

**Richmond Times-Dispatch**

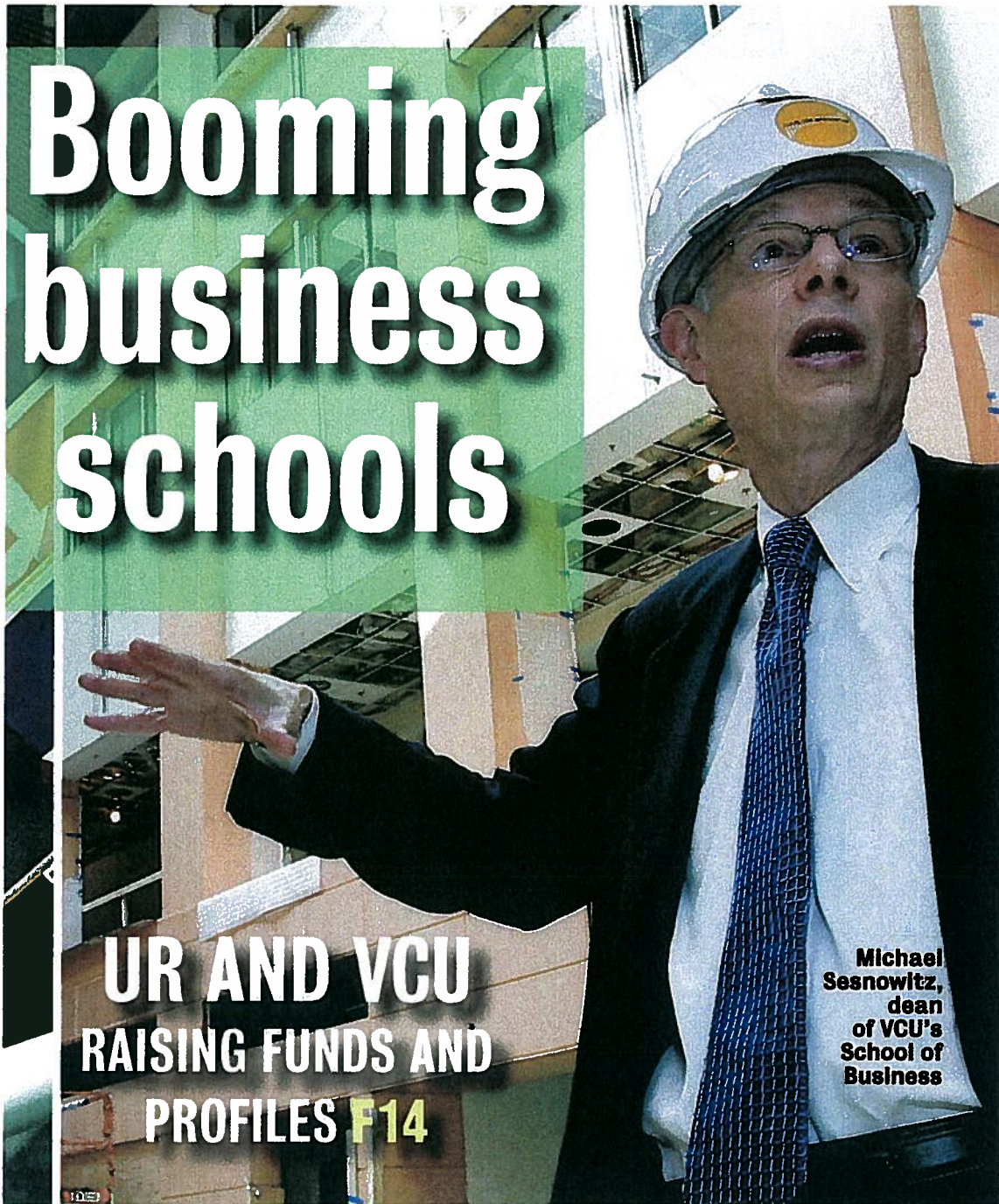
**Monday, August 13, 2007**

# MetroBusiness

## Booming business schools

**UR AND VCU  
RAISING FUNDS AND  
PROFILES F14**

**Michael  
Sesnowitz,  
dean  
of VCU's  
School of  
Business**



# Big plans for B-schools

STORIES BY GARY ROBERTSON / Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

## VCU expects synergy between business and engineering

**M**ichael Sesnowitz, dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business, has been all business when it comes to his preparations for building a new school.

First, help raise \$51.5 million from public and private sources.

Second, make sure all the technology is right so the business school can get a good start on its mission to be the most technologically oriented in the state.

Third, pick the colors for the sofas and chairs.

Sesnowitz shook his head when he thought about that assignment.

"If they had to rely on me, they'd be in big trouble — I'm color-blind," Sesnowitz said. "I'm glad we had a good interior designer."

VCU is beginning a slow drumroll toward January, when the new business school building and an additional phase

of the engineering school will open in a joint space on an 11-acre residential campus east of Belvidere Street, between Main and Canal Streets.

