Modified bone drug kills malaria parasite in mice

By Diana Yates

Life Sciences Editor

A chemically altered os-niposporid drug may be useful in fighting malaria, researchers report in a new study. Unlike similar compounds tested against many other parasitic protozoa, the drug readily crosses into the red blood cells of malaria-infected mice and kills the malaria parasite. The drug works at very low concentrations — no observed toxicity to the mouse.

The study appears in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The researchers found the drug by screening a library of about 1,000 compounds that had previously had no effect on parasites to target an important biochemical pathway (called isoprenoid biosynthesis) that enables the malaria parasite to sustain itself and defend itself from the host immune system. The drug has little impact on the same chemical pathway in human or mouse cells, said UI chemistry professor Eric Oldfield, who led the study.

The lead compounds are chemically modified forms of the osteoporosis drugs Actonel (Risedronate) and Zometa (Zoledronate) and Zoledroscronate potently block isoprenoid biosynthesis, but are unable to cross the membrane of red blood cells and also enhance the drug’s ability to bind to the target enzyme, nonglycerol diphosphate synthase (GGPPS), he said.

“While I was excited when I first discovered this enzyme, GGPPS is a valid target for malaria,” said study co-author Yonghu Zhang, a research scientist in Oldfield’s lab and inventor of the lead compound, BPH-703. “Our work gives a new direction to find new antimalarial drugs.”

Stewarding Excellence continues to increase efficiencies

By Mike Holenthal

Assistant Editor

The headlines are few, but the momentum created by the campus-led Stewarding Excellence @ Illinois process continues to help shape the university’s future. Unveiled in 2010 by then-Interim Chancellor Bob Ernst and Provost Rich- 

and Wheeler, Stewarding Excellence has encompassed a broad array of university programs. Twenty project teams, with a diverse membership of students, faculty and staff, have been asked to develop new methods to streamline campus operations.

Some of the project-team recommendations — like the closure of the Police Training Institute and the Institute of Aviation — were high profile announcements involving intense debate by the campus and surrounding community.

Others, like the development of a univer-

safe plan to consolidate server space and the transition to Unified Communications, were less noticed outside campus borders but had no less impact.

Universities, which have had to use in reli-

so than $15 million.

The university’s rejuvenated self-

service centers” and information technol-

ogy initiatives, just to name a few, all of which reap ongoing savings. Additionally, the systemwide re-engineering of the uni-

versity’s procurement process has the po-

tential to save millions more.

Andrechak said nearly 70 percent of the ongoing Stewarding Excellence savings can be traced to new IT measures, but that utility improvements would lead to millions more in savings in the future.

Generally, the difficulties in state support have led to a greater inclusion of finances in campus decision-making processes, but none of the changes or reorganizations have come at the expense of academic quality, Andrechak said.

For example, while university staff lev-

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ation process is being completed for reports covering the National Center for Supercom-

puting Applications, the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, and the Institute for Genomic Biology.

But the lessons learned from this intren-

spective on how Stewarding Excel-

ence — or as Wheeler calls it, “real, critical self-analysis” — is a bound that leaders say will guide the university through current financially challenging times and well into a successful 21st century.

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because of (Stewarding),” he said, “but it’s just one part of a multifaceted approach we’ve taken.”

The university’s rejuvenated self-evaluation processes have led to improved utility management, a voluntary separation program, the creation of campus and unit “service centers” and information technology initiatives, just to name a few, all of which reap ongoing savings. Additionally, the systemwide re-engineering of the university’s procurement process has the potential to save millions more.

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For example, while university staff levels have dropped by about 400, the evaluation is allowing leaders to more precisely target new hires to address specific university needs, he said.

“There have been measures put in place to ensure we’re hiring thoughtfully,” he said. “It’s been a matter of deciding, ‘What do we excel at and what can we do better?’”

SEE STewarding, PAGE 2
Academic Senate

Positive progress reported on enrollment management

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

By Phil Ciciora
Business and Law Editor

Accontancy head is appointed

By Phil Ciciora
Business and Law Editor

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2012

March 1, 2012

InsideIllinois

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CAMPUS

DATES

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Inside Illinois includes articles about faculty and students involving research, teaching, service and life at the University.

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Three faculty members selected as 2012 Sloan Fellows

By Liz Althberg

Physical Sciences Editor

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The UI has a long history of producing faculty members who have been selected to receive the Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship. This prestigious award recognizes early career scientists and engineers for their creativity and potential to make major contributions to the scientific community.

Three faculty members were selected for the 2012 Sloan Fellowships:

- **Amanda Brown**, a professor of mathematics, is being recognized for her work on solving partial differential equations and integrable systems. Her research has applications in fields such as fluid dynamics and quantum field theory.

- **Sheng Zhong**, a professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, is being recognized for his work on the Hele-Shaw problem. His research has implications for understanding the behavior of fluids in confined spaces.

- **Christopher Matthew Jones**, a professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Technology, is being recognized for his work on the development of new technologies for water purification.

These awards highlight the breadth and depth of research taking place at the University of Illinois, and the potential for these scientists to make significant contributions to their respective fields.

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**Deaths**

**H. Neil Becker**, 73, died Dec. 27 at Heritage Medical Center in Shelbyville, Tenn. Beck- er was a pathologist at the UI from 1962 to 1996. Memorials: UI College of Veterinary Medicine, 3305 Veterinary Medicine Basic Buildings, 7001 S. Lincoln Ave., Urbana, IL 61801.

**Carl J. Jones**, 68, died Feb. 10 in Maryville, Ill. Jones was a professor in the Department of Chemistry at the UI. Memorials: UI College of Veterinary Medicine, 3305 Veterinary Medicine Basic Buildings, 7001 S. Lincoln Ave., Urbana, IL 61801.

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**Memorial Service**

A memorial service for **John Henry Beherens** will be held at 10:30 a.m. March 17 at the First United Methodist Church, 201 W. Church St., Champaign. Beherens, 91, died Feb. 23 at his Savoy home. He was an accountant for UI Extension and later was a pro- fessor in the UI College of Agriculture (now the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences). He worked at the UI for more than 30 years, retiring in 1985.

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**On the Job**

**Amanda Brown**, an assistant editor at the Illinois Institute of Technology, is being recognized for her work on solving partial differential equations and integrable systems. Her research has implications for understanding the behavior of fluids in confined spaces.

