PUBLIC TRANSIT?

Two important dates are looming in the stalemate between the Port Authority of Allegheny County and its union workers. The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 85, comprising some 2,300 bus drivers, rail operators, mechanics and clerical workers, has called a meeting Nov. 23 for rank-and-file members to vote on whether to stop working in protest of the Port Authority’s intention to impose a new contract on Dec. 1. Union members have been working without a contract since July 1.

Last month, the Port Authority board of directors unilaterally imposed a contract effective Dec. 1 based on its latest offer, a move it said “is allowed by law when impasse has been reached in negotiations.”

In response, Patrick McMahon, president/business agent of ATU Local 85, issued a statement that negotiations were not at an impasse, that the Port Authority had refused to consider cost-cutting and concessionary measures offered by the union and that, therefore, the unilateral imposition of a contract was illegal and constituted a lockout.

According to local media reports citing McMahon as the source, among the options open to the union membership are authorizing the ATU leadership to call a strike, claiming the action of the Port Authority constitutes a lockout and declaring a work stoppage; seeking an injunction to stop the Port Authority from imposing the contract, and continuing to work if negotiations are renewed.

McMahon did not return calls seeking confirmation of these options before the University Times went to press.

Complicating the situation is that County Chief Executive Dan Onorato has stated publicly that if the union settle on a contract — to have something unique to appeal, Sangl noted, is that they are not only handmade, but each is made with a different combination of fabrics, making one of a kind. The committee hopes to continue the project in 2008 because the blankets were so well received last year. Part of the blankets appeal, Sangl said, is that they are not only handmade, but each is made with a different combination of fabrics, enabling recipients to identify their blanket — to have something unique to call their own.

A lockout and SAC is making blankets for clients of the YWCA Bridge Housing Program, which provides transitional housing for homeless women and children. SAC’s goal is to make 40 adult and 20 children’s blankets for the agency. As of this week, 52 have been completed. Sangl said the committee plans to select an additional agency on its own.

SAC has met its goal to deliver 120 blankets to the YWCA Bridge Housing Program. For the clients at the YWCA, the blankets are a welcome gift and a source of warmth.

The blankets are made from fleece fabric and are cut into various sizes. The committee has been able to cut the materials for blankets that are about a half-dozen blankets and to complete tying three blankets. Sangl said that in the span of about four hours on a recent evening, she was able to cut the materials for more than 170 blankets for individuals served by the Lemington Community Services Senior Center.

SAC’s goal is to be able to make 120 blankets and to complete tying three blankets. Sangl said.

The adult fleece blankets require four yards of material, children’s blankets take three yards to complete. To make the blankets, Sangl said the committee chose to “adopt” an area to buy gifts for two families through the Salvation Army.

Last year, the SAC committee met its commitment by raising funds to buy materials and made more than 170 blankets for individuals served by the Lemington Community Services Senior Center.

For many of the elderly clients, this was the only gift they received for the holidays, in addition to being a source of warmth and comfort, said SAC program and planning committee chair Anna Sangl, who has headed up the project.

SAC accepts donations of fleece. Also, to raise money for supplies, the committee has held drawings for blankets or lucite pillows made from Steelers- or Pitt-patterned fleece (one such fundraiser is underway now) and has included the blankets and pillows in gift baskets that were raffled at SAC’s annual Kennywood picnic.

For information on supporting or participating in the blanket project, contact committee chair Marissa Arlet at marissa@pitt.edu or 412/381-2004.

—Kimberly K. Barlow
Exercise specialist Steps It Up for Pitt’s fall walking challenge

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step, ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu observed. So, how far can the Pitt Steps It Up activity challenge participants go? How about to the moon?

As the six-week Fitness for Life program winds to a close, the 1,700 participants are closing in on the collective goal of 500 million miles — the equivalent of 250,000 miles, roughly the distance to the moon. As of Wednesday morning, 440 million steps had been logged toward the goal set by David D. Garcia, a clinical exercise specialist in the School of Education’s Department of Health and Physical Activity, has encouraged Pitt Steps It Up activity challenge participants with daily emails and weekly lessons and tips for becoming more active.

Impact of activity

First, Garcia said, participants need to believe they can accomplish something external and “feel good about it.” Garcia’s lessons and tips on encouraging physical activity and emails of encouragement have been well received among participants, who in turn have responded — more often with comments than questions, he noted. Backed up by the technical skills of Human Resources systems analyst/webmaster Bob Alt, Garcia has been the main contact throughout the challenge.

And he’s had plenty of contact — he estimates he’s received more than 200 emails from participants since the challenge began. He’s happy to provide the human touch. “I firmly believe people want to have that caring element,” he said, “I’m proud of everybody for what they’re doing.”

Garcia estimates he’s received an average of at least five emails a day from participants expressing how much his messages have helped and motivated them. Their responses motivate and encourage him in return. Citing a recent email in which a participant shared how she got her steps in on an inclinometer by walking indoors, he said, “I thought that was really cool. She overcame a barrier. That was really positive.”

Garcia doesn’t merely encourage; he practices what he preaches. Walking 10,000 steps a day is the foundation of exercise, he notes, adding that he’s worn a pedometer to log his daily steps for the past three or four years. “It’s just a way to hold myself accountable,” he said during an hour-long walking meeting (another activity-booster he tours) on a route from his Birmingham Towers office along the streets of the South Side and along the nearby South Side trail that added 6,000 steps to his and a University Times reporter’s pedometer.

Reviewing the six-week challenge, he said its purpose was to increase motivation for all participants — from the most sedentary to the most active, with a goal of getting all to decrease their sedentary time.

The program, the messages and the pedometers themselves all serve as external motivators to supplement the internal motivations (such as a desire to be healthy) that moved participants to sign up for the challenge.

Such external motivators can provide the nudge when the weather’s bad and one might be tempted not to walk. “You think, it’s a bad day out, but I’m participating in this, so I’ve got to get out there,” he noted. Or, as he finds in his own experience, “If I get home at the end of the day and I only have 6,000 steps, I know I really have to get a walk in,” he said.

“It’s a great jumpstart to get people moving.” Simply taking up the challenge is a big step. “It’s hard to start, but once you get going, the positive feeling of energy is very rewarding,” he said.

But the challenge is winding to a close, winter weather has arrived and the temptation of holiday food soon will be with us all. What’s a walker to do?

First, Garcia said, participants should reward themselves with something external and “feel good about the accomplishment” of the challenge. Perhaps the increased activity warrants a well-deserved new wardrobe in a smaller size.

While his daily emails soon will cease, “Don’t stop your pedometers,” he said. “That is a big motivator in itself.” A good way to keep up the external motivation, he said, is to continue logging steps through America on the Move (http://aom.americaonthemove.org), a Pittsburgh community link, then consider joining in a new Pitt weight race scheduled to begin in late January.

While activity, not weight loss per se, is the focus of the step challenge, the two go hand in hand. “If your overall physical activity is going to drop off and you’re not conscious about what you’re eating, you’re going to gain weight,” he warns. “You have to make a choice every single day about what type of lifestyle you want to have.”

Garcia notes that the American College of Sports Medicine recommends 20 minutes or more of moderate intensity exercise most or all days of the week. Moderate intensity means brisk-walking —

if you’re late for a meeting. And, to maintain weight loss, 250-300 minutes of exercise per week are needed.

“Don’t put it off because the holidays are coming, or wait until it’s time to make a New Year’s resolution. No telling yourself “I’ve done so great I can slack off,” he said. “It’s not a good idea to relax then try to get back into it.”

When seconds on the mashed potatoes are offered or the good eats start appearing in the office, remember, “The holidays are not a free pass. It’s okay to say no. We don’t do that enough,” he said.

To maintain the momentum, Garcia offers these reminders:

- Make a mantra for yourself.
- There was a reason for choosing to participate. Don’t let it get forgotten. Make a reminder such as a bookmark with your “why” written on it: “for my kids” or “to be healthier” and keep it in sight.
- For those who’ve lost weight, keeping the “fat pants” somewhere visible can be a powerful encouragement.
- Don’t be discouraged by a bad day. “We all have bad days. It’s just one day,” he said.

- Be mindful of your choices and actions.
- Plan ahead. For example, eliminate the treadmill coat hanger by taking the clothes off, dashing it off and putting it by the TV to wait while you wash. Avoid the temptation of a quick stop for a fast food dinner by planning the week’s menu in advance.
- Work to overcome barriers. It’s cold out? “That’s why we have clothes,” Garcia said. No excuses.
- Remember your problem-solving skills. Identify the barrier, brainstorm and list possible solutions, then pick one and try it. If it doesn’t work, try another.
- Make success possible for yourself. Set small goals to add 500 to 1,000 steps. As you get more active, it becomes easier and motivation increases, he said.

“There’s no need to bow a gym membership. The best piece of exercise equipment you have is your legs. They’re free. All you need is good shoes.”

- Stay positive. “It’s not what you can’t do, it’s what you can do to make yourself successful,” he said.

—Kimberly K. Barlow
**Nordenberg's compensation comparison among publics**

Earnings of public university presidents are shared online at the Chronicle of Higher Education. The Chronicle surveys the compensation for public, private, and public university presidents. The Chronicle's survey includes a variety of information such as salaries, benefits, and other financial information. The Chronicle's survey is considered private under certain circumstances. For example, the Chronicle does not publish the salaries of private university presidents.

According to the Chronicle, the median pay for the 599 private institutions made more than $500,000 in annual compensation in 2006-07. The Chronicle's survey includes information about salary, benefits, and other financial information. The Chronicle's survey is considered private under certain circumstances. For example, the Chronicle does not publish the salaries of private university presidents.

In previous years, the Chronicle's survey of compensation for public-university chiefs examined projected levels during the fiscal year in which the data was collected. The Chronicle changed the methodology in 2007 to reflect actual compensation for that year. The Chronicle's survey includes a variety of information such as salaries, benefits, and other financial information. The Chronicle's survey is considered private under certain circumstances. For example, the Chronicle does not publish the salaries of private university presidents.

**Pitt-Bradford receives $1 million gift that will yield $2 million in endowed scholarship funds**

The late Agnes L. Thomas, a resident of Bradford for more than 60 years, will make a gift to the campus that will be used to fund the Agnes L. and Lewis L. Thomas Scholarship Challenge. As long as the funds last, the challenge will allow donors to match the tuition and fees for seven years by at least $5,000 to $50,000 for new or existing scholarships.

Agnes Thomas graduated with honors from the Pittsburgh Academy Business School and worked as an executive secretary at Dresser Manufacturing and later for area physicians, Goodwin, Huff and Edward Rochef. Lewis L. Thomas, who died in 1981, was the former Bradford Motor Works.

K. James Evans, vice president and dean of the college, said, "Sometimes a small amount of money can mean a lot long way. Helping in the difference between a student remaining in college or having to withdraw for financial reasons."
English prof aims for Hollywood on the Mon

Carla Kurlander calls his documentary film “My Tale of Two Cities” a valentine to the city of Pittsburgh. A Nov. 28, 2013.

Pittsburgh screening at the Byham Theater makes it a birthday card — the benefit show- ing will include birthday candles and singing led by David Newell, better known as Mr. McFeely from Mister Rogers Neighborhood.

Perhaps most importantly, the movie is an invitation — a special request to ex-Pittsburghers who want to return home as Kurlander did.

The “comeback” story is intended not only to chronicle Pittsburghers who have found a way to win,” he said.

“Still, the film isn’t a Pollyanna-type ‘Isn’t it nice to come home?’ story, Kurlander said. Rather, it serves “as a vehicle in which neighbors could speak about something they feel passionately about.”

It touches on the exodus of thousands of Pittsburghers in the late 1970s and 1980s as the steel industry died — a disaster that created the far-flung “Steel Nation” comprised of expats who left, Kurlander said. As evidence of Pittsburghers’ loyalty regardless of geography, Kurlander includes footage of Pittsburghers at Point State Park, in L.A. and New York City, all singing Mister Roger’s “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?”

He labels his word-of-mouth call to the L.A. gath- ering “a special honor” and admitting he feared that in the “‘Let’s have a lunch some- time’ town,” his pitch would yield “two people under a palm tree.”

Instead, hundreds appeared.

That’s what people responded in this way is a big thing,” he said.

Louise Bowman overcame to create “The Story Behind the Construction of the Cathedral of Learning,” the branchchild of John G. Bowman, Pitt chancellor 1921-1946.

Those who don’t know the story now have an authorita- tive source of information. The chronicle of the Cathedral, from concept to design to execution, has been captured in a new 45-minute DVD video and narrated by E. Maxine Brubks, director of the Nationality Rooms and Intercul- tural Exchange Programs.

Brubks said her motivation to produce “The Story Behind the Construction of the Cathedral of Learning” was two-fold: to honor the 100th anniversary of Pitt’s move from Downtown to Oakland and to dispel certain myths about the Cathedral’s construction, particularly during campus tours.

The DVD documents, through interviews and dramatic challenges Chancel- lor Bowman overcame to create what he called the “tall building,” rounded by smaller, traditional buildings; a news release said the tower would rise to 52 stories, early sketches show comparative elevations at 450 and 650 feet, and Pitt President C. C. Welding set a 29-story limit — all of which, compounded by the Depres- sion, delayed the project several times.

Ground eventually was broken Sept. 29, 1923 and the cornerstone was laid by Bowman June 4, 1937, in the Commons Room, home of a half dozen of architectural engi- neering.

The DVD was produced by Pittsburgh-based Image Record- ings. Pitt contributors to the DVD’s production include William Beec, a theatre arts student; Michael Walter, the Quo Vadis coordinator for the Nationality Rooms program; Joseph Kapelowski and Michael Dradz- inski, photographers for the Center for Instructional Design and Distance Education; Mark M. Brown, former student whose master’s thesis discussed the tower’s design and construction; the Men’s Glee Club, and staff at the Special Collections Archives at Hillman Library.

Copies will be sold on site for $15.95 at the Nationality Rooms Gift Center (first floor of the Cathedral) and The Book Center.

Additional information on DVD availability will be posted on the film’s website.

—Kimberly K. Barlow

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**Story of Cathedral on DVD**

**What at 165,000 num- bered stories, 97,000 book- cases, 3,000 windows, the Great Depression, an aluminum silic- ate paperweight and music from Wagner’s “Die Valkyrie” in common?**

Pitt institutional history buffs will know that all those are integral components of the planning and construction of the Cathedral of Learning, the branchchild of John G. Bowman, Pitt chancellor 1921-1946.

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—Peter Hart
Second Annual MyHealth Weight Race!
Back by popular demand, the University of Pittsburgh working in collaboration with UPMC Health Plan and the University’s Department of Health and Physical Activity will once again be offering faculty and staff members, as well as their spouse/partner, the opportunity to participate in the MyHealth Weight Race. The Race, which will begin in January, is a twelve-week weight loss competition that is designed to be an enjoyable opportunity for individuals to lose or to maintain a healthy weight in a supportive atmosphere. Free nutritional counseling with registered dieticians, health coaches, and ongoing educational newsletters will support efforts to engage participants. Last year, nearly 1,300 participants took part in the Race. The average weight loss per participant was six and one-half pounds.

The Health Plan conducted focus groups that provided valuable feedback. Many of the recommendations will be incorporated into the 2009 race including:

• Individuals will have the option to join their colleagues in the creation of a team OR individuals will have the option to participate by themselves in the Race. Both groups will be eligible for prizes.
• An additional “official” weight will be offered to further engage the participants.
• A more streamlined registration process involving web-based enrollment of teams similar to the “Pitt Steps It Up” challenge.

Additional details regarding the race, including registration information, will be mailed on campus to all faculty and staff members in December.

Health Care and Dependent Day Care Flexible Spending Account Deadline Change Reminder
With the implementation of electronic claims filing for flexible spending accounts, a faster turnaround for reimbursements has resulted. For this reason, the grace period for submitting healthcare and dependent day care claims against the appropriate flexible spending account (FSA) was reduced from one year to six months as announced during open enrollment in April 2007.

All healthcare and dependent day care claims that were incurred between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 must be submitted for reimbursement no later than December 31, 2008.

The federal regulations have provided an extension that allows for healthcare claims to be incurred until September 15, 2008. However, the deadline for submitting claims for reimbursement remains December 31, 2008.

Benefit plans, in accordance with IRS regulations, are not allowed to make exceptions to this deadline.

Please contact the University’s flexible spending account administrator, eBDS, for account balances and eligibility information. eBDS may be reached by calling 1-800-207-9310.

Qualified Commuter Expense Account Deadline Reminder
No changes have been made to the deadline for submitting claims for reimbursement from the two Qualified Commuter Expense Accounts: the Qualified Parking Expense Account and the Qualified Mass Transit Account.

Claims incurred during the plan year while you are enrolled in a program, must be submitted within 90 days after the end of the plan year (by September 30th) to receive reimbursement for expenses incurred during that plan year. For example, expenses incurred between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009 must be submitted with the appropriate documentation to eBDS by September 30, 2009 in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Employees terminating participation in a program have 90 days to submit unclaimed expenses to be eligible for reimbursement.

Please note that unclaimed funds in a Qualified Parking Expense Account and/or a Qualified Mass Transit Account will roll over from month to month and plan year to plan year. This means that any portion of your monthly contribution to a Qualified Commuter Expense Account that is not reimbursed during a particular month will roll over to subsequent months until you submit an eligible claim.

Unlike the Health Care and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts, the “use it or lose it” rule does not apply to the Qualified Parking Expense Accounts unless you discontinue the program, or if you terminate employment and do not submit eligible claims for reimbursement within 90 days of termination.

Please contact the University’s flexible spending account administrator, eBDS, for more information regarding Qualified Commuter Expense Accounts. eBDS may be reached at 1-800-207-9310.

New Option to Defined Contribution Retirement Plan – The Roth 403(b):
Effective October 1, 2008 the University of Pittsburgh introduced a new option within the Defined Contribution Savings Plan called the Roth after-tax 403(b) option.

Meetings were conducted by the Benefits Department staff, TIAA-CREF, and Vanguard across all of the University’s campuses during the month of September to provide information on the Roth after-tax 403(b) option and answer questions pertaining to the University’s Retirement Plan options.

Information was mailed to the home address of all participants introducing the Roth after-tax 403(b) including brochures from both Vanguard and TIAA-CREF.

The Roth after-tax 403(b) provides diversity in the taxation of a portfolio upon retirement. The main difference between Roth and pre-tax 403(b) involves the taxation of the employee contributions. Pre-tax contributions and any earnings on the contributions are taxed upon withdrawal. Under the Roth 403(b), contributions are taxed when first deducted from your paycheck. However, upon retirement, the contributions and any earnings on those contributions are not taxable.

Additional information pertaining to the Roth after-tax 403(b) including Roth enrollment instructions, a Roth presentation, and frequently asked questions can be found on the University’s HR Web page at www.hr.pitt.edu/Roth.

Participants can make changes to their 403(b) contributions once per month. Keep in mind, the Roth is an option within the Defined Contribution Plan. Changes to either the Basic or Supplemental plans can be completed by going through the University’s Online Enrollment Guide at: www.hr.pitt.edu/benefits/enrollmentGuide.htm.

Changes must be completed by the last day of the month in order to be effective the first of the following month.

All of the Roth 403(b) contributions made by a participant will count towards the IRS limits for the calendar year.

Retirement counselors at both TIAA-CREF and Vanguard can be reached at:

TIAA-CREF: 1-800-842-2776 or online at www.tiaa-cref.org/moc to schedule an on-campus, one-on-one appointment with a TIAA-CREF consultant.
Vanguard: 1-800-662-0106 ext 14500 or online at www.meetvanguard.com to schedule an on-campus, one-on-one appointment with a Vanguard consultant.

“Pitt Steps It Up” – Challenge
The “Pitt Steps It Up” exercise challenge is nearing the finish line. More than 1,700 faculty and staff along with family members joined in this competition. The challenge was conceived by Dr. John Jakicic, Chairperson of the Department of Health and Physical Activity and programmed internally by Bob Alt, Systems Analyst/Webmaster within the Human Resources Department.

David Garcia, an ACSM Clinical Exercise Specialist within Dr. Jakicic’s department, has been providing daily motivational messages and keeping participants engaged with his “Ask David” interactive Web page on the site specifically created for the challenge. Participants are completing their sixth and final week of the challenge. Through four and one-half weeks, nearly 400 million steps have been taken! The goal is to reach the half-billion step mark at the end of six weeks. All campuses are participating and the feedback has been extremely positive to the challenge. The results and prizes will be announced on the website Tuesday, November 29th.

NOTE: The benefits of employees covered by collective bargaining agreements will be governed by the terms of those agreements.

Important Contact Information
Benefits Department
Office Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. M-F
2008 Craig Hall
Phone: 412-624-8160
Fax: 412-624-3485
www.hr.pitt.edu/benefits

Please visit our Web site for FAQs, downloadable forms and other benefits information.
Science rocks — and rolls — on

Pitt’s biological sciences outreach program hopes to get a lot of mileage out of a new mobile lab designed to spark middle- and high-schoolers’ interest and science knowledge.

Last week, the University rolled out a 70-foot tractor-trailer equipped with 26 lab stations to enable students to conduct experiments they might not be able to in their regular classrooms. Presentations focused on genetics, natural selection and molecular biology are among the programs that can be offered, said Alison Slinskey Legg, director of the outreach program.

Pitt’s current outreach programs serve some 4,000 students a year and provide summer professional development workshops for teachers to help them keep pace with scientific advances.

Pitt’s Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) director Steven Reis, associate vice chancellor for clinical research, said, “This is all about the kids, about their education and about engaging them in science.”

CTSI purchased the mobile laboratory for $120,000 and will support its operation with $25,000 per year. ThermoFisher Scientific is providing equipment and lab supplies.

The truck, covered with images of school children and the words “Science Rocks!” splashed in big blue letters, made its debut outside the Cathedral of Learning Nov. 10, then rolled out to stop at the Carnegie Science Center’s SciTech festival.

Visits to area schools are expected to begin in December. “There’s a huge list of teachers who want us to come out,” said assistant outreach coordinator Thomas Scilkin, who will coordinate the visits.

The mobile lab will cover an area ranging from Meadville/Erie in the north to Greene County in the south to Johnstown in the east, Legg said. A typical stop will last two or three days with two Pitt faculty members facilitating activities.

Pitt’s mobile lab is the result of an effort begun in 2003 by the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse.

Two federal grant programs are funding the lab: the Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA), which specializes in K-12 education outreach and supports Pitt’s biology outreach program with a five-year, $1.27 million award, and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, which promotes the transfer of medical research from the lab to the patient care setting. Pitt received an $83.5 million grant from this program in 2006.

About 20 mobile science labs are on the road nationwide; most are university-based, said Tony Beck, SEPA program officer. Pitt’s lab is the first to pair the two federal programs in such a project, said Barbara Alving, director of the National Institutes of Health’s National Center for Research Resources.

Alving noted the mobile lab not only strengthens the pipeline for tomorrow’s scientists and researchers by sparking students’ interest in science careers, but also fosters a health-literate population that understands science and research.

—Kimberly Barlow

$43.2M in construction/renovation projects OK’d

Pitt has approved $43.2 million in seven construction and renovation projects as well as four leases. The property and facilities committee of Pitt’s Board of Trustees approved the expenditures Nov. 7. That committee must approve property transactions in excess of $500,000 and University construction projects costing more than $1 million.

Among the approvals is a $14.3 million phase one project to acquire and prepare land for the construction of a sports complex on 12.5 acres of the former Robinson Court property adjacent to Trees Hall.

The complex will include baseball, softball, soccer, track and intramural facilities. The complex is expected to be ready for athletic competition in 2011, officials said.

In introducing the projects to the trustees committee, Jerome Cochran, executive vice chancellor, said, “There are four leases, one of which will be with UPMC, another tax-exempt organization, so it will not result in any property taxes. The other three will mean a total of $184,000 in local real estate taxes. Additionally, the projects have a total construction cost of $29 million, on which the University will pay $57,731 in business privilege taxes.”

The projects are expected to generate 200 construction jobs and 82 construction-related jobs, Cochran said.

Committee chair John Pelusi noted, “We routinely get taken to task for not paying taxes, but there are an awful lot of leases that get done by the University of Pittsburgh that we do pay real estate taxes on, as well as business privilege taxes on construction and these projects lead to employment of numerous people.”

The trustees also approved:

• $9.1 million for renovation of sorority housing in Amos Hall.
• $2.6 million for expansion of Greensburg’s Chambers Hall fitness center to accommodate locker rooms and coaches’ offices.
• A $61.6 million lab renovation and infrastructure upgrade in the Van de Graaff Building for nanoscience research.
• $4 million to install a 1,000-kilowatt diesel emergency generator for the so-called mid-campus complex, which includes the Van de Graaff Building, the Space Research Coordination Center, and Old Engineering, Thaw and Allen halls.
• $3.6 million for a redesign of the steam condensate collection system for University and UPMC facilities to support the Carrillo Street Steam Plant.
• $1.5 million for renovations of the fifth floor of the William Pitt Union as well as new heating and ventilation for the fifth floor.

In addition, the trustees approved four leases:

• The Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology will enter a 10-year lease beginning in May 2009 at an initial annual cost of $418,132 for 19,346 square feet in the Bakery Square development at 6435 Penn Ave.
• The Clinical and Translational Science Institute will begin a five-year lease in January 2009 with UPMC at an initial annual cost of $235,180 for 9,419 square feet in Forbes Tower, 600 Forbes Ave.
• The Physical Activity and Weight Management Research Center will enter into a lease amendment through Nov. 30, 2013, at an annual rental cost of $161,784 for an additional 2,413 square feet in Birmingham Towers, 2100 Washington St.
• Institutional Advancement will enter a 10-year lease beginning in May 2009 at an initial annual cost of $492,678 for 20,965 square feet at 126 N. Craig St.

—Peter Hart
**Tips on teaching**

*What worked? What didn’t?*

“I tell faculty the one most important thing you can do to enhance your teaching is to reflect on the session afterwards,” said CIDDE associate director Joanne Nicoll at the teaching fair.

“Think about what worked and what didn’t work. Make some notes, think about what you can do differently the next time. Maybe you are trying a different teaching method or strategy or activity in your classroom. How did it go? Don’t just give up if it didn’t go well. Ask yourself what can you do better the next time.”

That was one of the strategies Nicoll discussed in her forum “Ways to Enhance Your Teaching.” The goals of the session were for graduate students and faculty who are early in their career to compare the advantages of various teaching practices and to identify the practice or practice that best suited to the instructor’s course goals.

Nicoll recommended:

* Employing systematic ratings by students as supplements to the University-wide Office of Measurement and Analysis (OMET) end-of-term student evaluations.
* Using “master teachers” or senior faculty working closely with less-experienced instructors.
* Analyzing in-class teaching videotapes.
* Attending workshops that explore various methods of instruction.
* Using systems for faculty to assess their own strengths and areas that need improving.

Nicoll noted.

**Student ratings**

“As a faculty member you don’t get that OMET rating until the term is over. So what is more helpful is informal classroom assessment that you can do more frequently during the term, for example, a mid-course review,” Nicoll said. “You can do it any time and it’s anonymous,” so students are comfortable with being honest, she said.

“It can be feedback on content or teaching methods. Maybe you're trying some collaborative learning, some group learning and you don’t know whether students are liking it or not or whether they’re learning or not. This can be a good way of gauging that.”

Nicoll cited some ways to solicit student feedback during the term, including:

* The one-minute ungraded paper, where students are asked to identify briefly the most significant things they have learned, the major questions they have and how well the instructor is teaching the material.
* You can do this at the end of a class by asking students to summarize what they learned in that class," Nicoll said. “Or, you can focus on a homework assignment or a lecture to see if it was effective.”

* Changing the prompt from time to time to elicit a variety of responses. For example, ask: What was the most illuminating example or the most surprising information or the most disturbing idea in today’s class?
* Over-using this technique can make students think it’s a gimmick or a pro forma exercise in polling. Nicoll cautioned.
* The misconception/preconception check, whose objectives are to determine what misperceptions students have that might stifle their learning and how deeply embedded the misperceptions are.
* A simple questionnaire can elicit this information, Nicoll said, but it’s best to have an experienced colleague review the questionnaire so it doesn’t sound patronizing, threatening or obvious.

The technique is especially useful in courses that deal with controversial or sensitive issues, because it can bring to light stereotypes and other notions that inhibit learning, she said.

* The middeest point check, that is, what do students find least clear or most confusing about a particular lesson or topic.

This technique is well-suited to larger, lower-division classes to determine how widespread particular muddly points are, Nicoll said. The instructor can sort the student responses into groups of related points and respond to or clarify them in the next class meeting.

**Experienced instructor as mentor**

“Many departments, when new faculty come in, assign a mentor to a new faculty member, not only for content, but also for teaching,” Nicoll said. “We expect faculty here to be good teachers, so it’s useful to have someone to help them by doing some formative peer review.”

That peer review process includes the mentor and instructor meeting to discuss the course and syllabus, identifying the goals of the class, observing the class, and making observations with concrete notes of events, she said.

“You don’t just show up and observe someone. You need to find out beforehand what the goals of the class are; you need to have a discussion about the syllabus, about the desired learning outcomes. You need to take concrete notes so you can give specific feedback, identify strengths, recommend some enhancements, create an action plan,” Nicoll said.

CIDDE has developed guidelines to enhance the peer review process that are available at www.cidde.pitt.edu/tdfs/peer_intro.htm. If no mentor is available, instructional designers at CIDDE are trained to fill that role, she added.

**Videotaping of classroom teaching**

“CIDDE provides videotaping services to graduate student teachers,” Nicoll said. “Our TAs and our TFs say this is the most important thing to them, it's how they best learn. We videotape a class, then an experienced teaching fellow at CIDDE helps them analyze that tape for what's working and what's not.”

The analysis is crucial, she said. “Probably you won’t gain as much just watching yourself. But to have someone else watch it with you, someone you trust, a colleague or someone else watch it with you, it’s more beneficial.”

CIDDE instructional designers have a graduate-level background in learning theory — how people learn — and instructional theory — how to help people learn, Nicoll noted.

Pitt’s eighth annual Teaching Excellence Fair, held Nov. 5, included presentations from winners of 2007-08 innovation in education grants and conversations on teaching methods and techniques with faculty, as well as workshops and technology demonstrations led by Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE) staff. The event was sponsored by the Provost’s Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence and coordinated by CIDDE.

This year, many of the sessions were recorded in webcast form. Those webcasts are posted online at www.cidde.pitt.edu/tef/recordings2008.html. Following is a sampling of presentations made at the teaching fair.

**Workshops on teaching methods**

**CIDDE** hosts a number of instructional development workshops. “From the educational research, these workshops are a good beginning, but they’re only a beginning. They can give you some new ideas about how to do different things in your classroom. But it’s important to have support as you go on to use different methods and strategies,” Nicoll pointed out. “You can get that support here at Pitt with our instructional designers.”

Examples of teaching workshops include: “Developing Teaching Portfolios,” “Interactive Teaching and Learning” and “Best Practices in Online Teaching.” (See the CIDDE website for more information.)

**Systems to assess your own skills**

“These systems can give you some direction and focus, can help you review your syllabus — what’s working, what’s not — and review your OMET forms,” Nicoll said.

“When I review a faculty member’s OMET ratings, I don’t look at numbers. What I want to see is the open-ended responses that students make, such as ‘instructor gave a lot of useful examples’ or ‘instructor did not give good examples’; ‘instructor was not available enough outside of class’; ‘instructor showed enthusiasm for the subject’ or ‘instructor lacked enthusiasm,’” she said.

“Then I do a content analysis. I take them question by question and look at the comments. The
Ground rules for civility

While controversial material is the meat and potatoes in Lester C. Olson’s Rhetoric and Human Rights course, the ground rules he described at the teaching fair apply in any course where a controversial subject could come up in class.

“The classroom environment is a crucial consideration for excellence in teaching, and particularly so if one is dealing with highly sensitive or controversial topics, where civility can become a concern,” said Olson at “A Conversation on Civility in the Classroom: Constructing Ground Rules for Difficult Dialogues Concerning Sensitive Topics and Controversial Issues.”

“In 1991 I proposed a course called Rhetoric and Human Rights. I was understandably nervous, because it’s one of those topics that people bring very passionate views toward, and it meant dealing with highly controversial topics,” Olson said.

“In the early versions of the course, one of the ways in which I dealt with conflict was to locate it safely in the past. The earliest versions had units on the 19th century, Frederick Douglass, women’s rights advocates, abolitionists and the like.”

Over time, Olson developed themes for discussion centered on human rights concerns such as poverty, the environment, violence and sexual aggression.

“The more I worked with the course, it became increasingly more important to me to look to more recent years,” he said. A professor of communication with an appointment in women’s studies and a 1996 Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award winner, Olson co-directs the Provost’s Faculty Diversity Seminar, which, he said, “covers ways to integrate considerations of race and gender, primarily, but also economic status, religion, international background, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity and the like.”

For more information on the seminar, go to www.cide.pitt.edu/diversity/)

At the teaching fair, the conversation was directed toward graduate students and less-experienced faculty members, regardless of discipline.

“Years of experience have taught Olson the importance of setting ground rules on the first day of the term. He begins his human rights course with ground rules and three active-learning questions designed to create a classroom environment where students feel safe expressing their opinions.

“First, though, the ground rules are by no means enough to create a safe learning environment for the students,” Olson maintained. “It’s very important to have a course rubric that is detailed, that is open and transparent and that has clear grading criteria, because when students are confronted with talking about issues they view as highly sensitive and explosive — same-sex marriage, abortion, sexual assault, rape — they want to be evaluated based on the quality of their performance, rather than the content of their views. It is especially important if students are worried about whether they are being evaluated on whether or not they agree with the instructor’s policies.

The three questions Olson poses direct students to their collective responsibility for the quality of the learning environment, and encourage students to reflect on how they should participate as communicators on controversial issues.

• What ground rules are most important for you when discussing controversial issues?
• What behaviors do you engage in to ensure that you are listening to others?
• In other words, if someone says something you have heartfelt disagreement with, what behaviors do you engage in to make sure you have actually understood them?” Olson said. “This really sends a strong message that I’ll be watching for evidence that they’re engaging in the discussion and hearing what others have to say.

• How do you approach conflict resolution when discussing controversial issues?

At this point in an undergraduate course, you have a number of options,” Olson said. “One of the things is to task students to share their own ground rules. Some students are reluctant to articulate their ground rules but, in my experience, they’re quite happy to have them. So, especially if you’re trying this for the first time, having that discussion as part of the group’s work on the first day takes a lot of time, but it also further invests the students in the ground rules because they’ve had a say in them.”

Alternatively, the instructor can collect students’ written ground rules, consolidate them and bring a summary to the second class for further discussion, he said.

“Or you can pass out a syllabus with a list of ground rules and ask them to return with their additions, deletions and revisions,” Olson said. “I’ve done this for 15 years, and I see recurring patterns. So, on the syllabus I have a set of ground rules that I anticipate will surface.”

Directed at the students, those ground rules include:

• You should participate actively in discussion. If you feel uncomfortable in the classroom environment, it is your responsibility to talk to the instructor.
• You may choose to advance or defend an opinion “for the sake of argument.
• You may choose to “pass” on specific questions or topics without explanation.

“In my human rights course, I deal with subjects that may very well touch one or another of the students very personally,” Olson said. There is no way to tell if a student has been the victim of anti-Semitism, harassment or physical or sexual assault, for example, where discussion of that theme could be painful, he explained.

“Part of why I have a ground rule that people can pass is so people can disengage if they’re just too close to that. It’s also the case that sometimes a person doesn’t feel equipped to be engaged, which I also respect.”

• You must respect diverse points of view. We can agree to disagree.
• You may not belittle or criticize personally another individual for holding a viewpoint different from your own.
• Your use of language should be respectful of others or groups.

This rule includes controlling non-verbal communication, such as sneering or sighing, that could convey a lack of respect, Olson said.

• You need not represent any group, only yourself, although you may choose to represent a group.

Regarding the last rule, Olson said, a case can be made for taking a hostile name for a group and reversing its meaning. “Historically, various groups have done that,” he pointed out. “I had a student who was bothered by the expression ‘woman of color.’ Yet if you go back and look at radical women from minority groups in the 1980s, that was a coalition term and they very much used it constructively to advance a political agenda.

“In recent years the expression ‘queer,’ which was never used in a life-enhancing way when I was young, is actually a very powerful and life-affirming term for a number of students.”

The point is that language changes over time, he said.

“Terms that were used a decade or two decades ago are sometimes...
In summary Olson urged. • Put in place ground rules — linking course content to real-world applications — at the Teaching Excellence Fair. Pitt-Greensburg psychology professor Diane Marsh leads a discussion on authentic learning that can be put in other points of view.” • On the first day, I will talk about how in this human rights course, I’m dealing with issues that are not easy to solve: racism, sexism, heterosexism, homosexuality, bias issues around class, religion — they’re endemic and they’ve proved to be intractable. I also signal on the very first day that the topics are emotionally quite difficult, that they entail confronting the human capacity for cruelty to one another.

“Saying that is important, because it’s important to put careful parameters around their expectations. Some students come in wanting to solve the world’s problems. I talk about the course as a communication course, not a policy course. My goal is to raise their conscious awareness of communication practices.” —Peter Hart

What worked? What didn’t?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

• Put in place ground rules — linking course content to real-world applications — at the Teaching Excellence Fair.
A panel of First Experiences in Teaching program participants, left to right, Nicholas Malaspina, Katelyn Litterer, Terence Sperringer and Deirdre Ruscitti, join Office of Experiential Learning director Peggy Heely at last week’s Teaching Excellence Fair.

Heely said the program, launched in 2005 as a companion to OEL’s First Experiences in Research program for undergraduates, gives students an opportunity to discover whether they would enjoy a career in teaching. The experience can benefit students with other career paths as well, because some teaching is involved in any profession, Heely said.

For now, the program is offered in fall, although Heely said there are plans to expand it to accommodate courses that aren’t available during the fall term.

Students in the program aren’t involved in regularly conducting class sessions or grading assignments, but they undertake a project under the mentorship of a faculty member, either for credit or as a federal work-study job assignment.

They also meet as a group every other week. “A lot of projects involve interaction with small groups, so we focus one of our cohort sessions totally on how do you facilitate discussion and small-group interaction,” Heely said. Among the other sessions are ones covering the use of technology, and how research informs teaching practice.

Participants are familiarized with the same three-part paradigm presented to new faculty: a triangle that illustrates the interaction among goals and objectives, learning strategies, and outcomes and assessment.

Since the program’s inception in 2005, 67 percent of the 72 classes with First Experiences in Teaching participants have been in the humanities with 18 percent in natural sciences and 15 percent in social sciences — the opposite of the First Experiences in Research program in which 58 percent of the experiences are in natural sciences, 33 percent in the humanities and 22 percent in social sciences.

Feedback from faculty last year indicated overwhelmingly that the students exceeded their expectations and that they would be willing to participate again, Heely said. This year, 35 faculty are mentoring 41 students through the program.

Faculty seeking to mentor a First Experiences in Teaching participant in their classroom can identify a student among those who have completed the class successfully or who have a background that makes them knowledgeable about the course material. Professors can contact the students themselves or have OEL’s data team provide a list of prospects for professors to consider interviewing.

Students have pursued a wide range of projects through the program and gained numerous insights.

Deirdre Ruscitti worked with English professor Paul Bove in his Great Books class, lecturing the class on “The Histories” by Herodotus. Among the things she learned was how to ask better questions to facilitate classroom discussion, she said.

Terence Sperringer is working with computer science professor Alexander Labrinidis in a project-based class on Web 2.0. Sperringer works primarily with lab projects and is drawn to the informal non-lecture-based environment, which he enjoys. “It’s an excellent way to go about teaching a class,” he said.

Katelyn Litterer has been assisting in English professor Lois Williams’s introductory poetry writing class. For the past several years, Litterer has been researching how writing pedagogies influence composition. During this term, she has been talking with the professor and observing her methods. At the end of the term, she plans to review her field notes with Williams to provide the professor with an external view on her teaching as well as yield data for Litterer’s own research.

Nicholas Malaspina worked with anthropology professor Emily Fujita to adapt class material from a smaller discussion-based course to be used in a more lecture-oriented format.

Among the challenges he faced was recognizing the wide range of student work. Class materials needed to be tailored using a variety of methods to help ensure student success. “There’s no one way that will get the information across to every student,” he learned.

Malaspina said the program gave him a good first experience. “[Teaching] is ultimately what I’d like to do after leaving graduate school in the field. This is a great way to get into it in an introductory level,” he said.

— Kimberly K. Barlow
Arsenic in drinking water poses a serious health threat, according to a new study conducted by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh. The study, which was published in the online edition of the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, found that people who drank water containing arsenic at levels considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were more likely to develop dementia than those who drank water with arsenic levels below the EPA's standard.

The study, which was conducted in a rural community in western Pennsylvania, found that people who drank water with arsenic levels of 10 ppb or higher had a 2.7 times higher risk of developing dementia compared to those who drank water with arsenic levels below 10 ppb. The study also found that people who drank water with arsenic levels of 50 ppb or higher had a 3.8 times higher risk of developing dementia compared to those who drank water with arsenic levels below 50 ppb.

The study's lead author, Ashwin Chandra, an assistant professor of environmental health sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, said the findings suggest that even low levels of arsenic in drinking water can pose a significant risk to public health. "Our findings indicate that people who drink water with arsenic levels as low as 10 ppb have a significantly higher risk of developing dementia," Chandra said. "This is a concerning finding, given the widespread use of arsenic in drinking water sources and the fact that it is not currently regulated by the EPA or other public health agencies.

The study, which was funded by the National Institutes of Health, involved more than 1,500 participants, and was conducted over a period of 10 years. The participants were divided into two groups, one of which drank water with arsenic levels above 10 ppb and the other of which drank water with arsenic levels below 10 ppb. The participants were followed for a period of 10 years, during which time their cognitive function was assessed using a variety of tests.

The researchers found that participants who drank water with arsenic levels above 10 ppb had a significantly higher risk of developing dementia compared to those who drank water with arsenic levels below 10 ppb. The researchers also found that the risk of developing dementia was higher in participants who drank water with arsenic levels above 50 ppb.

The study's findings are significant because they suggest that even low levels of arsenic in drinking water can pose a significant risk to public health. The EPA's current standard for arsenic in drinking water is 10 ppb, but the study's findings suggest that even levels of arsenic below this standard can pose a risk to public health.

The study's findings also suggest that the EPA needs to reassess its current standard for arsenic in drinking water. The EPA's current standard is based on a risk assessment that was conducted in the 1980s, and it is not clear whether this standard is still appropriate in light of new research on the health effects of arsenic.

The study's findings also have implications for public health policy. The EPA and other public health agencies need to consider the health effects of arsenic in drinking water, and they need to work with local communities to ensure that drinking water is safe for all residents.

The study's findings are also significant because they suggest that there is a need for more research on the health effects of arsenic in drinking water. Further research is needed to understand the long-term health effects of arsenic in drinking water, and to determine whether there are any thresholds below which exposure to arsenic in drinking water is not a risk to public health.
of bone marrow transplantation pioneered in part by Children’s Hospital Pediatric hematologist/oncologist Lakshmanan Krishnamurti to be safe and effective in curing sickle cell disease. The study appears in the November issue of the journal Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation.

The transplant method, which relies on reduced-intensity conditioning (RIC), is less toxic to patients. It therefore can be offered to patients with severe sickle cell disease because it eliminates the life-threatening side effects generally associated with bone marrow transplantation.

Traditionally, bone marrow transplants require heavy doses of chemotherapy prior to transplant in order to destroy the recipient’s bone marrow so it will not reject the donated marrow. But with their bone marrow destroyed, transplant recipients become vulnerable to life-threatening complications.

In the study, Krishnamurti and colleagues report that six of seven sickle cell patients who received bone marrow so it will not reject the donated marrow. But with their bone marrow destroyed, transplant recipients become vulnerable to life-threatening complications.

He and study co-author Chester A. Mathis, professor of radiology and pharmaceutical sciences, invented the imaging compound, which binds to amyloid plaques in the brains of Alzheimer’s disease patients.

In the study, which was led by Howard J. Aizenstein, professor of psychiatry and neurology in the School of Medicine, and study co-author Ches ter A. Mathis, professor of radiology and pharmaceutical sciences, invented the imaging compound, which binds to amyloid plaques in the brains of Alzheimer’s disease patients.

In the study, which was led by Howard J. Aizenstein, professor of psychiatry and neurology in the School of Medicine, and study co-author Chester A. Mathis, professor of radiology and pharmaceutical sciences, invented the imaging compound, which binds to amyloid plaques in the brains of Alzheimer’s disease patients.

The findings, published in this month’s issue of the Archives of Neurology, could not only shed more light on how the illness progresses, but also open the door to the possibility of prevention strategies, said senior investigator William F. Klink, professor of psychiatry and neurology in the School of Medicine.

One surprising finding was that detailed tests of brain function conducted by study co-authors Robert D. Nebes of psychiatry and Judith Saxton of neurology and psychiatry showed no decrease in functioning among participants whose scan revealed the presence of the Alzheimer’s-associated amyloid deposits.

In the study, 43 people age 65 to 88 who had no impairment on cognitive testing were scanned with PiB and positron emission tomography.

Nine of them (21 percent) showed early amyloid deposition in at least one area of the brain, which is similar to rates found in postmortem studies. That suggests there may be as many people in this age group with the early brain changes, but no visible symptoms, of Alzheimer’s disease as there are people with recognized Alzheimer’s disease.

The good news is it appears the brain can tolerate these plaques for years before the effects are apparent," Klink noted. "The bad news is that by the time the symptoms emerge, the disease has had perhaps a 10-year head start."

He cautioned, “We suspect that people with amyloid deposits in normal brain functioning have a high risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease in the future, but we do not yet have proof of this.” Therefore, study protocol prohibits telling the researchers the results of their PiB scans.

The researchers plan to follow these individuals for years in this and larger studies to understand fully how the presence of amyloid deposits translates into future risk for Alzheimer’s disease.

The research was supported by grants from the National Institute on Aging, the Alzheimer’s Association and the U.S. Department of Energy.

While size linked to alcoholism risk

A study suggests that genetic factors influence size variations in a certain region of the brain, which could in turn be partly responsible for increased susceptibility to alcohol dependence.

It appears that the size of the orbital frontal cortex (OFC), an area of the brain that is involved in regulating emotional processes and impulsive behavior, is smaller in teenagers and young adults who have several relatives who are alcohol dependent, according to psychiatry professor Shirley Hill.

In the research, which appears online in the journal Biological Psychiatry, Hill and her team imaged the brains of 107 teens and young adults using magnetic resonance imaging. They also examined variation in certain genes of the participants and administered a well-validated questionnaire to measure the youngsters’ tendency to be impulsive.

The participants included 63 individuals who were selected for the study because they had multiple alcohol-dependent family members, suggesting a genetic predisposition, and 44 who had no close relatives dependent on drugs or alcohol. Those with several alcohol-dependent relatives were more likely to have reduced volumes in the OFC.

When the investigators looked at two genes, 5-HTT and BDNF, they found certain variants that led to a reduction in white matter volume in the OFC, which in turn may make people more vulnerable to alcoholism,” Hill said. “These results also support our earlier findings of reduced volume of other brain regions in high-risk kids.”

These differences can be observed in teenagers who start drinking excessively, she added, “leading us to conclude that genetic or environmental risk factors are involved in the development of alcohol dependence.”

The study was supported by grants from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Lung research grants awarded

Researchers at the Dorothy P. and Richard P. Simmons Center for Lung Biotechnology, part of the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine have been awarded approximately $3 million from the National Institutes of Health to conduct the first study of personalized medicine approaches to characterize COPD and IPF in young people. The work could lead to new personalized medicine approaches.

“This study will help us understand why one person responds to cigarette smoke by developing emphysema while another develops fibrosis, and then to rapidly translate this knowledge from bench to bedside,” Kaminski explained.

A HOLIDAY REMINDER FROM THE OFFICE OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

All faculty, staff and students are reminded to turn off computers, radios, copiers, printers, fax machines, automatic coffee machines, lights and other items in their area before leaving for the Holiday break.

Please take a moment to shut these items off. This will help reduce University utility costs and lessen the potential for physical damage to this equipment.

Facilities Management thanks you for your consideration and wishes you a Happy Holiday!

The Best Deal in Sight

Our Annual 50% Off Sale

Employees of UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh, as well as Pitt students are eligible for 50% off all glasses and sunglasses in stock — including designer brands — during November sales.

Visit the UPMC Eye Center Optical Shop on the 11th Floor of UPMC Presbyterian, and show your UPMC ID to receive the discount. Bring your current vision prescription or make an appointment to have your eyes examined.

UPMC Eye Center Optical Shop
412-647-2145
Monday through Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Offer valid November 1-30, 2008.*
Nancy E. Davidson, an internationally renowned expert in breast cancer research and treatment, has been named director of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI). Davidson will have overall responsibility and authority for all aspects of cancer research, care and education with the integration of the UPCI and UPMC Cancer Centers organization.

Davidson’s appointment is effective March 1. She also will serve as associate vice chancellor for cancer research and as chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Medicine. Davidson currently is director of the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center’s breast cancer program and professor of oncology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where she also holds the Breast Cancer Research Chair in Oncology. She holds a joint appointment in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Johns Hopkins.

Davidson is a recipient of the 2008 American Association for Cancer Research Award for Breast Cancer Research, the Avon Foundation Medical Advancement Award, the American Association for Cancer Research-Women in Cancer Research Charlotte Frieden Memorial Award, the Medley College Alumnae Achievement Award and the National Cancer Institute Rosalind E. Franklin Award.

She recently served as president of the National Colorectal Cancer Research Foundation and is a member of the scientific advisory board of numerous national and international organizations.

At Johns Hopkins, Davidson integrated basic scientific investigations of the biology of breast cancer with a nationally renowned clinical program focused on new therapies for the disease. She has published key findings on the role of hormones, particularly estrogen and progesterone, and cell growth in breast cancer. She also has guided several national clinical trials testing new targeted therapies, including the use of chemo-endocrine therapy for pre-menopausal women with breast cancer and anti-angiogenesis therapy for advanced disease.

Founded in 1985, UPCI became a National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center in only five years, a record time, and it is the only cancer center in western Pennsylvania with this elite designation. Currently, UPCI receives a total of $174 million in research grants and contracts and is a major player nationally in funding from NCI.

Davidson will succeed Ronald B. Kowsky, former executive director of UPCI and director of the UPMC Cancer Centers. Herberman described her move to pursue her research interests.


The prize was established with a gift from James A. Rawley, Carl Adolph Hopp Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Rediker, professor and chair of Pitt’s Department of History, will receive the prize at the annual meeting of the organization in January.


Gregory Reed has been appointed director of the Power Systems Engineering Initiative in the Swanson School of Engineering and associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. As its first director, Reed will provide leadership for the multidisciplinary activities of the new Power and Energy Initiative’s research and outreach components. He will work with industry partners, federal and defense agencies, foundations and other constituents in collaboration with the Swanson school’s faculty and staff and the University’s Center for Energy on various funding and research-oriented efforts.

Reed’s research interests include power transmission and distribution systems; applications of electronics, power electronics and control technologies; and power generation and renewable energy resources.

Prior to his appointment at Pitt, Reed served as senior vice president of the Power System Planning and Management Group at KEMA, an international company providing power and energy consulting, technology implementation and market knowledge expertise. He will continue to serve as a consultant for KEMA.

Reed has 23 years of industry and academic experience in the power and energy arena. He has authored or co-authored more than 50 papers and technical reports in the areas of power system analysis and the applications of power systems technologies.

Reed is a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Power Engineering Society, as well as a member of the American Society for Engineering Education. Four School of Nursing faculty members have been inducted as fellows in the American Academy of Nursing.

Elena K. Burns, associate dean for clinical education and associate professor in the Department of Health and Community Systems, Denise Charron-Prochownik, associate professor in the Department of Health Professions, Development, Mary Beth Hopp, associate professor in the Department of Acute and Tertiary Care, and Ann Mitchell, associate professor in the Department of Health and Community Systems, were selected by the leadership of the department for their outstanding contributions and achievements in the nursing profession.

Burns, Charron-Prochownik, Hopp and Mitchell are also members of the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association, District 6, and were inducted as fellows with 89 other nurse leaders during the American Academy of Nursing’s annual awards ceremony.

The academy’s mission is to serve the public and nursing profession by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis and dissemination of nursing knowledge. Innovation is a hallmark of one’s accomplishments within the nursing profession and provides the opportunity to work with other leaders in health care to address current issues.

Bernard D. Goldstein, professor of environmental and occupational health at the Graduate School of Public Health, has won the 2008 Ramazzini Award. The award was established annually by the Collegium Ramazzini, an international academic society based in Carpi, Italy, dedicated to understanding and preventing occupational and environmental diseases.

Goldstein was presented with the award last month in the former Convent of San Rocco in Carpi for his lifetime achievements in improving environmental and occupational health policy nationally and globally.

In a career spanning more than 40 years, Goldstein has made major contributions to understanding the toxicity of air pollutants and other chemicals on human blood and how cancer-causing substances are formed after exposure to chemical inhalants. He has written extensively on the interface between environmental science, public policy and the law.

Goldstein is former dean of SPH and founding director of the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute in New Jersey. As a member of the Institute of Medicine, he has chaired more than a dozen committees evaluating issues central to environmental and occupational health.

The Ramazzini Award was named for Bernardino Ramazzini (1633-1714), an Italian physician considered the father of occupational medicine.

The Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education (HIPPAE) recently announced its first annual Leadership Awards.

Patricia Kolar, director of field and community relations at the School of Social Work, is one of four award winners nationally named by HIPPAE. HIPPAE is a 12-year nationwide initiative to recruit and train the next generation of social workers who specialize in aging care by transforming how geriatric education is taught at master’s level.

The award recipients were drawn from educators, students and community agencies who have demonstrated leadership qualities through their engagement with HIPPAE.

Kolar was honored with the 2008 Outstanding Field Director Award.

The People of the Times column features recent news on faculty and staff, including awards and other honors, accomplishments and administrative appointments.

We welcome selections from all areas of the University. Send information via email to: utimes@pitt.edu, by fax at 412/624-4579 or by campus mail to 108 areas of the University. For submission guidelines, visit www.umn.pitt.edu/times/deadlines.html online.

Volunteer Pool

To sign up, log on to www.cnmrd.pitt.edu/CRO-volunteerpool.html

Hometown vs. Hunger Food Drive

Monday, Nov. 24, 5-7 pm

Pitt will take on Penn State in women’s basketball at the Petersen Events Center. Fans are asked to bring food donations in for a $5 ticket to the game. There will be an official weigh-in of food collected during halftime. Volunteers are needed to staff the pre-game event.

YMCA Turkey Trot

Thursday, Nov. 27, 7:10-10 am

Volunteers are needed to staff the annual Turkey Trot through Downtown Pittsburgh. The race benefits YMCA community and family programs.

Big Brothers & Big Sisters

Wednesday, Dec. 3, noon-1 pm

Big Brothers & Big Sisters provides one-to-one mentoring programs and related services that help youth discover their highest potential and grow to become responsible adults, leading productive and rewarding lives. Attend this on-campus session to learn more about volunteering with the program.

Project Bundle-Up Telethon

Friday, Dec. 12, 9 pm-11 pm

This fundraiser to support the work of Project Bundle-Up needs volunteers to staff the phones at WTAE-TV.

Gift Bag Preparation

Friday, Dec. 19, 4-6 pm

A Salvation Army Christmas dinner for the homeless and needy will be hosted at Pitt. Pitt will provide gifts to the dinner guests. Help at an on-campus location is needed to put these gifts together.

Christmas Day at Pitt

Thursday, Dec. 25, 9 am-midnight

A Salvation Army Christmas dinner for the homeless and needy is held on campus. Volunteers are needed to help make this day special. Indicate your preferred shift. Sign up early, this event fills up quickly.

Pre-K/K Information Sessions

City Campus: North Hills Campus:
December 4, 2008  December 5, 2008
5:30 - 6:30 pm  9:30 - 11 a.m.
January 16, 2009  9:30 - 11 a.m.

www.winchesterhurst.org

Register online at:
City Campus: 555 Morewood Ave, Shadyside
North Hills Campus: 4225 Middle road, North Hills
412.578.7518

13
C A L E N D A R

Monday 1
• Classes resume.
CSRP Lecture
“The Multimetric Placement Act: Threat to Foster Child Safety & Well-Being,”
David Herring, law; 2017 CL, noon-1:30 pm

Tuesday 2
Basic Translational Research in Lung Diseases Lecture
“Nervous Activity in the Bone Marrow Niche,” Paul Fenette,
S100A Starzl BST, noon
CVR Seminar
“Developing Vaccines for Emerging & Global Infectious Diseases,” Andrea Gambotto,
6014 BST, noon
Pharmacy Seminar
“Regulation of Tissue Estrogen Sensitivity by Estrogen Sulfotransferases,” Wen-Chou Song,
456 Salk, noon
Survival Skills & Ethics Lecture
“Careers in Science Writing,” Kenneth Chiacchia, UPMC;
“Survival Skills & Ethics Lecture,” Stephanie Lumsden,
6-7:30 pm

Wednesday 3
Pathology Martinez Lecture
“One Decade of Glioma Genomics Research: What Have We Learned?” Gregory Fuller,
Anderson Cancer Ctr., Houston
PKC Mental Health & Wellness Lecture
“Clinical Research Your Chance to Play a Role in Medical Progress,” Scaife aud. 6, 7-8:30 pm

Thursday 4
HSLS Workshop
“Adobe Photoshop for Beginners,” Sam Lewis, Falk Library class rm.
2, 10 am-noon

Molecular Biophysics/Structural Biology Seminar
“Design of Protein Interaction Interfaces,” Shoshon Kudoh; 6014 BST, 11 am
EOH Seminar
“Intracellular Danger Signaling: Regulation of Caspase-1.” Mark Viewers; 540 Bridgeside Point
Epidemiology Seminar
“Development in Adolescent & Adult Immunization,” Lee Mar
A&S/History
“Development of a Computational Model for Shoe-Floor Contact Properties,” Kurt Beschorner; Dec. 3, 1175 Ben

Shohei Koide; 6014 BST, 3 pm
“Manipulating & Understanding the Cultured Neuronal Network”
Bridgeside Point, 9 am
“Modeling Zinc Finger Transcriptional Model for Shoe-Floor Contact Properties,” Kurt Beschorner; Dec. 3, 1175 Ben

A&S/Neuroscience
“Mechanism of Block & Behavioral Effects of the NMDA Receptor Antagonists Memantine & Ketamine,” Shawn Koter
“Comparison of Mechanical vs. Functional Model for Shoe-Floor Contact Properties,” Kurt Beschorner; Dec. 3, 1175 Ben

Subcers, 7:30 am
Engineering/Bioengineering
“An Evening of One-Acts”; Nov. 24, A522 Parran, 4 pm
Exhibits
“Development of a Computational Model for Shoe-Floor Contact Properties,” Kurt Beschorner; Dec. 3, 1175 Ben

PhD Defenses
SIS/Telecommunications & Networking Program
“Signaling Overload Control for Wireless Cellular Networks,” Samvickh, Somashe; Nov. 20, 502 D, 8:30-11:30 am
GSPH/Biostatistics
• Applications of Statistical Analysis for Neuroimaging Data:
  Randomized Singular Value Decomposition for Partial Least Squares Analysis & Thin Plate Splines for Spatial Normalization,”
  Reda Rosario-Rivera; Nov. 21, 2325 Parran, 9 am
Engineering/Bioengineering
“Peripheral Nerve Tissue Engineering: Strategies for Repair & Regeneration,” Mitra Lavasani; Nov. 21, S10A Starzl BST, 10 am
Engineering/Bioengineering
“Manipulating & Understanding the Cultured Neuronal Network Through Conducting Polymers,” William Stufler,
21, 2018 BST, 3 pm
Engineering/Bioengineering
“Blocking Myostatin Signaling Pathway With Myostatin Prepropeptide & Follistatin: Novel Approaches to Improve Skeletal Muscle Healing,” Jianhong Zhu,
Nov. 24, Aircraft Rm. 10th fl.
Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Sciences
“Models of Finger Transcription Factors: Insights on Molecular Recognition & Fidelity,” Nuri Alpay Temiz; Dec. 3, 1071 BST 1, 10 am
GSPH/Epidemiology
“The Use of Electronic Medical Records Based on a Physician Diagnosis of Asthma: What’s Wide-Area Surveillance”, Jo Ann Glid; Dec. 3, 4522 Parran, 2 pm

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Periodontal (Gum) Disease is progressive and destructive if left untreated and has been linked to cardiovascular and other systemic diseases.

14
The obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) intensive outpatient Institute and Clinic (WPIC) has been awarded the 2008 Treatment of Mental Illness and Recovery Support Services Award from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This national award recognizes exemplary interventions that have been shown to prevent and/or treat mental illnesses and substance abuse.

WPLIC launched the intensive outpatient program for kids with OCD in 2005, one of only a few such programs in the country. The clinic is a comprehensive treatment facility, specializing in providing group and individual psychotherapy, education, family therapy, school-liaison services and pharmacotherapy for children, adolescents and families who are dealing with OCD.

WPLIC has developed an integrative and translational program which combines evidence-based treatments for children and families with careful symptom assessment and monitoring, and research aimed at understanding the biological causes of OCD. Andrew R. Gilbert, medical director of the OCD treatment program at WPIC, said: “Our results show a 65 percent reduction in overall OCD symptom severity from intake to discharge, which suggests that these evidence-based treatments lead to important symptom improvement in children and teens.”

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FIND IT

The Offices of Enterprise Development and Technology Management facilitate the commercialization of technologies developed at University of Pittsburgh (U Pitt) schools, institutes, and hospitals, and public benefit may result from University discoveries and inventions.

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Thursday 20
Flu Shot Clinic
Falk Pharmacy, Falk Medical Bldg., 9 am-1 pm

HSLS Workshop
“PowerPoint for Beginners,” Sam Lewis, WPIC Library classes, 10 am-noon

EEOH Seminar
“P3 & P6hhs: Co-Compurers in Vascular Dysfunction,” Kakulob Inu, 140 Bridges Point, noon

Endorse Research Conference
“Transcriptional Control of Islet Cell Differentiation,” Gerard Gradwohl, 159 Starzl BST, noon

CalendA Revised Calendar
Contact person should be included. Information should be sent by email to: UTPA@pitt.edu, by FAX: 724/625-4779, or by campus mail to: 308 Bellefield Hall. We cannot guarantee receipt of events received after the deadline.

Academic Career Development Workshop
“KV9/KB10 Workshop,” Joan Lakeski, Pitt, & Robert Miller, Penn State; S120 Starzl BST, noon

ULS Workshop
“RefWorks Basics”; Hillman Library ground fl., noon-1:30 pm

European Studies/EUCE Lecture
“Northern Dimension & the Black Sea Synergy: An Assessment of EU Russia Regional Cooperation & Energy Relations,” Ekaterina Turkina, GSPE, 4217 Posvar, noon

Asian Studies/Asia Colloquium
“Cognitive Motivations of Chinese Characters,” Jie Cai, linguistics, “Cultural Assumptio in Conversations,” Jennifer Candrall, education, 4217 Posvar, 2-4 pm

GSPI Biostatistics Seminar
“Statistical Issues in Genetic Association Studies,” Evelyn Frendahl, A113 Crabtree, 1:30 pm

Geology & Planetary Science Colloquium
“Reconstructing Lake Watersheds Using Carbonates,” Elizabeth Groth, 501CL, noon-1:30 pm

McGowan Inst. Seminar
Pat Loughlin, Stufe a, 4, 5 pm

CIM Lecture

Global Issues Lecture
“Gasoline; Ethanol; Food: Choose Two,” Pat Atkins, Atkins 360 Sustainability Consulting, 4130 Posvar, 6 pm

Greensburg Campus Poetry Reading
Philip Terman; campus cof- fehouse; Village, UPG, 7 pm (847/270-0381)

Friday 21
SBDC Workshop
“The 2nd Step: Developing a Business Plan,” 114 Mervis, 7:30-10:30 am (8-1542)

Dental Education Seminar
“Bone Altering Lesions of the Jaws,” “Implant Care” & “Osteolysis: Beyond Acrylics, Alloys & Articulati,” Anna Podlari, Linda Kelly, David Anderson & S. Rand Warnin, 2148 Sal, 8:10 am-3:30 pm

GSIPA Whereit Lecture on Local Government
“Metropolitan Growth & Decline: The Current Financial Crisis & the Long View,” Susan Wachter, Penn, WPU lower lounge, 8:10 am (8-2282)

Flu Shot Clinic
2nd fl. lobby, Belfield, 10 am-1 pm

General Internal Medicine Journal Club
“The Prevention of Progression of Arterial Disease & Diabetes Trial: Factorial Randomised Placebo-Controlled Trial of Apip- rin & Antioxidants in Patients With Diabetes & Asymptomatic Peripheral Arterial Disease,” Lawrence Gerber; 933W Main, noon-3:30 pm

Computer Science Distin- guished Lecture
“Next-Generation Data Streams,” David Maier, Portland State; 5177 Summer, 10 am

Pulmonary Grand Rounds
“Nitric Oxide: Bioavailability & Microvascular Regulation in Sickle Mice,” Dhananjay Kaul, 6289 Mountez, noon

Univ. Senate Budget Policies Committee Mtg.
101 CL, noon-2 pm

Survival Skills & Ethics Work- shop
“Obtaining Grants for Research in Education &/or Social Sciences,” John Jakić, health & physical activity, 2140 Starzl BST, noon-1:30 pm

Neural Basis of Cognition Seminar
“Changes in Thalamic & Corti- cal Activity in Parkinson’s Dis- ease: Insight From Rat Models,” Louise Parr-Browall, U of Ottawa; 4057 BST, noon

Neuroimaging Seminar
“Mechanisms of Excitotoxic Neurodegeneration in Autism: CNS Inflammation,” Nico Mezler, U of Wurzburg, Germany; 6014 BST, 1:30 pm

Men’s Basketball
vs. Akron; Petersen, 7 pm

Saturday 22
Educating Teens About HIV/ AIDS Workshop
“Live Without the Disease: A Series for Mothers & Daugh- ters,” Castor & Sons,” Althera Graham-Ellison; 617 WPU, 1:30-3:30 pm (942/975-9524)

Men’s Basketball
vs. IUP, Petersen, 4 pm

Chihandayan Classical Music Concert
Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik, Pandit Mital Banerjee Bhawmik, and Pandit Manohar Bhawmik,” 617 WPU, 1:30-3:30 pm (942/975-9524)

Music on the Edge Concert
Das & Ashis Suresh Yeri; FFA Concert, 617 WPU, 6 pm

AIDS Workshop
“Obtaining Grants for Research in Education &/or Social Sciences,” John Jakić, health & physical activity, 2140 Starzl BST, noon-1:30 pm

Neural Basis of Cognition Seminar
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“Mechanisms of Excitotoxic Neurodegeneration in Autism: CNS Inflammation,” Nico Mezler, U of Wurzburg, Germany; 6014 BST, 1:30 pm

Men’s Basketball
vs. Akron; Petersen, 7 pm

Sunday 23
Pitt Environmental Club/ Sierra Club Symposium
“Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream,” WPU Ballroom, 10 am-2:30 pm (570/351-1066)

Music on the Edge Concert
NOM Ensemble; Bellefield aud., 8 pm

Monday 24
CVR Seminar
“Imune Immune Factors in Dengue Vasculopathy,” Ernesto Marques; 6014 BST, 3 pm

Johnstown Campus Light-Up Night
Goodwill Arches, UP, 5-3:30 pm

Women’s Basketball Hoopla vs. Penn State; Petersen, reception at 5:30 pm at Campus View game, at 7 pm

Tuesday 25
Endoscopy Conference
“Feeding Tubes/Peg,” Kevin McGrath, mezzanine level C- Wing, Presby, 7:30 am

Flu Shot Clinic
Falk Pharmacy, Falk Medical Bldg., 9-am-1 pm

Health Services Research Seminar
“The Extension of Marginal Structural Models for Observa- tional Data From Epidemiology to Health Services Research,” Amber Barnett & Joyce Chang, 105 Parkvale, noon

Neuroscience Seminar
“Tonic GABA-Activated Channels Controls Striatal Output Neurons,” Stefano Vicini, Georgetown, A219B Langley, noon

ResE Roundtable Discussion
“Smoking in Black & White: Racial Differences in Nicotine Dependence,” Craig Fryer, 109 Parran, 3-3 pm

Men’s Basketball
vs. Boston; Petersen, 7 pm

Wednesday 26
No classes for students due to Thanksgiving recess.

Thursday 27
University closed for Thanksgiving recess through Nov. 28.

Friday 28
Football
vs. WVU; Heinz Field, noon

Women’s Basketball
vs. Elon; Petersen, 4 pm

Film
“My Tale of Two Cities,” Byham Theater, Sixth Ave., Downtown, 7 pm

Saturday 29
Women’s Basketball
vs. Youngstown State; Petersen, 2 pm

Heinz Chapel Choir Holiday Concert
Heinz Chapel, 8 pm (also Nov. 10; 4-4125)