GAME ON!

Students score as park districts’ coaches

By Dusty Rhodes

It was the final game of the Urbana Park District basketball season, and Jordan Morris’ motley crew of third- and fourth-grade boys (at right) was winning. He watched them dribble, pass and deploy the pump fake and the jab step — moves he and his friends had taught them at practice — to almost double their opponent’s score.

Celebrating with his team after the final buzzer, Morris pulled his hoodie over his face to hide his emotions.

“I actually teared up! One of the kids was trying to talk to me, and I didn’t want him to see me cry,” Morris said. “It was so cool to see all the hours we had spent with them come together. It was magnificent. It was art.

It was a masterpiece.”

Morris is one of the many UI students who volunteer to coach recreational sports leagues in the Champaign-Urbana area. Youth sports directors at the two park districts don’t keep an official count of student coaches, but Hsiung Marler, youth sports coordinator for the Champaign Park District, estimates that about 20 to 30 percent of his volunteer coaches are enrolled at the UI, and Kyle Mills, athletics supervisor with the Urbana Park District, said that up to 60 percent of his coaches are students. There’s no course at the university that requires students to spend their Saturday mornings wrangling rowdy 8-year-olds around a basketball court or herding pre-adolescents across a soccer field; the students sign up to coach for their own personal reasons.

John Rynnecki, a junior from Germany majoring in recreation, sports and tourism, started coaching soccer for the Champaign Park District shortly after the 2010 World Cup re-ignited his passion for the sport. He hopes to someday manage a professional team in Europe.

“It’s something I really want to do, and there’s nothing else I’d rather do,” he said. He’s now in his second season as a Champaign Park District soccer coach, and is also on the coaching staff of the Illinois Futbol Club (formerly known as the Little Illini Soccer Club) travel team.

Amy Spinabella, a senior in business finance from Mundelein, Ill., is in her third season as a Champaign soccer coach. She coaches with another UI student — a friend who was a teammate at Lake Zurich (Illinois) High School. They initially started coaching simply as a way to stay involved with a sport they both love.

“It was a way to get back into it, and we thought it would be fun to do — and it is,” Spinabella said.

David Alter, a senior from Downers Grove, Ill., majoring in molecular and cellular biology — and earning minors in business and chemistry — needs to list some volunteer work on his application to medical school, but wanted more than just a paper-clerk position. “I don’t like the whole idea of volunteering at hospitals where your interaction with people might not be happening. A lot of volunteers just file papers,” he said. “I want to volunteer in something that will make a difference in someone’s life, that will help them grow up and learn different things and think of things in different ways. And what better way to do that than coaching?”

Another pair of molecular and cellular biology majors, Mohammed Siddiqui and Laura Osoba, teamed with UI nursing student Lauren Cruise to coach youth soccer.

“I want to volunteer in something that will make a difference in someone’s life, that will help them grow up and learn different things and think of things in different ways. And what better way to do that than coaching?”

—David Alter, a senior Champaign last spring. Like Alter, they will list coaching as a volunteer activity on their graduate school applications, but that’s not their prime motivation, they said.

“Medical schools do look favorably upon people who do volunteer work, and nearly everyone does it, but I didn’t start coaching just to put it down as another part of my application,” Siddiqui said. “I already have plenty of volunteer work, most of it in the medical field, and the same applies for Laura and Lauren.”

Instead, coaching serves as something of a step-down drug for these three students, weaning themselves off of a life of full-time soccer. Osoba and Cruise grew up playing soccer together in Orland Park, Ill., from the age of 4 through club teams and high school varsity. Siddiqui, from Skokie, Ill., played in high school, too. Between two- and three-hour practices six days a week, plus games, they were saturated with soccer. “Soccer has been a major part of our lives,” Siddiqui said.

Teams that aren’t coached by college students are typically coached by the parents of one or more players. Marler said student coaches have a set of skills that full-fledged
Continued from page 1

growups simply can't match. "Students tend to have a deeper knowledge in sports
than the average parent; they tend to have more recent experience, and they have a lot more energy, generally," he said. "And to kids, anybody over a certain age is
a completely different species. A college student is someone they see as a version of themselves a little bit
down the road. That resonates with them, so they relate
much better."

Stephanie Corum, a mom who has coached her kids' Champaign soccer teams, agrees with Marler. "College kids bring a certain level of enthusiasm that parents
don't always bring," she said. "And the kids love, love, love the college kids."

In the spring 2011 season, Corum co-coached with
Rynecki, and noticed that he had a certain influence
over their squad of 8-year-olds. "I think the girls kind
of thought John was a little dreamy, and the boys
were like, 'I wanna be like
John because he's so cool!' "
Corum said. "But I realized
that we served different
tales. Anytime the kids got
hurt on the field, they said,"I want Coach Stephanie!"
But if they scored a goal, they really wanted to high-
five John.

Rynecki had to adjust
his expectations from
Germany — where soccer
is so popular that children
learn the game from an early age. "I had this
mentality that they would
know what they're doing,
they want to play soccer. So
at first, I was doubting my
ability to coach," he said."
"Then I realized oh, this is
what they do at this age: They want to have fun. That's
normal."
Theiir team lost every game except one, Corum said
— the one she had to miss, which Rynecki coached solo.
"There was just something magical about his being there
— the one she had to miss, which Rynecki coached solo.
Morris, who coached basketball with UI students Mike
Walsh (who has since graduated) and Jake Cocagne, of Champaign, Ill., said coaching gave him a
chance to "become a kid again" and to recognize parts of his own personality in different players on
his team — the kids he thought of as the "class clown," another one
he thought of as "the outsiders," and one who exhibited symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder, just
like Morris himself.

"I loved all of them. I miss
seeing those kids," Morris said.
"I can't wait to coach again."
Spinabella, the business major
now in her third
season of coaching soccer, had
her perspective on possible
motherhood shifted by coaching.
"I think because I'm a woman in
business, I'm so job-oriented, I
kind of see kids as a hassle, like
worries, because they are,
in a way," she said. "But coaching actually made me like
kids more. They looked up to us, they were really excited
to see us, and they were just really cute. We always felt
good about ourselves after practice."

Cuzman, a senior from Downers Grove, Ill.,
majoring in chemical engineering, has been coaching
younger boys since his junior year of high school, when a
broken collarbone cut short his basketball season.
When he arrived at the UI and joined Sigma Phi Epsilon, he found that another group of SigEps
had been coaching seventh- and eighth-grade boys
basketball for the Champaign Park District for four
years. Cuzman formed another coaching staff from
among his housemates, and continued what has become
a seven-year tradition of One Champaign team being
coached by young men who show up for Saturday
morning games decked out in slacks, button-down shirts and
ties.

"College kids bring
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— Stephanie
Corum, a mom
& co-coach

"It's just a little thing we've always done," Cuzman
said. "We take it seriously so the kids take it seriously as
well."

In the fall 2010 season, Cuzman's team included a
boy who had never played basketball or any other team
sport, and whose mother informed the coaches that her
son was autistic. Although she told them she would
understand if they didn't put him in the game day lineup,
Cuzman assured the mother that her son would play
at least a half a game each game, just like all the other
members of the team.

"The kid was not very good to start the season. He
was by far our most improved player," Cuzman said.
"There was a game where he made his first basket, and if
you'd been there, you would've thought he had won the
championship. It was one of those moments — you can't
dercally describe it — that made everything worth it."

Outstanding in his field
David Alter got his desired hands-on volunteer experience
coaching his soccer team in the Champaign Park District league.
First Class

Interactive tool puts the physics lab in the palm of your hand

By Liz Ahlberg

Physics often is the stuff of nightmares. For students, the terror lies in the expectation of mastering concepts as foreign as a never-heard language. Professors struggle to effectively teach complex concepts in a limited amount of time. And the expense of laboratory equipment is enough to make a department administrator reach for the antennae.

Physics professor Mats Selen could hold the solution to all three group's problems in the palm of his hand.

Selen developed the IOLab system, built around a low-cost, easy-to-use, all-purpose handheld device that performs a myriad of functions for both introductory and advanced physics courses.

"We had the idea that these devices would be a huge improvement in the way the students learn some of the concepts that they're struggling with," Selen said.

"Nothing like having your hands on something while your brain is thinking about it. Some effective learning goes on when your hands are tactically doing something and you're seeing it happen, as opposed to just hearing or reading about it."

The device has two parts. One is a wireless, battery-powered black box, slightly smaller than a graphing calculator, containing a small computer, a radio chip and a variety of sensors. The other component contains a receiver and links to a computer through a USB cable.

The IOLab — for Interactive Online Lab — can measure acceleration, orientation, magnetic fields, electrical signals, frequency spectra, time constants and more.

A user could even measure the speed of light merely equipped with the IOLab, a piece of scrap aluminum and a ruler.

Selen is testing the IOLab and accompanying software in Physics 100, an introductory course with 500 students, many of whom have little or no physics experience. The software guides the students through a lesson and gathers data from the IOLab device for analysis. The students can see, in real time, how a plot changes based on the motion of the wireless component.

"I'm seeing a lot of 'aha!' moments," said Anthony Hegg, a teaching assistant who oversees several of the IOLab experiences. "I thought they were getting it a lot quicker than I've seen it before. Usually, when I ask the students questions, they try to refer to the equation. And I ask them, how can you demonstrate that with these? They get stumped for a second, and then they work through it. It really provides a connection that otherwise they don't see."

Selen and colleagues have written four IOLab modules on motion, acceleration and velocity for Physics 100. For example, one unit tackles the concept of relative motion, or how a moving object appears to another object in motion. In the activity, labeled "Tumble Buggies," students attach the two IOLab components to a pair of battery-powered toy cars. One car is rigged to go slower than the other, so the IOLab's accelerometer and positional sensors can track their relative movements.

"It sounds simple but it's actually one of the hardest things they do all semester," Selen said. "It's very difficult to wrap your mind around relative motion. With this, you can see that by moving one part or the other or both, it changes how the speed is recorded relative to the receiver."

The tumble buggies module gives the students four tasks. They begin with guided, simple experiments to establish the basic concepts. Then, they are asked to predict the outcomes of different scenarios -- the faster car chasing the slower car, or the two cars moving in different directions. For each, the students make predictions, then design their own experiments to test their ideas. The challenge for the tumble buggies lab is to explore the different scenarios without the faster car falling off the table or the receiver-bearing car reaching the end of its tether to the computer.

"They're definitely having fun with it," Hegg said. "Since it's also taking data on the computer, they can see the outcomes of different setups. If I move the separate piece away, it's the same effect as moving the receiver piece the opposite direction. You can see it working in their heads."

Hands-on experiment Students in Physics 100 -- from left, Adriana Schoenfeld, of Inverness, Ill.; Aimee Nugent, of Marseilles, Ill.; and Sarah Dubiel, of West Chicago, Ill. -- explore relative motion with the IOLab system and a pair of battery-powered toy cars. One receiver and links to a computer through a USB cable. The IOLab -- for Interactive Online Lab -- can measure acceleration, orientation, magnetic fields, electrical signals, frequency spectra, time constants and more.

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Selen and his fellow physics professor Tim Stelzer were recently awarded a research grant from the National Science Foundation to develop and study the effectiveness of this "hands-on" approach to learning concepts. Ultimately, they hope that students will be able to purchase their own inexpensive IOLab devices from the campus bookstore and use these as a course supplement to perform hands-on activities in their residence hall rooms, guided by their computers.

They also hope to integrate it with Smart Physics, a computer-based multimedia curriculum that Selen, Stelzer and physics professor Gary Gladding have developed to use in place of expensive textbooks. However, Selen designed the affordable, multifunctional lab devices to reach beyond the UI.

He believes the IOLab could be extremely valuable for community colleges and other institutions that lack the space or resources for a fully outfitted physics laboratory. In addition, they could enable online courses to add lab elements.

Selen is optimistic that students' positive responses to the IOLab devices and the hands-on activities show that some are warming up to an often intimidating subject. The majority of students enrolled in introductory physics are majoring in other fields and need physics to fulfill a requirement. Selen hopes these students will remember their time in these courses fondly.

"If 20 years down the road, they remember physics as kind of a cool class they took, that's a huge success in my opinion," Selen said. "That means that as citizens of the world, they may understand that it's important for people to learn science and engineering and math. If you can do some activity with them that they enjoy and at the same time learn something, it's a good experience."

"There's nothing like having your hands on something while your brain is thinking about it."

— Professor Mats Selen
Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations (SCNO) is only 1 year old, yet it already has a formidable force for good on campus, in the community and beyond.

SCNO is a national organization, with chapters at Michigan State, Northwestern, Ohio State and (now) the UI. Last fall, communication major and Buffalo Grove, Ill., native Grant McNamara, a senior at the time, and industrial/organizational psychology major Mitchell Hamer (then a senior from Northbrook, Ill.) founded the group with McNamara’s younger brother, Jordan McNamara, now a junior in finance and information systems.

They were inspired by the notion that a student group could perform a much-needed community service, Jordy McNamara said.

“There are hundreds of nonprofit organizations headquartered in Champaign County and few, if any, had real ties to the university and all its resources,” he said. “To have the opportunity to take what I learn every day in the classroom and put it into productive use for these nonprofits … was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up.”

There are at least two other respected, student-run business consulting organizations on campus, and some SCNO members belong to these as well. But the opportunity to help out an organization that focuses more on its mission than on its bottom line draws those who never considered consulting before.

Finance and management major Ryan Singh was another early recruit to SCNO. Singh, a sophomore from Long Grove, Ill., was feeling a little lost as a freshman trying to pick a major when he heard a presentation about SCNO and decided to give the organization a try.

“I have the opportunity to take what I learn every day in the classroom and put it into productive use for these nonprofits … was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up,” Singh said.

“The SCNO group has been so helpful to us that now we are in our third semester with them,” Rost said. “The students gave her a lot of ‘tangible, applicable information’ that she could use to attract more shoppers and donors, she said. They put together a spreadsheet of contacts at local businesses that would have useful materials they might donate to the store. The students developed a contract form to help the store formalize the business-donation process. And over the summer they conducted a survey of I.D.E.A. Store shoppers.

“The survey information has been very helpful to us to understand who our donors and our shoppers are,” Rost said. She said she is also about to send out a first mailing to people on the business list.

Sophomore Annie Wang, an accounting major from Dunlap, Ill., led a team that helped Community Choices develop its website and branch out into social media.

Community Choices executive director Jennifer Knapp was “a little bit nervous about technology,” Wang said. “It’s relatively rare for students to get an internship after their freshman year, so I would say that having SCNO on my resume was a key contributing factor to that.”

Communication professor and SCNO faculty adviser Michelle Shumate, who recruited the group’s initial clients, said those clients tell her how satisfied they are with the student consultants.

“They think these are fabulous students and are really impressed with the quality of their work,” Shumate said. “And the quality of the work is as good as something that they’ve gotten from local (paid) consultants.”

SCNO also benefits the students in many ways, she said.

“This is really an empowering thing to join because they take what they have learned in the classroom and they can put it into practice for organizations that really want the help,” she said. “And I have been surprised — although maybe I shouldn’t have — that this is something that employers love.”

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Service learning

Sophomore Ryan Singh, a finance and management major, was an early recruit to year-old Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations. Annie Wang, a sophomore in accounting, and her work with SCNO helped her get a global wealth management internship at Merrill Lynch in Peoria this past summer.

Illinois among top producers of Gilman Scholars to study abroad

Thirteen UI undergraduates were offered federally funded Gilman Scholarships to study abroad during the summer, fall and academic year 2011-12 terms, placing Illinois among the top five institutions nationally this year in number of Gilman recipients.

The scholarship provides financially needy students who are eligible for federal Pell grants up to $11,000, annually, to undertake foreign study for academic credit at approved institutions of higher learning abroad. Illinois recipients were among the 1,500 awardees nationally from the 5,100 applicants for these terms. Most of the 13 students are studying abroad for a full year.

The Gilman Scholarship Program aims to diversify the kinds of students who study abroad and the countries and regions to which they go. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by the Institute of International Education.

The recipients: Karolina Wasiniewska, of Arlington Heights; Fahd Hussain, of Beach Park; Eida Xian, Suyun Cai, Marcin Michniowski and Ashley Doneal, all of Chicago; Richard Dambinski, of Des Plaines; Sharon Lee, of Hoffman Estates; Dana Vattanavanitkul, of Morton Grove; Gina Chung, junior, of Palatine; Lindsey Stine, of Riverside; Bianca Serrato, of Rolling Meadows; and Reesie Hartmann, of Savanna.

Mark of Excellence

By Diana Yates

Students consultants nonprofits in C-U and beyond

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Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations (SCNO) is only 1 year old, yet it already has a formidable force for good on campus, in the community and beyond.

The startup student organization brought a “Tree of Hope” to the Quad last fall, raising about $1,000 for the Developmental Services Center of Illinois. It showed one local nonprofit how to set up a computerized accounting system and helped another with its strategic plan. It developed a marketing plan for the I.D.E.A. Store in Champaign and conducted a broad survey of its customers and donors. It helped Community Choices, a local organization serving youth with disabilities, enhance its online presence.

Now with 67 members and 30 new projects on its radar (one of them in Africa), the all-volunteer undergraduate student organization is growing into a formidable force for good on campus, in the community and beyond.

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Deep passion: Student charting future on Navy submarine

By Mike Helenthal

What should a little girl aspire to become when she grows up? If you’re asking Kristin Schoemaker, anything she wants.

Schoemaker, a junior in nuclear engineering, is preparing to cast off the limitations of an age-old Navy rule prohibiting women from serving on nuclear submarines.

When she graduates from the UI in 2013, she expects to be among the first women to be allowed to serve under the sea – a feat unfathomable as early as 2010 when the Navy announced women would be accepted into its nuclear submarine program.

“I was considering graduate school or industry, and both of those options seemed OK,” she said. “I also could have applied for something on the surface (in the Navy) – the easy ‘woman’s choice.’ But none of those options were exactly what I wanted to do.”

Schoemaker’s future became less murky in the midst of her freshman year, when she discovered the newly minted naval opportunity through her involvement with the American Nuclear Society.

That led to a yearlong application process that included rigorous testing, a tour of a nuclear submarine and facilities in Kings, Bay, Ga., and a one-on-one interview with a four-star admiral.

“When we toured the submarine training facility, we got to meet the crew,” she said. “There was this common commitment and a camaraderie that really stood out. I wanted to be a part of it.”

The most stressful part of the application process was the admiral’s interview, which included an introduction applicants had to memorize and recite.

“I got to see how other people reacted (after the interview) and it gave me a little confidence to know I wasn’t the only one stuttering,” she said. “When it was over, I couldn’t even remember what the admiral’s office looked like.”

The real boost in confidence came during the testing phase of the application process – when she learned she had already covered most of the material in her UI classes.

“I feel like I’ve got a good background to pursue this,” she said. “There were people (in the testing phase) who just didn’t know what they were doing. I’d been studying since I applied and then they gave us these huge packets of information that had pretty much everything we’ve learned in college; it really wasn’t anything new. That’s one of the big reasons I came to the University of Illinois. I feel really prepared.”

Feeling prepared and confident is not a new concept for Schoemaker, whose family lives in Carpentersville, a Chicago suburb.

“She’s always been very focused,” said her father, David. “She knew exactly what she needed to do to get to the UI. She’s already in a male-dominated field and she seems to be prospering very well.”

A UI graduate and accountant, David said he’s never put pressure on Kristin to succeed – but he has preached the importance of getting a good education.

“She puts more pressure on herself than anyone,” he said. “I think that helps you in situations where other people are putting pressure on you. They key is, don’t put so much pressure on yourself that you lose track of where you’re headed.”

He said he has helped her with mathematical principles since she was in high school, but that Kristin, even with homework, inevitably forges her own path.

“I was pretty good at math, but she was always the one who wanted to work things out herself,” he said.

In the next phase of her life, Kristin’s pressures will not only be perceived – being several hundred feet underwater for weeks at a time is just one of the dangers she’ll face.

“But her father is confident she can navigate it all.”

Schoemaker said she realizes her mission is not yet completed. She still has to finish her degree and then enters into four years of various specialized Navy training programs, which includes two tours of duty.

She is already on the Navy payroll and must continue to meet ongoing physical and grade-point tracking requirements to officially enter the program. After completing the Navy program she will have already served seven years in the military.

“It know it will take a great amount of self-motivation,” she said. “This gives me something to work for and I don’t want to let anybody down. I just want to make sure I continue to get good grades and stay on track. I don’t want to do anything to mess this up.”

“Kristin Schoemaker, a junior in nuclear engineering, plans to be among the first women allowed to serve on a nuclear submarine when she graduates from the UI in 2013.”

Making Her Mark

“Rare ‘corpse flower’ bloomed at UI greenhouse in July

A rare tropical plant indigenous to the rainforests of Sumatra, Indonesia, got a lot of attention this summer when it bloomed. An exotic titan arum, also called the ‘corpse flower’ (Bunga Banara) for the rotting-meat odor that the plant emits, was the crown jewel of the Plant Biology Greenhouse for a couple of weeks in July.

A member of the Araceae family and cousin of Calla lilies, peace lilies, dieffenbachia and philodendrons, the titan arum, latin name Amorphophallus Titanum, is notoriously difficult to cultivate and blooms unpredictably. Fewer than 100 corpse flowers have bloomed in cultivation in the U.S. since the first titan arum unfurled at the New York Botanical Gardens in 1937.

The UI’s titan arum was grown from seed that was given to the university by Mo Fayyaz, a botanist at the University of Wisconsin at Madison 10 years ago.

As Titania neared the blooming stage, it grew at an astonishing rate. For most of its life, a titan arum cycles through periods of dormancy and activity, producing a single, umbrella-like leaf each year that can tower up to 20 feet tall and span 15 feet.

A time-lapse video of Titania growing is available at www.life.illinois.edu/plantbio/greenhouse.”
Johnny Watts was a signals analyst in military intelligence in the Army. Elizabeth Ambros, a Navy corpsman, managed the medical care for 300 Marines. Andrew Kennedy led an Army scout platoon in urban combat. All three were deployed at least once to Iraq. Now they’re among the more than 350 identified student veterans on the UI campus. About 70 percent are undergraduates, the rest graduate students.

It’s a number likely to grow in coming years with the drawdown of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and with the improved educational benefits now available. The Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect two years ago and the state-funded Illinois Veterans Grant provides benefits to veterans attending public Illinois colleges and universities.

What makes these students different, up front, is age and experience. Their time in the service came while many current undergraduates were still in middle school and high school. "Their jobs in the service may have involved significant responsibility, if not significant danger. Some may have seen the worst of war. They’re coming in with a life experience that is pretty unique," says Nick Osborne, a Coast Guard veteran, who in January became the first coordinator of Veteran Student Support Services within the Office of the Dean of Students last January. Osborne says the veterans bring a "pretty unique life experience" to campus, but they don’t want to be defined by it.

For the undergraduate veterans, however, the age difference alone can set them apart from their classroom peers, Osborne said. It’s easy for them to think "Why am I with all these kids?" he said.

Watts, a 26-year-old married sophomore in electrical engineering from Madison, Ill., put it concisely when he said "we were before them." They do things he used to do, but which he’s "really not interested in doing anymore," he said.

Most veterans did their share of "goofing off" during off-hours in the military, said Ambros, a 25-year-old sophomore pre-med kinesiology student from Puerto Rico and Chicago. "We’re already past that," she said. "Now we’re here to get something done."

The veterans’ age and experience not only can set them apart, but also make some of them bette, more-goal-oriented students, Osborne said.

Watts said he credits the military for giving him the discipline to sit and study even on a sunny Saturday in the Illini Union, when other students were out playing on the Quad. Ambros said her experience as a corpsman gave her confidence in skills she knows she will need as a doctor.

"That doesn’t mean the student veterans don’t face challenges -- from feeling academically rusty after years out of the classroom, to difficulties managing finances, to finding a supportive peer group.

"In the military, you have what I would consider a family, and it’s a really, really tight family, especially when you deploy together," Watts said. "It’s a bond that sticks, and one that’s harder to find on a campus where most can’t relate to your experience, he said."

Osborne says the veterans bring a "pretty unique life experience" to campus, but they don’t want to be defined by it.

For the most part their faculty and their peers have honored for their service, and that it could actually be used against them," Osborne said. Later, however, most have found "it’s been quite the opposite -- that for the most part their faculty and their peers have been extremely supportive and respectful and wanting to know more.

Osborne describes his job as a "natural fit" and his background seems to support that. He has the military background with the Coast Guard, serving in a military intelligence role that included a tour of duty in Iraq and Kuwait.

But he also holds a master’s in social welfare, in which he specialized in the study of college-age men and masculinity, as well as a doctorate in higher education administration. He also worked for the Veterans Administration while in school. His education and experience lend themselves to counseling, advising and mentoring, which are all part of the position, he said.

He also has the assistance of Kenneth and two other veteran-graduate students, employed part-time through work-study and all accomplished in their own right, he said.

As for his broader role as an assistant dean of students, Osborne compares the activity and energy to what he found in the military. "It’s just constantly like being on active duty," he said. "Some are in the service of every day, when the phone rings, when a student comes in, you just don’t know what you’ll be dealing with."

A full list of resources for veteran students can be found on the Veteran Student Support Services website: http://veterans.illinois.edu

Student veterans’ age, experience add dimension to campus

By Craig Chamberlain
Senior Stephanie Maldonado has won a $30,000 Truman Scholarship. She is one of about 60 students chosen from 602 students UI student in social work wins Truman Scholarship

Senior Stephanie Maldonado has won a $30,000 Truman Scholarship. She is one of about 60 students chosen from 602 students nominated by U.S. colleges and universities. She is the first UI student to receive a Truman Scholarship in nine years. Maldonado, of Chicago, spent much of her childhood in Puerto Rico. She plans to be a school social worker and eventually direct an advocacy agency serving the Latino/a community in Chicago.

Maldonado enrolled at Illinois in 2008. She is in the university’s first class of bachelor of social work candidates. She is a founding member and the president of the Bachelors of Social Work Student Association and a member of the James Scholar Honors Program. In addition to conducting research with a professor, she also has been a Multicultural Advocate for her residence hall at Illinois for two years. Maldonado also serves in a new social justice resource intern position at Illinois, and is developing training modules for other multicultural advocates.

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UI Board of Trustees votes to close Institute of Aviation

At the July 21 meeting of the UI Board of Trustees on the UIUC campus, university trustees voted 6-2 to close the Institute of Aviation and end the undergraduate degree program.

The institute, which opened in 1945, will likely close its doors at the end of the 2013-14 school year, after all current students have completed the program.

Robert Easter, who was interim chancellor and vice president at the time of the July meeting, told trustees he recommended closing the program because of its high cost and declining enrollment.

Closing the institute, "the smallest degree-generating unit, will save the campus about $750,000 per year," Easter said.

Since 2002, applications have decreased by 63 percent and enrollment has dropped 52 percent. Last fall, 34 freshmen enrolled in the bachelor of science in aviation human factors program, and no students were admitted for the 2011-12 academic year, Easter said.

The university will explore partnerships with local community colleges to provide a flight training program for undergraduates, he said. "The institute's graduate program in human factors, which does not require flight training, will be housed in the Graduate College."

Five tenure-track faculty members at the institute moved into tenure-track positions in other campus units, such as engineering and education, Easter said.

University trustees said the decision to eliminate the program was difficult. Trustees Timothy Koritz and Ricardo Estrada — as well as student trustees Hannah Ehrenberg, Kenneth Thomas and John Tienken, who have an advisory vote — voted against closing the institute. Board chairman Christopher Kennedy left the meeting early and did not vote.

"Given the financial condition that we find the university and state in, we need to continue to make difficult decisions going forward," said trustee Pamela Strobel.

Koritz, who learned to fly at the institute, said he wanted to ensure that every possibility to continue providing aviation training to UI students is explored.

"The death sentence won't happen until 2014, and I hope that we make an enthusiastic effort to find a partnership," he said.

Trustee Lawrence Oliver, a lawyer for Boeing Co., said his professional experience made him sympathetic to the need for academic aviation programs, "but the dwindling numbers speak for themselves."

He encouraged trustees to revisit the issue at a future board meeting to monitor the progress of discussions about flight training partnerships.

Heads up! New state law yields crosswalk changes

By Mike Hollembal

chalk one up for the pedestrians after Illinois lawmakers last year changed the state's crosswalk law, forcing motorists to stop — not just yield — if a walker has already entered a crosswalk.

But with all the other colossal issues facing the state, most Illinois motorists still haven't heard about the change in the law.

Campus safety officials would like to remedy that.

On the Urbana campus, where managing the flow of pedestrian traffic and protecting students is one in the same, summer was spent changing the signs around campus and preparing to enforce the new law when students returned.

Facilities and Services workers replaced 73 crosswalk signs with those prominently displaying a red stop sign at 29 marked crosswalks on campus. There are 21 other pedestrian-motorist intersections in the university district, many of them unmarked.

"The new law required us to replace the signs, but the safety of our students, faculty, staff and visitors is always a top priority," said Morgan Johnston, sustainability and transportation coordinator for Facilities and Services.

Johnston said department officials have tried to communicate the changes with as many local motorists as possible, posting a fact sheet on the F&S website and sharing the information with local media.

But all the information in the world won't change this about the state's crosswalk law: It looks good on paper, but in real life, with students bobbing in and out of motor traffic on their way to classes, it can be confusing.

"The crosswalk law in Illinois can be confusing for pedestrians and motorists," said UI Police Capt. Skip Frost.

Frost advises drivers to avoid the campus district when possible but if they must traverse campus in a vehicle, to slow down, abide by the Rules of the Road when possible but if they must traverse campus in a vehicle, to slow down, abide by the Rules of the Road.

"Stopping whether there is a pedestrian or not is a serious injury," he said. "Just focus on getting from Point A to Point B safely."

"Pedestrians often feel that they have the automatic right-of-way so long as they are using a marked crosswalk. That is not the law."

— UI Police Capt. Skip Frost

"What that means is that if a vehicle is approaching at the legal speed limit, and you don't give them time to react to your presence, then as a pedestrian you are violating the law if you step out into the crosswalk," Frost said.

"You have to give the vehicle time to stop."

He said the law extends past crosswalk markings and actually gives pedestrians a right to cross at any point on a road into a crosswalk as long as they don't impede traffic.

"To be clear, it is not unlawful to cross the street at other than a marked crosswalk," he said. "The word 'jaywalking' does not appear in the Illinois Vehicle Code."

He said the best pedestrian policy is to pay attention, which includes not texting or talking on the phone while crossing the street, and removing ear buds to better hear oncoming traffic.

"Having the right-of-way will not protect you from a serious injury," he said. "Just focus on getting from Point A to Point B safely."

Likewise, Frost said motorists don't have to stop every time they see one of the new crosswalk signs — only if there is a pedestrian actively crossing.

"Stopping whether there is a pedestrian or not will cause much confusion, traffic congestion and unnecessary delays all across campus," he said.

Frost said officers will be making traffic stops based on the crosswalk law, though they'll be as likely to educate as ticket at the start of the new school year.

"Pedestrian safety is one of several top priorities the UPD is committed to," he said. "Past tragedies illustrate the need to be aware."
Cheers! Giant smoothie breaks record at Convocation

Dining Services cooked up some excitement at the annual New Student Convocation and the Guinness Book of World Records certified their efforts. The world’s largest smoothie—a 330-gallon pink delight—was created from 960 pounds of yogurt, 600 pounds of strawberries and 105 gallons of pineapple juice.

After about six months of planning, the mixing started about 8:30 a.m. and wrapped up about four hours later, using a refrigerated truck on the west side of Memorial Stadium. The giant smoothie served about 8,000 students at the conclusion of Convocation at the stadium.

Each 4-ounce serving contained a modest 166 calories, but the total creation supplied a whopping 794,794 calories, 17,536 grams of protein, 4,385 grams of fat, and 176,931 grams of carbohydrate.

Kirsten Ruby, assistant director of housing for marketing, said the event was such a success workers may try to repeat the feat.

“The bug for setting records may have indeed hit the staff and discussions are under way about what next year’s record might be,” she said.

Prairie Farms, which purchases and processes milk from campus cows, donated 250 pounds of yogurt to help in the attempt.

The previous record for the world’s largest smoothie was held by Dairy Farmers of Canada, which created a 264-gallon smoothie in July 2010.

Strength in numbers: Students dig in to (i)Help

Two thousand UI students invaded schools, churches, parks and other nonprofit agencies throughout Champaign-Urbana to lend a hand on the afternoon of Sept. 23.

The mass exodus from campus was the official kickoff event to Homecoming called iHelp.

Students volunteered at more than 50 community agencies doing yard work, organizing clothes and classrooms, planting trees and much more.

This year, the iHelp team expanded beyond UI student participation to include Illinois alumni, families and friends of the university who volunteered at local agencies in Chicago as well as outside of Illinois.

The Student Alumni Ambassadors, a student-run organization sponsored by the UI Alumni Association, began iHelp in 2006. SAA’s role on campus is to develop positive relations and interactions among students, alumni and faculty and staff members.

More information can be found at www.iHelp.illinois.org.

Team work Engineering students at Illinois collaborate on painting the United States at Dr. Howard Elementary School’s playground in Champaign.

Clean up Some volunteers went to local schools and helped organize classrooms, while others did yard work.
Smart skin: Electronics that stick, stretch like a temporary tattoo

By Liz Allberg

Engineers have developed a device platform that combines electronic components for sensing, medical diagnostics, communications and human-machine interfaces, all on an ultrathin skin-like patch that mounts directly onto the skin with the ease, flexibility and comfort of a temporary tattoo. Lead by John A. Rogers, the Lee J. Flory—Founder professor of engineering at the University of Illinois, the researchers developed a circuit that bends, wrinkles and stretches with the mechanical properties of skin. They demonstrated their concept through a diverse array of electronic components mounted on a thin, rubbery substrate, including sensors, LEDs, transistors, radio frequency capacitors, wireless antennas, and conductive coils and solar cells for power. “We threw everything in our bag of tricks onto that platform, and then added a few other new ideas on top of those, to show that we could make it work,” said Rogers, a professor of materials science and engineering, of chemistry, of mechanical science and engineering, of bioengineering and of electrical and computer engineering. He also is affiliated with the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, and with the Frederick Seitz Materials Research Laboratory at the UI.

The patches are initially mounted on a thin sheet of water-soluble plastic, then laminated to the skin with water – just like applying a temporary tattoo. Alternatively, the electronic components can be applied directly to a temporary tattoo itself, providing concealment for the electronics. “We think this could be an important conceptual advance in wearable electronics, to achieve something that is almost unnoticed to the wearer,” said UI electrical and computer engineering professor Todd Coleman, who co-led the multi-disciplinary team. “The technology can connect you to the physical world and the cyberworld in a very natural way that feels very comfortable.” Skin-mounted electronics have many biomedical applications, including EEG and EMG sensors to monitor nerve and muscle activity. One main benefit of skin-like circuits is that they don’t require conductive gel, tape, skin-penetrating pins or bulky wires, which can be uncomfortable for the user and limit coupling efficiency. They are much more comfortable and less cumbersome than traditional electrodes and give the wearers complete freedom of movement. “If we want to understand brain function in a natural environment, that’s completely incompatible with EEG studies in a laboratory,” said Coleman, now a professor at the University of California at San Diego. “The best way to do this is to record neural signals in natural settings, with devices that are invisible to the user.” Monitoring in a natural environment during normal activity is especially beneficial for continuous monitoring of health and wellness, cognitive state or behavioral patterns during sleep.

In addition to gathering data, skin-mounted electronics could provide the wearers with added capabilities. For example, patients with muscular or neurological disorders, such as ALS, could use them to communicate or to interface with computers. The researchers found that, when applied to the skin of the throat, the sensors could distinguish muscle movement for simple speech. The researchers have even used the electronic patches to control a video game, demonstrating the potential for human-computer interfacing.

Packaging expert sees a social revolution in the evolving barcode

By Diana Yates

What if you could trace the history of everything you buy back to its origins? Using your smart phone camera, you could learn what factory made the ingredients in your heart medication, what country grew the corn in your breakfast cereal, or even how to recycle the phone. You could follow the whole life cycle of a product and everyone who handled it along the way to ensure that the medicine you’re taking isn’t counterfeit and the food you’re eating is safe.

This reality is on the horizon, said UI food science and human nutrition professor Scott Morris, an expert on the history and evolution of packaging and the author of “Food and Package Engineering,” a new textbook published by Wiley Blackwell. Barcodes, the familiar black-and-white labels on packages that began as a means to scan prices or track inventory, are evolving into a broader class of identifiers in new and startling ways, said Morris, who also is a professor of agricultural and biological engineering. As the technology advances, these electronic identifiers allow access to more information about the contents and history of products and are opening new channels of communication between buyers and sellers.

Manufacturers and retailers are trying to take advantage of this new technology-driven interaction, but they are also struggling to cope, Morris said. The shopper has unprecedented power to identify the best products at the best prices he or she can find. And those who are unhappy with their purchases can let the world know about it in real time. Companies have a lot at stake – and a lot to gain from more sophisticated barcodes, Morris said. Those who embrace the changes can quickly enlist the online crowd to help develop their products and packaging.

If used properly, a global identification system would increase efficiency and profits, expanding the “just-in-time” delivery of goods to retailers. It also would allow companies to get a more detailed picture of the locations, preferences and buying habits of customers, Morris said. Even through barcodes, QR codes and even RFID tags (which are read by radio waves rather than scanners) are available, Morris said, the structure of the actual identifier is a work in progress. Several organizations, in particular GS1, the global consortium that allocates barcodes, are developing new standards for these identifiers. “The format is not the issue here,” Morris said. “The issue is, what information is available through a physical object, and what use do we make of it?” That’s where it really gets interesting. Because then you’re not just dealing with a can of soup, a bottle of pills or an aircraft part. You’re dealing with the whole global economy all at once.”
Campus is now 3-D on Google Earth

Using building footprints from the Geographic Information System and models constructed with the 3-D modeling program Google Sketchup, the Facilities and Services’ facilities information resources department has been building a warehouse of models of the Urbana campus for Google Earth.

Chad Kupferschmidt, chief engineering draftsman for F&S, has been leading student workers in the effort. Since early 2011, more than 150 models have been uploaded and have been accepted by Google Earth for its 3-D buildings layer and are now viewable online.

Google Earth can provide accurate models of buildings and proposed building sites that are beneficial to planners, designers and students working on campus projects. The models may be downloaded and saved for use in a variety of ways, including site planning and construction of physical models for presentations and class projects.

To view the 3-D models, go to Google Maps (http://maps.google.com), type in a campus address and click on “Earth.” The Google Earth application can be downloaded at http://earth.google.com. When viewing the models through the Google Earth app, the models can be downloaded and the user can get additional information about building specifications and history.

Please post

Fall semester 2011

Nov. 19 — Thanksgiving vacation begins
Nov. 28 — Instruction resumes
Dec. 7 — Instruction ends
Dec. 8 — Reading Day
Dec. 9 — Final exams begin
Dec. 16 — Final exams end

Spring semester 2012

Jan. 16 — Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
Jan. 17 — Instruction begins
March 17 — Spring vacation begins
March 28 — Instruction resumes
May 2 — Instruction ends
May 3 — Reading Day
May 4 — Final exams begin
May 11 — Final exams end
May 13 — Commencement

Summer session 1

May 14 — Instruction begins
May 28 — Memorial Day (no classes)
June 9 — Final exams end

Summer session 2

June 11 — Instruction begins
July 4 — Independence Day (no classes)
Aug. 2 noon — Instruction ends
Aug. 2 1 p.m. — Reading day
Aug. 3 — Final exams begin
Aug. 4 — Final exams end

Fall semester 2012

Aug. 27 — Instruction begins
Sept. 3 — Labor Day (no classes)
Nov. 17 — Thanksgiving vacation begins
Nov. 26 — Instruction resumes
Dec. 12 — Instruction ends
Dec. 13 — Reading Day
Dec. 14 — Final exams begin
Dec. 21 — Final exams end

Spring semester 2013

Jan. 14 — Instruction begins
Jan. 21 — Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
March 18 — Spring vacation begins
March 29 — Instruction resumes
May 1 — Instruction ends
May 2 — Reading Day
May 3 — Final exams begin
May 10 — Final exams end
May 12 — Commencement

Administrative posts

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Counseling Center services are designed to help students address the academic, relational and emotional concerns they may face while at the university. Through the use of clinical services, outreach and campus consultation, training and numerous educational programming initiatives, the Counseling Center facilitates the development of new insights and strengths designed to help prepare students for a lifetime of psychological health and well-being.

The Office for Student Conflict Resolution is responsible for maintaining an environment conducive to academic success and for promoting a safe and secure campus by protecting the rights of all members of the university community. The office addresses all behavioral violations of the Student Code committed by individuals or student groups and violations of the Academic Integrity policy as referred by instructors, departments and colleges. Other programs of the office include mediation, which assists students in finding peaceful resolutions to conflicts with an unbiased third party, and the Tolerance Program, which responds to acts of intolerance within the campus community to emphasize the institutional values of tolerance and inclusiveness.

The Office of Student Financial Aid assists students by awarding financial aid to help pay for educational expenses. Financial aid is available from federal, state, university and private resources in four primary types: grants, scholarships/waivers, loans and employment. The office establishes cost-of-attendance budgets that are used to determine financial aid eligibility as well as to provide students and their families with a reasonable estimate of the cost of attendance at Illinois. The budgets include allowances for tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and other expenses.

The Career Center serves all students of the Urbana campus regarding professional and career development. With collaborative and innovative programs, services and resources, the center offers career counseling, pre-health career advising, job-search assistance, resume and cover letter reviews, mock interviews, workshops, newsletters and blogs, career fairs and special events. According to the Chancellor’s Senior Survey, 71 percent of the 2011 graduating seniors at Illinois used career services while in college.
Dear Parents,

On Oct. 1 during Homecoming I assumed my new responsibilities as vice president of the University of Illinois and as chancellor of the Urbana campus. I want to share with you how excited and humbled I am to have the privilege to lead one of the greatest modern research universities in the world.

A few weeks before I arrived, 7,255 new freshmen began classes on this campus. Their average ACT score is an impressive 28.2. Ninety-one counties in Illinois are represented in the incoming class. That includes 118 more in-state freshmen than last year. And, because we are a global brand, we have new students from more than 100 nations – from Argentina to Zambia.

When I was asked what I might want to tell you, the parents of our great students, the first thing I thought of was to express my gratitude. I want to thank you for entrusting your children to us. That trust is something that we do not take lightly. Our most important job is the education of these young adults, your daughters and sons.

As a parent of a son and a daughter I can empathize with the variety of emotions that come from watching your child leave home at this critical passage of growth and separation to attend a big institution such as this one. I want to assure you that we are committed to helping them along in this passage by providing the finest education and learning environment. Our goal is nothing short of transforming their lives.

But the education they will receive here is not simply a collection of data. We want your children to graduate with the ability to synthesize that information and to think critically and creatively. These abilities are crucial to a successful future because statistics show that young adults of college age today likely will have three different professions during their working lifetime.

Additionally, we want their education to provide them with a richer life (in the broadest definition of that word) and help them to negotiate the global world so they can be our next generation of leaders for the next few decades.

I don't mean to overemphasize the global while sacrificing the local. The state of Illinois is already a mix of local and global in part because there is a diversity of urban and rural within its borders. It all comes together here in Champaign-Urbana. Students who attend our campus come from large urban settings and small towns to this magical, transformative place where they will have opportunities to learn not only from their teachers but also from their friends and through internships and externships in varied environments right here in Illinois.

Here, what we are committed to is taking everybody's potential and cater their learning experience to what they want to make of it and then send them out into the greater world to serve in any way they can. That's what this great university is all about, and I am excited to be part of helping create the next generation of American leaders.

Thank you again for sending your sons and daughters to our university.

Phyllis M. Wise
Vice President, University of Illinois
Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign