When Bridget Evans first floated her idea, it sounded almost like the premise for a Disney film. She wanted to bring three Labrador-mix puppies to the UI campus to shadow students — to live in their apartments or residence hall rooms with them, attend classes with them, study in the library, eat in the cafeteria, hang out on the Quad, even go to hockey games.

But there was purpose to Evans’ proposition. Now in her senior year and majoring in community health, she pitched her idea last spring as a service project for the student council of the College of Applied Health Sciences. The puppies wouldn’t be pets: They would be future service dogs for people with disabilities. The students would provide the dogs’ basic training and socialization.

Their in-training status would give the dogs the same privileges as certified service dogs — including the right to live in residence halls or apartments that otherwise would not allow pets.

Jordan Sestak, a pre-med major who was president of the student council at the time, immediately liked the idea.

“I don’t know what it’s like to be in a wheelchair and not be able to do certain things by myself,” Sestak said. “I really can’t imagine, just walking around campus in this (snowy) weather, thinking about accomplishing everything that you need to do. If that can be made easier by having a service dog, then I’m happy to put as much time as possible toward making sure there are service dogs available to people.”

Evans’ plan included clinical services from the UI College of Veterinary Medicine, and a partnership with MidAmerica Service Dogs’ Foundation Inc., a small non-profit organization, which agreed to provide the dogs as well as further training.

“She had everything laid out, and knew exactly how she wanted to approach it,” Sestak said.

Evans, who was born with spina bifida, has been aided since she was 10 years old by a black Labrador retriever named Coal. When Evans uses crutches, Coal carries Evans’ books in a backpack harness. When Evans uses her wheelchair, Coal pulls her along, even through icy slush and snow. He opens doors, picks things up, and provides support when Evans goes up or down stairs. If she falls, he’s there to help her get back on her feet. And when she was given a chance to propose a project for the AHS council, Coal gave her a great idea.

“The whole philosophy of the college (of AHS) is improving the quality of life,” Evans says. “And there’s nothing that improves the quality of life for someone with a disability like a service dog.”

In the fall, Evans’ service committee interviewed about 40 applicants who hoped to become foster handlers for the dogs, and selected 22 students. Three were designated as primary handlers, each paired with a particular pup full-time; 18 were chosen as secondary handlers to give the primaries a few hours off each day, and to give the dogs experience with more people.

Sestak, now vice president of the council, is a primary handler. Since October, she has lived with a black labradoodle named Pilot, who is now about 10 months old. He has learned to retrieve dropped objects, turn off lights, and open doors of public buildings by pushing the hot dog! Students train dogs to serve people with disabilities

By Dusty Rhodes
Increased efforts by campus police to curb crime paying off

By Mike Helenthal

A warning to would-be bad guys: The UI campus is cracking down.

And campus police say redoubled efforts aimed at stemming last year’s uptick in the number of reported crimes are paying off.

Security will continue to improve this year, with plans to increase the number of sworn officers by nearly 10 percent, the expansion of student-based crime-watch programs and a doubling of the size of the campuswide security camera system.

“We are continuing to analyze opportunities and suggestions for improving our response for the crime issues on campus,” said Barbara O’Connor, executive director of public safety for the campus. “Crime requires an action take place, but reducing the risk of crime also takes an action; the campus has been engaged in many innovative and proactive strategies to enhance safety.”

O’Connor said three officers had been hired in the past six months and the ranks of the UI police force are expected to grow from 55 to 62 sworn officers sometime this year.

“Two new officers who transferred from other state universities are currently in the field-training program,” she said, “and, should they pass that, are expected to be certified for solo patrol by the end of May.”

The remaining officers have already been tested and are in the selection process but must complete police academy and field-training requirements.

In March, two UI officers will attend a two-week crime-prevention training course at the National Crime Prevention Institute in Louisville, Ky.

“Upon their return,” O’Connor said, “they will work with various divisions and groups on campus to help the community take a more active role in crime prevention.”

Additionally, partnerships with Urbana and Champaign police departments and the Champaign County Sheriff’s and Probation offices have allowed officers to have a greater presence in Campustown to combat increased assault-and-battery crimes reported late spring to early fall 2010.

O’Connor said the increased police presence has led to several arrests and that some recent cases had been closed after investigators found the initial report to be false.

Public perception is sometimes affected in that crime alerts are sent out when a crime is reported, but not when a case is closed.

Likewise, some reported cases are cleared as “unfounded” following a crime alert.

For example, police cleared a reported aggravated battery case near Scott Park in Champaign in September with an arrest that led to jail and probation time for the assaultant — but that action wouldn’t make an already released crime alert report. Additionally, a reported sexual assault near Wright and Chalmers streets was eventually discovered to be “unfounded” following an investigation.

But eliminating crime isn’t just about adding more badges, according to O’Connor, who is also the police chief.

She said any long-term success depends on a multi-faceted approach stressing greater student and faculty awareness and involvement — an effort that’s already well under way.

“When a community comes together to make itself safer, individual members mobilize to make it hard for a person to commit a crime,” she said.

And more Rape Aggression Defense programs are starting, with an additional instructor on the force. Over the winter break the offices of the UI chancellor and provost sponsored two training sessions for staff members, providing a campus police officer to escort anyone who has to walk campus alone, has seen participation rates spike, jumping from 211 SafeWalks escorts in the fall 2009 semester to nearly 800 last fall.

