The University opened a new professional testing center this week in G-33 Cathedral of Learning.

Moving from Alumni Hall into the space previously occupied by the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching, the testing center will serve both Pitt faculty and students as well as Pittsburgh area residents.

Among students who will use the new facility will be those registered with the Office of Disability Resources and Services, those taking online courses through the College of General Studies, those taking entrance exams for graduate school and community members taking licensure exams.

The testing center will offer numerous amenities including 20 more testing stations (for a total of 32), two private testing rooms, privacy filters on computer monitors to promote academic integrity, ceiling cameras for test security and adjustable tables for persons using wheelchairs, making the center compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act design standards.

The testing center will provide new and updated features for Pitt faculty, such as scanning and scoring of exams and a box to drop off classroom exams that will save instructors time.

"I think we simplified the whole scanning system," said Erik Arroyo, Pitt’s online programs manager. "We want faculty to be able to be in and out of here in about a minute. When they arrive, if they have all of their materials organized before they arrive, they drop it off, they’re on their way."

A project two years in the making, the state-of-the-art center will catalogue everything electronically. Prior to this, projects were catalogued in a ledger that created more steps for faculty who wanted to submit exams.

"We know faculty are busy and the last thing we want to do is make them wait a couple extra minutes so we can catalog who they are and what they’re doing," Arroyo said.

In addition to computer tests, paper and pencil exams will be scanned on-site and results will be emailed to faculty within hours. The testing center also will continue to provide make-up exam service, which was initiated during this academic year. "One of the services that we’re providing now is make-up exams to faculty," Arroyo said. "From all accounts this is a tremendous benefit for faculty and we can see that, even in the number from semester to semester."

—Alex Ottmann
Chancellor honored for service to Senate

Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg was honored May 7 as the winner of this year’s award for service to the University Senate.

Pictured from left: Former Senate president and current vice president Irene Frizas; former president and current immediate past president Tom Smitherman; Senate secretary Linda Frank; Nordenberg; former president Keith McDuffie, and former president Jim Cassing.

Nordenberg was honored for 19 years of continued commitment to the Senate during his tenure as chancellor.

Members elected to Senate committees

Election results for the 15 University Senate standing committees have been announced.

Elected members serve three-year terms beginning June 1, 2014.

Admissions and student aid
Julius Kiratu, nursing; Steven Levine, dental medicine; Juan Taboa, dental medicine.

Athletics
Mike-Frank Epitropoulos, arts and sciences; Susanne Godlin, public health; Kevin McLaughlin, education.

Benefits and welfare
Colleen Calley, pharmacy; Angie Riccelli, dental medicine; Sachin Velankar, engineering.

Budget policies
Beverly Gaddy, Greensburg campus, Emily Murphy, health and rehabilitation sciences; Elia Beniaish, dental medicine.

Bylaws and procedures
Laura Fontzi, education; Malgorzata Fort, Health Sciences Library System; Ketki Raina, health and rehabilitation sciences.

Commonwealth relations
Linda Frank, public health; Ann Mitchell, nursing; Dehora Rougeux, University Library System.

Community relations
Heidi Dutovon, nursing; M. Maggie Folan, pharmacy; Michael Lovorn, education.

Computer usage
Alex Jones, engineering; Marian Hampton, University Library System; Arif Jamal, University Library System.

Educational policies
Amy Aggelos, health and rehabilitation sciences; David Beck, health and rehabilitation sciences; A. Murat Kaynar, medicine.

Equity, inclusion and anti-discrimination advocacy
Cynthia Danford, nursing; Adriana Modesto Vieira, dental medicine; Luis Vallejo, engineering.

Library
Eileen Chaisens, nursing; Tin-Kan Hung, engineering; R. Guy Peters, arts and sciences.

Plant utilization and planning
Tracey Olanuy, University Library System; Joseph Newcombe, medicine; Maureen Reynolds, pharmacy.

Student affairs
Lance Davidson, engineering; Chyongchiou Jeng Lin, medicine; Mark Scott, University Library System.

Tenure and academic freedom
Chris Bonneau, arts and sciences; Rose Constantinou, nursing; William Federpsiel, engineering.

