PA budget delay spells delay in Pitt’s budget

Pitt's fiscal year 2015 budget continues to be on hold pending finalization of a state budget for the fiscal year that began July 1.

The University’s budget — and its tuition and salary pool figures for FY15 — won’t be finalized until Pitt’s state appropriation is set. And Pitt’s appropriation won’t be approved until after the state’s FY15 budget is complete.

Because Pitt and its fellow state-related schools are not under complete state control, their support from the state is provided through non-preferred appropriations, for which decisions are made individually after the state general fund budget is finalized.

Despite June state general fund revenue collections of $2.8 billion, which were 0.8 percent more than anticipated, preliminary figures from the state revenue department showed that FY14 general fund collections of $28.6 billion were $508.8 million, or 1.7 percent, below estimate.

A $2.91 billion state budget (House Bill 2328) was presented to Gov. Tom Corbett on July 1, following approval by a 26-24 margin in the Senate vote and a 108-95 vote in the House.

However, as of the University Times’ press time on Wednesday, Corbett had taken no action on the bill. The governor has 10 days either to approve or veto the budget, or to redline portions of it.

If he does nothing by Friday, the budget will take effect without his signature, said Paul Supowitz, vice chancellor for Community and Governmental Relations.

The governor could cut some budget items — perhaps legislatively-funded — to try to use education as part of the general fund budget, or to redline portions of it. Stricter policy went into effect July 1

Some here covered by UPMC smoking ban

Some Pitt employees will find that the new UPMC no-smoking policy affects them too, depending on which organization owns their building and employs their supervisor.

Neither Pitt nor UPMC officials could pinpoint exactly how many Pitt employees may be affected by the policy, which went into effect July 1. UPMC employees are being asked to be smoke- and tobacco-free during their workdays — neither to smoke nor to smell like smoke while on duty or even on their breaks.

The effort is intended to boost the health of staff members and all people who use UPMC facilities.

At Pitt, smoking “is prohibited in all University-owned and leased facilities and in all University vehicles” but is permitted in designated smoking areas, according to the Provost’s office.

Lisa Bonacci, vice president of human resources operations at UPMC, says UPMC and Pitt staff members overlap in buildings that have a medical focus, from UPMC CancerCenter and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic to the School of Medicine in Scale Hall and Pitt departments that conduct research.

Bonacci says there are three main scenarios in which Pitt employees may be affected by the new anti-smoking effort, including in a managerial role:

• In a UPMC-owned facility housing a Pitt-managed department. “It’s not under our control. They can’t smoke on (the UPMC campus),” but Pitt employees will not be held accountable for being smoke-free. If a Pitt employee smokes and is managed by a UPMC supervisor, be/she can’t smoke on the UPMC campus but won’t be forced to go without smoking while on breaks.

• In a Pitt-owned facility housing a UPMC-managed department. “We hold our staff members accountable to our policy. We would hold (Pitt staff members) accountable to not smell like smoke or use tobacco during their shift, just as we’d hold Pitt employees to any of our policies. …” If a Pitt employee works directly under a UPMC manager, he/she will be held accountable for not smoking or smelling like smoke while on duty.

• For UPMC employees working for Pitt managers. UPMC staff members still would be held to UPMC policies, “but will the Pitt manager hold them (to the policies)? It’s not going to be perfect.”

“Obviously, our security personnel would enforce that if it’s on (UPMC’s campus),” Bonacci added.

In a statement reacting to UPMC’s rule change, Pitt Staff Association Council President Rich Colwell said: “The new UPMC smoking policy will affect Pitt staff both indirectly and directly depending on where they work. For those (Pitt) staff members in a UPMC-owned or -leased building, they will have to comply. It is important that Pitt staff understand the policy fully and respect UPMC policies, as they are trying to help their patients.

“We understand that there may be obstacles in the way, and UPMC is willing to work with people to sort those out,” Colwell added.

Bonacci said UPMC employees have taken advantage of several ways being offered as aids for quitting smoking: telephone coaching, daily motivational texts, and personal health coaches.

UPMC also has waived the copay for its employees trying nicotine gum and other methods for kicking the smoking habit.