“As the time changed and students had midterm and final exams, we offered SafeWalks at an earlier hour during fall semester to nearly 800 last fall.”

Detective Tim Hetrick is the leader of the Public Safety and CITES – Campus Information Technologies and Educational Services – project to install a Web-based network of security cameras across campus. As many as 5,000 could be installed before the project’s conclusion.

The number of cameras could grow to 5,000 by the time the project is completed, according to Tim Hetrick, the UI police detective leading the department’s effort.

“We’ve got at least 300 scheduled to be installed over the next four to six months,” Hetrick said.

He said work on the camera system more slowly last year because the implementation process was still being defined. But the pace is accelerating.

“We’ve begun to place the cameras in areas of high interest around campus and will continue to do so,” Hetrick said.

Residence halls were among the first to have the cameras installed, but Hetrick said requests are starting to come in from all over campus.

“Each individual department has its own areas it wants to cover,” he said, explaining that all requests are reviewed and prioritized.

“After we are contacted by a department on campus, we conduct a site assessment to determine need and location of proposed cameras, with entry and exit coverage among the most common requests.”

“We actually have not really solicited for the camera services,” he said. “It’s just taken off on its own.”

Once installed, the cameras are accessible by police after a crime has occurred or even in real-time during a live call. Hetrick said existing cameras are already being used to assist police in solving crimes.

“We don’t have anyone staring at a screen of camera views all day, but the video feeds are available and the cameras are proving helpful,” he said. “We’ve been able to track a reported crime backward in a few cases.”

Hetrick said the police department is forming a partnership with the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District to include cameras at campus bus kiosks.

O’Connor said it will take all of these efforts to ensure campus crime is kept in check — plus individuals willing to make crime-prevention a priority.

“In a safer community,” she said, “each individual takes responsibility for his or her space and takes care for those who need help.”

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—UI Police Chief/BARBARA O’CONNOR

and this spring four more have been added for students.

“We have had an upswing in requests for classes,” Christensen said. “We are also working with local agencies’ Rape Aggression Defense programs to handle overflow or for those who can’t attend our classes due to scheduling.”

All are signs UI students and employees are paying more attention to their surroundings.

“When a person notices behaviors or situations that do not seem right,” he said, “they should call 9-1-1 right away. By doing this, they have increased the impact on campus where officers can take care of the safety, enforcement or peacekeeping functions.”

UI police say the 300-camera system employed at strategic locations across campus last year will add even more “eyes” — and one more level of protection.

That system, a joint effort between Public Safety and Campus Information Technologies and Educational Services, is expected to double in size in 2011.

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Fab Lab helps students design, tinker and create
By Phil Ciciora

In a mass-produced, throwaway world, an inconspicuous workshop on the southern-most edge of campus is giving UI students the opportunity to unleash their inner DIY-er and make things that can’t be bought at your local big-box store.

Describing itself as “an open-source community of people who like to design and make things,” the Champaign-Urbana Community Fab Lab provides students with a safe learning environment where they can modify, tinker and create … well, pretty much anything they can think of. Funded by an initial seed grant of $50,000 from the provost’s office, the Fab Lab is overseen by the Illinois Informatics Institute and the Institute for Computing in Humanities, Arts and Social Science. Housed at Art Annex II, just south of the ACES Library, the lab is a small-scale workshop that’s equipped with high-tech equipment, including a laser cutter, computer numerical control (CNC) machines and electronics assembly tools.

But perhaps its biggest asset is its network of skilled mentors and volunteers, says Betty Barrett, professor of labor and employment relations at Illinois and volunteer organizer at the lab.

“The philosophy of the lab is you decide what you want to make, and we say, ‘Cool, we’ll help you,’” she said. “We won’t do it for you, nor do we pretend to have all the answers. It’s a community-based, learning-by-doing experience, where everyone tries to help out.”

For a group of freshman students in the Illinois Foundry for Innovation in Engineering Education program, that means having a friendly design competition of who can build the better piece of machinery—a go-kart or a monorail couch.

If you’re keeping score at home, the go-kart has the slight edge, says George Ray, a freshman in aerospace engineering from Rochester, Ill.

“For both machines, we’re doing everything in here, including dirty stuff like changing the oil,” Ray said. “You couldn’t do this kind of stuff in a dorm, or even a garage.”

Max Flaton, a freshman in mechanical engineering from Harvard, Mass., notes that he recently used a hacksaw to cut a pipe—something that’s usually frowned upon in residence halls.

“If you really want to build something, this is the place to start,” Flaton said. “It’s a great space, and the tools and equipment they have here really makes it worthwhile, so that you can really do almost anything. When you walk through and see what other people are coming up with, it really blows your mind.”

But it’s not just functional things that are being created at the Fab Lab. While the average user may just want to learn about electronics or manufacturing processes, some Fab Lab-ers come to build custom-made toys, crafts and art projects, says Lauren Semeraro, a junior in electrical engineering from Mahomet, Ill.

“One of the more unique projects I’ve seen here is when someone wanted to etch different sides of a mirror with the image of a car,” Semeraro said. “When you held it up to the light, you could see the inside and the motor. It was really a beautiful piece of artwork.”

Semeraro says the creative environment the Fab Lab cultivates only adds to the fun.

“If you’re always had this idea in the back of your head that it would be really cool to make something, but nobody makes it, then you can probably come here and make it yourself,” she said.

