideas and learnings with some of the world’s most promising artists and dedicated medical students.”

Sheldon M. Retchin, MD, MSPH
CEO, VCU Health System
Senior Vice President, VCU Health Sciences

> “The School of the Arts brings unique expertise and perspective that has informed our medical education program and clinical care from standardized patients to medically informed patient apparel. This special collaboration is one of the distinguishing features of our School of Medicine and the VCU Health System.”

Jerome F. Strauss III, MD, PhD
Dean, VCU School of Medicine

VCUarts faculty and students conduct research on many levels and, seeing how many collaborations we have with healthcare, we are excited to tout this good work.

Joseph H. Seipel
Dean, VCU School of the Arts
Associate Professor Kristin Caskey (Fashion Design) led a student project to design specialized garments for conjoined twins awaiting surgical separation at VCU Medical Center based on a three-dimensional form developed by the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media. The collaborative work was featured in the Discovery Channel’s feature-length documentary, “Separation Anxiety.”
VCU’s da Vinci Center for Innovation develops interdisciplinary student projects supported by corporate and government affiliates. A team of students, including two from the School of the Arts, created a $500 operating table prototype for use in developing countries: a 24-inch, easy-to-ship flat-pack product that assembles into a full-size, hospital-grade table that moves in three dimensions and can easily be transported to the field when needed.
PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF A DOCUMENTARY FILM ON DOWN SYNDROME FOR PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS AND STUDENTS

VCUarts Department of Photography + Film
VCU School of Medicine Department of Pathology

Supported by a VCU Council for Community Engagement grant, this film project is being developed in partnership with the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond. Department Chair Sasha Waters Freyer (Photography + Film), an internationally acclaimed filmmaker, is working with Director of the Cytogenetic Diagnostics Laboratory Colleen Jackson-Cook (Pathology) to develop an original documentary film illustrating the spectrum of abilities seen in people with Down Syndrome and providing answers to questions regarding the needs and aspirations of these individuals.

INTERIOR DEVELOPMENT AT DALTON CANCER CENTER AT MASSEY

VCUarts Department of Interior Design
VCU Massey Cancer Center

Under the leadership of architect and Associate Professor Camden Whitehead (Interior Design) graduate students in interior environments developed plans for entry and circulation areas at Dalton Cancer Center at Massey. Students created a more rational entry and reception area design to better orient new patients, modified the design of the wig shop and a treatment room and integrated the meditation garden, the porch and pickup area outside with the entry and reception space.

FILMS ON THE VALUE OF DRIVING FOR OLDER ADULTS

VCUarts Cinema Program
VCU School of Medicine Department of Epidemiology + Community Health
VCU School of Social Work Council on Social Work Education

Students in the Cinema program worked in collaboration with former post-doctoral researcher Moon Choi, PhD (Family Medicine and Population Health) and the VCU Department of Epidemiology and Community Health to create films that depict the value of driving for older adult independence and the diversity of driving behaviors in the aging population. The Council on Social Work Education chose three of their short films as official selections for the 6th Annual Gero-Ed Film Festival.
VCUarts COLLABORATES WITH VCU CENTER FOR SOCIETY AND HEALTH

VCU School of the Arts
VCU Center for Society and Health

The Center for Society and Health’s primary goal is the development of effective visual communications that translate research data into accessible and persuasive information used in decision making, with a focus on public health and policy issues. The Center, the School of Medicine and the School of the Arts have funded a graduate student from the Department of Graphic Design to work with CSH to develop print materials and assist with website design, prior to a national rollout of a new campaign. This will provide materials for distribution to national legislators, lobbyists and the general public, highlighting factors that impact public health outcomes.

THE COMMUNITY VOICE

VCUarts Department of Art Education
VCU Department of Health Administration
VCU Department of Social and Behavioral Health
VCU School of Allied Health Professions
VCU School of Medicine

Funded by a Richmond Memorial Health Foundation grant, students and faculty from Health Administration, Art Education, Social Behavioral Health and administrators from the Virginia Coordinated Care program identified barriers and facilitators to access and take advantage of the utilization of healthcare services for an underserved population through the Photovoice technique.

MOLD MAKING AT VCUQATAR

VCUarts Department of Sculpture + Extended Media
VCU College of Humanities & Sciences
Department of Physics

VCUarts students and faculty members are collaborating on applications of the new material, aerogel, with physics faculty at VCU and VCUQatar. Awarded in 2013, mold-making procedures developed for prototyping products specific to unique aerogel properties was funded by a Qatar Foundation’s National Priorities Research Program grant.
Under the leadership of Executive Director of Entrepreneurship Matt Woolman (VCUarts) in collaboration with students in the Schools of Medicine and Engineering, an interdisciplinary team of students in the School of the Arts developed a project that utilizes new Google Glass technology to display real-time information such as alerts and critical patient data, as well as a live video feed from remote caregiver sites to a medical decision-maker in a hospital.
THE ART OF NURSING

VCUarts Department of Art Education
VCU School of Nursing

Department Chair Sara Wilson McKay, PhD (Art Education) with Clinical Assistant Professor Jeanne M Walter, PhD, RN, FAAMA (School of Nursing) led graduate students and faculty in Art Education to develop a program using art criticism (the ability to observe, interpret and evaluate) to enhance nurses’ clinical reasoning and perceptual skills. They were awarded VCU’s 2012 Presidential Research Incentive Program grant for the project.

CREATION OF NEW TREATMENT MASKS

VCUarts Department of Graphic Design
VCU Massey Cancer Center

This collaborative student project on redesigning treatment masks people wear at Massey Cancer Center was supervised by Associate Professor John Malinoski (Graphic Design) and was conducted through the Middle of Broad interdisciplinary design studio. With the intention of creating treatment masks that people feel less awkward wearing in public, students interacted with healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses and patients to design prototypes of treatment masks that appeared fun and less daunting to others.

VoicingElder

VCUarts Department of Kinetic Imaging
VCUarts Department of Theatre
VCU School of Allied Health Professions Department of Gerontology

“VoicingElder” is an expressive storytelling platform, designed by Associate Professor Semi Ryu (Kinetic Imaging). Combining reminiscence therapy with virtual interactive puppets, the project facilitates a deeper understanding of self-worth. The virtual puppets take the form of digital avatars with facial recognition for seniors, to help seniors recall their distant memories, feelings and hidden emotions in their storytelling. This intersects many fields of study and fosters interdisciplinary collaboration between art, gerontology, occupational therapy, social work and computer science. “VoicingElder” enables seniors to give new voice to their own stories, exploring a rich state of mixed reality and consciousness.
This incredible collaboration emphasizes the importance of communication in health care. Since 2004, the Departments of Internal Medicine and Theatre have collaborated on a communication curriculum that uses a theatre-based approach to teach empathy to medical students and health care professionals. The team assessed the effects of the curriculum on patient perceptions of medical students’ communication abilities to determine if patients also noted an improvement in rapport after training. The healthcare students showed marked improvement in communication skills after the training. With the help of a VCU Presidential Research Incentive Program award, Associate Chair & Associate Professor Aaron Anderson, PhD (Theatre), and Department Chair David Leong (Theatre), developed the Standardized Patient Program in collaboration with Medical Director & Associate Professor Ellen Brock, PhD (CHS) and Patient Safety and Assistant Vice President of Health Sciences for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care Alan Dow, MD (Internal Medicine). This highly successful program has received wide coverage in the media and serves as a model for related programs nationally.
ARTS + HEALTH FELLOWSHIPS

In the spring of 2014, a VCU Quest Innovation Fund grant was awarded to the School of the Arts and School of Medicine to launch an Arts + Health Fellows program, with leadership provided by Aaron Anderson, PhD, (Theatre) and Alan Dow, MD, Assistant Vice President of Health Sciences for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care. This program promotes innovative solutions to challenges in healthcare that utilize arts and design expertise. Fellowships were awarded to support the following projects:

**Preventative Vocal Health Study**

VCUarts Department of Music  
VCU School of Medicine Department of Otolaryngology

Associate Professor Cynthia Donnell (Music) will collaborate with Assistant Professor Jamie Eaglin Moore, MD (Otolaryngology) to evaluate new methods for maintaining vocal health. The project will study the impact of regular laryngologist and speech pathologist checkups on undergraduate voice students. The findings of this study could emphasize the importance of regular, preventative measures for vocal health in professions such as politics, public speaking and teaching.

**Women’s Health Retooled: Making Connections within the Community**

VCUarts Department of Graphic Design  
VCU School of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
VCU Institute for Women’s Health

Associate Professor Laura Chessin (Graphic Design) will be working with Centering Pregnancy Administrator Kirsten A. Olsen, LPN (Obstetrics and Gynecology) and Director of Grants Management RaShe1 Charles, MPH (Institute for Women’s Health), to create a public health campaign that encourages underserved pregnant women to engage in healthy prenatal care. The project aims to highlight the importance that the surrounding community plays in motivating mothers to make healthy decisions during their pregnancies.

**Creation of Youth-Friendly Medical Device Cases**

VCUarts Department of Communication Arts  
VCUarts Department of Fashion + Merchandising

Adrienne “Robin” Enriquez, an alumna of the Department of Communication Arts, will team with Associate Professor Kristin Caskey (Fashion Design) to design patient-centered coverings for pediatric medical devices. With the intention of removing the awkwardness of using medical devices, such as EpiPens, in social situations, she plans to create child-friendly designs for medical device cases and observe whether or not these designs make children feel more comfortable.
Morgan Yacoe, an alumna from the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media (pictured above with VCUarts Dean Joe Seipel) is developing medical anatomical models that are carefully engineered allowing medical students and doctors to practice a variety of specific medical procedures. These models provide an efficient experience of a very important surgical skill set. She also developed and teaches figural sculpting workshops for VCU plastic surgery residents. The grant will allow her to conduct research on the effectiveness of the medical models and sculpting workshops.
JOSEPH H. SEIPEL  
Dean, VCU School of the Arts

SUSAN K. ROTH  
Senior Associate Dean, VCU School of the Arts

DR. SARAH CUNNINGHAM  
Executive Director of Research, VCU School of the Arts

MATT WOOLMAN  
Executive Director of Creative Entrepreneurship,  
VCU School of the Arts

DAVID HOLLAND  
Director of Grant Coordination & Entrepreneurship,  
VCU School of the Arts

On cover: VCUarts Sculpture alumni, Morgan Yacoe and Kristi South,  
with cast models they developed for surgeons performing the separation  
of conjoined twins.

For more information on this or other projects, contact artsresearch@vcu.edu.