The new policy, she says, has had “mixed reviews, but overall the comments from our employees have been pretty positive.”

—Marty Levine

Stricter policy went into effect July 1

Some here covered by UPMC smoking ban

Will Pitt claim the 1st AMERICAN NINJA WARRIOR?

Joel Brady, a faculty teaching consultant in the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education and part-time Pitt faculty member, competes for a $500,000 prize on TV’s popular “American Ninja Warrior.” See pages 6-8.

Intergenerational workforces require respect and flexibility

The next issue, July 24, is the last issue of the University Times for the summer term. The deadline for advertising and events calendar information for that issue is July 17.
Penn State ranks a very close 2nd
Pitt again has highest tuition among publics

Pitt and Penn State once again had the highest tuitions among the nation’s publics in 2012, according to the US News public institutions for in-state students.

An ranking by the U.S. News & World Report places Pitt’s price of $19,591; the national average was $3,023 for the sector, which is nearly four times the national average tuitions for the nation’s top public institutions, according to the US News report released recently.

The average reports for Pitt’s four-year regional campuses was $15,500 at Pitt-Bradford, $14,394 at Pitt-Greensburg and $16,779 at Pitt Johnstown.

Pitt-Titusville’s average net price in 2011-12 was $15,015 per year. Pittsburgh has the highest net price of Pennsylvania, according to the most recent survey conducted by the State Higher Education Officers Association. Current state budgeting has taken Pitt back to the levels in 2009-10, and in 1995, adjusted for inflation. With adjustments for inflation, Pitt now receives lower levels of support than at any time since it was made a public university in 1966.

Service added: “Despite declining state support, Pitt continues to provide a high-quality education to our students in return for their tuition investments,” noted that Pitt not only was the only Pennsylvania public institution to make The Princeton Review’s annual “Best Colleges” list, but that it also was among the publication’s 150 “Best Value Colleges” based on assessments of academics, cost and financial aid. Kiplinger’s Personal Finance, for the ninth time, also ranked Pitt as the top value among public colleges and universities in Pennsylvania in its annual ranking of four-year schools that combine outstanding education with economic value.


Penn State has the highest net price. According to Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data, the most recent annual report lists institutions, by sector, in the highest and lowest 5 percent in tuition and required fees for 2012-13, and the highest and lowest in net price for 2011-12, as well as the institutions with the highest increases in those categories.

—Kimberly K. Barlow

How should Oakland celebrate?

How do you think Oakland should celebrate its 175th anniversary?

Oakland’s anniversary event, dubbed Oakland Forever, will be held Oct. 10 and 11. It will be centered around Schenley Plaza and include food, music, and various activities and amenities. In general, Friday evening will be more focused on food, entertainment and socializing; Saturday will be geared toward families and more cultural and academic and entertainment activities.

The event will be designed to engage families, students, visitors and alumni. Business, and other organizations have been encouraged to identify the activities, but Oakland residents, employees, students, businesses and institutions are being encouraged to participate.

The survey can be accessed at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1qREF8CgL2uz6g6m1aY9Qn10teX3z1T4Ybgg22mynC9n/viewform?usp=send_form

Workshop: How to handle office bullies

P usa Davis remembers a job interview in which she was asked, point blank: “Do you mind if you get blamed for things that aren’t your fault?”

She declined that job. Bullies seem to lurk when such practices happen where you’re already working. Do you always realize when you’re being bullied?

Davis, assistant vice chancellor for communications, told the University Times, “It doesn’t seem like there’s a quick fix. But it’s not bullying.”

Bullying usually happens in the workplace. Davis called it “appropriately...”

The workplace, Davis concluded, “is a lot to consider.”

But what can be done when you know it’s happening? The next recourse is to contact your supervisor, who “is the most timely person in the world,” she said.

If including supervisors doesn’t work, the next step is to “force the resignation of an employee whom he disfavors. She said bullies also are driven by a need to compensate for their own inadequacies or a need to control one area of their lives when others are out of control. A 2000 U.S. Hostile Workplace Survey by the Workplace Bullying & Trauma Institute found that 94 percent of bullying victims experienced severe anxiety and 94 percent had disrupted sleep. Other common symptoms included those that resemble PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), as well as shame, exhaustion, depression, substance abuse and panic attacks.

