Separation, retirement programs offered to Urbana employees

By Anna K. Herkamp
Assistant Editor

U administration has announced the details of two voluntary separation programs available only to employees in Urbana campus units.

Interested employees can enroll through April 2. In an e-mail sent to deans, directors and department heads Jan. 28, Associate Provost for Human Resources Elyne Cole said given the economic picture facing the university, staff reductions are inevitable. These programs, she said, will give qualified employees an incentive to resign or retire voluntarily.

“These are difficult times for our campus, and we are looking to provide something positive to employees who have served our campus so well,” she said.

The impact of the program on layoffs and notices of non-reappointment will depend on several factors, including the number of employees who choose to participate, units’ strategic plans and changes in the state’s financial health. In some units, participation may be helpful in limiting the number of employees who are laid off or given non-reappointment notices.

Interested employees will have until April 2 to apply for the program. Units will review the applications by April 14, and Human Resources will draft agreements for employees approved by units between April 15 and 23. As soon as employees receive a fully signed agreement, they will have seven days to change their minds.

The programs are voluntary and unit representatives should not initiate discussions with individual employees to encourage or discourage participation.

Voluntary separation qualifications

The Voluntary Separation Incentive Program is available to current civil service and academic professional employees who have worked for at least the last four consecutive years. Employees do not have to be retirement-eligible to qualify for this program, but may use this program to retire.

Eligible employees who wish to take advantage of the program may qualify to receive a lump sum payment of 50 percent of their annual salary.

ON THE WEB

www.mckinley.illinois.edu
www.c-uhpfd.gov

More information about both the retirement and separation programs will be provided at several information sessions to be held at the Beckman Institute auditorium.

VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT PROGRAM for faculty members

10:30-11:30 a.m. Feb. 5
1:30-2:30 p.m. Feb. 9

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM for civil service and academic professional employees

9:30-10:30 a.m. Feb. 9
3:45 p.m. Feb. 9

H1N1 cases down

By Anna K. Herkamp
Assistant Editor

A new wave of H1N1 may not be as imminent as public health officials had anticipated last year. McKinley Health Center Director Dr. Robert Palinkas said the incidence of flu symptoms on campus mirrors that of the state, nation and world. The number of cases is declining.

“(Incidents) have taken a significant turn downward,” he said. “Frankly, we’re not sure about the vagaries of this virus. It’s one of those odd circumstances in which viruses like this have had multiple waves. We’re not absolutely sure we’re going to have another wave. We’re just not sure whether we’ve really reached the point where it will have a hard time (spreading).”

Palinkas isn’t saying another outbreak is impossible, however. “We’re not ruling out the possibility of another significant outbreak, but we think the chances are pretty small at this point,” he said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is reporting flu activity down significantly this month.

The CDC Web site reported last week that doctor visits as a result of flu symptoms, hospitalizations and other data indicators have declined from previous weeks and the trend is continuing downward.

Public health officials are still recommending that anyone who has not yet been vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 influenza or seasonal influenza, should still get vaccinated against both. The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District is still offering H1N1 flu clinics to anyone wanting to be vaccinated.

As always, if any symptoms seem life-threatening, seek medical attention immediately.

In general, if people are having shortness of breath, they’re unable to keep down liquids or they’re immune-compromised, they should be pretty quick to seek medical attention, either from a doctor or some other medical professional,” Palinkas said. “For most other healthy, young people, staying at home, getting fluids and taking (fever-lowering) medication is probably adequate.”

Driven to distraction: New study shows driving hinders talking

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

It is well known that having a conversation (for example on a cell phone) impairs one’s driving. A new study indicates the reverse is also true: Driving reduces one’s ability to comprehend and use language.

The findings, from researchers at the UI, appear in the journal Psychonomic Bulletin & Review. This is the first study to find that driving impairs language skills, said Gary Dell, a psycholinguist in the department of psychology at Illinois and corresponding author on the study. Two previous studies had reported that driving did not impair the accuracy and comprehension of speech.

“The previous findings made no sense to those of us who have studied language,” Dell said. “You might think that talking is an easy thing to do and that comprehending language is easy. But it’s not. Speech production and speech comprehension are attention-demanding activities, and so they ought to compete with other tasks that require your attention – like driving.”

The new study was conducted in a driving simulator at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at Illinois. The participants worked in pairs – one as a driver and the other as a conversation partner who was either in the simulator with the driver or talking with the driver through a hands-free cell phone from a remote location. Half of the 96 participants were adults over the age of 65 and half were in their late teens and early 20s.

Participants either sat in an unmoving vehicle or navigated through busy urban traffic while listening to, and then retelling, a brief story that they had never heard before. Using a headphone and microphone, each participant heard and retold four stories. After leaving the simulator, all participants were asked to recall everything that they remembered about the stories.

As the researchers expected, a participant’s ability to remember and retell a story declined significantly if he or she was also driving during the exercise. The older subjects performed more poorly on these tasks to begin with, and their ability to retain and retell the stories worsened as much as that of their younger peers. In contrast to their performance while sitting still, Dell said, “the drivers remembered 20 percent less of what was told to them when they were driving.” Declines in the accuracy of retelling the stories were most pronounced while drivers navigated through intersections or encountered more demanding traffic conditions.

This study shows that various aspects of language go to hell when you’re driving,” said psychology professor Art Kramer, who collaborated on the study. The study reflects the trade-offs that occur when people try to communicate while performing other tasks, Dell said. “The relative balance of attention to any two tasks is going to vary,” he said. “And perhaps we don’t understand one another as well as we should because of this. With modern technology, we’re talking more and more while we are doing other things, but we may be understanding one another less and less.”

A researcher from Exponent Engineering and Scientific Consulting also contributed to the study. The National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health supported this research.
Trustees discuss budget: raising tuition and cutting costs

By Anna K. Herkamp

Urbana-Champaign Senate members ratified a statement and resolution on the furlough policy and cost-cutting measures during a special meeting Jan. 25.

Several senators discussed their ideas on long-term savings and revenue-generating solutions for the university’s current fiscal crisis.

Sen. Margaret A. Taylor, who is serving on an interim basis, said that faculty members’ responsibility to students should remain “paramount.”

“(Our)ATTLE AND state appropriations, cost-cutting and growing backlog of unpaid state dollars. This is a dollar we can use for academic programs that don’t serve enough," he said.

The group plans to provide its initial recommendations to Ikenberry by June 15.

Thursday’s meeting, trustees approved increases to next year’s student fees and housing rates to meet operational costs.

By Anna K. Herkamp

Urbana-Champaign Senate members ratified a statement and resolution on the furlough policy and cost-cutting measures during a special meeting Jan. 25.

Several members discussed the problem of ever-lowering state appropriations that place a higher and higher financial burden on the university. If the trend continues, the state will have to cut its funding sources.

Douglas McDonald, a professor of mathematics, said the university should be communicating to those from the families and communities we serve," he said. But in the meantime, he added, the university should be communicating to those families exactly what is at stake if the state’s funding continues “not to be in command of its expenditures or revenue or academic affairs. He will continue to serve as vice president.

“We should be reluctant to walk away from the families and communities we serve,” he said.