The bangs and clangs of construction seem to have had an oddly soothing effect on Sesnowitz, who jumps at every chance to give visitors, donors and others a tour of the new building.

He knows nearly every cranny of the imposing four-story structure, which will give the business school students approximately 135,000 square feet in which to study and mingle.

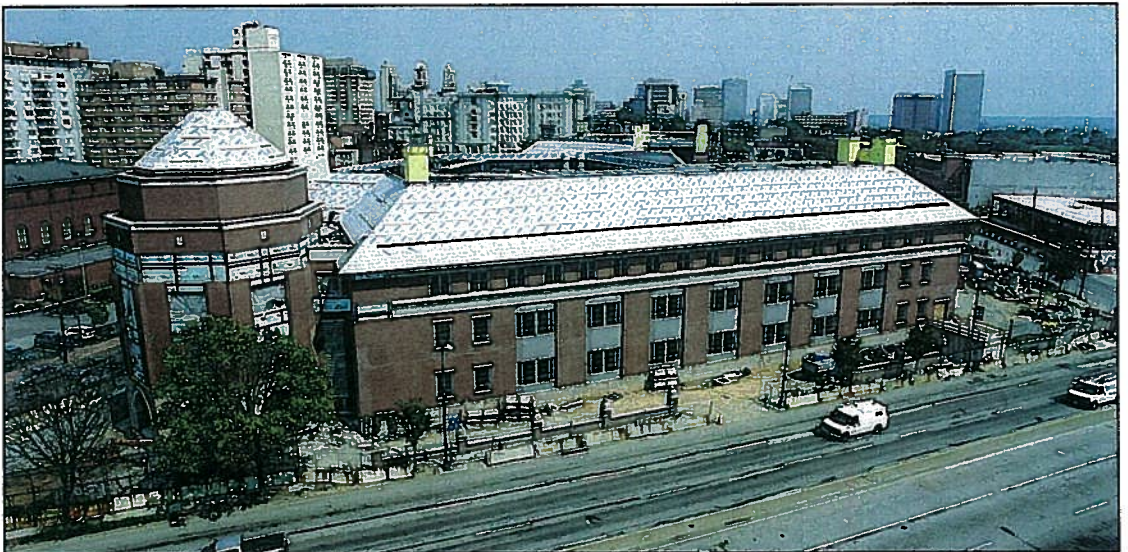
It will also give the school more room to grow. Last year, the business school added 200 undergraduates, bringing its enrollment to 3,500.

The new space will accommodate about 4,500 students.

Sesnowitz already expects the faculty to be happy.

In the current business school, the average faculty office is 95 square feet. In the new building, the average will be 150 square feet.

Collaboration between business and engineering students is one of the goals



JOE MAHONEY/TIMES-DISPATCH

**Construction on the VCU business/engineering building at Belvidere and West Main streets is expected to be finished in November. In the building, the two schools will create a joint career center.**

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of having the two schools in the same building.

VCU is going to pilot a new course this fall called Engineering for Business Students.

"It's being designed to help our students understand how engineers think and how they solve problems," Sesnowitz said.

It's also likely that business and engineering students will work on joint product-development projects.

One of the most heralded collaborations came two years ago when a team of business and engineering students overcame teams from across the U.S. to emerge as national champions in Microsoft Corp.'s Imagine Cup, a computer and software design competition.

A VCU team won the national competition the next year, too. That time, the team was composed only of graduate engineering students, but the coach of the team was from the business school.

In the new building, the business and engineering schools are creating a joint career center being headed by Mike Eisenman, former director of the Virginia

Department of Business Assistance under Gov. Mark R. Warner.

"We want to establish a relationship with members of the business community so they will want to recruit the talented students from the VCU School of Engineering and the School of Business," Eisenman said.

He noted that one of the first big events for the career center will be a career fair for engineering students on Sept. 20.

Sesnowitz said one of the wow factors in the Business School will be an electronic stock ticker that will wrap around the school's new trading room, which will be used for student training.

The electronic ticker will be dramatically noticeable from a light-filled, four-story atrium on the Main Street side of the building.

Sesnowitz says he can guarantee that the ticker will be an eye-catcher.

But he can't guarantee that it will prevent more bad weeks on Wall Street.

### At VCU

Details of the expansion of the business school:

**Location:** 301 W. Main St.

**Campaign goal:** \$47 million; \$51.5 million raised. \$35.5 million came from private donations; \$16 million from public funding

**Square footage:** 135,000

**Student capacity:** 4,500

**New programs:** Collaborations with engineering school

**New technology:** Electronic ticker tape, "room wizards" to allow students to reserve rooms via the Internet, entire building will be a wireless hot spot

**Construction beginning/end:** Started November 2005; scheduled to be completed Nov. 28

SOURCE: Virginia Commonwealth University

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