Semeraro, who’s also an associate manager at the Fab Lab, says no matter how imaginative the project, safety is always a priority for everyone involved with the Fab Lab.

“I’m always here hovering to make sure people are wearing safety goggles and nothing catches on fire,” she said. “We make sure there are no toxic fumes coming out of the laser cutter. We regulate what they put in there.”

For Chee Haw Chan, a freshman in mechanical engineering from Durston, Ill., the Fab Lab is an outlet for creativity away from the classroom.

“It’s a place to get away from books and do something fun for the sake of doing something fun, and not for a grade,” Chan said.

At the Fab Lab, Chan says he learned how to solder properly, a new skill that has come in handy.

“Classes teach you a lot of theoretical stuff, but sometimes you need to do things with your own hands,” he said.

“If not only do you learn new things here, you can actually do it,” Flaton said. “Instead of saying, ‘I’m totally going to do that one day,’ you can come here and do it right away.”

“It’s just a nice place to come after a long day of classes,” Ray said. “It’s a way of getting away from the daily grind of a college freshman.”

Chan, Flaton and Ray all agree that the Fab Lab has helped to ease their transition from high school to life as freshman engineers at the Urbana campus.

“It’s a welcoming environment, and I’ve met a lot of people here,” Flaton said. “When I’m not working on something, I like to walk around and take a look at what everyone else is doing. So not only do you get hands-on experience at building things, there’s also some community-building going on here.”

For Barrett, the Fab Lab is important in that it helps people cultivate self-reliance and the courage to take risks, as well as a sense of ownership over the things that define us in our technologically saturated global economy.

“You can certainly go through life without ever making anything, but then you’re at the mercy of those who sell you things, as well as those who can repair them,” she said. “Knowing that we control the things that we use – and not the other way around – can have a profound impact on our engagement with the world. It’s an empowering feeling.”

Plus, Barrett says, “I think it’s very cool to be able to say, I made this at the Fab Lab.”

The experience of working with things is something that’s been overlooked,” he said. “Classes teach you a lot of theoretical stuff, but sometimes you need to do things with your own hands,” he said.

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or most people, weather is a topic of small talk. For students majoring in atmospheric sciences, it’s a passion.

The 45 students in professor Robert Rauber’s fall 2010 radar meteorology class got to experience that passion first-hand when a sophisticated weather-research tool made a three-week visit to campus: Doppler On Wheels (DOW), a mobile radar unit funded mainly by the National Science Foundation and featured in the popular Discovery Channel program “Storm Chasers.” The DOWs are primarily used for research during tornado season, but in more idle times NSF allows universities to use the units for course work. The UI is one of the first universities to bring this equipment to a campus.

“The idea is to take it for three weeks and deploy the radar on real weather systems, collect real data and then have the students do a project with it as part of their course work,” said Rauber, the chair of the atmospheric sciences department.

To prepare the students for field work in the DOW, Rauber asked them to design their own experiments – a first for the eager undergraduates. Each group of two or three students designed two experiments, one for fair weather and one for foul.

“I tried to make sure they knew everything they needed to know before we went out. It was a challenge for them to think about what they wanted to look at,” Rauber said.

From Nov. 1 to 21, the students used the DOW in six-hour shifts, traveling around the Champaign-Urbana area to carry out their experiments. Under Rauber’s supervision, the students set up the equipment and recorded data, getting a taste for genuine fieldwork.

“I had no idea we could do so much with radar!” said Annareli Morales, a junior majoring in atmospheric sciences and in geology. “Because of this experience I’ve become more aware of what I want to do, and it gave me the confidence to pursue more research experience. I want to go into research, and it’s all because of the experience with the DOW. I would recommend this to everybody.”

During the three weeks the class had access to the Doppler on Wheels, the biggest challenge turned out to be the clear weather. But the blue skies didn’t prevent the class from gathering valuable data. Teaching assistant Jason Keeler unstraps the DOW for use in the field.

“I could see in the future expanding it even more. I was 6 years old, it’s all I’ve wanted to do. To be able to do it for a class and use this high-tech equipment was really, really cool.”

During the three weeks the class had access to the DOW, the biggest challenge turned out to be the clear weather. But the blue skies didn’t prevent the class from gathering valuable data. The students carried out every experiment the class designed for clear air, studying turbulence from wind farms, plumes from smokestacks and ground clutter.

“When I found out that we had the chance to use a DOW, I was really excited for it,” said atmospheric sciences junior Eric Ahasic. “I love the weather. Ever since I was 6 years old, it’s all I’ve wanted to do. To be able to do it for a class and use this high-tech equipment was really, really cool.”

The students’ enthusiasm buoyed them to going the extra mile to gather the data they needed, such as driving to Indiana to study a lake-effect storm. Ahasic and his partner even went out early on a rainy Saturday morning – sacred sleeping time for most undergraduates – to employ the DOW.

After gathering data in the field, the students spent the remainder of the semester using the department’s analysis software to mine the troves of data for nuggets of discovery.

“That experience helped me be aware of all that it takes to do research,” Morales said. “There’s a lot beyond engineering of the DOW. Once you actually get the data, then it’s another whole story.”

Morales and Ahasic both felt that the overall experience of the course, from experimental design to time in the DOW to analysis, gave them a taste for field research and all that it entails. Thanks to their newfound skills and confidence, both are applying for summer research internships.

