Pitt alum wins Rhodes

Recent Pitt graduate Eleanor M. Ott has been selected as one of 32 Rhodes Scholars representing the United States.

Rhodes scholarships cover all expenses for two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England. The scholars named last weekend will enter Oxford in October 2010.

Ott was selected from among 805 candidates representing 326 different colleges and universities. She is the University’s sixth Rhodes Scholar.

Pitt is the only public institution in Pennsylvania with a 2010 Rhodes Scholar; Swarthmore College is the only other institution in the state with a 2010 Rhodes winner.

The scholarships were created in 1902 by the will of British philanthropist Cecil Rhodes. Criteria for selection are high academic achievement, integrity of character, a spirit of unselfishness, respect for others, potential for leadership and physical vigor.

The Rhodes Trust pays all college and university fees, transportation expenses to and from England and provides a stipend to cover expenses while in residence in Oxford. The value of the scholarship varies by program, but is estimated at $50,000–$175,000.

Ott, of Lawrence, Kansas, did research in nuclear and radiochemistry at Pitt and graduated in April summa cum laude, with majors in chemistry, history and French. She plans to pursue a master’s degree in forced migration at Oxford.

Since graduating Ott has worked as a Truman Scholar at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on projects relating to teenage pregnancy prevention, refugee resettlement and domestic violence prevention. She was awarded the Truman scholarship in 2008.

At Pitt, Ott was co-president of FORGEPitt (Facilitating Opportunities for Refugees’ Empowerment), a refugee advocacy organization that she helped found in 2005. She also worked with the English as a Second Language program at Schenley High School.

The University is lowering its expectations to reflect tougher fiscal realities as it asks for state budget support in the upcoming fiscal year.

After several years of 8.5 percent requests, Pitt is seeking a 5 percent increase in its state appropriation for FY11, which begins July 1. Asking for a 5 percent increase “demonstrates need without being unrealistic,” said Vice Chancellor for Budget and Controller Arthur G. Ramicone.

“None of the governments, be they local, federal or state, have any money. There’s no sense making a pie-in-the-sky request,” he said. “Five percent’s probably an unrealistic request based on the state of the commonwealth’s budget.”

In Pitt’s Nov. 12 request to the state Department of Education, administration stated that the University intends to limit tuition increases to 4 percent and to increase the compensation pool by at least 3 percent if the state appropriates the $194.68 million the University is seeking.

Pitt asked for $173.3 million for educational and general (E&G) support, $457,000 for disadvantaged students, $341,000 for Services for Teens at Risk, $2.64 million for rural education outreach and $449,000 for student life initiatives.

The total also includes $18.28 million in academic medical center funding that is received through the Department of Public Welfare budget. The academic medical center funding request includes nearly $8.96 million for the School of Medicine, $1.05 million for the dental clinic, nearly $7.9 million for Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic and $412,000 for the Center for Public Health Practice.

Ramicone said it is unclear how much of an increase in the FY11 appropriation would be necessary in order to lift the salary freeze University administrators imposed for FY10. However, he estimated that a 1 percent increase in payroll currently would equate to about $4.5 million.

“We all realize you can’t freeze salaries forever — at some point you lose your best people, who have other options,” Ramicone said.

“We would love to be in a position where we could give a salary increase next year.”

In each of the past three years, Pitt requested an 8.5 percent increase from the state, an amount administrators said reflected the University’s funding needs. Legislators responded with an increase of 2.16 percent in fiscal
Program supports local soldiers

Pitt's Office of Veterans Services, the College of General Studies student government board and the McCull Center for Nontraditional Student Success have launched the "Pitt Packed with Patriotism" project to support deployed local soldiers.

Donations of personal hygiene items, snacks, magazines, DVDs and games, along with photos and letters for the soldiers may be dropped off in the McCull Center or the Veterans Services office on the 4th floor of the Cathedral of Learning.

Items that are especially appreciated by the soldiers include shampoo, bar soap, shaving cream, razors, women's hygiene items, powdered drink mixes, gum, vitamins, protein products, energy drinks and American cigarettes.

"We're sending to people we know," said Rairigh, noting that items collected through the project will be directed to units with local ties or to Pitt students and alumni who are serving overseas. She hopes to send two shipments to the engineering unit — which includes her husband and several Pitt alumni — before they return home in April. Later shipments will be sent in care of a Pitt student whose Army unit is to be sent to Afghanistan in April, she said.

For additional information, contact Rairigh at ann142@pitt.edu.

—— Kimberly K. Barlow

The Staff Association Council (SAC) last week announced details of its holiday project and affirmed standing committee chairs and vice chairs.

SAC will work with the Salvation Army's adopt-a-family program to provide holiday gifts to a single mother and her three young children, according to Martisa Arlet, chair of the program and planning committee.

"The mother, who is only 29, cannot work due to severe multiple sclerosis," Arlet said at the Nov. 18 meeting.

Gifts and monetary donations will be accepted at the SAC office, 313 Bellefield Hall, until Dec. 16. For more information call 4-4266.

SAC also is supporting a new and lightly used book and toy drive, an ongoing project to aid the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, a local early intervention service coordination agency for families of children, ages birth to 3, who have developmental concerns.

Book and toy donations should be delivered to Jennifer Welton, 419 CL (4-2458), jwelt10@pitt.edu.

Arlet also reported that SAC will sponsor a series of brown bag lunch speakers in the spring term at dates to be announced. Speakers will include a representative from Life Solutions (formerly the family and staff assistance program), who will discuss handling stress in the workplace; a nutritionist/dietician, and a representative of the Port Authority of Allegheny County, who is expected to discuss the public transit service changes set to start in March.

Also at the Nov. 18 meeting, SAC members affirmed the following committee leaders:

- Sherry Shrum, chair, and Steve Zupcic, vice chair, benefits
- Pamela Wein, chair, and William McNeil, vice chair, elections
- Meg Mayer-Costa, chair, and Kristine Hodgevold, vice chair, governance
- Angela Goldien, chair, and Lezlie Dowell, vice chair, grievances
- Libby Hilt, chair, and J.P. Marychak, vice chair, marketing and communications
- Monica Losagio, chair, and Karen Zarella, vice chair, program and planning
- Jennifer Welton, chair, and Michael Semcheski, vice chair, research and information
- Traci Talley, chair, and Ken Doty, vice chair, safety and security.

In other SAC business:

- SAC President Gwen Watkins criticized Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl's proposal to levy a 1 percent tax on student tuition.
- “This is not a fair tax because students already are paying their fair share. Most of us get off campus where they pay rent and a lot of them have jobs where they pay taxes. We stand behind our students in rejecting this tax. We should find a way to help Pittsburg that’s not the way to do it,” Watkins said.
- Annabelle Clipping, vice president of marketing and communications, noted that a donation has been received.

SAC is hoping to convert from a paper version to an electronic newsletter.

—— Peter Hart

By foot, bus or bike: Pitt commuters show their winning ways

A n alternative commuting method have driven Pitt commuters to victory in a carbon dioxide-saving commuter challenge that pitted the University and participants at eight other institutions.

California-based AlterNet-Rides, which promotes alternative transportation, is behind the concept that allows organizations to set up a challenge to encourage participants to use alternative commuting methods.

Participants in the second annual nationwide Fall Campus Challenge earned points by logging their commuting mileage and method on the commuterchallenge.com website during the month of October.

Driving alone earned zero points, but participants who went to work by bike, on foot or who telecommuted could earn 100 points for the day. Using public transit earned participants 95 points. Commuting on a motor cycle was worth 50 points, using a car or motorcycle gained the rider 60 points. Carpool/vanpoolers earned 1,000 points per commuter/day.

Pitt took second place in the 2008 fall campus challenge, in which schools competed.

