Project teams begin budget review process

By Anna K. Herkamp
Assistant Editor

In the face of falling state revenue, budget review teams have begun evaluating the first four areas targeted for cost savings on the Urbana campus. In addition, the Stewarding Excellence at Illinois Web site is soliciting ideas for approaches to address financial and educational challenges, as well as ways to generate more money.

An increasing state-funding backlog for the university is the reason for the reviews. The budget is now $847 million behind in payments to the university, and the number could soon exceed $500 million, said Mike Anctil, associate provost for budgets and resource planning.

In the charge letter to each of the contacts, Interim Chancellor and Provost Bob Easter and Richard P. Wheeler, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, said the campus has to examine its expenses and how they contribute to the UI’s mission. “As a campus, we are engaging in a thoughtful and thorough evaluation of how we use resources toward the broader aim of advancing excellence in our scholarship, education and outreach activities,” the letter said.

The first areas under review are the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement, the Institute of Aviation, allocation of undergraduate scholarships, and information technology services.

Written reports are due April 2 for the review of the Institute of Aviation and scholarships; written reports are due April 16 for public engagement and IT services.

Additional review teams will be created in the coming weeks, and the Steering Committee is seeking suggestions for potential project team members. According to the charge letter for the project team reviewing IT@ Illinois, a potential cost savings could be $10 million. The letter suggested savings could be achieved through consolidation of services or outsourcing. Team members for the IT review also are charged with examining whether external funding could be used for services.

Each project team has been given a set of questions to be answered regarding the efficiency of the unit’s operations.

The charge letter for the team evaluating the Institute of Aviation asks whether the pilot training program should be continued – particularly for freshmen – and whether the UI could partner with Parkland College, which offers pilot training.

The letter also asks the team to consider what the implications of discontinuing the institute’s programs would be for Willard Airport and its commercial airline service.

Another team is in charge of looking at a program that could be a recruitment asset in the current economy: undergraduate scholarships.

The team is in charge of seeing whether merit awards are used effectively in certain academic units and whether reallocating some scholarship money can help in other financial aid areas.

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement is another area under review. Its project team is charged with examining whether its functions of engagement, corporate relations and sustainability are required for the unit’s operations.

The team also is considering whether external funding could be used for services.

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Inside view of White House online is not what it seems

By Craig Chamberlain
Social Sciences Editor

The photos have the feeling of intimacy, of behind the scenes at the White House – and you found them where you found pictures of your new nephew and of your aunt’s trip to Texas.

Welcome to the White House photo-stream on Flickr, about 2,000 images – and growing.

But don’t let this “seemingly transparent” access to the president fool you, cautions Cara Finnegan, a UI professor of communication, who studies the political and persuasive uses of photography, and who has been studying the White House Flickr site.

The White House’s new-media photo archive is just the latest wrinkled in an old practice of image management and public communication, Finnegan says.

“It’s not a reality show,” not “an unvarnished documentary view,” she said. “The assumption can be that because it appears to be behind the scenes that we’re somehow really getting a glimpse into something behind the scenes. I think we need to keep in mind that these are pictures that were shot with intention, put online with intention.”

White House photographers have been employed for decades, but most of their images have waited for use in presidential libraries or museums, or in books of history, Finnegan said.

“The impulse to record the presidency visually is not new,” she said, “but what’s new is the way the Obama administration is using it now.”

Images shared on Flickr, often within days after events, serve not only their traditional role for the historical record but also serve to communicate a politically desirable image or message, Finnegan said.

What’s more, the White House doesn’t have to rely on distribution only through the traditional news media – though there are many cases of the news media using them, she said.

Political communication Cara Finnegan, a UI professor of communication, has been studying the White House Flickr site and says the behind-the-scenes photos aren’t what they seem to be.

Chopin tribute An Illinois professor is marking the bicentenary of Chopin’s birth with a series of concerts and the release of a 10-volume series of recordings that encompass Chopin’s complete works.

Brain structure A new study found that achievement on a new video game could be predicted by measuring the volume of three structures in participants’ brains.
Senate discusses budget, possible online evaluations

By Anna K. Herkamp
Edited by Doris K. Dahl

March 4, 2010

InsideIllinois

A fter its Feb. 22 meeting, the Urbana-Champaign Senate continued discussion of the budget-review process, and approved a change in university statute language defining the president’s position.

Senators also discussed a recommendation by President Stanley O. Ikenberry to add the word executive to the statutes describing the university’s president. In a Dec. 15 letter to the senate chair, Ikenberry said the recommendation was intended to “clarify the roles of the president and the university and the campus chancellors.” This recommended amendment is intended to dispel any implication that the president’s role is anything less than the chief executive of the university.

Senators also discussed a recommendation that will be up for a vote March 29 that amends language to specify that tenured faculty members have a tenured home and that a restructuring proposal for an academic unit involve faculty input by secret ballot.

John Ory, the director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and Chris Migotsky, the head of measurement and evaluation in the CTE, gave a presentation on the pilot program for an online version of the Instructor and Course Evaluation System.

Several senators voiced their hesitation for adopting the online version of the instructor evaluation forms because few students seem to voluntarily go online surveys.

Fewer students filling out the online surveys could skew data so that very high evaluations were very common, and this could lead to poor reviews and possibly affect tenure decisions.

Some senators also were concerned that the online forms could be easily accessed and dispersed online.

Some changes already had been made to the online surveys, which include not offering them during finals, sending out extra e-mail reminders and changing the rating system.

