Access to civil legal aid depends a lot on where you live

By Craig Chamberlain
Social Sciences Editor

According to one estimate, a half of Americans are confronting a civil legal problem at any one time. Without access to the right information or advice, or an advocate in civil court, they may lose a home, a job, custody of a child, says Rebecca Sandefur. They may lose out in a divorce, or in a billing or insurance dispute.

For those with limited means, however, getting those services depends not on their need but where they live, says Sandefur, a UI sociology professor and lead author of a first-of-its-kind report, published and posted online this month by the American Bar Foundation.

“There’s this tremendous arbitrariness with respect to geography” in the availability of these services, often underfunded even under the best circumstances, Sandefur said. Those living in wealthy states or in urban areas generally benefit over those in poorer states or in rural areas, Sandefur said.

Also, the level and type of services in a given community often depend on the initiative of local providers to establish programs and seek out grants and donations — with no coordination of services nationwide or within states, and often even within communities, she said.

The report, titled “Access Across America,” is from the first foundation’s Civil Justice Infrastructure Mapping Project, and claims to be the first-ever state-by-state portrait of the services available to assist the U.S. public in accessing civil justice.

Sandefur directs the project and wrote the report, along with co-author Aaron Smyth, a doctoral student at the University of California at Berkeley. The report was funded primarily by the foundation, with additional support from the Friends of Legal Services and the Legal Services Corp.

“The U.S. is an interesting country in that we have our big public legal system that we all pay for, yet it’s almost impossible for an ordinary person to use it without buying services from a private individual,” Sandefur said. And that’s almost always a choice between “lawyers or nothing.”

In criminal court, defendants have a right to a lawyer, she said. “On the civil side, we have no guarantee.”

An estimated $228 billion was spent in 2007 by federal, state and local governments for police protection, corrections, and judicial and legal services, most of that related to criminal justice, according to Sandefur, citing figures from the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

By comparison, the amount of money spent on free civil legal assistance is small, an estimated $1.3 billion in 2009, according to a source cited in the report.

Most of those funds support small-scale public-private partnerships directed at serving specific groups: the low-income population, the elderly, American Indians, veterans, homeless people, people with disabilities, and people with HIV/AIDS. And many in those partnerships have been “enormously creative” in working with limited resources, according to the report.

Those limited resources, however, make it all the more important for states and communities to coordinate in assessing needs and targeting priorities, Sandefur said. “There’s no apparatus for making those kinds of decisions right now” and “no way of knowing” how the money is being spent.
Speakers challenged more than 200 campus leaders Oct. 31 to envision the way the UI approaches almost everything it touches—they should revolutionize it.

The message was delivered through the UI’s “Summit on Online Education: The Present and Future” at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center to more than 200 administrators, faculty and staff members, and graduate students. The meeting was sponsored by the Office of the Provost and Online and Continuing Education and co-organized by the College of Education, the Ubiquitous Learning Institute, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Library and Information Science.

“It’s a way to think about allowing students virtually all of the colleges have embraced this as the new way of learning,” she said, adding they’ve achieved success without having to “dumb down” content or “charge a premium” to offer the educational mission.

The UI has developed an entire technology infrastructure to increase access. “The key is an engaged faculty and the campus Office of Public Affairs, administered by the associate chancellor Phyl-lis M. Wise in introductory remarks to participants. “There is a limit to how many students you can teach in a classroom. It allows students to learn in ways they could never, never access before.”

She said the Urbana campus has been “a leader in developing future solutions that are offering myriad online opportunities to students.

“We cannot afford to do everything we've done in the past simply because we have the extra duties being expected from instructors providing centralized infrastructure and everyone listening more to students. The key is an engaged faculty that is actively plotting the use of technology, not just throwing tools at them. The need for collaboration is extreme, but there are already rich partnerships to tap into.”

She said the new model of education is “a way to think about allowing students more access,” said Chancellor Phyllis Wise. “It’s a way to think about allowing students more access,” said Chancellor Phyllis Wise. “It’s a way to think about allowing students more access.”

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On the Job

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

The Packard Foundation recognized Schroeder for his work with fluorescent probes for ultra-high-resolution imaging. The award will allow Schroeder to "zoom in" to the molecular scale – a mere 1 to 5 nanometers.

Charles Schroeder

Schroeder is pursuing several areas of research with the goal of improving optical imaging at very small scales. High-resolution techniques can image at 20 to 25 nanometers, but Schroeder hopes that his work with probes and hybrid materials will allow scientists to "zoom in" to the molecular scale – a mere 1 to 5 nanometers.

The fellowship includes an unrestricted five-year, $875,000 award to support research of the recipient’s choosing. Schroeder’s award will fund the use of the new probes to study retroviruses and bacterial gene expression.

"We plan to apply these tools to study regulation of anaerobic metabolism with exquisite resolution in single bacterial cells," Schroeder said. "If we stumble onto something that is exciting and promising, then this award gives us the freedom to explore new directions in research."

Schroeder earned his doctorate from Stanford University in 2004, then completed postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard University and the University of California at Berkeley before joining the Illinois faculty in 2008. He also is affiliated with the department of materials science and engineering and the Center for Biophysics and Computational Biology.

Since its inception in 1988, the Packard Fellowship Program has named 473 fellows, including 12 UI faculty members.

On the Job features UI staff members. To nominate a civil service employee, email insideliu.edu.
Retirees and long-serving staff members recognized

Dalton adjusting to retirement after 26 years

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

Retired from the College of Media since May, 26-year office administrator Nickie Dalton is trying hard not to continue operating under the delusion she is on The Longest Vacation Ever.

That is, she’s still trying to shake that feeling that at any minute, it will all end and she’ll have to go back to work.

But it’s not a vacation, she keeps telling herself, it’s the start of a new, second life – with goals to accomplish and projects to finally finish.

“I don’t really have a routine working yet,” she said. “It’s something I haven’t pinned down just yet. There are days I sleep in a little; I guess I haven’t gotten past not missing it yet.”

But that is slowly changing as Dalton drifts farther past her departure date and into a decidedly more satisfying retirement.

She said she’d like to find a balance between family time, personal enrichment and volunteering.

So far she and her husband Larry, who retired from Facilities and Services as a water station operator two years ago, have taken “mini” camping trips over the summer and have spent the fall watching Illini football at Memorial Stadium.

“It’s been a little different, both of us being here together so much,” she said.

Dalton recently started taking flower arranging classes – something she always wanted to do but never had time for – and hopes to spend more weekends antiquing. “I love antiques and going to estate sales,” she said. “You never know when you’re going to turn up something interesting.”

Dalton said it’s difficult, after working in the College of Media for two decades (it was the College of Communications when she first started), to start each day from scratch.

“It was really tough leaving because I really liked the advancement team I was working with,” she said. “I really thought I was going to be there for a couple of more years, but somebody once told me, ‘You’ll know when it’s time.’ They were right, it was just time.”

She said she misses the contact she had with alumni.

“There are some amazing alumni and they’re always there for the college,” she said. “Media alumni are just great.”

And she misses using her work skills to further the college’s goals.

“My job varied most days from managing acknowledgements to alumni and donors, updating alumni and donor information on our database, scheduling meetings, and making travel arrangements,” she said.

“The task I loved most was helping with planning college events,” she said, which included convocation, honors reception, Chicago Alumni Reunion, Illinois Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism and Homecoming “when we used to host it.”

She hopes to find that kind of fulfillment in retirement – though with the option of occasionally sleeping in if she feels like it.

For now she’s taking in the newfound freedom and following the lead of her husband, who has a little more experience at not going to work officially.

“He stays busier than I do, but I’ll figure it out,” she said. “It’s just a little hard to get used to.”

Former submariner looking forward to life at ease

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

Michael Feigl has been taking one day at a time for most of his life, so he doesn’t expect many big changes upon retirement.

Hired at the UI electrical maintenance shop in 1984, Feigl’s course changed just 18 months into the new job when he and his motorcycle were struck by a vehicle on Green Street.

The accident turned the motorcycle into a mangled scrap of metal and left Feigl – who still has steel pins in his leg following a series of surgeries – in traction and unable to work for nearly two years.

“When I came back, it was like starting my life all over again,” he said.

Once comfortable on ladders and in electrical-access tunnels, Feigl discovered his patched-up leg wasn’t able to handle the day-to-day duties of an electrician as it used to.

But Feigl did what he always does – he rolled with it.

An electrician on a Navy fleet ballistic missile nuclear submarine from 1969 to 1974, Feigl soon went to work fulfilling the requirements to become a manager. He would become a sub-foreman in 1992 and a foreman in 1995, before spending his last 10 years at the UI as an electrical construction superintendent as part of the university’s Inspection and Commission Group.

“It took three or four years and I interviewed four or five times before they found the right position for me,” he said. “Because of that I was able to take some of the pressure off the leg.”

Feigl, originally from Chicago, has had an on-again, off-again relationship with higher education since receiving a full-ride bachelor’s (1996) and a master’s (1999) degree from the University program offered at Parkland.

Since the accident he has earned a bachelor’s in 1981 and in 1984 landed at the UI. He admits he was “a little overqualified” for an electrician’s apprentice, but he took the opportunity in 1977, became a journeyman in 1981 and in 1984 landed at the UI.

Since the accident he has earned a bachelor’s (1996) and a master’s (1999) degree in the industrial technology Eastern Illinois University program offered at Parkland College.

Feigl has also taught classes at the local electricians’ union apprentice school as well as electrical classes at Parkland.

“I was determined to get that degree,” he said. “It took a long time, but I was always getting closer every time. When I look back, it looks pretty good. I can’t believe I did all that. A lot of times my decisions were just supposed to help make ends meet.”

That approach will carry over to retirement, which became official Aug. 31.

ON THE WEB
http://shr.illinois.edu/service/
In some cases, poorer states were the ones making greater use of innovations on the Internet, because they were cheaper — even if “uniquely unsuited” to their populations, with lower rates of English literacy and computer access.

Sandefur said that her interest in this issue arose from focus-group research that made her aware of the extent of civil justice problems and how easily many of those problems can “completely derail” an individual or family. Judges have long been interested in the issue, she said, out of concerns about access to the legal system, along with the problems and inefficiencies that come with having unrepresented litigants in court. “Judges and courts want to be perceived as fair, functioning entities that serve the public,” Sandefur said, and many judges feel that if citizens can’t get access or aren’t treated appropriately, it “undermines the legitimacy of the whole legal system.” Solutions don’t have to lie just in spending more money or hiring more lawyers to aid those of limited means, Sandefur said. “One way to make some of this stuff more accessible would be to loosen the monopoly that the legal profession has on the right to provide legal advice.”

In Great Britain, for instance, an agency called the Citizens Advice Bureau can aid with numerous smaller matters that might require a lawyer in the U.S., she said. The country also has an ombudsman system for dealing with individual citizens’ complaints about regulated industries such as financial services and telecommunications.

People with civil justice problems don’t usually care if they’re resolved by judges or lawyers, or by other means, Sandefur said. They just want them resolved.

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**deaths**


Margaret Hageman, 93, died Oct. 17 in Mount Pleasant, Mich. Hageman worked in dairy science as a laboratory assistant for 13 years until 1967. Memorials: The Isabella County Medical Care Facility, 1222 North Drive, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858; the Richard H. and Elizabeth C. Hageman Endowed Graduate Research Fellowship at the UI, http://cropsci.illinois.edu/graduate; or the Catlett-Hageman Graduate Fellowship at Oklahoma State University.


Joseph P. Murtha, 80, died Oct. 18 in Mount Lebanon, Pa. Murtha, a professor emeritus of civil engineering, was a faculty member at the UI for 35 years, retiring in 1993. Memorials: A local food bank or St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church, P.O. Box 519, Terra Alta, WV 26764.

Arthur G. Nikelly, 84, died Oct. 19 at his Urbana home. Nikelly was a professor of psychology and a clinical psychologist at McKinley Health Center for more than 20 years, retiring in 1987. Memorials: Modern Greek Studies Fund, UI Foundation, Harker Hall, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826, www.moderngreek.illinois.edu/giving.

Ruth Bailey Rank, 88, died Oct. 17 at Provena Covenant Medical Center, Urbana. Rank was a staff clerk in the College of Continuing Education (now Office of Online and Continuing Education). She retired in 1984 after 25 years of service.

Memorial concert

Eric Dalheim, a longtime UI music professor who devoted his professional life to the art of accompanying and training singers, will be honored with a memorial concert at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 5 in Smith Recital Hall. The concert is hosted by the School of Music. Dalheim died at his home in Champaign on April 18.

The Eric Dalheim Memorial Scholarship in Accompanying, to recognize a graduate student who has shown promise as a professional accompanist, has been established in Dalheim’s memory. Contributions specifying the fund may be sent to the UI Foundation, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.

For more information, email Sally Bernhardson: sallytb@illinois.edu.
%Ukelele class’ designed to instill lifelong love of music

By Dusty Rhodes
Arts and Humanities

A ny musician who can perform a concerto on stage with a sympho-
ny orchestra surely feels right at home jamming with friends on a
simple pop tune or a folk classic like “This Land is Your Land,” right? Well, not neces-
sarily.

“One of my students last year said, ‘I’ve been playing music for more than 10 years, but I can’t just pick up an instrument and
play a song.’ She could only do that with a piece of music and a director,” said Mat-
thew Thibeault, professor of music educa-
tion at the UI. Thibeault has met so many musicians with the same surprising prob-
lem that he developed a course for future music educators to address this irony.

Listed in the course catalog as “Design-
ing Musical Experiences,” MUS 438 also
is known among upper-level undergradu-
ate and graduate students as “the ukulele
course.” Thibeault helps his students con-
struct their own instruments from an eco-
nomical ukulele kit, and then teach them-
selves and each other a variety of tunes by
using and creating YouTube videos. Each
class culminates in a series of public perfor-
mances under the name Homebrew Ukulele
Union. The fall 2011 class performed Nov.
2 at The Blind Pig Company in Champaign.

The course merges two seemingly dis-
parate components—a humble little gutter-
like instrument and the Internet—to teach
the musical version of the educational con-
cept known as “ubiquitous learning.”

Thibeault’s goal is to equip music edu-
cation students with the tools to empower
their own students to enjoy making music
all their lives. “Ironically, it gets left out of
people’s music education and it gets left out of the conception of what it should be to be a
music teacher,” Thibeault said.

When he started the course in 2004, he
purposely chose the ukulele for its acces-
sibility in size, price, and skill. “It’s like the
guitar but has fewer strings, and the frets
are closer together so the basic chords can be
played by young people much more easily,”
he said. The instrument’s user-friendliness
helps explain the abundance of homemade
videos available on YouTube (the phenomen-
onen has been spurred on since 2007 by the
Bushman World Ukulele Video Contest), in
addition to chord charts, tablature and even
sheet music free online.

“The new reality is that content is every-
where, and you can always be connected with
it. Digital tools are transforming how people
get information, how they use infor-
mation, how they create and share informa-
tion,” he said. “The influx of immigrants from South
America and Asia have really brought a lot
close together so the basic chords can be

Study: Crop diversity myths persist in media

By Phil Cialdor
Business and Law Editor

T he conventional wisdom that says
the 20th century was a disaster for
crop diversity is widely accepted, and
was even prescribed in 2000 as a
teaching moment for the UI’s Center
for Plant Science and Biotechnology.

“I think it was largely the ‘70s that
opened our eyes to the fact that we
were wasting a lot of diversity in the
marketplace,” said Paul Heald, a law
professor who specializes in bio-
technology.

But when the researchers went to Wash-
ington to study varieties available in histori-
cal commercial seed and nursery catalogs,
they were surprised by what they found as
they worked through the years 1900 to 1930.

“There was no evident sign of decline, so
we decided to step back and take a snapshot
of 1903 and 2004, two years where oth-
ers had collected full data on all important
vegetable crops,” Heald said. “We came to
this with the exact same preconceptions as
everyone else, but we couldn’t ignore facts
that were smacking us in the face.”

According to Heald, the reason no one
questioned the conventional wisdom of a
crop diversity crisis earlier is that the nar-
rative “resonates so completely with as-
sumptions made in all the socio-biological
fields.”

“Humans generally cause significant
environmental damage, so this false notion
of waning crop diversity fits an accepted
narrative,” Heald said. “It reconfirms what
everyone else, but we couldn’t ignore facts
that were smacking us in the face.”

According to the study, 40 percent of the
diversity gains the researchers found were
from imports, but only 3 percent of gains
could be traced to patents and less than 1
percent from biotechnological innovation.

“The influx of immigrants from South
America and Asia have really brought a lot
of new germ plasm into the U.S.,” Heald
said. “Seeds stored in suitcases and purses
can move around the world with the
baskets of women who believe that
the government playing any
significant role. On the other
hand, government stimulus,
like patent law, plays a role
in only 3 percent of diversity
gains, with biotech innova-
tion constituting less than 1
percent.”

In the debate between economists who believe that
patent law is essential to in-
creasing plant diversity through innovation,
and anthropologists and ethno-botanists
who believe that patents destroyed plant
diversity in the 20th century, Heald says the
study demonstrates that both sides are
wrong.

“The story of vegetables and apples in
the 20th century is a story of markets work-
ing without government intervention, so it’s
really a confluence of liberal and conserva-
tive dogma,” he said. “You see immigrants,
off-the-grid seed savers, small farmers and
local gardeners preserving and innovating.
They create what appears to be a very ef-
ficient market for diversity in the absence of
See CROP DIVERSITY, Page 12

PAGE 6
Insidetllinois
Nov. 3, 2011

ONLINE VIDEO
http://go.illinois.edu/ UkeleleClassVideo

Novel experience
Music professor Matthew Thibeault, right, and his “Designing Musical Experiences” class perform with their hand-made ukeleles. The course is known among upper-level undergraduate and graduate students as the “ukelele course.”

Ad removed for online version
NEW faces 2011

Among the newcomers to the Urbana campus are faculty members whose appointments began this summer or fall. Inside Illinois continues its tradition of introducing some of the new faculty members on campus and will feature at least two new colleagues in each fall issue.

Charles Daval

an assistant professor of trumpet in the School of Music in the College of Fine and Applied Arts
Education: J.D., Duquesne University School of Law, Pittsburgh; M.A. (trumpet performance), Northwestern University; B.A. (music), San Jose State University.
Research Interests: Entrepreneurship, orchestra and chamber music.
"Professor Daval brings to Illinois a wealth of professional performing experience," said Karl Kramer, director of the School of Music. "He was a member of the Boston, Montreal, Seattle and Cincinnati symphony orchestras, and has significant teaching experience as a former member of the faculty at the University of Michigan. He has significant recording experience and in addition to his music degrees, he has a Juris Doctor from Duquesne University Law School."
Courses: Applied trumpet and coaching chamber music. He also has an interest in music business classes.
Why Illinois? Daval said he was "very happy and settled at the University of Michigan" before taking time off to be at home with his young children. "When the time seemed about right to go back to work this job presented itself," Daval said. "I was lucky to basically have the same position at a peer institution present itself at just the right time for me. I feel like – in the best possibly way – I've been struck by lightning twice."

Jennifer A. Kam

an assistant professor of communication in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Education: Ph.D. (communication), Pennsylvania State University; M.A. (communication), San Diego State University; B.A. (communication and English), University of California at Davis.
Research Interests: The intersection of interpersonal, intercultural and health communication. Kam focuses on what factors influence how people form their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, and its implications for their long-term health and happiness.
"One of the most exciting features of Jennifer’s research is her focus on the members of subcultures in the U.S.,” said David Tewksbury, a professor and the head of communication. “Her work with Mexican-heritage adolescents has a strong emphasis on identifying the factors that can lead to poor academic performance, substance abuse and related problems. This foundational research examines how people interact with their environments, and it has very real implications for designing interventions to help at-risk youth.”
Courses: CMN496, “Risk Communication.”
Why Illinois? “Initially, I wanted to join the UI because of its reputation for having one of the top communication departments in the nation,” Kam said. “I quickly learned that the department and the university have much more to offer than just reputations. In particular, I was blown away by how friendly, supportive and humble the faculty is in and outside of the department. (I feel) this active and energetic department will inspire me to succeed. In addition, I look forward to developing collaborative relationships through opportunities for interdisciplinary research.”
Research: Graphene grows better on certain copper crystals

By Liz Ahlberg

ew observations could improve industrial production of high-quality graphene, hastening the era of graphene-based consumer electronics, thanks to UI engineers.

By combining data from several imaging techniques, the team found that the quality of graphene depends on the crystal structure of the copper substrate it grows on. Led by electrical and computer engineering professors Joseph Lyding and Eric Pop, the researchers published their findings in the journal Nano Letters.

“Graphene is a very important material,” Lyding said. “The future of electronics may depend on it. The quality of its production is one of the key unsolved problems in nanotechnology. This is a step in the direction of solving that problem.”

To produce large sheets of graphene, methane gas is piped into a furnace containing a sheet of copper foil. When the methane strikes the copper, the carbon-hydrogen bonds crack. Hydrogen escapes as gas, while the carbon sticks to the copper surface. The carbon atoms move around until they find each other and bond to make graphene. Copper is an appealing substrate because it is relatively cheap and promotes single-layer graphene growth, which is important for electronics applications.

“It’s a very cost-effective, straightforward way to make graphene on a large scale,” said Joshua Wood, a graduate student and the lead author of the paper.

“However, this does not take into consideration the subtleties of growing graphene,” he said. “Understanding these subtleties is important for making high-quality, high-performance applications. Researchers have speculated that the roughness of the copper surface may affect graphene growth, but the Illinois group found that the copper’s crystal structure is more important.

Copper foils are a patchwork of different crystal shapes. As the methane falls onto the foil surface, the shapes of the copper crystals it encounters affect how well the carbon atoms form graphene. Different crystal shapes are assigned index numbers. Using several advanced imaging techniques, the Illinois team found that patches of copper with higher index numbers tend to have lower-quality graphene growth. They also found that two common crystal structures, numbered (100) and (111), have the worst and the best growth, respectively. The (100) crystals have a cubic shape, with wide gaps between atoms. Meanwhile, (111) has a densely packed hexagonal structure.

“In the (100) configuration the carbon atoms are more likely to stick in the holes in the copper on the atomic level, and then they stack vertically rather than diffusing out and growing laterally,” Wood said. “The (111) surface is hexagonal, and graphene is also hexagonal. It’s not to say there’s a perfect match, but that there’s a preferred match between the surfaces.”

Researchers now are faced with balancing the cost of all (111) copper and the value of high-quality, defect-free graphene. It is possible to produce single-crystal copper, but it is difficult and prohibitively expensive.

The UI team speculates that it may be possible to improve copper foil manufacturing so that it has a higher percentage of (111) crystals. Graphene grown on such foil would not be ideal, but may be “good enough” for most applications.

“The question is, how do you optimize it while still maintaining cost effectiveness for technological applications?” said Pop, a co-author of the paper. “As a community, we’re still writing the cookbook for graphene. We’re constantly refining our techniques, trying out new recipes. As with any technology in its infancy, we are still exploring what works and what doesn’t.”

Next, the researchers hope to use their methodology to study the growth of other two-dimensional materials, including insulators to improve graphene device performance. They also plan to follow up on their observations by growing graphene on single-crystal copper.

“There’s a lot of confusion in the graphene business right now,” Lyding said. “The fact that there is a clear observational difference between these different growth indices helps steer the research and will probably lead to more quantitative experiments as well as better modeling. This paper is funneling things in that direction.”

Lyding and Pop are affiliated with the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at the UI. The Office of Naval Research, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and the Army Research Office supported this research.
A n ancient Egyptian mummy has had quite an afterlife, traveling more than 6,000 miles, spending six decades in private hands, and finally, in 1989, finding a home at the World Heritage Museum (now the Spurlock Museum) at the UI. The mummy’s travels did not end there, however. It has made two trips to a local hospital – once in 1990 and again this year – for some not-so-routine medical exams.

Egyptologists, a radiologist, a pathologist, a physical anthropologist and a mummy expert used the best diagnostic tools available to learn about the mummy without unwrapping its red linen shroud or cutting into it. The team discussed its findings during a symposium, “The Return of the Mummy: New Imaging Results on the Spurlock Museum’s Egyptian Mummy,” Nov. 2 at the museum.

The first round of tests in 1990 included X-rays and CT scans, as well as an analysis of tiny fragments of cloth, insects and hardened resins collected from the fraying base of the mummy. Dr. Joseph Barkmeier, medical director of diagnostic services and regional outreach at Carle Foundation Hospital and Physician Group in Urbana, conducted the CT scans at the hospital. He repeated the scans this year at Carle with much-improved CT technology.

“Medical diagnostic technology has experienced tremendous advancements in the past two decades,” Barkmeier said. “Image resolution is nearly 10 times greater than it was when we first imaged the mummy in 1990, and we can reconstruct images faster and view them from multiple vantage points.”

The scans and an analysis of the materials used in embalming (including carbon-14 dating of a wooden plank that supports the body) found that the mummy was a child of a wealthy family from the Roman period of ancient Egypt.

Examining a digitized mummy constructed from cross-sectional CT scans is similar to actually dissecting it – with some notable limitations, said Sarah Wisseman, project coordinator of the mummy studies and director of the Program on Ancient Technologies and Archaeological Materials at the Illinois State Archaeological Survey. Wisseman is the author of “The Virtual Mummy,” a book about the research.

The scans reveal the bone structure and also show that the embalmers left the brain, the heart and lungs in the body, she said. The images also offer insight into the materials used to stabilize, wrap and “fill out” the body. But they do not provide fine details of the soft tissues that remain, she said.

David Hunt, of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History, observed that the child still had some of its baby teeth, with adult teeth coming in. This and evidence that the long bones were still growing at the time of death indicate that the child was 7 to 9 years old, Wisseman said.

Several signs – including a cracked skull with no evidence of bleeding and the detection of carrion beetles in the body – suggest that this is a child from a wealthy family, Wisseman said. Despite the high-tech probing, the mummy’s head, Wisseman said, but such images can be misleading.

There are some “tantalizing” clues to the child’s sex in the face portrait attached to the mummy, Wisseman said, but such images can be misleading.

“All of the evidence, however, suggests that this is a child from a wealthy family,” she said. “They’re using expensive red pigment from Spain. They’re using gold gift decoration. This is a fairly high-class kid.”

Despite the high-tech probing, the mummy has maintained some of its secrets. Its hands are positioned in front of its collapsed pelvis, hiding any evidence of its sex. And DNA tests of a sample collected from the damaged region near its base have yielded no definitive results so far.

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Sarah Wisseman led the team of medical experts and researchers who presented new findings on the Spurlock Museum mummy at a symposium Nov. 2. Wisseman is the director of the Program on Ancient Technologies and Archaeological Materials at the Illinois State Archaeological Survey and the author of “The Virtual Mummy.”

“Once the bones are wrapped, and especially when they’re hardened resins, it’s very hard to get any information,” she said. “But there are other mummies that have one person depicted on the outside and then you discovery it’s a different sex or even an animal instead of a human, so you can’t tell a book by its cover.”

The CT scans also revealed something that might be a lock of hair on one side of the child’s head, Wisseman said.

“In the Roman period in Egypt, around A.D. 100, we do have examples of Roman face portraits with a shaved head and then a lock of hair on one side,” she said. “Boys had the lock on one side, girls on the other. But the evidence is not conclusive.

“We may not ever know whether the child was male or female,” she said. “And we still don’t know the cause of death.”

Along with Wisseman, Barkmeier and Hunt, other members of the investigative team spoke at the symposium, including Dr. Allan Campbell, clinical professor of pathology and dermatology at the UI College of Medicine at Peoria; Emily Teeter, a research associate at the Oriental Institute museum, University of Chicago; and Carter Lupton, curator of ancient history at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

The event was co-sponsored by ATAM and the Dr. Allan C. Campbell Family Distinguished Speaker Series, with research funded in part through the Richard and Barbara Faletti Gallery of African Cultures Fund.

The Illinois State Archaeological Survey is a unit of the Prairie Research Institute at the UI.
Competing GOP tax plans renew debate on value of deductions

By Phil Ciciora
Business and Law Editor

If a presidential election is looming, it’s inevitable that the law many Americans love to hate – the federal income tax – will come under attack from candidates. While this election cycle is no different, two competing plans from GOP rivals renew an important public policy question: Why have tax deductions at all?

UI law professor and taxation expert Richard L. Kaplan says that both Herman Cain’s radically simplified “9-9-9” plan and Texas Gov. Rick Perry’s “flat tax” plan aim to lower tax rates dramatically by eliminating most, if not all, of the tax deductions that currently exist.

“These candidates are certainly correct that tax deductions have grown like wildfire, and their proliferation has unduly complicated the tax law,” said Kaplan, the Peer and Sarah Pedersen Professor of Law. “Although the U.S. tax code allows deductions to stimulate saving for retirement and college, to help with the purchase of a home, and to encourage philanthropy, among myriad others, Kaplan says it’s ‘highly doubtful’ that the tax code is the most appropriate policy tool to create incentives for certain behaviors.

“The creation of one special provision acts as a catalyst, stimulating the growth of other, equally legitimate requests, which in turn create their own endless parade of just causes and compelling arguments,” he said. “This raises the question, ‘Why must every economic and social problem of modern civilization find its solution in the tax law?’ ”

Kaplan says the metastasizing nature of the tax code is attributable at least in part to the presence of these deductions, which have the unintended effect of raising tax rates to keep a certain level of revenues.

“It is a simple mathematical inevitability – more deductions require higher rates,” he said. “The only way an individual comes out ahead is if that person claims enough deductions to offset the increase in tax rates caused by those deductions. But that means that others will pay more, because not everyone can come out ahead.” According to Kaplan, revising the tax code and lowering rates for everyone was the signature achievement of the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

“The entire panoply of deductions wasn’t eliminated, but enough were that the 14 tax brackets were reduced to two, and the top rate was lowered from 50 to 28 percent,” he said. But what modern-day no-deductions proponents usually overlook are the two most significant causes of real-world complexity for tax deductions, the first being deductions for business expenses.

“If a small business has sales of $100,000 but incurs expenses of $90,000, would we really assess a 18 percent tax on $100,000?” Kaplan said. “If so, the tax would consume the entire profits of that business. In fact, a tax on gross receipts could be due even if that business had a loss. Not allowing deductions for business expenses strikes most people as unfair, to put it mildly.

“The small business contribution to the national interest – more deductions require higher rates,” he said. “The recordkeeping costs, the audit hassles with the IRS, and the litigation to define precisely where one category ends and the other begins.”

Nevertheless, Kaplan says, the basic critique remains valid: Even if we cannot achieve significant simplification, we could have lower rates if we had fewer deductions.

“The unsalvageable truth is that tax rates are artificially high because the revenue base has so many leakages,” he said. “Tax-payers as a whole would be better off, for see TAX RATES, Page 16

Flash Index falls slightly

The UI Flash Index fell to 98.3 in October, down half a point from 98.8 last month. The index increased sharply in September, and remains above the 97.8 level that prevailed from June through August of this year.

Although the index fell slightly in October there is room for optimism, said economist J. Fred Giertz, who compiles the index for the Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

“The two-month result suggests that the economy is not likely headed for a double-dip recession that was a concern earlier this year when Illinois was below the national level, Giertz said. After adjustment for the individual and corporate income tax rate increases earlier this year, individual income tax and corporate tax receipts were down in real terms compared to the same month last year while sales tax receipts were up.

The index is a weighted average of Illinois growth rates in corporate earnings, consumer spending and personal income. Tax receipts from corporate income, personal income and retail sales are adjusted for inflation before growth rates are calculated. The growth rate for each component is then calculated for the 12-month period using data through Oct. 31.

The unassailable truth is that tax rates are attributable at least in part to the presence of these deductions, which have the unintended effect of raising tax rates to keep a certain level of revenues.

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Researchers report they have figured out how the cancer-causing bacterium Helicobacter pylori attacks a cell’s energy infrastructure, sparking a series of events in the cell that ultimately lead to cell destruction.

*H. pylori* are the only bacteria known to survive in the human stomach. Infection with the bacterium is associated with an increased risk of gastric cancer, the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide.

“More than half the world’s population is currently infected with *H. pylori*,” said UI microbiology professor Steven Blanke, who led the study. “And we’ve known for a long time that the host doesn’t respond appropriately to clear the infection from the stomach, allowing the bacterium to persist as a risk factor for cancer.”

The new study, in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is the first to show how a bacterial toxin can disrupt a cell’s mitochondria — its energy-generation and distribution system — to disable the cell and spur apoptosis (programmed cell death).

“One of the hallmarks of long-term infection with *H. pylori* is an increase in apoptotic cells,” Blanke said. “This may contribute to the development of cancer in several ways.” Apoptosis can damage the epithelial cells that line the stomach, he said, “and chronic damage to any tissue is a risk factor for cancer.” An increase in apoptotic cells may also spur the hyper-proliferation of stomach cells in an attempt to repair the damaged tissue, increasing the chance of mutations that can lead to cancer.

Previous studies had shown that VacA, a protein toxin produced by *H. pylori*, induces host cell death, Blanke said, “but the mechanism had been unknown.”

The VacA protein was known to target the mitochondrion, an organelle that produces chemical energy where it is needed in the cell. In healthy cells, mitochondria fuse to form elaborate energy-generating networks in response to cellular needs. Mitochondria are important to a lot of other cellular processes, most important to Blanke and his colleagues, they regulate cell death.

While studying how a cell responds to infection, the researchers noticed that *H. pylori* induced mitochondrial fission. Instead of fusing and forming filamentous networks to respond to the cell’s energy needs, the mitochondria were breaking into smaller, unconnected organelles.

“Fusion and fission are two dynamic and opposing processes that must be balanced to regulate mitochondrial structure and function,” Blanke said. But infection with *H. pylori* — or with purified VacA toxin alone — was pushing the mitochondria toward fission.

The researchers found that VacA recruited a host protein, Drp1, to the mitochondria. This protein plays a central role in mitochondrial fission. Further experiments showed that Drp1-mediated fission of the mitochondrial networks was linked to activation of a cell-death-inducing factor, called Bax.

“The link between VacA action at the mitochondria and Bax-dependent cell death had previously been unknown,” Blanke said. This study provides a first direct link between a bacterial toxin-mediated disruption of mitochondrial dynamics and host cell death, Blanke said. It also opens a new avenue of investigation of other diseases linked to impaired mitochondrial function, he said.

“Hundreds of human diseases and disorders are associated with mitochondrial dysfunction, ranging from cancers to degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease and Parkinson’s,” Blanke said. “As yet, no one has methodically investigated a potential link between bacterial infections and mitochondrial diseases, despite the fact that several dozen pathogenic bacteria and viruses are known to directly target mitochondria.”

Blanke and his colleagues are beginning to investigate that link.

“To us, finding that a pathogen can disrupt mitochondria in a manner that has striking similarities to what has been observed in known mitochondrial diseases is potentially very exciting,” said Blanke, who also is an affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology at Illinois.

The research team included Illinois doctoral student Prashant Jain and professor Zhao-Qing Luo, of Purdue University.

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**Committee Rosters Available**

The annual summary of committee members on the Urbana-Champaign campus can be viewed online. In an effort to provide the most accurate information, Inside Illinois has compiled a list of URLs for units that appoint the committees.

**On the Web**

http://go.illinois.edu/committees11
After collective bargaining rights came under attack earlier this year, can organized labor regain its relevance by aligning itself with the Occupy Wall Street movement? If so, how closely should labor unions associate themselves with the movement, and what are the risks involved?

Even before the recent attacks on public sector workers and collective bargaining, labor had been building an activist network of its own among union members and supporters. One of the most significant aspects of this involved outreach to non-union workers and the unemployed through the AFL-CIO’s affiliate program “Working America,” which allows anyone to join with the labor movement.

Most of the work for this network has centered on electoral politics. But disappointment with elected officials and the severity of the state battles for unions, especially in Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio redirected the attention of union activists to more grassroots tactics. The protests in Madison, Wis., Indianapolis, Columbus, Ohio, and other state capitals developed organically without the centralized direction that unions employ during traditional labor actions. This was a deliberate move to allow for labor to connect with the community and students and to have the workers themselves be out front as the face of the movement.

The Occupy movement also developed organically, separate from the formal labor movement. It did likely draw inspiration from the protests in places like Madison. The AFL-CIO and many unions have endorsed the Occupy movement and offered support. Labor wants and needs to be involved with Occupy because it broadens labor’s appeal by strengthening the relationships among unions, the unorganized and progressive groups. It allows the labor movement to expand to include not just formal unions but all working people.

The Occupy Wall Street movement has been able to attract a lot of media attention, whereas labor rallies seem to generate little media coverage these days. Why is that?

Labor’s relationship with mainstream media has been problematic in that for the past 30 years it has received less and less attention. And when it does, it is usually to discuss a labor dispute or strike. Many newspapers and news networks have eliminated their labor reporters, and most in the media have very little understanding of how unions function and their role in society. The Occupy movement was ignored at first and now does have media attention but it has been mixed, with much attention being given to the “spectacle” aspect of the protest and the few incidents of confrontation between demonstrators and police.

Is the decentralized, leaderless model a sustainable one for the Occupy Wall Street movement, or is there where organized labor can help the movement?

A decentralized movement has the benefit of drawing more people in and allowing for new and creative ideas and approaches. Still, the movement needs resources and assistance and can benefit from the experience of organized labor.

Is aligning itself with the Occupy Wall Street movement a good strategy for labor to represent itself as a counterweight to the tea party?

I don’t think that labor wants to frame it in this way. The tea party movement has been viewed by progressives in a very negative light not only for its political stances on substantive issues but also for accusations of racism and homophobia. Instead of presenting themselves as the opposing force to the tea party movement, the Occupy movement is hoping to provide a more all-encompassing movement, hence the assertion that the movement represents the 99 percent.

A Minute With ...™ is provided by the UI News Bureau. To view archived interviews, go to illinois.edu/goto/aminutewith.
Unified Communications

Informational meeting to be Nov. 14

The Unified Communications program office will host informational meetings about the new campus phone system from 9 to 10:30 a.m., 1 to 2:30 p.m. and 3 to 4:30 p.m. Nov. 14 in Illini Union Rooms A, B and C.

The meetings will discuss the upcoming changes to the current campus telephone service and timeline for implementation. Those who attend will learn what steps they need to take to prepare for the change and the resources available to assist them. No registration is required. For more information, visit http://illinois.edu/UComnights.

Book Mentor Project

Event brings children's books to life

Adults and children can enjoy theater adaptations of children's literature while contributing to a worthwhile cause.

Illinois Public Media’s Book Mentor Project will host a fundraising event, “Words in the Wind,” at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 10 at Faith United Methodist Church, 1719 S. Prospect Ave., Champaign. A donation of $10 per person is suggested.

Donations will go to the Book Mentor Project, which provides books to low-income families. The project has distributed more than 4,300 books to families in Champaign County and to local organizations.

UI professor of theater Tom Mitchell and Parkland theater and film professor John Hoffsommer are organizing the event, which will feature theatrical adaptations of children's books.

“I'm drawn to the brief but magical, or brief but revealing, stories found in many children’s books,” Mitchell said.


Local performers also will be featured, including longtime Station Theatre regulars Gary Ambler, Barbara Evans and Hoffsommer; Parkland College Theater veterans J.W. Morrisette and Dallas Street; and Kent Conrad, Christine Svec, Johnson, Cara Maurizi and Ann Marie Morrisette.

For more information about the event, email Mitchell at tomitch@illinois.edu or Molly Delaney at delaney1@illinois.edu.

To learn more about the Book Mentor Project, visit bit.ly/bookmentor.

Community Cinema

Documentary to be shown Nov. 8

Illinois Public Media Community Cinema will host a free screening and discussion of “We Still Live Here (As Nacogdoches),” at 6 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Champaign Public Library in Robeson Rooms A and B.

The film documents the quest of Wampanoag social worker Jessie Little Doe to unravel a forgotten American Indian language after generations without native speakers. Together with her colleagues, Little Doe found a trove of documents written in her ancestors’ language, including deeds, contracts and an entire translation of the King James Bible, published at Harvard University in 1663.

Director Anne Makepeace covers the recent cultural revival of southeastern Massachusetts’ Wampanoag tribe. The film won several awards, including best documentary at the Seattle International Film Festival, and the Moving Mountains Award at the Telluride Mountain Film Festival.

“We Still Live Here” is part of Illinois Public Media’s 10-film Community Cinema series. The film will be shown with closed captions for persons with hearing disabilities and an English sign language interpreter will sign the discussion.

The event also will be broadcast on WILL-TV at 9:30 p.m. Nov. 18.

For more information, visit http://willconnect.org/project/cinema.

Craft Sale at Assembly Hall

Two-day event features local artists

The UI Assembly Hall will host the 32nd annual Chris Cingle Craft Sale from 9 a.m. Nov. 4 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 5.

The event is one of the largest craft shows in the Midwest and features more than 150 booths displaying handcrafted goods from local artists.

Admission is free (free for children under 6) and includes parking and five entries for door prizes. Strollers and carts are welcome. Tickets are available at the Assembly Hall ticket office.

The Illinois Heartland Decorative Artists hosts the annual event. For more information visit www.ihda.us or call 217-333-5000.

International Programs and Studies

Grant proposals due Dec. 2

International Programs and Studies is accepting proposals for the Hewlett International Research Grants Program until Dec. 2. Two types of grants are available.

The Hewlett International Conference Grant is used to prepare two- to three-day international conferences on campus. The department’s committee will judge each proposal on its scholarly significance of the international content of the topic, the quality of the leading participants, quality of planning and the extent of UI faculty and student involvement.

Each award has a maximum of $12,000 for financial support and will go toward travel costs, living expenses, publications costs and other direct expenses needed to host a conference. For more information, visit http://ilint.illinois.edu/faculty/record.html.

The Hewlett International Research Travel Grant is available to regular, tenure-track faculty members.

Grants range from $1,000 to $4,000 per award and are intended to fund travel and related expenses outside of the United States for basic and applied international research.

Proposals are judged on cultural, geographical, political or economic focus on areas outside of the United States; the focus on relationships among international institutions and nations; and if the proposal generates scientific or artistic data/analyses. Priority will be given to younger scholars and proposals that are part of a long-term international research program. For more information, go to http://ilint.illinois.edu/faculty/hrtravel.html.

Any questions can be directed to Raijev Malik, 217-333-4085 or rmalik@illinois.edu.

Proposals should be submitted electronically (PDF preferred) to jps@illinois.edu.

Office of the Chancellor

Easter appointed interim VCR

Robert A. Easter was named interim vice chancellor for research and will begin his new post on Dec. 16.

“I am delighted that he has graciously agreed to serve in this temporary assignment,” said Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise. “I have every expectation that he will actively guide our research efforts forward.”

Easter was the interim vice president and chancellor for two years prior to this new appointment. He also was the dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences from 2002 to 2009 and served as head of the department of animal sciences from 1996 to 2001. He has been a faculty member in the department of animal science.

See BRIEFS, Page 14

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Concert combines modern dance with Sousa music Nov. 10-12

The first dance concert of the school year at the UI will feature the rare pairing of modern dance choreography with the music of the “March King,” John Philip Sousa. The dance department collaborated with the UI’s Sousa Archives and Center for American Music on two of the five works on the program, and the Vintage Brass Band will provide live accompaniment for these pieces.

The concert includes another live performance on a vintage instrument: the synthesizer known as the Sal-Mar Construction, developed in the 1970s by music professor Salvatore Martirano. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 10-12 at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

John Toenjes, music director for the dance department, has been providing music for dancers for three decades, and said Sousa “very, very, very rarely” gets used for modern dance. “But in this concert, it’s more of a context and a texture than something you put your feet down to the beat of,” he said. “You don’t use the rhythm necessarily to form your dance, but it’s there for emotional impact.”

Sousa is most prominently featured in “Patriot Act Up,” choreographed and re-staged by dance professor Sara Hook and performed by Lindsey Lykowski. The work incorporates Sousa’s “The Thunderer” march, along with a percussion-driven segment of Morton Gould’s “Parade.”

“Dance Dance Dance,” choreographed for 12 dancers by graduate student Rebecca Walter, uses three Sousa compositions — “Helter Skel- ter Galop,” “The Rose Waltz” and “The Last Rose of Summer.”

The Sal-Mar Construction will provide the music for “Mutter/Moth- er,” choreographed by T.Lang, an alumnus of the university and now the director of Spelman Dance Theatre at Spelman College as well as the artistic director of her own company, T.Lang Dance. Her piece is an “artistic investigation” of a common proflinity. She has been working with Ken Beck to compose a soundscape on the Sal-Mar.

“That instrument is not something you can just play like a keyboard,” Toenjes said. “It was designed to be something you can’t really control. You basically give it some suggestions of what you’d like, and then it does its own thing, kinda sorta the way you wanted it to do it.

“It’s designed to keep you from falling in any rut, and it will always come up with something surprising that you’re not ready for.”

Rather than moving the massive pre-delicat Construction from its home at the Center for American Music, Toenjes will have cameras capture Beck’s performance and project the video onto the stage. Each performance is preceded by a discussion related to the work:


Dancing to the beat Mary Cochran in a 2005 adaptation of “Patriot Act Up.” Music by John Philip Sousa is prominently featured in the number, which will be choreographed and re-staged for dance by professor Sara Hook. The performance is part of a dance concert to be presented at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 10-12 at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.
Climate Survey to gauge campus experience

The UI wants to make sure that each student and faculty and staff member has the best campus experience possible. That was the impetus for the first universitywide climate survey. On Oct. 26, a user-specific login was emailed to every UI employee and student. Participants will complete a survey based on their affiliation with the university. The survey will measure people’s perceptions of the atmosphere of the university as reflected in its structures, policies and practices; their attitudes and values; and the quality of personal interactions. It will assess perceptions of inclusiveness, diversity, friendliness, cooperation, professionalism, recognition, respect, accessibility, support and opportunities for advancement.

In order to gain the most accurate picture of the university environment, the task force wants as many people as possible to respond to the survey. “The idea is to obtain the data we need from the survey and use that data to make positive changes across the university,” said Mrinalini “Meena” Rao, former vice president for Academic Affairs who has led the project. Christophe Pierre, who joined the university in October as the vice president for Academic Affairs, is now leading the project.

Christophe Pierre, who joined the university in October as the vice president for Academic Affairs, stresses “the extent to which members of the university experience inclusiveness, professionalism and recognition creates the climate for working, learning and living at the university. We need each and every person here to participate.”

The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. The last day to complete the survey is Nov. 23. Those who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for prizes specific to their campus, including campus parking passes.

Those who have not yet completed the survey will be reminded to complete the survey. Responses to the questionnaire will not be associated with personally identifying information, such as names, email or IP addresses. All responses will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law.

Planning for the survey began a year ago when President Michael J. Hogan directed the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs to conduct a universitywide climate survey. A subcommittee of the Universitywide Diversity and Access Task Force then began reviewing more than 500 questions from historic climate surveys on each UI campus and similar institutions.

The survey is being administered by the Survey Research Laboratory on the Chicago campus. A cross-campus advisory committee will review the results and make recommendations. The survey will be conducted every two to three years, in order to track changes.

More information on the survey and how it is being administered is available online. ♦

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achievements

A report on honors, awards, appointments and other outstanding achievements of faculty and staff members

BECKMAN

Steven Drake, the video producer for the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, won a Mid-America Emmy Award from the Mid-America Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Drake’s video, “The Invisible Gorilla,” won the Emmy in the informational/instructional feature category. The video features research done by Daniel Simons, a professor of psychology and a faculty member at Beckman. Awards were announced Oct. 22 in St. Louis. Drake’s video may be viewed at http://go.illinois.edu/invisiblegorilla.

GSIS

Miles James Efron, a professor of library and information science, won this year’s best paper award at the American Society for Information Science and Technology’s annual meeting for his paper, “Building Topic Models in a Federated Digital Library Through Selective Document Exclusion,” co-written by doctoral students Peter Organisciak and Katrina Fenlon. Efron also is a faculty affiliate in the Center for Informatics Research in Science and Scholarship in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

The research was conducted as part of a partnership in which the Institute of Museum and Library Services supports work by CIRSS and the UI Library in building and enhancing the IMLS Digital Collections and Catalog Registry, a site with digital cultural heritage materials from libraries, museums and archives across.

LAS

Ellen Moodie, a professor of anthropology, received the Ruth Benedict Global Citizenship Award from the Center for a Public Anthropology. The award recognizes Moodie’s participation in the center’s Community Action Online Project as well as other public outreach activities.

Leslie Jean Regan, a professor of history, received the 2011 Joan Kelly Prize for her book, “Dangerous Pregnancies: Mothers, Disabilities and Abortion in Modern America,” from the American Historical Association.

The prize was established in 1984 to recognize books in women’s history and/or feminist theory that best reflect the intellectual and scholarly ideals seen in the life and work of Joan Kelly.

SECRETARIAT

Donna Fry, an administrative assistant in the Office of University Counsel, was named 2011 Bess of the Year by the Secretariat. Fry received a framed certificate and her name was inscribed on a plaque for display until next year.

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

Joo G.N. “Sip” Garcia, the vice president for health affairs at the UI, was elected as a 2012 member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies for his research and contributions to the field. Garcia also serves as vice chancellor for research at UIC.

Garcia joins 65 new members who were elected this year. Honorees are chosen based on their professional achievements and involvement in medicine and health. ♦
Wen-Hao (David) Huang, a UI professor of education policy, organization and leadership, is developing a course for undergraduate students that will teach them how to create their own educational games. Online educational games can provide serious learning opportunities, and are used in an array of contexts, from teaching children history to training surgeons, pilots and combat troops.

One of the earliest and most popular learning games was The Oregon Trail, originally released in 1971. The game was developed by three student teachers in Mankato, Minnesota for history instruction and was widely used in classrooms in Canada and the U.S. during the 1980s and early 1990s. “The Oregon Trail is a great example of integrating GBL (game-based learning),” Huang said. “It helped teachers to be able to do that for themselves,” said Huang, who has no affiliation with the Oregon Trail game.

Among the educational games created by groups of students in the graduate course was a program for teaching third-graders mathematics and another that schooled college students on the principles of financial management. “I’m looking forward to seeing the topics that undergraduates students will come up with in the spring,” Huang said. “The game design process – for me and the students – is very creative and a very rewarding experience. I tell students, ‘The sky’s the limit.’”

The only restriction is that the games the students create cannot involve illegal activities, Huang said. Students in the graduate course “liked the course because they actually got to play,” Huang said. “In order to design an effective game-based learning environment, you definitely need to play. You need to figure out which features work for you and which aren’t as effective. You need to have the first-hand experience of situating yourself in the GBL environment in order to learn something.”

While game developers tend to focus on creating splashy effects and intricate challenges, in Huang’s view creating a narrative that captivates players is more important. Therefore the first segment of the undergraduate course will focus on creating storylines and related tasks or activities that promote players’ development of specific skills and desired learning outcomes.

As the final step in the design process, students will conduct formative evaluations to gauge their games’ effectiveness as instructional tools. “In a sense, we’re trying to use game-based learning to create a very immersive learning environment – once you get into the online domain you completely engage with what’s happening there,” Huang said. However, the challenge for game designers is creating interesting environments and stimulating tasks that effectively deliver the content to be learned – without overwhelming players, Huang said.

“If we provide too many stimuli to our learners, they have so many things that they’d like to do, but realistically, cognitively they just can’t because humans’ processing capacity and working memory is limited,” Huang said. “Their engagement, their attention is highly focused on that particular environment and sometimes users just can’t handle the influx of information.”

As part of his research agenda, Huang is developing a system to help game developers manage the motivational support and cognitive engagement provided to users. Huang and other researchers are also examining how some features of an educational game – for example, fantasy, role-playing, competition and challenge – affect learning outcomes. At the end of the undergraduate course, Huang’s work appeared last year in the journal Computers and Education.

To take the undergraduate course, students only need to be comfortable using basic word processing software and spreadsheets, Huang said. While basic programming knowledge is needed during the course, technical skills such as programming “are secondary,” Huang said. Educators have long been aware of a gender gap in the use of educational technology, which Huang also is exploring in his studies. “I see a trend where players, the majority of in-service teachers are female,” Huang said. Educators have long been aware of a gender gap in the use of educational technology, which Huang also is exploring in his studies. “I see a trend where players, the majority of in-service teachers are female,” Huang said. Educators have long been aware of a gender gap in the use of educational technology, which Huang also is exploring in his studies. “I see a trend where players, the majority of in-service teachers are female,” Huang said. Educators have long been aware of a gender gap in the use of educational technology, which Huang also is exploring in his studies. “I see a trend where players, the majority of in-service teachers are female,” Huang said. Educators have long been aware of a gender gap in the use of educational technology, which Huang also is exploring in his studies. “I see a trend where players, the majority of in-service teachers are female,” Huang said. Educators have long been aware of a gender gap in the use of educational technology, which Huang also is exploring in his studies.