Difficult decisions help ensure future of Illinois Public Media

By Anna K. Herkamp

Assistant Editor

Like other state-funded entities, Illinois Public Media is learning to do more with less. It’s also investigating programming changes that will help ensure its future.

Changes that have taken place this spring were intended to better serve the current audience of the public broadcasting television and radio stations as well as draw more listeners and supporters, said Mark Leonard, the director of broadcasting and general manager of WILL.

Perhaps the most visible change was the announcement of nine staff layoffs, which includes the phasing-out of the weather department. The positions that were eliminated were the result of position consolidation and a roll-back in work in some areas, Leonard said.

Weather staff members are still working for now and are reporting the weather on a reduced schedule. “The weather-reporting duties will move to the remaining news and on-air staff,” he said.

**Moving forward**

Last month, WILL-FM became a dual-format radio station, adding news programs from National Public Radio to its classical music lineup. NPR’s “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered” are now broadcast on the FM station, as well as WILL-AM.

Other changes will include adding a morning radio show host – a position the station has put off filling for some time — and moving FM host Vic Di Geronimo’s classical music show to later in the morning.

WILL is currently interviewing for the morning host position, which has been filled with substitutes since former radio station manager Dan Simeone retired, Leonard said. The station also has added a web developer and a membership support staff person.

WILL added the new staff positions with the public comment page can be found just the time the report is released. A link to the reports online.

Researchers say the findings show that universities need to re-evaluate investment portfolios and policies to cushion the blow when market downturns hit endowments, a growing economic engine for college campuses.

A secretary at Harvard probably had no idea her employment could be tied to how the school’s endowment was invested, but that actually turned out to be the case,” said UI finance professor Scott Weisbenner, a co-author of the study.

Many endowments scale back payments to universities more than their own policies dictate when asset values tumble, according to the study, which examined endowments at more than 200 doctoral universities from 1988 to 2008. That, in turn, further shrinks resources available to fund university operations.

Universities typically have policies that set annual payout rates based on a fixed percentage of average fund values over the last three to five years, seeking to provide a stable income stream and avert the dramatic spikes resulting from an especially good or bad financial year, said Jeffrey R. Brown, a UI finance professor and co-author of the study.

But while university endowments follow their policy when strong market performance increases asset values, he said, many scale back payouts beyond what their guidelines suggest when the market suffers large declines.

“That means the university budget takes a double hit because not only are asset values declining but they’re spending a smaller fraction of the endowment than their own rules say they should,” Brown said.

He says the move is puzzling because not only are asset values declining but they’re spending a smaller fraction of the endowment than their own rules say they should,” Brown said.

**Survival mission**

Mark Leonard, the general manager of WILL, said that recent changes to the public broadcasting stations will enhance Illinois Public Media’s mission, while working within the confines of state budget cuts.

The membership support position is the final step in completing an internal reorganization that started a year ago,” Leonard said. “The membership support position is the final step in completing an internal reorganization that started a year ago,” Leonard said. Many WILL listeners and sponsors have expressed disapproval of these adjustments over the last few months, Leonard said. But the cutbacks and programming modifications were necessary, according to Leonard. For example, the full-service weather programming cost $140,000 each year to produce, and only $40,000 of that was covered by business underwriting.

It’s difficult to tell members,” Leonard said. “They feel they have a stake in the success of the stations.”

He and others have tried to explain that they’re not happy with the changes either, but as resources diminish, the station must be a good steward of the funding it does have.

Although creating new revenue sources is a challenge, one thing WILL and other public broadcasting stations have on their side is the uniqueness of their product, he said.

“People trust us as a news organization,” he said, pointing out that NPR’s “Morning Edition” – second in ratings only to the Rush Limbaugh show.

Locally, WILL has its own strengths.

“We’re a very large, robust joint license,” he said, referring to WILL’s television and radio stations.

“That puts us in a special category. We’ve always produced more (local programs) than most of our peer stations. We’ve always set the bar pretty high, and the community values that,” he said.

“We have done a limited amount of production for national distribution in the past. We are exploring ways to increase that as well,” he said.

**Colleges suffer when endowment values wane**

University investment decisions can deepen job losses and other financial cuts when market collapses carve into budget-supporting endowment funds, a new study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found.

Researchers say the findings show that universities need to re-evaluate investment portfolios and policies to cushion the blow when market downturns hit endowments, a growing economic engine for college campuses.

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Some that rather than trying to preserve a steady stream of income to support the university, endowment managers may be trying to preserve the size of the endowment for other reasons, such as the prestige of having a large endowment,” Brown said.

Other findings include:

Universities with large endowment declines cut faculty, support staff and maintenance workers, but not administrators. “We found no effect on the number of administrators – none whatsoever,” Brown said.

“it’s statistically no different than zero.”

Schools made larger cuts to faculty and staff when endowment investment Six ENDOWMENTS, Part 3

Some of the changes include:

- The 2.39th commencement of the UI’s Urbana campus will be held in two ceremonies May 16 at Assembly Hall.
- Novel technique Researchers used a novel measurement technique to reveal the mechanics of red blood cells.

**Two more project team reports online**

Two additional project team reports have been posted on the Stewarding Excellence in the 21st Century website: the Institute of Aviation and IT@Illinois (information technology services).

There will be a period for public comment on each report lasting 14 days from the time the report is released. A link to the public comment page can be found just below the link for each team report. The public comment period for the Institute of Aviation and IT@Illinois reports ends May 13.

The reports with the public comments will be shared with the Council of Deans, the Campus Steering Committee, the Campus Advisory Committee and the Academic Senate Leadership. They also will be shared with Bob Easter, the interim chancellor, and Richard Wheeler, the interim vice chancellor for academic affairs.

Visitors to the website also may subscribe to weekly e-mail updates.

**ON THE WEB**

http://will.illinois.edu/budget/projectteams.html

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On the Web

www.news.illinois.edu/illinois
The 1396th commencement of the UI’s main campus will be held in two ceremonies May 16 at Assembly Hall. The morning ceremony, at the 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. ceremonies will be Timothy P. Shriver, the chairman and chief executive officer of Special Olympics International. In recognition of his work with the disabled and as an advocate for people with disabilities, Shriver will be presented with the university’s Presidential Medallion during the 10:30 ceremony.

At the morning ceremony, candidates in the colleges of Applied Health Sciences, Law, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Media, and Veterinary Medicine; the Institute of Aviation; the School of Labor and Employment Relations; the School of Social Work; and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science will receive degrees.

Candidates in the colleges of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences; Business; Education; Engineering; and Fine and Applied Arts will receive degrees at the afternoon ceremony.

Doors will open at 9:30 a.m. for the morning ceremony and at 1 p.m. for the afternoon ceremony. After all students and their guests are seated, the remaining seats will be available to the public. Shuttle buses also will stop at various campus locations, including Assembly Hall, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

All students who have earned bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral and professional degrees and advanced certificates during the Academic Year, 2009-10, are honored at the annual commencement.

People have four choices to receive honorary degrees during the commencement ceremony.

The honorary-degree recipients:

Erich Bloch, director, The Washington Academy Group, foreign associate, National Academy of Science: the honorary degree of doctor of engineering.

Robert S. Cring, the chairman of the board of directors of the Yew Chung Education Foundation: the honorary degree of doctor of human letters.

Chan has been a professor of early childhood education in China as well as internationally.

Richard M. Felder, professor emeritus, chemical engineering, North Carolina State University: the honorary degree of doctor of chemical engineering.

Walter E. Hanson, 93, died April 4 in Springfield, Ill. Hanson was a professor of wood technology in the Illinois State Geological Survey. Hanson held a B.S. degree from the University of Missouri and an M.S. degree in the field of forest and urban planning from the University of Illinois. He was a fellow of the American Forestry Association and a member of the Society of American Foresters. Hanson joined the faculty at the University of Illinois in 1946 and retired in 1981. Hanson was a member of the board of directors of the Yew Chung Education Foundation for 35 years, retiring in 1977. A UI professorship has been established in his name. Memorials: Hanson Family Fund, SCCF, 205 S. Fifth St., Suite 930, Springfield, IL 62701.

