Endowment share value increasing 5% next year

While proposed flat-funding from the state is leaving little opportunity for budget-related optimism, the income distribution from Pitt’s endowment will rise 5 percent in the coming fiscal year. The Board of Trustees investment committee approved distribution of $4.01 per share from the University’s endowment for fiscal year 2015, which begins July 1.

The University’s spending policy provides for an annual distribution of the greater of 4.25 percent of the endowment fund’s three-year average fair market value or a “floor” of the prior year’s distribution, provided that the distribution is not less than 2 percent or more than 7 percent of the trailing three-year average.

Arthur G. Ramicone, chief financial officer, presented the endowment distribution proposal at the committee’s June 9 meeting. “For fiscal year 2015, the income distribution of income to be distributed based on the 4.25 percent of the three-year average fair market value that is an asset is to $4.01 per share. That’s above the current income distribution that will be $3.80 per share,” he said.

Remarking the increase for the committee’s approval, Ramicone said the University officers “believe the income per share in any future distribution would be consistent with the long-term sustainability of the real value of the consolidated endowment fund.”

The officers recommended no changes to the University’s spending policy.

Following the June 9 meeting, Ramicone told the University Times: “The deans should be happy. This is a very tough budget year upcoming, so a 5 percent increase in that pool is nice.”

—Kimberly K. Barlow

Faculty complain about poor maintenance of classrooms

The University Senate plant utilization and planning committee (PUP) will look into faculty complaints about ongoing poor maintenance in some classrooms and restrooms on campus.

Several faculty members spoke up at the June 3 Faculty Assembly meeting about classroom and restroom conditions as well as about inconsistent responsiveness when requests for service are made.

Some Faculty Assembly members were in favor of establishing a ticket system — similar to the system for technology help requests — to make it easier to alert Facilities Management to problems as well as to track resolution.

Assembly member Jay Sukits contended that some maintenance workers are grazing in the business school because they are not being dispatched to classrooms and restrooms on time.

Sukits added, “It tends to be a maintenance worker’s policy. The University Senate plant utilization and planning will focus on this,” Sukits said.

Scott Nelson of chemistry said, “My experience has been uniformly positive. The next time I’m in that room, whatever I called Facilities Management about has been tended to, generally to my satisfaction,” he said.

—Kimberly K. Barlow

LEED-certified

Mark A. Nordenberg Hall, the freshman residence hall that opened last fall, has earned LEED Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED, or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design, recognizes the building’s green and sustainable features.

The building received top marks on its LEED scorecard for community connectivity, its access to public transportation, green roof and stormwater runoff design, water efficient landscaping, use of green power and regional materials, and its construction waste management. LEED certification also has Gold and Platinum levels.

Need maintenance? Here’s what to do

When maintenance is needed, who ya gonna call? The University Times asked Facilities Management how to ensure that requests for maintenance get into the right hands. Dan Marcinko, assistant vice chancellor administration/facilities and University sustainability coordinator, noted that posted on the board in each classroom is a classroom services notice that lists phone numbers for Facilities Management, CIDDE audiovisual services and the Pitt Police.

Marcinko said there are four ways to report classroom maintenance issues:

• Call Facilities Management’s work control desk.
  — The Facilities Management number (4-9512) posted in classrooms also is a way to report issues such as spills or a restroom’s empty paper towel dispenser, Marcinko said. “Call the desk and they dispatch somebody.”
  • Contact your building’s area coordinator.
  — The Facilities Management services guide (www.facmgmt.pitt.edu/Services.html) includes phone and email contact information for Facilities Management’s eight area coordinators and lists each coordinator’s assigned buildings.
  • Email Facilities Management.
  — Departmental coordinators (assigned by schools and departments to be the primary contact with Facilities Management) can make non-emergency maintenance requests via the Facilities Management website. But they must register their username first.
  • Use an online classroom problem report form.

—Kimberly K. Barlow
Faculty complain about poor maintenance of classrooms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Faculty complain about poor ticket number and can be tracked. System similar to technology help medicine suggested adopting a the faculty issues would be heard. Fink) attends PUP meetings, so that the head of Facilities Management team, said that concerns they don’t get cleaned and even far as, when we’ve had events on be that you have to call during a routine maintenance that you can count on... It shouldn’t have to. This is part of their job," she said. "And I’m sure the same is true for Facilities Management."

"Kimberly K. Barlow"

Angelica Riccelli of dental medicine agreed, calling a ticket system could be that faculty shouldn’t have to make requests for routine issues. "I’m not engaging in dialogue but water problems... I’m talking about garbage, boards that are not clean, leaky air conditioning, you know, in tickets for that. That should be done on a routine basis to keep the classrooms in great shape."

A

mid rising academic standards for National collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I sports, Pitt’s 19 Division I teams exceeded the 900 APR average four-year academic progress rates (APR). In addition, according to the NCAA 2012-13 APR report, six Pitt women’s teams (basketball, cross-country, gymnastics, softball, tennis and volleyball) and three Pitt men’s sport teams (basketball, wrestling) achieved perfect scores of 1000 in their most recent (2012-13) season APR. Beginning with 2012-13 championships, the NCAA began phasing in, in its academic standards and requiring teams to earn a four-year APR of at least 900, or a 910 average over the previous two years to be eligible for post-season play. The NCAA calculates APRs by crediting scholarship student-athletes with one point for staying in school and one point for being academically eligible. A team’s total points are divided by the number of points possible then multiplied by 1,000 to calculate the APR. For the 2014-15 post-season, teams must attain a 930 multiyear APR or 944 over the most recent two years. In 2015-16 and beyond, teams must earn a four-year APR of 930 to compete in championships.

In addition, teams that fail to meet the standards face penalties that include reductions in practice time and competition reductions. As anticipated the rising standards this year are making more teams ineligible for post-season play. Two of these teams this year versus 11 teams last year. In addition, 37 teams will be subject to penalties for the first time.

