U.S., Chinese children differ in commitment to parents over time

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

According to a new study, American, but not Chinese, children’s sense of responsibility to their parents tends to decline in the seventh and eighth grades, a trend that coincides with declines in their academic performance.

The study, in the journal Child Development, found no difference between American and Chinese students’ feelings of responsibility to their parents at the beginning of the seventh grade. The American children’s sense of obligation to their parents and desire to please them by doing well in school declined over the next two years, however, while the Chinese students generally maintained their feelings of obligation and increased their motivation to please their parents with their academic achievements.

“These different trends are notable because when children were able to maintain a sense of responsibility to their parents, they were not only more motivated and engaged in school, but also earned better grades over time,” said UI psychology professor Eva Pomerantz, who led the study. “Chinese children’s maintenance of a sense of responsibility to their parents may protect them against the decline so common among American middle schoolers in their engagement and achievement in school.”

See students, page 7

Strategic plan used to plot UI’s future course

By Mike Holenthal
Assistant Editor

The UI has released its 2010 Strategic Plan Progress Report, which discusses the five-year progress of the Urbana campus and serves as a blueprint for its future.

“It’s an objective assessment of where we need to make some improvements,” said Stig Lanesskog, associate dean of the master’s of business administration program and associate provost for strategic planning and assessment. “There is a lot of rich data that we’re using proactively.”

Lanesskog leads the development of the report for the offices of the Provost and of Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, using data from the UI’s Division of Management Information.

“The data comes from a variety of sources,” he said.

It’s the seventh year campus administrators have prepared the detailed report, each version tracking progress within the window of the last strategic plan update, which occurred in 2006.

“It’s to show people the methods we’re using to assess the overall health of the university,” he said.

The report points out challenges facing the Urbana campus. But it also points out enough positives to illustrate that the university continues to move forward.

“It’s really an objective, data-driven approach,” he said.

The report is divided into five categories, each based on the university’s overarching strategic goals for academics, and research and outreach: leadership for the 21st century; academic excellence; breakthrough learning environment; access to the Illinois Experience.

According to the report, last year’s 84 percent undergraduate student graduation rate exceeded the 2013 goal of 83 percent. This year’s rate meets that goal.

Lanesskog said the most-recent freshman class was among the largest and academically qualified in the country, an indicator the university still has a strong base from which to work.

Likewise, the university also showed significant gains last year in the graduation rates of underrepresented groups – with the gap between the overall student population and that of African-American students, for example, narrowing from 16 percent to 9 percent, and the rate for Hispanic students improving by 1 percent.

The overall rates continue to lag behind the general student population, and according to the report, “Given this is a single-year improvement, it is difficult to determine whether there is a sustainable trend.”

“We’re trying to close that gap for some of the underrepresented groups,” Lanesskog said.

The report also cites the university’s improved financial foothold, pointing out that, despite continued volatility with state-funding sources, units have increased cash balances by $362 million and reduced deficits by 23 percent.

“The recent voluntary separation and early retirement program reduced headcount on state funds this year, also giving the units more financial flexibility,” the report concluded.

Reducing energy consumption continues to be high on the list of financial goals. Several energy-conscious programs already have been initiated in hopes of building on an early statistical victory noted in the report showing overall campus reductions in square-foot energy consumption.

While rising energy costs receive much of the blame, “a key driver of the increasing costs may be the addition of assignable square footage,” the report notes.

Instructional units generated from online courses are up 166 percent since 2006 and have surpassed the 2013 target, and license and patent revenue have increased for two straight years, the report states.

Areas of improvement include the “nearly stagnant” undergraduate research and student study abroad rates, the rising student-to-faculty ratio, and a “modest” 8 percent growth rate shown in sponsored research expenditures since fiscal year 2003-04.

Lanesskog said in many instances, problems being faced by the university are already being met head-on. The Stewarding Excellence & Illinois initiative has led to cost savings and better structures, and similar administrative and in-house unit reviews are numerous and ongoing.

“We want to make sure we’re aligning our efforts and doing it together,” he said.

“Now more than ever we need to make sure we’ve got the right activities and initiatives to address all of these areas of improvement.”

He said the report has already undergone review by campus leadership at a recent strategic planning retreat, where it was used to help set campus priorities.

Bob Easter, vice president and interim chancellor, said the process has been invaluable.

“This annual update reminds us just how SEE STRATEGIC PLAN, PAGE 2

Inside Illinois
F or F a c u l t y a n d S t a f f, U n i v e r s i t y o f I l l i n o i s a t U r b a n a - C h a m p a g n e

May 19, 2011
Vol. 30, No. 21
UC @ Illinois: IT leaders needed in transition to new system

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

ow is the time for all good IT leaders to come to the aid of their university. But so far only half of them have had contact with Campus Information Technologies and have disagreements about the rollout of the new Microsoft Unified Communications system.

Rimovsky, CITES associate director of enterprise infrastructure, wants to see a better response because CITES will have to work with its 1 unit on campus for Phase 1 of UC @ Illinois – the move to the new email and calendaring system.

“We’re still trying to get IT professionals to understand what this means,” he said. “We can’t do this size of deployment without them, we don’t have the resources. Without them, we won’t get this done.”

Rimovsky and CITES staff members have spent the last several months implementing a plan recommended under last year’s Stewarding Excellence at Illinois report calling for an integrated and streamlined campuswide information system.

“So far we’ve converted 1,500 computer users have converted to the new email system. The rest are to be on board by the end of the year. As of October, UCIES Express Email will be deactivated. The switchover to the new system costs about $2 million and is expected to save the university an estimated $3 million annually when it’s completed.

“We have over 20,000 phone lines on campus and we presently pay AT&T for. Rimovsky said, adding the university will reap additional savings from the campus software license agreement with Microsoft. Just by phaseing out the aged Explorers 240 telephones system had become a costly and time-consuming endeavor, he said.

CITES is currently converting student email accounts over the summer and continue to provide training – as well as reinforcing the message that unit IT leaders need to become more involved in the process.

STATEGIC PLAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A useful it is to have meaningful and measurable goals in place,” he said. “We’ve achieved many of our goals over the past year. But we will have a roadmap for focusing on the most important goals, even as times change.”

“The Strategic Planning process has helped us learn important lessons that will enable the university not just to cope but to thrive in the dramatically changing circumstances that shape our economic and social environments,” he said. “Our continued success in moving the university forward will be a creative mix of strategic thinking, time-honored values, and entrepreneurial drive.”

In order to have the kind of redundancy needed to ensure the new system is as reliable as possible, CITES continues to work on system improvements like added server access and backup power systems.

An “IT pro forum” is set for June 7, thought United Communications will also play a part of the discussion. And CITES leaders are already engaging Telecom unit coordinators for deploying voice services.

Rimovsky said they will have a tremendous impact on administrative support staff, he said. “We’re going to be depending on their adopting this early.”

Rimovsky said that second conversion step, which includes computer-integrated phone service, is due to be finished by June 2012, a date that coincides with the end of the university’s current AT&T contract.

The transition to the new telephone system has started.

That conversion will take most of camp,

us off the land-line telephone system, al-

lowing employees to make calls through their computer and to use a campuswide calendaring system.

There is a lot of pre-work that needs to be done. Lots of departments have enclaves where they have their own systems. We just don’t know who to contact. We’re trying to identify and reach as many (university employees) as we can.”

—Tony Rimovsky of CITES

“IT’s not a question of lack of talent, it’s a question of how you can drive an awful lot,” he said. “If you don’t have the resources. Without them, we can’t do this. It will take time but we’re working on it.”

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

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T he President and interim Chancel-

lor Bob Easter told members of the Senate Executive Commit-

tee Monday the search for a new UT Athletics director won’t last long.

Ron Guenther, athletics director for 19 years, announced earlier in the day he would end his July 1 term.

Easter said the search committee is being led by Larry DeBrock, the dean of the College of Business, who also has held on the UI Athletic Board and chaired its Academic Progress and Eligibility Committee.

Easter said that committee could find Guenther’s replacement by next month.

“These things tend to move very quickly,” he said. “This is the time of the year when these kinds of positions roll over.”

Incoming SEC Chair Matt Wheeler, who presided over the meeting in Chair Joyce Tolliver’s absence, said Guenther’s replacement has a lot to live up to.

“Academics has always come first with him,” Wheeler said.

“They’re not just athletes, they’re also scholars,” Easter said. “This is unan-

ucid, but it is a day of transition. Ron’s became a institution.”

Under Guenther’s leadership, the gradu-

ation rate for UI athletes is second in the Big Ten conference, trailing only Northwestern.

In other business, SEC members heard a report on the efforts of the Office of Pres-

igious Scholarships to increase student scholarships awareness and participation.

“We’ve been working hard in the last three years trying to build the program,” said Laura Hastings, a co-director of the office. “Illinois students do not come here with a scholarships mentality.”

She said the office had been trying to en-

list department and unit leaders in an effort to reverse that mindset.

“We want to create a culture of scholar-

ship seekers,” she said. “But we do need help with recruiting. We’d like to get to the freshmen early.”

The office is asking faculty members to nominate “high-achieving” students for scholarships and has asked campus units across campus for help in reaching them.

“If you’re a question of talent, it’s a lack of information,” she said. “If you have a bright student, you know where to send them.”

SEC members also discussed whether the process of closing the Institute of Avia-

tion should have gone through the Com-

mittee on General University Policy. The mat-

ter went instead through the Educational Policy Committee, whose recommendation to dissolve Aviation except for the master program was turned down in a full vote of the Senate.

“So the way in which we process this we consider these questions?” asked SEC member Sarah Projanis.

When it comes to the issue of unit clos-

ures in the future, “it might not be a bad idea to have GUP review it,” said SEC member Mary Mallory.

Student Senator David Olsen said hav-

ing too much review would be inefficient.

SEC member Bill Maher said GUP has traditionally been reserved for more gen-

eral campus governance questions and not specifically for discussion of single units.

That’s a very large door in which you can drive an awful lot,” he said.

In other business, the Senate received a report on the implementation of the Office of Pres-

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A Minute With — white-collar crime expert J. Steven Beckett

Editor's note: As the retrial of former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich lurches into its third week, is anyone paying attention? J. Steven Beckett, a UI law professor and expert on white-collar crime, spoke with News Bureau business and law editor Phil Ciciora about the muted interest in the ex-governor's retrial.

So there's a different mindset for a defense lawyer in federal court. The federal government has more resources, and they are much more deliberate in their investigations and presentation of the case to the grand jury. They'll sometimes spend three, four or five years to get a case ready, and then as a defense attorney you have 70 days to digest all that evidence.

I think experience in federal court makes all the difference, but both parties usually figure out a way to negotiate before going to trial because the eventual penalties are so draconian. I've been practicing law since the early 1970s, and a first offender who was charged with a white-collar crime in federal court back then could expect to face probation. Not anymore.

Everybody goes to jail. And they don't just go to jail for short periods of time – look at (ex-Illinois) Gov. (George) Ryan, who's been incarcerated now for seven years.

Is there any hope for a plea bargain? No. My experience has been, to have a successful plea bargain, you must have a reasonable client. And by definition, this case fails that test. ◆

How difficult is it for the defense when your client is a national joke? No doubt about it, it's a daunting task for any defense team. Aaron Goldstein is a very experienced criminal trial attorney, but he has more experience in state court than in federal court. And there is a difference – you have a tougher time as a defendant in federal court. The odds of winning in federal court are slim and none.

Our federal courthouse in Urbana, for example, has never had a "not guilty" verdict, at least since Judge (Michael P.) McCuskey was on the bench beginning in 1996. That should show you that the federal system is a little different than the state system.

So why is there an almost complete lack of interest in the ex-governor's retrial? It's like a rerun of a TV show we've already seen and didn't particularly care for the first time around. Well, now they're showing it again, and they've even changed the cast of characters, but they've replaced all the stars with unknowns.

During the original trial, the tapes of the ex-governor cursing a blue streak had a pretty resonating reaction the first time they were played in court. Now, it was nothing. Nobody is listening.

Although the retrial itself hasn't garnered much attention, it has been interesting watching the media coverage. In the first trial, you could read a blog that had detailed, up-to-the-minute updates about the trial – who's on the witness stand, what the lawyers are saying, etc. Well, it's not updated anymore. So while there is some media coverage, it's not as intense as the first trial. I think there's almost an assumption that this retrial is a formality – that, in essence, it's a slow plea of guilty.

I also think reasonable human beings and reasonable lawyers would have figured out a way to come to a plea agreement to end this case before it started and let people get on with their lives. But a lot of that has to do with the ex-governor's unique personality; he just can't bring himself to plead guilty.

Blagojevich's defense team recently complained to U.S. District Judge James B. Zagel that they were being made to look like "buffoons." Is that a good strategy to curry favor with the jury?

I suppose every criminal defense lawyer at some time in his or her career has had a situation where they felt that the trial judge was engaged in a conspiracy with the prosecution to get them. It's kind of a defense lawyer's paranoia. However, if you read the opinions from time to time, you'll discover that they're right, to some extent.

Trial judges are human beings, too. They can have a bias about a case and some rulings can go across the lines and they can lose impartiality in the handling of the case.

I'm not saying that's what's happening here with Judge Zagel, but it has happened in the past. Judges do make mistakes, and cases do get reversed on appeal. It happens. But your job as a defense lawyer is to keep your cool, be respectful of the judge, be a strong advocate in the right way and keep going forward.

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Values, peers shape minority males’ academic success

By Sharita Forrest

For the U.S. to achieve President Barack Obama’s goal of having the largest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020, educators, policymakers and families will need to address the barriers that discourage minority students, particularly young men of color, from seeking higher education and persisting in college – provide vital “resistance capital” for young men of color.

Communal bonds with peers who are successful in college – particularly at institutions with actual or perceived racial tension – provide vital “resistance capital” for young men of color.

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Recovery in Japan

A Minute With ...™ urban planner Rob Olshansky

Editor’s note: In March, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake rattled Japan, triggering a tsunami and the near-meltdown of three reactors at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant. Rob Olshansky, a UI professor of urban and regional planning, has written extensively about post-disaster recovery planning and environmental impact assessment. He spent the 2004-2005 academic year studying earthquake recovery as a visiting professor at Kyoto University in Japan. He discussed Japan’s current recovery efforts with Dusty Rhodes, arts and humanities editor at the News Bureau.

Can you compare this crisis to the ones in Indonesia and Haiti, Chernobyl and Three Mile Island?

This is an unusual crisis in several ways. First, it combines enormous tsunami devastation with a huge and unprecedented radiation evacuation zone. It was, of course, also a large earthquake. Fortunately, the damage from shaking alone is relatively small. But the earthquake greatly affected transportation routes, and so this has made it difficult to deliver supplies, manage evacuees, and conduct searches, debris removal, etc. It is also unusual in that it affects a very large area.

Most important, it is of national significance. It strikes the country at a time when population is declining, the economy is deflating, and there is a leadership crisis. The national debt is large, and reconstruction will be expensive. All of this is creating great national soul searching.

With respect to Indonesia, both of these events have shown that tsunami waves can be extraordinarily high, up to 100 feet or more. This is sobering. It is difficult to prepare for such wave heights, with relatively short warning times for evacuation.

Unlike a place like Haiti, this disaster is not economically debilitating to Japan. Like the U.S., the country has considerable resources. That said, Japan will need to find the resources itself—it cannot count on the World Bank or wealthier countries to help finance its reconstruction. And the country at a time when population is declining, the economy is deflating, and there is a leadership crisis.

Another problem Japan is facing is severe soil liquefaction associated with this quake, because it lasted so long (five minutes). Does this complicate recovery?

Depending on how widespread it is, and whether it occurred in urbanized areas, it could slow recovery by necessitating extensive ground remediation and utility repairs.

I think a larger problem may be the considerable areas that are now under water. I have seen an estimate that an area equivalent to the size of Tokyo is now underwater as a result of the tsunami and deformation from the earthquake.

Given the magnitude of this disaster, how does recovery begin?

Recovery is accomplished by everyone, slowly doing what they need to do to start to return to their lives. But an important need is money. Large sums of money will need to be allocated by the central government for infrastructure and to assist private reconstruction in various ways. These reconstruction policies and funding decisions have not yet been made by the central government. Some committees have begun discussions, but these seem to be in the early stages.

It is these discussions that I am trying to follow right now. I am aware that Japanese officials have been investigating recovery methods in the U.S., China, and Indonesia, and probably many other places as well. I expect the recovery to be more decentralized and slower than the Japanese have been used to.

The cost estimate most often cited by the media is $300 billion. Is that accurate?

That seems to be a reasonable estimate at this point. There is a great deal of uncertainty, but this number seems to be the midpoint.

Can you estimate how much money Japan will need to find to help with the recovery?

That is a complex question. The cost estimate most often cited by the media is $300 billion. Is that accurate?

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The media have reported that the Japanese government plans to increase sales tax by 3 to 8 percent to help pay for reconstruction. Is that a good idea?

Any way you look at it, the nation will have to pay for this. If they don’t want to get further into debt, then a sales tax may be a good alternative. The downside is that it could slow the economy, but I suppose any means of paying $300 billion without using debt would inevitably slow the economy. As I’ve noted, I am aware that they are casting a wide net to gather alternative ideas.

‘Geology of Illinois’ commemorates Illinois Geological Survey’s centennial

By Liz Ahlberg

‘Geology of Illinois’ commemorates Illinois Geological Survey’s centennial

The history of Illinois is written in stone. And water. And soil.

For more than a century, the Illinois State Geological Survey, a unit in the newly named Prairie Research Institute, has studied the past hidden beneath the topsoil. Now they have shared that story in “Geology of Illinois,” a full-color, 530-page book exploring the integral link between the state’s geology and life on the surface.

The book is a compendium of more than 100 years of research in the state and summarizes what is known about the subsurface of Illinois, making this information available in one place for the first time,” said managing writer and editor Cheryl Nimz, who co-edited the book with Dennis Kolata, an emeritus geologist at the institute.

With more than 200 maps, illustrations and photos, the book guides the reader through the tectonics, geological history, mineral and groundwater resources, land use and environmental hazards of Illinois.

Over much of the state, the bedrock is buried beneath layers of glacier-deposited sediment, to which the area owes its rich farmland. The state’s prehistoric legacy is preserved in fossils from shark’s teeth (yes, sharks in Illinois) to mastodons.

The authors recount details of major geological events, such as soil becoming liquefied in the New Madrid (Missouri) earthquakes of 1811-1812 and sandbags reinforcing levees along the Mississippi River during the floods of 1993.

In addition to outlining history, the authors take stock of the state’s geographical resources and look to the future for both the land and inhabitants of Illinois.

The book was commissioned during the geological survey’s centennial celebration in 2005. Over the following five years, 43 authors contributed 30 chapters. Printing of the volume was supported by private donation. The book is available from the survey for $35 plus shipping.
By Shalita Forrest
Education/Social Work Editor

Social work students having an impact well before graduation

By Phil Clorida
Business News/Online Editor

Experts building social work graduates their diplomas and embark on the next phase of their careers, many already have begun leaving indelible marks on the lives of people in their communities.

A Champaign County social worker and recent graduate of the School of Social Work at the UI founded a program at a hospital in Urbana that helps bereaved parents deal with the death of their babies by providing burial attire for the infants.

Jen Harper, of Champaign, who initiated the burial gown project while working as an intern at Carle Foundation Hospital’s maternity and delivery unit last fall, said it is modeled after the Mary Madeline Project in Omaha, Neb., which uses a network of volunteer seamstresses to create burial gowns and burial envelopes for miscarryed babies from donated wedding dresses. The organization sent 40 burial gowns and envelopes to the program at Carle Hospital.

The service is part of the Perinatal Bereavement Program, which also provides blankets and mementos such as memory boxes and photos to families who suffer an infant death. Harper said that both programs experience infant deaths and another 15 or so suffer miscarriages, said Linda Ellison, perinatal bereavement coordinator at Carle Hospital, whose daughter suffered a stillbirth, a miscarriage and the death of a premature infant.

Harper said that many parents whose infants die find their grief compounded by their inability to find garments small enough to fit their tiny babies—and that are appropriate for an infant’s funeral rather than its joyous homecoming.

“It was really rewarding to be able to provide parents with something comforting,” Harper said, adding that during her internship she also helped counsel teen mothers and build awareness among new mothers about postpartum depression. Like many students, she was hired by the organization where she interned and is now a social worker at the hospital.

Before Harper entered the School of Social Work, she was active in the community as an undergraduate in psychology at Illinois, volunteering at Rape Crisis Services and running safety programs for local elementary school students.

For Claudia Sergent, a student in the program and a social worker in the Illinois Department on Aging’s Office of Elder Rights in Springfield, Ill., the spark to help others was lit when a social worker spoke to Sergent’s sixth-grade class in Divernon, III., about investigating child abuse cases. Years later, as a teenager, Sergent realized that she wanted to spend her life working with the elderly after she helped her close-knit family care for her great-grandmother for several years. Then, she created the elderly woman’s cognitive and physical capabilities prior to her death.

Now Sergent investigates reports of financial exploitation, abuse and neglect of Illinois’ elderly, and through a dual appointment in the Department on Aging’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, she’s also an advisor to residents in licensed care facilities.

“My job is very meaningful because I’m directly impacting individuals’ lives,” said Sergent, who graduated from the UI at Springfield’s social work program in 2006 and expects to graduate from the MSW program at Urbana in August.

“Anyone who goes into the social work field, goes into it because their heart is in the field,” helping other people, said Anita Patel, a social worker who’s earning an MSW through the School of Social Work’s outreach program, which enables students already employed in social services to complete the degree through off-campus classes that rotate among four sites around the state. Patel also is a full-time employee in the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

The internship portion of the MSW program helps students link their experiences in the field with classroom work — which includes ethics and professionalism, diversity and critical thinking — required by the Council on Social Work Accreditation, said Mary Maurer, who is the director of MSW field education and a clinical professor in the School of Social Work.

Advanced-standing students — those who enter the master’s program with a bachelor’s degree in social work and complete a one-semester internship after they’ve finished the academics, while students without a BSW intern for two semesters. The School of Social Work has about 120 students performing internships each academic year — perhaps fulfilling the internship and works the other three days each week at her regular job.

During her internship, she has researched the changes that would have to be made to websites and printed materials when the state implements modifications to Medicaid in July and October, and researched the residential mental health programs offered by other states to create a reference tool for Illinois policymakers.

Likewise, Sergent’s internship has comprised policy work and creating writing position papers about bills in Illinois that, if passed, could affect the state’s elderly residents.

“I think that (the legislative process) is a very neat process,” said Sergent, who spent a year working with the elderly in another capacity prior to joining the Department on Aging. “I was in direct service (previously), and I think that we need to have people who are able to speak to the legislators, see them day to day (and advocate) on behalf of (case workers) that are in the field.”

Sergent is working with other Department on Aging of-
Summer Language Academy announced

Many parents enroll their young children in piano lessons, ballet class, gymnastics or martial arts, figuring that getting a jump-start on these skills will serve their children later in life. Silvina Montrul suggests that parents consider another option—a foreign language course.

Young children have a unique ability to soak up a new language, and we, as a society, are not taking advantage of that discount for additional siblings enrolled. The after-school program, which will resume in the fall, is $215 per month for four classes per week. There is a $25 discount for additional siblings enrolled. The after-school program, which will resume in the fall, is $215 per month for four classes per week. There is a $25 discount for additional siblings enrolled.

The summer camp sessions are $150 per week, with a $25 discount for additional siblings enrolled. The after-school program, which will resume in the fall, is $215 per month for four classes per week. There is a $25 discount for additional siblings enrolled.

The academy was designed to fulfill the three missions of the university: research, teaching and community engagement. The staff, all native or near-native Spanish speakers, put together a curriculum that teaches children Spanish through games, songs and stories.

"By playing, they learn a lot, and they’re having fun," Montrul said. "We want the children to enjoy the classes.”

The academy is registering children ages 4 through 8 for summer camp. Statistics suggest that Spanish is the second language to learn. Montrul cited 2010 census data showing that about 50 million Spanish-speaking immigrants live in the United States, making it the second-largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world, out-ranked only by Mexico. And in the United States, Illinois has the fifth-highest number of Spanish speakers.

The summer camps, which begin June 6, will run 3 1/2 hours a day (campers select either morning or afternoon sessions), five days a week; families are asked to commit to a minimum of two weeks.

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Pleasing Parents  Psychology professor Eva Pomerantz, right, student Lili Qin and their colleagues found that American children’s sense of obligation to their parents is much more robust than similar research done in China has shown. "We found that American children’s sense of commitment to their families,” Pomerantz said. “Because of the benefits for children academically, we need to identify how parents can foster a sense of responsibility in children.”

Achievements

Athletes, Continued from Page 5

Professional association to pursue antitrust litigation. By contrast, professional baseball players have held fast and walked off the job in 25 of the past 25 years to secure gains at the bargaining table.

“Nothing gets discussed too much is that baseball has elided history,” LeRoy said. Nearly 90 years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that baseball was not interstate commerce, meaning that it’s exempt from antitrust law. The only way for players to get anything from owners was to form a union and leverage their power as workers to the max, which means going on strike and toughing it out, over and over again. So the MLB Players Association has really built up its collective bargaining muscles, if you will, and has gotten good at it, institutionally speaking.” But for NFL players, it’s a different story.

“The labor peace of the last 18 years in the NFL has occurred largely thanks to the 1993 settlement, after which the players association reconstituted itself as a union and entered into a new agreement bargaining as equals with the league. For the players, that opened the door to unrestricted free agency; for the owners, unprecedented growth both in revenue and player compensation. If you look at the current agreement, the question becomes ‘Can the NFL players bargain on the strength of how united they are?’” Union solidarity for NFL players is mostly artifice— about as effective as a fat punt attempt, LeRoy says.

“There’s an enormous difference between the interests of the star players— Peyton Manning, Tom Brady and Drew Brees—and the rank and file players, which makes some for a union to hold all that together and make everyone happy,” he said. “It’s convenient for the union to say, ‘We’ll take this process as far as we can.’ But when things start to hurt, they have the safety net of being able to snap their fingers and disband through decertification, like a collective bargaining representative by bargaining and sharing contract information. In the aftermath of past NFL lockouts, players have inquired about union-like behavior and activities.

Industry observers say when you start hearing about how the former head of the NFL players association advised ‘non-members’ to aggregate and leverage their power as workers to the union, or has inquired about salary information,” he said. “Don’t be surprised when you hear about a high-power- ing, high-profile attorney acting like an interlocuteur representative by bargaining and sharing contract information. In the aftermath of past NFL lockouts, players have inquired about union-like behavior and activities.

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“These findings are important because they suggest that one reason American children become less engaged in school during adolescence is that they no longer feel a sense of commitment to their families,” Pomerantz said. “Because of the benefits for children academically, we need to identify how parents can foster a sense of responsibility in children.”

Children, Continued from Page 1

The study, which also included researchers at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Beijing Normal University, involved 825 students in suburban Chicago and suburban Beijing.

In four sets of surveys given over two years beginning in the seventh grade, researchers asked the students about their attitudes toward parents and school. The researchers also tracked the students’ grades.

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Men of color A new study by Lorenzo DuBois Baber, a professor of higher education, sheds light on the unique challenges facing African American and Latino males.

MINORITIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

tional or cultural barriers.

“Having students who have been successful at any postsecondary institution go back to their high school and honestly discuss their experiences, challenges and the resources that are available” would provide more students of color with role models that encouraged them to pursue higher education, Baber said. “And it builds this pipeline, this critical mass of successful individuals who are from their community and they can identify with. I think that’s particularly important for African American and Latino males because there are so many stereotypes about them that are promoted by the mainstream media and other sources.”

Many of the study participants reported experiences in which classmates had made negative comments about their academic achievement in high school and promoted stereotypes about African American and Latino males. Support from family members or other adults – or, in one instance, cultivation of a new peer network of academically motivated students – helped students resist internalization of negative messages. However, for one boy at least, academic achievement necessitated social isolation because he had to distance himself from male friends that didn’t share his scholarly ambitions, and he lacked supportive adults in his life.

Cultural definitions of masculinity, which venerate aggression, domination and conflict – traits not valued in educational contexts – also may clash with African American and Latino men’s educational aspirations. Many of the students felt pressured by family members and peers to enter the workforce immediately after high school because employment was a cultural marker of manhood and prioritized immediate financial gains over the long-term, dubious investment of college.

Fears of being perceived as weak or vulnerable – and potentially being ostracized or ridiculed by their peers – discouraged African American and Latino male students from seeking help when they were struggling academically or grappling with stress and anxiety, the study found.

The costs of college attendance were a particular concern of the students, who were from disadvantaged rural or urban communities. Beliefs that higher education is unaffordable – coupled with a lack of information about grants, scholarships and other resources – may discourage many underserved students from ever considering going to college, the report said.

“What is often described as lack of ‘motivation’ or ‘desire’ among African American Latino males may be the result of declining aspirations stimulated by unchallenged assumptions about the financial burden of postsecondary attendance,” Baber wrote. “It is evident, particularly for first-generation college students, that the lack of information hurt their ability to navigate pathways to postsecondary success. Developing accessible information to help students navigate the postsecondary system is critical.”

Although some studies have suggested that college placement and other high-stakes tests are detrimental to minority students, the men in the study reported that the testing – in conjunction with positive feedback from school officials – provided them with critical information about their skill set and readiness for college-level work. Because many of them had struggled academically during high school, the exams helped clarify the academic paths they needed to take and the time required to achieve their goals.

Academic planning that begins before students enter high school would help them chart paths of study that prepared them for college, the report suggested.

Brandon Common, a doctoral student in higher education at Illinois, was Baber’s co-author on the study.

The researchers plan to follow up with the study participants this summer to examine their progress toward their educational goals and their responses to the challenges they’ve faced.