Marjorie May Harris, 83, died April 18 at Baptist Memorial Hospital, Arlington Heights, Ill. Harris was a faculty member at the UI for 28 years, retiring in 1989. She was the director of the UI’s Math and Finance Center and the secondary language program in the department of kinesiology and community health.

Phebe B. Herbst, 77, died April 12. Herbst left a career as chief clerk with Countryside Community Health System in 1979. She was a UI alumnus who has been an avid volunteer for the University since 1960. Herbst was presented in Fairfax, Va., on Dec. 10, 2009, to Janet Turney Mulvany, class of 1958 (ACES), for her groundbreaking contributions to the fields of science and technology.
On the Job Kathie Benko

Kathie Benko, a chief clerk at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, spends her day helping pet owners care for their furry friends and goes home at night to care for her own menagerie, which includes dogs, cats, birds and ferrets.

What do you do as a chief clerk at the hospital?

Basically, we’re all in client services. There are five other people who work with me. It’s like a hospital, so when you come in we do the check-in, make charts up, and check them out. We talk to them about billing and financing. We answer all the phone calls and then decide where the calls go. We check in emergencies, that kind of stuff. Client services says it all — you help the pet owners.

What services are offered?

It’s a hospital, so we have specialty medicine here — like surgery, orthopedics, oncology. In addition, each department can host clinical studies for certain kinds of diseases. For example, if there’s a specific cancer they’re studying, the (participating patients) receive veterinary care or a new drug. We have one clinical study by the dermatology department for allergies. The treatment isn’t (always) free, but a lot of it is covered. So, for example, my dog had cancer and I had to pay for the chemotherapy, but other portions of it the study were paid for. For the trials help the researchers learn more about certain types of disease.

What kinds of animals does the hospital serve?

Everything considered a small animal, but mainly dogs and cats. We also serve exotics, which includes guinea pigs, hamsters and reptiles. They even treat animals such as tigers, which is really cool. A tiger is considered a small animal because it’s a cat.

Where do the tigers come from?

Some zoos, but mostly from the exotic rescue in Indiana — they come in sedated, but they’re so neat.

What does a veterinary hospital do for reptiles?

I guess it depends on which one — lizards are different from snakes. Basically, a lot of people don’t know what to feed them, so some lizards — like bearded dragons or iguanas — might come in with a calcium deficiency. A lot of people just feed them crickets and put them under a sun lamp and think they’ll be fine, but they have a lot of different nutritional needs.

How long have you worked here?

I’ve been here 13 years. I worked at the (Illini Union) Bookstore for 10 years before that. The whole thing is the support and the love seeing them. It’s so much fun and I’m a total animal person, I have a house full of them.

What pets do you have?

Seven dogs, two cats, two ferrets and two birds. (The dogs) are large dogs: two mastiffs, a Newfoundland, a mastiff mix, a lab, a shepherd and a Pekingese. It is fun … and it’s a lot of work. It’s a lot of cleaning — the fur, every day — but it’s worth it to me.

Why work at the UI?

I love working here. I’m happy because I love seeing animals. You have to be an animal person to work here. If you weren’t, it would be hard to work here. I also like the wildlife people bring in.

What kinds of wildlife?

People bring in all kinds of wildlife to the (Wildlife Medical Clinic): injured hawks, owls, and we get a lot of bunnies, possums and some really unusual animals. Big, giant snapping turtles are cool.

What’s the worst thing about your job?

The worst thing is when I’m in the exam room and I see clients on a regular basis and so I bond with the owners and the pet. It’s very hard when the pets die. Our pets are members of the family.

Is there something about your department most people don’t know or would be surprised to learn?

I think a lot of people don’t realize what this hospital does. They think it’s like a vet office, but that is not the case. We’re a specialized hospital, and people are surprised there are so many departments. They don’t realize your pet can get chemotherapy or cataract surgery.

Besides being a pet owner, what do you like to do for fun?

Pets are the big thing, but I love cooking. I love ‘Iron Chef’ kind of stuff. I love watching the Food Network. I love unusual foods. And I love to do a lot of foraging. I love ‘Iron Chef’ kind of stuff. I love doing a lot of foraging. I love unusual foods.

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Favorite places to eat in Champaign-Urbana?

I really like Miko’s — it serves sushi. I also like places like El Toro.

- Interview by Anna K. Herkamp, Assistant Editor
Exclusive licensing deals a tool for collaboration, study says

By Jan Dennis Business Law Editor

Excl u sive licensing deals are a two- way safety net that fosters cooperation as new product ideas weave their way toward the marketplace, according to new research led by a UI business administration professor. Deepak Somaya says the findings reveal that exclusive licensing is commonly used as a contractual “hostage” that innovators voluntarily give up as a sign of good faith that nurtures cooperation.

Somaya says hostages can provide incentives and safeguards for both creators and the sole partners signed on to commercialize them. “That’s as simple an analogy in car shopping. Dealers want you to test drive because it can close the sale. But how do they know you’ll come back? Well, it’s because they have your driver’s license or the keys to your car,” Somaya said.

“But there’s a danger in giving too much of a hostage away, because exclusivity come in,” he said. “And in some cases, it may make sense to not give a hostage at all and license non-exclusively to multiple partners. If there isn’t a need for close cooperation, all it does is shackle your own feet.”

Somaya says giving away hostages can yield a level of cooperation that could never be spelled out in a contract, especially with early-stage product ideas that are still evolving.

“ Incorporating hostages into licensing contracts is a valuable complement to detailed contractual clauses,” he said. “It creates incentives for partners to cooperate willingly and automatically, even when situations arise that they did not anticipate and even if the other party can’t observe the level of support being offered.”

Deepak Somaya says exclusive licensing deals are a two-way safety net that fosters cooperation as new product ideas weave their way toward the marketplace.

I LLINOIS PUBLIC MEDIA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a source of new revenue in the future. The challenge is to make sure that national pro- gram reports; and a WILLKids site for market reports; and a WILLKids site for stories, local talk shows and agricultural news and programs that focus on Central Illinois. WILL-TV offers classical music for broadcast and the Web, and works with community partners. WILL-AM 580 offers local and regional news coverage as well as two local talk shows, agricultural news and coverage from NPI and the BBC. WILL-FM 90.9 offers classical music along with local news and NPI’s “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered.” WILL-TV blends a core of PBS programming with locally produced documentaries and programs that focus on Central Illinois. WILL Online provides live streaming of WILL; downloads and archives of news stories, local talk shows and agricultural market reports; and a WILLKids site for children and parents.

The study, which analyzed more than 200 exclusive licensing deals involv- ing publicly traded biotechnology, pharmaco-ecal and chemical firms. A contract for an early-stage pharmaceutical breakthrough, for example, might grant exclusivity only for Alzheimer’s treat- ment while the inventor retains rights for all other potential applications.

“With early-stage technologies, the li- censor doesn’t want to give away the store, but the licensee also wants protection be- cause developing and commercializing the product will require a lot of investment,” Leonard said.

Exclusive licensing deals are a tool for collaboration, according to new research led by a UI business administration professor. Deepak Somaya says exclusive licensing deals are a two-way safety net that fosters cooperation as new product ideas weave their way toward the marketplace.

I LLINOIS PUBLIC MEDIA Funding breakdown ($9 million budget)

program reporting that credits the achievements of the university, or to “tell the story of sci- ence.” “It’s not self-serving to tell our sto- ry,” he said of the research and discoveries taking place at the UI, as well as the his- tory and stories of the region. Leonard also wants WILL to continue its efforts at public en- gagement and to promote pro- grams that benefit the local community.

“We are using public en- gagement as a tool for in- creasing IPM’s relevance to its communities,” Leonard said. “This requires us to know our communities and focus on addressing areas of need. Social me- dia provide many new tools in that effort, augmenting IPM’s traditional abilities in broadcasting and production. We can be a convenor of conversation, a catalyst between organizations and a storyteller of those efforts. We have done some of that in our efforts surrounding hunger in our com- munities, the local impact of the economic meltdown, children’s dental health and childhood obesity.”