In the current NCAA report card, multiyear APRs represent a four-year average spanning 2009-10 through 2012-13. Across Division I schools, the average four-year APR is 976, up two points over last year. Four-year APRs for Pitt’s teams range from 907 for men’s basketball and women’s gymnastics to a low of 957 for women’s soccer. Eleven Pitt teams improved their multiyear APRs, while eight teams had APRs lower than in 2011-12.

H

onored for its most suc- cessful year yet, Pitt has won a Best of the Award from the United Way of Allegheny County for its 2013 UnitedWay campaign. The award was announced June 5. For the fourth straight year, Pitt surpassed its previous fund- raising record, amassing $665,001 in pledges from 2,505 employees, including 705 new donors.

Co-chairs were G. Reynolds Clark, chief financial officer of the University, and Loren Roth, Department of Psychiatry. Anne Franks, Office of University Advancement, was campaign manager.

"Know that the dollar amount is important," Clark said. "But the United Way doesn’t consider just the money,“ Franks said regarding the award. "But we want to think what they’re really talking about is the quality of the cam- paign," she added.

According to the United Way, Pitt was honored with the award for its full campaign that “equt-
Assembly endorses guidelines on open/closed committee meetings

E

actly who may attend University Senate standing committee meetings and whether the committee may close postponed to August 19, 2013, the standing committee meetings are normally open to members of the Senate, faculty, administrators and students. However, although standing committees may meet in executive session when necessary and appropriate for dealing with confidential matters.

However, many Senate standing committees receive input from various University Times from meetings and questions have arisen as to who should be included in execu-

tive sessions.

While there has been no move toward a bylaws change, amid debate in Faculty Assembly in recent months, the Senate (University Times), the Senate bylaws and procedures committee has developed a list of criteria for who may attend the committee sessions where much of the Sen-

ate’s work is done.

Bylaws and procedures committee chair Scott Nelson, “We felt it was worthwhile defining what an open versus an executive session or closed meeting means. With a show of hands, Faculty Assembly on June 13 endorsed the committee’s report up to the Senate administrative hand-

book, which does not require a formal vote, is set to be presented next at Senate Council.

“We have two important things to bring to the Senate. President Michael Spring said regarding the handbook update: “To make sure the University Times press — the University Times and the student newspaper are invited, and I think we also make clear that even when a meeting is closed, it’s (for all the pro- tems, liaisons and other people that are involved. … This does a great service to clarify that.”

In response to Assembly member John Lyon’s observation that there is potential for abuse of the power to close a meeting, Nelson said a committee chair may close a meeting at his or her discretion.

“Committee members may move to close a meeting if they feel a topic is of particular sensitivity or is beyond the scope of the committee,” Nelson said.

Spring said, “The majority of the time, a committee chair will decide on the matter by the standing committees. I just think there has been a lot of pressure to allow the committees to deal more frequently in closed session than in open.”

Plant planning and utilization and committee (PUP) member Paul Munro said that when he was PUP chairman, the Senate Times at attend was discussed at “PUP meeting and representa-

tives from the administration made clear that they would not close meetings. We might push it there. And so it was just generally the position that the press was not invited.

Spring said he recognizes that Senate committees deal with sensitive matters. “PUP has been in a unique position because they often deal with things before city planning sees them. “If the way are factory are able to make input into what the University’s doing, “And that’s important,”

Spring said, adding that if elec-

tions are put off until fall, “Delay may be not totally realistic and not really getting rolling until October or November, so I think there’s some urgency to bring up the concern… the thing for technology management.”

The full Senate will be discussing commit-

tee meetings that have closed, “I think that’s unfortunate… I just think it’s too global.”

Spring said, “If a committee has decided that all of their meetings are closed, which they can do, I’m going to continue to ask why and I’ll bring it to the Senate and (Executive Vice Chancellor Jerome Cochran).”

He added, “If any decision is made in closed session, it must be written — described and the vote announced, but the decision. That is in the bylaws.”

Nelson said, “Meetings can have closed portions. They don’t have to be entirely closed, so any open portion should have accompanying minutes available to be posted.”

Senate Vice President Irene Frieze added that minutes are not posted until they have been approved by the committee, “so if a committee hasn’t met for a while, it could be delayed.”

Standing committee

election deadline approved

The Assembly bylaws committee of the Senate (University Times) has approved a change to the Senate bylaws that modifies the terms of office for standing committee members. In the past, committees meeting every June 15-30) to July 1-June 30, and tasks the sitting chair with organizing the election of the next committee’s secretary (by electronic means, if necessary) by July 1. The new bylaws, which gives the chair the right to decide if that are in due in 2017, he said.

Manfredi said Senate Meetings began in implementing the standards last revisions. Revisions were developed in accordance with four key guiding principles

• Accreditation-related changes

Another business, chancellor’s liaison to the Senate educational policies committee Juan Manfredi, vice provost for undergraduate studies, reported on new stan-

dards that have been proposed by the regional organization that accredits the University.

Manfredi said, ensures that institutions meet basic quality standards and encourages institutional self-improvement through periodic external review.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, most recently reaccredited the University in 2012. (See Sept. 13, 2013, University Times) Institutions are reaccredited every 10 years, but progress reports must be submitted every year.

A Senate standing committee election deadline approved

The Senate bylaws committee of the Senate (University Times) has approved a change to the Senate bylaws that modifies the terms of office for standing committee members.

In the past, committees meeting every June 15-30) to July 1-June 30, and tasks the sitting chair with organizing the election of the next committee’s secretary (by electronic means, if necessary) by July 1. The new bylaws, which gives the chair the right to decide if that are in due in 2017, he said.

Manfredi said Senate Meetings began in implementing the standards last revisions. Revisions were developed in accordance with four key guiding principles

• Accreditation-related changes

Another business, chancellor’s liaison to the Senate educational policies committee Juan Manfredi, vice provost for undergraduate studies, reported on new stan-

dards that have been proposed by the regional organization that accredits the University.