He also added that the university should be communicating to those families exactly what is at stake if the state’s funding continues “not to be in command of its expenditures or revenue or academic affairs. He will continue to serve as vice president. The university should be communicating to those families exactly what is at stake if the state’s funding continues “not to be in command of its expenditures or revenue or academic affairs. He will continue to serve as vice president. The university should be communicating to those families exactly what is at stake if the state’s funding continues “not to be in command of its expenditures or revenue or academic affairs.

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On the Job  Shirley Barnhart

Illini Union Bookstore Assistant Manager Shirley Barnhart says she has loved every minute of her time at Illinois since she began as an employee in 1965. She’s been in her current position with the bookstore – textbook manager – since 1987. Here, she gives her insight about her job and why book rush never gets old.

What do you do?

“It’s different every day,” Barnhart said. She’s got a big job: making sure students on campus have the books they need for the semester. Getting ready for the semester’s book orders begins several months in advance.

“Since October, we’ve been gearing up for the start of classes,” she said.

The store began ordering this semester’s books in November. Although the store aisles are always bustling the first few weeks of the fall semester, the end of “book rush” – that intense period when thousands of Illinois students are buying or ordering their textbooks – doesn’t mean Barnhart and her staff can relax.

In between book rush, in the fall and spring, there’s plenty to do.

“During this period, we get book inventories we can use for the upcoming term, so we buy back books from the fall term that are going to be used for the spring.”

What’s new at the bookstore?

The 2009 spring semester brought with it a new initiative at the bookstore that gave Barnhart another set of responsibilities: the book rental program.

Barnhart says the additional option for obtaining textbooks has gained popularity, as well as a new e-book option.

“We now have 52 titles that are available as an e-book,” she said.

The paperwork involved in deciding which books to offer in e-book format can be daunting; it begins with reading through 11 pages of single-spaced titles.

“It’s labor-intensive at first, but once we get everything set up it pretty much manages itself,” she said.

In your time at the bookstore, what has changed the most? What are your biggest challenges?

“I think the biggest change is the computer,” she said. “And we strive really hard to get as many used books as we can for students – we hold off on generating purchase orders we should have done it a day ago,” she said.

“I think the other big thing is moving into this bookstore – we moved here in 1994.”

What do you like to do for fun?

Barnhart concedes she doesn’t do much reading of her own books at the beginning of a semester but when it calms down she does enjoy turning the pages.

“I read a great deal; not at this time of year, though,” she said.

She loves fiction, especially the work of Jodi Picoult.

She also loves reading cookbooks.

“I like cooking: the problem is I never make any of the recipes I read about,” she said.

Barnhart also has two grandchildren who live nearby – they also keep her busy.

Where are you from?

“Sterling, Ill., about 170 miles northwest. My mother is from this area, so I grew up in both places,” she said.

Why do you like working at the UI?

“I’ve loved every job I’ve ever done. I started at the information desk. I was an information person,” she said.

Back then, the information desk workers answered most incoming calls to the university. “We directed it to the correct department,” she said.

Before the bookstore consolidated, textbooks were sold in the Arcade Building, where the Career Center is now, and trade books were sold in the Illini Union, in the area of the computer lab and Quad Shop. Later, when she began working in the bookstore, she began in the paperback section before the whole store was under one roof.

What’s best about your job?

“For me, it sounds crazy, but I love fall book rush. I love having all the kids come back to campus. I enjoy working with them and their parents as they come in to buy books. It invigorates me,” she said.

“I like the second book rush just as well – getting everything done and organized so that it runs smoothly without problems.”

-- Interview by By Anna K. Herkamp, Assistant Editor

Mellon Foundation awards $1.25 million to IPRH

By Sharita Forrest

The Illinois Program for the Research in the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UI) has been awarded a six-year, $1.25 million grant by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant will fund 10 postdoctoral fellowships in the humanities and humanistic social sciences during the next six years, with the first appointments to begin in the fall of 2010. IPRH will name two fellows who will engage in research and teaching at Illinois, pursuing scholarship on a wide range of humanities topics and teaching four courses each during their two-year terms in the appropriate departments.

“This generous award presents us with an opportunity to attract to our campus outstanding emerging scholars in the humanities,” said Dianne Harris, the director of IPRH and principal investigator for the grant. “Their presence and engagement in our interdisciplinary intellectual environment promises to further enrich our teaching and research missions in multiple spheres, and we are enormously grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for this opportunity.”

Chancellor Bob Easter called the award an affirmation of the outstanding quality of humanities scholarship at Illinois. “We are well aware of our prize-winning authors, historians, anthropologists and other gifted scholars that comprise the humanities here. A grant of this size can only be interpreted as recognition by others of our strengths in areas across the humanities,” Easter said.

“The scholars who come to Illinois as Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellows will bring with them a set of fresh perspectives that will invigorate our ongoing discourses in the humanities,” said Christine Catananzaro, senior associate director of IPRH. “And, at the end of their two-year terms, they will take our reputation for excellence with them.”

In addition to that, any publications and presentations resulting from their fellowships will credit IPRH, Illinois and Mellon. We will have a lasting impact on their careers.”

The Mellon Fellows must have recently completed a doctoral degree in a humanities discipline, with expertise and research that falls into one of four broadly interdisciplinary areas: race and diaspora studies, the history of science and technology, empire and colonial studies, and memory studies. Each fellow will teach four courses that range from undergraduate lectures to graduate seminars.

“This progression will enable the fellows to acquire teaching experiences with students at various levels of the university while simultaneously allowing the broadest exposure for UI students to the Mellon Fellows,” Harris said.

Each fellow will work with a senior faculty member, who will serve as a mentor, and fellows will be encouraged to participate in departmental activities, campuswide collaborations and IPRH programs, including seminars and reading groups.

ON THE WEB

www.iprh.illinois.edu/

www.mellon.org
Excellence in public engagement recognized with awards

By Anna K. Herkamp
Assistant Editor

This week, the UI recognized outstanding individual and group outreach efforts with the 2010 Campus Awards for Excellence in Public Engagement.

The reception, which took place Feb. 2 at the Beckman Institute, honored Reginald J. Alston, a professor of kinesiology and community health; George F. Czapar, an educator and Extension educator; Rebecca Ginsburg, a professor of landscape architecture; graduates Laura M. Fierce and Maren L. Somers; agricultural and biological engineering; and the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center.

The award recognizes faculty members, academic professionals and students who have consistently applied their knowledge and expertise to issues of societal importance. Each faculty member and academic professional received $1,500 and a permanent $1,500 salary increase. The students each received $1,500 to be used for professional development or other educational activities. A $5,000 award also was made to the unit honored.

This year’s awards review committee had tough choices.

“We had so many strong (nominations) and the decision-making, especially among the finalists, was difficult,” said Clarence Lang, a professor of African American studies in the department of history and a member of the awards committee.

The committee received 28 nominations, which included 10 faculty members, five academic professionals, six students and seven programs, said Tschangho John Kim, an Endowed Professor of Urban and Regional Planning.

Both Kim and Lang served on the committee for the first time this year.

“As a group we seemed to gravitate toward civic engagement work that went beyond people’s job descriptions, or activities that fell within the scope of course work,” Lang said.

“We had a lot of nominees doing fantastic work as part of their paid employment and so forth, but we tended to reward people who went the extra distance. We also tried as best we could to gauge how demonstrable an impact nominees’ civic engagement work had on the communities they were serving. Issues also mattered, too. Projects dealing with health and incarceration among people of color certainly caught my attention.”

Committee chair Nancy O’Brien, the head of the Education and Social Science Library, has served on the committee for two years.

“This year’s award winners were notable in the broad impact of their work,” she said.

“Each year there is a different focus to the awards that is based on the types of nominations received. This year the focus seems to be on social justice issues, sustainability programs, and health policy and issues. It’s really inspiring to see how many university students, staff and faculty members participate in public engagement programs that make a difference.”

Committee members also reviewed letters of support from communities and individuals affected by the projects, a process O’Brien called “definitely inspiring.”

In the future, many other projects and individuals also will be recognized once their projects develop.

“We were overwhelmed by an embarrassment of riches,” Lang said. “We simply could not award every candidate, even though I didn’t see a packet that didn’t deserve recognition.

“There was a whole category of nominees that will probably have a much stronger candidacy next time around,” Lang said. “After their projects have had the chance to develop and mature.”

Reginald J. Alston
professor of kinesiology and community health

Alston is a nationally and internationally renowned advocate and scholar for individuals with disabilities. As a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow in the U.S. Congress, Alston worked closely with Sen. Tom Harkin, who has crafted major disability legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Upon returning from his fellowship in Congress, Alston joined the board of directors of the Community Health Improvement Program, which oversees the Frances Nelson Community Health Center in Champaign.

Alston has a high commitment to public engagement, primarily in the area of improving the lives of persons with disabilities through promoting their full participation in society. To that end, he serves on the governing board of the Illinois Assistive Technology Program, a statewide initiative that offers consultation to individuals with disabilities, as well as their families, on the availability, affordability and proper use of adaptive devices for independent living. As a board member, Alston helps to establish policy promoting the integration of assistive technology in home environments, classrooms, medical settings and employment sites throughout Illinois.

George F. Czapar
UI Extension educator (integrated pest management), Springfield office

Czapar provides statewide leadership in issues of water quality in Illinois. He is the center coordinator for the Springfield Extension Center and co-chair for the Integrated Pest Management Team. He also was appointed by the governor to serve on the Groundwater Advisory Council. The nine-member panel reviews, evaluates and makes recommendations regarding state laws, regulations and procedures related to groundwater protection.

Czapar also has helped organize the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices, a coalition that assists and encourages adoption of best management practices to protect and improve water quality in Illinois.

More recently, he helped develop the Illinois Watershed Management Clearinghouse, a Web site to provide resources and support to individuals and local watershed groups.

In addition, Czapar has been active in the off-campus graduate studies program in the department of crop sciences. In 2007 he was invited to join the ACES Academy for Global Engagement, a yearlong program that includes a series of scholarly and experiential activities designed to prepare participants for international engagement. As a result of this experience, he successfully received external funding to develop collaborative partnerships with Zhejiang University in China and the University of Leeds in England.

Ad removed for online version
Rebecca Ginsburg

professor of landscape architecture

Ginsburg has shown outstanding leadership in community engagement, primarily through the Education Justice Project, which provides higher education to eligible men incarcerated at the Danville Correctional Center. The project has made a dramatic impact on an underserved community by extending university knowledge and expertise beyond the campus. Ginsburg solicited assistance from people from a variety of disciplines and began an education program for a population largely ignored by society. Reaching out to potential allies on campus and in the community, she formed a small group that conducted research on prison education programs in North America and worked on establishing a university-based higher education program to be delivered at an Illinois penitentiary.

Ginsburg states that her motivation for this initiative is based on her conviction that the university as a land grant institution has a responsibility to reach out to the state’s most disadvantaged residents and to make the resources of the university readily available to them. The program has emerged as one of the most innovative prison education programs in the U.S.

National Great Rivers Research and Education Center

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center is a unique partnership among the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at the UI, Lewis and Clark Community College, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Natural History Survey.

The center’s mission is to advance the understanding of the great rivers, their floodplains and wetlands for the purpose of sustaining the plant, animal and human communities that depend upon them. Center staff members work with and provide outreach to many organizations, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Upper Mississippi River Forestry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and many other groups.

One of the vehicles for engaging the needs of the state is the Illinois River Watch Network. This program trains citizen volunteers in basic-stream and river-monitoring techniques. The citizens monitor stream quality based on protocols consistent across the state. The information is compiled in a database and used to monitor stream quality throughout Illinois. They also have developed a new program called the River Watch Discovery Program, geared toward K-8 teachers and students.

The center also supports internship opportunities, research projects, student symposia and collaborative partnerships between community and four-year colleges, all centered on water quality issues in Illinois.

Separation programs, continued from Page 1

All applications for the VSIP and VRP programs will be reviewed by campus human resources first and then forwarded to the appropriate college or major administrative unit office. The college office will distribute the information to the unit level. If an agreement is approved, employees will receive their incentive payments within 45 days of separation.

Because the programs are funded through each unit, denial or acceptance of applications is based on unit budget, the position’s funding source and unit operational needs.

Units will consider whether an individual request has a financial benefit or return to the unit. Each unit may establish caps on the maximum amount of funding it will devote to the separation programs. No central funds are set aside for this program.

The university reserves the right to approve or deny separation agreements based on whether the separation is in the best interests of the affected unit and its ability to fulfill its missions.

Each employee will have seven calendar days from the date the agreement is fully signed by both the employee and the university to revoke it. Revocations must be in writing. For those who retire, future employment is governed by the current UI Board of Trustees guidelines on re-hiring retirees.

Those who choose to take advantage of the VSIP will have until Aug. 15, 2010, to leave the university, but employees may choose a date before that time. Those who resign must agree not to seek employment at the university for one year from the separation date.

Similarly, employees participating in the VRP must retire on or before Aug. 15, 2011. Any future employment for these individuals is governed by guidelines established by the board of trustees for re-hiring retirees.

Want to learn more?

Those interested in taking advantage of either program are encouraged to review the programs online and then speak with their unit head or designated representative.

Campus human resources staff members will also be available to answer questions. Faculty members, other academic employees and academic professional employees may contact Sandy Jones, Academic Human Resources, 333-6747 or sjjones@uillinois.edu. Civil service employees may contact Corbin Smith, Staff Human Resources, 333-3105 or csmith10@uillinois.edu.

ON THE WEB

www.shr.illinois.edu/VSIP.htm

www.shr.illinois.edu/VRP.htm

Graduate student awards

Laura M. Fierce

civil and environmental engineering

Fierce has been involved with Engineers Without Borders since her undergraduate days in mechanical engineering when she worked on project teams. Her teammates soon recognized her leadership and conviction and elected her president. Last year, Fierce was offered a position at a major U.S. engineering firm in a highly sought summer internship program. However, she declined the offer and instead worked the summer in Enugu, Nigeria. She has helped to direct the activities of many student volunteers. She has also worked for the organization in the area of funding development.

Somers has an interest in using her engineering skills to address issues such as water, health and lighting. She also is interested in working on preventable diseases, specifically related to safe and adequate water.

Somers also has been a leader in exploring curricular routes for training students in sustainable engineering. She is involved in all of these activities while pursuing a rigorous curricular path: two majors, a minor and the environmental fellow program.

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Fierce has been involved with Engineers Without Borders since her undergraduate days in mechanical engineering when she worked on project teams. Her teammates soon recognized her leadership and conviction and elected her president. Last year, Fierce was offered a position at a major U.S. engineering firm in a highly sought summer internship program. However, she declined the offer and instead worked the summer in Enugu, Nigeria. She has helped to direct the activities of many student volunteers. She has also worked for the organization in the area of funding development.

Somers has an interest in using her engineering skills to address issues such as water, health and lighting. She also is interested in working on preventable diseases, specifically related to safe and adequate water.

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Graduate student awards

Laura M. Fierce

civil and environmental engineering

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Scanning genomes: New technique finds gene regulatory sites

By James E. Kloppel
Photo Editor

A new statistical technique developed by researchers at the UI allows scientists to scan a genome for specific gene-regulatory regions without requiring prior knowledge of the relevant transcription factors. The technique has been experimentally validated in both the mouse genome and the fruit fly genome.

“Our structural approach is more widely applicable than other approaches, and is especially useful for investigating gene regulatory networks with relatively little prior characterization,” said Saurabh Sinha, a professor of computer science and an affiliate of the university’s Institute for Genomic Biology.

Sinha and colleagues at the UI, the University of Cambridge and the State University of New York described the technique and reported their findings in the Oct. 20 issue of the journal Developmental Cell. Sinha is a corresponding author of the paper.

Proper gene regulation depends upon certain combinations of molecules being attached to segments of DNA at the right place and at the right time. Such combinatorial regulation is arguably the most prominent theme in animal development, Sinha said.

The clusters of binding sites to which the necessary molecules attach are called cis-regulatory modules. Finding the appropriate cis-regulatory modules is the first step toward unraveling the gene regulatory process.

Beginning with a short list of sample cis-regulatory module sequences (obtained through genetic assays) the computer algorithms search genome-wide for other sequences with similar-looking binding sites and similar functionality.

“By describing the underlying chemistry in terms of molecules, DNA sequences and binding energies, it may be possible to use knowledge about gene regulation in one species to make predictions about gene regulation in corresponding systems in very diverse species,” Sinha said. The National Institutes of Health, the Illinois Sociogenomics Initiative, the Leukemia Research Fund and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society funded the work.

Study: Some stock repurchase plans just empty promises

By Jan Dennis
Business & Law Editor

A new study backs long speculation on Wall Street that companies sometimes hallow stock repurchase programs they never plan to pursue, hoping to stir a buzz that will mislead investors and pump up sagging share prices.

But phantom repurchase programs are rare, and most are rooted in sound economic motives that generally pay off for both companies and investors, said David Ikenberry, a UI finance professor and researcher for the study.

“The good news is that the vast majority of repurchase programs are solid and well intentioned,” he said. “But there appear to be a handful of companies that are indeed trying to mislead the market. They’re down on their luck and hoping a repurchase announcement will spark a price reaction that might not be warranted.”

Among other reasons, firms routinely launch buybacks when they perceive that shares are undervalued, said Ikenberry, whose study appeared in the Journal of Corporate Finance. Buybacks can provide a competitive return by reducing publicly held stock, boosting per-share earnings even if sales remain the same.

In those cases, announcements of repurchase plans are often greeted as a bullish signal, sparking bargain hunting by investors that drives up share prices, said Ikenberry, who has studied stock repurchase programs for 15 years.

But he says Wall Street analysts have long worried the positive market reaction could also spawn abuse, encouraging troubled firms to tout repurchase programs they have no intention of following through on.

“The concern has always been that there is no requirement that these buybacks ever be completed,” Ikenberry said. “So you have this potential for cheap talk and empty promises by firms who are down on their luck and just looking for a quick fix.”

He says those suspicions are supported by a study of more than 7,600 repurchase programs announced between 1980 and 2000, which found that firms showing signs of financial distress are less likely to follow through on buybacks.

Firms that used aggressive accounting to pad earnings but still saw their stock prices fall have this potential for cheap talk and empty promises by firms who are down on their luck and just looking for a quick fix.”

Deaths

George Lee Biggers, 71, died Jan. 18 at Carle Foundation Hospital. Urbana. Biggers worked in food service at the UI.

Edwin Joe DeMaris, 90, died Jan. 15 in Edmonds, Wash. DeMaris taught at the UI for 20 years, retiring in 1975. He served as a professor and the head of accountancy and as the director of graduate studies in the College of Business.

Violet Mae Clark Emling, 84, died Jan. 26 at Lake Regional Hospital in Osage Beach, Mo. Emling worked at the UI for 25 years, retiring in 1988 as a chief library clerk for the UI Library. Memorials: Alzheimer’s Association.

Zada Jean Hopkins, 80, died Jan. 18 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Hopkins worked at the UI for about 27 years, retiring in 1995 as a collection specialist with Student Accounts.

E. June Johnson, 89, died Jan. 20 at Decatur Memorial Hospital. Johnson worked at the UI from 1944 to 1952 as a clerk II with the Bureau’s Office.

Carol Attaway Lyke, 68, died Jan. 30 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Lyke worked in Admissions and Records for 22 years, retiring in 2004. Memorials: WILL-AM-FM-TV, Campbell Hall, 300 N. Goodwin, 61801, MC-252.

Michael E. Manuel, 68, died Jan. 22 at the Wilson Memorial Hospital, E.O.R., Sidney, Ohio. Manuel worked at the UI from 1962 until 1976 as a storekeeper II with the Housing Division. Memorials: Multiple System Atrophy Research Foundation; St. Thomas School, Philo, or Botkins, Ohio, Fire Department.


Tholma Z. Lawless Skinner, 98, died Jan. 23 at the Champaign County Nursing Home, Urbana. Skinner worked as a kitchen helper at the Illini Union for 11 years, retiring in 1978. Memorials: United Community Church of Broadlands or the Broadlands Volunteer Fire Department.

Maurice C. Tempel, 84, died Jan. 20. Tempel worked at the UI for 29 years, retiring in 1986 as a building services supervisor in the Housing Division. Memorials: Holy Cross Catholic Church/Education Fund or Central Illinois Honor Flight (online at www.centralillinoishonorflight.org).
Dear Colleagues,

I want to express my appreciation for your generosity in support of the 2009 Campus Charitable Fund Drive (CCFD). It is your incredible personal commitment that allowed us to reach the $1.4 million goal.

As the economy continues to suffer, it is reassuring to know that you remain dedicated to the agencies designated in the CCFD. Your generosity will have a lasting impact in our community and around the world.

Please join me in thanking the college and unit leaders who volunteer their time to keep the fund drive running smoothly each year. I appreciate their extraordinary efforts and know that we would not be successful without them.

I also appreciate the guidance of the CCFD Advisory Board under the leadership of Dr. Maureen Banks, who served as our 2009 Chair.

This was another challenging year for everyone who participated in the CCFD. And again, you stepped up and met that challenge. I am proud to be a part of this Illinois community.

Thank you for caring,

Robert A. Easter
Chancellor and Provost (Interim)

The CCFD Advisory Board would like to thank the following for their support:

Mike Halle - Lite Rock 97.5 WHMS
Tony Clements

Activities and Recreation Center (ARC)
Aptil's Florist
Assembly Hall
Billigs
Cocomero
Cold Stone Creamery
The Cookie Jar
County Market
Dr. Ollie Watts-Davis and the Black Chorus
El Toro
Fat Sandwich Company
Gameday Sports
Great Harvest Bread Company
Hooilhaman's
I Hotel & Conference Center
Illi Union Bookstore
Insomnia Cookies
Jupiter's
Kraamker Center for the Performing Arts
LePep
Levis Faculty Center
Metzler Center
Nathan Montgomery - Salt & Light
Noodles & Company
The Other Guys
Savoy 16
Steak & Shake
TGI Friday's
T.J.S. Bookstore
The Toasted Bean
UI Meat Sales Room

The ORGANIZATION SECTION

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TOTALS: $1,404,770.00 100.00%

Thank you for caring.

Robert A. Easter
Chancellor and Provost (Interim)
Technologically turbocharged dance to be staged at Illinois

By Sharita Forrest

Arts Editor

A seminal dance production from the 1980s by acclaimed postmodernist choreographer Trisha Brown will be “reimagined” with interactive 21st-century technology by artists at the UI.

A portion of Brown’s “Astral Convertible” will be restaged Feb. 4-6 at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts by the UI departments of dance and theater in collaboration with the Emerging Digital Research and Education in Arts Media Institute – known as “eDream” – and the Institute for Advanced Computing Applications and Technology.

Hailed by The New York Times as “ingenious,” “startling, stunning and exciting to look at” for its fusion of technology and the arts, the original production used motion sensors activated by the dancers to cue electronic sounds and car headlights in towers around the stage.

To reinvent “Astral Convertible” with the latest technology, John Toenjes, the music director of the dance department, collaborated with other media specialists to create an interactive system of sound, light and performers. At its heart is a software program developed by Mary Pietrowicz, a researcher at ALCAT, that recognizes specific body movements and analyzes qualities of movement – such as stillness, turning or swinging – based upon data collected and sent by sensors and transmitters embedded in the performers’ costumes.

The software and sensors in the costumes also interact wirelessly with sound and light in the set.

“eDream has approached Astral Convertible in the experimental spirit of the original,” said Donna Cox, the director of the Illinois Network Design and Experimentation Group; and undergraduates Brett Jones and Raj Sodhi in the Cultural Computing Research Group. We will continue to develop these emergent technologies for use in future productions.”

When “Astral Convertible” premiered in 1989, the World Wide Web was in its infancy and concepts such as “interactivity” and “wireless devices” weren’t part of the standard lexicon.

“But now the Web has progressed to Web 2.0 and community-building,” Toenjes said. “I wanted to do a production rooted in the concepts of community and sharing – where the dancers and stage are combined and communicate with each other.”

A challenge for Toenjes, who is a specialist in computer-assisted interactive dance and an instrument designer, has been pushing the boundaries of innovation while heeding Brown’s request to adhere to the minimalist and mobile look and feel of Robert Rauschenburg and John Cage’s set – also known as Dance at Illinois – and the Institute for Advanced Computing Applications and Technology.

“Astral Convertible” performance at Illinois is being funded by an American Masterpieces: Dance grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts, which has supported several past projects at Illinois. “She’s really transformed the way we think about how bodies move, and her exploration of the integration of body and mind is parallel with faculty research within our department,” Toenjes said. “I wanted to do a production rooted in the concepts of community and sharing – where the dancers and stage are combined and communicate with each other.”

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The “Astral Convertible” project are Kathleen Fisher, a UI faculty member at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, and a pioneer in merging the performing arts and computing – inspired the “wearable architectures” integrated into dancers’ costumes. Schiphorst also worked closely with Toenjes on the costume sensor technology as a guest artist in residence.

Also contributing to the “Astral Convertible” project are Kathleen Fisher, a UI faculty member at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, and a pioneer in merging the performing arts and computing – inspired the “wearable architectures” integrated into dancers’ costumes. Schiphorst also worked closely with Toenjes on the costume sensor technology as a guest artist in residence.

The performance is part of February Dance, which also features new work by faculty members in the UI dance department – also known as Dance at Illinois – and performing artists Renee Wadleigh and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol.

The campuswide institute was founded in 2009 to cultivate collaborations in artistic performance, computing and engineering. The campuswide institute was founded in 2009 to cultivate collaborations in artistic performance, computing and engineering.

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ON THE WEB

edream.illinois.edu/

kranntcenter.com
Researchers to perform sex change operation on papaya

Feb. 4, 2010

By Diana Yates

Life Sciences Editor

The complicated sex life of the papaya is about to get even more interesting. Thanks to a $3.1 million grant from the National Science Foundation, the NSF grant will fund basic research on the papaya sex chromosomes and will lead to the development of a papaya that produces only hermaphrodite offspring, an advance that will enhance papaya health while radically cutting papaya growers’ production costs and their use of fertilizers and water.

“We’re going to change the sex of the papaya to help the farmers,” said UI plant biology professor Ray Ming, who will lead the effort with researchers from the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center, Texas A&M University and Miami University. A USDA scientist will also collaborate on the initiative.

“This is a perfect case to demonstrate how basic science can help the farmers directly,” Ming said. “In our case we can apply it immediately as a byproduct of the research program.”

Papayas already come in three varieties: male, female and hermaphrodite. The hermaphrodite produces the flavorful fruit that we eat today, but from a farmer’s perspective, however, hermaphrodite plants come with a severe handicap: Their seeds produce some female plants (which are useless commercially) and some hermaphrodite produces the flavorful fruit that we eat today, but from a farmer’s perspective, however, hermaphrodite plants come with a severe handicap: Their seeds come with a severe handicap: Their seeds produce some female plants (which are useless commercially) and some hermaphrodites.

The problem is exacerbated because it is impossible to tell the sex of a seed until it has grown up and flowered. This means that papaya farmers must plant five or more seeds together to maximize the likelihood of obtaining at least one hermaphrodite plant. Once they identify a desired plant, they cut the others down.

“This is labor intensive, resource intensive,” Ming said. Crowding also causes the plants to “develop a poor root system and small canopy that delays fruit production,” he said.

Ming co-led an international team that produced a first draft of the papaya genome in 2008. This draft, which sequenced more than 90 percent of the plant’s genes, offered new insights into the evolution of flowering plants in general, and the unusual sexual evolution of the papaya.

Ming and his colleagues have identified regions of interest on the papaya’s three sex chromosomes: the X, Y, and Yh. (X produces a female plant, XY a male, and XhYh is a hermaphrodite. All combinations of Y and Yh fail to develop beyond the early embryonic stage after pollination.)

The Y and Yh chromosomes contain genes that promote the development of the male reproductive organ, the stamen, in male and hermaphrodite trees. And, the researchers hypothesize, the Y chromosome also contains a gene that disables the development of the female sexual organ, the carpel. The researchers theorized that the Yh chromosome lacks the gene that turns off development of the carpel, however, allowing both male and female organs to grow in XYh plants.

The researchers will focus on finding these genes and testing their hypotheses, Ming said. And once they have identified the sex-determining genes of the Y chromosome, they will move the gene responsible for stamen development into the female genome and change the sex from female to hermaphrodite – without the Yh chromosome.

The resulting hermaphrodite will produce only hermaphrodite seeds, Ming said, eliminating a major headache for farmers while improving the health of the papayas and the environment.

Further research will explore the origin and evolution of the sex chromosomes by comparing the papaya to five other related species in two genera and by conducting population genetic studies of the papaya sex chromosomes.

Ming is an affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology at Illinois.

Improving plant health

By Jim Kloeppel

Physical Sciences Editor

How cosmic forces affect life on Earth

How forces beyond Earth can affect the planet and those living on it is the subject of a new book by James B. Kaler, professor emeritus of astronomy.

“Heaven’s Touch: From Killer Stars to The Seeds of Life, How We Are Connected with Earth” takes the reader on a journey from Earth to the stars. Along the way, Kaler describes in detail the cosmic forces that affect life on Earth, including those that can destroy it.

Beginning with a look at the gentle ebbs and flows of ocean tides created by the sun and moon, Kaler then describes the sun’s more potent influences, including harmful ultraviolet light, dangerous X-rays, and massive storms of charged particles that can damage satellites and knock out power grids on Earth.

Venturing across the solar system, Kaler shows how Jupiter’s strong gravity can redirect the paths of asteroids and comets toward potentially devastating collisions with Earth. In the distant past, meteorites, comets, and the occasional errant asteroid slamming into Earth helped shape the planet’s surface, and the creatures living on it, Kaler explains. Future impacts capable of wiping out whole cities cannot be ruled out.

Kaler then heads into deep space and describes how highly energetic cosmic rays, launched from exploding stars called supernovae, may help create conditions necessary to life on Earth.

Heaven’s Touch launches with a look at the seeds of life and earth. It describes how Earth’s mass and the number of supernovae that have blown up in our galaxy before our birth, each one has contributed a mountain-mass to us,” Kaler writes. “We walk on trails made of exploded stars.”

ON THE WEB

http://press.princeton.edu/

http://stars.astro.illinois.edu/

Ad removed for online version
A Minute With ...

Foreign aid expert Matt Winters on Haiti and disaster aid

What worked and didn’t work in the world’s response to the 2004 tsunami? And what’s different about the circumstances in Haiti that may be slowing the aid effort there?

In Aceh, Indonesia, the place hardest hit by the 2004 tsunami, more than 500 aid agencies showed up to provide disaster relief and rebuilding support. With that many actors on the scene – a lot of them with no previous experience in Aceh – it could have easily been a complete mess. But the Indonesian government took a firm hand: It created a single agency to coordinate the effort; it required NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to register with and report their activities to the agency; and it arranged for government donors to pool their money. Those steps increased coordination, allowing resources to be deployed more efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the goals of Indonesia’s own government and citizens.

In Haiti, the earthquake has undermined an already weak government. Since the earthquake hit the capital city, destroyed communications infrastructure and government buildings and killed government officials, it has been much more difficult for the Haitian government to take the leadership role that the Indonesian government took in Aceh. Ultimately we would like to see the Haitian government and the Haitian people being the ones to set priorities, to decide where resources should be going and to begin to incorporate long-term development planning into the relief effort.

What’s the best way for individuals to help in responding to such a disaster?

People who want to help in Haiti should give money to organizations that already have an operational footprint in Haiti. People should not send goods, which are usually more of a hindrance. A box of teddy bears, for instance, may seem like a really nice idea for the kids of Haiti, but if the effort had gone into raising money instead, it would have a bigger impact on those kids’ lives. Get money to the organizations on the ground and let them figure out what needs to be purchased and how best to do that.

Similarly, unless you have very specialized skills, you should not be volunteering to go to Haiti. If the only thing that you can bring to Haiti is unskilled labor, then stay home – let the Haitians themselves supply the unskilled labor.

How should they decide where to give?

It takes a little bit of research. If someone is thinking about giving to their favorite NGO, they really need to check to see how much that organization has been doing in Haiti over the past few years. Do they have staff already on the ground in the country who understand how to work there and can gain quick insight into how best to respond to people’s needs?

NGOs, for their part, should be honest about how much money they actually will be able to use. Doctors Without Borders, for instance, already has asked people to stop donating specifically to Haiti and instead to give to its general emergency fund so that they can be ready for the next disaster. Other NGOs should do the same, and those that lack the expertise to make a useful contribution in Haiti should acknowledge that and not try to raise money around the earthquake.

Looking long-term and beyond direct assistance, what can the U.S. do to aid Haiti’s recovery?

One thing is to keep the money flowing. Everybody wants to give to Haiti right now and to see that money used right now – but in reality, some of that money is going to be most useful six months from now or a year from now. The president of the Dominican Republic proposed a $2 billion-a-year fund to finance Haiti’s recovery over five years – the U.S. and the other major donors should commit to that. And then they should commit to some more difficult things – like letting the Haitians take the lead in terms of deciding how the money in that fund will be spent and delegating responsibility for the fund to a single organization (probably the World Bank). In other words, donors need to work toward coordination of their aid and toward country-ownership of that aid.

Beyond just sending money, the Obama administration already has done something really important: It has offered temporary protected status to undocumented Haitian migrants in the United States, allowing them to work legally here. According to the Overseas Development Institute, nearly three out of four households in Haiti already rely on the money sent home by overseas Haitians, so remittances are clearly going to be an important part of the long-term recovery.

Looking toward the future, I would stress again that the more we can get the Haitian government and Haitian people involved now, the better that future development outcomes will be. In Aceh, local government was involved in the process from early on – therefore, local government was responsible for infrastructure that was going to remain behind after foreign aid workers left. Local ownership leads to much better long-run development outcomes.
A UI symposium will use the popular TV show “Mad Men” as the catalyst for exploring one of the most turbulent periods in American history.

Titled “Mad World: Sex, Politics, Style and the 1960s,” the Feb. 19 symposium will feature faculty experts from Illinois and other universities discussing various cultural themes that emerged during the ’60s and which are depicted in the Emmy- and Golden Globe award-winning TV series.

With its fourth season beginning this summer, “Mad Men,” broadcast on the American Movie Classics channel, recently won its third consecutive Golden Globe award for best dramatic series. Set in the 1960s, the show centers on the professional and personal exploits of Don Draper, a fictional Madison Avenue advertising executive, and features characters who contend with the changing mores and values of the period.

For whatever reason, the UI is composed of ‘Mad Men’ fanatics,” said UI English professor Lauren Goodlad. “There is just a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for the show, although the symposium is larger than that. The whole concept of the event is to look at the ’60s backdrop that the show uses and is a raison d’etre.”

Keynote speakers for the symposium will be Michael Slayaz, a professor of English at the University of California at Irvine, and Lynne Joyrich, a professor of media.

THE U.S. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969

“The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution That Will Begin the World Over” co-written with John Nichols, will be on sale for $25 at the event, with all proceeds going to WILL. Nichols, political writer for The Nation magazine, will appear with McChesney to kick off the show.

Jay Pearce, the creator of the event for Illinois Public Media, said “Media Matters” is one of WILL’s most popular programs and was the catalyst for bringing the whole world who hear the program on the Web. This is a great opportunity for listeners to see Bob in action and meet him afterward,” he said.

INNOVATORS’ IMPROV

Unique forum addresses sustainability

An evening of innovative conversation is expected as participants take to the stage for an exchange of enterprising ideas, artistic expressions, global discussion and fresh perspectives on sustainability.

What does sustainability mean to you? Have your say at Innovators Improv at 5 p.m. Feb. 18 on Stage Five at the Champaign County Jail and a patrol ride-along. The meetings are held at the Police Training Institute and other sites.

Starting its 24th session, the academy strives to help local residents better understand police work. In addition, the police agencies involved in the academy seek feedback from participants about law-enforcement issues.

For more information or to enroll in the program, contact the Police Training Institute at 217-333-2337. More information is also online: www.pit.illinois.edu.

Bob McChesney’s “Media Matters” Studio audience needed for live show

Fans of WILL-AM’s “Media Matters With Bob McChesney” are being urged to perform at a live studio audience for the show at 12:30 p.m. Feb. 21.

The event at the Siebel Center is free to the public. Tickets are required and can be reserved online or by calling 217-333-7300 during business hours by 5 p.m. Feb. 15. Parking will be available one block north in the garage at Orchard Avenue and Clark Street.

“We wanted to listen to both audiences on the show for the first time,” said McChesney, a UI professor of communication. “I will stay after the program to talk more about the show and my new book and sign books.”

His new book, “The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution That Will Begin the World Over,” co-written with John Nichols, will be on sale for $25 at the event, with all proceeds going to WILL. Nichols, political writer for The Nation magazine, will appear with McChesney to kick off the show.

“Media Madness: Multiple Identity Disorder in ‘Mad Men’” will feature Eldrena Douma, a Hopi-Tewa storyteller from Laguna Pueblo, who travels throughout the U.S. sharing stories from her American Indian heritage.

In the workshop, “Past, Present, Write for the Future,” Douma helps participants pinpoint personal life stories.

Howard Zinn, a prominent historian, published an expression of a people’s right to appropriate for study development. She also shares tales that give examples of how history and life stories remain strong among her tribe and family and how some of these stories have made their way into books for preservation purposes. Held in Spurlock’s Zahn Learning Center, the workshop is $30 ($20 for students).

The workshop’s focus is to inspire students to maintain their oral traditions and strengthen their skills to write and record family stories. Adults in her community told of life experiences, history and folktales. Today, she continues to develop stories of her own unique creation which stand to become as much of a part her rich heritage as the traditions of stories she grew up with. Tickets for this event are $5.

For more information about either event, call Kim Sherbahn, 217-244-3355; ksheahan@illinois.edu.

Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy

Spring dates and featured speakers for the “Climate and Society” series have been announced. The series is being coordinated and hosted by Illinois’ Institute of Social Dimensions and Environmental Policy Initiative.

Generally, speakers will be featured each Friday from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in Illini Union Rooms B and C. There is no reception following. (Some are scheduled at alternate times to avoid conflict with related events occurring at the same time.)

The first talk, “Social Dimensions of Climate Change: From Principles to Practice at the World Bank,” will feature Robin Mearns from the social development department at the World Bank. The talk will be 4:30 to 5 p.m. Feb. 4.

For speaker series updates and abstracts see www.beckman.illinois.edu/strategies/climatesociety.aspx.
“Crosscurrents of Creativity in Teaching” is focus of Faculty Retreat

The 2010 Annual Faculty Retreat will take place Feb. 5 in Illini Union Rooms A, B and C. The theme of this year’s retreat is “Crosscurrents of Creativity in Teaching.” Keith Sawyer, professor of psychology and of education at Washington University in St. Louis, will be the keynote speaker.

Although online registration is closed, people may call Conferences and Institutes, 217-333-7369, to check on availability.

Sawyer is one of the country’s leading scientific experts on creativity, innovation and learning. He urges a shift away from “linear creativity,” holding that innovation emerges from creative collaborations throughout an organization. He has written 10 books on creativity and innovation, most recently “Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration” and “Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation.”

This year’s format combines tradition with innovation. After the keynote talk, participants will engage in an activity designed to connect Sawyer’s ideas to the creative practices of teaching. Tim Stelzer, a professor of physics and the 2009-2010 Distinguished Teacher-Scholar, will give a presentation during lunch.

There also will be an opportunity for conversation with Sawyer at the Fireside Chat at the conclusion of the retreat.

New this year are post-retreat events, sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence, that will reinforce and expand on the concepts of creativity and innovation. The sessions will offer an opportunity for faculty members to explore beyond the scope of the retreat in smaller groups, to learn about other strategies and initiatives and to develop new partnerships.

The post-retreat events, which will be held throughout the semester, will include a faculty speaker series, reading groups exploring Sawyer’s book “Group Genius” and interactive sessions such as workshops and panel discussions.

The retreat is sponsored by the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Office of Continuing Education.

ON THE WEB
Retreat
http://www.conferences.illinois.edu/facultyretreat/
Post-retreat activities
http://cte.illinois.edu/
Keith Sawyer’s blog
http://keithsawyer.wordpress.com

STOCK PLANS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6
Stock prices decline repurchased fewer shares than healthy companies, according to the study, co-authored by business professors Konan Chan, of the University of Hong Kong; Inn moo Lee, of the National University of Singapore; and Yanyi Wang, of Yuan Ze University.

“This paints a picture of companies that are struggling and whose stock prices are falling even though they’re doing everything they can to pump up earnings,” Ikenberry said.

“Announcing a share repurchase may be just one more public relations tool in their effort to turn the tide.”

He says the study is the first empirical review of repurchase programs that have the potential to be misleading, and was sparked by long-standing concerns among analysts, scholars and observers such as Jim Cramer of CNBC’s “Mad Money.”

“By definition, there can be no smoking gun with the tools we have,” Ikenberry said. “Yet we do have compelling circumstantial evidence, and find a limited number of cases where it’s plausible that some misleading behavior on the part of management did occur.”

Investors can guard against buying into phantom repurchase programs through due diligence, he said. Warning signs include strong earnings despite weak cash flow, indicating aggressive accounting practices, coupled with a long-term pattern of languishing stock value.

But Ikenberry says the study shows that deceptive repurchase programs are the exception not the rule, and cause no long-term harm to the market. While stock prices often surge with the repurchase announcement, they soon dip if earnings fail to support the increase.

He compares the market’s rise and fall to long lines that follow hype for a new restaurant.

“If the food turns out to be good, business will stick and there will be lines for a long time,” Ikenberry said.

“But if it’s not good food, the hype and buzz will fade and business will, too.”

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>7 Sunday</td>
<td>Helen Mason's Faculty Recital. 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<td>8 Monday</td>
<td>Faculty Recital. Jonathan Keeble. 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<td>9 Tuesday</td>
<td>Faculty Recital. Jun Pugh. 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<td>10 Wednesday</td>
<td>Guest Artist Master Class. Michelle de Young, mezzo-soprano. 1 p.m. Memorial Room, Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<td>11 Thursday</td>
<td>Master of Music Recital in Vocal Coaching and Accompanying. Sarah Cuadra, pianist. 5 p.m. Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Friday</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Recital. Stephen Bruner, horn. 5 p.m. Recital Hall, Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Saturday</td>
<td>Master of Music Recital. Jonathan Keeble, trumpeter. 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Smith Memorial Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Sunday</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Recital. Jennifer Chutorashvili, Bassoon. 11 a.m.</td>
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| 15 Monday  | Doctor of Musical Arts Recital.  
| 16 Tuesday  | Master of Music Piano Recital.  
| 17 Wednesday| Master of Music Recital.  
| 18 Thursday | Master of Music Recital.  
| 19 Friday  | Master of Music Recital.  
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| 29 Thursday  | Master of Music Recital.  
| 30 Friday  | Master of Music Recital.  
| 31 Saturday| Master of Music Recital.  

**Contemporary music presented under the direction of Eduardo Diazmuñoz.**
CALENDAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

21 Thursday 6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Bradford’s, 1215 S. First St. Touch Me! 21 Sunday 7 p.m. Get out and get active! Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010

263 Harding Auditorium, UI Union Bookstore. To register, e-mail ksheahan@illinois.edu. 3 p.m. First Thursday of each month. Illinois Folk Dance Society. Workshops for online speakers. 8-10 p.m. Tuesdays and some Saturdays. Illinois Union. Beginners welcome, 398-6686. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, location varies. cap.illinois.edu

The Deutsche Konversationsgruppe 1-3 p.m. Wednesdays. The Beatles Corner, 706 S. Goodwin Ave., Urbana. 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Saturday, location varies. cap.illinois.edu

The Illinois Club and Friends 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. third Thursday of each month. Location varies. rockefellerspeakeasy.com

February events

Saturday 6 Tuesday 9 Thursday 11 Friday 12 Saturday 13 Sunday 14 Monday 15 Tuesday 16 Wednesday 17 Thursday 18 Friday 19 Saturday 20 Sunday 21 Monday 22 Tuesday 23 Wednesday 24 Thursday 25 Friday 26 Saturday 27 Sunday 28 Monday 29 Tuesday 30 Wednesday 31

February events

6 Saturday 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday. Free admission; reservations. 10 a.m.-noon; one hour before performance weekdays; 7:30 a.m. Monday-Thursday; 8-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday; 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on non-performance days. Krannert Center, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. For garden tours and more information, 263-3309. arboretum.illinois.edu

7 Tuesday 11 a.m.-1 p.m. After Hour 1.30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Reviewer Center Café. For a group tour, 244-0690; walk-ins: 398-1673. Krannert Center Café. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday; 1-3 p.m. Sunday. Beckman Institute Café. chicagoist.com

11 Thursday SPEAK Café. “Black emPower- ment.” An open mic public space for hip hop, activism and Black Power expression. 7 p.m. Palete Café, Krannert Center Café. Fridays spring semester. For more information, kbraun@illinois.edu or call 244-3355.

12 Friday VOICE Graduate Reading Series. Illinois students blue Orange (fiction), Susan Maccari (poetry) and Matt MacIntosh (non-fiction) read from their work. 3:30 p.m. Gallery, Krannert Art Museum. Creative Writing.

15 Monday American Style. Lecture and discussion with UI alumna An- drea Herrmann, author of “The Good Wife” (Reginetta Press), a liter- ary novel with a sophisticated twist on Peter Pan. 4:30 p.m. Illini Union Bookstore.

16 Tuesday inclusive Illinois Diversity Roundtable. “Closing the Gate at Blacks at Illinois.” Panchito. Michael Jefferys, Carol Liv- ingstone, Carol Chellera and William Jefferys, 416 E. Main St., Urbana. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. A, Ill. Union. To register, e-mail inclusiveillinois@illinois.edu or call 244-3355.

18 Thursday Spurlock Museum Volunteer Information Session. Learn about the museum’s programs and events for visitors of all ages and how you could be a part of the adventure. 10 a.m.-noon. Zahn Learning Center, Spurlock Museum. Session repeats Feb. 24, 1:30-3:30 p.m. More information, contact kbraun@illinois.edu or call 244-3355.

19 Friday Workshops. “Preservation Emporium.” Join preservation experts from UI Preservation Services to repair, clean and preserve that old film of grandpa’s or that family heirloom. 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Krannert Art Museum. 3 p.m. First Thursday of each month. Illinois Folk Dance Society. Workshops for online speakers. 8-10 p.m. Tuesdays and some Saturdays. Illinois Union. Beginners welcome, 398-6686. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, location varies. cap.illinois.edu
Adding technology creates more opportunities for learning

By Phil Klofski
News Editor

A new study co-written by a UI expert in math education suggests that incorporating technology in high school-level geometry classes not only makes the teaching of concepts such as congruency easier, it also empowers students to discover other geometric relationships they wouldn’t ordinarily uncover when using more traditional methods of instruction.

Gloriana González, a professor of curriculum and instruction in the College of Education at Illinois, says when students used dynamic geometry software they were more successful in discovering new mathematical ideas than when they used static, paper-based diagrams.

The study, published in a recent issue of the International Journal of Computers for Mathematical Learning, analyzed how students solved geometry problems over four days, with two days spent using static diagrams and the other two with dynamic diagrams drawn using a calculator with dynamic geometry software.

“There’s been a big push to have teachers use technology in the classroom, and there’s a lot of incentives for them to use it, the chief one being the motivation kids get from using technology,” González said. “But the powerful thing is that integrating technology in the classroom allows teachers to provide students more opportunities for learning, which gets students thinking about mathematical ideas in a new light."

González, who co-wrote the study with Patricio G. Herbst, of the University of Michigan, said that teachers like to use technology in the classroom not only because it’s stimulating for students, but also because it’s a more efficient use of resources for teachers.

For example, instead of drawing 20 different diagrams on a chalkboard by hand, teachers can create one diagram on a computer and manipulate it using the dynamic geometry software.

Without the software, the teacher is drawing 20 different variations of the same diagram, “which can get very boring very quickly,” González said.

“The technology allows teachers to do many things that they couldn’t ordinarily do or would be very hard to do by hand, such as call attention to a particular geometrical pattern or configuration that the students may not have seen otherwise,” she said.

But students shouldn’t get too excited: González says there’s no need for them to throw away the protractors and compasses just yet.

“What we found is that students who did things by hand didn’t formulate the same conjectures as when they use the dynamic geometry software. But just having the experience with the manual tools really helped them to understand what happens when you try to do the same thing using the dynamic geometry software,” González said. “So there is some transference between the two.”

The technology, González said, pushed students to think about mathematics in a completely different way.

“Compared to the two days of using static diagrams, students didn’t find anything as sophisticated as they did when they used the computer,” she said. “The dynamic geometry software really helped them make connections that they hadn’t made before.”

For teachers, integrating technology into a lesson plan can bring about unanticipated complications.

“Sometimes students may understand the tool, but not the underlying mathematics behind the tool,” González said. “Students can play, but teachers are trying to teach mathematics, not a particular tool.

As a teacher, you want your students to go beyond the tool. The heart of mathematics is proofs, and only teachers are able to ask students to go beyond the tools and provide a proof.”

González said educators have a difficult job gauging how students will react to a lesson, while simultaneously teaching the content they need to learn and keeping students engaged and focused.

“If we help teachers try to understand what kind of thinking students will have when using technology, then we can help students to have a deeper understanding of mathematical ideas,” she said. “Whatever we can do to support teachers’ work in terms of having a better understanding of student thinking about mathematics, the better, because teachers have a challenging job.”

“Adding technology creates more opportunities for learning,” she said. "Whatever we can do to support teachers’ work in terms of having a better understanding of student thinking about mathematics, the better, because teachers have a challenging job."