University parking structures C-7 and C-10 are proof that time doesn’t stand still. Though the garages still are functional after 40 years of hot, humid summers and icy-cold winters, there is rust on their exterior brick, and the crumbling stairwells have had to be repaired. Farber said it’s an open secret that those structures are nearing the end of their lives, and something needs to be done,” said Michelle Wahl, the director of the campus parking department.

“The master plan calls for taking inventory of the entire campus parking system as a whole and prioritize a range of project and cost recommendations. The company also will review the department’s operational efficiency, as well as departments or colleges that may have special parking needs. Studies also will advise administrators on parking priorities and how to pay for needed improvements. In addition, the consultants will initiate an online campuswide survey in the spring semester, which will target all “walkers” of those who use campus parking services, including students, faculty and staff members, as well as departments or colleges that may have special parking needs.

“We hope the survey leads to a host of solutions that will become part of the master plan,” Farber said. “It actually turns out to be fortunate that we can dovetail C-7 and C-10 into this broader conversation.”

Wahl said parking continues to be a quality-of-life issue for university users, and the two garages—one at Sixth and John streets, the other at Fifth and Daniel streets—are central to that conversation.

Renters at those lots were given notice last week of the need to remove the garages, and they were promised they will be included in the survey and that their needs will be taken into account.

“Our planning process will address both the short-term and long-term parking needs of the customers in these facilities,” read the notice to patrons of the two parking garages. “The removal of these structures is not happening in the immediate future, so please be assured you do not need to take any action at this time.”

Once the user survey is completed and the consulting firm has made its report at the end of the year, a standing steering committee representing a diverse campus constituency will make final recommendations.

Farber said the consultant’s recommendations—including what will fill the void of C-7 and C-10—won’t be known until the process is completed. See PARKING, Page 4

Winter session receives positive feedback

By Mike Helenthal

I didn’t take long for students to warm up to the idea of taking classes during winter break.

Nearly 1,000 students took a total of eight four-week online courses from Dec. 22 to Jan. 16, with classes filling so quickly administrators had to remove predetermined size caps on some.

The pilot program was the first time the U. of I. had offered a winter session, a period when the campus traditionally shuts down before and after the Christmas and New Year’s holidays.

“We were very surprised at the number of students who enrolled, and instructors have commented that these were some of the most dedicated and engaged students with whom they have worked,” said Deanna Raineri, the associate provost for education innovation within the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

“It has gone past our expectations.”

Raineri said she has heard mostly positive comments from students and professors following the session, and administrators are surveying both groups to determine whether there is enough support to offer a permanent winter session.

Creating a new attendance term would require senate approval.

While the winter session courses are taught in four weeks, they still contain the same academic fullness as the regular 16-week course.

“These are not light versions of these courses,” Raineri said, noting that many of the general education courses already had been offered with an online option, making them easier to adapt to the shortened format.

That gives students more course-taking options—but it also puts more responsibility on the students to keep up with the accelerated pace, she said, though the number of students dropping a course during the winter session was not significantly different than the eight-week online and traditional courses.

One of the challenges was to ensure that students were made aware of the fast pace of the winter session before they signed up.

Raineri said the student demographic was very similar to the general student population, with international students making up just over one-fifth of enrolled students.

Jose J. Vazquez-Cognet, a professor of economics, said the winter session is just one more way to serve students’ ever-changing needs.

The introduction to microeconomics course he taught during the winter session is normally delivered during a 16-week session, but the course also is offered through an eight-week online option during the summer.

“I haven’t cut any corners,” he said of the course, which attracted more than 100 students for the winter session—nearly the same as his summer session classes. “We’ve played around with the format, reorganized things and just compounded all of the material into the time frame.”

Vazquez-Cognet said he wasn’t entirely convinced the winter session would be well-received by students—or that he wanted to spend his break teaching.

“I was really neutral about it,” he said. “In fact, I thought it might be an inconvenience to me—but it surpassed all of my expectations.”

He said the students in the class were as dedicated and engaged a group as he has seen. He said discussion forums were full of insightful conversations and the work turned in was superior. It made the teaching side of the experience comparatively easy.

“These were really goal-oriented students,” he said. “There was less hand-holding than when I teach in the summer.”

Vazquez-Cognet said he’s excited that his course can now be delivered in three different formats—and that students are able to better choose how and at what pace they want to learn.

“Students can just choose which (approach) works for them best and which fits their lifestyle,” he said.

Joseph Perry, a professor who adapted his economics statistics course to the winter session, said the students...

SEE WINTER SESSION, Page 4
By Christy Levy

UIC News

TIMOTHY L. KILLEEN said he was keeping a close eye on the fourth agenda item at the Jan. 15 U. of I. Board of Trustees meeting: his appointment as the 20th president of the University of Illinois.

"It was a little fluxated on No. 4, but the other (agenda items) were important, too," he said with a laugh, after trustees unani-

mously approved his appointment.

"I can now use the word 'we' in refer-

cence of Illinois, and we can do a lot togeth-

er. We have the chance to rein in public higher education," Killeen said when he was introduced at UIC Nov. 19.

Killeen's five-year contract, $800,000 per year plus an annual performance bonus of up to $100,000, makes his compensa-

tion seventh among peer institutions.

After an eight-month search that win-

nowed 200 candidates down to three final-

ists, Killeen was the board's unanimous choice.

Killeen spent more than 20 years on the faculty at the University of Michigan, where he began as a postdoctoral scholar and later as associate vice president for re-

search and professor of atmospheric, oce-

anic and space sciences.

Killeen said the new president would ben-

efit from the recently completed university administration review, which already is be-

ing implemented to improve and streamline university decision-making processes.

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efit from the newly completed university administration review, which already is be-

ing implemented to improve and streamline university decision-making processes.

"It's going to be a fascinating period, and we're off to a good start," Easter said.

Killeen has stepped down as president of the SUNY Research Foundation.

"We have a chance to reinvent public higher education," Killeen said at the Jan. 15 board meeting. "That will take all hands on the tiller, and I'm ready to roll up my sleeves." Killeen, who still serves as vice chancellor of the Research Foundation of the State University of New York, Current U. of I. President Bob Easter retains his role. Killeen's $30 percent U. of I. appointment has been spent working on the presidential transition.

Easter: University can weather short-term funding cuts

By Mike Helenthal

Assistant Editor

U of I President Bob Easter said the university will neither furlough employees this year, even if next year's state budget appropriation is reduced – as Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner has said is likely.

But that doesn't preclude the possibility that the new governor will address funding and historical issues through executive orders, he added.

Easter, who is retiring this year, made the remarks at his final annual meeting with the Senate Executive Committee Jan. 26.

"We have built enough cushion in the budget to weather a short-

term state funding reduction. In the long term, depending on the lev-

el of state funding, cuts of 20 percent or even 25 percent may depend on Easter's recommendation.

"We have a chance to reinvent public higher education," Killeen said at the Jan. 15 board meeting. "That will take all hands on the tiller, and I'm ready to roll up my sleeves." Despite the numerous challenges, Easter said he is confident the U. of I. can continue to benefit the citizens of Illinois by leading progress and economic development.

"It's going to be a fascinating period, and the university has the ability to make a big impact," he said. "We have a significant role to play, we always have."
F
or the first time in more than two decades, in-state U. of I. freshmen will see no tuition increase next fall, after university trustees approved tuition and housing rates Jan. 15 at their meeting on the UIC campus.

Tuition for in-state freshmen next fall will remain $10,036 per year at the Urbana campus, $10,584 at UIC and $9,405 at UIS.

“We want to remain competitive in the market, and our institutions, as well as our students and our communities, need to be in reasonable and affordable access,” said Christophe Pierre, the university vice president for academic affairs.

Tuition rates for nonresident freshmen and graduate and professional students will increase about 2 percent, “modest, inflation-related increases,” Pierre said.

“It’s a tremendous move on behalf of students and their parents,” trustee Ricardo Estrada said. “It signifies a commitment to keep tuition and fees prices efficient in the way we use our resources.”

Under the state’s guaranteed tuition law, passed in 2004, tuition rates are fixed for four years (the time required to complete most undergraduate degree programs).

“That’s very unique and a huge piece of the puzzle,” trustee Timothy Koritz said. “That’s a trend in law, and I think it’s a trend in higher education because it helps families plan a budget to send their kids to school.”

Total in-state fees and housing rates will increase slightly next fall. At Urbana, student fees will increase $34 (1.1 percent) per year to $3,081, while fees rising $30 (1.1 percent) to $2,850 at UIC and $26 (1.4 percent) to $1,871 at UIS.

Student fees fund campus recreational facilities, student centers, career services, and the counseling centers and libraries. They also help pay for facility maintenance, renovations and utilities.

Tuition increases would be based on the standard two-room student and 14-meal plan. At Urbana, tuition will rise $152 (1.5 percent) per year to $10,322. UIC’s housing rates will increase $210 to $7,072 while rates at UIS will rise $50 (0.5 percent) to $10,700 per year.

By Christy Levy

Senators asked to show support for new medical school

By Mike Henthalhal

ON THE WEB
senate.illinois.edu

A faculty-led executive committee and representatives of Carle Health, which was initiated by Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise near the end of the fall semester.

“I spent a number of sessions talking about this proposal,” said Gay Miller, the Education Policy Committee chair and a professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Miller said the committee suggested numerous revisions that appear in the final Wise’s extensive proposal, senators attend- ing the Feb. 9 meeting will have the opportu- nity to ask questions of many of the peo- ple involved in the medical school effort.

“This makes it really urgent for us to discuss this plan,” said Roy Campbell, a professor of computer science. “We want to make sure the senate is looking at every part of this.”

In addition to the committee’s report and Wise’s extensive proposal, senators attend- ing the Feb. 9 meeting will have the opportu- nity to ask questions of many of the peo- ple involved in the college’s accreditation and operation.

“The college will grow and the wider community will grow.”

The board made a final statement on the Steven Salaita matter, referencing the board’s Jan. 29 statement regarding the matter.

Senator Edward McMillan will lead the board in the next year after being elected trustee Edward McMillan as chairwoman during the annual elec- tion of officers. He succeeds Christopher Kennedy, whose term expires Jan. 19 Gov. Bruce Rauner will appoint trustees to re- place Kennedy and Pamela Strobel, whose terms expired last spring. McMillan, a U. of I. alumnus and nation- al leader in agribusiness, has served on the board since 2009.

“I’ve seen first-hand how the universi- ty’s academic programs transform the lives of students and how its research discovery leads the way to progress and economic growth,” he said. “Our board is committed to building on its rich legacy of excellence and extending its service to society for gen- erations to come.”

Trustee James Montgomery and Kent Harder were elected to serve with McMil- lan on the board’s executive committee.

The board approved the Urbana cam- pus’s nominations for honorary degrees.

Degrees of doctor of science will be be- stowed upon Risa I. Lavizzo-Mourey, the president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; and Ralph Cicerone, the president of the National Academy of Sciences and chair of the National research council. Timothy Nagent, the di- rector emeritus of the Urbana campus’s agribusiness program, will receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Human Letters.

The board issued its most recent and ap- parently final statement on the issue after a meeting with the Urbana campus’s pro- fessors, pointing to the mistaken impression that the decision regarding Dr. Salaita might be reconsidered.

“This makes it really urgent for us to discuss this plan,” said Gay Miller, the Education Policy Committee chair and a professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Blackboard

ON THE WEB
senate.illinois.edu

Trustee McMillan to replace Kennedy as board chairman

Next meeting is 3:10 p.m. Feb. 9

Illini Union Room A

A faculty-led executive committee

ONLINE VIDEO

Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise reflects on the impact that engineering-based medicine will have on the world for decades to come.

go.illinois.edu/ science2034_video

By Mike Henthalhal

Assistant Editor

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ONLINE VIDEO

Urbana-Champaign Senate

Urbana, Feb. 5, 2015

By Christy Levy

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Senators asked to show support for new medical school

By Mike Henthalhal
Anne Price

Anne Price, the office manager for the Campus Honors Program since August, has learned from every work experience. She said she enjoys working with honors program students and helping them navigate the system. “They have a lot on their plate, a lot to deal with,” she said.

Petry said he likes the online aspect of teaching because many times he is able to learn more about students than in a face-to-face setting. “They’re not the smartest kids,” she said, “they are the ‘I want to change the world’ kids. They tend to be the ones who push themselves really hard.”

In addition to CHP classes, special seminars and workshops, the students work on campus honors building, a converted residence, as a central social location. She said students routinely drop by the house to meet, study or just hang out.

“Try to create a community,” she said. “You can almost always find students using the campus resources, and in other areas of the TAMU, one of the reasons I really like where I’m at, I feel like the jobs I’ve had before prepared me well for this job. It’s been a perfect fit for me.”

Prior to the U. of I., Price worked for 10 years as a secretary in the private sector and for 12 years as a day care provider.

The work paid off, with around 360 students taking the winter session course.

To make it even more student-friendly, Snodgrass said the materials were made available on a U. of I. Box account two weeks prior to the start of the class, and the three- or four-part final exam was formatted to be taken in stages.

“I recognized that students have a lot of travel plans over the holidays and I wanted to make this class as manageable as possible,” he said. “There were dozens of student requests on my course material on Christmas Eve. I was up working late that night... I was going to try anything to get them’s minds on the exercises!”

Snodgrass said the “vast majority” of his students kept up and performed well on the final exam.

He said students are able to use the winter seminar schedule as a proctor or director, new requirements, while keeping already busy semester schedules open to take major-related courses presented for transfer.

He said he is finding that online courses allow him to learn more about his students. And those students occasionally see him on campus and approach him like they’re long-time friends.

“They find it strange and funny to finally meet the teacher that up to that point only on their computer,” Snodgrass said. “It’s been great to get to know them now that they’re back on campus.”

Price has been married for 30 years and has two adult daughters. She has lived in Mahomet, Illinois, for 25 years, though the couple has plans to move to Weldon, Illinois.

Her favorite season is anything that allows for gardening, and she is an avid reader.

“I pretty much like to read anything, she said.

She also is involved with Mahomet Christian Church and, with her husband, Barbara Kaufman, has been a member of the church for 10 years. She was pastor of the church from 1998 to 2007.

On the job features U. of I. staff members. To nominate a civil service employee, email rhnetheil@illinois.edu.

Price is right

Anne Price, the office manager for the Campus Honors Program since August, has 16 years of experience.

Price was a professor of music archives and Center for American Music, U. of I. Foundation, https://www.uif.uillinois.edu/Gifts/StartGiving.aspx. Eliza Ray Hawkins Jr., 93, died Jan. 12 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. He was a civil service employee, employee, email rhnetheil@illinois.edu.

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Anne Price, the office manager for the Campus Honors Program since August, has 9 years of experience.

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Is this case likely to be the final say in marriage equality? It depends. If the court rules that it's unconstitutional to discriminate against gays and lesbians by forbidding them to marry, then yes. The decision could parallel its famous decision in Loving v. Virginia, when it ruled that miscegenation statutes were unconstitutional. If the court finds that marriage is a fundamental right that is being unfairly withheld from a group of people, as in Loving, the issue would be conclusively resolved.

However, the court could choose to follow the federalism line of reasoning it espoused on in the recent Windsor decision, when the court noted that subject to constitutional limitations, marriage is a state law issue. In that case, the issue of same-sex marriage would remain, with individual states deciding whether to permit same-sex couples to marry, either through the legislature or state court decisions.

What do you foresee happening? Like a few other recent cases, does it all come down to Justice Anthony Kennedy's vote? Kennedy's vote is crucial, and I am optimistic that he will rule in favor of same-sex marriage. Why? In 2003, he authored the opinion in Lawrence v. Texas, which was very friendly to the gay and lesbian community. However, Kennedy also authored the Windsor decision that weighed heavily on the community.

Was he very friendly to the gay and lesbian community? Yes, I think so. In my most recently published article, I point out that along with marriage comes a family law principle: the presumption of parentage to children born within the marriage. If a child is born to a married lesbian couple, then both mothers would be presumed the parent of the child. However, without same-sex marriage, parenting issues are confusing at best to the couple and often difficult to determine. A mother who does not know what her parental rights are to a particular child may fear that she will lose custody of the child if she reports abuse to the authorities, either due to a real or a perceived lack of parental legal protections, or due to heterosexist norms in the court system. That is, she may lose the child to the biological father.

Thus, granting marriage rights to same-sex couples will lend a bit of certainty to the determination of parenthood and, hopefully, permit those suffering from domestic abuse to leave an otherwise harmful situation.

U. of I. expert Sara R. Benson on the Supreme Court and gay marriage

Editor’s note: After sidestepping the issue last fall, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide by late June whether all 50 states must allow gay and lesbian couples to marry. U. of I. law professor Sara R. Benson, an expert on sexual orientation and the law, spoke with News Bureau business and law editor Phil Ciciora about the case, which some see as the civil rights issue of our time.

Is there any hint of how Kennedy will rule? Kennedy's vote is crucial, and I am optimistic that he will rule in favor of same-sex marriage. Why? In 2003, he authored the opinion in Lawrence v. Texas, which was very friendly to the gay and lesbian community.

Was he very friendly to the gay and lesbian community? Yes, I think so. In my most recently published article, I point out that along with marriage comes a family law principle: the presumption of parentage to children born within the marriage. If a child is born to a married lesbian couple, then both mothers would be presumed the parent of the child. However, without same-sex marriage, parenting issues are confusing at best to the couple and often difficult to determine. A mother who does not know what her parental rights are to a particular child may fear that she will lose custody of the child if she reports abuse to the authorities, either due to a real or a perceived lack of parental legal protections, or due to heterosexist norms in the court system. That is, she may lose the child to the biological father.

Thus, granting marriage rights to same-sex couples will lend a bit of certainty to the determination of parenthood and, hopefully, permit those suffering from domestic abuse to leave an otherwise harmful situation.
New drug compounds show promise against endometriosis

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

T
e new drug compounds – one of which has already proven useful in a mouse model of multiple sclerosis – appear to be effective in treating endometriosis, a disorder that affects millions of women around the world. That’s because our bodies can produce tumors of many kinds. Some of these tumors contribute to the body’s immune response and promote inflammation.

Endometriosis affects as many as 15 percent of reproductive-age women in the U.S. and millions of women worldwide. The endometrial tissue that contributes to the disorder can lead to scarring among the ovaries, fallopian tubes and other organs; infertility, inflammation and chronic pain.

“The usual treatments for endometriosis are aimed at suppressing estrogen, because it’s an estrogen-driven disease,” said U. of I. molecular and integrative physiology professor John Katzenellenbogen, whose laboratory developed the new compounds.

The first study had 56 participants was considered more preliminary. The second and larger study, with 186 participants, the researchers found that even adding a third task had little effect on holistic processors.

In that same study, they also induced various participants into good and bad moods, and found that a negative mood leads to more analytic processing and a positive mood to more holistic processing. The finding suggests that those who want to multiprocess effectively should do so in a good mood.

The effect of processing styles has gotten little attention in research on multitasking or advertising, Duff said, and she finds that surprising.

Instead, almost all multitasking research has focused on a cognitive resource perspective, which claims that our ability to truly multitask is determined by limits on executive processing, or what our brains can handle in dealing with simultaneous tasks, Duff said. Yet most of that research has looked only at cognitive load tasks, such as texting and driving, and not more perception-oriented tasks, such as consuming media, she said.

Likewise, almost all advertising research has been done with participants focusing on single ads, and one at a time – and yet we see potentially thousands of ads each day, and few of them with our full and direct attention, Duff said.

As a result, in much of her research, Duff said she’s “not really interested in somebody who’s paying full or 100-percent attention to an ad.” Instead, she wants to know what’s happening when they are ignored.

It’s a particularly important question now, Duff said, because studies suggest we’re consuming more media in less time through multitasking.

Advertisers should be asking, “What if it’s different if it’s not full, direct attention on an ad?” Duff said. “What if these things don’t work the same way?”

And marketers should be thinking about the ads they think they’re ignoring, but whose messages may still be getting through.

Duff said: “You might be getting more out of those ads than you realize.”

Ads effective even in the midst of multitasking, studies find

By Craig Chamberlin
Social Sciences Editor

Those video ads playing in the corners of your computer screen, in the midst of your multitasking, may have more impact than you realize. They may be as effective as the ads you’re really watching, such as those during the Super Bowl, says a U. of I. researcher.

It depends on how you perceive and process media content – whether your processing “style” is to focus more on one thing or to take it all in, according to Blunt and Duff, a professor in Illinois’ Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising.

It also may depend on your mood. Duff led two different studies on multitasking and ad recognition, both with a different group of undergraduates at a different Midwestern university. The results were recently published online in a paper for the Journal of Advertising.

As part of each study, participants were evaluated and categorized as being more “analytic” or “holistic” in their style of processing. Analytic processors tend to focus on specific items, looking at them in isolation from the environment in which they’re found, Duff said. Holistic processors tend to take everything in at once, or as a part of a whole.

Described another way, analytic processors probably prefer quiet for getting things done, and holistic processors may need music and other distractions, Duff said.

Duff and co-author Sela Sar, also an Illinois advertising professor, found in both studies that analytic processors did better than holistic processors on ad retention when their only task was to watch a series of video ads on a computer screen. When asked to split their time with a second simple task on the same computer, however, the results were dramatically different.

Analytic processors “just fall right off as soon as you make them do something else,” Duff said. Listeners “just fall right off” as soon as you make them do something else, Duff said. They were just as likely to know what’s happening when they’re ignored, the researchers found.

In a previous study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers found that CLSI suppressed – and even reversed – the loss of brain neurons and function in a mouse model of MS.

While many more years of work must be done to test these new compounds in other models and, eventually, in humans, the results demonstrate a new approach to treating endometriosis and other disorders tied to estrogen signaling and inflammation, the researchers said.

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at the National Institutes of Health supported this research.

In a previous study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers found that CLSI suppressed – and even reversed – the loss of brain neurons and function in a mouse model of MS.
Since 1996, state support for higher education in Illinois has been dramatically cut, leading to tuition increases of 50 percent at two-year colleges and 100 percent at four-year institutions, adjusted for 2015 dollars. Have we reached a tipping point that could price students out of the state?

Yes, we are pricing students out of the state. It is much worse which many good students from middle- and lower-middle-income families can no longer afford to attend college. And as Pell Grant assistance, which many middle- and lower-middle-income families now represent a smaller percentage of total enrollments at public colleges and universities there.

Is this continued underfunding sustainable?

Well, yes, but only in a death-spiral sense. In the last 10 years, state funding for public universities has been reduced to only half of what it was in 1996. And while students at public institutions are now the fourth-higher in the nation, and Illinois’ share of state spending for higher education has fallen to just 49th in the nation. So students are leaving for other states or just aren’t going to college. And Illinois’ growth and broader development are in higher education and lower-middle-income families will also suffer.

What does the underfunding of higher education portend for the state of Illinois generally and for the need to start investing in education funding as an investment in human capital rather than as a line-item expenditure?

The current level of underfunding cannot be sustained. Continued underfunding of higher education increases tuition costs and decreases the budgetary support for its community colleges and universities. The consequences are daunting for the state’s future. What is being created is a generation of taxpayers who have grown up in a society with fewer graduates, higher tuition costs, and lower state support – both in Illinois and nation-wide.

What would be the effects from a cut in higher education funding roughly equal to the percentage loss in tax revenue due to the drop in state tax rates?

I have estimated the effect of an 8.5 percent cut to education funding, which is the amount of tax revenue lost and the proportion cuts in investment in education as the personal and corporate income tax rates in Illinois fall back to earlier levels. My calculations show there will be 9,181 fewer students enrolled in two-year colleges and 14,541 fewer in bachelor’s degree programs.

In terms of the impact on the state budget, I estimate that over a five-year planning period, the loss of increased earnings by these 23,722 lost programs will result in $200 million less sales and income tax revenue to the state. The increase in spending in Illinois is slowing in relation to other states and the state’s share of the state support – both in Illinois and nation-wide.

What does the underfunding of higher education in Illinois mean for the future of the state and its people?

A decrease in state support for higher education in Illinois means that the share of the state’s budget devoted to education is the lowest in the nation, and Illinois’ share of state spending for higher education has fallen to just 49th in the nation. So students are leaving for other states or just aren’t going to college. And Illinois’ growth and broader development are in higher education and lower-middle-income families will also suffer.

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In terms of the impact on the state budget, I estimate that over a five-year planning period, the loss of increased earnings by these 23,722 lost programs will result in $200 million less sales and income tax revenue to the state. The increase in spending in Illinois is slowing in relation to other states and the state’s share of the state support – both in Illinois and nation-wide.

What does the underfunding of higher education in Illinois mean for the future of the state and its people?
new study of muskrats and minks in central Illinois indicates that toxoplasmosis, a disease spread by cats, is moving rapidly through the landscape and contaminating local waterways.

Researchers found antibodies for Toxoplasma gondii, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis, in 18 of 30 muskrats and 20 of 26 minks tested for the disease in central Illinois. They report their findings in the Journal of Wildlife Diseases.

“We thought we’d do a broad prevalence survey in minks and muskrats,” said U. of I. graduate student Adam Ahlers, who led the study with veterinary clinical medicine professor Mark Mitchell and their colleagues found toxoplasmosis in wild minks and muskrats in central Illinois.

“A lot of streams have been dredged and straightened, and animals that have to live in those habitats are exposed to increased drainage from agricultural and urban runoff,” Ahlers said.

With no wetlands to filter out pathogens such as the T. gondii oocysts, rainwater likely flushes the parasite directly through drainage tiles and into waterways, he said.

“Our hypothesis was that animals positioned in larger watersheds would be exposed to more drainage and more oocysts, so they should have higher toxoplasmosis prevalence rates,” Ahlers said.

For muskrats, at least, that’s what was born out in the results. Muskrats in larger watersheds had higher toxoplasmosis prevalence rates than those from smaller watersheds.

The team found no link between mink infection rates and the size of the watershed in which they were found, but this may be due, in part, to the already-high prevalence rate in minks. Seventy-seven percent of those tested had been exposed to T. gondii.

“Minks have larger home ranges. They leave the stream system and they’re eating mice and birds and other animals that could have the disease. Also, minks are always in the stream channel and are picking up the disease passively – probably through grooming or eating water. They’re herbivores, so it’s also likely they’re picking it up by consuming oocysts attached to aquatic vegetation.”

About 60 percent of muskrats tested had been exposed to T. gondii.

The parasite requires a feline host: only in cats can they develop the new oocysts, which are shed in the feces and – if they survive long enough in the environment – go on to infect new hosts.

“This parasite’s goal in life is to get back into a cat,” said Mitchell, who has traced toxoplasmosis infection in wildlife as far afield as the Galapagos Islands. Freeze-dried cats were introduced in the 16th century.

Infection – in prey animals and in humans – is associated with unhealthy behavioral changes, Mitchell said. Infected mice lose their natural fear of cat odors and, as a result, become more susceptible to being eaten by cats.

In humans, toxoplasmosis infection has been correlative linked to miscarriage, autism spectrum disorder, increased suicide risk and decreased learning in children, Ahlers said.

Researchers estimate that up to one-third of the world’s population has been exposed to T. gondii.

The Illinois Natural History Survey is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at Illinois. The U. S. Department of Agriculture contributed to this research.

Software teaches computers to translate words to math

By Liz Ahlberg

Physical Sciences Editor

In instances when apples and seven oranges, and he wants to share them with three of his friends, can a computer understand the text to figure out how many pieces of fruit each person gets?

Thanks to new software developed at the U. of I., machines now can learn to understand mathematical reasoning expressed in language, which could greatly improve search engines and access to data as well as boost mathematics education.

U. of I. computer sciences professor Dan Roth and graduate student Subhro Roy published their work in the journal Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics.

“There is a lot of data available in news archives and public records, but it cannot be accessed in a meaningful way,” Roth said. “For example, if people want to know what percentage of a state’s budget has been spent on education over the past 20 years, a query like that won’t give the desired result with a keyword search. In that case, the computer has to understand the text to figure out how much of the budget was used to spend on education.”

The researchers’ software was able to do quantitative reasoning, it would infer from the text the type of information the user is looking for. It can find the numbers, then calculate the percentages and addition required to do this.

The task with apples and oranges is the biggest challenge, was in teaching the computer to identify quantities and units in text regardless of how they are expressed, something humans do when they read. Secondly, the software has to decide how to do this.

By Dolores Tosco

Life Sciences Editor

Researchers found toxoplasmosis infection rates were higher than expected.”

“And when we got the data back, we were really surprised because the prevalence rates were higher than expected.”

Previous studies have found toxoplasmosis in sea otters, and a few studies have detected the parasite in semi-aquatic mammals in freshwater ecosystems, Ahlers said. The researchers suspected that the widespread use of tile drainage systems and the lack of natural wetlands in central Illinois would help spread the disease.

About 60 percent of muskrats tested had been exposed to T. gondii.

The parasite requires a feline host: only in cats can they develop the new oocysts, which are shed in the feces and – if they survive long enough in the environment – go on to infect new hosts.

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U. of I. library has unique collection of Indian comic books

By Jodi Heckel
Arts and Humanities Editor

T he artwork in the comic books would look familiar to any comic book fan. A well-muscled, green-skinned man and a Wonder Woman-type character square off against several figures with the faces of humans and bodies of snakes. There are explosions, a superhero climbing up the outside of a building and another breathing fire to be green.

The comic books – written in Hindi and published by Raj Comics – is one of about 1,000 Indian comic books in the U. of I. library system. South Asian Studies librarian Mara Thacker began collecting the comics for the U. of I. when she was assistant to the dean. She says she has what she believes is the largest collection of Indian comics in North America.

“We’re the only ones buying at this level of comprehensiveness,” Thacker said.

The comic book collection is a collaborative project between the International and Area Studies Library and the Undergraduate Library, and was started after attending a workshop of the Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation, of which she is a member. One of the goals of the organization is for each member library to create its own specialization that will benefit a national collection of material and not duplicate another collection.

Thacker chose Indian comics for the Undergraduate Library already had a graphic novel collection, and it was beginning to add foreign-language comics. And, she added, “we already had a pretty good Indian film collection, so we had a good start on Indian pop culture material. Comics seemed really doable, and nobody was doing it.”

Thacker herself has a particular interest in India, and in pop culture and visual culture.

“You can learn a lot about a culture or group of people from its pop culture products. And I love the art” in the comic books, she said. “Some of it is really stunning.”

The collection includes comics from India’s most famous comic publisher, Amar Chitra Katha. Thacker said ACK’s comics tell stories from Hindu mythology or Indian folk tales.

“The focus is really a celebration of Indian culture,” she said.

The U. of I. also has comics from publishers such as Raj Comics, Vimanika Comics, Holy Cow Entertainment and Pop Cracker. Some feature stories and artwork in the tradition of Marvel Comics, with lots of superheroes, and others reflect Indian folk art themes.

“There are some superhero comics that would be very familiar to an American audience, although they are set in an Indian context,” Thacker said.

“Most of the comics are in English or Hindi, although there are some in Bengali and a few other South Asian languages.”

“With graphics to supplement the text and the easier language that is used, maybe some language learning students might like to use them,” Thacker said, adding that the comics has helped her to practice Hindi.

Thacker believes scholars in various areas will want to use the comics – for example, religious studies scholars might be interested in comics that retell religious myths. They’ll also be available to the local South Asian population to share stories with children.

Thacker works with the Library of Congress and two agencies to get new titles. She is now focusing on finding old and rare comics, as well as acquiring comic books from Bangladesh.

“I’m really excited to see what’s available in Bangladesh,” she said, adding the U. of I. library system could be one of the first in North America to have comics from Bangladesh.

Most of the comics are in the Undergraduate Library, and a few that are rare or in fragile condition are in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Study shows factors in legal disputes about kids with autism

By Sharita Forrest
Education Editor

F amilies whose children with autism spectrum disorders spend less than 20 percent of their time in mainstream classrooms are nearly twice as likely to resort to litigation, such as filing for due process hearings or mediation, when they disagree with school officials about their children’s education, according to a recent survey of parents.

The Web survey, which gathered responses from more than 500 parents in 47 states and Washington, D.C., examined characteristics of children with ASD, their families and family-school relationships to identify factors that might predict parents’ utilization of procedural safeguards to protect their and their children’s rights.

More than 26 percent of parents who participated in the survey reported they had filed for mediation or due process hearings, two procedural safeguards that are available to them under the Americans with Disabilities Education Act.

However, families with incomes above $100,000 were significantly more likely to take legal recourse. Burke and Goldman also found links between the strength of parent-school partnerships and greater use of mediation or due process. However, Burke said long-term studies are needed to determine causality – whether parents who have great partnerships with schools are less likely to file due process, or if these relationships are eroded when parents seek the help of judges or hearing officers to resolve disputes.

Children who engaged in more internalizing behaviors, such as being withdrawn or anxious, were at greater risk of becoming involved in due process or mediation proceedings as well, the researchers found.

“These kids can easily fly under the radar, as opposed to children who engage in externalizing behaviors, such as physical and verbal aggression,” Burke said. “This should shed some light on how we need to make sure these kids are being served appropriately.”

The paper was published recently in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.
By Diana Yates
Lifestyles Editor

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repetition – and 13 percent of quality gains
learning-by-doing on the job through sheer
obtained from "autonomous learning" – that is,
"organizational forgetting" – affects the quality of
products, says Anupam Agrawal, a pro-
company's quality performance initiatives, sug-
"depreciation" can mute the effects of a com-
product, says Agrawal. "If different products are being produced
by the U. of I. Flash Index rose to 106.8
the state’s rate fell to 6.2 percent, compared to
the expectation that one must be brilliant to succeed in certain academic fields was
associated with the underrepresentation of women in those fields.

‘Organizational forgetting’ erodes gains in supply chains
By Phil Ciclora
Business/Law Editor

just like physical assets, a company’s organizational knowledge can depre-
ciate over time. According to a pa-
management and services, the humanities, social sciences and math.
only revisiting the fix is equally as
firms that employ process improvement initia-
employees. The growth rate for each component
consumer spending and personal income.

Quality competence
The deprivation of organizational knowledge can mute the
effects of a company's quality performance initiatives, says research co-written by Anupam Agrawal, a professor of business administration at Illinois.

If different products are being produced or the ways in which they’re being produced have been changed, then it’s time to revisit the process because the initial improve-
ments are no longer valid,” he said.

When you teach someone something, or if this period of learning on the job, the ar-
row does not continually point up,” he said.

“It’s going to come down, so you have to correct course every so often, because as you are learning, you are also slowly forget-
ting. And that’s what you have to be careful about. Fixing the problem is important, but occa-
ionally revisiting the fix is equally as important.”

The reasons why quality initiatives derail are myriad, Agrawal said.

Agrawal said. “In other words, quality initiatives are not push-button fixes where you ‘set it and for-
get it.’ Agrawal said.

“You work to arrest the problem, and you do what is the right thing to do at the time, but it doesn’t solve the problem in the long-
run,” he said. “So just because it’s right on day one doesn’t mean you don’t need to go back on day 50 and revisit it. Because by
day 100, it will inevitably grow worse, even if in the middle everything looks rosy. It is a dual-track, continuous process. You have to continually improve but then also realize that there’s a slight erosion of your knowl-
edge going on as well. The assumption that quality improvements are attained indef-
initely is not correct.”

“Firms need to be vigilant, even if they don’t see the need for it.”

The paper will appear in the journal Manufacturing and Services Operations Management.

Quality competence – the deprivation of organizational knowledge can mute the
effects of a company’s quality performance initiatives, says research co-written by Anupam Agrawal, a professor of business administration at Illinois.

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Medical malpractice reform does little to contain health costs

By Phil Cicire
Bureau Chief, Law Editor

Two papers co-authored by a U. of I. expert in the regulation and financing of health care conclude that tort reform has had relatively little impact on the U.S. health care system.

Tort reform advocates have hailed caps on noneconomic damages as a silver bullet for controlling health care costs – as a way to reduce defensive medicine and attract more physicians to a state, particularly those practicing in high-risk specialties. But according to David Hyman, the H. Ross and Helen Workman Chair in Law and professor of medicine, there’s scant evidence to support any of those claims.

“The best evidence is that caps would have little or no effect,” he said. “Evidence that caps might actually increase health care costs,” Hyman said. “It’s very hard to see how damage caps bend the cost curve down or materially increase the number of practicing physicians in a state.”

According to Hyman, the direct costs of medical malpractice liability “prey on economic modesty” relative to total health care spending in the U.S. but is “not likely to be a major factor.”

One paper examined the third wave of malpractice reforms, which consisted of states adopting caps on noneconomic damages – so-called “tort reform” states that include Arizona, Florida and Texas – that enacted tort reform from 2002-05. Thirty-one states covering about 70 percent of the U.S. population have already adopted damage caps, according to the paper.

“We compared what was happening in heightening sensitivities in those states before and after tort reform with what was happening in the control states, which were the states that had never enacted tort reform and states that had enacted tort reform during one of the earlier waves,” Hyman said. “Some early studies found evidence that enacting tort reform made a big difference in health care spending. Subsequent studies found more modest effects. Other studies found no effect.”

Hyman and his co-authors found enacting a damage cap had no effect on hospital spending, but, somewhat surprisingly, caused an increase in spending on physician services.

“It turns out that eliminating liability didn’t lower spending – it actually resulted in a slight uptick in spending,” he said. “So the argument, ‘Just pass tort reform and you’ll save lots of money,’ was not borne out in our study. The bottom line is you’re not going to save a lot of money with tort reform, and there’s some evidence that you might actually increase spending.”

The second paper considered another common claim about medical malpractice reform: States that enact tort reform will become a “magnet” for physical liability, especially those who practice in a high-risk specialty.

“There is a certain plausibility to that argument,” Hyman said. “People decide where to live and work based on many factors. If tort reform means that a practicing physician’s malpractice premiums are lower, then it might factor into whether or not they move to your state. Or it may make some physicians in that state defer retirement. It’s also possible that malpractice caps make it easier for someone to do a residency, and deciding where to set up practice after they finish their residency.”

But outside of a slight increase in the number of plastic surgeons, Hyman and his co-authors found no evidence that adopting a cap on damages from medical malpractice increases the number of physicians or the number of high-risk physicians.

“The economics of attracting and keeping high-risk specialists and those practicing in rural areas are challenging, and so the question is what tools do you have to do that, so they provide needed services,” he said. “Tort reform proponents argue quite vehemently that enacting a strong cap on noneconomic damages is a good way to get physicians to move to your state. But what we found contradicts that.”

Hyman and his co-authors found enacting tort reform on physician supply is really an argument about access to health care services, Hyman said.

“The idea is, there are physicians practicing in the state, citizens of the state will have an easier time getting health care, and caps are one of the levers that policymakers have to try to increase access for patients,” he said.

But policymakers have other “levers” at their disposal.

“PAYING physicians more when they treat Medicaid beneficiaries is a clear and direct way of encouraging physicians to move to your state and practice in settings where access to medical services is a problem,” he said.

If the impact of tort reform on health care cost and physician supply is so small, then what’s the point?

“We continue to have these problems with the health care delivery system – quality problems, access problems, cost problems,” Hyman said. “The bigger question is, if tort reform isn’t the solution, what is?”

Hyman co-wrote the papers with Bernard Black and Myaik Paik, both of Northwestern University.

Study highlights the complexities of ant perception

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

Researchers report that trap-jaw ants recognize the unique odor of a fertile queen only if the queen also shares the workers’ own chemical volleyball – a distinct blend of dozens of smelly, waxy compounds that coat the ants’ bodies from head to toe. The discovery offers new insights into how social animals evolved and communicate with others in their group, the researchers say.

The findings, reported in Biology Letters, showed that chemical context makes all the difference to the trap-jaw ant (Odontotumachus brunneus), said U. of I. postdoctoral researcher Adrian Smith, who led the study with U. of I. entomology professor Jocelyn Millar and animal biology department head Andrew Suarez.

In that overall chemical profile – 40 to 50 compounds that they’re producing and that coat their entire body – the ants can tell who belongs in the nest and who doesn’t,” Smith said. Once they recognize the distinctive blend of odors that defines their nest, the ants can sniff out the queen, who also smells of nonacosene, a universal signal of fertility in this species of trap-jaw ant. Only queens are allowed to add this fertility compound to their antennae. But workers failed to retract their antennae when confronting a queen from a distant colony.

When workers encountered queens from a different nest in their own colony – one with a nearly identical background odor profile – they did retract their antennae, crouching and backing away, Smith said. But workers failed to retract their antennae when confronting a queen from a distant colony.

Unlike humans, however, ants can collect this information only at close range, by antennating other ants.

“THAT’s the point of perception; that’s the point of seeing something for them,” Smith said. “These chemical compounds are the only thing they don’t want off the ant, and they’re only perceptible within a relatively small range, like a few millimeters, basically.”

In a second set of experiments, the researchers exposed some queenless ant colonies to nonacosene by placing the fertility compound on a glass slide inside the nest. In other nests, which functioned as controls, the researchers placed glass slides with no fertility signal. There was no difference in behavior between the ants who were exposed to nonacosene and those that weren’t, indicating, once again, that the fertility compound in isolation signals nothing meaningful to the ants. Only in the proper context can the ants make sense of the fertility signal.

“This research highlights the importance of the social context in which signals are nested,” Smith said. “It’s relevant to the evolution of communication for any animal that lives in a group.”

Entomology professor Jocelyn Millar of the University of California at Riverside contributed to this research.
Tablet computers good medium for educational materials

By Phil Ciciora
Business and Law Editor
Feb. 5, 2015

As someone who comes from the e-learning field, it was very interesting to see how students responded to what was then new technology.”

—Norma I. Scagnoli

Degraded or missing image.

“Overall, the results indicate students used the tablets mostly as a tool for communication and as a reading device, with an average of 49 percent of class reading done on the tablet. By the end of the academic year in which the mobile tablet was introduced, 80 percent of students indicated they were comfortable reading content on a screen, noting that they rarely printed documents anymore. “Students liked not having to carry heavy backpacks full of books and laptops, and they enjoyed the easy, anytime-anywhere access to class materials,” said Gopesh Anand, a professor of business administration at Illinois and co-author of the paper.

In 2011, many of the apps that are now considered standard — word processing and presentation programs, for example — were not available for mobile technology. At the time, few students had used a tablet computer. “Now, of course, pretty much everyone has a tablet or is at least familiar with them long before they arrive in the classroom,” Chhajed said.

Faculty members teaching in the program also were offered tablets and encouraged to use them in whatever way they saw fit for class purposes. That was a risky approach, according to Anand. “It was aimed at creating pull from the students and faculty saying, ‘Yes, this is something we want,’” he said. “We always think before we do anything new that we should lay the groundwork to preempt complaints from students, faculty or staff. What was refreshing about this approach was we didn’t wait for perfection to start. And by taking that approach, we created buy-in from the students and faculty.” The tablets weren’t forced upon the students or faculty members, the researchers note. “We gave them the tablets and said, ‘Use it any way you want if it increases your productivity,’” Chhajed said. “We didn’t say, ‘Don’t play games or watch movies,’ or put any other prohibitions or restrictions on it. We gave them the tools and then let them choose how to use it. And they used it for the things that mattered to them.” The results were more positive than anticipated by program administrators, said Norma I. Scagnoli, the director of e-learning with the College of Business and co-author of the paper.

As someone who comes from the e-learning field, it was very interesting to see how students responded to what was then a new technology,” she said. Scagnoli, also a research professor with the College of Education, said it was an enlightening experiment to see which aspects of the technology worked for students — as well as which didn’t. “At the time, there wasn’t a lot of information about how to do things like annotate documents on a tablet,” she said. “But students found a way and figured it out. It was interesting to see how this new technology engaged them in critical thinking about their own learning strategies.” Chhajed said administrators also organized extra events to tie technology to critical-thinking skills. “For each of the three years that we ran the experiment, in the spring semester there was an innovation challenge that was about designing an app,” he said. “We gave them a week, and then they presented their idea to a panel of judges. That is where creativity comes in: When you’re familiar with something, the question of how you extend it to a new environment presents itself.”

Former U. of I. graduate student Seung Won Hong is a co-author of the paper. ◆
KAM exhibition highlights modernist homes, fabrication

By Jodi Heckel
Arts and Humanities Editor

Erik Hemingway says his Urbana home, designed by the late architect John Replinger, is a well-kept secret. With its floor-to-ceiling windows across the back looking onto a golf course, a feeling of openness and spaciousness inside, and an interior courtyard, it’s an example of midcentury modern architectural style.

“It’s got those classic lines,” Hemingway said. “Even though it was designed 50 years ago, it has aged well. It has an international appeal. It is very solid.”

Hemingway, a U. of I. architecture professor and a practicing designer, has an interest in modernist architecture. His rehabilitation work on his Urbana home and other modern buildings is part of a new exhibition at Krannert Art Museum. “Erik Hemingway Modernism” is part of “Speculative Visions of Pragmatic Architectures,” which opened Jan. 29 at the museum.

His part of the exhibition documents work on the Urbana home and two apartments in a Mies van der Rohe building in Chicago, including photographs of the Replinger house by Phillip Kalantzis-Cope. Hemingway’s research interest is looking at how architects such as Replinger and A. Quincy Jones were influenced by earlier masters of modernism, such as Mies van der Rohe and Richard Neutra.

Hemingway said Champaign-Urbana has a surprising number of modernist homes.

“There’s kind of a closet modernism in some neighborhoods,” he said.

Not all are in good condition, however. His Replinger home had a great deal of damage from moisture, with cracks on the walls and ceilings throughout the home. In addition to rehabilitating that home, he upgraded two apartments in the Mies van der Rohe building while “still respecting the bones of the building and the details of the apartments.”

Hemingway tried to do the renovations economically, with materials that can be purchased at big box stores, to show homeowners on budgets that they can afford to maintain a modernist home. He hopes his work and the museum exhibition will lead to more appreciation of modernist homes.

The other part of the “Speculative Visions of Pragmatic Architectures” exhibition shows work from the U. of I. School of Architecture’s Detail and Fabrication program. The program emphasizes the process of making, great attention to detail and hands-on experimentation with materials, said architecture professor Jeffery Poss, curator of the exhibition.

“Building a piece of furniture is a good way for students to learn the entire design process from conception to finished product,” Poss said.

Poss will lead a gallery conversation about the Krannert Art Museum exhibition, along with Hemingway, Swiatek and Brian Vesely, lead designer at his make-lite design studio, at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 19 at the museum.

Erik Hemingway’s work on the home is documented in a new exhibition at Krannert Art Museum. “Erik Hemingway Modernism” is part of “Speculative Visions of Pragmatic Architectures,” which opened Jan. 29. The exhibition includes a concept of an adaptive building strategy for use in flood-ed areas, as well as furniture designed and made in the Detail and Fabrication Lab.

Two stools and a small side table represent both traditional and newer forms of making, Poss said. The stools’ wooden legs were made using traditional millwork techniques, while the seats and side table were made from a digitally created mold that was produced using a computer-controlled router and then used for casting concrete.

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Building a piece of furniture is a good way for students to learn the entire design process from conception to finished product, Poss said.

Poss will lead a gallery conversation about the Krannert Art Museum exhibition, along with Hemingway, Swiatek and Brian Vesely, lead designer at his make-lite design studio, at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 19 at the museum.

To view job postings, apply for civil service or academic jobs at Illinois, or to update your application information:

jobs.illinois.edu
Construction of solar farm scheduled

Construction of a 5.87 megawatt solar farm on campus with more than 20,000 solar panels was approved by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. The project was approved with the condition that the University enter into a lease agreement with Solar Power Group in order to receive the approved power purchase and land lease agreements with Phoenix Solar South Farms LLC.

The solar farm, which will be constructed on the site of the former Champaign County Fairgrounds, will provide power to the Urbana campus and help reduce the University’s carbon footprint.

The solar farm will be one of the largest on-site university arrays in the country, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency statistics, producing 7.36 million kilowatt-hours per year, or approximately 2 percent of the electrical demand for the Urbana campus based on fiscal year 2015 projections.

“We are very pleased to see this long-awaited agreement completed and signed, so the installation can begin,” said Al Stratman, the executive director of Facilities and Services. “This unique and challenging project was only made possible through the dedication of many people working together and focused on achieving our renewable energy goals.”

In 2008, the university signed the American College and University Pledge, committing to carbon neutrality by 2050. As a part of this commitment, specific goals for energy conservation and renewable energy were outlined in the 2010 Illinois Climate Action Plan. The solar farm will contribute toward the renewable energy used on campus for at least 20 years.

“The solar farm represents the success of numerous efforts, including those made by the many hard-working students committed to advancing renewable energy and environmental sustainability,” said Amy Liu, the chair of the Student Sustainability Committee. “Its construction will be a historic project and a source of great pride for campus.”

Phoenix Solar Inc. will be the contractor for the solar farm installation and operation.

Construction of the solar farm will occur between First Street and the railroad tracks, the 20.8 acre solar farm was first approved by the U. of I. Board of Trustees in November 2013.

Asian Educational Media Service

AsiaLENS spring film series announced

Established in fall 2008 by the Asian Educational Media Service in partnership with the Spurlock Museum, the AsiaLENS series presents recent documentary and independent films on issues reflecting contemporary life in Asia. Screenings are hosted at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Knight Auditorium at Spurlock Museum, with spring 2015 programming focusing on matters of spirituality and recovery.

The first film of the semester will be “Embrace” on Feb. 10. A 2011 film by Dan Snyder Yu and Pema Tashi, the film tells a story through the narratives of a father and son, two tantric yogis of two generations. This film illustrates both the transcendent and sentient dimensions of Tibetan sacred sites and of their ecological significance, and documents a ritualized relationship between people and the place of their dwelling and natural surroundings. U. of I. scholar Alexander Mayer, a professor of religion and East Asian languages and cultures, will lead a post-screening discussion.

The series concludes April 14 with the 2013 film “Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard,” by Bryan Reichardt and Shirumi Shigeta Manale. This film tells a story of the rediscovery of long-lost pictures drawn by Hiroshima school children living in the aftermath of the atomic bomb. This is a film about hope in the face of horror, the power of reconciliation and the unwavering optimism of children. This final screening will feature a discussion led by Rodrick Wilson, a U. of I. professor of history and East Asian languages and cultures.

The Asian Educational Media Service is an outreach program of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. U. of I. students committed to advancing renewable energy and environmental sustainability, and docu-
array of artwork created by Japan’s leading-yet-marginalized artists. The film articulates the lasting impact that the spirit of resistance. Roderick Wilson, a professor of history and East Asian language and cultures, will introduce the screening, sponsored in part by Asian Educational Media Service and Krannert Art Museum.

Survey Research Lab
Survey methods webinars announced
The Survey Research Laboratory is offering six intermedia webinars on survey research methodology during the spring 2015 semester. The series is free to university faculty, staff and students. A basic understanding of survey research methods is recommended. All webinars begin at noon. Advance online registration is required at http://go.illinois.edu/srl_sp15.

This spring’s webinars are Cognitively Pretesting of Questions (Feb. 11), Sampling Hard-to-Reach Populations (Feb. 18), Nonresponse Bias Assessment (Feb. 25), Ethics in Survey Research (March 4), Questionnaire Design Clinic (March 11) and Agree-Disagree Response Formats: Problems and Alternatives (March 18).

National Center for Supercomputing Applications
Apply for fellowships by Feb. 22
Researchers at the U. of I.’s Urbana campus are invited to apply for the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) postdoctoral fellowship program, which provides seed funding for demonstration or start-up projects, workshops or other activities with the potential to lead to longer-term collaborations around research, development and education.