University Press
Charles Arwood, medicine; Kathleen Musante (DeWalt), arts and sciences; Peter Friedman, medicine.

—Alex Oltmanns

Technology Corner

CSSD knows that faculty and staff at the University count on strong and secure technology services for research and scholarship, teaching and learning, administrative operations and other professional activities.

We thought we would do some “counting,” too — of the ways our services have been used this year.

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When Linda B. Nilson presented her new grading system to Print on faculty on May 1 — it uses mostly pass/fail exams and assignments, tokens that students can trade for missed homework or classwork — the faculty group was grouped into bundles so that students can choose to shoot for an A (or a D) — she had assured the group they wouldn’t be fired if they used it.

“People have implemented this system, we’re hearing it’s rendering rich, full, employed lives,” Nilson told about 75 attendees at her first Summer Instructional Developement Institute at the O’Hara and North Carolina-Greensboro, as well as Duke, Western Illinois, Lee and West Liberty universities, along with Pima Community College in Tucson.

In its simplest form, specs grading might mean offering a D if a student gets an average of 60-69 percent on exams and does nothing else; a C to students who average 70 percent or higher on exams without completing other assignments; a B to those who achieve C-level test scores and finish a group project according to its specs, and an A to those who fulfill the B requirements and also meet the specifications for an individual paper.

Alternatively, students may be asked to complete the least demanding assignments to earn a C, mid-level assignments to ear a B, and the most demanding assignments to earn an A.

The results, she said, will be different depending on the student, since they know exactly how to reach a self-selected grade level. It also will mean more time for faculty to concentrate on the students aiming for higher grades. It’s possible — perhaps even desirable — to write the specs for each grade requirement so that D-level and C-level students complete all their assignments earlier in the semester, “and then, maybe, it’ll see you at the final,” she suggested.

Spect for an assignment may be as simple as asking students to follow basic directions, hit the required length and turn it in on time. Or the specs may be more complicated, with section-by-section or even paragraph-by-paragraph instructions for a paper, including specific questions the students must address. Care must be taken in writing detailed specs, she cautioned, they must “describe the features you’re looking for and outline those features.”

If students are asked to complete a literature review, for instance, faculty should specify how many references must be cited, how recent they must be and how the material must be organized and presented.

Students “are not doing what they’re capable of doing,” she said. “Why should they, when they can do partial work and slip by?” In contrast, the specs should be clear and firm. This will prompt higher quality work, she maintained, and work that is easier to grade.

For every assignment assessed using specs grading, each faculty member may decide whether students would receive full credit for answering a question or solve a problem in the proper manner, or whether they would receive full credit only for getting an answer correct — or for both. But faculty should gear their specs to desired learning outcomes, Nilson said. They should also keep in mind that the specs for the lowest passing grade must ensure that students demonstrate the course’s fundamentals. This is particularly crucial when a course is not elective and is part of a sequence of courses, each dependent on the student attaining a certain level of knowledge successfully, she said.

On the other hand, specs for an A in any course should make certain that students show how they can undertake higher level thinking about the course’s subject, Nilson said.

“If we get kids who come in with high qualifications, I expect them to get A’s,” said one faculty member. “Am I soft?”

“If they work for it and they meet your expectations … everyone can get an A,” Nilson said.

Bundling assignments

Nilson also proposed basing student grades on specific “bun- dles” of assignments completed.

The specs should require students seeking higher grades to jump more and higher hurdles. “Each bundle is associated with one or more of your student outcomes,” she noted, which makes clear what each student actually is learning.

Some specs-guided courses could allow students to create their own bundles from a menu. To get a B, the student must complete four of 10 bundles, while an A requires six of 10 to be finished. In this setup, each student will achieve his or her own mix of outcomes, “but students like the choice,” she said.

History faculty member Lau- rence Glasco expressed uncer tainty about how to handle spec grading using bundles, particularly a bundle menu: “My students read the syllabus like lawyers … they can spot any loopholes,” he said. “Some of these mix-and-match things … I’m afraid my students would really get me over a barrel on how to mix this.”

But after a break in the presen tation, when faculty used their own syllabi to construct assignment bundles, one faculty member con cluded: “It gave me the ability to break away from grading students relative to each other. It gave each student their own path.”

“Frightening” for students, Nilson said. “They say students are adults and we’ve got to treat them like adults. Well, not all students are adults. … This is edging them in this direction without putting too much responsibility on them.”

Aiming high enough and accepting failure

Carol DeArment, CIDDE senior instructional designer, pointed out that students taking classes in their major need to aim for better grades — and that this needs to be specified in a course’s syllabus.

Under this proposed new grading system, students will fully understand faculty expecta tions, Nilson said. “Our jobs, instead of becoming graders, we are explorers. Here’s what we’re looking for….”

“And there’s research on this,” she added. “When students know what we’re looking for, they’re more likely to go for it, because it will be feasible.

However, she said, “they still might decide they have better things to do this semester. What grade they wind up with says nothing about their capabilities, to me. I might say something about their time schedule.”

What happens when a student aims to complete A-level assign ments and fails? asked Glasco.

Does the student get a B or an F? “I can see a student changing their mind, doing four difficult assignments, then they run out of time, and they do an intermediate assignment and one easy assign ment and they want to negotiate” their grade, he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Linda Nilson, founder of the Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation at Clemson University, says the current method of grading students using points fails to foster rigorous student work.
T he University Senate benefits committee chair Karin Kozar said the University spent its last meeting of the academic year on May 6 discuss- ing fresh ways to communicate the full range of Pitt benefits to fellow faculty members.

"Communicating... was really our goal this year," said chair Angelina Riccelli, dental medicine faculty, who was re-elected as committee head during the meeting.

The committee is planning to look at points programs, incentive benefits and changes through periodic small brochures. Committee member Linda Tashbook, of the law school, suggested that addiction resources be the focus of one of the brochures because "addiction is so prevalent," she said.

Tashbook also pressed the group to consider adopting the master card, a new Pitt wellness programs, while other committee members ques- tioned whether it would fit within the current policy framework. Under the current policy, the master card must be offered to all students enrolling in a Pitt long-term care insurance program. Kozar explained changes in, and conflicts between, Silver Sneakers, offered by Highmark for those with Medicare Advantage plans, and the benefits offered by UPMC's Silver and Fit, formerly offered by UPMC. Those taking advantage of one "silver" plan cannot use a health facility that has an exclusive deal with the other plan. That conflict is most apparent when UPMC dropped Silver and Fit on Jan. 1, 2014, instead of giving a $250 allowance per year toward membership in a fitness facility. "It's a nice offer," Kozar said.

Kozar supported that roughly 500 employees had attended three benefits fairs on the Pittsburgh campus during the open enroll- ment period.

"It's been a quiet year," he said, with fewer employee complaints about benefits changes than in previous years. Chief among the topics covered was the rising cost in the medical insurance premiums this year.

"The thing was, we've received the most comment on was, 'Where's my letter from Unum?'" Unum, which offers both long-term care insurance to Pitt employees, sent letters to policy holders beginning March 28, detailing a 27 percent raise in premiums on July 1, 2014, and a 20 percent increase on July 1, 2015, and 20 percent on July 1, 2016, for a cumulative 88 percent increase. The letters also explained how participants may keep, reduce or eliminate their coverage, in the latter case retaining their premiums in an account for eventual payout, should they need to make future use of the token idea but added, "I can see myself working twice as hard with every body clamoring to earn tokens."

"Don't let them see them, Nilson said. "The concept is for you to adapt to your needs."

How much feedback should we be given when faculty members, another faculty member asked — especially students who are just changing for a G1. "If they fail, do they still get feedback?" Washburn added.

"Just because which grades were not met," Nilson said. "If you're allowing a revision, you can appreciate that student — under the current grading system, she added, students see teacher feedback only as their opportunity to argue the professor into upping their grade. "How would you determine if a group project passes or fails?" came another faculty query. "My concern is that you have one professor who says 'I don't like this, you become even more over-bearing' when the entire group passes or fails.

"You have specs for it," Nilson said. And the group also may be allowed to vote someone out, after a warning, Nilson suggested. In a large class, the teacher can group them as inside classes into their own project group.

Grabbing tokens along the way

Nilson also suggested faculty members, starting assignments like them in class with three or four tokens to exchange for an exten- sion deadline, and perhaps make-up assignment. Class specs also may spell out how a student would be assessed after each sentence containing an error, then let the student figure what was wrong and fix it.

You don't care how they find out that there is an error and you don't care how they correct it, Nilson said. "You could either set up a token system or just let them get to the token idea but added, "I can see myself working twice as hard with every body clamoring to earn tokens."

"Don't let them see them, Nilson said. "The concept is for you to adapt to your needs."

"In my experience," she added, "students are always very protective of their tokens." They won't learn tokens just to scat a class. "Most of them will end up keeping them just in case they need to revise something. You don't need it. But do your best for the gaffe with a token or not.

"It's like a little economy you're setting up," she added. "But don't get too fancy with it. It will take up too much of your time.

Possibly "revolutionary"

Donna Nativo, director of human resources at the Pitt Practice program, asked Nilson how individual faculty fared when they were involved. "In my experience," she continued, "it's been a very positive experience. Their tokens isn't an token that's just a token. It's a class token.

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Some student fees hikes proposed

The Board of Trustees students affairs committee is recommending increases in some student fees. At a May 12 meeting held via conference call, the committee recommended that the board approve:

- A $5 increase in the Titusville campus student fees for full-time students in the fall and spring semesters to $90 and a $5 increase for part-time students to $15 per semester.
- A $5 increase in the Titusville campus student fees for full-time students to $100 for the fall semester and a $5 increase for part-time students to $20 per semester.

The board of Trustees approves the recommended fee increases, they will go into effect for the fall semester.
Allen Kent, Distinguished Service Professor in the School of Information Sciences, died May 1, 2014. He was 92.

Born in New York City, Kent earned a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the City College of New York and a certificate in metallurgical testing at New York University.

He served the United States military in the Air Force and the Air Force Reserve Research Office during World War II.

Kent advised the Kennedy administration on the creation of a National Information Storage and Retrieval Network. He also worked as a research associate at MIT and taught library science at Case Western Reserve University.

He joined the Pitt faculty in 1963. He was the founding director of the Knowledge Availability Systems Center and established Pitt’s Department of Information Science in 1970.

The Academic Pediatric Association has awarded its 2014 APA Research Award to Alejandro Hoberman, a faculty member in pediatrics and chief of the Division of General Academic Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital. The award was presented at a recent meeting of Pediatric Academic Societies in Vancouver.

The award acknowledges Hoberman’s excellence in research in the areas of methodology and soundness. He is known for his research on acquired amnesia and urinary tract infections.

Hoberman’s research has been published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the Journal of the American Medical Association, JAMA Pediatrics and Pediatrics.

He has served on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) special emphasis panels, NIH strategic planning groups, American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines committees and as a member of the Clinical and Translational Science Award child health oversight committee.

Julie Donohue, a faculty member in the Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Health Policy and Management, was awarded the James L. Craig Excellence in Teaching Award.

She is a member of the Council on Graduate Students Education’s Office of the Dean, and Jennifer Russell, a faculty member in the School of Education, was given the Extra Mile Award by the Council of Graduate Students Education (CGSE). The award was announced at a recent meeting of CGSE members.

Katz joined the Pitt faculty in 1967 and served here until his retirement in 1998.

He taught labor economics, macroeconomics, sociological economics, statistics and econometrics.

His research interests included job searches, economics of unemployment insurance, diseased workers, economics of working conditions, worker participation and institutional software.

Prior to joining the Pitt faculty, Katz taught at Columbia University. He also worked as an economist for the board of governors of the Federal Reserve System and was a labor force analyst for the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The award was established in 1967 in memory of Allen Kent, Distinguished Service Professor in the School of Information Sciences at Pitt. The award is presented annually to a faculty member in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, who has been elected to the American Library Association’s 2014 Harvey Vis- cardi Achieve- ment Awards, which pay tribute to leaders in the disability com- munity who have had a profound impact on shaping attitudes, raising awareness and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities. Nominees came from 11 countries, this year’s date’s of winners hail from the United States, Australia and Kazakhstan.

Cooper also is a senior researcher at New York University’s U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs Human Engineering Research Laboratory and is a member of the International Spinal Cord Society. He has a Ph.D. in industrial psychology and is a certified ergonomic consultant.

The University Times is the official newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh, and is published by the Office of the Dean of Libraries and Information Sciences, is one of the winners of the international competition. The award is sponsored by the Viscardi Center, which is the 2014 recipient of the Extra Mile Award by the Council of Graduate Students Education (CGSE). The award was announced at a recent meeting of CGSE members.

The award was presented at the Division K Business Meeting at the AERA annual meeting in Philadelphia last month.

M. Najeeb Shafiq, a faculty member in the Department of Administrative and Policy Studies, was honored by the Journal of Education Finance with an outstanding article award.

His article “Accounting for Risk of Non-completion in Private and Social Rates of Return for Higher Education,” is the 2014 recipi- ent of the Outstanding Journal Article Award of the National Education Finance Conference. This award is given annually to authors whose Jour- nal of Education Finance article embodies extraordinary rigor and relevance to the field of education finance. Recipients are selected by a committee of senior scholars.

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PEOPLE OF THE TIMES
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Katherine Seelman, a faculty member in the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, received an appointment from President Barack Obama to the National Council on Disability. Seelman joins three other newly appointed members on the council.

Thomas Starzl, a faculty member in the Department of Surgery and a pioneer of transplantation, has been elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences.

The National Academy of Sciences elected 84 new members and 21 foreign associates from 15 countries in recognition of their distinguished and continued accomplishments in original research.

Four Pitt faculty members have been elected to membership in the Association of American Physicians. AAP recognizes physician-scientists and molecular genetics faculty member in microbiology and molecular genetics, David Hackam, a faculty member in surgery, David Lewis, a faculty member in psychiatry, and Sally Wenzel, director of the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Center.

The American Society for Clinical Investigation (Young Turks) elected 75 new members in 2014, of which are Pitt faculty members. Elected from Pitt were Yuan Chang, a faculty member in pathology, Patrick Moore, a faculty member in microbiology and molecular genetics, David Hackam, a faculty member in surgery, David Lewis, a faculty member in psychiatry, and Sally Wenzel, director of the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Center.

Five Pitt faculty members have been elected to membership in the Association of American Physicians. AAP recognizes researchers who have made significant contributions to the advancement of medical science over the course of their careers. Pitt faculty made up 12 percent of the 60 persons elected this year.

Elected from Pitt were Yuan Chang, a faculty member in pathology, Patrick Moore, a faculty member in microbiology and molecular genetics, David Hackam, a faculty member in surgery, David Lewis, a faculty member in psychiatry, and Sally Wenzel, director of the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Center.

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Bike to Campus Event
Free bike registration, safety check, raffle. Schenley Plaza, 7-10 am
IEE Workshop “The 2nd Step: Developing a Business Plan”, Morris, 7-10-10 am (iee@katz.pitt.edu)
CIDDE Workshop “What’s New in Blackboard Post Upgrade?”, B26 Alumni, 10 am (register: www.cidde.pitt.edu/ workshop)
Faculty & Staff Development Program “PeerSource New User Training”, Michelle Fullem & Kaitlyn Konkle; 342 Craig, 9-11:30 am (register: www.hr.pitt.edu/fdpq)
Faculty & Staff Development Program “Getting Social Equity & Civil Rights Act of 1964: Assessing Social Equity & Civil Rights in the Light of Growing Income Inequality”, U of TX; 9-10 am (through May 30; selc.gspa.pitt.edu)
Faculty & Staff Development Program “Basic of Effort Reporting,” Beverly Zem; 342 Craig, 9-11 am (register: www.hr.pitt.edu/fdpq)
Faculty & Staff Development Program “From Ghosts to Skeletons: Function & Dysfunction of the Membrane Scaffold,” Jon Morrow, Yale; 1:300 BST, noon (8-1040)
HSLS Workshop “Gene Regulation Resources,” Jianhua Luo, pathology; 1104 Scaife, noon (8-1040)
Scholars in Vision Science Seminar “Bivascular Function in Strabismus,” Jonathan Horton, UC-San Francisco; 125 Victoria, noon (8-1040)
Faculty & Staff Development Program "Introduction to Research Administration," Christine Crawford, B-21 UCHC, 9-11 am; “Communicating With Impact,” Maureen Lazare, 2 Craig, 9-10 am (register: www.hr.pitt.edu/fdpq)
Scholars in Vision Science Seminar “Prostate Cancer Genomer,” Jianhua Luo, pathology; 1104 Scalie, noon (8-1040)
Memorial Service For Arnold Katz, professor of economics, who died Feb. 18, Heinz Chapel, 2 pm
Postdocs' Advisory Committee on Women's Concerns Workshop "Postcards From the Future: A Woman's Guide to Financially Ever After!", UCLB, 4 pm (RSVP: 800/712-8353)
Faculty & Staff Development Program "Family & Medical Leave Act," Jane Vol, 342 Craig, 9-11 am (register: www.hr.pitt.edu/fdpq)
ADRC Lecture “Amyloid-beta Deposition in Non-demented Elderly: A Role for Lifestyle?” Ann Cohen, pittADRC; Monongahela ADRC conf. rm., noon (412/922-2711)
The University Times events calendar includes Pitt-sponsored events as well as non-Pitt events held on a Pitt campus. Information submitted for the calendar should identify the type of event such as a lecture or concert, and the program’s specific title, sponsor, location and time. The name and phone number of a contact person should be included. Information should be sent by email to: utc@pitt.edu, or by fax to: 412/383-4579, or by campus mail to: 308 Bellefield Hall. We cannot guarantee publication of events received after the deadline.

Light refreshments provided by University of Pittsburgh Parking, Transportation, and Services. Supported by Campus Transportation Management Association, University of Pittsburgh Police, and Panther Cycling Clubs.

Bike to Campus Event Friday, May 16 7 a.m. - 10 a.m. Schenley Plaza First 30 new registrations will receive a FREE gift.

Thursday 15
Sculpture’s 40th Anniversary Party “Light Up” Pocrow Courtyard, noon-8 pm; guided tours; noon & 8 pm (sapp@pitt.edu)
Senate PUP Mtg. 4127 Sempton, 5 pm

Friday 16
• Summer term add/drop period ends.

Bike to Campus Event Free bike registration, safety check, raffle. Schenley Plaza, 7-10 am

Saturday 17
Bradford Campus Walk MS Registration: Blaudell, UPB, 11 am (colleen.szymczak@ umus.org)

Tuesday 20
Faculty & Staff Development Program “Perfecting Your Leadership,” Vernon Franklin, 302 Ctr., Cooper classrm. D, noon (toyg@upmc.edu)

Wednesday 21

Thursday 22
Faculty & Staff Development Program “Family & Medical Leave Act,” Jane Vol, 342 Craig, 9-11 am (register: www.hr.pitt.edu/fdpq)
ADRC Lecture “Amyloid-beta Deposition in Non-demented Elderly: A Role for Lifestyle?” Ann Cohen, pittADRC; Monongahela ADRC conf. rm., noon (412/922-2711)

Saturday 24
• Official date for degrees awarded in the School of Law and the first professional programs in the medical and dental medicine schools.

Monday 19
• Summer 12-week session add/drop period ends.
Bradford Campus Admissions Program “Exploration Days,” UPB, 10 am (www.upb.pitt.edu/admit)
HSLS Workshop “Painless PubMed,” Estler Sagsf, Falk Library classrm. 3, 1 pm (esagpf@pitt.edu)
Pgh. Ctr. for Bone & Mineral Research Seminar “Cell Plasma Longevity & Ig Secretion Linked Through Transcript Elongation,” Christine Milcarek, immunology, Hillman Cancer Ctr., Cooper conf. rm. C, 8 am (piperfeinstein@upmc.edu)
Bradford Campus Book Talk “Don’t Write the Obituary Yet,” Susan Evans; Mukaiyama U Room Frame-Westerberg Commons, UPB, 7 pm (944-9622)

Thursday 29

Monday 26
• University closed for Memorial Day.