The open-ended comments section also has been deleted.

Ory pointed out the key to making the online surveys more effective would be to get more student participation. Other institutions that put the evaluations online initially had low response rates, but they generally go up over time, he said.

Many senators, however, remained unconvinced that the online version should replace the paper survey.

Entomology professor Bettina Francis said the online system was “unacceptable” because she didn’t have a way to opt out of the survey.

She opted out of the paper versions, but the online system sends her e-mails prompting her to complete the survey.

The ICES evaluations are not required of faculty, and for instructors like her, who have, for years, done paper forms, it is difficult to ensure students participate.

CABIN FEVER? What are you going to do when spring finally arrives?

ust when you thought you couldn’t stand the sight of your winter coat anymore, temperatures started warming up this week. What is the first warm-weather activity you’re going to do to when the temperatures stay above freezing? What is one of your favorite activities for spring? Write to us and let us know. We’ll compile reader responses and include them in an upcoming edition.

Send them to herkamp@illinois.edu.

InsideIllinois

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BUDGET REVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The online system sends her students e-mail reminders and changing the rating scale were among the suggestions the online system was “unacceptable” because she didn’t have a way to opt out of the survey.

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Hobson honors Chopin through recordings, concerts

By Sharita Forrest
Art Editor

K
nown as the “poet of the piano,” Chopin wrote as much for his romantic, melancholic compositions and his revolutionary, nuanced playing style, Polish pianist and conductor Ian Hobson said of the composer and pianist Frédéric Chopin continues to entice pianists and woo audiences more than 160 years after his death.

Internationally acclaimed pianist and conductor Ian Hobson, who also is the Swanlund Professor of Piano and the Center for Advanced Studies Professor of Music at the UI, is marking the bicentenary of Chopin’s birth with a series of concerts and the release of a 16-volume series of recordings that encompass Chopin’s complete works.

Hobson has a long history with Chopin. In 1975, the year that Hobson joined Illinois’ faculty, he won the U.S. National Chopin Competition, and that same year composed “Chopiniana,” Piano International Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland, a prestigious event held every five years.

One of a select few pianists and conductors to record Chopin’s complete works, Hobson is perhaps the first person to include in his Chopin retrospective new or alternative versions of key pieces. “La ci darem la mano” in B flat major for piano and orchestra, which Hobson performs on Volume 2 as a piano solo, also appears on Volume 3 with Hobson conducting Sinfonia Varsovia, based in Warsaw, in accompaniment. Organized in chronological order, the pieces in the collection were recorded between 2003 and 2009, mainly in Poland. Of the 16 volumes, 12 are solo piano.

“It was an educational journey for me to start with some of the pieces that Chopin wrote — such as the mazurkas and polonaises — when he was only 7, 8 or 9 years old,” Hobson said. “Proceeding chronologically, you see the incredible growth of his genius.”

Volume 2 is titled “Hats off,” in reference to a article written by composer and pianist Robert Schumann, who hailed Chopin’s brilliance by writing, “Hats off, gentleman! A genius!” after reading the manuscript for “La ci darem la mano.”

In his Chopiniana in “the time of the show-off, virtuoso piano,” Hobson said, “He knew how to make the piano sing. Chopin is refined, elegant, beautifully wrought piano writing. Nothing of Chopin was awkwardly written. He had an authentic, refined sense of proportion.”

Ares Ozga, the author of two Chopin biographies, wrote the program notes and titles for each volume, which examine each piece in the context of Chopin’s life, his evolution as an artist and musical fashions of the time period.

Hobson is performing solo piano selections from the Chopin collection in a series of 12 Sunday afternoon concerts at the Tallgrass Loft in the historic Norton Building. 200 W. 11th St., Lockport, III. On March 21, Hobson will perform selections from Volume 6, “Kingdom of Poetry,” and on April 11 selections from Volume 7, “Cannons Among Flowers.” Hobson also will perform on May 9, Sept. 9, Oct. 19, Nov. 24, and Dec. 19.

On March 13, Hobson will perform Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor in concert with Sinfonia da Camera at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. The program also will include selections by Debussy and Schumann.

For tickets to the Tallgrass series, call 815-685-8814; e-mail concerts@earthlink.net. Tickets to the Sinfonia performances may be purchased online at www.krannertcenter.illinois.edu or by phone at 217-333-6280 or 800-527-2849.

Hobson’s 2010 concert schedule is available on his Web page.

ON THE WEB

www.ianhobson.net

On the Job

Helen Katz

Helen Katz’s UI career began more than 45 years ago when she was a college freshman. She’s glad things have come full circle for her. The office specialist in the College of Education’s department of educational psychology says interacting with students and professors who are learning about teaching is what makes her job worthwhile.

What do you do?

“My job is about serving the students,” Katz said.

Katz’s days differ depending on the time of year. She’s very involved in helping students through the admissions process of the educational psychology graduate program. She reminds them of key dates, assists in setting up committees within the college and relays information about the program.

“A lot of time is taken up on admissions,” she said, “processing various applications, checking transcripts — when the decisions start coming in, processing admissions or denials.”

Katz also writes the department newsletter and is one of the party planners for the office.

What does your department do?

“The way I’d define (educational psychology) is: psychological principles applied to educational practice. It covers a range of stuff — logistics issues and how (people learn) languages. There are people working on bullying, people working on educational assessment and how to measure testing — evaluations in schools and all kinds of things.

“There are people who are training to be school therapists and counselors. It’s a really broad field.”

What is the best thing about working in your office?

“Variety, I suppose. I like having projects I’m in charge of from start to finish — the other thing I love is I have so much contact with and get to meet a lot of international students, especially Korean and Chinese students. We’ve become close friends.”

“The College of Education has its own commencement exercise. I volunteered to do it one year. The first time I got lucky and ended up being in the place where graduates come down the ramp to get a card and get photographed. I could congratulate all the graduates when they came down. … I love it because by the time someone graduates, it’s like their little babies. We’ve helped them to get through everything.”

Sometimes Katz is the one who helps them make the final push to commencement.

Students make it part of the way through graduate school and may quit for a job with the intention of going back to school eventually. Once in a while, Katz’s encouragement helps them get through so they get their degrees. That aspect of it is much of what makes her job gratifying.

“When I first heard about this job, I immediately knew this was the one I wanted. I really focused on trying to get it — and lo and behold I got it. I think I even said this in the interview: It’s perfect for someone who is a ‘mother hen list-maker.’ “

Many years later, when she began her current job, she decided to take advantage of the free class offerings. She took some acting classes that focused on social issues. When she realized she got credit for the class, she went to see an adviser who told her finishing the degree she started in the early ‘60s wouldn’t be that hard.

“This was a laborious process,” she said of examining her old transcript. “The transcript was so old and out of date, but when we figured out what I needed to get a degree, it wasn’t that much. I took one class a semester.”

She finally finished her bachelor’s degree in rhetoric in 2007. She thanks her advisers who helped her finish up her last science course. She had some medical issues that required her to take time off from classes, but her advisers found a class she took years ago that fit the requirement.

“The people at LAS were wonderful and helpful. (It might not have been their top priority) to make sure someone my age graduates, but they did everything they could to help me.”

— Interview by Anna K. Herkamp, Assistant Editor
On-campus child care needed for increasing student-parents

By Phil Ciciora
News Editor

The lack of affordable, high-quality on-campus day care programs that cater to undergraduate students who double as parents is a stealth issue that has the potential to harm both the student-parent and the child, says a UI expert in early childhood education.

According to Brent McBride, a UI professor of human development, the college drop-out rates of traditional undergraduate students – college freshmen who have just transitioned from high school – who also are full-time parents is a growing problem in the U.S., one that’s further exacerbated by the dearth of acceptable child care options for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

“The typical scenario is a young 18- to 20-year-old woman who’s away from home for the first time, separated from her familial support system, and may be in a difficult relationship with her partner,” McBride said. “It’s mostly a hidden issue, and that makes it much worse for those student-parents, because it tends to make them feel that much more isolated.”

Among the challenges student-parents face are a lack of money, a lack of support and understanding, and the mounting pressure of familial responsibilities.

Finding affordable child care is another big challenge student-parents face, but McBride, who also is the director of the university’s Child Development Laboratory, believes campus-based support programs, including affordable, high-quality campus day care, may provide the assistance that student-parents need to complete college while successfully raising a child.

“What we’ve found and what the literature supports is that traditional undergraduate students who are suddenly thrust into this role of parent aren’t prepared for all the responsibilities being a full-time parent entails,” he said. “They’ve been focused on social relationships and educational endeavors, but they haven’t thought about being a parent with a newborn baby. Having an on-campus day care program that welcomes and understands the demands on student-parents provides a support mechanism as well as a way for them to learn parenting skills.”

Affordable campus child care also is crucial to the success of student-parents from a personal developmental standpoint.

“The student-parents themselves are also at a very vulnerable stage of their own personal development,” McBride said. “They’re in that identity exploration phase where they’re transitioning to young adulthood, trying to figure out who they are, and trying different careers and roles.”

But with a baby in tow in addition to their full-time studies, student-parents often find themselves “tossed into an adult world with minimal preparation and minimal support for that change,” McBride said.

“If you’re a student-parent, you’re at risk for academic failure, they’re also severely at risk for personal problems because of that disruption of their own development,” he said. “That only amplifies the concern we have for these students.”

It should come as no surprise, then, McBride said, that student-parents are three times as likely as traditional undergraduates to drop out.

“If you’re a student-parent, you’re at greater risk of not succeeding at any type of institution of higher education simply because you’re a parent, and the hardships and hurdles are that much higher,” he said.

While their friends and peers are attending class, studying and completing home-work assignments, student-parents must do all that plus raise a child.

“The vast majority of their peers are traditional undergraduate students, so there’s no way to support them, and no way for them to congregate and seek out others in their situation,” he said.

The faculty at a traditional college or university also is usually in the dark about a student’s parental responsibilities outside of class.

“How are student-parents supposed to complete group assignments if they have to take care of a child? Not being able to participate in normal undergraduate activities only serves to further isolate them, which in turn leaves them at greater risk of dropping out and not earning a degree.”

Faced with the choice between raising a child or pursuing a degree, McBride says student-parents usually have no choice but to drop out and forgo what many educators and economists see as a key component to long-term economic stability and mobility.

“The lifelong trajectory of these students is, once they transition to parenthood, they don’t finish school,” he said. “And with the economy the way it is, this is a very vulnerable demographic. Their job prospects are really hamstrung.”

Having an on-campus day care center for undergraduate student-parents not only benefits the student who eventually graduates with a bachelor’s degree, it also benefits the child.

“It helps the student-parent, because it’s one less ball that they have to juggle,” McBride said. “Trying to balance school and parenting is a tough thing to balance, especially if you’re a young single parent. But day care also benefits the child in multiple ways.”