This year, Pitt took first place in competition against Penn State, Stanford, the University of Kentucky, the University of North Texas, the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, the University of Texas-Austin, the University of California-Los Angeles, and the University and South Carolina.

Pitt’s 76 participants saved 13,708 pounds of carbon dioxide. Overall, 996 participants across the nation participated in the alternative transportation challenge — the equivalent of taking six cars off the road for a year. (Using statistics from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, challenge organizers estimate that the average vehicle, driven 12,000 miles and getting 20 miles per gallon of gas, emits 11,742 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.)

Pitt’s participation in the annual campus challenge is spearheaded by assistant director of parking Janet Thomas, who said she became aware of the competition through a transportation newsletter and thought it would be a good way for the University to showcase its alternative commuting programs and participants.

Although the University currently gains bragging rights with its title, prizes are awarded at random to participants. Kathy Bucagrovi of Pitt's Office of Student Affairs won an iPod Nano as one of two $100 gift cards.

Pitt will defend its title in the third annual challenge, said Thomas, who intends to promote the competition again next fall.

—— Kimberly K. Barlow

SAC collecting donations for holiday drive

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—— Peter Hart
A reluctance to "act white"

... isn't the cause of the racial performance gap in schools, lecturer says

Amanda E. Lewis

-contrary to popular belief, non-white students’ reluctance to "act white" is not the source of the racial gap in student outcomes, according to a national expert in race relations and urban schooling.

Rather, non-racial school structures are responsible for the gap, according to Amanda E. Lewis, a sociology faculty member at Emory University, as spoke at part of Pitt’s Center on Race and Social Problems lecture series. Her areas of expertise include race and ethnic relations, urban schooling, our country’s children, and youth, gender and urban ethnography.

Lewis’s book is self-proclaimed progressivist community in which race still shapes educational opportunities and outcomes, and where despite attending the same school, black and Latino students navigate a very different educational plane than their white counterparts, Lewis said.

This study was based on about 200 interviews with parents, students, teachers and administrators at the school and comparative data from a national survey of 40,000 suburban high school students.

"Rather than focus on topics of overt racial exclusion, we argue that most racial patterns are supported by structural inequalities, institutional practices and racial ideologies that mutually reinforce themselves and perpetuate themselves largely non-racial," Lewis said.

These practices include the academic tracking system, which ostensibly results from a benign approach of racialized achievement criteria, but which, Lewis said, is influenced by parental desires, individual aspirations and perceived expectations that vary greatly between white and minority students and their families, despite being in a similar economic class.

"In some ways we were examining what should be a best-case scenario. Riverview High School has been relatively successful for over 40 years; students from all racial groups receive higher test scores in the four nearby large cities, and the majority of graduates attend college and get jobs," Lewis noted.

However, the school’s successes belie stark patterns of inequality, she said. "Almost 90 percent of white students met or exceeded standards in both reading and math, while just 10 percent blacks and less than 15 percent of Latinos did. Similarly, if you look at test-passing rates, while students at the school are doing better than national averages (of their racial peers), African Americans and Latinos continue to lag way behind whites," Lewis said.

"Blacks and Latinos achieve significantly lower grades and test scores than their white counterparts; they’re much less likely to be involved in school activities, they’re far more likely to be suspended or otherwise disciplined, they’re far more likely to attend dropout-prone four-year colleges, and they’re inequitably distributed across course levels in all subjects," she said.

"So we’re grappling with these deep contradictions between patterns of success and disparities in a highly resourced, racially integrated educational community. Why aren’t black and Latino students achieving at higher rates even in the more affluent schools?"

One popular explanation is the oppositional culture theory, outlined by author John Ogbu in 1986, Lewis said.

"According to Ogbu, when we try to understand the experience of minorities in the U.S., we need to discourse forcibly incorporated into the mainstream of the United States as a result of slavery. And that forms a different relationship with those institutions and voluntary minorities who have come to the U.S. of their own free will," the lecturer said.

While voluntary minorities tend to compare their situation in the United States favorably to that in their former homeland, involuntary minorities instead compare their situation to that of the dominant group. They understand through experience that, relatively speaking, their opportunities are constrained along a number of dimensions.

"We think that understanding of the many institutional barriers they face when trying to succeed, Ogbu hypothesizes that involuntary minorities essentially disenfranchise from the dominant culture the idea that recognizing discrimination in the school and in society would lead to lower aspirations."

Regarding the so-called burden of acting white, Lewis said that most African-American students are held up as the gold standard explanation for the racial achievement gap.

"Despite its popularity in the press, there is in fact to date little conclusive evidence that negative peer pressure is prevalent among black students or unique to their peer group," Lewis said.

Data show that bright students of all races get teased as nerds or brainiacs and lower-achieving educational achievements. "This is very important: If this theory can explain anything about the achievement gap, it has to be a particular black thing that doesn’t go on in any other group. Teasing or peer pressure must be race-specific. In essence it’s something that all students are subject to," the lecturer said.

"Peer pressure also has to be pervasive, affecting a large part of the population, and it has to be tied to achievement-related behavior. Under this theory it has to be tied somehow to a commitment to studying or class work," Lewis said.

"One, what we find is that students of all races who reported a high desire for achievement who were involved in the school ... quite successful in the racially integrated schools with high levels of racial integration ... not only in schools where blacks are well represented in AP and honors courses.

"If oppositional culture is not the cause of the achievement gap, what is?"

"In schools like Riverview we find everyday institutionalized discrimination, including such things as racial stereotypes and race-based performance expectations. We find highly racialized school practices and structures like tracking and discipline, and the way that school practices differently respond to and reward the social and culture influences that shape what it means to be a student," Lewis said.

These dynamics don’t receive much attention, partly that’s because they’re harder to document. There are few of these dynamics that take the shape of explicit racist behavior. What we find is institutionalized discrimination in the form of apparently non-racial structures and mechanisms that have very racialized outcomes," Lewis said.

"By moving away from the traditional social science paragons of discrimination, we find all the subtle ways that racial characterizations shape our thinking and interactions in ways that we often are not even conscious of," she said.

Lewis said other factors that contribute to the achievement gap include:

- Even in comparable social and economic classes, white families compared to black families tend to have more educational resources, more time flexibility to tend to children, etc.

- Certain kinds of school resources pay off more for whites. For example, some parents believe that most white students come from high-income families and that white students tend to come from upper- or middle-class families and that most black and Latino students do not. "So it doesn’t matter anymore what you are, what color you are, when your whiteness becomes the primary signifier that is being measured," she said.

In dealing with white students, school personnel often acted proactively, anticipating that parents most likely would pressure them if they didn’t.

"If a white student is not doing well in a class, the teachers hear about it, the parents follow up, and the student is seen," Lewis said.

"There’s the parents’ intervention actually pays off in achieve- ment outcomes, that’s a school policy matter. The school has the absolute responsibility of knowing all students, and that isn’t happening, even though much of this happens outside conscious thought," she added.

"There’s the general belief that whites are more competent of people of color affects performance expectations formed by everyone — parents, teachers, students, peers. Patterns in tracking, for example, relates to those same performance expectations. "Blacks are over-represented in the lower tracks. Not only has the distribution in the tracks become racialized, among the most troubling data show that the tracks themselves have become associated with groups."

There also are curricular consequences associated with tracking in the system. She said the higher-track classes get the better resources and the smaller number of students.

"The minority students have no context to evaluate the classes," Lewis said. "What are we doing with our so-called lower-ability students if we except nothing of them?"

Lewis’s research finds that institutional and interpersonal discrimination as well as apparently non-racial and well-intentioned practices contribute to comparable different experiences and cumulatively contribute to outcomes.

"There are multiple discretionary steps related to teachers’ expectations or where teachers are at work, more inequality results, Lewis maintained. “Even people with the same raw talent achieve a negative effect,” she said.