Manfredi said, ensures that institutions meet basic quality standards and encourages institutional self-improvement through periodic external review.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, most recently reaccredited the University in 2012. (See Sept. 13, 2013, University Times) Institutions are reaccredited every 10 years, but progress reports must be submitted every year.

A Senate standing committee election deadline approved

The Senate bylaws committee of the Senate (University Times) has approved a change to the Senate bylaws that modifies the terms of office for standing committee members.

In the past, committees meeting every June 15-30) to July 1-June 30, and tasks the sitting chair with organizing the election of the next committee’s secretary (by electronic means, if necessary) by July 1. The new bylaws, which gives the chair the right to decide if that are in due in 2017, he said.
Chronicler of inequality, politicalahlen and political inequality.

The New York Times columnist E.J. Dionne recently released a book, "Inequality & the U.S. Political System," which explores the relationship between inequality and political representation. Dionne argues that inequality is a key factor in shaping the political landscape, influencing both how political decisions are made and who benefits from those decisions.

"I think we live in a time when the representation turns out the way the representation turns out, not because it's about the economy, and not because it's about the politics, but because it's about the issues that we care about," Dionne said.

Dionne believes that inequality is a structural problem that affects how politics works. He argues that in some cases, the political system is skewed in favor of the wealthy, which makes it difficult for the majority of Americans to have their voices heard.

"We need to have a political system that is more equitable, that is more just, and that is more reflective of the diversity of our country," Dionne said.

In the book, Dionne examines the role of gerrymandering in shaping political outcomes, as well as the impact of campaign finance on political decisions. He also discusses the importance of a strong civil society in ensuring that the voice of the people is heard.

"If we really want to think about how we fight inequality, we are going to have to realize that the court is now acting in many ways how the Gilded Age court did and we are going to have to find ways around that," Dionne said.

"There's no other democracy in the world that has the same regulatory regime that we have when it comes to political money," Dionne said.

"I think it is a mistake to view money as speech. ... Money is a means to have rapid access to audiences," he said. "There is something peculiar in politics in which one side can afford a large microphone and the other can afford a small one or no microphone at all."

Dionne argues that the system needs to take some steps to address the issue of inequality, including reforming campaign finance laws and implementing measures to ensure that everyone has a voice in the political process.

"If we don't have equality, then a lot of us will not have liberty," Dionne said.

Dionne also points to the importance of a strong civil society in ensuring that the political system works for the benefit of all Americans.

"If we really want to think about how we fight inequality, we are going to have to realize that the court is now acting in many ways how the Gilded Age court did and we are going to have to find ways around that," Dionne said.

"There's no other democracy in the world that has the same regulatory regime that we have when it comes to political money," Dionne said.

"I think it is a mistake to view money as speech. ... Money is a means to have rapid access to audiences," he said. "There is something peculiar in politics in which one side can afford a large microphone and the other can afford a small one or no microphone at all."

Dionne argues that the system needs to take some steps to address the issue of inequality, including reforming campaign finance laws and implementing measures to ensure that everyone has a voice in the political process.

"If we don't have equality, then a lot of us will not have liberty," Dionne said.

Dionne also points to the importance of a strong civil society in ensuring that the political system works for the benefit of all Americans.
Potential breast cancer drug works well in early trials

A drug previously studied to improve fatigue in leukemia patients has now been shown to be effective in treating patients with cancers related to the BRCA 1 or 2 gene mutations, as well as patients with BRCA-like breast cancers, according to a University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI) clinical trial. The results of the phase I study were presented at the annual American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting this month.

“The trial has increased levels of PARP, which we believe may, in part, lead to resistance to the drug and other breast cancers,” said Shannon Pahala, a faculty member in the Department of Pathology and the breast oncologist with UPMC CancerCenter at Magee-Womens Hospital.

“Tumor cells in patients with BRCA mutations are particularly sensitive to the effects of PARP inhibitors due to underlying DNA repair abnormalities caused by the BRCA mutation. Veliparib can act as personalized medicine for patients with tumors caused by an inherited BRCA mutation, due to this particular sensitivity.”

The trial enrolled 60 patients with a BRCA genetic mutation and 28 patients without a mutation. The objectives of the trial included determining how veliparib affected cancer cells and observing how patients responded to the drug.

“We found that veliparib is well-tolerated by patients, with few side effects other than what can be seen with chemotherapies,” Pahala said. “In addition, anti-tumor activity was detected in both our BRCA-positive and our BRCA-negative patients.”

Pahala and a research team at UPCI have been investigating ABT-888 for five years. Their research began in the laboratory and progressed to human clinical trials. Pahala is currently leading a phase II clinical trial with ABT-888.

“Many cancer patients with BRCA mutations end up exhausting their treatment options. Veliparib may give them another option,” she said.

Veliparib is a PARP inhibitor, which means it lowers the resistance of cancer cells to treatment by targeting the poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) family of enzymes responsible for a wide variety of cellular processes in cancer cells, particularly DNA repair.

Activity prevents loss of mobility in elderly patients

Pitt researchers have become the first to detect a fundamental part of light-matter interaction — the exciton — in metals, the exciton. The team published its paper, “Transient Excitons at Metal Surfaces,” online June 1 in Nature Physics.

Mankind has used reflection of light from a metal mirror on a daily basis for millennia, but the quantum mechanical magic behind this familiar phenomenon only now is being uncovered.

Physicists describe physical phenomena in terms of interactions between fields and particles, said lead author Hirove Petek, Richard Kidger Chair in the Department of Physics and Astronomy in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. When an electromagnetic field (an electromagnetic field) reflects from a metal mirror, it shatters into a free electron and a hole (the particles), and the consequent acceleration of electrons creates a wave, which is reflected as an incident light (the reflection).

The classical theory of electromagnetism says that this wave can only be perfectly observed if the standing inputs of quantum mechanical description of how the light excites the electrons is lacking.

Petek’s team of experimental and theoretical physicists and chemists from Pitt and the Institute of Physics in Zagreb, Croatia, reported on how light and matter interact at the surface of a silver crystal. They observed, for the first time, an exciton in a metal.

Excitons, particles of light-matter interaction, or light photons become transiently entangled with electrons in the metallic system and are known to be fundamentally important in processes such as plant photosynthesis and optical communications that are the basis for the Internet and cable TV. The optical and electronic properties of metals cause excitons to last no longer than approximately 100 attoseconds (0.1 quadrillionth of a second). Such short lifetimes make it difficult for scientists to study excitons in metals, but also enabled reflected light to be a nearly perfect replica of the incoming light.

Yet Branko Gumbscher at the Institute of Physics predicted, and Petek and his team experimentally discovered, that the surface electrons of silver crystals can maintain the excitonic state more than 100 times longer than the bulk metal, enabling the excitons in metals to be experimentally captured by a newly developed multidimensional coherent spectroscopic technique.

The ability to detect excitons in metals sheds light on how light is converted to electrical and chemical energy in plants and solar cells, and in the future may enable metals to function as active elements in optical communications. In other words, it may be possible to control how light is reflected from a metal.

The work supported by the Division of Chemical Sciences, Geosciences and Biosciences in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Pitt team first to detect exciton in metals

Pitt researchers have become the first to detect a fundamental part of light-matter interaction — the exciton — in metals, the exciton. The team published its paper, “Transient Excitons at Metal Surfaces,” online June 1 in Nature Physics.

Mankind has used reflection of light from a metal mirror on a daily basis for millennia, but the quantum mechanical magic behind this familiar phenomenon only now is being uncovered.

Physicists describe physical phenomena in terms of interactions between fields and particles, said lead author Hirove Petek, Richard Kidger Chair in the Department of Physics and Astronomy in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. When an electromagnetic field (an electromagnetic field) reflects from a metal mirror, it shatters into a free electron and a hole (the particles), and the consequent acceleration of electrons creates a wave, which is reflected as an incident light (the reflection).

The classical theory of electromagnetism says that this wave can only be perfectly observed if the standing inputs of quantum mechanical description of how the light excites the electrons is lacking.

Petek’s team of experimental and theoretical physicists and chemists from Pitt and the Institute of Physics in Zagreb, Croatia, reported on how light and matter interact at the surface of a silver crystal. They observed, for the first time, an exciton in a metal.

Excitons, particles of light-matter interaction, or light photons become transiently entangled with electrons in the metallic system and are known to be fundamentally important in processes such as plant photosynthesis and optical communications that are the basis for the Internet and cable TV. The optical and electronic properties of metals cause excitons to last no longer than approximately 100 attoseconds (0.1 quadrillionth of a second). Such short lifetimes make it difficult for scientists to study excitons in metals, but also enabled reflected light to be a nearly perfect replica of the incoming light.

Yet Branko Gumbscher at the Institute of Physics predicted, and Petek and his team experimentally discovered, that the surface electrons of silver crystals can maintain the excitonic state more than 100 times longer than the bulk metal, enabling the excitons in metals to be experimentally captured by a newly developed multidimensional coherent spectroscopic technique.

The ability to detect excitons in metals sheds light on how light is converted to electrical and chemical energy in plants and solar cells, and in the future may enable metals to function as active elements in optical communications. In other words, it may be possible to control how light is reflected from a metal.

The work supported by the Division of Chemical Sciences, Geosciences and Biosciences in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Activity prevents loss of mobility in elderly patients

A 20-minute brisk walk each day could help older adults signifi-

Pitt researchers have become the first to detect a fundamental part of light-matter interaction — the exciton — in metals, the exciton. The team published its paper, “Transient Excitons at Metal Surfaces,” online June 1 in Nature Physics.

Mankind has used reflection of light from a metal mirror on a daily basis for millennia, but the quantum mechanical magic behind this familiar phenomenon only now is being uncovered.

Physicists describe physical phenomena in terms of interactions between fields and particles, said lead author Hirove Petek, Richard Kidger Chair in the Department of Physics and Astronomy in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. When an electromagnetic field (an electromagnetic field) reflects from a metal mirror, it shatters into a free electron and a hole (the particles), and the consequent acceleration of electrons creates a wave, which is reflected as an incident light (the reflection).

The classical theory of electromagnetism says that this wave can only be perfectly observed if the standing inputs of quantum mechanical description of how the light excites the electrons is lacking.

Petek’s team of experimental and theoretical physicists and chemists from Pitt and the Institute of Physics in Zagreb, Croatia, reported on how light and matter interact at the surface of a silver crystal. They observed, for the first time, an exciton in a metal.

Excitons, particles of light-matter interaction, or light photons become transiently entangled with electrons in the metallic system and are known to be fundamentally important in processes such as plant photosynthesis and optical communications that are the basis for the Internet and cable TV. The optical and electronic properties of metals cause excitons to last no longer than approximately 100 attoseconds (0.1 quadrillionth of a second). Such short lifetimes make it difficult for scientists to study excitons in metals, but also enabled reflected light to be a nearly perfect replica of the incoming light.

Yet Branko Gumbscher at the Institute of Physics predicted, and Petek and his team experimentally discovered, that the surface electrons of silver crystals can maintain the excitonic state more than 100 times longer than the bulk metal, enabling the excitons in metals to be experimentally captured by a newly developed multidimensional coherent spectroscopic technique.

The ability to detect excitons in metals sheds light on how light is converted to electrical and chemical energy in plants and solar cells, and in the future may enable metals to function as active elements in optical communications. In other words, it may be possible to control how light is reflected from a metal.

The work supported by the Division of Chemical Sciences, Geosciences and Biosciences in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Activity prevents loss of mobility in elderly patients

A 20-minute brisk walk each day could help older adults signifi-

Pitt researchers have become the first to detect a fundamental part of light-matter interaction — the exciton — in metals, the exciton. The team published its paper, “Transient Excitons at Metal Surfaces,” online June 1 in Nature Physics.

Mankind has used reflection of light from a metal mirror on a daily basis for millennia, but the quantum mechanical magic behind this familiar phenomenon only now is being uncovered.

Physicists describe physical phenomena in terms of interactions between fields and particles, said lead author Hirove Petek, Richard Kidger Chair in the Department of Physics and Astronomy in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. When an electromagnetic field (an electromagnetic field) reflects from a metal mirror, it shatters into a free electron and a hole (the particles), and the consequent acceleration of electrons creates a wave, which is reflected as an incident light (the reflection).

The classical theory of electromagnetism says that this wave can only be perfectly observed if the standing inputs of quantum mechanical description of how the light excites the electrons is lacking.

Petek’s team of experimental and theoretical physicists and chemists from Pitt and the Institute of Physics in Zagreb, Croatia, reported on how light and matter interact at the surface of a silver crystal. They observed, for the first time, an exciton in a metal.

Excitons, particles of light-matter interaction, or light photons become transiently entangled with electrons in the metallic system and are known to be fundamentally important in processes such as plant photosynthesis and optical communications that are the basis for the Internet and cable TV. The optical and electronic properties of metals cause excitons to last no longer than approximately 100 attoseconds (0.1 quadrillionth of a second). Such short lifetimes make it difficult for scientists to study excitons in metals, but also enabled reflected light to be a nearly perfect replica of the incoming light.

Yet Branko Gumbscher at the Institute of Physics predicted, and Petek and his team experimentally discovered, that the surface electrons of silver crystals can maintain the excitonic state more than 100 times longer than the bulk metal, enabling the excitons in metals to be experimentally captured by a newly developed multidimensional coherent spectroscopic technique.

The ability to detect excitons in metals sheds light on how light is converted to electrical and chemical energy in plants and solar cells, and in the future may enable metals to function as active elements in optical communications. In other words, it may be possible to control how light is reflected from a metal.

The work supported by the Division of Chemical Sciences, Geosciences and Biosciences in the U.S. Department of Energy.
The study was funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Simple change to Medicare Part D would yield $5 billion in savings, study finds

The federal government could save over $5 billion in the first year by changing the way it assigns Part D plans for Medicare beneficiaries eligible for low-income subsidies, according to research from the Graduate School of Public Health.

The results of the study, funded by NIH and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is being published in the June issue of the journal Health Affairs.

Medicare Part D provides assistance to beneficiaries below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. In 2013, an estimated 10 million beneficiaries received subsidies, and 75 percent of the total Part D federal spending of $60 billion is for low-income enrollees.

Since 2006, the government has randomly assigned low-income enrollees to stand-alone Part D plans, based upon the region in which they live.

"Random assignment is suboptimal because beneficiaries often are assigned plans either not covering or charging higher costs for their medications," said Yuting Zhang, the study’s lead author and a faculty member in the Department of Health Policy and Management. "We found that most people are not in the least expensive plans that satisfy their medication needs."

Zhang and her colleagues say an "intelligent reassignment" that matches beneficiaries to their least expensive plan would have lower costs, compared to the current system.

Using real data from 2008 and 2009 for a 5 percent random sample of 1 million beneficiaries aged 65 and older, the Pitt researchers noted that assigning beneficiaries to plans could be implemented relatively easily each year, with the largest savings in the first year but additional savings annually thereafter.

"$1.5 million grant awarded to educate, retain science students"

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) has awarded a $1.5 million, five-year grant to continue, develop and create new lab-based biology courses aimed at retaining students in the sciences.

Pitt is one of 37 schools to receive funding through the HHMI’s sustaining excellence competition, aimed at improving science teaching nationwide. More than 170 applicants underwent three rounds of peer review before HHMI decided on the 37 recipients.

Graham Harfall, the University’s Eberly Family Professor of Biotechnology and the director of the HHMI’s program, said Pitt’s grant was awarded because the school is "proactively changing the culture in its Department of Biological Sciences within the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. The effort will build upon sciences educational activities funded by HHMI for the past eight years."

In the past, Harfall said, students learned to ‘do science’ through an apprenticeship-based approach, working with a faculty member or a graduate student, but the new grant is aiming at the sort of approach where you can develop a course-based curriculum, based on case studies, that can engage many students and can do so at an early point in their college career — in other words, freshmen.”

HHMI reported that nearly 40 percent of the 3 million students who enter college annually intend to study science or engineering, but 60 percent of that cohort fail to earn their degree in a science or engineering field. Harfall is optimistic that the HHMI funding will help reverse this national trend.

"Research indicates that it is effective to get students involved in lab work," he said. "If we can get to students in their freshman year and get them interested in research, that will promote retention in the sciences. The earlier we get them, the better chances they have of succeeding."

Nancy Kaufmann, program assistant director in the Department of the Biological Sciences for the HHMI-supported work, said a portion of the grant will be used to expand offerings of the Hartfall-created SEA-PHAGES course, in which students find, identify and sequence the DNA of bacteriophages, the most abundant life form on Earth.

"SEA-PHAGES has been implemented at 70-plus colleges and universities around the country and a study reporting its success was published in Cell last year. Another course, already being piloted in Pitt’s biology department and ready to be expanded, delves into the intricacies of aquaporins, proteins that control fluid levels in cells."

Kaufmann said the grant also will allow Pitt biology faculty to develop new lab-based courses, pay for summer research fellowships for undergraduates after their freshman year as well as the salaries of graduate teaching assistants and teaching postdoctoral students, and fund an existing research lab hub where undergraduate students can do independent research.

"Even before conception, a son's vulnerability for alcohol use disorders could be shaped by a father who chronically drinks to excess, according to a new animal study from the School of Medicine. The findings, published online in PLOS ONE, show male mice that were chronically exposed to alcohol before birth had male offspring that were less likely to consume alcohol and when they did, showed stronger responses, providing new insight into inheritance and development of drinking behavior."

Previous human studies indicate that alcoholism can run in families, particularly father to son, but to date only a few gene variants have been associated with alcohol use disorder and they account for only a small fraction of the risk of inheriting the problem, said senior investigator Gregg E. Homanics, a faculty member in the Department of Anesthesiology.

"We examined whether a father's exposure to alcohol could alter expression of the genes he passed down to his children," Homanics said. "Rather than mutation of the genetic sequence, environmental factors might lead to changes that modify the activity of a gene, which is called epigenetics. Our mouse study shows that it is possible for alcohol to modify the dad's otherwise normal genetic information in the offspring for his sons, but surprisingly not his daughters.""

Prof. and author Andrey Finogelev, a student in anesthesiology, chronically exposed male mice to intermittent ethanol vapor, leading to blood alcohol levels slightly higher than the legal limit for human drivers. Then, they mated them to females who had not been exposed to alcohol.

Compared to those of ethanol-fed females, males sired by ethanol-exposed mice consumed less alcohol when it was made available and were less likely to choose to drink alcohol. Also, they were more susceptible to alcohol's deleterious effects, such as reduced appetite and control and reduction of anxiety.

"We suspected that the offspring of alcohol-exposed males would have an enhanced taste for alcohol, which seems to be the case in these experiments," said Finogelev.

"Whether the unexpected reduction in alcohol drinking that was observed is due to differences between species or the specific drinking model that was tested is unclear."

The researchers plan to examine other drinking models such as binge drinking, identify how alcohol modifies the genes, and explore why female offspring appear to be unaffected.

$3 million grant awarded for fundamental research

Sergey Frolov, a faculty member in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, has received a $3 million Office of Naval Research basic research challenge grant to explore ways of transforming quantum computing into a novel and unusual particle. Frolov will be the primary investigator for the study on the unconventional concept that he and his colleagues have developed, but elusive elementary particle that Frolov and colleagues dis- covered in 2012.

Frolov said, "We may be adding a new, third class of fundamental particles to fermions and bosons."

On a more practical level, he said this research could be used to create a novel and incredibly powerful quantum computer, a concept currently undergoing theoretical exploration. Quantum computer would be "rather unusual," he says. "It would have unique properties because it is different than the physical swaying of Majorana fermion particles. There would be thousands of them, and they'd shuffle around, that's how computation would proceed."

Majorana fermions were first theorized in the 1920s, when physicist Ettore Majorana mathematically proved that there could be a particle that lived on the boundary of matter and antimatter, a particle that also represents its own antiparticle. Frolov and colleagues were the first to create them in a lab.

The new paper, "Signatures of Majorana Fermions in Hybrid Superconductor-semiconductor Nanowires," was published online on the cover of Science in 2012. Frolov worked on the project as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Technology in the Netherlands.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science dubbed the paper the best research article published in Science in 2012, and will award Frolov and his colleagues with the Newcomb Cleveland Prize.

Two new awards to recognize the international achievements by members of the Pitt community

The University of Pittsburgh and the University Center for International Studies open nominations for two awards made possible through the generosity of Madhu and Dr. Jagdish N. Sheth (Business ‘62G, ‘66G) through the Sheth Family Foundation.

The Sheth Distinguished Faculty Award for International Achievement, which recognizes the publication of a current University of Pittsburgh faculty member’s contributions to furthering international education.

The Sheth International Young Achievement Award, which acknowledges a University of Pittsburgh alumnus for contributions to the international community, through professional achievement and societal impact. Nominee must have graduated from the University in the last 10 years.

To view the full criteria and to submit your nomination, please visit: www.ucis.pitt.edu/main/news-events/sheth-international-awards

If you have any questions please contact Jason Kane, Director of Constituent Relations, UCIS at jek108@pitt.edu or 412-648-7424.

University of Pittsburgh

Notes column reports on funding criteria for ongoing research, as well as news items of interest.
John A. Barranger

Gene therapy researcher John A. Barranger, a former faculty member in the Graduate School of Public Health Department of Human Genetics and in the School of Medicine's departments of molecular genetics and biochemistry and of pediatrics, died May 25, 2014, at his home in Pittsburgh. He was 68.

A graduate of Los Alamos College, Barranger earned Ph.D. and M.D. degrees at the University of Southern California and completed a pediatrics residency at the University of Minnesota. He was instrumental in developing an enzyme replacement treatment for Gaucher disease, an inherited disorder in which an enzyme deficiency prevents lipids from breaking down in the body, damaging organs and other tissues. The treatment, developed during Barranger’s fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, became a model for treating other lysosomal diseases.

He joined the University faculty in 1990. At Pitt, Barranger developed and directed the Human Gene Therapy Applications Laboratory, the Center for the Study and Treatment of Jewish Genetic Diseases and the Comprehensive Gaucher Disease Treatment Center. He was co-director of the Human Gene Therapy Center and medical director of the Molecular Medicine Institute.

He left the University in 2005. Most recently, Barranger founded the Lysosomal Storage Disease Clinical Care Network to establish treatment centers nationwide.

He is survived by his wife, Erin Patricia Barranger; children Erik Barranger, Julia Coughenour, Eric Rice, Alex Barranger, Patrick Rice and Lindsay Rice; and grandchildren Emma Barranger, Everly Coughenour and Clara Cate Rice.

Memorial services were private. Memorial gifts may be made to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 6 Hernando Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403 (www.cbf.org/donate/ gift-in-honor) and the Children’s Gaucher Research Fund, P.O. Box 2121, Granite Bay, CA 95746 (www.childrensgaucher.org/how-to-help/donate-now).

—Kimberly K. Barlow

PEOPLE OF THE TIMES

Anne B. Newman, chair of the Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Epidemiology and director of the school’s Center for Aging and Population Health, has been selected as the first Katherine M. Detre Endowed Chair of Population Health Science.

This chair was named after the late Katherine M. Detre, who was noted for her leadership of large-scale clinical studies of cardiovascular disease. Detre was a Distinguished Professor of Epidemiology and founded Pitt’s Epidemiology Data Center.

Internationally known as an expert in aging and public health, Newman has been a professor of epidemiology here since 2005. Through research and clinical practice, she has shown people how to remain productive, active and healthy as they age.

Newman is principal investigator of numerous epidemiology studies and clinical trials exploring differing aspects of aging.

The robotics industry’s highest honor, the Engelberger Robotics Award, was presented to Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology faculty member Rodney Brooks along with Vijay Kumar, June 2 in Munich. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the joint International Symposium on Robotics and the German Conference on Robotics.

The awards, named after the “father of robotics,” Joseph F. Engelberger, are presented annually by the Robotic Industries Association, the industry’s trade group.

Each recipient received a special plaque, commemorative medallion and a $5,000 honorarium.

Cooper received the 2014 Engelberger Award for Application. As a person with a spinal cord injury and director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America Research Foundation, Cooper knows how much good can be accomplished through technological advancements in robotics. His robots and achievements have been featured in places ranging from Popular Science to the front of a Cheerios box.

At its June 1 commencement ceremony, Duquesne University School of Law awarded Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Nordenberg delivered the keynote address at the school’s 100th commencement event.

Nordenberg is the former dean of Pitt’s School of Law.
Friday 13
HSLS Workshop
“PowerPoint for Conference Posters,” Julia Dahun, Falk Library/classrm. 2-1, 1-3 pm (j56j@pitt.edu)

Sunday 15
Vol/Organ/Concert
“St. Francis: A Musical Tribute From the Past to the Present,” Charity Conry, Audrey Nemzer & Nicholas Will; Heinz Chapel, 1 pm (4-4117)

Monday 16
Bradford Campus Amissions Program
“Exploration Days,” UPB, 10 am (www.upb.pitt.edu)
Pgh. Ctr. for Bone & Mineral Research Seminar
“How Human Muscle Derived Stem Cells for Bone Regeneration: A Combination of Cell & Gene Therapy,” Yuejia Gu; Hillman Cancer Ctr., Cooper classrm. C, 4 pm (guperrinton@hr.pitt.edu)

Tuesday 17
Faculty & Staff Development Program
“Please Respect Your Generation,” Warren McCoy; 9 am (reg: www.hr.pitt.edu/fsdp)
HSLS Workshop
“Painless PubMed,” Michele Klein; Falk Library/classrm. 1, 9 am (kleinf@pitt.edu)

Wednesday 18
Clinical Oncology & Hematology Grand Rounds
“What Is the Role of Clotlarinone in the Treatment of AML,” Amanda Gillespie-Twardy, UPMC Cancer Pavilion 2nd fl. Herberman aud., 8 am (millere@upmc.edu)
Faculty & Staff Development Program
“Using Data & Records Management,” Zach Brodt & Maritza Kasica; 342 Craig, 9:45 am (www.hr.pitt.edu/fsdp)
Pathology Seminar
“miRNA-122: Nature’s Double-Edged Sword,” Kalpana Ghoshal, Ohio St., 11:00 Scalf, noon (8-1040)
CFTI Workshop
“Data Sharing: Discovery & How & Why,” Andrea Ketchum; 7039 Forbes T wr., noon (www.hr.pitt.edu/fsdp)
CFTI Workshop
“Nurse Informatics,” Ansuman Chattopadhyay; Falk Library classrm. 2, 1-4 pm (anup@anumart.net)

Thursday 19
UPCI Scientific Retreat
Pitt-Greensburg, 7 am June 19-7 pm June 20 (george@upcisc.pitt.edu)
Friday 20
Pediatric Maxillofacial Surgery Lecture
“Thoughts on Clefts, Tiomos & Reconstruction,” John Caracan, U of MD, 2nd fl. Salk, 7 am noon (fordam@upmc.edu)

Tuesday 24
Basic & Translational Research Seminar
“Single-Molecule Investigations of Cancer Causing Variants of Human DNA Repair Enzymes: Seeing Is Believing,” Bennett Van Houten; Hillman Cancer Ctr., Cooper classrm. D, noon (toyg@upmc.edu)
MRR Seminar
“Early, Middle, Late: How the B Cell Response Evolves,” Mark Shlomchik, immunology; Rangos and, noon (limacherk@app.pitt.edu)

Wednesday 21
Summer 6-week-1 session finals. Exams scheduled during last class meeting.

Monday 23
Summer 6-week-2 session enrollment period ends & classes begin.

Tuesday 24
Basic & Translational Research Seminar
“Novel Redox-Based Antican- cer Agents,” Basb Riggs, Stony Brook U, Hillman Cancer Ctr., Cooper classrm. C, 4 pm (toyg@upmc.edu)

Wednesday 25
Summer 6-week-1 session grades must be approved by instructors by 11:59 pm before final post can begin.
Summer 6-week-2 session add/drop period ends.
Summer 4-week-2 session deadline for students to submit withdrawal forms to dean’s office.