Research overwhelmingly suggests that high-quality child care has a significant positive impact on the development of young children.

“Child care, Paid 5
CHILD CARE. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

children’s language and pre-math skills, along with other soft skills such as self-con-

control, socialability and cooperative play. A campus-based day care center could also leverage university resources easier than a commercial day care center.

If there’s a language delay, for exam-

ple, we can tap into campus experts in that area,” McBride said. “If there’s dysfunc-

tional parenting, we can step in and make referrals to campus resources to help with

parenting.”

Campus-based day care facilities also offer better quality controls than profit-ori-

ented child care programs. Research consistently indicates that as much as 40 to 60 percent of all child care in the United States has been deemed sub-standard – “so sub-

standard that it’s harming the child rather than helping,” McBride said. “For better or for worse, the quality of community-based child care programs is not always what we would want it to be,” he said. “Having federal dollars being poured into something that’s less than optimal from the child care perspective, that could actu-

ally be to the detriment of the child, is not a good investment of taxpayer dollars.”

A good investment is one that’s made in human capital, McBride said.

“If a person has the human capital to go to college, we’ve got to help them cultivate that potential,” he said. “We need to encour-

age parents to be good parents, to be pro-

ductive members of society and to be able to provide for their children. If you take away the opportunity for higher education, they’re not going to be able to provide. We don’t want to take away those opportuni-

ties. The consequences are just too great.”

To help low-income undergraduate stu-

dent-parents complete their studies, the Child Development Laboratory at Illinois is now accepting undergraduate student-parents and their children into the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program. Funding for the program was provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. 

WHITE HOUSE. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Finnegan makes use of the White House photostream, linked from the White House home page, in a course called Visual Poli-

tics. She thinks the Flickr site is a good way to think about the history of the presiden-

tics. She plans to present her research at a conference titled “Rhetoric, Politics and the American Presidency” in 2013.

Many of these images work to "autho-

ricize Obama as president" and also draw on the idea of the “mythic presidency,” assoc-

iating Obama with past presidents seen as larger than life, Finnegan said. “By depict-

ing Obama in the environment where all these mythic presidents held sway, Obama becomes absorbed into that same narrative,” she said. It’s not unlike what court painters at-

tempted to do in their depictions of kings and queens hundreds of years ago, Finnegan said. “It’s also not unlike the images that oth-

er presidents or their staffs have encouraged, she said (Pete Souza, Obama’s chief White House photographer, served in the same role during the second Reagan administration.)”

In other photos, however, Finnegan said she sees an attempt to communicate other messages.

“These images seem to invite the viewer to think about the history of the presiden-

cy,” Finnegan said, in some cases relative to Obama’s role as the first black president, in other cases suggesting how presidents have to struggle to get things done. Rather than associate him with past presidents, “they seem to somehow separate him from these mythic figures,” she said.

Paintings of Lincoln and Washington are prominent in photos of Oval Office meetings. Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt, the latter on horseback, are there in the background of conference meetings – Obama even appear-

ing to gesture toward FDR during an early budget meeting. Busts of Lincoln and Jef-

ferson appear in a photo of Obama walking alone through a White House doorway.

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Berenbaum honored for helping public understand science

By Anna Herkamp

Entomologist May R. Berenbaum is the 2009 recipient of the Public Understanding of Science and Technology Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Berenbaum, a Swanlund Chair and the head of the department of entomology, created the Insect Fear Film Festival, now in its 27th year on campus. The festival engages hundreds of viewers each year with feature-length films and shorts, commentary on the films, an insect petting zoo and insect art contest.

"(The award) is particularly significant to me because I’ve been a member of AAAS since my early graduate student days," Berenbaum said. "My father, who was a research chemist in industry, used to subscribe to Science. It was on our coffee table growing up, so this is an organization with which I have a very long association."

She also is committed to making complicated subjects accessible for the public.

"I think that there’s a perception that some scientific findings or phenomena are too complicated to explain so that the general public can grasp them, and I just don’t believe that. People’s quality of life depends on making informed choices that involve scientific issues. That’s why I make the effort whenever I can."

Berenbaum also is known as an authoritative public source of information on insect problems.

"I seem to have become the go-to person for any insect-related news story, which is fine," she said. "And it’s good because insects can wreak havoc in all kinds of ways. It’s important for people to know what the potential is and what the limitations are."

The AAAS Committee on Public Understanding of Science and Technology commended Berenbaum for her extensive service on the National Research Council. She is a national associate, an honor reserved for National Academy of Sciences members who make extraordinary contributions to the NRC.

Her work includes chairing the committee on the status of pollinators in North America, which released its findings in October 2006 – months before the massive disappearances of honey bees across the country.

"I believe that we need to foster scientific literacy. The general public can grasp them, and I just don’t believe that. People’s quality of life depends on making informed choices that involve scientific issues. That’s why I make the effort whenever I can."

Berenbaum said she is devoted to teaching and to fostering scientific literacy.

She received the 2006 Entomological Society of America Distinguished Teaching Award and has written numerous magazine articles as well as five books about insects for the general public, including "The Earwig’s Tail," published September 2009, which exposes some of the most firmly entrenched insect myths and urban legends.

The Public Understanding of Science and Technology Award award, given since 1987, was presented Feb. 20 during the 176th AAAS annual meeting in San Diego. Berenbaum graduated summa cum laude in biology from Yale University in 1975.

She received a doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology from Cornell University in 1980, and she joined the UI faculty that year. She became department head in 1992.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, founded in 1848, is the world’s largest general scientific society and includes some 262 affiliated societies and academies of science.

Illinois professor elected to National Academy of Engineering

By Liz Ahlberg

William D. Gropp has been elected to membership in the National Academy of Engineering. Gropp is the Paul and Cynthia Saylor Professor of Computer Science at the UI.

Gropp is among 68 new members and nine foreign associates announced by the academy on Feb. 17. Election to the NAES is one of the highest professional honors an engineer can gain. The 2,267 members and 196 foreign associates are an elite group distinguished by their outstanding contributions to the fields of technology and engineering.

Gropp was cited for his work in numerical software in the area of linear algebra and high-performance parallel and distributed computation. He wrote the book on the message passing interface (MPI) – several books, in fact – and has been instrumental in developing the Portable Extensible Toolkit for Scientific Computation (PETSc), one of the leading packages for scientific computing on highly parallel computers, among numerous other advanced computing projects.

"This is a significant recognition and prestigious honor for one of our distinguished faculty," said Resammi Adesida, the dean of the College of Engineering and NAES member. "This is yet another indication of the impact our college and this university has on the world. It is further testament to the excellence to which we continue to aspire."

Gropp earned his master’s degree in physics from the University of Washington in 1978 and his Ph.D. in computer science from Stanford University in 1982. He joined the UI in 2007. He is a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and the Association for Computing Machinery.
Two faculty members earn 2010 Sloan Fellowships

By Liz Ahlberg
Physical Sciences Editor

Two UI faculty members have been selected to receive 2010 Sloan Research Fellowships from the Alfred P. Sloan foundation: Yann R. Chemla, a professor of physics, and Karrie Karahalios, a professor of computer science.

The two are among 118 early career scientists and researchers chosen to receive the two-year, $50,000 awards. In keeping with its goal of recognizing potential groundbreakers in their respective fields, the program allows fellows to pursue their choice of research topics and gives them flexibility in applying funds toward their research.

Chemla’s research focuses on molecular motors – complex molecules that carry out specialized tasks within the cell, such as gene replication or cellular transport. He uses biophysical techniques, such as laser “tweezers” called optical traps, to study how molecular machines convert chemical energy into mechanical work.

Karahalios works with interpersonal interaction in networked environments. She designs and implements communication channels involving perceived social cues in networked electronic spaces, then incorporates those cues into the physical and virtual interface in the hopes of making technology-mediated interaction more intuitive.

Sloan Research Fellowships have been awarded since 1953.

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Kranert Center doing its part to ‘Go Green’

Kranert Center for the Performing Arts has received a $450,000 0 percent interest loan from the UI Student Sustainability Committee and a $225,000 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to replace 550 lamps and fixtures in its lobby with energy efficient light-emitting diode lights.

The previous fixtures used 619 million watts of energy annually; the new fixtures are expected to use 132 million watts per year, saving about $100,000.

Additional cost savings could come in the form of labor and bulbs (because the bulbs last longer) and a reduction in cooling costs because of less heat being produced by the new fixtures.

The LED fixtures are programmable and able to produce any light color.

Tell us what your department or unit is doing to conserve energy or preserve resources. Send your ideas to herkamp@illinois.edu.
Video gamers: size of brain structures predicts success

Researchers can predict your performance on a video game by measuring the volume of specific structures in your brain, a multi-institutional team reported recently.

The study, in the journal Cerebral Cortex, found that nearly a quarter of the variability in achievement seen among men and women trained on a new video game could be predicted by measuring the volume of three structures in their brains.

The study adds to the evidence that specific parts of the brain, a collection of distinctive tissues tucked deep inside the cerebral cortex, profoundly influence a person’s ability to refine his or her motor skills, learn new procedures, develop useful strategies and adapt to a quickly changing environment.

“This is the first time that we’ve been able to take a real-world task like a video game and show that the size of specific brain regions is predictive of game skills,” said Kramer, a professor of psychology at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at the UI, who co-lead the research. “It’s interesting to think that these structures, the researchers wrote.

Animal studies conducted by Graybiel and others led the researchers to focus on three brain structures: the caudate nucleus and the putamen in the dorsal striatum, and the nucleus accumbens in the ventral striatum.

“Our animal work has shown that the striatum is a kind of learning machine – it becomes active during habit formation and skill acquisition,” Graybiel said. “So it made a lot of sense to explore whether the striatum might also be related to the ability to learn in humans.”

The caudate (CAW-date) nucleus and putamen (pew-TAY-min) are involved in motor learning, but research has shown they are also important to the cognitive flexibility that allows one to quickly shift between tasks. The nucleus accumbens (ah-COME-bins) is known to process emotions associated with reward or punishment.

The researchers began with a basic question about these structures, Kramer said: “Is bigger better?”

They used high-resolution Magnetic Resonance Imaging to analyze the size of these brain regions in 39 healthy adults (aged 18-28; 10 of them male) who had spent less than three hours a week playing video games in the previous two years. The volume of each brain structure was compared to that of the brain as a whole.

Participants were then trained on one of two versions of Space Fortress, a video game developed at the UI that requires players to try to destroy a fortress without losing their own ship to one of several potential hazards.

Half of the study participants were asked to focus on maximizing their overall score in the game while also paying attention to the various components of the game.

The other participants had to periodically shift priorities, improving their skills in one area for a period of time while also maximizing their success at the other tasks.

The latter approach, called “variable priority training” encourages the kind of flexibility in decision-making that is commonly required in daily life, Kramer said. Studies have shown that variable priority training is more likely than other training methods to improve those skills people use every day.

The researchers found that players who had a larger nucleus accumbens did better than their peers.

Researchers can predict your performance on a video game by measuring the volume of specific structures in your brain, a multi-institutional team reported recently.

The study, in the journal Cerebral Cortex, found that nearly a quarter of the variability in achievement seen among men and women trained on a new video game could be predicted by measuring the volume of three structures in their brains.

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Six Illinois faculty members named University Scholars

Six Urbana campus faculty members have been named as University Scholars. The program recognizes excellence while helping to identify and retain the university’s most talented teachers, scholars and researchers. The faculty members were honored at a dinner Feb. 15 in Champaign. Begun in 1985, the program provides $10,000 to each scholar for each of three years to use to enhance his or her academic career. The money may be used for travel, equipment, research assistants, books or other purposes.

The recipients (with comments from their nominating papers):

**Rajshree Agarwal**, a professor of business administration

“Agarwal has four current National Science Foundation grants and has been recognized for her research by the most important professional societies in her field. In 2002 she was presented with an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship, one of the most prestigious fellowship programs for mid-career scientists and scholars. Since 2000, Agarwal has twice been recognized for her research by the most important professional society in her field. She has published more than 50 papers in leading journals and has made significant contributions to the fields of operations research, marketing and economics. Her work is highly regarded and her research is highly visible.”

**Milan K. Bagchi**, a professor of molecular and integrative physiology

“Bagchi’s work has made fundamental contributions to our understanding of the mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. His research has contributed to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems, and to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. He has contributed to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems, and to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. He was the recipient of the College of Veterinary Medicine’s highest research honor, the Distinguished Research Award.”

**Jodi A. Flaws**, a professor of veterinary biochemistry

“Flaws’ research has been fundamental contributions to the understanding of the mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. His research has contributed to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems, and to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. He was the recipient of the College of Veterinary Medicine’s highest research honor, the Distinguished Research Award.”

**Neil L. Kelleher**, a professor of chemistry and a faculty affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology

“Kelleher leads an expansive group addressing three main scientific lines of research: (1) the development of high resolution tandem mass spectrometry and proteomics, (2) the development of high resolution tandem mass spectrometry and proteomics, and (3) the development of high resolution tandem mass spectrometry and proteomics. His research has contributed to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems, and to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. He was the recipient of the College of Veterinary Medicine’s highest research honor, the Distinguished Research Award.”

**Taekjip Ha**, a professor of physics and a faculty affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology

“A Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, Ha’s research has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. His research has contributed to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems, and to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. He was the recipient of the College of Veterinary Medicine’s highest research honor, the Distinguished Research Award.”

**D. Fairchild Ruggles**, a professor of landscape architecture

“Ruggles has made fundamental contributions to landscape architecture. His research has contributed to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems, and to the understanding of the physical mechanisms of biological molecules and systems. He was the recipient of the College of Veterinary Medicine’s highest research honor, the Distinguished Research Award.”
A Cappella BEATdown is March 8

Two nationally known experts with widely opposing views on the government’s role in health care will kick off a new debate series at the UI.

Mark Dr. Steffie Woolhandler, co-founder of Physicians for a National Health Care Program, and limited government advocate Michael D. Tanner, of the Cato Institute, are panelists for the inaugural event in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Series.

“What Controls Your Health Care? A Debate on Free Markets vs. Government” will take place from 4 to 5:30 p.m. March 9 in Deloitte Auditorium at the Business Instructional Facility. A reception will follow.

The UI Center for Business and Public Policy will host the debate, funded by the Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government. The non-profit academy plans annual debates on issues involving individual rights and limited government.

Woolhandler also is a board member of Physicians for a National Health Care Program, an alliance of doctors, medical students and health professionals who support a universal, single-payer national health insurance program.

She is a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and practices primary care internal medicine at Cambridge Hospital in Massachusetts.

Tanner is a senior fellow and health-care policy scholar at the Cato Institute, a nonprofit research foundation that promotes individual liberty, limited government and free markets.

He is a leading opponent of government-sponsored health insurance, and a co-author of “Healthy Competition: Why the Holding Back National Health Care and How to Free It.”

The debate, which will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience, is free and open to the public.

Live competition

A Cappella BEATdown is March 8

Eight a cappella singing groups from Central Illinois, including four UI student groups, will face off in a live competition at 7 p.m. March 8 on WILL-TV. Viewers will select the winner of “A Cappella BEATdown – Live!” by voting by phone or online during the show.

A cappella – singing without accompaniment – is experiencing a surge in popularity that is inspiring groups to take up the musical style, thanks to the popularity of the TV show “Glee” and groups such as Straight No Chaser, which became a YouTube sensation with its version of “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

In-studio judges, including WILL-FM’s “Live and Local” host Kevin Kelly, will provide on-air critiques and comments about the performances and vote in case of a tie.

Kelly is music director of the Prairie Ensemble and the East Central Illinois Youth Orchestra, and choirmaster at Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church.

More information and photos of participating groups are available online at will.uiuc.edu/beatdown.

CDL and ECDL Apply now for child care programs

The Child Development Laboratory, at 1105 W. Nevada St., and the Early Child Development Laboratory, 1005 W. Nevada St., are accepting applications for the 2010-2011 school year. Half-day preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-old children meet Tuesday through Friday for three hours a day during the regular academic year. Full-day child care programs for children ages 3 weeks to 4 years run from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday all year.

Tours of both facilities are offered weekly. Hour-long tours depart from the lobby of the Early Child Development Laboratory at 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays and at 9:30 a.m. Thursdays. Use the Lincoln Avenue entrance through the Jimmy John’s parking lot. Tours are suspended during the enrollment months of April and May.

To complete an online enrollment application, go to cdllife.uiuc.edu. For additional information or to schedule a tour, call 217-244-8622. For full consideration, submit your application for the half-day programs by April 1 and for the full-day programs by May 1.

WILL-TV Vote for your favorite Britcom on March 6

WILL-TV hosts the Great BritCom Vote XI at 7 p.m. March 6. Viewers can sample five British comedies and then call in to vote for one of them. WILL-TV program director David Tidels plans to purchase the winning program to broadcast during the next fiscal year.

The schedule: 7 p.m., “May to December”; 7:40 p.m., “The Brittas Empire”; 8:20 p.m., “The Old Guys”; 9 p.m., “Open All Hours”; 9:45 p.m., “Next of Kin.”

For more information about the programs, go to will.uiuc.edu.

27th annual International food and music featured

The University YMCA, Cosmopolitan Club and International Student and Scholar Services will host the 27th Annual International Dinner and Performance Night. The event, which offers a sampling of food and music from all over the world, will begin at 6 p.m. March 7 at the University YMCA. Tickets can be purchased at the University YMCA. Space is limited.

The event is open to the public.

The Robert E. Brown Center for World Music

Web site focuses on local music events

Support and planning for the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music at the UI will keep fans of international music attuned to performances and other opportunities for indulging their passion. Along with news and information about the center's programs, activities and artist-teachers, the Web site, www.music.uiuc.edu/cwm, offers an online events calendar that announces performances and other world-music events in East Central Illinois and the surrounding area.

“We aim for this calendar to become a comprehensive resource for informing the community of world-music events in our area,” said Jason Finkelman, the center’s communications manager, who maintains the site.

To add an event to the online calendar, click on the “submit event” link on the left side of the home page, which will open an online form.

The center, in Levis Faculty Center, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of the world's performing arts, primarily through active study of their performance. Its main activity is the Brown Center International Dinner and Performance Night, an annual celebration of the world's musical cultures held each spring.

The workshop also will include presentations by UI anthropology professor Janet Keller and Nina Tarr, a professor in the UI College of Law, along with problem-solving exercises and a group discussion.

The workshop will be from 1 to 4 p.m. March 31 in the Faculty Lounge and Conference Center, Room 215, at the College of Law.

The workshop is free and open to the public, but seating is limited, so participants must register by March 18 at www.law.uiuc.edu/lave.

Support and planning has been provided by the College of Law, department of anthropology, College of Education Teaching Academy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Teaching Academy, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Teaching Academy, and Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
Three dance performances featured

Third-year master of fine arts candidates present three unique dance performances – for the Krannert stage, a Chicago-based company Thread Meddle Outfit at 8 p.m. April 1-3 at Paulina Loft, 1049 N. Paulina, #2F, Chicago. A $5 donation is suggested at the door.

Seymour Sudman Dissertation Award

Apply for survey research award

The Survey Research Laboratory is accepting applications for its annual Seymour Sudman Dissertation Award for excellence in survey research as part of a doctoral dissertation. Applications are due April 26.

Eligible dissertations will involve either methodological research related to surveys, including the broader area of cognition that can be applied to survey research or will be based on primary survey data collection on any topic. All doctoral candidates on the Urbana campus whose dissertations meet the criteria are eligible, provided they have successfully defended their proposals prior to April 23, and have not yet defended their final dissertation. An award of $2,500 will be given to the winner. Proposal applications will be judged on the overall quality and on their contribution to the field of survey research. Receiving or being considered for other awards does not preclude a student from applying for this award. The award will be made in May 2010.

Complete eligibility and application information is available at http://www.aces.illinois.edu/ExplorACES/.

Chicago arts festival

Three weekend art festivals announced

Public parking lots, flying carp and the mysteries of crop circles will be among the environmental themes explored in an upcoming arts festival that focuses on how we shape the land and how it shapes us.

DIRT – a three-weekend festival of performances, dance, readings and videos – will be held March 5-21, at Links Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., Chicago.

Current ACES students plan the three weekend art festivals announced for online version

NATURAL SCIENCES

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FEATURES MARCH 12-13

ExplorACES 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 12; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 13 (various locations)

Designed to introduce high school students and their families to the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, ExplorACES offers more than 100 interactive exhibits.

The Web site includes information about exhibits as well as an interactive map to help guide visitors through the buildings and activities and online registration to attend receptions for admitted freshmen and others.

Current ACES students plan the festival that was extracted from a borehole formed Feb. 1.

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NATURAL SCIENCES

Naturally Illinois Expo 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 12; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 13 (various locations)

The Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability at the UI will open its doors to the public to highlight the variety of research the institute does for the state of Illinois to wisely manage resources, the environment and the economy.

On site will be baby Illinois turtles, a 30-foot wind turbine powering scientific instruments, fossils to dig and bio-diesel made from waste. The expo provides an opportunity to learn hands-on about science and the natural and cultural resources of Illinois through the work of the INRS state scientific surveys.

New exhibits this year include “What Happens to Your Electronic Waste.” In addition, visitors can view a 372-foot core of sediment that was extracted from a borehole on the south lawn of the Natural Resources Building during last year’s expo, which geologists used to reconstruct 300+ million years of geologic history.

Another new exhibit introduces a new state scientific survey, the Illinois State Archaeological Survey. Formed Feb. 1.

http://www.inrs.illinois.edu/expo

Graduate and faculty levels. The awards will be presented at a reception April 30.

Applications are invited from scholars in all sectors of the university with a focus on the humanities and humanities-influenced research. The awards are open to all full-time faculty students and faculty members. Details about the awards and the application/nomination process can be found online at www.iphilinois.edu/. More information about the awards and application procedure is available from Christine Catanzarite, catanzar@illinois.edu or 244-7913.

Early Spring Literary Festival

Celebrate literature March 15-17

Two alumni – Eileen Favorite and Rayo Ojikuta – and several faculty members will be among the acclaimed authors who will present their work and discuss current issues in publishing during the inaugural Early Spring Literary Festival.

The festivl, to be held March 15-17, will comprise a series of readings and panel discussions celebrating creative writing and contemporary literature. The Creative Writing Program and the Carr Reading Series are sponsoring the festival.

All events, free and open to the public, will be held in the Authors Corner on the second floor of the Illini Union Book of S. Wright St., Champaign. For a complete schedule: http://creativewriting.english.illinois.edu/carr/.
Midwest home this season marks the 10th consecutive year of residency for the Mark Morris Dance Group at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. In addition to the ensemble’s off-stage activities with students and community members, the group performs at 7:30 p.m. March 5 and 6 in the Tyrone Festival Theater. A talkback session – during which the audience can ask questions – follows each performance.

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**Inside Illinois**

March 4, 2010

Much of this information is drawn from the online Campus Calendars at the UI Web site at http://illinois.edu/tn/3/calendars.html. Other calendar entries should be sent 15 days before the desired publication date to insideill@uiuc.edu.

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**calendar of events**

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**Upcoming Lectures**

*February 24*

**Salaam El-Sayed**

*February 25*

**James. B. Steinberg**

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**Ad removed for online version**
### CALENDAR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16</td>
<td>Gas, Dust &amp; Star Formation in the Taurus Molecular Cloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 18</td>
<td>Music by Amory Arbeau, clarinet; Melissa Neily, tenor. 1:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 19</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Recital, Kay Welch. 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Smith Memorial Hall. School of Music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 20</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Project Recital, Sinta Corinna Jacobson. 5:30 p.m. Recital Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 21</td>
<td>The Mux, the Process. Fuels and Chemicals from Biomass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 22</td>
<td>Greg Hallberg, Lunchtime Lecture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 23</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Recital, Jonathan Unsin, jazz drums. 7:30 p.m. Smith Memorial Hall. School of Music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 24</td>
<td>1816 S. Oak St., 1005 Forbes Natural History Museum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 26</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Recital, Michael Near, jazz trumpet. 1:00 p.m. Recital Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 27</td>
<td>Doctor of Musical Arts Project Recital, Nanette Archer. 5:30 p.m. Recital Hall.</td>
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<tr>
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Business culture steers flow of new ideas, study says

By Jan Dennis

The business culture companies emphasize has an effect on new product ideas that bubble back up from the workforce, a UI marketing study found.

Groundbreaking ideas spring most from companies that stress technology, rather than customer needs or staying ahead of competitors, according to research that will appear in the Journal of Product Innovation Management.

Firms that focus on their competitors or customers generate more new product suggestions than technology-based companies, the study found. But the ideas typically net only subtle advances, such as the slow evolution of wireless reading devices, rather than breakthroughs similar to the shift from compact discs to music downloads.

“Customer- and competitor-ori
tented companies are more likely to come up with variations of existing products because they watch their markets closely and react to demands rather than building on breakthrough technology,” said William Qualls, a UI marketing professor who co-wrote the study.

He says the findings suggest that firms are best served by a balanced philosophy that includes all three cultures. While an emphasis on technology bolsters innovation, he said, market-driven firms are more attuned to what consumers want, giving them an edge in commercializing new products.

History is littered with technological leaps that sputtered for lack of effective marketing, said Qualls, who co-wrote the study with Jelena Spanjol, then a UI doctoral student and now a marketing professor at UIC, and Jose Antonio Rosa, a former UI marketing professor who co-wrote the study.

VIDEO GAMES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 counterparts in the early stages of the training process and regardless of the training group. This makes sense, Erickson said, because the nucleus accumbens is part of the brain’s reward center, and a person’s motivation for excelling at a video game includes the pleasure that results from achieving a specific goal. This sense of achievement and the emotional reward that accompanies it is likely highest in the earliest stages of learning, he said.

Players with a larger caudate nucleus and putamen did best on the variable priority training.

“The putamen and the caudate have been implicated in learning procedures, learning new skills, and those nuclei predicted learning throughout the 20-hour period,” Kramer said.

The players in which those structures were largest “learned more quickly and learned more over the training period,” he said.

“This study tells us a lot about how the brain works when it is trying to learn a complex task,” Erickson said. “We can use information about the brain to predict who is going to learn certain tasks at a more rapid rate.” Such information might be useful in education, where longer training periods may be required for some students, or in treating disability or dementia, where information about the brain regions affected by injury or disease could lead to a better understanding of the skills that might also need attention, he said.

The study was funded by the Office of Naval Research.