"Discussing these dynamics with teachers, however, remains very difficult, because oftentimes when words like discrimination are used, the teachers feel defensive. But I emphasize that this doesn’t mean that school staff are racist or racist practices are not at work anywhere else in our society, but we need to look at whether school practices contribute to race inequality in economic, social and cultural resources.”

—Peter Hart
Sanctions alone can’t stop gang violence, national expert insists

“it’s less costly and more effective to counter youth gang violence if agencies and community groups work together in a collaborative outreach fashion.”

—Irving A. Spergel

Pitt faculty contribute to city’s anti-gang efforts

Pittsburgh’s anti-gang violence initiative has been taking shape recently, aided by Pitt faculty researchers who have been retained to gather and analyze gang-related data. This is a collaborative effort within the Department of Political Science that was launched in September 2008 by Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and City Council member Ricky Burgess, and guided by David Kennedy, professor and director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at the University of Cincinnati to aid in the anti-gang initiative. The project is working with the neighborhoods to combat the gang problem in Pittsburgh.

Kennedy told city officials that he plans to bring in a (continued)

The main goal of his model, he said, is to improve community capacity to reduce gang crime and violence. Spergel outlined suggested tactics and strategies, structures and processes derived from his model:

• Target the most violent gang members. “The immediate target is the members of the gang itself,” Spergel said.

• Balance the role of the social worker and the police. “A social worker calling the cops when he sees a crime is a problem unless the cops will keep the informer confidential. So they have to communicate and build a good relationship,” Spergel said.

• Social workers need to develop a professional relationship with kids, rather than a peer relationship, so they can offer counseling and warnings to prevent crime.

• The best way to build trust is through an introduction to gang members by a former member who is gang-savvy, although that is not absolutely necessary, he added.

• Employ an intensity and continuity of effort. “Youth workers can’t just be there when a fight breaks out. They have to be out in the streets on Friday and Saturday nights and even, if possible, daily,” Spergel said. On the other hand, a social worker who has established trust in position to ward off crime by counseling youths against it, he said.

“Moments like these are hard to come by. You need the right conditions in the neighborhood and the cooperation of the police,” Spergel said.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, which distributes grants to fund studies of the issues facing rural communities, including economic development, educational outreach and government finance.

Pitt’s Rural Development Institute System, only one State system of higher education in Pennsylvania and Penn State were eligible. Now Pitt’s regional campuses will be eligible for the grants of up to $60,000. The bill also adds agriculture along with health and welfare concerns to the list of eligible subject areas.

Legislation signed into law last month amends the regulations for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania and Penn State were eligible. Now Pitt’s regional campuses will be eligible for the grants of up to $60,000. The bill also adds agriculture along with health and welfare concerns to the list of eligible subject areas.
The debate over what, how and how much tax-exempt organizations should contribute toward public services has all the characteristics of a classic wicked problem, said Kevin Kearns, director of Pitt’s Johnson Institute for Responsible Leadership. There are multiple actors and stakeholders—all of whom have different values and belief systems. And the data are not necessarily reliable or totally transparent and where options are almost unlimited in the terms of the range of feasible solutions, they said during a discussion on the relationship between tax-exempt organizations and municipalities held Nov. 6 at the University Club.

The issue is not merely a dollars and cents, Kearns said, but also a deeper one that is rooted in democratic philosophies regarding the limits on what governments can do and what they can ask other sectors to do.

“The problem is a tremendously interdisciplinary aspects, some of which are economic, some of which are financial, accounting in nature… and many of which are intergenerationally and environmentally,” Kearns said.

In a dialog titled “Tax-exempt Organizations and Municipal Finance: Examining Local Prec. 48’s New Revenue Realities,” the Johnson Institute brought together local and national experts to discuss the unique problems that are arising in municipalities where high concentrations of property tax-exempt nonprofits make their home.

Communication, compromise and cooperation ranked high among panelists’ suggestions for moving forward.

Noting that both nonprofits and local governments are starved for resources, Nonprofit Quarterly magazine editor Rich Cohen said this is a case of mutual starvation in which both sides are looking at each other for resources.

Because Pittsburgh is not unique in its position as a city with a high percentage of tax-exempt properties within its borders, the discussion centered on what can be done to help the situation.

Providing the local perspective was Brian Bloom, Schofield Professor of Education and Public International Affairs professor Sibylia Davis. Adding a regional perspective was Joe Geiger, executive director of the Pennysylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations, professor Evelyn Brody of the Chicago-Kent Law School, and Woods Bowman of Richard D. Cost School of Public Service, who is an economist, a former Cook County, Ill. finance director and a former Illinois state legislator.

By the numbers

GSPVA’s Peirce framed the local situation with details from her research on the economic impact of the region’s nonprofit organizations.

While it’s difficult to quantify exactly what the tax-exempt properties owned by nonprofits contribute to the economy, it’s clear that nonprofit organizations “is big, it’s growing, and fairly geographically concentrated in the city of Pittsburgh,” Peirce said.

To get a sense of how many nonprofits there are, Peirce looked at the year 2004, which was the first year of the Act 55, the state’s act to tax nonprofits the value of property they own in the region. Although nonprofits have been able to use the law to reduced the tax on small parcels of property, the law has led to an increase in the number of nonprofits filing tax returns.

In examining the sector’s performance over the past two recessions, “In some cases in parts of the state that were doing well or fairly well, and it wasn’t the same kind of decline we’re looking at right now,” Peirce said.

As a result, nonprofits are a recession like this one, which is clearly a lot bigger than the last one, are not going to be as resilient as previous downturns. Over time it will be stronger than other parts of the economy, which suggests that when we looked at the last two, it was not nearly as impacted as other parts of the economy.

The value of nonprofits

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, there are more than 12,000 charitable organizations operating in Pennsylvania—not including faith-based organizations (which add another 18,000) and those not required to file with the state, said Joe Geiger, executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations. “Is it such a problem that we have an abundance of organizations?” He pointed out the role nonprofits play in retaining property values, arguing, “It’s great that there’s a museum, and a theatre or a youth sports program in the community. Why would people want to live in a community where there were no tax-exempt organizations?”

Legal status of nonprofits

Geiger noted that prior to the passage of Act 55 in 1997, local governments were challenging nonprofits’ status in court. Previously, a charity bore the burden of proof as to whether it qualified. But as a result of Act 55, the challenger has to prove that the nonprofit organization is not exempt from property taxes. “That certainly has implications when we talk about property tax-...” Geiger said.

However, others in the audience shared the sentiment that the so-called “eds and meds”—education and health care—sector are seen as economic engines in the region. “Health care, education and human services alone accounted for 45 percent of the nonprofit concentration in the city of Pittsburgh,” Peirce said.

Nonprofit sector trends to be more resilient during recessions, Geiger said. In spite of rising unemployment and structural strains being seen now, the sector’s employment figures “don’t change a lot,” he said. “And when you’re looking at one recession like this one, which is clearly a lot bigger than the last one, the non-profit sector is going to be more resilient during recessions.”

The majority of the region’s nonprofit organization is made up of two, the sector’s going to show a different performance over the past two recessions, “In some cases in parts of the state that were doing well or fairly well, and it wasn’t the same kind of decline we’re looking at right now,” Peirce said.

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The economy's impact

In outlining similar property tax struggles elsewhere, Chicago-Kent law professor Evelyn Brody pointed out that states grant the property tax exemption to nonprofits, but it is the local taxing jurisdictions that feel the effects. "I believe that the states have an obligation to do something about this problem," she said, noting that "spillover" effects impact the municipalities that have non-exempt properties. "The center city has the higher education and the hospitals and the cultural institutions, the benefits are enjoyed more broadly than those who live in the suburbs, people who live elsewhere in the state, elsewhere in the country, and maybe worldwide."

DePaul professor Woods Turner noted that the state funding for municipalities in Illinois is designed to raise a specific benefit, "as water and sewer. It found that governments and the delay in the state budget are six taxing bodies that get a part of what's the drain on the charity

Local governments & nonprofits

The search for a solution

DePaul professor Woods Turner said, "I think we need to have this discussion. There isn't an easy answer that I know of, but state government does respond to pressure. All politics are local and when local governments get together, state legislators do respond." Geiger agreed that nonprofits and government must be willing to compromise. "I have obligation and I must have information I can to the table... It's got to be more than 'what's in it for me'?

Statewide options

The biggest problem with municipal funding in cities and counties, Geiger said, is one on which will contribute immediately in property taxes and the other indirectly through consolidation. He said he didn't fault either the local officials or the nonprofits for their positions. "To the extent that I think institutions like the University of Pittsburgh should defend to the degree they can their public charity purpose, that is the issue that can't be resolved locally. "I think this has to be done at the state level," he said.

Turner noted that the state of Connecticut reimburses local governments for the percentage of the value of their communities' tax-exempt properties. However, he said, "Unfortunately, the reimbursement is subject to the whim of the appropriation of the state fiscal authority," because it has no dedicated revenue source to fund it.

If the government agrees it has a burden to support tax-exempt properties, Turner said, "I think the burden should be shared equally statewide. So, for example, if statewide 15 percent of all value is tax-exempt property, you could set up a program in which anything above 15 percent becomes a state level, or programs like that."

Geiger noted bills with such provisions have been introduced in Harrisburg in every legislative session since 1993 was passed without success. In outlining similar property tax struggles elsewhere, Chicago-Kent law professor Evelyn Brody pointed out that states grant the property tax exemption to nonprofits, but it is the local taxing jurisdictions that feel the effects. "I believe that the states have an obligation to do something about this problem," she said, noting that "spillover" effects impact the municipalities that have non-exempt properties. "The center city has the higher education and the hospitals and the cultural institutions, the benefits are enjoyed more broadly than those who live in the suburbs, people who live elsewhere in the state, elsewhere in the country, and maybe worldwide."

The report viewed PILOTs as a limited help to financially strained municipal budgets because more than two-thirds of the municipalities with the highest fiscal distress did not host a tax-exempt medical or educational institution. Brody said some PILOTs can be a way for government to indirectly tax a nonprofit's income. "The institutions that look attractive to hit up for PILOTs are the ones that have positive revenue. Beyond Pennsylvania

The report found only Connecticut and Rhode Island provide state funding for nonprofits that are home to nonprofit hospitals or universities. By last year 43 tax-exempt institutions contributed a total of $1.4 million from education and medical institutions. In fiscal 2009, it's estimated that Boston's eds and meds will contribute $14.5 million.

Several proposals came up in the Rhode Island legislature over the summer, Brody said. One gave municipalities the option of imposing a tax on 20 percent of all real and personal properties owned by private colleges and universities that were not participating in PILOTs. Another proposed an impact fee on a portion of the real estate property value for colleges and universities with real estate valued at more than $20 million. Separately, the city of Providence in May proposed a $150 per semester service fee on higher education students to defray the cost of police and fire protection.

Nonprofits fought both the student head tax and the impact fee, Brody said, adding that in July the Providence city council formed a committee to study the tax-exempts issue.
"When you buy a piece of property you’re also buying a permanent obligation to pay taxes on that thing," he said. "People do look at the property taxes before they decide to buy." Higher tax rates, which do result from property tax exemption, are capitalized into land values. "So taxpayers residing in a community when the property is removed from the tax rolls are losers because they have to pay higher taxes and the property is now worth less. But future property taxpayers are not affected," he said. "It’s not a revenue issue to the government. And as far as pre-existing property, when a person buys into a neighborhood ... they are getting a discount on their property by virtue of the higher tax rates that result from property tax exemption," Bowman said. "Taxpayers blame property tax exemptions for high tax rates, they don’t see the offsetting lower property values —that they got a break when they bought the property in the first place. But even if they did, they don’t want to think their property is worth less as a result of these tax exemptions," he said.

Capitalization also works in reverse, he said. "If the property tax exemption were abolished, today’s taxpayers would benefit through lower tax rates and higher land values. But future generations wouldn’t benefit, just as they’re not disadvantaged by the exemption today because the tax burden is a factor in the value of the real estate. "The issue will never go away because current taxpayers will always perceive a benefit and they’re correct in that." Bowman said. "The issue is basically a political one. The economic arguments, no matter how good they are, will never prevail."

Key to the issue: People must perceive nonprofits as assets to the community. Nonprofit leaders can believe their organizations are assets to the community but they’ve got to convince the community of that fact. It is a never-ending job," he said.

Bowman noted that in his home area of Chicago, there are conflicting political currents with regard to nonprofits. The county is pressing nonprofit hospitals to provide more charity care while the city is giving the same hospitals the capitalization that’s created. That’s another way the interests of nonprofits and governments can align.

PILOTs and SILOTs
Payments in lieu of taxes, or PILOTs, Bowman said, "are the worst way to deal with the conflict." He argued that PILOTs tend to have differential effects on nonprofits because some voluntarily pay, while others don’t. Likewise, not all taxing bodies benefit from PILOTs. "Schools rarely see any money from these PILOTs," he said. "It goes to the municipal governments because they’re the ones who have the muscle."

On top of it all, PILOTs don’t raise much money, he said. "When I look at the dollars that are raised by these things, they seem like they’re not worth the effort."

He argued that school districts should have a role. "In most states and most regions, schools take most of the property tax, yet all the focus is on the municipal governments," he said. "If you’re going to deal with this, you’ve got to get the schools into it." Bowman favors SILOTs, or services in lieu of taxes. "A hospital might provide a free health clinic, for example," he said.

He argued that SILOTs are mission-related and can be based on a nonprofit’s capacity. "Everyone gets to do what they’re best at and at a financial level that they can afford. It’s visible and measurable too. ... The PILOT agreements tend not to be public; people tend not to know exactly who’s giving how much. But if you’re offering services, they’re out there for everybody to see." Another option would be a one-time fee. "If you really want to deal with this ... deal with new property that’s coming off the tax rolls," he said, suggesting that owners could be subjected to a one-time impact fee for taking property off the tax rolls that could be incorporated into the fundraising campaign a nonprofit mounts when it wants to take on a capital project.

Cohen pointed out that determining levels for SILOTs can be problematic, given the diversity of services provided by nonprofits. He questioned how to calculate the value and amount of services to be provided. Another concern is that not all nonprofits are service providers. Cohen said, questioning whether nonprofits such as advocacy groups, institutes or research-related agencies could be considered less valuable.

Evelyn Brody of the Chicago-Kent Law School pointed out there also is a potential risk of extortion of the services by the political powers that be: "You’re a school, provide tuition to my constituents," she said.

—Kimberly R. Barlow

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**Introduction to PK/K**

City Campus  
Dec. 2, 9:30 a.m.

North Hills Campus  
Dec. 3, 9:30 a.m.

**Introduction to Middle School**

City Campus  
Dec. 8, 9:00 a.m.

**Introduction to Upper School**

City Campus  
Dec. 9, 9:00 a.m.

Winchester Thurston School
The University Times

Pitt becomes AsthmaNet research site

Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Institute at UPMC and the School of Medicine have received a seven-year, $529,000 grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), an arm of the National Institutes of Health, to bring cutting-edge clinical trials to asthma patients in Pittsburgh.

Pitt’s asthma institute is one of nine sites across the country chosen to participate in AsthmaNet, a project funded by the National Institutes of Health to test new strategies for improving the care of patients at high risk of hospitalization and death from asthma, including African Americans and children.