Fellows are provided a zero-percent appointment at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications and are responsible for contributing to the center’s academic core, playing a significant role in advising on center strategy, contributing to and taking part in large collaborative faculty efforts, and acting as liaisons with their home departments. Fellows are provided office space at NCSA as appropriate and have direct access to NCSA research scientists, staff and services. Where possible, NCSA will provide access to compute, data and other cyberinfrastructure—including software licenses—needed for fellowship projects.

Projects are encouraged that build on existing NCSA activities, including the center’s six thematic areas:
- Cybersecurity (contact Randy Butler)
- National Data Service (contact Ray Plante)
- Imaging and Spatial Data Analysis (contact Kenton McHenry)
- Private Sector Program (contact Merle Giles)
- Biocomputing and Bioinformatics (contact C. Victor Kindratenko)
- Advanced Visualization Laboratory (contact Donna Con)
- Bioinformatics and health sciences (contact C. Victor Kindratenko)
- Computing and data sciences (contact Gabrielle Allen)
- Culture and society (contact Donna Cox)
- Earth and environment (contact Shaowen Wang)
- Materials and manufacturing (contact Narayana Aluru)
- Physics and astronomy (contact Athol Kembhal)

Other major projects and programs, include:
- Blue Waters (contact Greg Bauer)
- XSEDE (contact Jay Alamada)
- Extreme Systems Laboratory (contact Volodymyr Kindratenko)
- Advanced Visualization Laboratory (contact Donna Con)

The awards are collectively known as the Campus Awards for Excellence in Faculty Leadership. Illinois is a premier public university where faculty members provide outstanding leadership that enriches the intellectual vitality of the campus and the broader community. In recognition of those faculty members who distinguish themselves with their vision of the future and their effort to enable and promote others in shaping that future, three campus-level awards for excellence in faculty leadership will be given annually. Campus-level administrators (e.g., in the offices of the chancellor and provost and deans) are not eligible. Awards are presented at the annual Campus Service and Leadership Appreciation Reception. The Excellence in Faculty Mentoring Award recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to faculty mentoring by actively assisting prospective and early-career faculty in advancing their careers. Exceptional mentoring can include offering advice, feedback and guidance on research activities, coaching on work-life balance issues, providing professional opportunities for mentees, and assisting in development of teaching skills. The award consists of a recurring salary increment of $2,000, $2,500 for the personal use of the recipient, and a personalized commemorative plaque.

The Outstanding Faculty Leadership Award recognizes a faculty member who has provided extraordinary leadership contributions across many dimensions of shared governance (e.g., committee work, chair of task force, service in the Urbana-Champaign Senate) that advance the excellence of a department, a college and/or the campus, and who exemplifies the campus commitment to collaborative decision-making. This award is the highest accolade honoring a faculty member whose professional service has advanced the Illinois mission. The award consists of a recurring salary increment of $2,000, $2,500 for the personal use of the recipient, and a personalized commemorative plaque.

The nomination period for these awards is now open. The following is the annual deadline schedule:

- Deadline for departmental nominations to be forwarded to the college: March 1
- Deadline for college- or campus-level unit nominations to be submitted: March 15
- Awards presented at the Campus Service and Leadership Appreciation Reception.

*When a deadline falls on a weekend or campus holiday, nominations will be due the next business day.

For more information, contact Kim Green at provosta wards@illinois.edu or 217-244-3669.

Ten books that changed the world
‘History Soapbox’ is Feb. 11
What is the one book that you think really changed everything? On Feb. 11 at the Illini Union, 10 U. of I. history professors will sell their one book of choice. The seven professors and three graduate students each will have just six minutes to make their case. Then those in attendance will vote.

The ‘History Soapbox’ event will begin at 8 p.m. in the General Lounge (Room 210) of the Illini Union. It is free and open to the public.

Participants will be history professors Terri Barnes, Marc Hertzman, Fred Hoxie, Mark Micale, Mark Steinberg, Carol Symes and John Randolph, and doctoral students Peggy Brennan, Uthaya Chaturpadhyaya and Sylvia Escamilla Huerta. Their chosen books will be announced that evening.

For more information, contact Antoinette Burton at aburton@illinois.edu. ♦
Lots of cats in The New York Times, and not all just for fun

By Craig Chamberlain
Social Sciences Editor

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The cute cat video seems to be everywhere online, and it’s become a handy epithet for everything that journalism should not be. So what should we make of the fact that The New York Times, that paragon of journalism, has written a lot about cats over 140 years?

That’s the question posed by University of Illinois journalism professor Matthew Ehrlich after compiling hundreds of cat-related tales from the Times’ digital archive.

In his search, Ehrlich found hero cats and nuisance cats and victimized cats; streetwise alley cats, abandoned waterfront cats, killer deli cats and pampered office cats. He found numerous stories on cats versus birds, cats and women, cats as urban symbols, and story after story about cats getting stuck and then usually extracted from almost every conceivable place – including trees, ledges, chimneys, piers, sewers, packing crates and airplane cargo holds.

“Cat stories have been part of the news diet that the paper of record has been serving up almost since its beginnings,” according to Ehrlich, whose paper on the subject was posted online by the journal Journalism.

The commercial reasons for writing about cats seem apparent based on the ebb and flow of stories over the years, he said. The stories began to appear in the 1870s, and they point to intensely polemical debates over how animals should be treated and what journalism should be.

The Times coverage, for instance, shows that cats were more despised than fawned over in the late 1800s; especially in cities, Ehrlich said. They were regarded then as an urban nuisance.

“This is demonstrated in a ‘gleefully gruesome’ 1885 editorial concerning a cat that wedged its head in a tin can and eventually died. The paper suggested it would like to see the same happen citywide: ‘The midnight concerts of canned cats will make the whole city melodious, and after their swan song is sung the cats will die, and the whole feline race, so far as this city is concerned, will be exterminated.’”

Even tongue in cheek, “you couldn’t possibly get away with that today,” Ehrlich said. “What it suggests, obviously, is that cultural attitudes toward cats have changed dramatically.”

Ehrlich has no pets and is a self-described “cat agnostic.” But he was drawn to the subject after seeing two stories in the Times about cats versus birds, and another several months later about cats as killers of wildlife. The latter drew a heat-ed online response, quickly becoming the most-emailed and most-commented-upon story that day on the Times site.

Given the way that “cute cat videos” had been vilified by critics, Ehrlich got curious about the extent of cat stories over the years in the “self-consciously serious” Times.

He did a ProQuest search of the paper’s digital archive for references to cats in story subjects, titles and headlines, and found more than 2,300 items over 140 years, starting in the 1870s. After sifting out stories that were redundant or of marginal interest, he had nearly 700 stories that would become the focus of his study.

Ehrlich found coverage of debates over cloning, declawing and drugs for cats.

Those stories demonstrate that cat and animal news is not all just for fun, Ehrlich said. Many ongoing issues relate to human-animal interaction, ranging from livestock farming to animal experimentation to the rights and responsibilities of pet owners, he said.

“Those relationships are very complicated and they’re rooted in history and culture, and we don’t think about them,” Ehrlich said. “The news is one way of helping us think about them.”

Ehrlich also thinks that animal news, cute and otherwise, may have lessons for the future of journalism – and the academic study of journalism – given that even “serious” newspapers have always included stories appealing to the heart as well as the head.

“Clearly, people respond very powerfully to animals. We should probably think about why people respond so powerfully to them, and the ways in which journalism can learn from that,” Ehrlich said.

“It’s not that animal news is something that is an exemplar for what all of journalism should be. It’s just that we shouldn’t be so quick to dismiss it as trivial, when so many people care so deeply about it.”