“That’s one thing I love about Illinois,” Ahasic said. “Every major here requires you to do some real-life experience to show that you’re actually able to do the job. I’m midway through my junior year here and I’ve already gotten to use the DOW, design my own experiments and carry them out. I definitely feel that this shows that you have to take what you learn from books and apply it in real life.”

Given the success of the fall semester, Rauber plans to apply to the NSF to use the DOW in future sections of the biannual course.

“I could see it in the future expanding it even more and trying to do some more interesting stuff. There’s a lot more we could do with it,” Rauber said.
UI Library addresses student concerns about overnight access

As of Jan. 18, 2011, Library users must present a valid i-card for entry into the Undergraduate Library and the Grainger Engineering Library Information Center from midnight to 6 a.m., and the Funk-Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Library from midnight to 3 a.m. Any library users who are not current members of the Urbana campus community are asked to leave the libraries at midnight.

As an additional safety measure, the lower level of the Undergraduate Library is closed from midnight to 6 a.m. The lower level of the Undergraduate Library will remain available for retrieval upon request. For more information on these restricted hours and other group study spaces, media viewing spaces, public computing, and print and digital collections, materials housed on the lower level of the Undergraduate Library continues to provide full library services during these hours, including access to individual and group study spaces, media viewing spaces, public computing, and print and digital collections.

Reflections body image program trains students to reach peers

By Mike Helenthal

While very few of us are perfectly pleased with what we see in the mirror, growing numbers are so disappointed at what appears that they’re willing to take dangerous steps to change it.

A concerned group on the UI campus is reaching through the looking glass to help students before it goes that far.

Three years ago, leaders of Campus Recreation, the Counseling Center and Froshweek and Sorority Affairs teamed with Tri Delta sorority to create a new body-image program for the campus.

So far, about 150 peer trainers in the Reflections program have helped more than 700 women on campus face body-image issues that can lead to more-serious and even life-threatening eating and over-exercising disorders.

“Before Reflections, we were doing a lot of reactive things,” said Robyn Deterdet, the director of the Division of Campus Recreation. “We kept asking what we could do to be more proactive.”

Enter the Tri Dels.

Tri Delta’s national leadership made the Reflections program a part of its sorority’s annual training regimen as a result of the success of its efforts on the campus of Trinity University in San Antonio.

The program, started by Trinity psychologist Carolyn Becker, relies on the concept of cognitive dissonance to help replace media- and socially induced feelings of falling short of the “ideal” body shape. It’s based on Becker’s research, the results of which appear in a paper called “Reducing Eating Disorder Risk Factors in Sorority Members: A Randomized Trial,” delivered to the Conference on Eating Disorder in 2004 and published in 2005 by the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy.

“There’s a lot of repetitiveness in the program, but the idea behind it is to get them to a place where they are no longer thinking about some of these body issues or paying attention to the negative influences,” said Jane Kroencke, assistant director of campus recreation’s wellness services.

Much of the Reflections program deals with identifying media influences — which use willow-thin models to sell everything from shoes to toothpaste — and dispelling the “thin ideal” myth.

The program is aimed at women because they are more likely to face anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating problems that many times follow body-image issues. While men are also affected by body image and eating disorders, women are as much as three times more likely to seriously suffer from these disorders.

And it’s not just a matter of eating or not eating, being healthy or not. According to the National Institute of Public Health, the mortality rate among people with anorexia is 12 times higher than the annual death rate from all causes of death among females age 15-24.

Kroencke said the program already has shown results at the UI.

“It really challenges their value system and the way they function,” she said of participants. “It’s not the stereotypical conversation they might have if they were talking to a parent. We try to show them the ‘thin ideal’ is something that’s not attainable.”

Reflections is presented in small groups of about 10 participants and asks students to challenge conventional media messages.

Kroencke said the sorority system is an ideal vehicle for Reflections’ message because the program also challenges participants to change their own media-reflected habits, such as complimenting someone for looking thin.

“These are a group of women who already live together,” Kroencke said. “It really makes them connect.”

“It’s a peer-led program and they’re in a common living space,” said Jillian Kachel, a graduate assistant working with Reflections. “That’s why it works.”

Becker originally picked the sorority structure because, according to her paper’s introduction, “Although sororities are often perceived as contributing to eating-disordered behavior, limited research has investigated eating disorders in sorority members.”

Andrew Hohn, assistant director of fraternity and sorority affairs at Illinois, said campus leaders were pleased to find Tri Delta so willing to share its successful and award-winning program.

“They opened it to any sorority and we’ve just taken it to a larger scale,” he said. “When they agreed, we just sort of jumped at the opportunity. They just bought right into it.”

He said campus leaders would like to expand Reflections to other groups, including men if a need is identified, but doing so is difficult because of limited staffing and funding, and the perpetual nature of retraining students after leaders graduate. Currently, six UI staff members oversee the program.

The Office of the Dean of Students has provided $1,500 toward the cost of training. The sororities pay for manuals for the participants and the trainers. Campus Rec provides meeting space for the sessions, typically held in April at the Activities Recreation Center.

“We’re looking at ways to expand Reflections training to women of color and female athletes,” Hohn said. “Our goal is to train as many as we possibly can.”