Nearly 10 percent of the U.S. population suffers from asthma, making it one of the most common chronic diseases in both adults and children. Asthma attacks are responsible for over one million visits to the emergency room, 500,000 hospitalizations each year and billions of dollars in health care costs. While many patients are able to control their symptoms through medication, as many as 20 percent of asthma patients don’t experience relief from symptoms with current medications.

Sally Wenzel, director of the asthma institute and a faculty member in medicine, said, “This grant will help us bring the most innovative and promising clinical trials to Pittsburgh, giving our patients and the Pittsburgh asthma community access to the best treatment available while at the same time helping us advance our understanding of asthma.”

ICU care improvements studied

Researchers will lead one of five U.S. teams that were awarded grants to study how nurses contribute to and improve the quality of patient care.

Co-principal investigators Mary Beth Happ of the School of Nursing and Amber Barnato of the School of Medicine and Graduate School of Public Health will lead the two-year, nearly $100,000 project, “Study of Patient-Nurse Effectiveness With Assisted Communication Strategies” (SPEACS-2). The project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative, will focus on improving patient care outcomes in the intensive care unit.

Happ stated, “Each year, more than 27 million ICU patients are temporarily unable to speak due to breathing tubes and artificial respiration. These patients face additional communication challenges such as hearing loss, impaired vision and confusion during hospitalization in the ICU. Researchers on the SPEACS-2 team will strive to improve the patient’s ICU experience by learning to more accurately interpret the patients’ messages about their symptoms, as well as their care needs.”

Happ and Barnato’s team of nurses, physicians, speech-language pathologists and biostatisticians will examine the impact of a web-based nurse communication training program on patient care outcomes.

Barnato stated, “We know these tools improve communication. The obvious next question is whether improved communication medically improves patient outcomes and reduces costs. It would be very exciting if a low-tech tool in the ICU can improve critical care nursing care, patient outcomes and efficiency.”

Collaborative care helps bypass blues

Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) patients who were screened for depression after surgery and then cared for by a nurse-led team of health care specialists via telephone reported improved quality of life and physical function compared to those who received their doctors’ usual care, according to a School of Medicine study recently presented at the American Heart Association annual meeting and published in the Nov. 18 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

With more than 450,000 procedures performed annually, CABG surgery is one of the most frequently performed and costly medical procedures in the United States. Although the procedure clearly benefits many individual patients, 20-25 percent experience depressive symptoms following the surgery and have worse clinical outcomes, including poorer quality of life, continued chest pain and a higher risk of rehospitalization and death.

“By bypassing the Blues” is the first trial to examine the impact of a collaborative care strategy for treating depression following an acute cardiac event.

The intervention included weekly telephone follow-up by a nurse using an evidence-based treatment protocol for depression. The nurse collaborated with the patient’s primary care physicians and the study’s clinical management team, composed of a psychiatrist, psychologist and internist. This approach has proven effective for treating major depression in primary care settings but had never been applied to a population with cardiac disease.

Principal investigator Rebecca Rollman, faculty member in medicine and psychiatry in the medical school’s Center for Research on Health Care, said, “Dozens of studies have described a link between depression and heart disease, and the most recent science advisory from the American Heart Association recommends screening patients with heart disease for depression. However, few depression treatment trials have involved cardiac patients and none used the collaborative care model that we examined in the impact of treating post-CABG depression on quality of life, re-hospitalizations or health care costs, as we did.”

Investigators recruited 453 post-CABG patients from seven Pittsburgh-area hospitals from 2004 through 2007. They included 102 depressed patients who were assigned randomly either to an eight-month course of telephone-delivered collaborative care or to their doctors’ usual care for depression. Investigators also randomly sampled an additional 151 non-depressed, post-CABG patients to facilitate comparisons for depression patients. They tracked patients to monitor quality of life, physical functioning, mood symptoms, non-mood mental health symptoms, health care costs and deaths.

The researchers found that patients enrolled in collaborative care reported greater improvements in mental health-related quality of life, physical functioning and mood symptoms. Overall, 50 percent of intervention patients reported a 50 percent or greater reduction in mood symptoms from baseline to eight-month follow-up versus 29.6 percent of patients in usual care.

“Men with depression were particularly likely to benefit from the intervention. However, the mean health-related quality of life and functional improvements of intervention patients did not reach that of the non-depressed comparison group,” said Rollman.

Pitt co-authors of the study included Bea Herbeck Belnap and Peter Counihan of medicine, Yashma N. Kapoor, director of the Center for Research on Health Care, Charles F. Reynolds III of psychiatry, biostatistics faculty member Sati Mazumdar and statistical services administrator Patricia Houck of the Graduate School of Public Health, and Herbert C. Schulberg, a Pitt professor emeritus of psychiatry now on the faculty at the Weill Cornell Medical School.

More information is available at www.bybypassingtheblues.pitt.edu.

Dental researchers to study facial birth defects

Researchers at Pitt and the University of Iowa will lead a $1.5 million, five-year initiative to study the cause of facial birth defects. The FaceBase Consortium will create an encyclopedic database of how the faces of children develop and what goes wrong to cause malformations.

FaceBase will build a list of the genes and proteins that drive embryonic cell differentiation around the forming mouth. These cells become bone, cartilage, ligament, nerve and soft tissue, which are visible as the developing face in the first sonogram of a fetus. However, questions remain about how and why some malformations occur.

“FaceBase will bring together data that’s never been in the same place before,” said Maiza Grazia, co-principal investigator of the FaceBase Management and Operations Office and a professor of the Center for Craniofacial and Dental Genetics in Pitt’s School of Medicine. “We hope it is that this database will help us to piece together the information needed to intervene when facial development starts to go wrong — or prevent it from going wrong in the first place.”

Maizara and dental medicine professor Seth Weinberg also have received a five-year, independent FaceBase research and technology grants. This $1.5 million, five-year research grant will focus on acquiring three-dimensional facial images and a large number of genetic markers from participants in Pittsburgh, Seattle and Houston. The resulting data will be available through the FaceBase database and will allow discovery of genes related to facial formation.

Co-investigator Michael Becich, chair of the Pitt Department of Biomedical Informatics, will collaborate on the development of the FaceBase portal and database. A prototype is expected to be ready by the end of the year. The FaceBase portal and database will be free and publicly accessible to the scientific community.

FaceBase is funded by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Genetics of heart defects studied

Developmental biologists at the University have been chosen to participate in a $100 million federal “betch to win” research network that is dedicated to learning about the formation of the cardiovascular system and the genetic knowledge that will lead to new diagnostic and intervention strategies for congenital heart disease.

The Pitt team, led by developmental biology chair Cecilia Lo, will identify and study a set of genes that play an essential role in producing structural heart defects, such as holes in the heart wall, transposition of major blood vessels that connect to the
heart and other problems of car-
diac development that can affect
up to 1 percent of live births.
Lo’s $8.6 million project will
explore new tools to identify changes
that increase the likelihood of gene
mutations and use non-invasive fetal
ultrasound and magnetic resonance
imaging to spot any heart defects that
result. The DNA of the affected mice
will be examined to identify the gene
changes that cause the abnormal-
ity. A refresh model will be used as
a quick boos to validate the find-
ings.

Ultimately, we want to build a
diagnostic chip that can rap-
idly and accurately identify the
genetic root causes of specific
heart defects, said Lo. “That could
enable us to examine how these
genetic influence disease
progression, correlate them with
long-term outcomes and
better tailor treatments.”

Lo is particularly interested in
mutations that affect the function
of cilia, which are hair-like projec-
tions on cells that best known
for moving fluids along tissue
surfaces. “We now know cilia are
critical to heart development in
the fetus,” she said. “For example,
they help to direct the way the
heart, which is a left-right asym-
metrical organ. This asymmetry is
crucial for normal functioning and
allows for efficient oxygenation
of blood.”

The benchtop device was
approved by the National Heart,
Lung and Blood Institute. Lo’s
project is in the Cardiovascular De-
velopment Consortium, which
includes research teams from
the University of Utah, Harvard
University and the University of
California-San Francisco.

Another consortium compris-
ing five research centers will focus
its work on translational research
in pediatric cardiac genomics.
Both will work with an existing
clinical pediatric heart disease
network.

Senior author Angela Gronen-
born, chair of the Department of
Structural Biology and director of
the University of Pittsburgh
Center for HIV Protein Interac-
tions, said capsid proteins,
and particularly the interfaces or
seams where one connects to another,
are very important for assembling and
disassembling the HIV coat.

The study, conducted with
researchers from the Vanderbilt
University School of Medicine,
indicates that these seams provide
the flexibility to dismantle the coat
efficiently after viral entry into the
host and to put it back together
when new viruses emerge from the
cell.

“Our lab experiments show
that if we replace a few of the
pivotal stitches in the seam by
mutation, the resulting viruses are
less infectious or even non-infect-
ious,” Gronenborn said. “The
seam, and therefore the virus,
can no longer function properly.”

Pitt co-authors include In-Ja
Yoon, Xin Meng, Jinwon
Jung, Gongpu Zhao, Jinwoo
Ahn and Jason Concel of
the Department of Structural Bio-
logy.

Fat grafting for war injuries
Surgery professor J. Peter
Rubin is leading a team that
recently received a $1.6 million
award from the Department of
Defense to help wounded soldiers
recover from devastating facial
injuries using innovative surgical
technologies based on the biology
of fat tissue.

Working with core faculty
at the McGowan Institute of
Regenerative Medicine, research-
ers plan to treat 20 soldiers
with facial injuries.

“As many as 24 percent of
wounded soldiers suffer some kind
of facial injury, which can have a
huge impact on quality of life,” said
Rubin, who also co-directs Pitt’s
Adipose Stem Cell Center.

While we can reconstruct
bone structures very well, it is
the surrounding soft tissues that
give people a recognizable face.
This project will investigate how
soft tissue grafting can more
precisely restore facial form and
improve the lives of our wounded
soldiers.”

The use of fat grafting for seri-
ous facial injuries, such as those
resulting from roadside bombs,
is facilitated in this project by
using specially designed devices
and instruments for harvesting
fat tissue and implanting it into
regions of scarred tissue.

“Fat grafting, or moving fat
tissue from one part of the body
to another, has been used as a
cosmetic procedure for decades,”
said Rubin. “We are now applying
these same techniques for recon-
structive surgery to accurately
restore facial form after battlefield
injuries.”

Other Pitt faculty involved
in the project are Kacey Marra,
director of Pitt’s plastic surgery
laboratory, Gretchen Haas
of psychiatry and Barton Branest-
rad of radiology and biomedical
informatics.

MIDAS project wins award for supercomputing center

The Pittsburgh Supercomput-
ing Center (PSC), a joint effort of
Pitt, Carnegie Mellon University
and Westinghouse Electric Co.,
has received the 2009 HPCwire
Reader’s Choice Award for Top
Supercomputing Achievement.

The award recognized PSC’s
work as part of the National
Institutes of Health’s Models of
Infectious Disease Agent Study
(MIDAS) project, which sup-
ports research to simulate disease
spread and evaluate intervention
strategies.

HPCwire is a news service for
high-performance computing and
cosmological science that serves
an international community.

As part of the MIDAS project,
PSC scientist Shawn Brown has
modeled the spread of the H1N1
virus in various locales, including
the United States, the Washing-
ton, D.C., metropolitan area and
Allegheny County.

The project’s modeling helps
policymakers and public health
officials evaluate the effective-
ness of virus mitigation strategies,
such as vaccination and school
closure.

Brown is collaborating with
the Pittsburgh MIDAS Center of
Excellence, led by Donald Burke,
dean of the Graduate School of
Public Health.

This group is studying ques-
tions about the behavioral, envi-
ronmental and evolutionary fac-
tors underlying infectious disease
epidemics to develop real-time
models for particular localities,
cities and states.

Hillman Library extends hours

Hillman Library will extend its 24-hour end-of-term schedule for
the first time. Hillman will be open continuously from 10 a.m.
Sunday, Dec. 6 until 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19. The University Library
System will provide free coffee and tea in the Cup & Chaucer
cafe during its regular closing time.

The PITTCat+ online catalog will be available 24 hours a day
during all hours of operation include the ground floor computers
for database and electronic resources searching, the lending/reserve
desk and computer labs on the first, second and fourth floors.

Pitt’s SafeRider service is available from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. by calling
412/648-2255.

During the two-week 24-hour schedule, admittance to Hillman
from midnight to 7 a.m. will be with Pitt ID only.

Sock-a-thon to begin

Pitt’s Faculty and Staff
in Service to Community pro-
gram (formerly the Volunteer
Pool) is sponsoring a sock-a-
thon to aid the homeless and
needy during the winter. The
effort runs Nov. 30-Feb. 26.
New socks can be dropped off
at the Volunteer Pool.

For more information,
contact Gwen Watkins at
412/624-7702 or watkins-
pitt.edu.

HIV protein coating describes
described structure

Structural biologists at the
School of Medicine have described
the structure of the complex of
protein units that make up
the coat surrounding the HIV
genome and identified in it a
“seam” of functional importance that previ-
ously went unrecognized. Their
findings, reported recently in
Cell, could point the way to new
treatments for blocking HIV
infection.

The researchers used a com-
bination of nuclear magnetic
resonance and cryoEM, which
are standard structural biology
tools, to see both the overall shape and
the atomic detail of capsid protein
(CA) assembly. It takes about 1,500
copies of CA to make the coat, or
capsid, that surrounds the genome
of the AIDS virus.

“This strategy allowed us to
see both the forest and the trees,”
explained structural biology facul-
ty member and study co-author
Peijing Zhang. “Knowing what
the CA protein looks like and how
the capsid is built will allow sci-
entists to rationally design ther-
apeutic compounds that interfere
with assembly of the protein and
affect its function.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

NOVEMBER 25, 2009

The Pittsburgh Supercomput-
ing Center (PSC), a joint effort of Pitt,
Carnegie Mellon University and Westinghouse Electric Co., has received the 2009 HPCwire Reader’s Choice Award for Top Supercomputing Achievement. The award recognized PSC’s work as part of the National Institutes of Health’s Models of Infectious Disease Agent Study (MIDAS) project, which supports research to simulate disease spread and evaluate intervention strategies. HPCwire is a news service for high-performance computing and cosmological science that serves an international community.

As part of the MIDAS project, PSC scientist Shawn Brown has modeled the spread of the H1N1 virus in various locales, including the United States, the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and Allegheny County. The project’s modeling helps policymakers and public health officials evaluate the effectiveness of virus mitigation strategies, such as vaccination and school closure.

Brown is collaborating with the Pittsburgh MIDAS Center of Excellence, led by Donald Burke, dean of the Graduate School of Public Health.

This group is studying questions about the behavioral, environmental and evolutionary factors underlying infectious disease epidemics to develop real-time models for particular localities, cities and states.

Hillman Library will extend its 24-hour end-of-term schedule for the first time. Hillman will be open continuously from 10 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 6 until 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19. The University Library System will provide free coffee and tea in the Cup & Chaucer cafe during its regular closing time. The PITTCat+ online catalog will be available 24 hours a day during all hours of operation include the ground floor computers for database and electronic resources searching, the lending/reserve desk and computer labs on the first, second and fourth floors. Pitt’s SafeRider service is available from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. by calling 412/648-2255. During the two-week 24-hour schedule, admittance to Hillman from midnight to 7 a.m. will be with Pitt ID only.

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For more information, contact Gwen Watkins at 412/624-7702 or watkins-pitt.edu.

HIV protein coating describes structure

Structural biologists at the School of Medicine have described the structure of the complex of protein units that make up the coat surrounding the HIV genome and identified in it a “seam” of functional importance that previously went unrecognized. Their findings, reported recently in Cell, could point the way to new treatments for blocking HIV infection.

The researchers used a combination of nuclear magnetic resonance and cryoEM, which are standard structural biology tools, to see both the overall shape and the atomic detail of capsid protein (CA) assembly. It takes about 1,500 copies of CA to make the coat, or capsid, that surrounds the genome of the AIDS virus.

“This strategy allowed us to see both the forest and the trees,” explained structural biology faculty member and study co-author Peijing Zhang. “Knowing what the CA protein looks like and how the capsid is built will allow scientists to rationally design therapeutic compounds that interfere with assembly of the protein and affect its function.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8
The People of the Times column features recent news on faculty and staff, including awards and honors, accomplishments and administrative appointments.

We welcome submissions from the University. Please send information via email to: utimes@pitt.edu, by fax at 412/624-4579 or by campus mail to 108 Belfield Hall.

For submission guidelines, visit www.utimes.pitt.edu.

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**People of the Times**

Faculty member Phil Williams has been named the holder of the Wesley W. Posvar Chair in International Security Studies in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). He is also the new director of the Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies, which is part of both GSPIA and the University Center for International Studies (UCIS).

Williams, who previously served as Ridgway Center director from 1992 to 2001, has published extensively in the field of international security, including the books "Crisis Management, "The Senate and U.S. Troops in Europe" and, with Mike Bowker, "Superpower Detente: A Reappraisal." During the last 16 years, his research has focused primarily on transnational organized crime. Williams was founding editor of the journal Transnational Organized Crime and has edited several publications on combating organized crime and the trafficking of women.

Most recently, he has focused on alliances among criminal organizations, as well as on terrorist finances, drugs and violence in Mexico, and complexity theory and intelligence analysis. In 2007-09, he was a visiting research professor at the Strategic Studies Institute at the Army War College, where he wrote two monographs, "The New Dark Age: The Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy" and "Criminals, Militias and Insurgents: Organized Crime in Iraq.

The University established the Posvar chair to honor the late Pitt chancellor Wesley Posvar, who died in 2001. Posvar, who had been a brigadier general in the U.S. Air Force, served as chancellor from 1967 to 1991 and was renowned for his early recognition of the importance of international studies, establishing UCIS during his years as Pitt's leader. The Posvar chair was held by the professor who also serves as director of the Ridgway Center.

The Ridgway Center was established in 1988 under the auspices of GSPIA and UCIS. Dedicated to the study of American presidents who have held the office and their administration. Dr. Martin Van Blerkom now serves. He is co-editor-in-chief of the journal Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice and Science and has authored a number of widely read publications on anthrax, smallpox and plague and on a range of biosecurity issues, including medicine and hospital preparedness, scientific research strategy, pandemic response and national security.

The Center for Biosecurity is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen national security by reducing the risk of biological attacks, epidemics and other destabilizing events, and to improve the nation's resilience in the face of such events. Inglesby succeeds Tara O'Toole, who was appointed last year under secretary for science and technology in the Department of Homeland Security.

Pitt-Johnstown faculty members Malcolm and Diane Van Blerkom are the recipients of the College of Education and Health Professions Robert Parkinson Award for Outstanding Service. Malcolm is a professor and chair of the Department of Biology, and Diane is a research professor at the Strate-University of Pittsburgh's Super Lawyers in 2005. He is co-editor-in-chief of the journal Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice and Science and has authored a number of widely read publications on anthrax, smallpox and plague and on a range of biosecurity issues, including medicine and hospital preparedness, scientific research strategy, pandemic response and national security.

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Monday 7
CSRP Lecture “Research Ethics & College Student Development: From Theory to Practice,” Kathy Hampleburg, Student Affairs 2017 CL, noon-1:30 pm
Nursing Alumni Society Poin- ters 1st fl. lobby Victoria, noon-5 pm (also Dec. 8, 9 am-5 pm; 4-2204)
CGS Info Session McCracken 4th fl. CL, 6 pm (4-6810)
Bradford Campus Performance “A Small World,” Bromley Family Theater, Blissfield, UPB, 7:30 pm (tickets: 814/162-5155)

Tuesday 8
GfI Fellows Seminar “Pathophysiology/Roald Resource: Squirrel: Ischemic Syn- dromes of Bowel & Clinical Con- sequence,” Sandra El-Hachem; 7:30 pm
Basic & Translational Research Seminar “Genetic Imprinting & Epi- genetic Reprogramming,” J. Richard Chaillet; Cooper Conf. Ctr. room, 8-10:30 am
Basic & Translational Research Seminar in Lung Diseases “Sex & Seventeen: IL-7 Receptor Signaling in Oral Mucosal Infections,” Sarah Gaffen; NW262 Montefiore, noon
Ctr. for Vaccine Research Lecture “An Introduction to the Field of Patient Safety,” J. Scott Ash; HSLS workshop, 8:30-10:30 am

Thursday 10
Academic Career Develop- ment Postdoc Professionalism Workshop “Planning Pilot & Explor- atory Studies to Advance your Research,” Charity Moore; 160 Stolz BST, 8-10:30 am
HSLS Workshop “The WOW Factore: PowerPoint for Posters,” Sam Lewis; LS Library classroom 2, 10-11:30 am
EEO Seminar “Senssing Danger in Sterile Inflammation,” Allan Tsang; 540 Bridgeman Point, noon
Epigenetic Seminar “Policy Advocacy & the Public Health Researcher,” Maggie Potter; 145 Crabtree Room
ADRC Lecture “Palliative Care in Alzhei- mer’s Disease: Selected Topics” Robert Arnold, palliative care & medical ethical; 549 Mon- tefiore ADRC, conf. rm., noon
Geology & Planetary Science Colloquium “American Geophysical Union Meg, Practice Talks,” GfI P.grad students, 203 Thaw, 4 pm
Global Health Film “Pandemic: Facing AIDS”; A11 Crabtree, 6-8 pm
PhD Defenses Medicine/Molecular Phar- macy “LGLMD-1C Role of Caveolin-4 in Neuromuscular Junction & Structure,” Michael Hezel; Nov. 25, 1293 Stolz BST, 1 pm
Engineering/Bioengineering “Engineering Approaches for Neuroprotection,” Richard Stoner; Dec. 3, 4075 BST, 9 am
A&S/Intelligent Systems “Locating & Reducing Transla- tion Difficulty,” Belinda Mohi; Dec. 1, 5177 Sennot, 10 am
IS/Information Science & Technology Lecture “Genetic Discovery of Dynamic Systems,” Mark Vormoet; Dec. 5, 5227 1F, 10 am
Biology “Dynamics of Protein-Drug Interactions as Sensed From Structural Ensembles & Phys- ics-Based Models: Applications to MAP Kinase Phosphatases,” Ahsan Bakran; Dec. 3, 1037 BST, 2 pm
Business “The Role of In-Store Slack & Mental Budgets in Shopper Marketing,” Karen Stiley; Dec. 4, 209 Merrin, noon
A&S/History of Art & Archi- tecture “Seeds of Agribusiness: Grant Writing & the Visual Culture of Grain Farmers 1862-1955,” Travis Nygaard; Dec. 4, 1044 FA2, 2-3 pm
SHRS/Communication Sci- ences & Disorders “The Effects of Locality on Sentence Comprehension in Persons With Aphasia & Normal Individuals,” Jee Eun Sung; Dec. 4, 6601 Forbes’ Tower, 2 pm
A&S/Physics & Astronomy “Low Temperature Photoemis- sion Study on Defect Cen- ters in Silicon Carbide,” Fei Yan; Dec. 4, 311 Clover, 2 pm
A&S/Physics & Astronomy “A Search for Lepton Flavor Violation in Upsilon Decays,” William Love; Dec. 8, 245 list, 11 am
A&S/Hispanic Languages & Literatures “Can Silence Speak? Reading the Marginalized Woman in Three Novels of Female Development” Jila Behrooz; Dec. 10, 1032 CL, 2 pm
Exhibits FMA Exhibit “Face Making: The Disposition of Women in Japan From Edo to Today” by Hiroki Otsuka; through Dec. 19, Mon.-Sat. 10-4 pm. & Th 4-8 pm, 1 Art Gallery, FMA (9999-8801)
Nationality Rms. Holiday Displays CL, Taped tours weekends through Jan. 10, except Dec. 27 & 31, 9 am-2:30 pm, Sat. 11 am-2:30 pm, 27-10 am, first-come, first-served guided tours (4-6000)
Barco Law Library Exhibit “Spin Art Meets Photographic Art” by Michael Rosella; through Jan. 22, M-Th 7:30 am-11:45 pm, F 7:30 am-8 pm, Sat. 10 am-11:45 pm, Sun. 10 am-11:45 pm (8-1376)
Falk Library Exhibit “Opening Doors: Contemporary African-American Sculptures” through Jan. 28, M-Th 7 am- 11:45 pm, F 7 am-10 pm, Sat. 9:30 am-11:45 pm, Sun. 9:30 am-11:45 pm, Falk Library African-American Alumni Council Exhibit “Then & Now: A Historical Tour” by Hiroki Otsuka; through Dec. 19, 4 pm-8 pm, Sat. 11 am-11:45 pm, Sun. 10 am-11:45 pm
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Classified Ads
• For $8 or up to 15 words, $5 for 16-30 words $10 for 16-30 words.
• For University ads, submit an account number for transfer of funds.
• All other ads should be accompanied by a check or a small amount payable made payable to the University of Pittsburgh.
• Reserve space by submitting ad copy one week prior to publication. Copy and payment should be sent to University Times, 106 Bellafield Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, 15260
• For more information, call Barbara DellRosa, 412/644-6464.

UCSIS Faculty Research Grant Application deadline is Dec. 11. (info & application procedure: www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/faculty/index.html)
UCIS-EUCE Faculty Fellow- ship for Fall 2010 or Spring 2011 Deadline is Jan. 15, 2010. (info & application procedures: www. ucsis.pitt.edu/euce/faculty/index.html)

Event Deadline
The next issue of the University Times will include events of Dec. 10-Jan. 7. Information for events during that period must be received by 5 pm Dec. 5 at 310-2419. For University Times, information may be sent by fax to 4-4579 or email to utcalls@pitt.edu.
Pitt still waiting for state funds

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Still awaiting FY10 funding

In its request for the current fiscal year, which began July 1, the University sought $203.5 million. (See Sept. 27, 2009, University News.) However, an appropriation bill for the University, SB1036, which remains in the House appropriations committee, includes $160.49 million in state support for Pitt and $7.3 million in federal stimulus money for FY09 as well as $8.64 million in stimulus money for FY09.

Renegotiating the state’s FY10 budget on Oct. 9, but nearly $730 million in appropriations for Pitt, its fellow state-related universities, and two dozen other institutions that receive nonpreferred appropriations from the state remain in limbo pending an agreement in the state legislature on casino table games revenues to balance the budget.

In spite of the governor’s proclaimed optimism for a quick resolution, no agreement has been reached, although negotiations continue in earnest.

A meeting between the governor, operating budget leaders of the House and Senate, scheduled session is Dec. 1; the next house session is Dec. 9.

Erik Arneson, spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi, told the University Times, “In this time of budgetary reforms and the authorization of table games, we are optimistic that we can settle by the end of this calendar year.”

Brett Marcy, spokesman for the House Democrats, said, “The non-preferred appropriations, such as those for state-related universities, who are non-negotiable as tied to the legislation that will legalize table games in Pennsylvania. We cannot spend the money we don’t have, and in order to raise the money needed for those appropriations, we must legalize and extend the tax table games.

Our staff has been working on this legislation continuously since the budget passed, but it has to be done right. While we understand the immediate financial concerns of the University of Pittsburgh and other state-related universities, House Democrats are focused squarely on the long-term financial impact of this legislation. We remain adamant that the final table games legislation must generate enough revenue to fund these programs and projects for at least one year but also for years to come.”

Noting that the Senate has passed appropriations bills for Pitt, Penn State, Temple and Lincoln, Arneson said, “The Senate Republican caucus has consistently said that funding for the state-related universities should be approved without regard to table games.

“There is enough money in the already-enacted budget to cover that funding, so there is no good reason for the delay.”

No FY10 budget for Pitt

The University has not set its own budget, a state-funded, non-preferred appropriation. “You’re expected to be fiscally responsible, but without current-year cuts, it’s difficult to compare actual expenses with available funding and reserve budget amounts,” Ramicone said.

If Pitt’s appropriation weren’t in limbo, the University would have received about $75 million of that by this point in the fiscal year, Ramicone said, adding that it’s costing the University “in the six figures” in interest that its cash reserves would have been earning.

About $10 million in PHEAA grants for Pitt students that typically are released to the University in August were delayed until after the state budget was passed. Another $10 million in spring-term PHEAA grants is expected to be released in January.

The University also sent notices to about 220,000 last minute, which are due Dec. 17. —Kimberly K. Barlow

December

Wednesday 1

GI Fellows Seminar
“Endoscopy: Feeding Tube/ Nasogastric,” Toby Graham, M.D.

Academic Career Development Workshop
“Developing Competitive Grant Applications,” Bruce Freeman; 5120 Starlz BST; 8:30-10:30 am (8-8571)

Basic & Translational Research Seminar
“Arenovirus e1 Converts Differentiated Cells Into Replacing Stem Cells by Genevote Wild Type-Related Localization of Chromatin-Modifying Complexes,” Arnold Berk, Cooper Phys. Conf. class room on B & C, noon

Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar
“Parasitological, Nuclear Recept for CAR & Molecular Mech of Drug Resistance,” Massi, Nigle; 415 NLH; noon

Long-Term Staff Recognition

Health Services Research Seminar
“Doctor-Patient Communication, Language Barriers & Informal Consent,” Yael Shenker, MD; noon

WMRI Work-in-Progress Conference/ Seminar
“Ovarian Granulosa-Tumor-Associated Stem Cell Transplantation to the Clinic,” Kyle Owre, WMRI 1st Bldg, 10 am

Pharmacology & Chemical Biology Seminar
“Sec. 602,5,” Robert Clark, critical care medicine & pediatrics; 1955 Starlz BST, 1:30 pm

Friday 2

SBDC Workshop
“The 1st Step: Mechanics of Starting a Small Business,” Meris, 7-9 pm (8-5424)

Friday 3

EEOH Seminar
“Adobe Photoshop for Beginners,” Ronen Marmorstein, Wistar Institute; 6014 BST3, 11 am

COH Seminar

Saturday 4

Epidemiology Winter Art Exhibit

Sunday 5

Geology & Planetary Science Colloquium
“Late Quaternary Climate History of Tirol From the Sediments of the Gutenberg-Rossing Trench, Jungfrau, Chinese Academy of Sciences; 2010 the Future,” John S. Wilson; Humanities Lecture
“The Poetics of Representation in New Peru: A Walk Round the City of the Cloister of San Agustin in Lima,” Sabine MacCormack, Notre Dame; 501 CL, 7 pm

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Sunday 6

Nationality Rms. Holiday Open House
CL, noon-4 pm (8-6000)