The impact on the workplace is pretty dire, Davis added. A single bully can cost an organization a half-million dollars a year, she said, due to the target taking sick leave or quitting, or an overall loss of work performance. Bullying involves an abuse of power. It differs from harassment: unwelcome, offensive acts, including those protected against discrimination by city, state or federal laws.

Bullying may take many forms: harassment, threats, gossip, sexual jibes, excessive monitoring, work sabotage, spreading rumors, retribution for spoken or written comments or even a funny joke one time... said one respondent.

It’s important to collect data and details about the incidents that add up to bullying, she said. “There’s no substitute for actually going through and going home with you every day,” she cautioned.

And those with bullying complaints must be prepared to tell their story calmly, coherently and repeatedly. If not satisfactory for a complaint is obtained by going through departmental channels, faculty and staff can turn to the Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion, Human Resources or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The workplace, Davis concluded, is not a place where everyone is going to “clap hands and sing ‘Kumbaya’” at all times. “I don’t personally tend to be the most timely person in the world,” she said.

But the understanding is possible. “Folks who know me give me lots of leeway. We come to work every day with a lot of people who are together in other aspects of life find ways to cooperate as a terrific group. People who are together. Anyone who is married knows that.”

— Marty Levine
T o each generation, the next one seems less hard-working and more self-centered — every one of them a “Me” generation — while those older still seem wiser, when they aren’t being stereotyped as rigid or ready to retire.

Those are just some of the images conjured by varying age groups as, for the first time, five generations work together at Pitt. Warren McCoy, diversity specialist in the Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion, took staff members attending his “Please Respect My Generation” workshop last month through their impressions of each generation — and ways the generations can communicate better.

The five generations in today’s workplace are: Traditions (born between 1910 and 1945), Baby Boomers (1946-66), Generation X (1965-76), Millennials (1977-90) and Generation Y (1991- present). Each group was divided, and shaped, by major events: The Traditionalists, shaped by both the Great Depression and World War II, giving birth to the Baby Boomers, who are known for their accelerated access to education and steady careers. Generation X reacted to such camaraderie with a “me” generation, and were the first to grow up with the technological boom, experienced exponentially by Generation Y — which, as their name implies, also have known only the War on Terror and the uncertainty it has added to the national mood.

While the youngest generation is the one most concerned with diversity in the workplace and the rest of life, none of the generations may realize that intergenerational diversity is a relation concern.

Generational generalizations McCoy asked attendees to consider the public image of each generation; they saw Traditions in the best light. They were tagged as wise, reliable, no nonsense, even unapproachable individuals who were respected as teachers and leaders for playing by the rules and possessing a good work ethic. As McCoy pointed out, no generational group fits everyone in that age group, but is a positively stereotyping any better than the negative variety. Workshop participants called Traditionals knowledgeable, “because we didn’t want to say, ‘Know it all,’” one staff member in attendance volunteered. The group was also labeled as thrifty and socially conservative — traits not always seen as assets today.

The double-edged sword of stereotypes could be seen most clearly in the public image of the Baby Boomers, who are all supposedly hard working and loyal to both workplace and boss but not work over family. They hold traditional values and respect the hierarchy at work, but that makes them resistant to change and slow to adopt new technology. They believe hard work and long hours will get the job done — this is the only way to behave, and are often paternalistic and tolerant of discrimination.

Generation X’s image is better, combining an anti-authoritarian streak with a readiness to change, but they are still old-school, having trouble adapting to high tech and abandoning paper, for instance.

Their risks but remain financially responsible, and work well when left alone to reach a clear goal.

Millennials are the first tech-savvy generation but feel too pressured to succeed in the workplace. College attendance now is expected, but its results are no longer clear, since the corporate ladder is more like a zigzagging staircase among many jobs and corporations. They are much more relaxed than previous generations about workplace attendance and work schedules, and are seen as simultaneously lazy and innovative. Are they multitasking like mad or merely distracted? If they are, then certainly more forgiving of workplace mistakes, unorthodox career paths and a better work-life balance. Being geeky has become trendy, thanks to this generation.

Generation Y/11, just now entering the workplace, were the least understood by staffers at the workshops, which included about 40 percent Millennials, an almost equal proportion of Gen Xers and almost 20 percent Baby Boomers but no one representing either the oldest or youngest generations.

“I don’t think they understand how their actions can impact their daily lives, but they understand how they can impact the world,” said one staffer at the workshop.

“They don’t want to work,” volunteered another. A third simply called the generation “scary.”

About the least that could be said for them, the group concluded, was that they are ultra computer-savvy and diversity conscious, getting tasks done efficiently once committed, but the same time bad at face-to-face communication and still expecting to be spooned, with a sense of entitlement. “Usually groups that aren’t represented are beat up,” said McCoy, “and we’re beating them up pretty good.”

Indeed, those 25 or younger were spoken of as if they inhabited a land whose borders were closed to the wider world, and who spoke an incomprehensible language. “If you learn how to talk to them, they’re willing to learn,” said another workshop attendee. “It’s all in the wording and approach.”

Workplace encounters

In fact, approaching each generation with respect and learning how to speak to them seems to reach across generational chasms. McCoy offered several workplace scenarios for those in attendance to imagine experiencing as different generations. In one, a Millennial asks her Baby Boomer boss for a promotion; the Millennial feels her manager’s degree qualifies her for the post, yet the boss believes the Millennial hasn’t worked the long, late hours that a Baby Boomer in her position might have logged. Staffers in attendance imagined the dialogue between the pair. “You have the book knowledge, but you don’t have the experience of an older worker,” the boomert might say. “Just because you stay late, doesn’t mean you’re more efficient,” the Millennial might counter. “I leave a lot but get more done.” “As a Millennial,” McCoy said, “you’re probably thinking, ‘What’s the job requirement? If I have the job requirements, what’s the problem?’ I think Baby Boomers probably evaluate work being done by the hour,” said a Millennial in attendance.

Some other scenarios highlighted how the generations might have differing reactions that would need to be addressed. Baby Boomers would report the incident to a supervisor. A Gen X manager who wouldn’t institute new work methods may see a Millennial as simply adding to the noise. McCoy’s hypothetical workplace encounters rang true for workshop participants.

In one, a Gen Y/11 worker must deal with a disdainful member of the public, who says: “Can I see something? It’s not true for workshop participants.

One attendee said such encounters would never happen in her office: “I call the Traditional in my department the department Yoda. She’s the one over there and she knows everything.” Other attendees agreed that Gen Y/11 employees may not respect the oldest generation the most, and wondered whether the tenure system at universities like Pitt may help breed greater respect for the oldest employees.

In the end, McCoy suggested that employees of all generations need to reject negative stereotypes, remain flexible when dealing with all others and “try to learn from each other what each generation has to offer.”

“Try to learn from each other what each generation has to offer.”

—Warren McCoy
diversity specialist
Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion

A $1 million gift from alumni Renee K. and Richard M. Gold- man will establish the Renee and Goldman dean’s chair. The Goldman dean has a legacy of educational experience and innovation. In 1996, founded the Sagamore School, a college preparatory school in Florida that was among the first schools in the nation to offer a computer program for all of its students. They established other educational ventures. Among their most recent was another Generation Preschools, among the first to receive national accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In addition to being dean, Lengold is a professor in the School of Education and also a professor of psychology and intelligent systems in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. He is a lifetime national associate of the National Research Council. As dean, Lengold was instru-mental in the founding of the Center for Urban Education and has hired 32 of the school’s 55 members, with several new faculty members set to arrive in the fall. He attended college from 4th to 22nd in U.S. News and World Report’s rankings of graduate programs in education, helped raise more than $57 million for the school while also increasing the school’s average of $500,000 per faculty member, and led a push to improve the school’s physical space.
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Julie wins Goldwater scholarship

Pitt junior Alexander Gauthier has been named a 2014-15 Goldwater Scholarship winner for his outstanding undergraduate research in condensed matter physics.

He joins junior Emily Crabb, becoming Pitt's second 2014 Goldwater Scholar and the 43rd Pitt student to receive the honor since 1995.

The scholarship encourages students to pursue careers in mathematics, physical sciences and engineering. It goes toward tuition, room and board, fees and books for the student's remaining period of study.

Gauthier is majoring in physics at the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

Since his freshman year at Pitt, Gauthier has been a research assistant and undergraduate researcher in the lab of Jeremy Levy, a professor of physics and astronomy and director of the Pittsburgh Quantum Institute.

Gauthier also has received the Pitt's Honor Tuition Scholarship, the Braddock Research Fellowship and the 2013 William F. McKeever Scholarship.

Gauthier's research findings have been published in some of immunology's leading journals, and he has been awarded five patents worldwide with several more awaiting approval.

His research has been featured at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, as well as at the University of Pittsburgh Quantum Institute.

For more information or to arrange interviews, contact: utimes@pitt.edu, by fax at 412-648-4759, or by regular mail to 407 Belford Building.

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JULY 10, 2014

P E O P L E O F T H E T I M E S

Law faculty member David Harris is profiled in the 10-member screening committee that will help to choose Pittsburgh's next chief of police.

In the People of the Times column features recent news on Pittsburgh public safety director, the 10-member screening committee that will help to choose Pittsburgh's next chief of police.

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Don’t let his scholarly demeanor fool you. Joel Brady is one tough professor.

Brady, a 33-year-old faculty teaching consultant in the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE) and part-time Pitt faculty member, is competing for a $500,000 prize on TV’s popular “American Ninja Warrior.”

Clad in his classroom uniform of khakis, tie and sweater vest, Brady tackled the qualifying course in Denver in an episode that aired last month. His performance in the Denver finals is scheduled to air in early August.

The American show, now in its sixth season, is modeled after a long-running Japanese TV obstacle course competition that has been conquered only four times by three people in its 30-season history.

In the American version, top competitors in five cities — Venice Beach, California; Dallas, St. Louis, Miami and Denver — move on to the national finals in Las Vegas, where they will attempt to be the first to earn the American Ninja Warrior title by completing a four-stage obstacle course modeled after the Japanese show’s “Mt. Midoriyama.” The U.S. season finale is set to air Sept. 15 on NBC.

Brady has followed the Japanese show since he was a teen. “I was interested in the athletic side of it,” he said, adding that he spent time in Japan as a preschooler while his parents were missionaries there.

“It’s an interesting show in that there has never been a winner in the American version. And in the Japanese version, only three people have ever won it, over 30 seasons. If you lump the Japanese version and the American one together, you’ve got 36 seasons and only three winners. One of them won it twice, so there’s actually been four seasons where it’s been won,” Brady said.

And, in the American version, no one even has made it to the course’s stage four, the rope climb, he said.

A former pro rock climber, Brady’s interest in trying out for “American Ninja Warrior” was piqued when he interviewed several friends from the climbing circuit for a magazine feature about their participation on the show. “The whole time that I was interviewing them, I was thinking, ‘I need to finally do this,’” he said.

Brady, who quit competing in major climbing events in the early 2000s, said that “American Ninja Warrior” has become known among climbers as their “senior circuit” since “we’re all kind of over the hill for professional climbing competition.”

Because strength and agility make climbers and parkour runners particularly well suited for the obstacle competition, they outnumber the mixed martial arts competitors, snowboarders and other athletes on the show.

“There’s a bit of a friendly competition on that level: Who’s better, parkour or climbers?” You’ve got to be skilled in both areas. Generally the earlier stages are more parkour intensive and the later stages are more climbing intensive,” he said.

Among the contingent of climbers in the current season’s “American Ninja Warrior” are fan favorite Noah Kaufman, an emergency room doctor, and Brian Arnold, famed for being the American who has gone the furthest against the obstacle course.

Ten of thousands of people apply to compete on the show, but only about 500 are chosen, Brady said, noting that the producers are looking for participants who have a engaging story or characteristic — a firefighter single mom, cancer
“They take people who can do impressive things athletically. But they also are people who have a compelling story to tell or something that sets them apart in their biography,” Brady said.

“The appeal of the show is that people can identify with the competitors,” either to cheer for them or be inspired by them.

Brady, with the help of fellow CIDDE staffer David Cherry, produced an audition video that played up his role as the professor who teaches “Vampire: Blood and Empire,” a literature course in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

“We had fun with it,” Brady said, quipping, “It was a fruitful collaboration.”

Brady’s 3-minute audition video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xj6GFUu4ZUI) intersperses scenes from his office and classroom with action footage from Pitt’s climbing gym (dressed in his classroom attire) and on rock walls.

Introducing himself as “the professor,” in the video, he admits: “Teaching about vampires is kind of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the material is a lot of fun and I get to talk about vampires with my students all day. On the other, I've completely lost the professional respect of my colleagues, not to mention my friends and family. So, six of one and half a dozen of the other.

“I mean, it’s not like I go around pretending like I’m a vampire ... much” he deadpans to the camera, striking a Dracula-style pose from behind his corduroy jacket, with fingers as fangs.

While vampire professor may be the most compelling hook for TV purposes, Brady, who earned his PhD in religious studies at Pitt in 2012, also has led the University teaching practicum for graduate student instructors and teaches a variety of courses in the Slavic, religious studies and history departments.

“T’was someone who actually fits the stereotype of the person who’s locked away in their ivory tower and is only concerned with their books. I am that. T’was someone who takes my research and my studies and my teaching seriously. But I’m also an athlete,” Brady said.

“I came across on the show as maybe looking like an underdog. Because I was looking professorial, I didn’t look like someone who would be able to do this, but never mind that I’ve been rock climbing for 20 years semi-professionally,” he said.

“It’s obviously a bit schticky,” he admits, “but I’m myself. I’m sort of like a costumed character, except that I’m literally wearing what I wear when I teach. It’s just out of context.”

And there’s been the unexpected benefit of generating publicity for the Slavic department. Prospective students have contacted the department, with some connecting with him directly to inquire about Pitt and its vampire course.

Brady isn’t teaching the vampire course this fall. Instead, he will be behind the podium for the Slavic department’s course on cross-cultural representations of prison in the 20th century.

Despite his confidence in his skill and the appeal of his vampire professor persona, Brady feared he hadn’t made the cut when other regional competitions passed with no response from the show’s producers. Then, about three weeks before the Denver competition, he got the call to compete there — a bonus, given that several climbing friends live there.

To prepare, “the main thing that I drew upon was my 20 years of rock climbing experience,” he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
“I’m still in relatively good rock climbing shape and I maintain that,” he said. “I’m an athlete in that I’m a rock climber but I’m not an athlete in any other sense generally. I don’t run, I don’t swim, I don’t bike. Just climb, basically.”

His preparations included carrying a rope and climbing skills that uses hands only — to prepare for the obstacles in which participants are forbidden to use their feet. “You have to be able to do a lot of those kinds of things in a row,” he said.

A freak snowstorm hit Denver just before the qualifying round, Brady said. “The snow had melted, the course conditions were complicated by the cold. It was so cold, actually, for a while, you have so many competitors that fall in the water and splash the obstacles, that you’re dealing literally with ice,” he said.

“I was huffing and puffing in Denver,” he said, adding that the temperature was hovering around 30 degrees on the night the qualifying round was filmed. “So in addition to it being high altitude, it was extremely cold, which also affects your wind. So that was definitely a challenge,” Brady said.

His choice to run in khakis and his trademark sweater vest proved fortuitous. “A number of athletes came out there with their shorts and short sleeves. I was actually dressed for the occasion,” he joked.

“The announcer, one of the first things he said was, ‘Kids, when you get to college, this is what your professor will look like.’ It was, like, too perfect.”

While much was made of his “cerebral approach” to the course, Brady attributed his strategy more to his climbing background than to his level of education. “There’s a bit of that, but quite frankly that has more to do with us being rock climbers who plan it all out beforehand,” he said, adding that he and his climbing buddies discussed their strategies at length.

“In climbing, You have to look at the route that’s before you. You have to plan out how you’re going to move. A lot of times, the way you will move on say, the fifth move, may be dictated by how you moved on the third move. So you have to plan in advance and sequence it out,” he explained.

“Climbers also plan for routes, he said. “If you get into something where you’re almost going to fall off, then what do you do in that situation?”

“You have to think strategically, too, because in these city rounds, time is a factor. So you can get through without completing the course, but it’s dictated by how quickly you completed your last obstacle. But if you go too fast, you might screw up or you might get overly tired because you didn’t rest enough in between. So you have to balance these things out,” Brady said.

“It’s all about all of this planning and then fundamentally it’s about executing it physically.”

The qualifying course in Denver was made up of the quintuple steps — a series of angled platforms positioned on alternate sides over a water pit; the cat grab — a jump to vertical walls; the spinning log, spikes into cargo — participants must swing by rope to a cargo net; the devil steps — an inverted V that must be traversed hand over hand from beneath, and the warped wall — a steep quarterpipe that contestants get three tries to scale.

The obstacles that require leg strength tend to be more difficult for climbers because climbing doesn’t develop lower-body strength, he explained. “You just use your legs strategically and use your knees to take weight off your arms, but that doesn’t result in a significant amount of weight being shifted to your legs. It’s probably less intensive than walking for your legs, so that’s why climbers always have skinny legs and can’t do the lower body stuff very well, can’t jump very well.”

In the Denver qualifying round, “My technique wasn’t as refined as it needed to be” in his failed attempt to scale the 14-foot warped wall, Brady said, adding that he faced the obstacle for the first time during practice in a Boulder parkour gym the night before the competition.

“The hardest part, at least in the city qualifiers, was those quintuple steps because they were so icy,” Brady said. “Obviously, I didn’t complete the warped wall either. That was the other big challenge. Certainly after coming so close — I had my fingers over the top and I couldn’t quite hold on — that was a big area of concern and a challenge for the next night because in the finals you run all the same obstacles, but they tweak them a little bit to make them slightly harder,” he said.

“The obstacles weren’t the only thing that were tweaked for the finals. Brady said he tried his knee on the first night’s warped wall attempt. “It was an issue of concern for the Denver city finals,” he said.

While episodes are aired in rotation — the qualifying rounds from each of the five cities, followed by the final rounds — each city’s qualifying and final rounds were filmed on successive nights.

On the second night, conditions were better for the Denver finals, he said. “Temperatures got at least into the upper 50s,” but the course was extended and some obstacles were made more difficult.

For instance, one of the spikes was eliminated to make the jump to the cargo net farther and an obstacle was placed in the middle of the spinning log. And in the finals, “after you get to the top of the warped wall, you keep going,” he said.

In Denver, the salmon ladder — in which the contestant hangs from a bar that must be popped up a series of pegs — and the devil’s knobs — in which the contestant hangs from and traverses door-knobs arranged in an arc — were added.

“Brady said he and his climbing buddies set a collective goal of all qualifying for the finals in Las Vegas, which were filmed in mid-June. “And actually our goal was to all be standing at the top of the 70-foot rope together at the end,” he said.

“We all shared our strategies and cheered each other on. And there was the sense of ‘If you fall, you’re letting the whole group down,’” Brady said.

“The interesting thing about the show is that there is a pretty strong ethic among the competitors that it is you against the course, not you versus other competitors. And it really isn’t you versus other competitors because you don’t win unless you beat the course. And no one has ever won.”

“So how did the climbers fare? All Brady will say is: “Tune in because the climbers are going to put on a show.”

Is Pitt’s vampire professor the first American Ninja Warrior? Under a $1 million per incident penalty for divulging details about the show’s outcome, he can’t say whether there’s a $500,000 check in his sweater vest pocket.

“I could do a lot worse than having a beautiful wife and three kids, teaching classes on vampires and prisons and madmen, and competing on ‘American Ninja Warrior,’ he said. “I feel very blessed.”

Details on the show, including videos, are posted at http://bit.ly/1opSwUV.