Hohn said parents also play a role in the body-image problem. He said “fat talk,” involving a parent pointing out a child’s body deficiency in hopes of evoking change, usually has a negative effect.

“Parents can see a lot of the warning signs but that doesn’t help if they don’t know what the warning signs are,” he said. “They need to become more educated as well.”

UI is one of the first universities outside of Trinity to help expand the program beyond Tri Delta. So far, four other sororities on campus have had in-house training. And three, Delta Gamma, Sigma Delta Tau and Delta Zeta, plan to annually hold it.

“It’s a very big problem on a lot of campuses and it’s one we take very seriously,” Deterdet said of the body-image issue. “Women are told they need to be thin at such a young age. There are junior-high kids being told to diet, and that’s just not healthy at such a young age. You have to think about how one person can make a difference.”

She said she first inquired about adopting Reflections after seeing Becker interviewed on CNN.

“I thought, ‘What if we just send her an e-mail and tell her we’re interested in finding out more?’” Deterdet said. “She got right back to us that very day.”

More information about Reflections is available online at www.bodyimageprogram.org.

Mark of Excellence

By Mike Helenthal

As of Jan. 18, 2011, Library users must present a valid i-card for entry into the Undergraduate Library and the Grainger Engineering Library Information Center from midnight to 6 a.m., and the Funk-Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Library from midnight to 3 a.m. Any library users who are not current members of the Urbana campus community are asked to leave the libraries at midnight.

Since 2008, the UI Library has provided 24-hour access five days a week during the academic year to the Undergraduate and Grainger libraries, thanks to funds provided by the Student Library/IT Fee. The restricted hours are in response to the Illinois Student Senate’s December 2010 Resolution on Library Security.
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ustomer service. Marketing. Stress management (for dogs and cats). These are not typical veterinary courses, but they are important in the day-to-day operations of a private veterinary office. For that reason, they are part of the curriculum for Illinois veterinary students who have the chance to do a rotation at Furnetic, a veterinary hospital just west of the Chicago Loop and south of the Eisenhower Expressway.

The Furnetic veterinary clinic is a division of the Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine and is affiliated with the UI College of Veterinary Medicine. Because it is an independent veterinary office in an urban neighborhood, it offers students a unique training experience that goes well beyond the practice of medicine, said Thomas Graves, a UI professor of veterinary clinical medicine and the director of the center.

“There’s not another veterinary college in the country that has a stand-alone urban primary care practice,” he said. “And the thing is, that’s what most of our graduates go into: small animal general practice.”

There general practice veterinarian, one of whom is pursuing an interest in animal behavior, staff Furnetic, providing client services and patient care while also training students. Students who do rotations at the clinic get to experience the “meat and potatoes of general practice,” Graves said. This includes wellness examinations, dog and cat behavioral interventions, dentistry, diagnostic procedures and treatment for routine health problems.

This complements the training students receive at the teaching hospital in Urbana, where they do rotations in intensive specialty care such as surgery, radiology, orthopedics, imaging and ophthalmology.

Furnetic officially opened in June 2009. One student, 33-year-old Downers Grove, Ill., native, Nicholas Marion was lucky enough to be there at the beginning.

“I did a four-month externship there in the summer of 2009,” he said. “It allowed me to see how a new clinic started, from the marketing aspects to just the logistics of getting a facility open, especially one that’s as high-tech as the one in Chicago.”

The facility uses an electronic record-keeping system, which is more efficient than paper files and also saves room, said Marion, who will finish his medical training this spring.

“I got to see how such a computer-intensive office gets established and then configured to work efficiently,” he said. “For the first time in his life, Marion also learned about marketing.

“The majority of my curriculum is science and veterinary medicine based, so marketing is something that I had never thought about very much,” he said. “Communicating with the community, going to outreach events was neat for me to do. I learned how to try to bring in new clients and build client relationships.”

“This is a real veterinary hospital, so it’s a small business in a neighborhood where students have to pay attention to things like customer service,” Graves said. “We also have them go through practice management exercises there, where they learn the financial side of running a private practice.”

Working in a neighborhood practice is very different from working in a university teaching hospital, with all of its support staff and university infrastructure, Graves said.

“I can see in the mornings picking up the paper wrappers and things that have blown out of garbage cans overnight,” he said, “because the way our clinic looks when people walk through the door is important.”

The students also get a taste of the everyday realities of running a business, he said.

“When you’re in a small private practice as a veterinarian and the receptionist has a headache and can’t come to work, guess what? That’s your problem,” he said.

The clinic is also “one of the most tangible and positive presences that the Urbana campus has in Chicago,” Graves said. “Chicago is most of the population of Illinois, and most of our students and their parents are from that area,” he said.

Julie Disney, 23, is one of those Chicago-area students. She grew up in Olympia Fields, a south suburb, started her sophomore year in the veterinary program, and did a rotation at Furnetic last November.

“I thought it would be interesting to go back to an area where I’ve lived before and try to engage some local community,” Disney said.

She was particular with the training in provided by staff and professors.

“She really empowers people with that,” Disney said.

“The animals should be part of their daily routine, ” Disney said. “The behavioralists are their friends.”

Behavioral interventions, like behavioral training, are also a part of the day-to-day work.

“I can’t tell you how many clients who appreciate our presence,” Disney said.

The reception area invites clients and their pets to “sit, stay” in the practice located in the Illinois Medical District.

Veterinary students

Chicago high schoolers volunteer

Tuition to be tied to inflation

University trustees approved a measure in January aimed at making tuition increases more predictable, keeping them in line with inflation.

The new policy creates a framework for setting tuition that strives to keep rates flat, with increases based on inflation.

Other considerations, such as changes in state appropriations to the university, also will be factored into tuition decisions. The guidelines will make planning easier for university budget officers and ensure affordability for students, said board chairman Christopher Kennedy.

“The board’s hope is to keep tuition flat,” Kennedy said.

“Inconsistent increases and uncertainty can be a strain for short- and long-term families, as well as administrators and the university in its planning,” he added.

Since 2004, tuition increases have averaged 5.6 percent. Under the state’s guarantee, tuition increases will not exceed the rate of inflation, based on the consumer price index.

The guidelines will make planning easier for university budget officers and also will be factored into tuition decisions. The guidelines will make planning easier for university budget officers and also will be factored into tuition decisions.
Veterinary students learn in an urban Chicago practice

...at clinic; veterinarians visit city public schools

Julie Disney, a second-year veterinary student, with her dog Dakota, did a rotation at Furnetic in November.

T
here's not another veterinary college in the country that has a stand-alone urban primary care practice. . . . that's what most of our graduates go into: small animal general practice.

One of the staff veterinarians, Tracy Hlede, regularly visits Chicago public schools in an intensive effort to recruit new students to the field of veterinary medicine.

"It’s been so exciting for me to see high school kids coming in and working and volunteering and learning about veterinary medicine as a health profession in our clinic," Graves said.

Disney and Marion both like working with small and large animals, but both expect to start their careers in a small animal clinic after finishing school.

Marion, who also holds a bachelor’s and doctorate degree in bioengineering from Illinois, hopes to eventually find—or start—a practice in a rural area that will allow him to do both small and large animal veterinary care.

"My dream is to do mixed practice," he said.

For both of these students, and dozens of others who rotate through the Chicago veterinary clinic, the experience gives them a real taste of what is ahead for them in their careers.

"About 90 percent of the skills that we’ll need in the real world when we’re employed as veterinarians we are developing here in the clinic," Marion said.

Julie Disney, a second-year veterinary student, with her dog Dakota, did a rotation at Furnetic in November.

The clinic is expanding this spring to 10,000 square feet, and will soon offer 24-hour emergency animal care, Graves said. He also hopes to bring in more specialized care.

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ReMarkable

Some Illini don’t want to graduate to begin giving back

By Sharita Forrest

There’s no doubt that Illini are givers. Over the years, many graduating senior classes have enhanced their successors’ college experience with parting gifts—such as beautifying the campus with a flower bed around the Alma Mater sculpture, buying bells for the Altgeld Hall carillon, and creating a fund to assist needy freshmen. Likewise, generous alumni have expressed their gratitude and loyalty through gifts that funded scholarships, facilities and learning experiences for the generations that followed them.

Some Illini are so passionate about their alma mater and about philanthropy, however, that they can’t wait until they’ve left the stage with their diplomas in hand or made their marks in the world in later life to start giving back. Seeing unmet needs in units around campus or simply out of gratitude for scholarships and other assistance that they’ve received themselves, student philanthropists strive to make the campus a better place while they’re still walking its halls daily.

Last fiscal year, more than 1,000 students at Illinois—full- and part-time, undergraduate and graduate—donated to the campus, contributing more than $100,000 to projects and units dear to them.

Three years ago, an organization was created on campus to support student philanthropy and recognize those who give. The 1867 Society, named after the year the UI was founded, provides opportunities for students to support projects and units on campus that they feel strongly about and gain recognition for their efforts. Students who want to learn more can hone their leadership skills by serving on the society’s executive board or as members of its council.

“Historically, our student body has had a strong philanthropic spirit,” said Sharla Sola, assistant director of Annual Giving Programs in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement and the society’s advisor. “The 1867 Society is building a community by recognizing students who give back and publicizing the importance of giving to the Urbana campus.”

Any undergraduate, graduate or professional student can become a member of the 1867 Society by making a monetary donation to any gift fund on the Urbana campus, such as the Annual Fund for their college or department, the General Scholarship Fund, the Library Annual Fund or Student Affairs.

Students are encouraged to donate to the 1867 Society Fund, which supports various types of projects on campus that benefit students. During the fall semester, campus units and organizations apply to receive grants from the 1867 Society Fund the following spring. The society’s executive board narrows down the applicants to three.

During the spring semester, members vote to determine the project(s) that they want to support.

The May student donors elected to give $1,300 to the Undergraduate Library, which used the money to fund two projects—outfitting five conference rooms in the library’s Learning Commons with flat screen TVs so students can work collaboratively, and installing power-assist equipment on the library’s doors to make access easier for students with disabilities.

Fifteen organizations applied to the 1867 Society Fund this past fall. This spring, members will decide whether to donate the money collected this year to the Emergency Dean Fund, which helps out students who need emergency resources; the Undergraduate Library, to support installation of computer workstations in the Technology Area; or the Informatics Club, to buy global positioning systems for building a website that will help people navigate campus.

Many students find the 1867 Society Fund appealing because they get to choose where the money goes, said Caroline Cvetkovic, a 21-year-old senior from Marion, Ill., majoring in bioengineering. The president of the group this year, Cvetkovic organized the fund last year, when she was the group’s vice president for campus relations.

“I think that I, like a lot of students, had misconceptions about the financial state of the university and where our tuition dollars go,” Cvetkovic said. “I’ve found that when I’ve talked to a lot of my friends and classmates, they don’t realize the power of giving back to support the university, and this is a good way to get the word out.”

The society’s “Get Real” campaign shows students that their tuition dollars only cover a portion—currently, about 17 percent—of the university’s budgetary needs, and that many projects—including facilities, faculty chairs, scholarships and events—are dependent on donor support, Cvetkovic said.

“Through the 1867 Society, I’ve realized how many opportunities I’ve been given because of others who came before me and donated. This is a way to keep passing it along to future generations because what I give now will influence the future of Illinois and its students,” Cvetkovic said.

Cash-strapped students sometimes are reluctant to donate because they mistakenly believe that small gifts aren’t welcome or won’t make much of an impact. But the society’s “Give Now” campaign encourages them to start small—even a gift of $5 can make a big difference when it’s pooled with similar donations from other students.

“Growing up here, I’ve had a lot of opportunities through the university,” Victoria Froshib said. “Being in the community, the university just means a lot to me. I want to do everything I can to give back to it.”

Students are encouraged to donate online through the 1867 Society’s website so their gifts can be tracked and recognized. Donors receive a tassel with the 1867 emblem on it when they give $18.67 or more during a fiscal year, which begins July 1 and ends June 30. Students also can select from five cumulative gift levels—orange and blue, for gifts of $18.66 or less; sand, for gifts of $18.67-24.99; green, for donations of $25 – 49.99; and loyalty, $50 – 99.99; or alma mater, for giving $100 or more. Members can renew their membership from one fiscal year to the next by contributing again during the subsequent fiscal year.

The society’s major fundraiser is Wii Support Illinois, a Wii Bowling tournament held each year on Feb. 28, the anniversary of the UI’s founding. The top bowler walks away with a television, and all participants have opportunities to win one of many gift certificates donated by local restaurants, salons, hotels and other businesses. The society also sponsors trivia nights that allow students to learn more about giving on campus while dazzling their peers with their knowledge of the university and pop culture.

1867 Society members, from left, Katie Chan, freshman in business; Lindsay Wood, senior in food industry and business; Caroline Cvetkovic, senior in bioengineering; and Kim Laconsole, junior in communications, with one of five flat screen televisions purchased for the undergraduate library with funds raised by the group.
Latino faculty members in the UI College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences will be mentoring the next generation of Latino scientists through a National Science Foundation grant recently awarded to Gustavo Caratano-Ambeli, a professor of crop sciences; Sandra Rodriguez-Zas, a professor of animal sciences; Jesse Thompson, assistant dean of academic programs and coordinator for diversity programs; and Maria Villamil, a professor of crop sciences.

“We are fortunate to be selected as part of the Undergraduate Research and Mentoring program of NSF,” said Caratano-Ambeli, co-principal investigator. “Illinois has one of the fastest-growing Latino populations, and this population is highly underrepresented in science and research.”

The $662,836 NSF grant will establish a UI program titled “New Biology Fellows” that will focus on mentoring Latino undergraduate students. Villamil is one of many faculty members concerned about the number of Latino students in the college.

“With less than 50 percent of Latino students graduating from high school, rigorous college entrance requirements, financial challenges, a lack of role models and little to no exposure to biosciences, it’s not surprising that few Latinos enter into science, technology, engineering and math fields at the UI,” she said.

Students haven’t been exposed to “new biology” or the integration of all of these areas into one multidisciplinary field. They see biology, math, physics, engineering and computer sciences as separate entities, said Rodriguez-Zas, co-principal investigator.

“A limited number of students possess the quantitative and informatics background, combined with a firm grounding in biology and agricultural sciences, necessary to make full use of the large datasets available to enhance agricultural sustainability and community wellness,” Rodriguez-Zas said.

Four cohorts of “New Biology Fellows” will receive one-year research experiences in quantitative biology and informatics starting in the summer of 2011 and continuing through 2015. Each cohort consists of seven college sophomore and junior students who have completed at least one introductory biology and one introductory math course from a Hispanic-serving institution in Illinois, including Harry S. Truman College, Morton College, Northeastern Illinois University, Triton College, Waubonsee Community College, Wilbur Wright College and UI.

“We plan to create a permanent pipeline to help students in two-year programs move on to a four-year program and eventually pursue graduate degrees at the UI,” Rodriguez-Zas said.

Students will receive $15,000 fellowships for their research and academic work for one year at the UI studying a topic of their choice. Topics include plant and animal bioinformatics, quantitative genetics and plant breeding, statistical genomics, architecture of complex traits, food nanotechnology, biological system modeling, and statistics for agriculture.

“We want to enhance the pool of multicultural and multidisciplinary scientists and professionals by offering experiential learning opportunities, as well as academic and career development activities,” Villamil said.

The experience will include a 12-week, intensive, summer research immersion experience, a mentor-guided academic year of research, and an optional second summer internship experience.

“This could be life-changing,” Villamil said. “Not only can this experience increase students’ chances to find their dream job or be accepted into graduate college, but they also can learn the latest techniques and gain valuable academic and leadership skills from some of the leading scientists in the country.”

An important component of the program includes guidance on how to deal with the expected barriers that would normally preclude students’ consideration for advanced education, Thompson said.

The fellowships are being offered by the UI departments of agricultural and biological engineering, agricultural and consumer economics, animal sciences, crop sciences, food science and human nutrition, and the Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability.
by Craig Chamberlain

Re-envisioning teacher education with digital tools

Susan Noffke remembers learning to thread a film projector as a student teacher. That was the educational technology of the day. "It’s a skill that serves no function," Noffke said.

Today, the education professor shows her students how to use YouTube for social studies instruction. She takes them online to view historical documents at the National Archives. Or to hear narratives of former slaves, recorded during the Great Depression.

Other professors, teaching instructional methods for science, show their students the value of tools such as digital microscopes, and various probes and sensors. The data gathered can often be viewed or recorded on a laptop or mobile device.

Even pre-school children can be taught, using such devices, "in ways that we couldn’t imagine 20 years ago," Noffke said.

And yet there are still many times, she teaches her students, when the right technology is still a book or a piece of paper.

Many of today's digital tools are not new, of course. Computers and the Internet have been facts of life, and education, for some years now. Most of the current generation of students basically grew up digital and now live through their cell phones and social networking.

But as the technology continues to change, schools, and schools of education, continue to adapt with it, according to Noffke, co-chair of a task force that's re-envisioning teacher education at Illinois.

"Our students have to be really aware of the issues around technology and not just the how-tos," Noffke said. It’s about teaching students a disposition toward technology, about "seeing it as a tool and not as an end in itself," and using the right tool for the task, she said.

In keeping with that view of technology as tool, the college is working to make everything right tool for the task, she said. Computers and the Internet have been facts of life, and education, for some years now. Most of the current generation of students basically grew up digital and now live through their cell phones and social networking.

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Students who have completed degree requirements since August 2010 and May 2011 degree candidates are eligible to participate. Participation information and instructions are available at www.illinois.edu/commencement.

Books should order their academic regalia online at www.herffjones.com/illinois by April 18 or visit the Illini Union Bookstore between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on April 7 and 13 or between 4 and 7 p.m. April 18.

Questions may be directed to the Committee on Commencement at commencement@illinois.edu or 217-333-8834.

Administrative posts

David W. Chih
Assistant dean of students
Director
Asian American Cultural Center

Provides leadership for inclusion, diversity and cross-cultural engagement with Asian American and Asian international issues for all in the campus community.

http://studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/AACC

Anna K. Gonzalez
Associate vice chancellor for student affairs
Director
Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations

Principal staff liaison to students and faculty staff members on issues of inclusion and diversity, and retention of diverse staff members and students. Assists students in meeting their goals and objectives. Engages in strategic initiatives regarding coordination and implementation of multicultural programs.

http://studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/oir.html

Patricia L. Morey
Assistant dean of students
Director
Women's Resources Center

Provides organizational leadership for programs and services at the Women's Resources Center. Serves as the key advocate and support person for students who have been victimized by sexual assault or abuse within a relationship. Additionally, provides services as a dean-on-duty as part of the Office of the Dean of Students.

http://studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/women/

Ross A Wantland
Assistant director
Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations

Works with students and faculty staff members to create fair, just, and equitable communities on campus through workshops, trainings, and campus programming.
Dear Parents,

Recently, U.S. News & World Report listed the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as one of the “20 colleges where it’s easy to get involved.” This is a list that makes us even more proud of our outstanding students.

The article stated that “major public institutions like … the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign … have far more organizations than most smaller schools, each boasting at least 950 organizations registered on campus. However, these groups must serve student bodies that exceed 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students.”

The organizations on our campus include hundreds of Registered Student Organizations as well as the many volunteers that make the surrounding community stronger. This includes the popular iHelp program launched by the University of Illinois Alumni Association. This is a one-day, volunteer project at Homecoming in which students and alumni go into their communities to do everything from reading to after-school youngsters to donating blood to local police or firefighters. Then there are fantastic groups such as Orange Krush, Alternative Spring Break, and so many groups in our fraternities and sororities. The volunteer hours students contribute are in the tens of thousands but the good deeds they perform are immeasurable.

In this issue of Postmarks you will read of another way our students are engaged, the 1867 Society. For three years now the 1867 Society has raised funds that directly benefit projects on this campus. The group is open to all levels of students from undergraduate to professional. I find it inspiring and really quite amazing that last year our generous students contributed more than $100,000 through gifts to funds all across our campus.

The 1867 Society activities not only benefit the campus, they also benefit the students. Through the 1867 Society, students learn valuable leadership and communication skills. They work as a team. They go out into the greater community as passionate ambassadors of the university while interacting with diverse groups.

Students involved in the organization also build loyalty to the university by being invested in its future and learning more about its funding sources. The “Get Real” Campaign communicated quite effectively to all students the need for private support in the wake of decreased funding by the state of Illinois, now at about 17 percent.

Students also get to choose where their money goes. As you will read in the Postmarks article, last year’s gift helped to outfit five conference rooms in the Undergraduate Library. The group is currently deciding on where this year’s gifts will go.

I am so thankful for the support of the 1867 Society. That is why I am pleased to announce that the Office of the Chancellor will be supporting the 1867 Society for another three years. I can’t wait to see what additional good deeds come out of these great supporters of our campus.

Robert A. Easter
Interim Vice President, University of Illinois
Interim Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign