

NOMINATION COVER SHEET

2017 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

1. NAME Full (Legal): Michael Kevin Hamed Preferred First Name: Kevin	
2. INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION Institution: Virginia Highlands Community College Rank/Position Title: Professor Year Rank/Title Attained: 2014 Years at Institution: 13 Campus Email Address: khamed@vhcc.edu Campus Phone: (276) 739-2431 Campus Mailing Address: P.O. Box 828, Abingdon, VA 24212 Campus Communications Contact: Name: Anne Dunham E-mail: adunham@vhcc.edu	3. PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION Academic Discipline: Biology Specialization/Field: Vertebrate Zoology Type of Terminal Degree: Ph.D. Year Awarded: 2014 Awarding Institution: University of Tennessee
4. PERSONAL INFORMATION Home Phone: (276) 644-4456 Cell Phone Number: (423) 963-3680 Home Mailing Address: 21694 Plantation Road, Bristol, VA, 24202	

Please check only one box:

- RESEARCH/DOCTORAL INSTITUTION NOMINEE:
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- RISING STAR NOMINEE:

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Signature (President or Chief Academic Officer)



Printed Name: Dr. Gene C. Couch, Jr., President

E-mail address: gcouch@vhcc.edu

Telephone: (276) 739-2421

Virginia Highlands Community College Mission Statement

Virginia Highlands Community College provides exceptional educational pathways to enrich lives and strengthen our communities.

A passion for science and deep appreciation for the diverse wildlife present only in the Appalachian region guide Dr. Kevin Hamed each time he stands before students at Virginia Highlands Community College. Because his own love for learning was sparked by an energetic teacher who took him out of the classroom and into nature, Dr. Hamed is anxious to introduce students to the remarkable creatures living in the nearby wetlands and forests they might otherwise never visit. He supplements classroom lectures with frequent hands-on research, experiential learning, field trips and technology-based discovery, always searching for ways to capture the attention of science enthusiasts and those pursuing degrees in other fields. Additionally, he is well known among his peers in the scientific community for his published research of Appalachian amphibians and well respected among educators for involving students in that work. Above all, Dr. Hamed is a strong proponent of the VHCC mission who recognizes that education builds vibrant communities and that many students — particularly those from rural areas and at-risk populations — need the opportunity to explore before they discover their true passion. In this pursuit, he is a tireless mentor who provides guidance and encouragement that continues long after graduation.

TEACHING

Dr. Hamed's reputation on the VHCC campus often means his classes fill soon after registration opens, requiring that new sections be added to meet demand. During his 13-year tenure as a VHCC faculty member, he has taught well over 100 sections of General Biology I and II to students pursuing transfer degrees. In each of these courses, classroom lectures and textbook readings are always supplemented with field research that allows students to understand how new discoveries are made and documented.

Since 2003, Dr. Hamed's General Biology students have taken part in hands-on research projects that focus on the fish, amphibians and mammals found in Southwest Virginia and nearby areas. These projects have taken students to the Tennessee Valley Authority's South Holston Weir Dam to study the nesting habits of four-toed salamanders, to Trinkle Creek within Steele Creek Park to better understand the Tennessee Dace, and to the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area to explore how climate change impacts plethodontid salamanders. Students also have participated in a multi-year study that explores how roadside litter impacts small mammals in the Cherokee National Forest, and been involved in two separate projects to document sightings of least weasels and green salamanders throughout the region.

Dr. Hamed chooses these research efforts because they allow him to share his own expertise and show students that every geographical region, particularly the Appalachian region, has unique species to be studied. Preparing students to participate in hands-on research — especially research that will likely be published, presented at professional conferences, and used by wildlife officials to make land management decisions — requires extra work from him, but Dr. Hamed knows that those who develop a love for learning will have an increased chance of success.

This philosophy led him to create Coastal Ecology, an honors course that allows VHCC students to travel to the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) to study plants and animals native to the coast. Those selected for this course prepare for the trip in January and February, then give up Spring Break for an intense week of exploration on the Gulf Coast. Some past participants have noted that it was their first opportunity to dip their toes in the ocean and almost all have said it was the most intense course they took at VHCC. The chance to see blue crabs, fringed flounder, chain pipefish, brown pelicans, and other species that are native only to the coast is somewhat unusual for students in Southwest Virginia, and it is worth noting that VHCC is the only community college that currently studies at GCRL. Dr. Hamed made it a personal goal to organize such a trip after his first visit as a young scientist and, thus far, has taken 8 groups of students to GCRL since 2006. Past participants include Heather Barbrow Barnett, who now conducts marine mammal surveys in

Alaska; Dakota Hughes, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in marine science and recently conducted a month-long study of lionfish in Jamaica; and David Algood, who earned a master's degree in Biology from the University of Southern Mississippi because of his Coastal Ecology experience while enrolled at VHCC.

Dr. Hamed's creative approach to teaching allowed Sgt. Eric Hoffman, a VHCC student who was called to active military duty while enrolled, to conduct an independent study of the reptiles and amphibians of Camp Al Asad in Iraq. Dr. Hamed customized the class so that Eric would not get behind on his education while deployed, frequently sending him books and literature that were not readily available in the Middle East. Eric has since earned a master's degree and is now a high school science teacher.

A cross-disciplinary course entitled Native Plants of Virginia was created by Dr. Hamed to allow both science and horticulture students to learn together. The course includes four days of experiential learning opportunities that allow students to visit public lands at elevational gradients and talk with land managers about the skills and knowledge needed for success in that field. He's also introduced case studies into his courses, allowing students to find an area that interests them for intensive research. Past case studies have looked at climate change, overfishing, the role that hunting has on wildlife conservation, and the management of endangered species.

Somehow, Dr. Hamed manages to balance time spent in the field with the important work he does on campus and in the community. He organizes study groups and invites guest lecturers to his classes, arranges collaborative projects that involve his students and those from neighboring high schools and universities, shares best practices that help middle and high school teachers better engage students through experiential learning, is a frequent guest lecturer at science conferences, and even mentors adjunct faculty at VHCC who are new to the teaching field.

All who meet him are impressed by his knowledge, his enthusiasm and his patient approach to teaching. He makes a concerted effort to know his students, to understand their interests, and to help them overcome any obstacles that might impact their success. He remains cognizant of the fact that the open-door policy of community colleges means that students come from a variety of backgrounds with varied levels of preparedness for college work. He faces these challenges by offering extra help to those who need it most and searching for ways to foster enthusiasm. He knows many will not become scientists or ever venture into the woods in search of salamanders again, but he also knows that those who get excited about learning will be successful.

His good work has been recognized on campus with two VHCC Professional Development Awards for his work with the Coastal Ecology course, the 2010 Outstanding Faculty Award in Teaching and the Faculty Award for Professional Excellence in the Domain of Scholarly and Creative Engagement in 2015. In Virginia, he was a finalist for the State Council of Higher Education's Outstanding Faculty Award in the Rising Star category in 2008. And, nationally, he was recognized in 2009 as the U.S. Professor of the Year for Virginia by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

DISCOVERY

Amphibian Research

Widely respected as a leading expert on Appalachian salamanders, Dr. Hamed has been awarded more than \$189,000 in grant funds for his salamander research, which has resulted in five peer-reviewed journal publications that have been cited in 109 other publications. Additionally, he has published 10 natural history and distribution notes; 5 outreach publications on amphibians for the general public; presented 15 papers and 8 posters at regional, state, national and international meetings; given 19 presentations on the ecology and management of

amphibians, and presented 9 talks that led to nearly two dozen interpretive hikes for the general public.

In addition to being widely cited by scholars and scientists, his research has facilitated change by state and federal agencies charged with managing the environment.

For example, Dr. Hamed in 1998 began a research project at the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) South Holston Weir Dam that involves locating salamander nesting areas, then either photographing unique markings located on their underbellies or marking them with tiny transponders. This enables the researchers to track the salamanders' movements and compare data from year to year. Students have assisted with tracking several species of salamanders each year since Dr. Hamed joined the VHCC teaching faculty. Of particular interest are the four-toed salamanders because they are listed as "in need of management" by the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency.

Data collected has prompted TVA to change some of its land management decisions, such as mowing in certain areas during prime salamander nesting times and the placement of sewer lines during new construction. The research was also featured in a TVA video to document the agency's community partnerships. Additionally, TVA has provided grant funding for continued research. A \$25,000 grant in 2015 allowed Dr. Hamed to purchase equipment needed to track the salamanders and a subsequent grant of \$1,000 allowed students – both VHCC students and at-risk high school students participating in a summer program on the VHCC campus - to create alternative nesting sites for four-toed salamanders.

Liz Hamrick, a TVA terrestrial zoologist, noted that the "habitat and species protection is important to TVA because every creature and every plant native to the Valley has an important role to play in preserving the ecosystem in which they live. The four-toed salamanders are especially dependent on certain habitat conditions in order to thrive and VHCC's efforts are really making a difference."

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) has provided grant funding and is closely monitoring research that Dr. Hamed began in 2005 to determine the prevalence of green salamanders in Southwest Virginia. The information collected helps the state agency determine where to focus conservation efforts. Dr. Wally Smith of The University of Virginia's College at Wise recently joined the salamander research project and community members have been asked to report green salamander sightings. With Dr. Hamed's help, the local media has reported on his research efforts, further enhancing awareness of these elusive salamanders.

Other research projects led by Dr. Hamed have provided the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the VDGIF with evidence that Weller's salamanders are not deserving of a federal threatened/endangered species designation, that salamander distributions in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area have experienced minimal changes in the last 50 years, and that forest service roads negatively impact salamander populations for more than 100 years after they have been abandoned.

Minnow Research

Because of his landmark research regarding the Tennessee dace, a tiny fish found primarily in northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia, Dr. Hamed was invited to write an entry in the fish section of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. He also has written two peer-reviewed articles and an outreach article for the general public that was published in *Tennessee Conservationist*. Further, he was the first to document spawning and population dynamics of the minnow, and the Virginia Department of Transportation later contracted with him to determine the impact of road activities on this endangered species. He is now working with VDGIF to develop and write an endangered species recovery plan for the Tennessee dace.

In Tennessee, Dr. Hamed has worked with the City of Bristol and Friends of Steele Creek Park to create a management plan for the fish, which included a recommendation that private property adjacent to Trinkle Creek be purchased as a land buffer. He subsequently helped

organize a successful fund-raising effort to purchase the property to protect Trinkle Creek, which now has one of the state's highest populations of Tennessee dace.

Additionally, Dr. Hamed has been invited to give 3 presentations and a poster at science conferences that focus on the management and life history of Tennessee dace.

Small Mammal Research

In 2003, Dr. Hamed organized a "citizen science project" to encourage members of the community to document and report sightings of least weasels within 7 southern states. Through this study, which was later joined by Dr. Donald Linzey of Virginia Tech, 133 least weasels were documented, indicating they are more prevalent than previously believed and, thus, not deserving of protective status. His findings have been published and garnered widespread attention in the *Southeastern Naturalist*, a peer-reviewed journal, and in the *Tennessee Conservationist*. This article has garnered additional citizen reports needed for accurate decision making.

For the past 17 years, he has worked closely with the VDGIF to band and monitor Virginia's only material colony of federally endangered gray bats, he is supervising an undergraduate science student who is documenting seasonal abundance of small mammals based on the diet of Barn Owls, and has published the results of a project that documented the impact that discarded cans and bottles have on mammals along national forest service roads. General Biology students at VHCC have been actively involved in documenting findings for this project.

Each of these research projects demonstrate his diverse areas of interest and many contributions to conservation efforts in the region. The Tennessee Scenic River Association recognized his research efforts with an award in 2001.

KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

A proponent of experiential learning (EL), Dr. Hamed often invites students to join him in the field while he is conducting research on his specific areas of interests. He begins by posing a research question in the classroom, then inviting students to offer their own hypotheses. Following a classroom discussion, students are invited to help collect and document data in search of scientific answers. The exercise has proven valuable at helping students understand the proper methods for conducting reliable research. While participating in these EL opportunities, students also get the chance to work with professionals, thus gaining valuable workplace skills, or "soft skills," that are vital for future success. Because of his experience in this area, Dr. Hamed was appointed to the VHCC Quality Enhancement (QEP) team, which is currently working to include soft skills training in every course and make EL opportunities part of every academic program. This plan is being developed as part of VHCC's reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Additionally, Dr. Hamed's extensive research and close working relationship with wildlife management agencies have allowed him to engage students through case studies. He teaches them to conduct literature reviews, sometimes using publications he has written, and then become an advocate for a stakeholder. Classes often conduct mock legislative hearings so that students can better understand how environmental issues are resolved when there are opposing interests. They also gain knowledge about threatened animals and how social and political challenges threaten the survival of these animals. Some of the case studies chosen for the class are a result of Dr. Hamed's work with Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC).

He attended two week-long workshops funded by the National Science Foundation to learn applications for emerging technology, then began incorporating geographic information systems (GIS), global positioning systems (GPS), and remote sensing applications into his classes. Since then, students enrolled in Plant Life of Virginia, a class he created, use technology to map native species trees on the VHCC campus. Additionally, he led a research project that

pioneered the use of PIT tags, tiny transponders that are injected into salamanders, at TVA's South Holston Weir Dam. The use of this technology allows him and his students to track the movement of marbled and spotted salamanders so they can better understand their nesting and migration habits. Dr. Hamed has also integrated the use of photo recognition software into his course to identify salamander spot patterns. Because this rapidly developing technology is also used to identify facial characteristics of suspected criminals, students are learning to use technology with applications in a variety of fields

Dr. Hamed's efforts to learn practical applications for technology and then incorporate it into his classes ensures students are ready for the next phase of their education and prepared for the workplace. His use of technology in the classroom earned Dr. Hamed the Technology in Education Award and Best in Show from the Virginia Community College System in 2008.

Perhaps the best example of his knowledge integration, however, is illustrated by the classes he has created. Coastal Ecology, an honors course that allows students to travel to the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory during Spring Break, includes an intense look at the invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and plants that are native to the coast. Dr. Hamed invites other faculty members, too, including those specializing in chemistry and botany, to accompany him on the trip so that students can learn about the abiotic factors that affect the diverse species present. Plant Life of Virginia, another class he created, combines studies in biology and horticulture.

Each of these efforts illustrate how Dr. Hamed helps students develop a deeper appreciation for the various scientific specialties they could choose to pursue and the joy of discovery – much as he did when he found his first salamander.

SERVICE

When not teaching in a VHCC classroom or collecting data for his varied research projects, Dr. Hamed spends much of his time sharing his vast knowledge with others from all walks of the community. Those who have scheduled him for community hikes, guest lectures, and civic club presentations often say that his enthusiasm is contagious and his skill as an educator allows him to adapt his talk to a level appropriate for any audience. For those reasons, many groups ask him to return again and again, certain his appearance will draw a crowd.

He has presented programs for the Warriors Path State Park Spring Festival each year since 1997 and been a presenter at the Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally each year since 1998. He served as a judge and committee member for the Blue Ridge Science Fair for nearly a decade and has judged local science fairs for Cornerstone Christian Academy, Sullins Academy and Watauga Elementary School.

As an active member of the Tennessee Herpetological Society since 1999, he has served as secretary, vice president, editorial board co-chair, conservation chair, and newsletter editor. Through his membership in that organization, he helped to establish the Chad Lewis Scholarship in honor of a young graduate student who died tragically in 1996.

Dr. Hamed formerly worked as Nature Center Manager at Bristol Tennessee's Steele Creek Park, where he provided community education and oversaw preservation of the park's flora and fauna. He has remained a strong supporter of the park in the years since, serving as an advisor to Friends of Steele Creek Park, a role that allows him to contribute his expertise to research, programming and funding. He also served as vice chair of the Bristol Tennessee Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission from 2005 through 2011.

In the nearby Johnson City community, Dr. Hamed is assisting the city's Parks and Recreation Department in managing a timber rattlesnake population at Buffalo Mountain Park. He is also working with faculty at East Tennessee State University to write a grant that would fund additional research on these snakes.

He serves as a volunteer research advisor for the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, a non-profit dedicated to exploring and sharing the natural history of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and

was a board member for Discover Life in America from 2009 through 2010. This small non-profit based in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is dedicated to sharing information about the park's 80,000 species with scientists and the public.

At Smyth County's Hungry Mother State Park, Dr. Hamed has served on the planning committee and chaired the amphibian section of Bioblitz, an event that allows scientists and community members to work together to identify as many species of plants, animals, birds, fungi, salamanders, and other organisms as possible. He also collaborated with park staff to document green salamanders within the park's boundaries and is working to develop a management plan for monitoring the park's population of this rare species.

He has given talks and led hikes for a variety of community organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, the Tennessee Valley Authority's Earth Day Program and Abingdon's annual Virginia Highlands Festival.

He also chaired the Beaver Creek Watershed Alliance, a multi-stakeholder group formed to improve water quality and educate the public on the value of Beaver Creek. The stream is impaired and on Tennessee's list for improvement. His efforts included working closely with the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to implement a plan for improving the stream and organizing a creek clean-up project that involved VHCC students and community members. And during the summer months, he provided a day-long program on salamanders and natural history for students from Illinois' College of Lake County, who were visiting the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area as part of a class assignment.

Each of these activities have made significant contributions to the environmental health of the region and allowed community members of all ages – from young school children to senior citizens - to better understand the diverse species present in their own backyards.

When not wading through the wetlands or forests of the region, Dr. Hamed helps improve the campus environment by serving on committees and representing the college at important community events. During his VHCC tenure, he has served on numerous hiring committees, chaired the VHCC Landscape Committee that oversaw the development of a Campus Master Plan, represented the Biology Department at dozens of career fairs and college recruitment activities, co-chaired a committee on diversity for the Foundations of Excellence, presented numerous lectures for the College's acclaimed Arts Array Series, and been actively involved in the selection and development of a Quality Enhancement Plan that is expanding experiential learning opportunities to promote student success. Additionally, he was selected to be a member of the Virginia Community College System's Geospatial Technician Education Cohort Team, a collaborative effort with Virginia Tech and the Virginia Space Consortium, and is a graduate of the VCCS Rural Community College Leadership Program.

Perhaps his most important service, however, involves his one-on-one interactions with students – both in and out of the classroom. As a faculty advisor, he helps students make important career decisions. He often creates independent studies that allow them to explore areas of particular interest to them and introduces them to community resources that can provide real-world experience. He has assisted many with applications to transfer universities and graduate programs and allowed many others to join him in presenting research findings at professional conferences. These associations continue long after graduation.

Dr. Hamed's contributions to campus, the community, and the field of science have been recognized with many awards including the Boone Watershed Partnership's Aquatic Preservation Award for Aquatic Resource Education, the Natural Heritage Preservation Award presented by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Recognition of Superb Service presented by Boone Watershed Partnership, and two program awards presented by the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Some of my earliest memories as a child were catching and observing animals in their natural world. I knew I wanted to pursue a career where I would be able to interact with wildlife on a daily basis. My passion became more focused during high school. In the fall of 1988 as a high school sophomore, I had the opportunity to visit Whitetop Mountain, VA. Because of an innovative and amazing high school teacher, I was able to witness the majestic Yonahlossee salamander. Twenty-four years later, I found myself standing in the exact same location, once again collecting Yonahlossee salamanders during the final week of data collection for my dissertation. During those 24 years, I realized the amazing impact educators can have on their students. A great teacher can inspire students for a lifetime of learning, provide potential career paths, and encourage their students when it is most needed.

While obtaining my undergraduate degree at Tennessee Technological University, I had the privilege of learning from many great professors, but two professors had a profound influence on my education and future career. Dr. Michael Harvey shared his passion for bats and field biology during zoology lectures and after classes to help reaffirm my career goal. Dr. Frank Bulow ignited a passion for southeastern native fish and encouraged me to spend a summer at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL). My experiences and interactions with these two professors and the GCRL staff provided the foundation I would need to begin a career.

Less than two months after graduating with my B.S., I was fortunate to obtain a wildlife biology position as a nature center manager for one of the largest municipal parks in Tennessee, Steele Creek Park. In this position, I was able to apply much of the knowledge I had gained and research many other natural history topics. One of my greatest joys was educating visitors and school groups about the park's natural world. I created a program that allowed high school junior and senior students interested in pursuing a career in biology to conduct independent research projects within the park. After several successful projects, I realized I would like to mentor and teach students just as teachers and professors had helped guide my educational journey.

In order to obtain a faculty position, I had to obtain advanced degrees. While serving in my role at the nature center, I was a fulltime graduate student at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) where I obtained my M.S. degree. However, one of the greatest benefits was realizing the hardships working students face as I often worked 50+ hours each week in addition to my thesis research and course work. I often share these experiences with my students because the majority of community college students work multiple jobs as a fulltime student to help support their families.

Not long after graduating at ETSU, I had the opportunity to serve as an adjunct biology instructor at Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC). This experience was especially fulfilling, and I was hired as a fulltime biology instructor the following semester. During my 13 years at VHCC, I have had the opportunity to teach over 1,000 students. Numerous former students stand-out as successes, but a few surpassed all expectations while overcoming amazing obstacles. Some of my greatest achievements have been helping students graduate from VHCC and transfer to 4-year colleges or universities to obtain their B.S. degrees. Many former students have obtained graduate and/or professional degrees. I know these students would have been successful at any institution, but I hope my mentoring helped them to develop a passion for biology. One such student is Eric Hoffman who came to VHCC after serving an Army deployment in Iraq, where he was injured during an IED explosion. Eric was a student in my general biology course and participated in experiential learning, where he was exposed to

hands-on investigations with salamanders. Eric quickly developed a passion for biology and enrolled in my coastal ecology course. During our week at GCRL, Eric not only absorbed every possible fact and concept, but he also assisted many other students who had limited outdoor skills such as kayaking. Eric discovered his passion of teaching and found a career where he could share his love of science and the outdoors. After the trip, Eric was highly motivated and ready to finish his associate's degree. Unfortunately, Eric was redeployed to Iraq, which delayed his degree progress. However, we worked together to develop an independent study course to survey his base (Camp Al Asad, Iraq) for herpetofauna. This area had been a large wetland complex before the Iran/Iraq war and was now almost dry. Eric returned safely from serving his country to complete his associate's degree and transfer to Emory and Henry College, where he obtained both a B.S. and M.S. Eric is now a high school science teacher who has created a coastal biology course for his students and travels each fall to the Duke Marine Laboratory inspiring future generations.

Many of my students do not become biologists. However, I strive to provide encouragement and guidance to all students, including those who become teachers, law enforcement officers, engineers, contractors, health care professionals, or enter another field. I am excited when former students email me to let me know how their biology experiences helped to guide their future degrees and vocation. Some students even pass on their love of biology to their children through nature excursions.

Great teachers never stop learning and are always proposing questions and discovering answers. The natural world continues to fascinate me, and I continue to develop new research questions. Many of my colleagues travel great distances to research exotic lands. Even though I find their Indiana Jones-ish adventures appealing, there are many unanswered ecological questions within an hour of my campus. The Southern Appalachian Mountains have the greatest diversity of plethodontid salamanders in the world, as well as some of the most species rich areas for fish in North America. My research has focused on these areas because of a great personal interest and because my students and local residents can relate to my research as it focuses on life that is often encountered in their backyards. Additionally, most biology students and community members are unaware of the incredible salamander diversity that resides on local mountains. Therefore, my research provides new experiences for my students and creates an appreciation for the natural world of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and their local community.

I want my daughter and future generations to be able to experience the natural world of Southern Appalachia just as I was able to. Much of my research works to address conservation issues. Salamanders are some of the most imperiled vertebrates; 53% are considered threatened or endangered. Most of the salamanders I research are being considered for some type of state or federal protect. I often receive research grants from agencies to provide data necessary for the management of these salamander. It is daunting to know that the future of these animals depends, in part, on my research, but it is rewarding to know my students and I are providing relevant and meaningful data.

The natural world of the Southern Appalachians inspired me to pursue degrees and careers that would focus on understanding and protecting these amazing habitats. As an educator, I want to provide inspiration to students to develop a similar passion. I hope that my students will one day be researching or working in some of the same habitats that we visited during their time at VHCC. Maybe, they will have their own college class and continue to pass down the wonders of the natural world around us.

ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITAE of M. Kevin Hamed

ACADEMIC DEGREES:

- **Ph.D.**, Natural Resources, University of Tennessee, 2014.
- **M.S.**, Biology, East Tennessee State University, 2001.
- **B.S.**, Biology, Tennessee Technological University, 1995.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT:

- **Virginia Highlands Community College**
 - Professor of Biology* August 2014–Present
 - Associate Professor of Biology* August 2010–14
 - Assistant Professor of Biology* August 2007–10
 - Biology Instructor* August 2003–07
- **East Tennessee State University**, Johnson City, Tennessee
 - Adjunct Biology Instructor* January–May 2007

SELECTED SPONSORED RESEARCH:

- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Grant. January 2017–December 2019. Green salamander distribution and habitat model update (\$40,000; Co-PI: Walter Smith, UVa-Wise).
- Tennessee Valley Authority, Research Grant. February 2015–September 2017. Salamander nesting and spatial ecology at the South Holston Weir Dam (\$25,500).
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, State Wildlife Grant. June 2010–January 2013. Mount Rogers National Recreation Area/green salamander habitat model and status update (\$73,612).
- Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, State Wildlife Grant. September 2007–July 2009. Phylogeographic structure and chytrid infection monitoring of Yonahlossee salamander populations in East Tennessee (\$14,000; Co-PI: Tom Laughlin, ETSU).
- Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, State Wildlife Grant. September 2007–July 2009. Amphibian community inventory and monitoring, South Fork Holston River wetland (\$17,500; Co-PI: Tom Laughlin, ETSU).

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (* UNDERGRADUATE MENTEE):

- Linzey, D. W and M. K. Hamed. 2016. Distribution of the least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) in the Southeastern United States. *Southeastern Naturalist* 15:243–58.
- Hamed, M. K. and T. F. Laughlin. 2015. Small-mammal mortality caused by discarded bottles and cans along a U.S. Forest Service Road in the Cherokee National Forest. *Southeastern Naturalist* 14:506–16.
- Blackburn, M., J. Wayland, W. H. Smith, J. H. McKenna*, M. Harry*, M. K. Hamed, M. J. Gray, and D. L. Miller. 2015. First report of ranavirus and *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in green salamanders (*Aneides aeneus*) from Virginia, USA. *Herpetological Review* 46:357–61.
- Hamed, M. K., M. J. Gray, and D. L. Miller. 2013. First report of ranavirus in plethodontid salamanders from the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, Virginia. *Herpetological Review* 44:255–7.
- Hamed, M. K., F. J. Alsop, and T. F. Laughlin. 2008. Life history traits of the Tennessee Dace (*Phoxinus tennesseensis*). *American Midland Naturalist* 160:289–99.

- Hamed, M.K., D. P. Ledford, and T. F. Laughlin. 2008. Monitoring non-breeding habitat activity by subterranean detection of ambystomatid salamanders with implanted passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags and a radio frequency identification (RFID) antenna system. *Herpetological Review* 39:303–6.
- Semlitsch, R. D., T. J. Ryan, M. K. Hamed, M. Chatfield, B. Drehman, N. Pekarek, M. Spath, and A. Watland. 2007. Salamander abundance along road edges and within abandoned logging roads in Appalachian forests. *Conservation Biology* 21:159–67.

SELECTED OUTREACH PUBLICATIONS:

- Hamed, M. K. 2016. Tennessee's smallest carnivore. *The Tennessee Conservationist*. July/August.
- Hamed, M. K. and J. D. Kleopfer. 2014. U.S. State Wildlife Grant provides great news for forest salamanders. *Southeastern Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation – Year of the Salamander Newsletter*. November (<http://www.parcplace.org/parcplace/images/stories/YOSal/SalamanderNewsNovember.pdf>).
- Hamed, M. K. 2012. Studying Weller's salamander. *The Tennessee Conservationist*. November/December.
- Hamed, M. K. 2009. The trematode *Ribeiroia ondatrae* in southeastern amphibians. *Southeastern Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Disease, Pathogens and Parasites Task Team, Information Sheet #4* (www.separc.org).
- Hamed, M. K. 2004. A trumpeter swan's journey south. *The Tennessee Conservationist*. November/December.
- Hamed, M. K. 2002. Tennessee dace among the state's 17 protected minnows. *The Tennessee Conservationist*. July/August.

PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

- 15 presentations and 11 posters at national/international conferences
- 27 invited presentations at local, regional, and state conferences
- 11 presentations at public and educational conferences
- 44 interpretive hikes and walks at local/state festivals and events

SELECTED AWARDS:

- Faculty Award for Professional Excellence in the domain of Scholarly and Creative Engagement, Virginia Highlands Community College – 2015.
- Outstanding Faculty Award in Teaching, Virginia Highlands Community College – 2010
- U.S. Professor of the Year, Virginia State Award Winner, Council for Advancement and Support of Education – 2009
- Chancellor's Faculty Fellowship, Virginia Community College System – 2009
- Technology in Education Award and Best in Show, Virginia Community College System – 2008

SELECTED ACADEMIC SERVICE:

- SACS QEP & Program Review Committees
- 17 hiring committees
- Instructor for Upward Bound Summer Camp for 10 years
- Diversity committee member for Foundation of Excellence Review

LETTERS OF SUPPORT (EXCERPTED)

“There are thousands of birds in the sky, but only a few are eagles.”

-- Author Unknown

I have been fortunate to work in community college education for more than 32 years and, in that time, I have worked with some dedicated and talented faculty. I have worked with faculty members who were subject matter experts and great at engaging students at the highest levels. I have worked with faculty members who were terrific at connecting with the community and other educational institutions outside the college. I have also worked with faculty members who had a gift for writing grants or pursuing other resources – they just had an ability to obtain money or whatever else was needed to support their work and the college.

With that said, I have worked with only one faculty member who has a combination of all three of these qualities at the highest level, and that person is Dr. Kevin Hamed. Dr. Hamed is a subject matter expert who students talk about long after having experienced his class. Kevin organizes many learning experiences outside the classroom and pursues projects with other agencies and organizations in support of the student learning experience. And, finally, he is creative and persistent in obtaining resources to benefit students and support his extensive research.

I can say without question that Kevin is a unique and talented individual. He is a difference maker, and the Virginia Community College System, Virginia Highlands Community College, our students, and our community are fortunate to have Kevin on our team! Dr. Kevin Hamed is an eagle.

— **Dr. Gene C. Couch, Jr., President of Virginia Highlands Community College**

I have gotten to know (Dr. Hamed) through our local chapter of Virginia Master Naturalist. I asked him to be a volunteer speaker for our spring training class without truly understanding his prominence in the field of herpetology. It was a bit like calling up Dolly Parton to sing at your birthday party because you had heard someone mention her name one time. Clearly Dr. Hamed is, in fact, a superstar in his field, but he never deems any group of interested people beneath his time and abilities. He came to our "little class" and spoke with us enthusiastically for several hours as if we were a class of scholars or graduate students. In every encounter, he is excited about what he has learned, he is thrilled to be sharing his knowledge with anyone who would care to learn, and he is constantly winning over new fans of herpetology. I recently had the honor of seeing him interact with students in the field at a Bioblitz event. It was impressive that he found the time to volunteer for this project, and it was great to see how he interacted with young people. They clearly were eager to show him what they had already learned from him, and he was ever-teaching and ever-sharing as they happily slogged through ditches and puddles well after dark. His constant interest in research and learning more is a testament to his genuine love for learning, and it says a lot about his commitment to the preservation of the beloved reptiles and amphibians of the Appalachians. Kevin's genuine enthusiasm, exceptional scholarship, and ease with people make him a consummate teacher in the classroom, in the field, and in the community.

— **Monica S. Hoel, Holston Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist**

Since 1998, Virginia Highlands Community College Professor Dr. Kevin Hamed has conducted research on salamanders and other amphibians on TVA lands located near South Holston Dam. This ongoing research has produced excellent data, especially in reference to the life cycle and population monitoring of the four-toed salamander. The four-toed salamander is listed as a species in need of management in the state of Tennessee. In partnership with TVA, Dr. Hamed had initiated and implemented various amphibian habitat improvement projects on

TVA property. He has also been an excellent local resource for TVA as he is the leading expert in amphibians in this area. Although the research and projects that Dr. Hamed has been involved with are great accomplishments, the best qualities of Dr. Hamed are his passion for his work and desire to educate others. He always includes students of Virginia Highlands Community College and other youth on his research and project work. I have never seen him out in the field without students.

— **Randy Short, TVA Natural Resources Management**

I have known Dr. Kevin Hamed for a number of years as both a student and now a colleague. Kevin maintains a level of enthusiasm that is contagious to both students and colleagues because of his positive, collegial and intelligent perspectives on work and life. Kevin has a history of exceptional accomplishments in teaching, research and service. ... One of the little gems in Kevin's extensive repertoire is his success in translating completed research projects into popular articles. Kevin's just completed Ph.D. dissertation focused on the ecology and conservation of Southern Appalachian salamander populations. I think the published results will be seen as important and will further establish his already solid reputation in Southern Appalachian salamander ecology. Kevin's teaching background is extensive. He has experience in interacting with persons at all levels of interest and from a variety of backgrounds, and I know from my own observations that he is very effective in his teaching. He is demanding of students but also very much interested in effective strategies for successful student learning.

— **Dr. Thomas F. Laughlin, Associate Professor, East Tennessee State University**

Dr. Kevin Hamed was my teacher in the Spring of 2005 for a Coastal Ecology course and he continues to be my mentor 11 years later. Marine biology isn't a typical career goal for those who grow up in Southwest Virginia, but it was mine. I'm certain that I would not have realized this goal without the help and encouragement I received from Dr. Hamed. He takes his job very seriously and goes above and beyond what is expected of him on a daily basis. He is the type of professor whose influence lives on in the lives of his students long after they leave the classroom. While learning about Gulf Shore ecology in his class, I also learned how to be a reputable scientist. I have often sought his opinion on job decisions since graduation, and he constantly reminds me that any experience that can be gained in a job will only benefit me in the future. It is Dr. Hamed's advice that inspired me to push through those in between jobs in order to attain the job of my dreams.

— **Heather Barbrow Barnett, former student who is now a marine mammal observer**

Teaching is the primary objective for a community college faculty member. Very few faculty members engage in research of any kind. Kevin is the exception. Not only is he an excellent teacher, but he has proven to be a recognized researcher in the fields of herpetology and mammalogy. In 2015, Kevin and I presented a poster session at the Tennessee Chapter of the Wildlife Society Annual Conference, and in May, 2016, we co-authored a significant research paper on the distribution of the least weasel in the journal *Southeastern Naturalist*. Kevin has also engaged in a variety of community service activities such as serving as a Committee Member and Judge for the Blue Ridge Highlands Regional Science Fair, serving as a Board member for Discover Life in America and the Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally, and others. Kevin epitomizes the criteria for the Outstanding Faculty Award through his scholarly instruction and research. He successfully works across disciplines. His ecological field research not only aids in his own teaching, but his discoveries are meaningful for the successful conservation of many species and for society as a whole. I do not know of another community college faculty member as well qualified for this award as Kevin Hamed.

— **Dr. Donald Linzey, Instructional Faculty Member at Virginia Tech's Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation**

Kevin is the most engaging educator that I've ever known. His instruction always resonates with a wide range of learners. His never ending research and scholarship establishes a depth of knowledge that allows him to guide students as they connect the dots across a wide range of biological topics. As he and I have collaborated over the years on the Coastal Ecology class I have been amazed at what he has discovered in the field and how he always has the knowledge to excite me and the students. Whether standing roadside somewhere in dark, marshy Mississippi identifying frogs only by their calls or on Virginia's highest mountain closely scrutinizing salamanders for the most subtle of field marks, Kevin is tireless in creating unique, high-quality, experiential learning opportunities. In higher education, the best teachers strive to inspire students to life-long learning. And to accomplish that noble goal, you have to be a life-long learner yourself. Kevin has a thirst for study, research, and original scholarship that is unmatched. To this day, he works non-stop on his research, his lectures, and on his on-campus and off-campus lab experiences. His dedication and enthusiasm are infectious: years after students have taken his General Biology classes, they reach back to Kevin via social media with their wildlife observations and their comments and questions, displaying their on-going passion for things biological. The region serves as a laboratory for Kevin's wildlife research and teaching. But the interest he creates in wildlife science travels. Kevin's students have ended up all over the globe pursuing their studies. He has guided students who were studying a unique desert frog while deployed in the Middle East, insects in the Carolinas, feral pigs in the Great Smoky Mountain, wild bird management at airports in California, and the list goes on ...

— **Joel Keebler Academic Director of Agricultural Sciences at Chemeketa Community College in Oregon and former VHCC faculty member**

I have never observed Kevin in a classroom setting, but have had many opportunities to observe his skilled teaching in non-classroom settings. For years, he has been an essential component of the Warriors' Path State Park Spring Nature Festival. Here Kevin shared his depth and breadth of nature knowledge by leading large groups of interested amateurs on guided nature hikes. He was able to hold the attention of the youngest child, while still satisfying the curiosity of the experienced adults. His teaching was a rare combination: accurate, engaging and enthusiastic. I also had the pleasure of watching Dr. Hamed at work at the Rocky Fork State Park Hiker's Jamboree. A group of urban children and teens happened to arrive just in time for his salamander talk. They were obviously a bit frightened of all things natural, but "too cool" to show it. Kevin was able to engage them immediately - capturing their attention while gently easing their fears. He skillfully included them in the discussion, while still holding the attention of the rest of his audience, which included college-level instructors, trained zoologists, and hiking enthusiasts of all ages. His salamander field trip included the same diverse audience. All of us benefited from Kevin's expert guidance. In fact, some of the young teens in that same group of urban children worked the hardest to locate and carefully capture additional salamanders, and to bring them to their new "outdoor hero," Dr. Hamed.

— **Marty Silver, Park Ranger, Warriors' Path State Park**

I spent many, many hours with Kevin on his various research projects. This hands-on experience sharpened my creative thinking skills more than any classroom could have. Sometimes it was daunting questions like "should we start the 2 hour trek back to the vehicle or just keep doing salamander surveys while dodging lightning?" and once it was even "did you notice that they had a gun?" On a more serious note, spending 10-hour days traversing Whitetop Mountain involved creative thinking every step of the way. He taught me how critical it was to use the same practices of data collection throughout the study. I learned just how important it was to always be prepared, even if I didn't know what I was preparing for.

— **Brian Parks, former student now working for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.**

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Unsolicited emails

"It's been a while since I sat in your classes and listen to you proclaim your love of salamanders and honestly I miss it. A few years ago I was a student of yours, and I wanted to let you know that you made a massive impression on my life. At the time I was attending VHCC I was, to say the least, a little troubled and after only a semester I left school mainly due to my own self-doubt. But today was a great day for me. Today I enrolled in the undergraduate biology program at ETSU. Your teaching was a large part of the decision making process and I have you to thank for my love of the natural sciences. As of right now I'm not sure if I'll go the microbiology route or take the traditional route but either way it's because of you that I've finally made up my mind ..."

— **Matthew Hawk**

Mr. Hamed, I wanted to thank you for being a great professor of Biology. I learned so much about Biology from the labs and BioPortal activities, I really enjoyed your class, and I learned a lot about Biology, and now have a great appreciation for it than ever before. I also enjoyed your enthusiastic way of teaching the class and the way you're able to make the topic, whatever it may be, interesting. I'm glad I had the privilege to be in your class, and I hope to see you next fall, whenever I'm on campus. Have a great summer!

— **Marcus Poore**

I attended the morning session on salamanders led by Kevin Hamed. He attracted a very large group (about 40) and was able to organize and lead them in such a way that all had the opportunity to learn from him. He is an exceptional teacher in all respects- he is enthusiastic, very knowledgeable and cheerful in the face of cold driving rain! He had to deal with an extremely large group for one leader and managed to keep them together for the major aspects of the field trip. So kudos to Kevin!

— **Bill Dunson, Professor Emeritus of Biology for Penn State University, regarding the 2014 Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally**

I am now attending Radford University where I have a class call Introduction to Environmental Studies. The reason I am emailing you is I was able to answer a question in that class because of the service learning we did. It may sound trivial but when you're in a class with more than 100 people knowing the answer when no one else does is exciting. My professor had some pictures up on a power point presentation. In one picture he was joking around and said, "I have this jet pack on my back and I'm about to take off to space. No just joking." He then asked what it was. I was able to answer it because he was wearing a fish shocker. Well I was excited even if it was not an important question. Also Jeremy Hutchinson and I would like to know if you will be doing any shrew hunting this year. If so let us know, we really enjoyed it.

— **Heather Hutton**

Additional Letters of Support

Even though research is not a requirement at the community college level, Kevin has maintained a heavy teaching load while also exposing his students to field research. For several years he has spent his spring break offering a coastal ecology class for our students. Not only does he develop and organize the class, but he makes the travel arrangements and drives the students to the gulf coast of Mississippi for the week long field experience. He has also involved students in his salamander research, spending many weekends teaching students how to conduct field research. Another area that is rarely seen at the community college level is an instructor who is able to secure grant funding. Kevin has partnered with colleagues at senior institutions to secure several discipline related grants over the years. He was also the recipient of the VCCS Chancellor's Fellowship in 2009 which allowed him to complete residency requirements for his doctoral work at UTK. Kevin is active on college committees and has gladly pulled extra duties helping me keep our horticulture program

going until I could replace that faculty member. Because horticulture is a one man show, he agreed to mentor our newly hired faculty as he gets acclimated to our college. Kevin assists our grounds crew by arranging tree pruning education and tree identification so they will not remove valuable tree specimens from campus. Recently, Kevin worked to get specimen kits available in our bookstore so that students in our hybrid biology class who absolutely cannot travel to campus for labs can complete labs at home. Kevin participates in nearly every opportunity given to faculty to showcase their programs to future students from middle school to high school graduates. He often presents his research at community events across the region. He is dynamic, energetic, likeable, and an engaging speaker whose passion for biology is clearly evident. He has much common sense, is sensitive to others' feelings, and is an outstanding employee. — **Dr. Susan Fleming, retired professor and administrator at VHCC.**

It is my pleasure to endorse the application of Kevin Hamed for the Outstanding Faculty Award through the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Kevin is a highly accomplished teacher that conducts cutting-edge research by incorporating undergraduate students into his research program. His research integrates field surveys, theory, and experimental research to answer applied and basic question in wildlife ecology. His current research examines the influence of anthropogenic stressors on plethodontid salamanders in the Southern Appalachians. This work has provided extensive insights into how past and present human activities directly and indirectly influence wildlife populations. Given the increasing influence of humans on ecological systems, Kevin's research has been well supported with funding from state and federal agencies. He has received funding from the Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the National Science Foundation. Kevin also has done an exceptional job at disseminating his research. He has 12 research publications with data for an additional four from his dissertation research. He has also presented his work at national and international meetings. Importantly, Kevin has consistently integrated undergraduate students into his research. Through his mentorship, undergraduate students have been able to conduct pioneering research in ecology and have been pivotal in the development of Kevin's research program on salamanders. Lastly, Kevin has been involved throughout his career in outreach activities involving middle and high school students, college undergraduates, and even his peers. His dedication to these outreach activities is evident in his CV and extremely impressive. For instance, he has eight outreach publications covering topics such as disease ecology, general species ecology, and bird migration. He has also been heavily involved in extension events involving the general public. Collectively, these activities demonstrate Kevin's dedication to activities that enhance educational awareness and interactions with society. In conclusion, Kevin exemplifies the meaning of an outstanding faculty member and is well deserving of the award from the SCHEV. If I can elaborate further on my endorsement of Kevin, please do not hesitate to contact me. — **Jason T. Hoverman, Ph.D., Purdue University, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources**

Probably the program that has the biggest impact on the students is the Coastal Ecology class that he developed and runs during Spring Break. I have been a co-instructor for the class three different years. That is a little bit of a misnomer because Kevin is the course's heart and soul. He really makes all the plans, decides what we will do and organizes most of the details as well. He is always so excited about going and gets the students excited as well. Since he already teaches at the maximum overload, he technically doesn't get paid for the course, but does it for the students and his love of sharing biology with them. From the moment we get to the Gulf Coast location we hit the ground running. He has all types of activities planned from bird-watching, to seining various beaches and inlets; from dragging a net behind a research vessel and counting species, to salamander hunting; from kayaking in a bayou to keying out,

summarizing and organizing what was found at the end of each day. There isn't a minute of wasted time. — **Sandra Davis, VHCC Associate Professor of Chemistry**

Kevin is a professor who has a true love and passion for his field of expertise. Science, particularly the aspects of earth science and zoology, is a career for him and also a hobby and a love. Though I myself struggle with the technical aspects of scientific study, the courses I had as a student under Kevin Hamed were some of the most rewarding of my experiences at Virginia Highlands. I looked forward to the learning that I gained in his class. — **David Woodrum, former student**

I have known Kevin since 1997 through his participation in the Boone Watershed Partnership. In his volunteer position as Chairman of the Beaver Creek Watershed Alliance (associated with the Boone Watershed Partnership), he has been lead numerous community-wide stream clean-ups, facilitated and worked on projects to improve water quality such as stream-bank stabilizations and served as a watch-dog and advocate for streams. He has also been very involved in the Boone Watershed Partnership, providing superb presentations on varied subjects. He is thorough in his research and very effective in his deliveries. One of his special qualities is his ability to relate the key points of a topic to a wide range of knowledge level audiences. — **Gary Barrigar, Chairman, Boone Watershed Partnership**

Kevin was my drive to become a high school science teacher. I took a number of strategies from his style of teaching to include project based learning, connecting to resources in the community, and tearing down the walls of the classroom to open up a multitude of opportunities. I can't say enough about his influence in my teaching career. Kevin's ability to bring real life experience into the learning environment is just beginning to reach the classrooms of public education! I am currently integrating the same teaching style as Kevin uses at VHCC. Kevin's passion and ability to make sure students connect with the community hits on an area where high school graduates are lacking; he insures they have their soft skills needed to network and go after and achieve their goals with confidence! — **Eric Hoffman, former student now working as a science teacher at Patrick Henry High School.**

I have worked with Kevin since he arrived on our campus some 13 years ago. Kevin is easily recognized as an expert scientist in our community and our state. He is also a leading expert in the study of native Appalachian salamanders and is recognized throughout the country. But the thing that makes Kevin stand apart from other distinguished scientists is his ability to engage students in the subject matter. For many years, I ran outreach programs designed to increase the college success rates for students in our region. I cannot think of an occasion that Kevin did not agree to participate in whatever middle or high school activity we had planned. He does the same for the students at VHCC. Not only is he able to engage students and build relationships with them, he is able to engage them in the study of science and for hundreds and hundreds of students, he has provided their introduction to the scientific process. It is hard to measure the impact he has had on the students in our region but I suspect it is significant. — **Dr. Beth Page, Acting Dean of Technical and Professional Studies at VHCC.**

Dr. Hamed has a unique ability to engage community college students in biological content and help them see the applicability of the field to their lives and communities. Kevin actively engages students in field research focused biodiversity and ecology. In the field, students learn content, applicability, and have the unique opportunity to participate in primary research. They also come to know Kevin as a mentor who is committed to helping them find their way in the world. Students have often commented that Dr. Hamed is the most influential faculty member in their

educational journeys. — **Dr. Hara Charlier, Former Vice President of Instruction and Student Services at VHCC.**

Kevin Hamed has easily become my favorite teacher of my entire college career. I first had Dr. Hamed as my professor for VHCC's Coastal Ecology course in Ocean Springs, MS. After this class, I had the privilege of working under Dr. Hamed as a work study, all the while learning and progressing in my scientific career. Even after receiving my Associates degree from VHCC and moving to Coastal Carolina University to pursue my Bachelor's degree in Marine Science, Dr. Hamed continues to help me in my studies and my future career by reviewing important papers and searching for internships and future job opportunities. — **Dakota Hughes, former VHCC student now attending Virginia Tech.**

The faculty and staff at Virginia Highlands Community College all share the responsibility of recruiting new students and creating a welcoming, engaging environment for everyone who walks through our doors. Dr. Kevin Hamed is a master in this regard because of his natural ability to relate to people from all walks of life, his passion for teaching, and his love of learning. Despite his tremendous teaching load and the significant demands of his research, he always volunteers to help at college fairs and open houses - and often becomes the most talked about presenter at the entire event. I am confident many students have taken the next step toward enrollment as the result of his good work. VHCC is fortunate to have a scientist and educator of Dr. Hamed's caliber engaged in our ongoing recruitment efforts. — **Karen Cheers, Dean of Enrollment and Student Services**

Tennessee Valley Authority Video

Dr. Hamed's work with salamanders was the subject of a 2015 TVA video designed to educate residents about four-toed salamanders and TVA's community partnerships.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fill0I0EBVQ>

Student Evaluations

What are the instructor's greatest strengths? Uses own interest to promote interest and make things more enjoyable for students • Wants students to learn • Mr. Hamed is without a doubt the best teacher I have ever had • Although the course is fairly difficult, he presents the material in a fashion that encourages students to take an interest and actually learn. He explains very advanced, foreign concepts in a way that is simple to understand and remains humorous in almost everything he does • Very knowledgeable, knew all the material • Very organized in presentation of the material and coinciding lab work • Providing all of the information needed to successfully complete this hybrid course • He's very interested in what he does and in every person • Communicates well, promotes interesting material, and very helpful if there are questions • The instructor is an effective communicator, very knowledgeable on subject matter, and genuinely cares about the students • Very vocal and willing to help you any way he can • He makes sure everyone understands what he is teaching • Incredible all around • Passionate and Caring • Teaching! Excellent at explaining things • Explains things very well • Making the material understandable, providing opportunities to engage in field work, making biology interesting • He is extremely passionate about his work • Approaches through all types of learning, auditory, visual, etc.

Additional comments: I feel like I have learned a lot • Kevin Hamed is undoubtedly the single greatest instructor on the planet • Mr. Hamed has been an outstanding teacher, and has provided me with all the material needed for my success in the class • Love Professor Hamed, very knowledgeable and understands what he is teaching you • Professor Hamed is by far one of the best teachers I have had thus far here at VHCC. I love how passionate he is about Biology. He makes things fun and interesting. I love going to class.

Dr. Kevin Hamed Wins Virginia's Top Faculty Award

Dr. Kevin Hamed, professor of Biology at Virginia Highlands Community College, has been selected to receive the highest honor awarded to faculty at Virginia's public and private colleges and universities.

The 2017 Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia was announced Friday and will be presented to Dr. Hamed during a special ceremony in February.

"I can't think of anyone who is more deserving of this prestigious honor," said VHCC President Gene C. Couch Jr. "Dr. Hamed is a subject matter expert who students talk about long after having experienced his class. He organizes many learning experiences outside the classroom and pursues projects with other agencies and organizations in support of the student learning experience. And, finally, he is creative and persistent in obtaining resources to benefit students and support his extensive research. He is a difference maker, and the Virginia Community College System, Virginia Highlands Community College, our students, and our community are fortunate to have Kevin on our team."

Widely respected among his peers in the scientific community as a leading expert on Appalachian salamanders, Dr. Hamed has taught more than 100 biology classes since joining VHCC in 2003. By combining classroom lectures with research assignments in the region's forest and wetlands, he provides students with experience collecting and recording data.

Together, they have studied a variety of amphibians, fish, and mammals, and the resulting data has been used to facilitate change by the Tennessee Valley Authority, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and other state, federal and local organizations charged with making land management decisions.

Among his other notable achievements, Dr. Hamed spearheaded an effort in 2006 to create an honors course in Coastal Ecology. The class includes an intense week-long study at the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory during Spring Break. VHCC is the nation's only community college that offers a program there and many past participants have continued their studies in marine biology as a result of the experience.

In the community, Dr. Hamed has led hikes and presented programs for a wide variety of organizations including the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, the Boy Scouts of America, the Virginia Highlands Festival, Warriors Path State Park, and the Blue Ridge Science Fair. Additionally, his findings have been published in a wide variety of scientific journals and shared with the general public through numerous other publications. He is a past recipient of the Chancellor's Faculty Fellowship from Virginia's Community Colleges, the VHCC Outstanding Faculty Award in Teaching, the VHCC Faculty Award for Professional Excellence, and the Virginia Professor of the Year from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in 2009.

Dr. Hamed holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Tennessee Technological University, a master's in biology from East Tennessee State University, and a Ph.D. in Natural Resources from the University of Tennessee.

He and his wife, Misty, have one daughter. The Hameds live in Bristol, Va.

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