Apologies may fuel settlement of legal disputes, study says

By Jan Dennis
Business & Law Editor

A pologies may be good for more than just the soul, according to research by a UI professor of law and of psychology.

Jennifer Robbennolt says her studies show that apologies can potentially help resolve legal disputes ranging from injury cases to wrongful firings, giving wounded parties a sense of justice and satisfaction that promotes settlements and trims demands for damages.

“Conventional wisdom has been to avoid apologies because they amount to an admission of guilt that can be damaging to defendants in court,” she said. “But the studies suggest apologies can actually play a positive role in settling legal cases.”

Robbennolt surveyed more than 550 people, gauging their reaction to apologies offered during settlement negotiations in a hypothetical injury case. She says apologies generally reduced financial demands, increasing prospects for an agreement.

But the nature of the apology matters, according to a summary of her findings that will appear in Court Review, a publication of the American Judges Association. Apologies that accept fault have more impact than apologies that merely express sympathy, but take no responsibility.

Robbennolt says apologies that accept blame can be powerful psychologically, giving plaintiffs a sense of closure and accountability that makes them less angry and more willing to forgive.

“The apology fulfills some of the goals that triggered the suit, such as a need for respect, to assign responsibility and to get a sense that what happened won’t happen again,” she said. “So receiving an apology can reduce financial aspirations and make it possible for parties to enter into discussions about settlement.”

For defendants, apologies can reduce legal costs as well as damages because cases settle more quickly, said Robbennolt, who has studied the legal implications of apologies for a decade.

While plaintiffs respond favorably to apologies, another study by Robbennolt shows that lawyers react more in line with traditional thinking – that apologies are an admission of guilt that can be used to leverage bigger settlements.

She says lawyers may view apologies differently because of their third-party view of the dispute, or because their training provides a perspective on the legal value of apologies that lay people fail to appreciate.

“Another possibility is the way in which the financial incentives of attorneys and clients can diverge,” Robbennolt said. “Settling cases quickly can mean lower fees for attorneys paid on an hourly basis. Or if the attorney is taking a contingency fee, that fee is smaller if cases are settled for less. As some lawyers say, you can’t take one third of an apology.”

How those diverging views of apologies play out when lawyers and clients mull settlements is unknown, she said, but could ensure a broad analysis of pros and cons that benefits clients.

“The findings tell lawyers that clients seem to value apologies in ways that lawyers don’t, so they need to be sensitive to those differences,” Robbennolt said. “At the same time, clients can benefit from getting advice from someone who can help them fully understand all of the legal implications so they can decide exactly how to respond to an apology.”

She says courts are increasingly recognizing the potential for apologies. Statutes that make at least some apologetic statements lives, the authors wrote. Such information will help recipients “improve their health, expand their access to clean water, increase the productivity and well-being of their livestock, apply better pest-control measures and learn to participate more effectively in the marketplace as consumers and entrepreneurs.”

Various programs promote this kind of learning every day around the world, Pittendrigh said. (For example, he and Bello work on a USAID project to help cowpea farmers in Africa protect their harvest from insects without using insecticides.) But when specific development programs end, the educational materials are often lost or posted on websites that can be difficult to find, he said.

“We need a mechanism so that hands-on materials can be put in a centralized place where other people can access them,” Pittendrigh said.

All materials submitted to the SusDeViki will be peer-reviewed for accuracy, usefulness and accessibility. Aid workers, educators, extension agents, non-governmental organizations, Peace Corps volunteers and others can modify the materials to suit their own needs and may resubmit the altered materials for another round of peer review. This sharing process will allow the system to grow organically, Pittendrigh said.

SEE WEBSITE, PAGE 8

Sharing resources By pooling funding, time and people and other resources, an educational consortium is helping farmers save money and share programs.

PAGE 4

Construction update Many Deferred Maintenance projects are finally under way.

PAGE 5
improve education and serve the public good.

LAS

Louise Fitzgerald, a professor emeritus of physiology, is the 2010 recipient of the Heritage Award from Division 35 (Psychology of Women) of the American Psychological Association for recognizing distinguished lifetime research contributions to the psychology of women.

Ronald P. Toby, a UI professor of history and of East Asian languages and cultures, and Akira Ibye, recently a visiting professor in the department, announced their retirement from Harvard, presented lectures at a recent Library of Congress event marking the 150th anniversary of the Mission, the 1860 Japanese diplomatic mission to the U.S., which was the first official delegation from Japan to any Western government.

The UI representation on the program was only appropriate, according to Toby, because of a long history of UI links to Japan. Illinois “was among the very first U.S. universities to graduate a student from Japan, in 1873,” he said.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Jim Hahn, orientation services librarian at the Evtic Reading Center at the library, was named as an Outstanding Paper Award Winner at the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2010. The award is for his article “On the Remedication of Wikipedia to the iPod,” published in the Reference Services Review journal. Award-winning papers are chosen following a review by members of the journal’s editorial team, which includes eminent academics or managers. Hahn will receive a certificate and be honored at an upcoming conference.

Charles B. Andrews, 82, died May 26 at North Shore Evanston Hospital, Evanston, Ill. Andrews worked at the UI. A memorial service will be held in late July at the Hall of the Chapel. Funeral arrangements are by the Amer- ican Educational Research Association for outstanding research achievements. The association inducted new fellows in May during its annual meeting.

Founded in 1916, the association aims to promote research on the educational crisis sponsored by Yale University and the Review of Educational Studies, a top academic journal. Freeman Spiegel and Weisbinder are research associates with the National Bu- reau of Economic Research, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes better understanding of how the economy works.

Hua-Hua Chang and Jennifer C. Greene, both professors of educational psychology at the College of Education, received their 2010 annual editing award for “SAGE Journal of Educational Research,” the association’s journal for educational research. Chang is also a director of the Emer- ald Literati Network Awards for Excellence.

A UI research paper stemming from the nation’s first Black history course earned the UI- ward last month at the University of California at Davis Financial Management Conference.

The paper, “Corporate Debt Maturity and the Real Effects of the 2007 Credit Crisis,” was written by finance professors Holter Andersen, Marcia Campbell and Scott Weisbinder, and doctoral student Bruno Laranjeira.

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APOLOGETICS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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On the Job: Elaine Goss

Elaine Goss, an office support associate in Engineering Career Services, is a world traveler who takes pride in helping UI engineering students get their first jobs. Originally from Great Britain, Goss has brought a cosmopolitan mix of interests and extraordinary circumstances and the lessons one learns along the way. It will take your mind and heart to new places and make you consider what your own personal legend may be.

What are some things you do in your office that most people on campus might not realize?

We have two amazing assistant directors who will meet with students and offer career counseling, resume reviews, salary negotiating – basically anything that will help the student get a full-time job. We do 18,000 days of recruiting in the spring and 18 weeks in the fall, and we do two career fairs – one in the spring and one in the fall – usually at the Illini Union. We have 39 interviewing suites in our building. When the economy is at its best we have known to have 90 interviewing suites occupied at one time.

What are some of the things you take pride in about the office?

Our professionalism and teamwork. We work together as an exceptional team. No matter what your rank, everyone pitches in and we get it done. We (the women in the office) have fun while we’re doing it. We also do a little something at (holiday time) that a lot of people aren’t aware of. We decided we wouldn’t buy each other holiday presents. Instead, we’d pool our money and sponsor a local needy family. We ask how many children they have and what their wish list is. It’s an amazing thing. Everybody takes part in it. We put all the loot in (a conference room), and spend a lunch hour with them wrapping it, then we get the delight of delivering it to the family.

Tell me something you’ve learned in your time at the UI?

I’ve learned a lot about recruitment: what it takes to get a student job – and the dedication of all the professionals working here. There is nothing more rewarding and exciting than when you’ve worked with a student for many months and they’ll pop their head into the office and say, “I’ve got some great news – I got a job!” We all celebrate when that happens. I feel I’m a part of something.

Tell me about your family.

I have two children. My son, Michael, 36, lives in London, and he and his wife are expecting their first child, Florence August, so I’m going to be a grandma. My daughter, Tracey, 33, lives in Connecticut. My husband, Bob Goss, is retired from the Air Force. He worked at the Air Force Systems Command Center for the Performing Arts.

Where are you originally from? Why did you immigrate to the U.S.?

I was born in Singapore. My father was in the Royal (British) Air Force, but unfortunately we left when I was only 6 months old, so I can’t tell you much about Singapore. One of my goals is to eventually get back there.

My husband was in the American Air Force. We met on a blind date when he was stationed in England. It was the first time I’d ever gone on a blind date – first time and last time. The rest is history. We’ve been married for 38 years and it’s been a wonderful marriage. We’ve raised two wonderful children – life is good for me.

Do you ever miss England?

I did the first few years. I do still sometimes get homesick. I miss my family. My mother is disabled and my father has health issues, but I come from a large family. I’ve got three sisters and two brothers – they’re all in England. When I first moved to the U.S., there was a lot of adjusting to do. I think what helped me was my father being in the Royal Air Force. We were used to moving around all the time.

What are some of the things you had to get used to when you came to the U.S.?

Well, it’s a completely different way of life. Things happen so much faster here. In England, for instance, if you need an electrician to come to the house in the states, they’ll be here next day. In England, it could be next week. One of the lovely things that I easily got adjusted to is that everyone is so friendly here. In England, we tend to be reserved. Food choices are very different. The biggest thing I missed at first was my tea.

What other differences are most notable to you between the U.S. and England?

My father was an English gardener – that’s where I get my love of gardening. You can drive into an English village and everyone has got a beautiful garden. I just made the National Trust’s guide to country gardens. Our garden was featured. It’s a very English garden. My husband likes to say, “It’s team work” – that I’m the team and he’s the work.

– Interview by Anna K. Herkamp, Assistant Editor

Summer Reading

Mary Ellen O’Shaughnessy

executive assistant dean,
College of Fine and Applied Arts


One of the most interesting books I have read recently is “Life List: A Woman’s Quest for the World’s Most Amazing Birds,” by Olivia Gentile. It is a portrait of Phoebe Snetsinger (daughter of advertising executive Leo Burnett) who quite in-nocently began bird-watching that turned into a life of being a wife and mother of four. What started as a Thursday afternoon pastime in Webster Groves, Mo., grew to consume most of her time and energy. She pursued bird-watching all over the world taking bird tours that were paid for by an inheritance. In fact, when given a terminal diagnosis of melanoma she started traveling more often, living longer than ex-pected and dying in a bus accident while on a birding trip.

I started a book club, “The Reading Divas.” I also help co-ordinate the Student Affairs Book Club through the division’s Leslie M. Schwartz Professional Development Committee. Here are a few books off my shelf I recommend:

If you’re looking for inspiration, “The Passionate One: Man’s Mission to Promote Peace … One School at a Time,” by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. I just finished this book with my book club and felt so motivated and passionate after learning about Mortenson’s life mission of enhancing education and inter-faith action in the Middle East.

If you’re looking to change your perspective, read “Change the Way You See Everything Through Asset-Based Thinking,” by Kathryn D. Cramer and Hank Wasiak. This made me consider how I view the world and interact with others. The concept of focusing on one’s strengths and what’s good about yourself is life changing and can help improve your personal and professional relationships.

program manager, Illinois Leadership Center

Since I moved to Illinois from California a few years ago, I have rediscovered my passion for reading. Dur-ing my first few weeks here, I visited almost every park after work with a book in order to get outside and stimulate my mind. I have continued cultivating my inner bookworm and also started a book club, “The Reading Divas.” I also help co-ordinate the Student Affairs Book Club through the division’s Leslie M. Schwartz Professional Development Committee. Here are a few books off my shelf I recommend:

If you’re looking to learn more about history, intrigue, drama, romance, action and family relationships. While it takes some dedication to finish (it’s almost 1,000 pages!), it is well worth the investment (and then there’s a sequel …)

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Committee on Institutional Cooperation.

The presence of these behind-the-scenes efforts of a higher education consortium housed near the Urbana campus: the details of campus life, as well as headline-search and innovative library programs?

The collective purchasing agreement.

The (CIC) brings together really smart people from all these campuses,” Allen said. “They’re the best in the world at what they do. They don’t just come up with ways to solve problems, but they’re coming up with new models for how research is done. They’re giving them the tools to make that happen.”

The CIC’s cooperative purchasing contracts have saved the member institutions another $300,000 in fiscal 2009. According to Barbara McFadden Allen, director of the CIC,

“The (UI) Library is both a significant lender and a huge borrower of materials from our partner CIC libraries,” said Tom Teper, associate university librarian for collection services. “The nearly 12 million volumes that we hold only represent a fraction of the world’s published output,” Teper said. “Consequent-

In 2008-09, the universities saved money, students also benefit directly from CIC programs.

IL (UI) Library is a significant lender and a huge borrower of materials from our partner CIC libraries,” said Tom Teper, associate university librarian for collection services.

Another program, called Traveling Scholar, allows graduate students to travel to other campuses to study and conduct research.

The group meets several times year. Each CIC institution serves as a representative at the CIC. How it works

The provost of each member institution would be likely to sell up to a full academic year pursuing specialized courses of study, researching unique library collections, and working in advanced laboratories and facilities at other CIC institutions with no change in registration procedures from their home university or additional tuition, according to the CIC website.