Thursday 26
HSLS Workshop
“Painless PubMed,” Pat Weiss; Falk Library classrm. 1, 11:30 am (pwy@pitt.edu)
SAC-sponsored Tour: Soldiers & Sailors Museum, noon (www.sac.pitt.edu)
Laureate Lecture
“Cell Signaling by Receptor Tyrosine Kinases From Basic Principles to Cancer Therapy,” Joseph Schlessinger, Yale, Scalf lecture rm. 6, noon

Defenses
Public Health/Epidemiology
“Epidemiology of Maoyi Thai-Related Injuries,” Stephen Stromeyer; June 12, 6:48 Crab- tree, 10 am
A&S/Sociology
“Sweden Ends Here! Social Movement Studies & the Right to the City,” Kimberly Creasap, June 12, 2:31 PM, Josh; Public Health/Health Policy & Management
“The Efficiency & Effectiveness of Donor Registry Promotion & the Organ Donation Process: Impact on the Availability & the Cost of Procuring Organs for Transplant,” Manik Razdan; June 17, 4:32 Crabtree, noon
Public Health/Epidemiology
“Interactions of the HIV-1 NEF Virus-Host Cell Interaction With Host Cell Tyrosine Kinases of the SRC & FGR Families,” Seya Tarabori June 19, 11:55 Public Health aud. 9, noon
Medicine/Ctr. for Neurosci- ence
“The Impact of Inflammation on the Regulation of Intracellular Ca2+ in Cultured Nociceptive Neurons,” Nicola Newell-Scheff; June 26, 1:49 BST, 10 am
IS/Library & Information Science
“Reorganizing the Record: The Role of Contemporary Archives in Safeguarding & Preserving Per- formance as Intangible Cultural Heritage,” Tonia Sutherland, June 26, 8:28 LS, 10 am
Public Health/Epidemiology
“Dementia, Brain Structure & Vasocular Risk Factors in Very Old Blacks & Whites,” G Liao, June 26, 11:00 130A 130 N. Bellefield Ave., 1 pm

CTSI Workshop
“Current Climate of Regulations Concerning Data Management (RCB),” Mehdi Risbyski, Toyofy Forbes Jr., noon (www.ctsi- pitt.edu)
Pathology Seminars
“Comparison Between Patho- genomic & Non-Pathogenic SIV Infections in Donor-Mouse Models. Tissue Compartment Reveal A Critical Role for the Adenos- ine Pathway in the Control of SIV-Related Immune Activ- ation & Inflammation,” Tanya (Gupta) He, Molecular & Cellular pathology, noon (www.relayforlife.org)
Faculty & Staff Development Program
“Workplace Bullying,” Paula Davis & Carol Mohamed; 342 Craig, 12-2 pm (www.hr.pitt.edu/fsdp)
Allegeny Observatoire Lecture
“Dark Matter Problems in Astronomy,” Matt Walker, CMU; Riverview Park, North Side, 7:10 pm (RSVP: 412/521- 2400)

Thursday 26
HSLS Workshop
“Painless PubMed,” Pat Weiss; Falk Library classrm. 1, 11:30 am (pwy@pitt.edu)
SAC-sponsored Tour: Soldiers & Sailors Museum, noon (www.sac.pitt.edu)
Laureate Lecture
“Cell Signaling by Receptor Tyrosine Kinases From Basic Principles to Cancer Therapy,” Joseph Schlessinger, Yale, Scalf lecture rm. 6, noon

Defenses
Public Health/Epidemiology
“Epidemiology of Maoyi Thai-Related Injuries,” Stephen Stromeyer; June 12, 6:48 Crab- tree, 10 am
A&S/Sociology
“Sweden Ends Here! Social Movement Studies & the Right to the City,” Kimberly Creasap, June 12, 2:31 PM, Josh; Public Health/Health Policy & Management
“The Efficiency & Effectiveness of Donor Registry Promotion & the Organ Donation Process: Impact on the Availability & the Cost of Procuring Organs for Transplant,” Manik Razdan; June 17, 4:32 Crabtree, noon
Public Health/Epidemiology
“Interactions of the HIV-1 NEF Virus-Host Cell Interaction With Host Cell Tyrosine Kinases of the SRC & FGR Families,” Seya Tarabori June 19, 11:55 Public Health aud. 9, noon
Medicine/Ctr. for Neurosci- ence
“The Impact of Inflammation on the Regulation of Intracellular Ca2+ in Cultured Nociceptive Neurons,” Nicola Newell-Scheff; June 26, 1:49 BST, 10 am
IS/Library & Information Science
“Reorganizing the Record: The Role of Contemporary Archives in Safeguarding & Preserving Per- formance as Intangible Cultural Heritage,” Tonia Sutherland, June 26, 8:28 LS, 10 am
Public Health/Epidemiology
“Dementia, Brain Structure & Vasocular Risk Factors in Very Old Blacks & Whites,” G Liao, June 26, 11:00 130A 130 N. Bellefield Ave., 1 pm

Theatre
PICT Production
“Waiting for Godot”, Rand- all Theatre, through June 21 (various times; http://picttheatre. pitt.edu/days/events/2014-season/ waiting-for-godot)

Bradford Little Theater Pro- duction

Exhibits
Hillman Library
“Alaska: A Look Back Over the 20th Century”, Hillman gal. fl. through Aug. 8, Sun 10 am-F 10 pm & Sat 9 am-10 pm

Deadlines
Burroughs Wellcome Fund 2015 Career Awards for Medi- cal Scientists
Preprint applications due June 16. (www.sorha.org/pitt/search- funding?ShowNomination=0&nominationId=50775)
UCS Ethic Inst’n Achievement Awards
Nominations due July 1. (www. ucs.pitt.edu/main/news/events/ ethics-international-awards)
Engineering Sustainability 2015 Call for Abstracts
Submission deadline is Oct. 27. (http://escpmpage.org/ ESSCP2015)

Event Deadline
The next issue of the University Times will include University and on-campus events of June 26-July 10. Information for events during that period must be received by 5 pm on June 19. Send information to utcal@pitt.edu

• $8 for up to 15 words, $9 for 16-50 words, $10 for 51-100 words.
• For University ads, submit an account number for transfer of funds.
• No ads should include a call for action or solicitations.

For more information, call Barb Deilano, 412/624-6684.

MARKS FELDER LAW
Wills, estate planning, trusts, nursing home; Medicaid cost-of-care planning; POAs; probate & estate administration; real estate; assess- ment appeals. Squirrel Hill. 412/821-4944. Monroeville. 412/473-4211. email mflb@marks-law.com. Free initial consultation. Fren quoted in advance.