Funding woes Illinois Public Media has suffered from a gradual loss of Illinois Arts Council fund- ing. Five years ago, council funding totaled $518,000. Now, that funding has dwindled to some $208,000, with payment of that from the state of Illinois in question.

Illinois Public Media began the current fiscal year with a balanced budget; however, Illinois Arts Council cuts were announced in October creating a deficit of $110,000. Previously changes at the station had in- volved staff reduction through attrition and cuts in operations and support positions. (Currently the stations employ 53 full-time employees, down from 74 four years ago.) “The audience didn’t see a lot of change,” Leonard said.

“The last round of cuts was pretty dra- matic. The goal is to not have to do more.” In addition, the station has been under pressure to hold back some of its funding from the university.

With the state funding its university obligations, there is increased uncertainty about the state honoring the remaining $208,000 to IPM as well as uncertainty about next year’s support from the state,” Leonard said.

I LLINOIS PUBLIC MEDIA is a not-for- profit public media service of the College of Media, which broadcasts public television and radio programs, produces local content for broadcast and the Web, and works with community partners.
Color-blind racial ideology linked to racism, online and off

By Phil Ciciora

Images from racist theme parties that are posted on social networking sites can contribute to indirect racism, Tynes said. "It’s more about people using these sites to criticize and mock images of African American culture, not just focus primarily on whites. It’s not just that we’re socializing children and adolescents about how to perpetuate stereotypes, but also by crowd-sourcing users’ reactions to the posts. Students can contribute to indirect racism, even if they’re not writing their own comments.”

Tynes awarded $1.4 million grant

Brendesha Tynes, a professor of educational psychology and of African American studies at Illinois, discovered that white students and those who rated highly in color-blind racial attitudes were more likely not to be offended by images from racially-themed parties where attendees dressed and acted as caricatures of racial stereotypes. (For example, photos of students dressed in blackface make-up attending a “gangsta party” to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day.)

“People who reported higher racial color-blind attitudes were more likely to be white, and more likely to condone or not be bothered by racial-ethnic party images,” Tynes said. “In fact, some even encourage not posting images by adding comments of their own such as ‘Where’s the Colt 45?’ or ‘Party like a rock star.”’

Tynes and co-author Suzanne L. Markoe, a professor of educational psychology and of African American studies at Illinois, discovered that white students and those who rated highly in color-blind racial attitudes were more likely not to be offended by images from racially-themed parties where attendees dressed and acted as caricatures of racial stereotypes.

"You are more likely to think that people don’t see, some students would let us know that they thought the image was racist or that it angered them. We think that it’s because whites have been socialized not to talk about race.”

"To their friends, they would express mild approval of the party photos or just not discuss race,” Tynes said. “But in private, in a reaction that they thought their friends wouldn’t see, some students would let us know that they thought the image was racist or that it angered them. We think that it’s because whites have been socialized not to talk about race.”

Specifically, beginning in elementary school, texts should provide a more comprehensive view of American history and culture, not just focus primarily on whites. "Simply telling people to celebrate diversity or multiculturalism or saying, generically, that we believe in tolerance isn’t sufficient,” Tynes said. "We need to teach people about structural racism, about the ways that race still shapes people’s life chances and how the media informs our attitudes toward race.”

Tynes and co-author Suzanne L. Markoe of the University of California, Los Angeles, published their research in the March issue of the Journal of Diversity in Higher Education.
New technique reveals mechanics of blood cell membranes

By Liz Ahlberg

A new research team led by electrical and computer engineering professor Gabriel Popescu used a novel measurement technique called diffraction phase microscopy to reveal the mechanics of red blood cells.

The research team used a novel measurement technique called diffraction phase microscopy, which uses two beams of light while other microscopes only use one. “One beam goes through the specimen and one beam is used as a reference,” Popescu said. “It is very, very sensitive to minute displacements in the membrane, down to the nanoscale.”

RBC membrane movement can be observed through typical light microscopes, a phenomenon known as “buckling,” but Popescu’s team was able not only to see nanoscale membrane fluctuations in live cells, but to measure them quantitatively – a first.

In addition to normal cells, the team also measured two other morphologies: bumpy RBCs called echinocytes and round ones called spherocytes. They discovered that these deformed cells display less flexibility in their membranes, a finding that could provide insight into mechanics and treatment of diseases that affect RBC shape, such as malaria, sickle-cell disease and thalassemia.

With collaborators from the University of California at Los Angeles, the group used its data to construct a new model of the RBC membrane that accounts for fluctuations and curvature, a more complete and accurate rendering than previous models that treated the membrane as a flat sheet.

“Our measurements showed that a flat model could not explain the data. With this curvature model, we understand much better what is happening in the RBC,” said Popescu, adding, “It’s really a combination of a new optical method and new theoretical model, and that is what allowed us to find some new results where the shape and deformability are coupled.”

The team’s technique eventually could be used to screen for blood diseases such as malaria or to screen banked blood for membranes that have been used before transfusion, since stored blood often undergoes cellular shape changes.

In addition, this novel microscopy technique has important implications for researchers interested in membrane biology and dynamics, according to Catherine Best, co-author of the paper and an instructor in the UI College of Medicine. “An advantage to studying red blood cells in this way is that we can now look at the effects of chemical agents on membranes, specifically. It is very exciting. For instance, we can look at the membrane effects of alcohol, and we may learn something about tolerance to alcohol,” Best said.

Because diffraction phase microscopy measures live cells without physically manipulating or damaging them, it also could be used to evaluate medications being developed to treat blood cell morphology diseases, according to Popescu. “We can study the mechanics of a single cell under different pharmacological conditions, and I think that would be ideal for testing drugs,” he said.

The National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation funded this research, which included collaborators from MIT, Harvard Medical School, the University of Colorado, Harvard University and UCLA.

Politics often undermines environmental agreements

By Craig Chamberlain

A caution to idealists inspired by Earth Day: At the intersection of politics and nature, politics usually wins, even over the best intentions, says UI political scientist Robert Pahre.

“Politics screws up outcomes that everybody says they want,” says Pahre, a UI professor whose environmental research has focused on national parks and issues along their borders.

Agreements are made to maintain sustainable populations of wildlife, for example, “yet it’s almost never true that we get that result,” Pahre said. In combining the needs of biology with the realities of politics, the outcome is almost always biased against what is sustainable, he said.

Pahre’s perspective also is rooted in political science, where institutions and incentives are emphasized as the keys to political problems, rather than educating the public on the issues, he said. “Political scientists almost never believe that it’s a matter of public education,” he said. “Better institutions, with well-enforced rules, usually work better.”

Even in the renewed environmental interest in recent years, nature getsironically little attention, Pahre said. “Political scientists almost never believe that it is a matter of public education,” he said. “Better institutions, with well-enforced rules, usually work better.”

Recycling, green energy and sustainable architecture are important issues, Pahre said, “but those issues are really about humans using the resources we have more efficiently in ways that benefit humans.” It just seems like an impoverished view of what the environment is or what the planet is,” he said, and maybe not as motivating as experience with nature for changing attitudes about the environment.

As part of his courses, Pahre has taken students on trips to Yellowstone National Park, in the West, but also to the Mammoth Cave and Great Smoky Mountains national parks, both within a day’s drive of the campus. Other parks with a wealth of activities and wildlife, such as Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, are just as close, he said.

Fact, there is a National Park Service unit in every state except one, Pahre said. “The parks are next door, in ways that people don’t think about.”

Environmental issues

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New model A research team led by electrical and computer engineering professor Gabriel Popescu used a novel measurement technique called diffraction phase microscopy to reveal the mechanics of red blood cells.

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RBC membrane movement can be observed through typical light microscopes, a phenomenon known as “buckling,” but Popescu’s team was able not only to see nanoscale membrane fluctuations in live cells, but to measure them quantitatively – a first.

In addition to normal cells, the team also measured two other morphologies: bumpy RBCs called echinocytes and round ones called spherocytes. They discovered that these deformed cells display less flexibility in their membranes, a finding that could provide insight into mechanics and treatment of diseases that affect RBC shape, such as malaria, sickle-cell disease and thalassemia.

With collaborators from the University of California at Los Angeles, the group used its data to construct a new model of the RBC membrane that accounts for fluctuations and curvature, a more complete and accurate rendering than previous models that treated the membrane as a flat sheet.

“Our measurements showed that a flat model could not explain the data. With this curvature model, we understand much better what is happening in the RBC,” said Popescu, adding, “It’s really a combination of a new optical method and new theoretical model, and that is what allowed us to find some new results where the shape and deformability are coupled.”

The team’s technique eventually could be used to screen for blood diseases such as malaria or to screen banked blood for membrane flexibility before transfusion, since stored blood often undergoes cellular shape changes.

In addition, this novel microscopy technique has important implications for researchers interested in membrane biology and dynamics, according to Catherine Best, co-author of the paper and an instructor in the UI College of Medicine. “An advantage to studying red blood cells in this way is that we can now look at the effects of chemical agents on membranes, specifically. It is very exciting. For instance, we can look at the membrane effects of alcohol, and we may learn something about tolerance to alcohol,” Best said.

Because diffraction phase microscopy measures live cells without physically manipulating or damaging them, it also could be used to evaluate medications being developed to treat blood cell morphology diseases, according to Popescu. “We can study the mechanics of a single cell under different pharmacological conditions, and I think that would be ideal for testing drugs,” he said.

The National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation funded this research, which included collaborators from MIT, Harvard Medical School, the University of Colorado, Harvard University and UCLA.

Politics often undermines environmental agreements

By Craig Chamberlain

A caution to idealists inspired by Earth Day: At the intersection of politics and nature, politics usually wins, even over the best intentions, says UI political scientist Robert Pahre.

“Politics screws up outcomes that everybody says they want,” says Pahre, a UI professor whose environmental research has focused on national parks and issues along their borders.

Agreements are made to maintain sustainable populations of wildlife, for example, “yet it’s almost never true that we get that result,” Pahre said. In combining the needs of biology with the realities of politics, the outcome is almost always biased against what is sustainable, he said.

Pahre’s perspective also is rooted in political science, where institutions and incentives are emphasized as the keys to political problems, rather than educating the public on the issues, he said. “Political scientists almost never believe that it is a matter of public education,” he said. “Better institutions, with well-enforced rules, usually work better.”

Even in the renewed environmental interest in recent years, nature getsironically little attention, Pahre said. “Political scientists almost never believe that it is a matter of public education,” he said. “Better institutions, with well-enforced rules, usually work better.”

Recycling, green energy and sustainable architecture are important issues, Pahre said, “but those issues are really about humans using the resources we have more efficiently in ways that benefit humans.” It just seems like an impoverished view of what the environment is or what the planet is,” he said, and maybe not as motivating as experience with nature for changing attitudes about the environment.

As part of his courses, Pahre has taken students on trips to Yellowstone National Park, in the West, but also to the Mammoth Cave and Great Smoky Mountains national parks, both within a day’s drive of the campus. Other parks with a wealth of activities and wildlife, such as Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, are just as close, he said.

Fact, there is a National Park Service unit in every state except one, Pahre said. “The parks are next door, in ways that people don’t think about.”

Environmental issues

At the intersection of politics and nature, politics usually wins, even over the best intentions, says UI political scientist Robert Pahre.
Paper wasp and honey bee workers share a genetic toolkit

By Diana Yates

Life Sciences Editor

They are both nest-building social insects, but paper wasps and honey bees organize their colonies in very different ways. In a new study, researchers report that despite their differences, these insects rely on the same network of genes to guide their social behavior.

The study appears in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences. Honey bees and paper wasps are separated by more than 100 million years of evolution, and there are striking differences in how they divvy up the work of maintaining a colony. Said UI entomology professor Gene Robinson, who led the study with postdoctoral researcher Amy Toth. “Honey bees have a sharp division of labor between queens, which reproduce, and workers, which care for the brood and forage for food, while among paper wasps social roles are much more fluid,” he said.

The same genetic elements are used for different types of division of labor. “And yet the same genes can be used by different groups of paper wasps. But those genes were hand-picked because they were for exactly the same genes,” Robinson said. For this reason, the team wanted to take a second look at the broad array of genes in the wasp – to be sure that the pattern they had identified was indeed special to wasps as well as bees.

Crop sciences professor Matt Hudson, the team’s bioinformatics expert, used a computer algorithm to mine the sequencing data from the previous study to design a microarray. The microarray allowed the researchers to simultaneously measure those genes that were most active in the paper wasp brain.

“We expect that Polistes has got somewhere in the range of 10,000 genes, and we expect that at least half of them, but not all of them, would be expressed in the brain,” said Hudson, who also is a professor in the Institute for Genomic Biology. The effort identified more than 4,900 genes that were active in the wasp brain. The new analysis confirmed that the same genes and gene regulators are important to the division of labor within a honey bee hive also are used by the wasps as they take on different roles in the nest.

The team included researchers from the department of animal biology at Illinois, as well as from Grand Valley State University. Amy Toth now is a professor at Iowa State University. This study was supported by the National Science Foundation and the Illinois Sociogenomics Initiative.
Twenty honored for excellence in teaching, advising

Then faculty members, five academic professionals and five graduate teaching assistants at the UI were honored April 27 for excellence in teaching and advising. The honors were presented during a reception at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center.

Comments about the award recipients are from the nominations.

Faculty members honored with the Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching:

Roy Axford, nuclear, plasma and radiological engineering, is knowledgeable, dedicated to his students and truly gifted at making difficult concepts accessible. His courses emphasize more than the memorization of formulas. His teaching style makes quantitative methodology useful to students both inside and outside the field of nuclear science and technology.

Steven Helle, journalism, delivers challenging coursework in an engaging classroom environment. His students note his dedication to the field of journalism as well as his commitment to their betterment as scholars and citizens. He is more than a talented teacher; his students find him to be a gifted mentor.

Anthony Pollock, English, believes all students have the potential to be capable intellectual agents whose continuing engagement with literature and culture can be a source of transformative power for them long after they have left the classroom. He continually revises his coursework in response to the changing needs of students and strives to give students a sense of how to organize their thinking without dictating what thoughts they should have.

Kelly Tappenden, food science and human nutrition, combines collaborative teaching strategies with insights drawn from research, as well as from personal experience. She believes that incorporating interactive elements into one’s teaching repertoire can markedly improve the quality of students’ learning. She uses multiple instructional techniques, such as problem-based learning, to help students integrate theoretical and real-world knowledge about nutrition and dietetics.

Billie Theide, School of Art and Design, challenges her undergraduate and graduate students by coaxing them out of their academic comfort zones. Her classes are designed to guide students through the often technical and complicated information associated with the art of working with metals. She strongly encourages her students to present their work in professional venues outside of school, such as in competitions and publications.

Instructional staff members who received the award:

Thomas Costello, a teaching associate in communication, uses an interactive teaching style that is appreciated by his students. He calms the anxiety that many students feel about public speaking. He cares deeply about the fundamentals of undergraduate education and fosters an understanding of the principal skills necessary for success both inside and outside of the classroom.

Michael Raycraft, a lecturer in recreation, sport and tourism, is able to present complex concepts in ways that remain meaningful to experts while being accessible to non-experts. He couples humor with a matter-of-fact style that is both engaging and enlightening. His attention to detail is evident in preparation that incorporates SEE TEACHING AWARDS, PAGE 9.

UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING: FACULTY MEMBERS

Roy Axford
Steven Helle
Anthony Pollock
Kelly Tappenden
Billie Theide
nuclear, plasma and radiological engineering
journalism
English
food science and human nutrition
art and design

UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING: INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Thomas Costello
Michael Raycraft
David Sinoe
Thomas Graves
communication
recreation, sport and tourism
finance
veterinary clinical medicine

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL TEACHING

Debra Woods
Timothy Struthmann
Helen Neville
Gary Wszolek
mathematics
civil and environmental engineering
educational psychology
psychology

OFF-CAMPUS TEACHING

Timothy Stolzer
physics

DISTINGUISHED TEACHER-SCHOLAR

Photography by L. Brian Stauffer
Class demonstrates the rehabilitative powers of dance

By Anna K. Horakmp
Assistant Editor

One exercise involves students gracefully gliding from one end of the classroom to the other in the basement of Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

"I found myself in the middle of the floor – delicately surprised," she said.

For the past eight years, Krannert Center has teamed with the Mark Morris Dance Group, whose full-time home is in UL, as well as Unity Parkinson’s Disease Support Group, Carte Clinic and Dance at Illinois to put together a workshop that was first aimed at therapeutic dance classes for patients with Parkinson’s Disease, but is now open to anyone who’d like to participate.

Along with traditional dance class exercises at the barre, the class includes sitting position movements that isolate specific areas of the body, stretches and simple coordinated choreographed movement.

The awards recognize professors, in addition to recognizing outstanding research. Strathmann challenges his undergraduates to set both short-term and long-term goals for their research, as this helps them to fully envision the final product of their work. He believes engaging undergraduates in research provides an opportunity to inspire students, especially those from underrepresented groups, to pursue careers in environmental chemistry research.

Helen Nevillie, a professor of educational psychology, received the Campus Award for Excellence in Guiding Undergraduate Research. The $2,000 award is designed to foster and reward excellence in involving and guiding undergraduate students in scholarly research. Strathmann challenges his undergraduate students to set both short-term and long-term goals for their research, as this helps them to fully envision the final product of their work. He believes engaging undergraduates in research provides an opportunity to inspire students, especially those from underrepresented groups, to pursue careers in environmental chemistry research.

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Role of religious faith in World War I examined

By Sharita Forrest

Although World War I has faded from cultural memory, overshadowed by more dramatic and unambiguous conflicts that both preceded and followed it, the Great War continues to shape Americans’ interpretations of their nation, its war-craft and its soldiers today.

In a new book, “Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War,” (Princeton University Press), Jonathan Ebel, a professor of religion at the UI, examines the pivotal role that religious faith – Christianity, in particular – played in the war effort and people’s interpretations of their wartime experiences, giving birth to a religion-based nationalism that continues to influence the nation’s discourse.

“I started this project back in March 2001 thinking that I was going to tell a standard World War I story about disillusions, about people being duped,” Ebel said. “As it turns out, I found something quite different.”

Although often perceived as a precipitant of disillusionment, World War I seems to have inspired reillumination, strengthening Americans’ attachments to the religious framework that surrounded the war, Ebel concluded.

Ebel spent eight years combing through letters, poems, diaries and memoirs from soldiers, their family members and people who worked for war support agencies such as the YMCA.

He also reviewed public literature such as Stars and Stripes, which billed itself as “the official newspaper of the American Expeditionary Force” during the war and offered a public forum for letters, poems, cartoons and editorials written primarily by enlisted men. Ebel also found a trove of veterans’ perspectives on their wartime experiences in the responses of 2,500 African-American veterans’ perspectives on their wartime experiences, giving birth to a religion-based nationalism that continues to influence the nation’s discourse.

“People bring powerful emotional agency to things and then see Suzanne as either malicious or underrepresented or marginalized people, to gain power and that she’s really trying to address with her feminist politics, just more and equitable ways of being in the world.”

“President Woodrow Wilson had been explicit that service to the country would bring a more full complement of the benefits of citizenship, so African-American soldiers seemed to be serving with that in mind,” Ebel said. “Indeed, many of the leaders in the black community – W.E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Isaac Fisher – all seemed to have quite similar feelings about the war’s promise for redemption.”

“And although white and black people framed things a bit differently, their experiences in the responses strengthened and with a renewed commitment to fighting an ongoing battle to save America from evil.”

While black leaders such as Du Bois were disillusioned when military service failed to live up to its promise of racial equality, many people – black and white – revealed in their writings that they entered the post-war period with the religiously charged ideas that had framed their war experiences strengthened and with a renewed commitment to fighting an ongoing battle to save America from evil.

After the war, the American Legion — which was founded by Theodore Roosevelt III to “keep alive the spirit of the Great War” — vigorously promoted religion-infused religious faith.

Controversial artist Suzanne Lacy explored

By Sharita Forrest

The work of controversial artist Suzanne Lacy defies simple categorization. Sometimes described as performance art, feminist art or political art, it encompasses all those categories but fits neatly into none of them.

In a new book, “Suzanne Lacy: Spaces Between” (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), the first in-depth examination of the artist and her art, author Sharon Irish tracks Lacy’s development as an artist-activist and the societal contexts surrounding her work.

Irish, who is the interim director of the Community Informatics Initiative and holds appointments in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science and the School of Architecture at the UI, based her book on interviews with the artist and more than 50 of Lacy’s collaborators. Irish also accompanied Lacy on a project in Kentucky, visited many of the sites where performances were staged and combed through stacks of archival information — including boxes of papers in Lacy’s garage.

Since Lacy began working as an artist in the 1970s, her art has comprised books, photography, collage and performance pieces that have ranged from a few pages to an entire citywide project involving survey preparation and hundreds of people.

Standing images such as animal carcasses and animal organs nailed to walls, mutilated human bodies, animal blood and women in black wearing headdresses shaped like coffins were used in early works to evoke strong emotions about taboo and intractable societal problems such as rape and murder.

“Suzanne is a feminist, and feminism is a term that is dismissed more these days,” Irish said. “To me, the way that Suzanne’s work is informed by feminism means that she sees the relationships among people as political and that feminism is a way of building coalitions among women, but also underepresented or marginalized people, to gain power and that she’s really trying to address with her feminist politics, more just and equitable ways of being in the world.”

Lacy may be best known, at least in the U.S., for her 1987 performance piece “The Crystal Quilt,” which used 450 women over the age of 60 to address media portrayals of older women and their untapped potential.

In the armies of a Minneapolis skyscraper, the women were seated in groups of four at tables arranged to form a quilt pattern designed by painter Miriam Shapiro. The women varied the pattern by moving their hands. Performed on Mother’s Day and broadcast live on public television before 3,000 observers, the “living quilt” interwove performers’ personal reflections with societal analysis about aging.

“That was a very successful effort to engage a wide range of policymakers and decision makers in looking at how older women could be leaders in the state of Minnesota,” Irish said.

“People bring powerful emotional auras to things and then see Suzanne as either malicious or underrepresented or marginalized people, to gain power and that she’s really trying to address with her feminist politics, more just and equitable ways of being in the world.”

In February, Lacy was named the first recipient of the College Art Association’s Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement.

A Creative Research Award from the College of Fine and Applied Arts supported publication of the book.

Controversial artist Suzanne Lacy explored
Faculty members, alumni

Graduate College seeks IMentors

The Graduate College seeks faculty members and graduate alumni for IMentor, a new mentoring network to support the success of underrepresented graduate students at Illinois.

Studies on graduate education repeatedly point to mentoring as a key factor in degree completion. Yet, African-American, Hispanic and American Indian graduate students often report that isolation and a lack of significant connections to faculty members and peers affect their decision to accept admission offers or remain in graduate programs.

IMentor's goal is to attract academic or research advisers, help guide students through aspects of the graduate experience and into chosen careers. Registration for mentors is now open. Students will sign up for IMentor, and, if they have a match with a faculty member. To learn more to or become an IMentor, visit the Graduate College website at www.grad.illinois.edu/mentor or contact the Graduate College at GradEEPrograms@illinois.edu or 217-333-4860.

University YMCA

Donate to annual garage sale

Collections for the University YMCA's annual Dump and Run garage sale will begin May 10. The sale is being coordinated with International Student and Scholar Services.

Items will only be accepted at the UI Stock Pavilion (not at the University YMCA). There will also be collections in August. Sale dates are Aug. 21 and 22.

Dates and times to drop off items this month:
May 10-15 and May 17-28: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
May 13 and 20: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
May 21 and 28: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To schedule a pick-up for large items the week of May 10, call Samantha at 217-337-1500. For information on what items may be donated, visit www.universityymca. org/dumpandrun/.

Dump and Run collects reusable items — often things that students would dispose of as they leave campus — and sells these items when students arrive or return to campus in August.

The project reduces litter and consumer waste, lowers dollar costs for certified housing units, provides inexpensive items for students to purchase in the fall and is a significant fundraiser for the University YMCA.

To volunteer, e-mail Amanda@universityymca.org. Anyone who volunteers for at least six hours may shop before the sale.

LPs, CDs, video games and more

Vintage Vinyl sale is May 8

The Vintage Vinyl sale — with thousands of used records, tapes, CDs, video games and video players offered for sale — takes place May 8 at Lincoln Square Village in Urbana.

An entrance fee of $5 will be charged 8-11 a.m. Admission is free 11 a.m.-3 p.m. After the sale closes for an hour of organizing, all items will be half price 4-6 p.m. Used equipment — including CD players, DVD players, turntables and speakers — also will be offered at bargain prices.

Support of this event enables Samuel Music and Yamada Public Media that provides news and information to blind and visually impaired auditors in East Central Illinois.

Deane Geiken, director of the BRR, said adding video games and players to the mix this year means there's something for all ages at the sale. "As always, we have a great selection of classical and rock recordings. We'll have to see if the rock, jazz and blues donations will match," he said.

School annual piano sale is May 6-10

The University Piano Loan Program, Samuel Music and Yamaha Corporation of America provide faculty members and students in the School of Music with new pianos. As the end of the academic year approaches, acoustic and digital pianos are available for sale to piano students in the School of Music.

All instruments will be sold at reduced prices with the Yamaha/CompBenefits warranty included, on a first come, first served basis.

To ensure the best selection, schedule an appointment at the School of Music between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. May 6, 7 and 10 or between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. May 9. Appointments are required. To schedule an appointment, call 888-742-6632 or e-mail univpiano@samuelleumusic.com. Students in the School of Music are encouraged to continue to loan new instruments each year to the UI School of Music.

Sixth annual international conference

Qualitative inquiry explored May 26-29

Qualitative researchers gather at the focus of the sixth annual International Conference of Qualitative Inquiry from May 26 to 29. The theme of this year's conference is "Qualitative Inquiry for a Global Community in Crisis."

In recent years, the conference has drawn more than a thousand participants from more than 60 countries, making it the largest annual conference of qualitative researchers in the world, according to conference director Norman Denis, a professor in the Institute of Communications Research in the College of Media.

The first congress organized by Denis and others in 2005 in reaction to moves by governments and funding agencies to define good science and research strongly in favor of a quantitative, "evidence-based," biomedical model with emphasis on controlled experiments and numbers-gathering, Denis said.

This meant restrictions on funding for qualitative research observation and often seeks to record the voices of marginalized populations, he said. The trend has affected fields such as business, communications, education, health care, law and social science, he said.

As the first conference participants founded the International Association of Qualitative Inquiry, The UI also is home to the multidisciplinary International Center for Qualitative Inquiry. More information is available at www.icqi.org.

UI Veterinary Clinic

Free eye exams for service animals

Many companion animals perform vital roles in society as service animals, assisting people with disabilities, aiding in search and rescue, or contributing to therapy.

To show appreciation for service animals, veterinary ophthalmologists at the UI Veterinary Teaching Hospital will participate in the third annual ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam. The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists, a specialty organization that certifies veterinarians who demonstrate excellence as specialists in veterinary ophthalmology, coordinates this event to provide free eye exams for service animals, including dogs and horses. More than 170 board certified veterinary ophthalmologists throughout the U.S. and Canada will donate their services for this event.

To qualify for a free exam, service animal owners must first register at the ACVO website: www.ACVOeyeexam.org. After registration and approval is complete, call Shari Poruba, 217-333-5374, or Lori Zoch, 217-265-0008, for an appointment.

For more information about the hospital, visit http://vpetmed.illinois.edu/vth/.

Strength training

Research study participants needed

Female UI employees between the ages of 18 and 34 years are needed for a 60- to 90-minute focus group about strength training. Women should be physically active and not currently doing any strength training. Participants will receive $25 compensation. If interested in participating, contact Ravina Daphtary, daphtar1@illinois.edu or 217-244-6138.

ACDIS

Nuclear weapons film screening May 8

"Countdown to Zero," a documentary billed as "a wake-up call about the global nuclear threat," will get an early screening May 8 on the UI campus.

The 90-minute film, not yet in theaters, will be shown at 7 p.m. in Room 101 of the Armory Building, with a discussion of representatives of film, government and organization devoted to eliminating nuclear weapons.

The film was produced by Lawrence Bender, who also produced "An Inconvenient Truth," the influential documentary on the issue of climate change.

For more information and links to reviews, check the ACDIS website: http://acdis.illinois.edu.

Health Plan Administrators

Benefits brief

Benefit Choice enrollment continues through May 31

The annual Benefit Choice enrollment period for UI employees continues through May 31. The Benefit Choice Options booklet, which contains changes for the 2010-11 plan year, will not be mailed to employees this year, but is available online at http://nessie.uhr.illinois.edu. Full-time employee health and dental contributions remain the same as the current plan year.

The Benefit Choice section of NNESSIE should be used to make changes to your health and life insurance plan enrollments, opt in or opt out of the state group health insurance plan (if you have proof of other non-state group coverage), opt in or out of the dental plan, and enroll or disenroll in flexible spending accounts (FSAs). Employees also may add or drop dependents (documentation is required) and same-sex domestic partners. Changes will become effective July 1. NNESSIE can be used until midnight May 31. The Benefits Services office will be closed May 31 for the Memorial Day holiday.

Benefits staff members will be available at the following computer lab locations to provide Benefit Choice information, assist employees with NNESSIE navigation and answer questions relating to Benefit Choice or other benefit issues.

- 9-11 a.m. May 13, 19 and 26, OBFS Training Lab 16, 111 E. Green Street, Champaign
- 11 a.m. May 11, 18 and 27, Staff Human Resources, 52 E. Gregory, Champaign

Pre-registration is not required. Employees are encouraged to bring documentation with them if adding a dependent or opting out of health insurance during the Benefit Choice period. Parking at both locations is metered.

These sessions are approved events under Civil Service Policy and Rules, Rule 11.12. Employees may be released from work to attend this event, university opera-

ers permitting, and subject to prior approval from your supervisor.

Customer service hours at the Benefits Services office (Room 177 Henry Administration Building) are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Personal e-mail with a benefits counselor can be scheduled by calling 217-333-3111. E-mail inquiries should be sent to ben-

efits@uillinois.edu.

ON THE WEB

http://nessie.uhr.illinois.edu

Health Plan Administrators

Health Alliance HMO
800-851-3379
www.healthalliance.org

HealthLink DAP
800-624-2356
www.healthlink.com

PersonalCare
217-366-5551
www.personalcare.org

Quality Care Health Plan
CGHA HealthCare
800-962-0051
http://provider.healthcare.cigna.com/sai.html

Vision Plan

Eyemed
866-723-0512
www.eyemedvisioncare.com/stil

Quality Care Dental Plan

CompBenefits
800-999-1669
www.compbenefits.com

For other plan administrators view the Benefit Choice Options booklet online.
The Farm Analysis Solution Tools (FAST) Team received the Team Award for Excellence. Its members: Ryan M. Batts, Paul N. Ellinger, Darrel L. Good, Scott H. Irwin, Dale H. Lattz, Nicholas D. Paulson, Gary D. Schnitkey and Bruce J. Sherrick, all in the department of agricultural and consumer economics; and James G. Endress and Ruth F. Hambleton, of UI Extension.

Students of the Professional Staff Awards for Excellence: George F. Czapar, UI Extension educator, for sustained excellence in teaching and outreach. Stephen A. Eldridge, agronomist in the department of crop sciences, for sustained excellence in research; Donald L. Meyer, a senior network analyst for ACES Information Technology and Communication Services, sustained excellence in technical contribu-
tion, and executive chef in the department of food science and human nutrition, for sustained excellence in innovation and creativity.

The Marcella M. Nance Staff Award was presented to Evonne R. Hausman, an of-

The College of Engineering presented its 2010 faculty awards at its Faculty Awards Cer-

D庶tive Map, for his time, expertise and leadership in his role as co-founder of the Sustainable Electronics Industry. He gave the keynote address April 17 at the Midwest District Conference in Milwau-

William Bullock, a professor of industrial design and director of the Design for Energy and Environment Lab, was awarded the annual Midwest Educator award giv-

Sally McConkey, water resources engi-

Distinguished Achievement Awards were presented to Daniel Nelson, associate GIS database administrator, for his leader-

Sally McConkey, water resources engi-

Twelve students received the Xerox Awards for Faculty Research were assistant pro-

The lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Ivan Krpac, senior geo-

Special Achievement by a Team honored the Sorbent Activation Process Team for its work in developing a patented technol-

The Team Award for Excellence was presented to a group of scientists and scientists in the areas of agricultural contamination of groundwater and monitoring of carbon sequestration.
ACHIEVEMENTS. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12 ed with ISGS: Xu Chen, Hong Lu, Yongqi Lu, Massoud Rostam-Abadi and David Ruiter. Mary Seid, a supportive geologist, was recognized as Outstanding New Staff Mem- ber for her contributions to the survey’s geologic mapping program through her enthusiasm, creativity, efficiency and atten- tion to detail.

Outstanding Contributions to Survey Health and Safety was presented to David Ruiter, a visiting research specialist, in recognition of his efforts to ensure a safe working environment.

IPRHI

The Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities announced the recipients of its inaugural IPRH Prizes for Research in the Humanities for the 2009-10 academic year at a reception April 30. Leslie Reagan, a professor of history, received the Faculty Award for her project “Rashes, Rights, and Wrongs in the Hospital and in the Court- room: German Measles, Abortion and Mal- practice Before Roe and Doe.” Graduate and undergraduate awards also were made. Entries had to be published dur- ing the past year, or written for a university course during 2009-10.

LAS

Hua-Hua Chang, a professor of psychol- ogy, has been elected a fellow of the Ameri- can Educational Research Association. The honor recognizes exceptional scientific or scholarly contributions to education re- search or significant contributions to the field through the development of research opportunities and settings. Chang and other new fellows were inducted May 1 during the association’s annual meeting.

Cary Nelson, a professor emeritus of English and Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences, has been re-elected pres- ident of the American Association of Uni- versity Professors for a third two-year term. He has served on the association’s National Council for 10 years, six as second vice president and the last four as president. The association is a nonprofit charitable and educational organization that promotes aca- demic freedom by supporting tenure, aca- demic due process, shared governance and standards of quality in higher education.

LIBRARY

Senior Library Specialist Jan Adamczyk at the UI Library will be honored by the Illinois Library Association with the 2010 Robert P. Doyle Award. The award, established in 1999, is sponsored by the Reaching Forward Conference of Library Assistants. Adamczyk will receive full reg- istration and expenses to attend the ILA An- nual Conference to be held in September at Navy Pier in Chicago.

Christopher Prom, an assistant uni- versity archivist and a professor of library administration, is one of four winners of the 2010 Movers and Shakers in Archives awards. Sponsored by the ArchivesNext blog, these awards recognize people or or- ganizations in the U.S. who are innovative, creative and making a difference in the ar- chival world. Prom, also a Fulbright Dis- tinguished Scholar and Research Fellow, was nominated for the work he has been pursuing while on sabatical at the Centre for Archive and Information Studies at the University of Dundee in the UK.

MEDIA

Gov. Pat Quinn declared April 21 as “Ebertfest Day” in Illinois to honor film critic Roger Ebert and his annual festival that showcases films that have been overlooked by the public, film critics or distributors. “I salute Roger Ebert for his lifelong passion for movies, and for his unflagging work, through Ebertfest, to make sure that worthy films find an audience,” Quinn said.

Ebert is an adjunct professor of journalism in the College of Media. Brian Johnson, a journalism professor and head of the department, was awarded the James H. Ottaway Fellowship by the American Press Institute. The fellowship provides funding to attend an API semi- nar for college-level journalism educators. Johnson attended the “Beyond the News- room” seminar in March.

Jan Slater, a marketing professor and department head, will serve as president of the Association of Education in Jour- nalism and Mass Communication for the 2010-2011 term. She will take office dur- ing the association’s convention in August. Previously she served on the organization’s board of directors and as the chair of the Council of Divisions.

MOMS ASSOCIATION

The Graduate College Career Servic- es Office was honored by the Moms As- sociation during Moms Weekend at the UI. The office was given the Illini Spirit Award, created to provide financial support to pro- grams and projects that contribute to the safety, health, development and achieve- ment of UI students.

Founded in 2003 to assist Illinois gradu- ate and postdoctoral students with decision- making and planning, the office will use the funding to organize a symposium titled “Balancing Family and Work.”

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

Several university administration em- ployees who work on the Urbana campus have been awarded the Distinguished Em- ployee Leadership and Team Award. They were honored at a banquet April 1. Academic professionals from the Urbana campus honored: Del Kranz, an associate director in the Office of Technology Management, was cited for her significant contributions and her expertise on intellectual property.

Beth Ladd, a functional area coordina- tor with AITS/Decision Support, was rec- ognized for her role in conceptualizing, de- signing, implementing, marketing and sup- porting the Consolidated Faculty Analysis tool, which supports reporting and analysis of sponsored research data.

Brent Rasmus, an associate director in University Accounting Services in the Of- fice of Business and Financial Services, is regarded as a resident expert in public higher education accounting and financial management. He provides technical advice and interpretation of state and university accounting policies and procedures.

Civil service honorees from the Urbana campus: Jackie Huls, an administrative aide in the University Office for Human Re- sources, gets things done by leveraging her knowledge and experience for the benefit of university HR and the UI.

Heidi Rockwood, an administrative as- sistant to the vice president for technology and economic development, manages the office and serves as a vital resource for the directors in the organization.

For the team category, the Electronic Fact Sheet Project Team was honored.

As a result of this system, data collection and tracking is easier and much more ef- ficient. There has been a reduction in over- time devoted to data collection, and staff members formerly assigned to handle and coordinate late responses are now dedi- cated to processing the information and are free to work on other priorities.

calendario

6 Thursday  “Summer Solstice: Placidity and the Regulation of Neural Circuits and Behavior.” Thomas Fisher, Wayne State University. Noon 1102 Chemical and Life Sciences Laboratory. Molecular and Integrative Physiology. 2010 Illinois Znanie Lecture. Eliott Anderson, Yale University. 2 p.m. 216 Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences. Sociology. “Post-Transcriptional Regulation of Gene Expression.” Tony Romanos, University of Florida. 2 p.m. 1102 Chemical and Life Sciences Laboratory. Microbiology.


14 Friday  “To confirm times, go to www.findingillinois.com.” 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Intermezzo Café: http://illinois.edu/otrac/html/rapperstate.html. 2 p.m. Outside of Music.

