Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine joins in celebrating anatomy lab opening

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ROANOKE, Va., June 2, 2015 – The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine recently joined with Jefferson College of Health Sciences and Radford University in hosting a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Virginia Intercollegiate Anatomy Lab. The new laboratory, known as VIAL, is located on the eighth floor of Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital.

The event commemorated the completion of a $2.5 million, yearlong collaboration that was notable for its unique private-public partnership among the three institutions.

"Our three academic institutions have a common goal of educating the next generation of health care professionals," said Nathaniel L. Bishop, president of Jefferson College of Health Sciences. "With that common goal in mind, we came together to create this shared space, where all of our students can learn with the most innovative and progressive technology available in a cost-efficient manner."

The finished space includes approximately 8,000 square feet of instruction and storage space, including a 2,816-square foot laboratory that accommodates 15 separate stations, which can be used to teach large anatomy laboratory sections of up to 60 students or multiple small sections. The space includes a cadaveric dissection laboratory, a digitally advanced classroom, and a cool-temperature storage facility.

"State-of-the-art laboratories like this one provide the students of all three institutions with unique opportunities to learn," said Dr. Cynda Johnson, founding dean of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. "Our students will graduate with one-of-a-kind experiences that will ultimately help them provide superior care to their patients."

The primary feature of the classroom is an Anatomage table, which will be connected to five large-screen monitors located throughout the classroom. The monitors can also display images from the laboratory camera and digital storage server. Students will be able to connect their laptops or tablets to the monitors to form localized study groups. This technology will also offer the option of displaying images of interest from one station to all the students in the room simultaneously.

Additional equipment includes all instruments used in dissection. Twenty iPads are affixed across the laboratory to enable required images to be viewed at each station during dissection.

The laboratory is kept cool - 60 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 55 degrees at night - so the cadavers can remain in the laboratory. A storage facility, whose temperature is maintained at 55 degrees Fahrenheit, holds an additional 15 cadavers. All cadavers are on wheeled tables for easy transportation between the storage facility and the laboratory, which will help prevent damaging temperature changes.
VIAL supports the three institution's interprofessional education programs, which teach health care students to work collaboratively in clinical settings before entering their professions.

"The Virginia Intercollegiate Anatomy Lab represents a collaborative advancement in the way Radford University has partnered with other medical education programs to collectively enhance our students’ educational opportunities," said Radford University President Penelope Kyle. "Achieving together what we likely would not have been able to accomplish as individual institutions, our three institutions have achieved an excellent example of the prudent use of our fiscal resources, while giving the next generation of clinicians and healthcare professionals an excellent, state-of-the-art facility that will help them serve, heal, strengthen, and help so many others in our communities."

Bishop, Johnson, and Kyle all gave remarks at the ceremony, as did Steven Arner, chief operating officer of Carilion Clinic, and Virginia Delegate Joseph Yost.

In addition to VIAL, the Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital is home to Jefferson College of Health Sciences and Radford's doctoral program in physical therapy. Student use of the laboratory will begin this summer.

The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute[3] joins the basic science, life science, bioinformatics, and engineering strengths of Virginia Tech with the medical practice and medical education experience of Carilion Clinic. Virginia Tech Carilion is located in a new biomedical health sciences campus in Roanoke at 2 Riverside Circle.

Written by Mark Lambert.
On hand for the ribbon cutting were, from left, Nathaniel L. Bishop, president of Jefferson College of Health Sciences; Penelope Kyle, president of Radford University; Dr. Cynda Johnson, dean of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine; Virginia Delegate Joseph Yost; and Steve Arner, senior vice president and chief operating officer of Carilion Clinic.

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