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Another Minute With ...™ is provided by the UI News Bureau. To view archived interviews, go to http://illinois.edu/goto/aminutewith.
With cranes looming overhead, workers in hard hats hammering away and parking lots being re-paved – it’s easy to tell it’s summer construction season.

The campus has budgeted nearly $204 million on construction projects. There are more projects this year than usual, mainly because many projects finally began in 2010, years after their plans were approved.

This year, 43 projects were under way by the end of spring semester. Many will be completed by the end of summer. The projects include work on more than 30 campus buildings.

Recognizing the growing budget shortfall for building maintenance, the campus allocated an additional $10 million for the much-needed renovations across campus.

The building was scheduled to receive a new roof and windows this summer. Work will begin as soon as possible to reinforce corridors in the building, and then to reinforce floors.

Units housed in the building include: LAS; School of Earth, Society, and Environment; the geology department and Geology Library; atmospheric sciences; integrative biology; and the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology.

Summer repairs A crane hovers above the Illini Union, one of many campus buildings on the Quad scheduled for renovation this summer. Work at the union will include painting of the cupola and repair of the east exterior stairs.
Master Gardeners’ Idea Garden on South Lincoln Avenue

The intimate garden setting to a larger, more formal setting. Eight gardens featuring a variety of spaces from the small, less of the weather.

The theme for this year, “Picture Perfect,” emphasizes environment for access to learning and scholarship (IDEALS) at www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/5130.

For more information, contact the Graduate College Thesis Office at thesis@illinois.edu.

Facilities and Services

St. Mary’s Road closed

The UI is closing St. Mary’s Road to through traffic between Fourth Street and Goodwin Avenue. The road is fit for minimal local traffic only. Because it is an oil and chip farm road, there is not a structural base on which St. Mary’s Road can be reconstructed. Because of the state of the university budget neither reconstruction nor significant repairs can be made at this time.

CITES

e-Conferencing service available

Units may increase productivity, accelerate processes, and help reduce travel and costs with a new e-Conferencing service available from Campus Information Technologies and Educational Services. e-Conferencing is a network-based multimedia conferencing system (based on Cisco Unified MeetingPlace) that integrates audio, video and Web conferencing capabilities, with self-service access 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service will:

- Enhance the ability to collaborate virtually.
- Provide secure meeting environments.
- Promote collaboration from virtually any device and any location, both inside and outside the university – office phone, home phone, conference room speaker phone, mobile phone, Web cam and computer screen.
- Allow easy management, recording and playback of meetings.

For more information, visit https://e-conferencing.illinois.edu/. CITES Help Desk also is available to answer questions:

CITES Help Desk
Walk-in: Room 1211, Digital Computer Lab
Phone: 217-244-7000 or 800-531-2531
E-mail: consult@illinois.edu
Live Chat: http://cites.illinois.edu/help

Fiscal Year 2010-11

Campus holiday schedule announced

The 2010-11 holiday schedule for the Urbana campus:

2010
- Monday, July 5: Independence Day holiday observed
- Monday, Sept. 6: Labor Day
- Thursday, Nov. 25: Thanksgiving Day
- Friday, Nov. 26: Day after Thanksgiving (designated holiday)
- Friday, Dec. 24: Christmas Day holiday observed
- Monday, Dec. 27: day after Christmas (designated holiday)

2011
- Monday, Jan. 17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Monday, May 30: Memorial Day
- Dec. 28-30: Reduced-service days**
- Friday, Dec. 31: New Year’s Day holiday observed

**Days
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day

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UI Extension

Master Gardeners host garden walk

UI Extension’s Champaign County Master Gardeners will host its annual garden walk in Champaign and Urbana from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. June 26. The event will be held regardless of the weather.

The theme for this year, “Picture Perfect,” emphasizes the Graduate College to reduce confusion about deposit requirements, enhance communications with departments about deposits, and reduce the time between depositing, archiving and distribution of theses.

Information regarding the various release options available to students is posted online at www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-faq/thesis_release_options.

Since its implementation in October 2009, electronic deposit has been very successful. Eighty-five percent of master’s and doctoral students chose that option the first time it was offered. That number has continued to grow. Electronic deposit is available through the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship (IDEALS) at www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/5130.

For more information, contact the Graduate College Thesis Office at thesis@illinois.edu.
June 17, 2010

InsideIllinois

Much of this information is drawn from the online Campus Calendars on the UI web site at http://www.uiuc.edu/calendar/. Other calendar entries should be sent 15 days before the desired publication date to insideillinois@uiuc.edu.