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**On the go**

**Amanda Brown** continues to build on her 15 years of university experience, working the last two years in the College of Liberal and Sciences’ Shared Service Business Center, Brown, who runs half-marathons in her spare time, started her UI career as Extra Help for the Provost’s Office.
Illinois making progress toward better sustainability

By Mike Holenthal

The list of sustainability projects on the Urbana campus has grown to more than 100, and by 2015, campus leaders are trying to make it easier to track their progress.

To that end, the Office of Sustainability is working to create ways of providing progress updates for each campus project listed in the campus’s nearly 2-year-old Climate Action Plan.

“We want to highlight our efforts as a climate leader,” said Pradeep Khanna, an associate chancellor and the interim director of the Office of Sustainability. “There is an incredible amount of work happening on this campus related to the environment. It permeates all aspects of campus: teaching, research, public engagement and facilities.”

The Office of Sustainability has started preparing monthly progress reports and will soon have a new Web portal allowing users to access work descriptions and monitor the progress of any listed project.

This year’s Climate Action Plan (iCAP) was formulated in 2010, two years after the university joined the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, a consortium of higher-education institutions committed to seeking carbon neutrality by 2050.

One of the campus goals is to achieve a 30 percent reduction in energy use and emissions by 2020. The university is about halfway to that goal and very close to meeting the 15 percent emissions-reduction goal envisioned for 2015.

Campus officials are hopeful those goals will be achieved through myriad efficiency strategies focusing on conservation, renewable energy, transportation, building standards, waste-management and procurement.

The projects range from the $22 million Energy Services Company project being conducted at veterinary medicine facilities to a proposed 28-acre solar project. Even before a request for proposals is published, there has been little time to share the progress updates for each campus project listed in the campus’s nearly 2-year-old Climate Action Plan.

“The outstanding work being done by our faculty in the broad area of sustainability needs to be emphasized,” Khanna said.

That goes for students too, Lage said. UI students support many of the campus’s efforts through a sustainability fee.

So far, iCAP-initiated efforts have led to the repackaging of 40 Urbana courses to carry messages of conservation and sustainability through a teaching workshop that shows how to incorporate environmentally friendly messages in course work.

“It’s been really well received by teaching professionals,” Lage said. “There is one professor who changed her whole class to revolve around sustainability; she even changed the course name. Sustainability is being added to the curriculum in ways you would not expect. We have to educate our future leaders.”

The university’s sustainability efforts have earned recognition. The UI recently had a number of entries selected as finalists for the Second Nature Climate Leadership Award, and the Office of Sustainability is preparing a film to document the campus’s progress as part of its presentation to the awards panel. Once completed, the film will be a part of a Second Nature campaign later this month. Viewers will be able to vote online for the best overall project. The winners will be featured on a PBS special.

Sarah Wise, an associate professor in the Department of Geography, said the iCAP forum is set for April and will feature progress updates.

Johnston said the outreach is genuine. “There has been a ton of progress,” Johnston said, “and that’s what we’ve really been focused on — the progress itself.”

But to achieve the goals in the next phase, there will have to be more widespread communication, cooperation and participation, Johnston said, which is where the communication strategy comes in.

“We have a lot of information to share and we’ve even invited the community-at-large to be a part of it,” she said. “We’ve had a lot of participation and people who have become actively engaged in the conversation, but we need that to keep moving forward.”

“The message is that sustainability is everywhere,” Lage said. “It’s leading to a lot of feedback from all corners and we are committed to get more people seated at the table.”

Johnston said the outreach is genuine. Officials are encouraging anyone who wants to participate in the energy-use transformation to use the iCAP forum to email comments to sustainability@illinois.edu. She said someone will directly respond to emails and that “we literally want to sit down and talk to them about their ideas.”

She said leaders also have vowed to better include the community in the planning of projects. An example of that outreach is a proposed 28-acre solar project. Even before a request for proposals is published, sustainability leaders are planning to communicate with neighbors who potentially could be affected.

Recycling efforts

The university continues to improve its recycling efforts, which include not only composting and other direct waste-reduction programs, but also changes in purchasing practices and policies. For example, officials are working on a plan to create a surplus equipment website allowing one unit to more easily transfer unused equipment to another.

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What role does precipitation play in radioactive fallout? 

Precipitation (that is, both rain and snow) captures radioactive particles in the atmosphere and carries it to Earth’s surface. This process is called “wet deposition.” Radioactive particles can also fall directly to Earth’s surface as dry deposition, but the process that carries radioactivity long-distance (such as from Japan to the United States), is likely dominated by wet deposition.

How could particles from Japan rain down in the U.S.? What did this study teach us about how radioactive pollution travels in the atmosphere?

The tsunami caused by the March 11, 2011, earthquake led to catastrophic failure among the six nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The National Atmospheric Deposition Program, part of the Illinois State Water Survey within the Prairie Research Institute at the UI, collected rainwater samples from its nationwide network in the days following the nuclear incident to test for radioactive fallout. Together with researchers from the United States Geological Survey, NADP researchers published a paper in the journal Environmental Science and Technology detailing their findings. In an interview with News Bureau physical sciences editor Liz Ahlberg, NADP coordinator David Gay, right, and researcher Christopher Lehmann talked about radioactive fallout and the study.

We used NOAA’s HYSPLIT model to evaluate the path of the radioactive material from Japan to the United States. The model’s predicted path agreed reasonably well with measurements from our network. Thus, the impact of the Fukushima disaster agreed well with our predictions, namely that the radiation entered the upper atmosphere, was transported across the Pacific Ocean, and was deposited to the U.S. in rain and snow.

What, exactly, did you test for? Samples were collected across the U.S. from our NADP network of more than 250 sites. Samples were prepared at our laboratory at the Illinois State Water Survey and sent to the USGS National Reactor Facility in Denver. Along with our partners at the USGS, we tested the samples for radio-isotopes of iodine (specifically, I-131) and cesium (Cs-134 and Cs-137). What radioactive elements did you find in precipitation, and where?

Our partners at the USGS detected all three radioactive elements in the precipitation samples. Radioactive I-131 has a half-life (that is, the amount of time it takes to lose half of its radioactive energy) of about eight days. By the time we analyzed the samples, we were able to detect I-131 at only five of the 167 locations tested: at two sites in Washington state, two sites in California and one site in Colorado. Radioactive Cs-134 and Cs-137 have longer half-lives – 2.1 years and 30.2 years, respectively – and we were able to detect those species at many more sites. Radioactive cesium was detected at widely distributed sites across the U.S., with the highest Cs-134 activities detected in Alaska, and the highest Cs-137 activities detected in California.

Did the levels of radioactive particles in precipitation pose a threat to health or the environment? 

We certainly have heard and read news reports about the tragic, but localized, impact of the radiation released in the Fukushima disaster. We did not expect (nor have there been reported) health impacts on the U.S. population. The purpose of this study was to record the distribution and magnitude of radioactive fallout using our existing national network. Determining the direct health impact on the U.S. population is more complicated, as it must take into account duration of exposure to radiation, and other factors. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency routinely monitors the potential radioactive exposure of the U.S. population as part of its “RadNet.” According to the U.S. EPA, the short-term exposure of the U.S. population is unlikely to have any significant health impact.

Ads removed for online version
Carbon-storage project combines innovation, outreach

By Liz Ahlberg
Physical Sciences Editor

Geologists are hoping to learn a great deal about geologic carbon sequestration from injecting 1 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into sandstone 7,000 feet beneath Decatur. And they’re hoping the public learns a lot from the endeavor, too.

The Illinois Basin-Decatur Project began its injection, the first million-ton demonstration from an industrial source in the U.S., in November 2011. Over the next three years, the Midwest Geological Sequestration Consortium, led by the Illinois State Geological Survey, hopes to use innovative science and engaging outreach to evaluate the potential of carbon capture and storage techniques.

“The Illinois Basin-Decatur Project is a significant example of how science impacts society and serves as an example of how science at a local level can impact the global good,” said Sallie Greenberg, the sequestration communications coordinator for the Illinois State Geological Survey, a branch of the Prairie Research Institute at the UI.

Greenberg discussed the IBDP and the outreach efforts surrounding it in a presentation at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Geologic sequestration, or underground carbon storage, is a process that injects compressed carbon dioxide into a porous rock layer, such as sandstone. The Illinois Basin, a large geologic formation underlying the state of Illinois as well as western Indiana and Kentucky, has a layer of sandstone deep beneath multiple layers of shale, which act as a cap to keep the carbon dioxide permanently trapped.

The IBDP is located at the Archer Daniels Midland ethanol fermentation processing plant in Decatur, making it the first large-scale sequestration effort in the U.S. to use carbon from a biofuel production source. Ethanol fermentation emits nearly pure carbon dioxide. The IBDP captures the gas, compresses it to a liquid-like dense phase, and injects it into the underground sandstone at a rate of 1,000 metric tons per day.

“This is an opportunity to determine the safety and the effectiveness of this carbon capture and storage technology,” said Robert Finley, the director of the IBDP. “Because we have exceptionally favorable geology here in the Illinois Basin region to do this, testing it out at Decatur becomes a very important opportunity for us. The geology is excellent, and we have an excellent partner in Archer Daniels Midland.”

The researchers are using innovative near-surface and deep monitoring technology to protect health and safety while keeping track of how the carbon dioxide behaves in the subsurface. In addition to the injection well, the IBDP has a 7,000-foot-deep verification well on site that allows the researchers to monitor pressure and fluid chemistry. They are also using advanced geophysical imaging technology to monitor the injected carbon dioxide by sending energy pulses into the earth and recording the reflection.

“It’s essentially like taking a sonogram of the earth,” Greenberg said. “Using geophysical technology allows us to create a time-lapse view of how the carbon dioxide is distributed in the sandstone reservoir.”

While working to hone the technology of carbon capture and storage, the researchers also hope that their demonstration will assure the public that geological sequestration is a safe and efficient process.

Public outreach is an important component of the program. The IGS is offering a variety of teacher education and professional development programs through a knowledge-sharing and capacity-building program called the Sequestration Training and Education Program. The survey has hosted

Underground storage. The geologic layers of the Illinois Basin are ideal for carbon storage. The carbon dioxide is injected into sandstone, where it fills in the gaps between the grains of sand. The sandstone lies beneath three layers of shale, which seal the carbon dioxide underground.
What’s essential in motivating workers’ online learning?

By Sharita Forrest

Companies that want to motivate workers to use electronic training programs need to make training modules fun and stimulating whenever they can, and offer extrinsic incentives, such as wage increases and user support, when employees need extra enticement, according to a new study by researchers at the UI.

Employees’ acceptance of technology is critical to the successful implementation of e-learning, and organizations often overlook the nature of employees’ extrinsic incentives as motivators, particularly when training programs introduce new technologies or reconfigure existing ones, said the lead author on the study, Sun Joo Yoo, who is a graduate student in human resource development in the department of education policy, organization and leadership. The department is in the College of Education at Illinois.

Yoo’s co-authors on the study were Seung-hyun Caleb Han and Wenhao David Huang, who are a graduate student and a faculty member, respectively, in the same department.

Nearly 85 percent of Fortune 500 companies rely on e-learning for employee training, spending more than $16 billion on it annually.

E-learning has proliferated in South Korea, accounting for more than 45 percent of total worker training in 2005. Korea’s burgeoning interest in electronic training is tied to the nation’s rapid growth in information technology and communications sector, supported by nationwide availability of high-speed Internet and telecommunication infrastructure.

The research team at Illinois examined the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators on employee acceptance and usage of e-learning at a mid-sized food service company in South Korea, which has used technology-based learning since 2000 to train employees for its franchise stores.

Employees are required to complete at least 100 hours of training annually; to qualify for promotions, they must complete at least two e-learning courses. Failure to meet the training requirements adversely affects employees’ performance evaluations.

During 2010, the company provided more than 200 e-learning courses monthly, addressing topics such as customer etiquette and leadership using case studies, video clips and Flash movies, Yoo said.

About 226 employees at seven of the company’s branches participated in an anonymous online survey that assessed intrinsic motivators (anxiety, attitudes toward e-learning and perceptions that the system was easy to use) as well as extrinsic motivators (perceived organizational and technical support, workers’ expectations that use would improve their job performance and perceptions that others believed their using the system was important). All of these psychological and behavioral factors significantly affected employees’ acceptance and use of e-learning.

“Many human-resource professionals focus on facilitating conditions — that is, demonstrating organizational and technical support for using systems — and not on individual intrinsic motivators, but the current study indicates that they should,” Han said.

The study can help organizations decide where they might best concentrate their resources when deploying technology-based training. Designing programs that are intellectually stimulating and fun to use can heighten employees’ intrinsic motivation. However, when training simply isn’t intrinsically rewarding — and some topics and tasks simply aren’t engaging or enjoyable — organizations might focus on extrinsic factors, offering tangible rewards and promoting user support, the researchers said.

The study has been accepted for publication in the journal Computers in Human Behavior and became available online Jan. 25.
A small population of rattlesnakes that already is in decline in southern Illinois faces a new and unexpected threat in the form of a fungus rarely seen in the wild, researchers report.

The eastern massasauga rattlesnake (Sistrurus catenatus catenatus), a candidate for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act, suffers from habitat loss and environmental stresses wherever it is found, said UI comparative biosciences visiting instructor and wildlife veterinarian Matthew Allender, who led the health investigation. Long-term population studies of the snake— in Illinois and elsewhere— had never turned up evidence of debilitating fungal infections. But in 2008, biologists studying the snake reported to Allender that they had found three sick snakes in a park in southern Illinois, all with disfiguring lesions on their heads. The snakes died within three weeks of their discovery. A fourth snake with a similar syndrome was discovered in the same park in the spring of 2010.

Allender conducted necropsies on the snakes and identified the pathogen that had killed them: Chrysosporium, a fungus that plagues portions of the pet reptile industry but is not normally seen in the wild, he said.

“Chrysosporium causes disease in bearded dragons and in other snakes and it’s a bad bug,” Allender said. “We see it in captive animals worldwide, but we don’t typically find it in free-ranging animals.”

Chrysosporium also is emerging as a dangerous infection in humans with weakened immune systems, he said.

Shortly after he first presented his findings at a meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Allender heard from other biologists about similar infections in snakes in the northeast United States.

“They seem to be having a similar problem in timber rattlesnakes in New Hampshire and Massachusetts,” Allender said. Although biologists have sporadically identified Chrysosporium in those snakes, the symptoms they report— facial swelling and ulcers and malformations of the jaw— are the same, he said. These infections also occurred only within the last five years.

“Fungal pathogens have been increasingly associated with free-ranging epidemics in wildlife, including the well-known effects of Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis on frog populations globally and white-nosed syndrome in bats,” Allender wrote in a December 2011 report in Emerging Infectious Diseases. “Both of these diseases cause widespread and ongoing deaths in these populations that seriously threaten biodiversity across the United States.”

Allender sees this new occurrence of a fungal infection in endangered snakes as a “yellow flag” that warrants more study.

“Wildlife diseases and human health are not that different. And often wildlife are our window into a weakened environment that leads to disease in both people and animals.”

—Matthew Allender

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

Rare fungus kills endangered rattlesnakes in southern Illinois

Insidetllinois
March 1, 2012
Caught in the act: Team discovers microbes speciating

By Diana Tate
Life Sciences Editor

Whitaker and her colleagues focused on Salsolobas islandicus, a heat-loving organism, found genetic diversity that likely occurs millions of years ago. Such diversity can handle it, and the ones that can’t successfully move around very often. The researchers sequenced the genomes of 12 strains of S. islandicus from a single hot spring in the Mutnovsky Volcano region of Kamchatka. By comparing sequences at multiple sites on the microbes’ single (circular) chromosome using new software, the researchers were able to reconstruct the genetic history of each of the strains. The analysis revealed two distinct groups of S. islandicus among the 12 strains. The microbes were swapping genes with members of their own group more than expected, the researchers said. The other group was less than expected, Whitaker said. And so the exchange of genetic material between the two groups was “very high.” This indicates that the two groups are already separate species, even though they share the same habitat, Whitaker said. The differences between the two groups were slight, but speciation was clearly under way, said she.

Peering more closely at the patterns of change, the researchers saw a mosaic of differences among the chromosomes, with vast “continents” of variation and smaller “islands” of stability. Those islands likely represent regions that are under selective pressures and are evolving into different species. “islands” of stability. Those islands likely represent regions that are under selective pressures and are evolving into different species.

The findings provide the first evidence that sympatric speciation occurs in a microbe, Whitaker said. “They do exchange some genes – just not very many. So now we know you don’t have to have a geographic or mechanical (barrier to recombination) and mutations increasing diversity. The findings provide the first evidence that sympatric speciation occurs in a microbe, Whitaker said. “They do exchange some genes – just not very many. So now we know you don’t have to have a geographic or mechanical (barrier to recombination) and mutations increasing diversity.

Program targets growing obesity among Midwest Hispanics

By Shailita Forrest
News Editor

H

Hispanics living in the Midwest have the highest obesity rates among Latinos in the U.S. and in Illinois, the percentage of obese Latino adults has more than doubled since 2001. In 2003, the percentage of adults aged 20 or over who were obese among Latino adults in Illinois was 20.9 percent. By 2007, that percentage rose to 24 percent, said the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The nutrition curricula, developed by scholars at Illinois, was seen as a model for others. ”We see a lot of interest in this program,” said said Wiley. “And for many of the families we worked with, it was a great opportunity to learn about healthy eating and ways to incorporate healthier habits into their daily lives. The program aims to help Latino families find ways to incorporate healthy eating and culturally relevant forms of exercise into their lives.

Microbial populations

Illinois microbiology professor Rachel Whitaker and her colleagues found two groups of nearly identical microbes that were diverging into different species. Before scientists were able to dissect the microbes parted ways. They became evolving into different species – despite the fact that they still encountered one another, and they once confused bacte-ria and archaea. Researchers now know that so much so that they once confused bacte-

“Soda consumption was a huge problem,” Wiley said. “We’re facing a moment when they began the program. And 41 percent of the parents reported rarely or never consuming the 2-3 daily servings of fruit recommended by the USDA. Participants were encouraged to consume traditional foods pre pared in healthier ways, such as whole grain tortillas and dessert tortilla chips topped with fruit. At the conclusion of the study, 14 percent of the children were consuming fruits and vegetables five or more times a day, and 13.9 percent of the children were “orders of magnitude” more similar to each other than groups normally considered separate species, she said.

“That means there are orders of magni tude more species of microbes than we ever thought there were,” she said. “And that’s kind of mind-boggling.”

The study appears in the journal PLoS Biology. The research team included sci entists from Arizona State University, the University of California at Davis and the University of Oxford.

Obesity, PAGE 30

Healthy habits

Angela Wiley, a faculty member in human and environmental sciences, a unit in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, leads the program.

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A new outreach project at the Orpheum Children’s Museum in Champaign will open March 11. “FIND Orphy,” a collaborative project between the UI and the museum, will provide a range of informal science education opportunities for children, parents, schools and other community members.

“We believe this project has the ability to reach a population that is often overlooked in STEM fields,” said Barbara Hug, a clinical professor of curriculum and instruction. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. “This connects directly to a core mission of the university — to increase the diversity of its student population and in STEM fields through working with a varied population of all ages.”

OBESITY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

are in a Coca-Cola. And for many of them it was a huge eye-opener. Quite frankly, I think many of them were shocked.”

A 12-ounce can of Coke contains 140 calories and 39 grams of sugar, the equivalent of 10 cubes of sugar. Consuming three cans a day is the calorie equivalent of eating five tortillas, participants learned.

By the end of the program, participants had reduced their consumption of sugary beverages from about seven times a week to four times. Changes were observed in children as young as age 6.

Shared mealtimes, bonding activities and joint physical activity were also components of the program, but were especially challenging for the parents in the study, many of whom worked multiple jobs. Parents were encouraged to adapt the program to their family’s circumstances, which could mean eating breakfast together as a family once or twice a week if that’s all their schedules allowed.

“Lots of times we have these scripts that play in our head that say if we have a mealtime we have to have candles on the table, a number of different types of food prepared from scratch and a sit-down dinner that’s all nice and pleasurable,” said Wiley, who also teaches a series of workshops on work-life management. “But it doesn’t have to be dinner, traditional food or fancy food. You can sit around on the living room floor and play a card game while you eat. The really important thing is finding those little bits of time where you can have a quality connection.”

Because many of the families lived in “food deserts” — areas lacking stores selling nutritious, affordable food — the researchers helped participants develop strategies, such as carpooling or taking the bus to larger discount stores where they could purchase food at lower prices in large quantities and in canned or frozen forms that have longer shelf lives.

However, many parents had “a real reluctance to utilize frozen foods” because of cultural perceptions that using convenience foods “is a sign they’re not providing well for their families,” Wiley said. “Food is never simply about nutrition. It is so much about psychology, emotions, relationships, bonding and many other things.”

For some of the parents, buying their children the junk food they asked for was a tangible way of demonstrating love and affection.

“We helped them think about how love can also involve not always giving their children the Cheetos they’re asking for but helping them develop a taste for apple slices,” Wiley said. “If we can help parents investigate their own beliefs, which are often unconscious, and challenge those that are unhealthy, I think we have a much better chance of helping them sustain healthier patterns.”

The researchers are working with two local organizations, C-U Fit Families and the Common Ground food co-op, to organize community-based outreach to Spanish-speaking families. They’re also developing guidelines for community leaders and policymakers in rural Illinois cities with Spanish-speaking populations.

Co-authors of the study were Barbara Fiese, the director of Family Resiliency Center and the Pampered Chef Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency; Amber J. Hammons, a postdoctoral research associate in human and community development; and Margarita Teran-Garcia, a faculty member with appointments in the department of food science and human nutrition, and the Division of Nutritional Sciences.

The research was funded by Salud America!, an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the Christopher Family Foundation; the Family Resiliency Center and UI Extension.

ON THE WEB
http://orpheumkids.com
The Midwest is usually associated with tornadoes, not earthquakes, in terms of natural disasters.

True, but we do have earthquakes around here. In Illinois, we have a magnitude 5.0 earthquake every 10 years or so and maybe one or two earthquakes strong enough to be felt every year. I have lived in Urbana for 30 years and have felt two earthquakes in that time. It is a very strange sensation, hard to forget.

Here in the central U.S. we have a hard time seeing where the faults are because the bedrock is covered with sediment. In and near Illinois there are three major clusters or zones of earthquakes: northern Illinois, southeast Illinois/southwest Indiana (also known as the Wabash Valley area), and south of Illinois is the New Madrid Zone. We just had a minor earthquake in the northern Illinois zone last month. It shook up quite a few people in the north suburbs of Chicago. By far the most active earthquake zone in the Midwest is the 150-mile-long New Madrid Zone.

Where is the New Madrid Zone? How active is it?

It is defined by many hundreds of minor earthquakes that cluster on three lines, two running southwest-northeast almost parallel to the Mississippi River and connected by a third line of quakes in the middle that runs northwest-southeast. The middle line runs through the town of New Madrid, Mo. The north end extends almost to Illinois. The earthquake of Tuesday, Feb. 21, was located at the north tip of the New Madrid Zone. Although most of the earthquakes in the New Madrid Zone are very small, this is also the earthquake zone that spawned the great earthquakes of 1811 and 1812. Three (or four) earthquakes occurred between December and February that winter, one major quake (and hundreds of aftershocks) on each of the three segments.

What does magnitude 4.0 really mean?

Earthquakes in the U.S. are rated by the energy that is released by the movement on the fault as recorded by seismometers. Charles Richter devised the scale in California based on the largest recorded motions on seismograms from a standard type of seismometer and scaled for distance from the epicenter. Because there is such a large range in the amount of energy in different earthquakes, the scale is logarithmic; that is, each unit increase represents a tenfold increase in the amount of energy. So when we say that the earthquake in southeast Missouri was magnitude 4.0 and the great earthquake last year in Japan was magnitude 9.0, we mean that the Japanese earthquake was roughly 100,000 times more powerful than the Missouri earthquake. Earthquake waves travel farther in the central part of the continent than they do on the margins like in Japan or California.

For instance, the relatively small earthquake in Missouri was felt by people more than 200 miles away from the epicenter. We have reports from 1811 and 1812 describing motions so strong along the east coast that people felt seasick.

What kinds of damage can this cause?

Initial reports from the magnitude 4.0 earthquake in southeast Missouri state that it caused very little damage. This is typical of magnitude 4.0 earthquakes. Within a few tens of miles from the epicenter most people feel the shaking, cups are tossed about and maybe some plaster or old brickwork is cracked, but that is usually the extent of it. My rule of thumb is that a magnitude 5 can be expected to cause minor damage, but rarely is it severe. If a magnitude 6 earthquake strikes near populated areas, then severe damage and some casualties can be expected. The damage depends on the location of the earthquake relative to population centers and the types of construction in the affected area. As soon as I heard that a magnitude 7 earthquake had occurred near Port au Prince, Haiti, I knew it would be catastrophic without seeing any footage. That was a very big earthquake near a major population center with poor building codes.

How often do earthquakes of this magnitude occur in the New Madrid Zone?

Although we didn’t have seismographs back in 1812 to measure the big earthquake, we do have a lot of information about them from newspaper accounts and personal journals. We also know that similar large earthquakes occurred in the same area several times over the past 1,000 years or so. Even a magnitude 6.0 or 6.5 earthquake would likely cause considerable damage. Whether they will recur is a point of ongoing research.

Could this be a portent of bigger quakes to come? Should people be worried?

Based on the record of past earthquakes, some scientists suggest the probability of a magnitude 6.0 or greater earthquake in the New Madrid Zone to be 25 to 40 percent in the next 50 years. If I heard on the morning news that there was a 40 percent chance of rain in the afternoon, I would probably take an umbrella with me. It’s similar with earthquakes. We have a credible prognosis of 40 percent chance of damaging earthquakes within the next several decades. That means if we take preventive measures now, we can reduce the damage when the earthquake strikes. Fortunately, agencies such as the U.S. Department of Transportation are working to strengthen bridges. Building codes are being upgraded so that critical structures in earthquake-prone areas are built to resist earthquake damage. Emergency responders are routinely trained to deal with the widespread, multi-state chaos that will ensue in the days following a major earthquake. Finally, public events such as the Great Shakeout held earlier this month bring public awareness to the threat.

A Minute With...™ is provided by the UI News Bureau. To view archived interviews, go to illinois.edu/goto/aminutewith...
**Center for Business and Public Policy**

Former federal reserve official to speak

Kevin Warsh, the former chief liaison to Wall Street for the Federal Reserve System, is scheduled to be at the UI on March 12 to give a talk about the financial crisis.

Warsh, who was a member of the board of governors of the Federal Reserve from 2006 to 2011, will give a speech titled “Trouble Calls: An Insider’s Account of the Financial Crisis.”

The event, free and open to the public, will begin at 4 p.m. and is sponsored by the Center for Business and Public Policy, a unit of the College of Business at Illinois.

The event will be in the Deloitte Auditorium of the Business and Instructional Facility.

**ACES**

ExplorACES is March 9, 10

Most people have never felt the inside of a cow’s stomach, designed flowers to music or created their own soil profile. Visitors to ExplorACES will have the opportunity to do these things and learn more about the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 9 and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 10 at the ACES Library, Alumni and Information Center.

The student-run event acquaints prospective and admitted ACES students with the college’s faculty, curriculum and student organizations through more than 125 exhibits that showcase academics, research and student activities.

A reception for admitted students will be held March 10 at the Student Union and at the Professional Building.

Free parking and a free shuttle service is being offered to and from parking lot E-14, just west of the Assembly Hall.

For more information, visit www.exploraces.org.

**Campus Recreation**

Wellness fair is March 13

All staff and students are invited to stop by the UI Wellness Center’s Health and Wellness Resource Fair from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. March 13 in the South Lounge of the Illini Union.

Activities and interactive learning stations will include seated massage, desktop wellness exercises, injury-prevention techniques, stress relievers and financial wellness games.

For more information, visit www.campusrec.illinois.edu/wellnesscenter.

**AAUP**

UI chapter will host promotion workshop

Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost Richard Wheeler will be the principal panelist at a workshop titled “Achieving Tenure and Promotion Committee; and Billie Jean Theide, a professor of art history, with a special interest in the protection of research data; understand the needs across campus to build the infrastructure and services to fill gaps related to research data-management practices, curation of data for research data-management procedures. There also will be a panelist from the association to discuss its position and the support the association provides.

For more information, visit http://go.illinois.edu/AAUP_TenureWorkshop12.

Research Data Initiative

Lecture on data-management is March 15

As part of the Illinois Research Data Initiative, Myron Gutmann, the assistant director of the National Science Foundation, will speak at 10:30 a.m. March 15 in Room 126 of the Library and Information Science Building. Gutmann leads NSF’s Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate, and is a professor of history and information and research professor in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

Gutmann has broad interests in interdisciplinary historical research, especially health, population, economy and the environment. As the director of Michigan’s Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, he was a leader in the archiving and dissemination of electronic research materials related to society, population and health, with a special interest in the protection of research data.
The tea ceremonies are conducted by the Chado Urasenke Tankokai Urbana-Champaign Association. The association is dedicated to the study of Chado in the Urasenke tradition. The association is open to the public and offers the tea ceremonies at 2 or 3 p.m. on the third Saturday each month. Participants in the Saturday ceremonies will be able to sit in chairs rather than kneel on mats.

The audience can expect a member of the association to tend the 2 or 3 p.m. weekday ceremonies, Japan House is offering a ceremony at 3 p.m. on the third Saturday each month. And participants in the Saturday ceremonies will be able to sit in chairs rather than kneel on mats.

Japan House is wheelchair accessible.

Since its founding in 1998, Japan House on the UI campus has been holding traditional Japanese tea ceremonies for the public.

Until recently, the ceremonies, called Chado – The Way of Tea, were conducted on Thursdays and required participants to kneel on a thin mat.

Now, in an effort to accommodate people who can’t attend the 2 or 3 p.m. weekday ceremonies, Japan House is offering a ceremony at 3 p.m. on the third Saturday each month. And participants in the Saturday ceremonies will be able to sit in chairs rather than kneel on mats.

The tea ceremonies are conducted by the Chado Urasenke Tankokai Urbana-Champaign Association. The association is dedicated to the study of Chado in the Urasenke tradition. The association is open to the public and offers classes for students and adults on how to perform tea ceremonies.

Japan House is open for tours from 1 to 5 p.m. on the Saturday of the tea ceremony. The ceremony, which costs $8, includes a brief tour beforehand and then a traditional bowl of matcha tea as well as a Japanese sweet.

The audience can expect a member of the association to perform the ceremony. The tour and ceremony last about 45 minutes. Audience members are asked to be respectful during the ceremony to honor the culture and traditions of Japan.

Call 217-244-9934 for reservations, which are recommended. For more information on Japan House and the tea ceremonies, visit the association’s Facebook page. Japan House is wheelchair accessible.

Orchestratas Feeding America

Sinfonia da Camera hosts food drive

Sinfonia da Camera and the Eastern Illinois Food Bank will host a concert at 7:30 p.m. March 10 at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. The performance will explore American composers’ contributions to classical music – from the whimsical style of Don Gillis to the iconic jazz- influeced Greek Dances.

The event will feature flautist Jonathan Keeble and cellist Dmitry Kouzov, both UI professors of music.

Tickets can be ordered through Krannert Center’s ticket office. General admission is $34; $33 for senior citizens; $12 for UI students; and $5 for youth ages 12 and younger.

The event is a part of the national Orchestratas Feeding America campaign, designed by the League of American Orchestras and Feeding America, to combat year-round hunger in the United States. Donations of canned and packaged food may be dropped off in the Krannert Center lobby.

For more information, visit www.sinfonia.edu.

Social Entrepreneurship Institute

Poster proposals due March 30

The Center for Teaching Excellence, the Office of Public Engagement, the College of Engineering and the Social Enterprise Institute are accepting poster proposals for their event, “Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship Showcase,” which will be from 3:30 to 5 p.m. May 2 in Illini Union Rooms A and B.

Proposals are due March 30 and should be submitted online at https://illinois.edu/bc/c626539.

The event will provide opportunities to network and learn ways to get involved in academic projects that strengthen communities and foster civic responsibility. Any member of the campus community is eligible to submit a proposal, which may include non-UI partners as presenters. Topics that will be considered:

- Academic service-learning course or projects, including community-engaged research that involves students in reflection and action.
- Co-curricular service-learning programs (not volunteering or philosophy).
- Academic service-learning courses with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship.
- Co-curricular social entrepreneurship initiatives that involve students in community-engaged projects.

Gender and Women’s Studies

Conversation on ‘beauty’ is March 7

The UI Gender Equity Committee will host “Talking Back to Beauty: (How) Can a Feminist Have a Conversation With the Cosmetics Industry?” from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. March 7 in the Spurlock Museum auditorium.

Alma Gottlieb, the director of undergraduate studies in LAS global studies, will present a critique of the cosmetics industry. A panel discussion will follow. Feedback from this session will be used next month in Paris when Gottlieb gives an invited talk for executives of L’Oréal.

Financial literacy

Campus competition encourages saving

The UI Wellness Center, the UI Extension Financial Wellness Program and America Saves want to help faculty and staff members and students save money, reduce debt and build wealth. And, to make it fun, the UI will compete with UIC and UIS to see which campus can sign up the highest percent of savers. Participants not only will improve their personal financial picture, but also will qualify to win prizes.

The campus also will host a free Financial Wellness Fair from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. March 14 at the Activities and Recreation Center. The event will offer financial information, activities and prizes.

Addressees are encouraged to purchase tickets early. The event has sold out the past four years.

For more information and updates on the menu and performance schedule, visit www.universityymca.org/international/dinner.

Civil service employees

Scholarship deadline is March 30

Applications for Civil Service Employees and Dependent Scholarships are available online through the Staff Human Resources Office home page (http://shr.illinois.edu/forms). Printed copies of the application are available from civil service representatives Gary Fry (glfry@illinois.edu) or Glen Warfield (gwarfi1@illinois.edu).

The application deadline is March 30. Recipients are usually selected the second week in May with an award ceremony held in early June. Last year scholarships were awarded to five dependents of employees and one employee.

The committee tries to award about eight scholarships each year to qualified individuals pursuing degrees of high er education at an accredited college or university.

Prairie Research Institute

Naturally Illinois Expo is March 9-10

The Prairie Research Institute will host its fourth annual Naturally Illinois Expo from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 9 and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 10 at the Natural Resources Building and grounds. It is free and open to the public.

The event provides an opportunity to talk with scientists from the state scientific surveys who work on solutions to water, energy, climate, ecosystem, technology and cultural resource issues.

In a new exhibit this year, “Waste to Oil – Turning Waste Into Energy,” scientists will demonstrate how waste materials from plastics to fryer oil, soapstock, corn stover or algae can be converted to fuels for energy.

Other new exhibits:

- “Live! Honey Bees” featuring a queen bee and workers on a honeycomb frame behind glass
- “Exploring the Mahomet Valley in 3D” showing how geologists fly high above the ground and dive below the surface using new software to analyze and map the deposits that filled the Mahomet Bedrock Valley
- “Zoarchaeology: Animal Bones of Illinois” featuring animal remains, and bone and shell tools that teach about people and their environment from long ago

For more information, visit www.prairie.illinois.edu/expo.

Modern Greek Studies

Free Greek-themed concert is March 13

Pianist Konstantinos Papadakis will perform music by contemporary Greek composers and works inspired by Greek themes in a free recital March 13.

Papadakis, who was born in Heraklion, Crete, has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Athens Concert Hall, Wigmore Hall in London and the Grand Concert Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. He is the Motoko and Gordon Deanne principal chair with Boston’s Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, and is on the faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music.

He will premiere a piece by Jorge Villavicencio Grossman, and perform works by Nikos Skalkottas, Manos Hadjidakis, Minas Roudoudakis, Panagiotis Theodossiou and Robert Maggio.

The recital, sponsored by the Modern Greek studies program and endorsed by the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music, begins at 7:30 p.m. in Smith Memorial Hall. For more information, visit www.moderngreek.illinois.edu/events.

For more information, call 217-333-3996 or visit www.education.illinois.edu/ups.
March 1, 2012

Inside Illinois

PAGE 15

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

ADMINISTRATION

Chancellor Phyllis Wise has been asked to serve on Gov. Pat Quinn’s Export Advisory Council.

During his State of the State address, Quinn announced the formation of the council as part of his goal of doubling the number of state exports by the end of 2014. The council will work with the governor and other state officials and agencies to provide recommendations aimed at improving Illinois’ standing in the international marketplace. Council members will also serve as international ambassadors by actively promoting the global competitiveness of Illinois firms.

LYDIA BUKI, a professor of kinesiology and community health in the College of Applied Health Sciences, was chosen as the 2014-2019 editor of the Counseling Psychologist journal by the Society of Counseling Psychology. Her term as editor-elect begins in 2013.

Founded in 1969, the journal focuses on timely topics such as counseling HIV-infected clients, counseling lesbian and gay clients, cross-cultural counseling, debate ethics and white racial identity.

EDUCATION

James D. Anderson, the Gutsell Professor and the head of the department of education policy, organization and leadership, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. The award was presented at the association’s 64th annual meeting Feb. 17 in Chicago.

Selected by the association’s president, Anderson was honored for his lifelong commitment to improving student learning.

The association is a national alliance dedicated to the professional development of teachers and school leaders in order to enhance student learning.

Debra Bragg, a professor of education policy, organization and leadership, was invited to attend the U.S. Department of Education’s symposium on college completion on Jan. 30 in Washington, D.C.

Titled “Evidence-Action-Innovation: A College Completion Symposium,” the event included 50 of the country’s leading researchers and policy experts who were invited to participate to develop ways for students to succeed in postsecondary education. Specifically, attendees were to focus on bridge programs, learning communities and advising/mentoring with special emphasis as to how they relate to student success and college completion.

TRATETTENAGH, a professor of curriculum and instruction, was chosen to be part of a working group appointed by the White House’s Office of Science, Technology and Policy. The group, Interagency Working Group on Digital Gaming Technologies, will strive to improve transparency, communication and program coherence related to the Federal Agency’s work on games.

Tsettian’s research focuses on classroom teaching and learning through the use of multimedia simulations and virtual reality environments.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Elyne Cole, the associate provost for human resources, was honored by the Champion Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for her contributions to economic development and employment in Champaign County.

“Cole embodies the spirit of the UI’s active role in promoting inclusivity of a diverse student body and workforce,” said Joseph J. Martocchio, a provost fellow and a professor of labor and employment relations.

The association is a national organization dedicated to advancing equal rights for people of color.

UI LIBRARY

Paula T. Kaufman, the Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and university librarian, was named the 2012 Academic/Research Librarian of the Year by the Association of College and Research Libraries. Kaufman will be presented the award at the American Library Association’s annual conference June 25 in Anaheim, Calif. The honor includes a $5,000 award.

The award, sponsored by YBP Library Services, recognizes an outstanding member of the library profession who has made significant national or international contributions to academic and research librarianship, and library development.

ACRL, a division of the American Library Association, is dedicated to promoting the role of academic libraries in teaching, learning and research environments.

Scott Walter, the associate university librarian for services, associate dean of libraries and a professor of library and information science, received the 2012 Distinguished Education and Behavioral Sciences Librarian Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries for his contributions to the field. Walter will be presented the award by the Education and Behavioral Sciences Section at the association’s annual conference June 23 in Anaheim, Calif. The award includes a $2,500 prize.

The award honors outstanding contributions as an educator or behavioral sciences librarian through accomplishments and service to the profession.
The American University Meets the Pacific Century Project, a UI social science research laboratory guided by UI professors Nancy Abelmann (anthropology, Asian American studies, East Asian languages and cultures), Soo Ah Kwon (Asian American studies, human and community development), Tim F. Liao (sociology, statistics) and Adrienne Lo (anthropology, Asian American studies, human and community development), is analyzing how Asian undergraduates are transforming higher education demographics.

The conference will focus on the fastest-growing segment of international students, Asian undergraduates. The project, guided by, from left, Nancy Abelmann (anthropology, Asian American studies), Soo Ah Kwon, (Asian American studies, human and community development), Tim F. Liao (sociology) and Adrienne Lo (anthropology), is analyzing how Asian undergraduates are transforming higher-education demographics.

Changing demographics The American University Meets the Pacific Century Project, a UI social science research laboratory, will host a conference March 9-10 that addresses the fastest-growing segment of international students, Asian undergraduates. The project, guided by, from left, Nancy Abelmann (anthropology, Asian American studies), Soo Ah Kwon, (Asian American studies, human and community development), Tim F. Liao (sociology) and Adrienne Lo (anthropology), is analyzing how Asian undergraduates are transforming higher-education demographics.

By Dusty Rhodes Arts and Humanities Editor

At its Feb. 22 meeting, the UI Student Senate passed a resolution encouraging Facebook users to avoid posting racially insensitive material on a memes page associated with the school. The page administrators voluntarily removed the posts deemed offensive, but the debate continued in the Opinions section of the Daily Illini, a student newspaper. Few of the racially charged memes referred to African-Americans or Latinos; most referred to students of Asian heritage.

The memes controversy exemplifies the type of issues that are the focus of the American University Meets the Pacific Century Project – a social science research laboratory guided by UI professors Nancy Abelmann (anthropology, Asian American studies, East Asian languages and cultures), Soo Ah Kwon (Asian American studies, human and community development), Tim F. Liao (sociology, statistics) and Adrienne Lo (anthropology). Started in spring 2010, the AUPEC Project is hosting the first conference to address this topic on March 9-10, with speakers from colleges in the U.S. and Canada as well as Yonsei University, the oldest private university in South Korea.

The conference will focus on the fastest-growing segments of international students – Asian undergraduates – with presentations on topics ranging from the social conditions in China and South Korea that drive education migration to the ways these students are changing American colleges and universities.

With more than 8,000 international students enrolled last fall, the UI has more students from other countries than any other public university in the U.S., and the second highest number overall, after the University of Southern California. In fall 2011, the 3,086 students from China and 1,536 from South Korea made up the majority of the international students at the UI, according to statistics provided by the school’s International Student and Scholar Services. These figures represent a shift from even five years ago, when the total number of international students at the UI was 5,146, with most coming from South Korea (1,220) and 931 from China, and a marked change in the university’s demographics.

“The University of Illinois had been one of the schools that had been, comparatively, rather protectionist,” Abelmann said. “The vast majority of our undergrads were not only domestic, but from the state of Illinois.

“And unlike some campuses of the University of California, with extremely high rates of Asian-Americans, that was not the case here,” Lo said. “Our rates of Asian-Americans on campus were much lower than many comparable universities.”

The goal of the AUPEC Project is to analyze the effects of this demographic transformation. The students enrolled in the lab course have focused on a range of topics, including attitudes and interactions in student leadership groups, dining halls, and even a campus club for fans of StarCraft, a popular video game.

“Using student researchers is a weakness in that we can’t pay people to work many hours,” Abelmann said, “but it’s a strength because the students have their feet on the ground. They hear things and know things that faculty might not be able to get at if we were the only researchers.

“We believe that the most important thing is to get some in-depth data on some of these contact zones,” she said. “We’re trying to understand the fabric and complexity of our campus.”

The researchers are interested in every angle – not just the international students’ experiences but also how they affect domestic students, faculty members and the larger community. “We are as interested in the domestic student and faculty response to these students as we are to the experience of the domestic student and faculty response to these students as we are to the experi-