We set up a photo booth on our campus and asked faculty how they are inventing the future. The story featured here represents just a small sampling of the innovative work that is being done at Virginia Tech.

Crops in the U.S. are constantly threatened by plant pathogens, many of which can be transported over hundreds of kilometers in the atmosphere. Associate Professor Dr. David Schmale’s lab students devised a way to use radio controlled model airplanes to sample plant pathogens in the air.

“It’s important to train students to be scientists because we need the next generation of critical thinkers,” said Dr. Schmale. “Students doing research in my lab are generating their own questions, their own ideas, and their own methods to test these hypotheses or educated guesses that they’ve come up with themselves.”

At Virginia Tech, professors create an opportunity for undergraduate students to get a hands-on experience in the lab in a real world environment.

“The students are the number one driving factor for excellence,” said Dr. Schmale. “The eagerness to learn, the ability to acquire new information and demonstrate that knowledge in a critical context is one of the greatest rewards for any teacher.”

Dr. David G. Schmale III –
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Associate Professor, Food Safety and Plant Biosecurity

“I invent a taste for facts about fungi.”

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