14 Friday  “Sports” 6 p.m. Beckman Institute Café. Information Science.

14 Friday  “Music” 7 p.m. 216 Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. Information Science.

15 Saturday  “12.05 p.m. Baseball, UI vs. Western Illinois. 4:05 p.m. Illinois Field. Admission charge.”

15 Sunday  “Baseball, UI vs. Western Illinois. 4:05 p.m. Illinois Field. Admission charge.”

16 Monday  “Calendar” 6 p.m. Beckman Institute Café. Information Science.

16 Wednesday  “Baseball, UI vs. Purdue. 1:05 p.m. Illinois Field. Admission charge.”

16 Sunday  “Baseball, UI vs. Purdue. 1:05 p.m. Illinois Field. Admission charge.”


18 Wednesday  “School of Music.” 6 p.m. Beckman Institute Café. Information Science.

18 Saturday  “Junior Academy of Science. In "Science in the News 2010."” 10 a.m. Elements of music exist within a musical environment. Music is the making of music.

19 Monday  “First day of instruction Summer 2010.” 11 a.m. Noon. B102 Chemical and Life Sciences Laboratory.

26 Sunday  “Commemoration of the centenary of the founding of the Seamen’s Church.” 7:30 p.m. McKinley Presbyterian Church. Through May 15. For more information, visit music.illinois.edu. Illinois Natural History Survey Traveling Science Center exhibit dedicated to biodiversity with a focus on nature. A 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Register for a free aquatic insects course on workshops offered by Edward DeVal, UI, at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. Parking area. Middle Fork River Bridge, Kickapoo State Park, Danville. To register, e-mail japanhouse@illinois.edu. Illinois Natural History Survey.


27 Friday  “Dance” 21 Friday  “Day for Parkinson’s Disease.” Mark Morris Dance Company. John Chamberlain. Stephen Cuvelier, UI. 7:30 p.m. Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. Open daily, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., with guest artist Jeremy Fierlinger, University of Illinois. 12:15 p.m.-2 p.m. Group; Marianne Jarvi and group; Bev Rzym, UI. 4 p.m. Library Annex, Information Science. Center for Teaching and Learning’s Books.

27 Friday  “‘Surface Water Hydrology.’” 21 Friday  “‘The Fable That Morphed: Representing Ambivalent Affinities.’”


29 Sunday  “Commemoration of the centenary of the founding of the Seamen’s Church.” 7:30 p.m. McKinley Presbyterian Church. Through May 15. For more information, visit music.illinois.edu. Illinois Natural History Survey Traveling Science Center exhibit dedicated to biodiversity with a focus on nature. A 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Register for a free aquatic insects course on workshops offered by Edward DeVal, UI, at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. Parking area. Middle Fork River Bridge, Kickapoo State Park, Danville. To register, e-mail japanhouse@illinois.edu. Illinois Natural History Survey.

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neural excitability throughout the whole brain,” Cox said. “Now we have something a bit more specific to latch onto: the beta-2 adrenergic receptor.”

This receptor offers an attractive alternative target because, the researchers found, amyloid-beta binds to a different part of the receptor than that normally engaged by neuromodulators and hormones. This means it may be possible to stop amyloid-beta from binding to it without hindering the other functions of the beta-2 adrenergic receptor.

Korean Conversation Table
Meetings suspended for the summer. East Asian Languages and Cultures.
Site: www.slavic.illinois.edu/secretariat, The
Voice
7-9 p.m. Fridays during the academic year. Room 444, University.
http://kch.illinois.edu/outreach/lifetime.html

Modern Greek Conversation Table
Second Tuesdays during spring semester. 4 p.m. Espresso Royale on Goodwin and Oregon, Urbana. For more information, contact vergis1@illinois.edu.

Russian Table – Russian Table
Thursdays during the academic year: 4:30 p.m. Espresso Royale on Goodwin and Oregon, Urbana.

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ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Previous studies have shown that Alzheimer’s patients who also take beta-blockers tend to see a slower decline in their mental function. These drugs are meant to treat hypertension and other conditions by targeting beta-adrenergic receptors, including beta-2. This finding provides further support to the idea that the beta-2 adrenergic receptor is a key to the ill effects of Alzheimer’s disease.

Xiang and Cox stress that the beta-2 adrenergic receptor is almost certainly not the only important player in the damage that occurs in an Alzheimer’s-affected brain. But they see it as a promising new potential target for future drug research.

Xiang and Cox are also professors in the Neuroscience Program. Cox is the head of the Department of Pharmacology in the College of Medicine, and a full-time member of the Beckman Institute and of the Center for Biophysics and Computational Biology at Illinois.

RELIGIOUS FAITH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

beliefs about the redemptive power of struggle and war, perceptions of America as a nation with divine status and images of military veterans and war dead as saints, martyrs and imitators of Christ.

During a postwar period fraught with race riots, labor protests and violence, the American Legion appealed to Americans to subordinate their religious differences to the needs of the country and band together in an ongoing fight for survival against demonic enemies such as the Ku Klux Klan, pacifists and communists which the Legion believed were poised to destroy the country and all the values that people had fought for.

In effect, the American Legion gave birth to and manifested an “alternate religion of nationalism that gives place to religious traditions, but only to the extent that they fit within the needs of the nation,” Ebel said.  

CALENDAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

May 6, 2010

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Team finds promising new drug target for Alzheimer’s disease

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

Researchers at the UI have identified a potential drug target for the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease: a receptor that is embedded in the membrane of neurons and other cells.

A protein fragment associated with Alzheimer’s disease activates this receptor, sparking increased activity in the affected neurons, eventually leading to cell death, the researchers report. The new findings appear in the FASEB Journal.

Scientists have known for decades that a protein fragment, called amyloid-beta (AMY-loyd-BAYT-uh), is a key to the riddle of Alzheimer’s disease. Alois Alzheimer himself first found aggregates of this “peculiar substance” in the brain of a dementia patient after her death. These bundles of protein, or plaques, are composed almost entirely of amyloid-beta, and still are used to diagnose Alzheimer’s disease after death.

Animals with amyloid plaques in the brain experience a decline in brain function that mirrors that of Alzheimer’s disease. A recent study found that neurons closest to these plaques tend to be hyperexcitable relative to normal, while activity in the surrounding neurons is depressed, indicating an imbalance in brain activity associated with these plaques.

Other studies have found that clumps of only two, or a few, amyloid-beta fragments somehow stimulate a receptor, called the AMPA receptor. When amyloid-beta binds to a neuron, the AMPA receptor opens a channel that lets calcium or sodium ions into the cell.

Normally the AMPA receptor opens this channel only when it binds to glutamate, a potent neurotransmitter that is important to normal brain function as well as memory and learning. In either case, the quick influx of ions causes a nerve impulse.

To date, scientists have not been able to identify a mechanism by which amyloid-beta causes the AMPA receptor channel to open, however.

“If a mouse is exposed to amyloid-beta in the brain, it impairs neuron function, causing memory deficits and behavioral deficits,” said Kevin Xiang, a professor of molecular and integrative physiology at Illinois who led the new study with professor Charles Cox and postdoctoral fellows Dayong Wang and Govindaiah in the same department.

“The question is how this peptide causes all these detrimental cellular effects.”

For the new study, the researchers focused on the beta-2 adrenergic receptor, a protein that – like the AMPA receptor – resides in the cell membrane. Neurotransmitters and hormones normally activate the beta-2 adrenergic receptor, but amyloid-beta also induces a cascade of events in the neuron by activating the beta-2 adrenergic receptor, the researchers found. One of the downstream effects of this interaction is activation of the AMPA receptor ion channels. (In mice lacking the beta-2 adrenergic receptor, amyloid-beta had no discernible effect on AMPA receptors, they found.)

“We showed that we needed the presence of beta-2 adrenergic receptors to get the increase in the AMPA-mediated response,” Cox said.

Further experiments showed that amyloid-beta does bind to the beta-2 adrenergic receptor.

Previous studies had found that blocking the AMPA receptor could alleviate the misfiring caused by amyloid plaques in the brain. But the AMPA receptor, which responds to glutamate, is important to learning and memory, so blocking it could also do harm, the researchers said.

“Glutamate is such a ubiquitous neurotransmitter throughout the brain, you can’t simply go in and block its actions because if you do, you can just start rounding up the side effects,” Cox said.

“Once you block the AMPA receptor you’re basically dampening widespread learning,” Cox said.

SEE ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE, PAGE 15