Research program to center on foster children and community

By Andrea Lynn

A UI faculty member who sowed the seeds of hope for foster children and families in Illinois four years ago when she began Hope for the Children on the abandoned Chanute Air Force base in Rantoul, is seeing another one of her ideas take root at the UI.

Brenda Krause Eheart, director of HFTC, a unique intergenerational community of foster and adoptive families, senior citizen volunteers and professional counselors and staff members, will lead a new UI interdisciplinary research program centered on foster children and community.

“Brenda Krause Eheart, director of Hope for the Children and a member of the sociology department and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, will lead a new UI interdisciplinary research program centered on foster children and community,” said Daniel R. Bush, a professor of plant biology and scientist with the Photosynthesis Research Unit of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service.

These nutrient import-dependent tissues include every harvested product in agriculture.

Bush and postdoctoral researcher Tzyy-Jen Chiou, the co-author on the PNAS paper, discovered a regulatory system that controls the long-distance transport of sucrose.

“This paper provides the first clue to a system that can regulate resource allocation,” Bush said. “The vascular tissue, I think, is going to turn out to be a very dynamic tissue in a plant, because it’s there where cells move organic material around, not unlike the human vascular system. This is not only a pathway for materials, but also for information.”

All plants respond to changing environmental conditions by redirecting organic nutrients from the leaves to different organs as needed. How does a plant monitor what is going on? “You may see leaves stunted, in a holding pattern, but the roots are proliferating in an attempt to increase the uptake of a limiting mineral,” Bush said. “How does the plant control the allocation of resources for this response?”

“This finding is an important first step in understanding resource allocation,” he said. “I believe there are other regulators here. My suspicion is that there are other control pathways that are integrating with this system to communicate information such as water content or nitrogen availability.”

Understanding resource distribution in plants, Bush said, may lead to the ability to manipulate the distribution of carbon to maximize crop yields or improve nutritional value.

Research sheds light on how plants regulate distribution of nutrients

By Jim Barlow

In humans, the heart is the mechanical pump that circulates the blood of life. In plants, according to new research, it is sucrose accumulation that energizes the heart’s equivalent – an osmotically driven pressure-gradient – in a vascular system that regulates and directs where life-giving resources go.

At the heart of the findings, published in the April 14 issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is improved understanding of how plants regulate the distribution of organic nutrients synthesized during photosynthesis, says a UI scientist.

“We could have diagrammed the mechanics of the plant’s vascular system 10 years ago, but what we didn’t have at that time were biochemical and molecular understanding of the proteins that mediate the key steps,” said Daniel R. Bush, a professor of plant biology and scientist with the Photosynthesis Research Unit of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service.

Bush previously had used a biochemical assay to describe a proton-sucrose transporter in plant cells. Sucrose is the primary end product of photosynthesis. When it leaves from leaves, it is loaded into the elongated phloem cells of the vascular tissue by the transporter, which boosts sucrose concentration 50 to 100 times higher than it is in all surrounding cells. As water moves in, Bush said, positive hydrostatic pressure builds, forcing the sucrose through the continuously linked phloem cells and to the non-photosynthetic sink tissues that need organic nutrients.

In plants, according to Eheart, RMHC is granting nearly $700,000 over three years to the UI through HFTC to set up the program, which will involve UI faculty members and students. The aim of the program is “to bridge the gap between academic scholarship, public policy and program development in child welfare,” said Eheart, a member of the sociology department and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

Interdisciplinary research projects already underway at HFTC include the community as a network of interaction. Ritalin and hyperactivity in foster care, and cost analysis of foster care communities.

Hope for the Children is a nonprofit corporation and licensed child-welfare agency at Hope Meadows, on the grounds of the former Air Force base. The innovative model is designed to secure a nurturing and permanent environment for foster care children to live and thrive in.

On May 6, RMHC announced that it also is sponsoring a nearly $7 million program to replicate the HFTC model in at least six sites across the nation over the next three years. The first of the sites, all to be called RMHC Generations of Hope, is in the Rockefeller Park neighborhood in Cleveland; it is expected to open in 1999. Chris Zimmerman will direct the RMHC Generations of Hope program from an office adjacent to the HFTC office in Rantoul. Brenda Edgar, wife of Gov. Jim Edgar, is honorary chairperson of the RMHC Generations of Hope advisory board. UI President James J. Stukel and Eheart are members of the board.
Board requests tighter procedures for faculty sabbaticals

By Shannon Viele

The Review

A t its May 14 meeting in Urbana, the UI Board of Trustees heard a presentation on the university’s procedures for granting paid sabbaticals.

Two months ago, the board approved 234 faculty sabbaticals recommended by the chancellors of the three campuses, but two board members abstained from voting on the issue.

Trustee Thomas Lamont said that the trustees needed more information about how sabbaticals work so they could explain to the public why the board would continue awarding sabbaticals.

“At the end of the day, faculty members are employees, and sabbaticals are viewed by many people as a privilege,” he said.

In her presentation, Sylvia Manning, UI vice president for academic affairs, explained that sabbaticals are a reassignment from classroom teaching to a faculty member to pursue a systematic program for improving teaching, conducting research, or working in an analogous to any education or training program for continuing employees.

Over the past 12 years, the number of sabbaticals approved by the board has ranged from a high of 282 in fiscal year 1980 to a low of 230 in fiscal year 1997. The overall decline in the number of sabbaticals tracks the decline in the number of faculty members at the Urbana campus.

Over the past five years, approved sabbaticals have made up about 2.5 percent of the payroll of tenure-system faculty members. Any reduction in the number of faculty members approved for sabbaticals takes, that percentage actually comes to 2.25 percent of the payroll.

Each campus has slightly different procedures for awarding sabbaticals, but all faculty members must submit a proposal to be eligible and submit a report after completing a sabbatical.

Faculty members are not entitled to sabbaticals. To receive one, a faculty member’s proposal must be recommended by the department head with the concurrence of the dean of the college or director of the unit. It also must be recommended by the campus chancellor, president and board of trustees.

Manning asked two department heads, Don Besecker of the department of engineering education and Paul Bohn from Urbana’s chemistry department, to give reports on how they administer sabbaticals.

Marshall provided examples of specific cases of sabbatical proposal rejections. He said that factors used to decide whether to grant a faculty sabbatical include the merit of the sabbatical proposals submitted, the number and quality of the faculty member’s recent publications, and the faculty member’s performance during a previous sabbatical.

Bohn said that faculty members in his department had to show that they would be pursuing research at least one third of their sabbaticals — becoming familiar with new techniques or advancing in instrumentation, developing new collaborations with other experts or synthesizing the results from a particularly active period of scholarly attention to a problem.

When evaluating sabbatical proposals, the department heads also consider their department’s needs in assessing whether it will have the resources to deliver undergraduate and graduate instruction with a reasonable level of quality.

Faculty members who don’t perform well on their sabbatical projects may face such consequences as lesser salary increases, failure to win or renew research funding and loss of peer recognition, Manning wrote in her report to the board.

Lamont said that he was sure most faculty members accomplished their objectives, he was concerned about the university’s ability to monitor the outcomes of sabbatical projects for reviewing and evaluating the work done during sabbaticals.

Consequences such as loss of peer recognition or lesser pay increases seemed somewhat insignificant for failing to perform, he said.

Manning said that there is a large gray area between a productive sabbatical and an unproductive one. For example, a professor on sabbatical might complete a book that is mediocre. If there is no standard in the world for saying the faculty member didn’t do the job, she said.

Manning said she knew of no instance in which a faculty member had completely failed to perform any work during a sabbatical.

If we had a situation where, instead of attempting to write a book, the faculty member had gone to Hawaii, then we would have a problem,” she said. Lamont agreed.

The trustees said they supported the practice of granting sabbaticals, but merely wanted to tighten standards for holding faculty members accountable.

The provosts of the three campuses will study current procedures for handling sabbatical reports as well as possible methods for determining consequences for those who fail to perform adequately, Manning said.

Trustee Ada Lopez said that while holding faculty members accountable is important, it also is important to understand the nature of the university so that one doesn’t hold faculty members to models that it doesn’t necessarily fit.

“Teaching is very much an art,” she said.

Lamont asked whether faculty members couldn’t spend the summer months improving their skills rather than taking a sabbatical.

But President James J. Stukel said that faculty members often must use the summer months to conduct research or work with graduate students. Often, they have responsibilities to outside funding agencies.

Chairman Michael Aiken said that the responsibilities of faculty members are often open-ended. The amount of time spent pre- paring for the fall is a job in itself, and achieving student learning goals depends largely upon the conscientiousness of the individual professor.

“Most faculty members work 55 to 80 hours a week, not 30 or 40,” he said.

UIC south campus development

During the public-comment session of the meeting, several people called upon the board to take action to preserve the existing buildings in the expansion area for UIC’s south campus.

Daniel Marmer, a master’s candidate in geography and urban planning at UIC, said that the area between a productive sabbatical and an unproductive one is analogous to any education or training program for continuing employees. Most faculty members work 55 to 80 hours a week, not 30 or 40,” he said.

Inside ILLINOIS

Inside Illinois is an employeepublication of the

University of Illinois at Chicago.

UIC is published on the first and third

Thursday of each month by the News Bureau of the

campus. (Office of Public Affairs, approved by the

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Summer recipe series gets sizzling start

We're cooking and it isn't because it's been unusually hot this past week. Several recipes have come in for Inside Illinois' new summer recipe series and they all look tasty. So clip the recipes below to try and then get inspired and send us one of your own. Do you have a great recipe for the grill, or one that uses veggies or fruit from the garden? Maybe you have a hot-day favorite that cools appetites without heating the house. And don't forget to include a few lines about the recipe, as where it came from or why it's a favorite -- any tidbits of information that tell us more. We plan to do a random drawing from all contributors for a prize to be determined. Please submit your recipes and stories (not handwritten, if possible) to: Nancy Koenerman, 807 S. Wright, Suite 520 East, MC-314 or e-mail koenerman@uiuc.edu or fax 244-0361.

Easy Eggplant

(should feed 4 as a side dish or 2 as a main dish)
1 medium eggplant
a bit of low fat mayonnaise
3/4 cup fresh grated Parmesan (use fresh, not prepackaged)

Cut the eggplant into 1/2 inch slices (skins and all). Rub a small amount of mayo on each side of the slices. You won't need much. Dip each slice into the grated parmesan so that it covers uniformly. (It'll stick to the mayo.) Place the slices on a greased broiling rack and grill under the oven broiler 'til lightly browned and bubbly on the first side. Flip the slices over and repeat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.

For accompaniments: fresh tomato slices with silvered fresh basil, corn on the cob or fresh green beans, and chilled Frascati wine (a fresh, light Italian white).

Green bean/pea salad

1 small can peas, drained
1 small can pinto beans, drained
1 large onion, diced
1/2 teaspoon paprika

Combine all dressing ingredients in a quart jar. Shake well and pour over vegetables. Let stand in refrigerator for 24 hours. Drain vegetables before serving.

COE hosts middle-school camp

The College of Engineering is hosting a camp for sixth- and seventh-grade girls Aug. 2 through July on the Urbana campus. The camp is sponsored by the Women in Engineering Program and Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering (Wyse), will demonstrate possible careers in math, science and engineering. Girls also will gain skills in oral and written communication and computer technology. In addition, topics such as gender equity and cultural diversity will be explored with the participants.

Faculty and staff members from the college will provide hands-on demonstrations and lectures from their perspective disciplines. In addition, the participants will have the opportunity to explore one specific research area in depth.

To receive an application for the program, contact Susan A. Limmermeyer at 344-3517 or slimmermeyer@uiuc.edu with subject heading “Middle School Camp.” The registration deadline is July 1. Forty participants will be accepted for the program. Cost is $400 for the residential program and $250 for the nonresidential program.

Knappert Center ticket order forms

Summer brochures for Knappert Center for the Performing Arts have been mailed, but ticket order forms were inadvertently omitted from the mailing. Order forms for Knappert Center’s 1998-1999 season events should have been mailed by May 20 along with the summer issue of CenterStage, Knappert Center’s newsletter. Order forms also are available at the Knappert Center ticket office. Orders for series or single tickets may be placed with the ticket office by phone, 333-6288, or fax 333-6289; or by e-mail at KCPATIX@uiuc.edu. A telephone order will ensure that patrons receive all the benefits of the new 1998-1999 season discounted series prices.
Joyce Wright, head of the undergraduate library, with some of the adaptive technology recently installed at the library. An open house was held May 1 at the library to showcase the Alternative Reading Rooms and adaptive technologies for use by people with disabilities. The space and technology are a joint effort between the Division of Rehabilitation Education Services and the library. The equipment shown is the Omni 1000 and 3000 workstations. Omni 1000 is text-reading software for use by people who are visually impaired. Omni 3000 is software for use by people who have learning disabilities, or people with low vision. A number of other kinds of adaptive/assistive technology have been or will be installed over the next several months.

Seven CAS fellows appointed by Shannon Vinic

A t its May 14 meeting in Urbana, the UI Board of Trustees approved the appointment of seven faculty members as 1998-99 fellows in the Center for Advanced Study. The appointments provide untenured faculty members with one semester of release time for creative work on self-initiated projects of scholarly research or professional activity. The fellows are nominated by their department heads and selected by the Center forAdvanced Study professors.

Faculty members named fellows, and the research they intend to pursue:

• Kelly Korinne Bost, human and community development, multiple factors associated with preschool children’s social adaptation in the classroom setting.
• Ann Bekrus-Chasson, art and design, Liu Yuan’s ‘Lingyan’ge and practices of reading in 17th-century Suzhou, China.
• Aida X. El-Khadra, physics, phonemology with improved lattice quantum chromodynamics.
• Poshek Fu, history, the cultural politics of Chinese cinema in Japanese-occupied Shanghai from 1937 to 1945.
• David Gin, chemistry, development of a direct dehydroygenation method for the synthesis of complex oligosaccharides and conjugates.
• Erik R. Lund, music, composition of commissioned works: a concerto for trombone and computer-generated tape, and a work for the UI percussion ensemble.

Survivors include her husband, Raymond; a stepson; a daughter; a stepdaughter; four brothers; two sisters; 10 grandchildren; and a great-granddaughter. Memorial contributions may be made to Provena Covenant Hospice Unit.

Dorothy I. DeWitt

Dorothy Irene DeWitt, former UI food service worker, died April 26 at her home in Urbana. She was 82. DeWitt worked at the Illini Union for 26 years. She was survived by her husband, Randy; a stepson; a daughter; a stepdaughter; four brothers; two sisters; 10 grandchildren; and a great-granddaughter.

photo by Bill Wiegand

University Librarian Robert Wedgeworth has announced his plan to retire from the university as of Aug. 20, 1999. In a letter to Interim Provost Thomas Kallman, Wedgeworth stated that his retirement in August 1999 “would accommodate the university’s needs in light of the expected appointment of a new provost in the coming year. The university librarian responsible for guiding the University Library into the next century should have ample opportunity to make plans she or he will be expected to implement. The appointment of a new provost will coincide nicely with the search for a new university librarian, should the timing of this appointment work as expected.”

Wedgeworth was appointed interim university librarian in September 1992, upon the resignation of David Bishop, and was appointed university librarian in November 1993. During his tenure, the library has completed development of a comprehensive technology infrastructure and has propelled its Mortenson Center for International Library Programs into the forefront of international library cooperation and exchange programs. Wedgeworth’s arrival at the university coincided with the start of Campaign Illinois, and he was actively supported. Since 1992, the library has attracted more than $15 million in new active and deferred endowments, building on the more than $10 million in active endowments in existence prior to 1992.

“T have been grateful for the opportunity to lead the resurgence and revitalization of such a great library,” Wedgeworth said. “By any measure one might choose, I believe that we will leave the University Library demonstrably stronger than I found it and well positioned to enter the next millennium.”

Wedgeworth is a 1959 graduate of Wabash College and received his master’s degree in library science from the UI’s School of Library Science in 1961. He was executive director of the American Library Association’s Commission on International Relations, 1972 to 1985 and dean of Columbia University’s School of Library Service from 1985 to 1992. He was elected president twice by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), serving from 1991 to 1995 and 1995 to 1997. He has received numerous awards, including the 1989 Joseph Lippincott Award and the 1997 Melvil Dewey Medal from both the American Library Association, and the 1991 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the UI’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science. wedgeworth announces retirement