June 17-4 July

calendar

events

colloquia

17 Thursday

“Naturally Euroepean: How Tsarist Eastern Europe Transformed Environmental Administration in Bucharashe’s Administrative Reforms,” Maria Reveda, Ctr. for Study of New Europe and Eurasian Center.

music

17 Thursday

Double Reed: noon. Music Hall; Saxophone: 10 a.m. certs.

Junior Strings: 10 a.m. 2010 Session II Final Concert.

3 Saturday

Krannert Center lobby.

17 Thursday

Robert Rumbelow, conductor; UI Chamber Orchestra;UI, Krannert Center; Senior Orchestra: 10 a.m. Tryon Festival Theater, Ronald Reagan Community Center.

17 Thursday

Twilight Concert: UI Summer of Poles From Dostoevsky’s “Notes From Underground.”

17 Thursday

29 Tuesday

“On the Road with the Women’s Air Force Band” Through June 15.

12:30-1 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

17 Thursday

Note: Most guides do not meet during the summer.

Association of Academic Professionals

For events:

cap.illinois.edu

406 E. Armory Ave., Urbana.

217-244-2571.

illinois.edu/chimes/

krannertcenter.com

For reservations, call 217-333-4380.


217-398-1083.

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts

Arbor the Arts Cafe

Open 7:30-11 a.m. on non-performance weekdays; 7:30 a.m. through weekday performances; weekends from 90 minutes before until after performances. Krannert Uncorked: Wine tastings at 5 p.m most Thursdays.

Promenade gift shop: 10 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Saturday; 10 a.m. before and until 1 hour after performances.


Peoria Civic Center. For tickets and more information, visit: illinois.edu/civiccenter.

For tickets, call 217-544-3131. For more information, visit: illinois.edu/疮/.

At Krannert Center: 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Friday.

For more information, call 217-333-4380.

For more information, visit: illinois.edu/museum/tours.

To arrange a tour, 217-333-4380.

Saturday workshops:

Thursday

Repeats Aug. 6.

Librarian: Keiko Okumura.

For more information, call 217-333-4380.

Tuesday

7:30-11 a.m. on non-performance weekdays; 7:30 a.m. through weekday performances. Krannert Uncorked: Wine tastings at 5 p.m most Thursdays.

For more information and to confirm performances, visit: illinois.edu/civiccenter.

Library

Main Library hours: June 14 through Aug. 7. Monday through Thursday: 8:30-6 p.m.; Friday through Sunday: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

For events:

Illinois Gov’t/Legislature.

The Illinois Club

Open to all faculty and staff members of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 217-398-4660.

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Registered website users will be able to comment on all posted material.

Access to the World Wide Web has dramatically increased in the developing world, with “smart” cell phone and Bluetooth technology available in many developing nations, including West Africa, the researchers note. This allows people in remote locations to share useful information with one another, “by-passing the middlemen,” Pittendrigh said.

To succeed, the new website must become a respected supplier of useful, culturally relevant information, video, audio and images, said team member Srinivas Venugopal, an MBA student at Illinois who has conducted programs in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

From the first seeds of information that are planted on the site, the team expects a lush “virtual ecosystem” of shared knowledge to grow, Bello said.

“We’re hoping that each submission builds around it a community,” said Ricardo Diaz, a member of the SusDeViki team who also works for Extension. “Those that are good will burst into lots of layers, whereas others will likely just sit there.”

It would be a mistake to think that the information on the SusDeViki will flow only from the developed to the developing world, said team member Francisco Seufferheld, an extension educator who, with Bello, took a group of Illinois winemakers to Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, so that the Midwesterners could learn from the South Americans how to market their wines globally.

“There is a lot to be learned from innovations that occur in other parts of the planet that can have positive impacts on Illinois,” Bello said. “For some folks these experiences can be captured through an educational trip to another country. But for most we hope that at least some experiences and innovations can be shared through such web-based systems.”

The SusDeViki team has completed the first incarnation – the alpha stage – of the website. A group of international collaborators are testing it and providing feedback to the team.

These institutions, organizations and university units have provided funding for this initiative: the C.W. Kearns, C.L. Metcalf and W.P. Flint Endowment Funds; the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, the U.S. Agency for International Development by way of the Dry Grains Pulses Collaborative Research Support Program; UI Extension; the Center for International Business Education and Research; the Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership; the Community Informatics Initiative; and the UI Office of Public Engagement.

International collaboration The new website will provide educational materials that promote sustainable development, such as this poster demonstrating how to kill insects without insecticides.

Poster provided by Dr. Ibrahim Baoua of INRAN (Maradi, Niger)