—Kimberly K. Barlow
Researchers at University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University and University of Swaziland are conducting interdisciplinary research on the use of optical fibers for biomedical applications. The research focuses on the development of optical fiber sensors that can be used for various medical applications, such as monitoring physiological signals, delivering medication, and guiding surgical procedures. The researchers are working to develop optical fiber sensors that can be multiplexed within a single optical fiber, allowing for the transmission of multiple signals simultaneously. This approach could enable the development of optical fiber sensors for a wide range of biomedical applications, including those in minimally invasive surgical procedures, where traditional sensors may be less effective or more invasive. The research is supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Researchers are also exploring the use of optical fiber sensors for non-invasive medical imaging, such as optical coherence tomography, which can provide high-resolution images of internal structures without the need for invasive procedures. The research is expected to lead to new technologies for medical diagnosis and treatment, with potential applications in fields such as oncology, cardiology, and neurology. The research is being conducted in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Swaziland. Researchers are also collaborating with industry partners, such as Medtronic and Boston Scientific, to develop and commercialize the new technologies.
**Research Notes**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Advanced testing methods to evaluate changes in cholesterol levels among different groups of people have revealed that the biological, physical, psychological, and social aspects of menopause are linked with a variety of health outcomes, including heart disease.

He is an author of a new study that correlates unhappy marital interaction and the course of carotid artery disease. The research was presented at the Society of Women's Cardiology annual meeting.

El Khoudary is collaborating with other scientists to identify the ways in which the quality of cholesterol carriers in women changes over time. El Khoudary said, "These observations are not just in the way we evaluate our relationships in general but in the quality of social interactions with our partners as they unfold during our daily lives."

Additional Pitt authors on this study were Maria M. Brooks, Rebecca C. Thurston, and Karen A. Matthews.

**Unhappy marriages pose atherosclerotic disease risk**

The affairs of the heart may actually affect the affairs of the heart in ways previously not understood.

Noted Thomas Kamark, a PhD student in psychology in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences: "Growing evidence suggests that the quality and pattern of one's social relationships may be linked with a variety of health outcomes, including heart disease."

As a woman transitions to menopause, many biological changes take place that can put her at greater risk of many conditions, including osteoporosis and heart disease, said El Khoudary. "Our most recent study underscores the importance of having cli- nicians aware of these risk factors and prepared to work with their patient to help her best mitigate these risks."

El Khoudary is collaborating with other scientists to identify the funding to study a larger sample of women over time to definitively tie changes in hormone levels and the quality of cholesterol carriers with heart disease.

Previous studies evaluating the associations between sex hormones and cardiovascular disease as women went through meno-pause looked only at cholesterol measured through conventional blood tests. El Khoudary and her colleagues used nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy to meas- ure the size, distribution and concentration of lipoproteins that carry cholesterol in the blood.

The Pitt team found that as estrogen levels fall, women have higher concentrations of low- quality, smaller, denser LDL and HDL particles, which are associ- ated with greater risk of heart disease. The conventional blood tests often don’t pick up such a nuance in particle size.

The study evaluated 129 women from Pittsburgh who were enrolled in the Study of Women’s Health Across the Nation (SWAN). The women were a average of 50 years old and not on hormone replacement therapy. SWAN is an ongoing study of women’s health across the biological, physical, psycho- logical, and social domains. More than 3,000 middle-aged women who were recruited at seven sites across the U.S. The goal is to help scientists, health care providers and women learn how mid-life experiences affect health and qual- ity of life during aging.

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Donald T. Reilly

Don Reilly had “followers,” recalls his colleague Judith Vollmer, both English professors at Pitt-Greensburg — “students who took every single one of his life offerings.”

“Once, a ‘Reilly follower’ I knew walked into my office reciting a passage from “The Myth of Edwin Drood” and wearing a cast-off tweed jacket, in imitation of the professor he admired so much,” Vollmer says. “Don inspired a couple of generations of students to read serious books and to build their own personal libraries.”

In a separate study, Prout also found that people who underwent a CABG surgery experienced clinical depression. The research was supported by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

The Telephone University Research Notes column reports on findings arising from University research. We welcome submissions from all areas of the University. Submit information via email to: utimes@pitt.edu or via the online guidelines, visit www.utimes.pitt.edu/?page_id=6807.

Pitt center wins UCEE award

The EU Center of Excellence/European Studies Center (UCEE/ESC) has won the 2014 UUCE Outstanding Activity Award for “Conversations on Europe.”

This is the second time in three years that the Pitt center has won the award.

“Conversations on Europe” is a virtual roundtable series that uses videoconferencing technology to offer Pitt students, faculty and members of the local community the opportunity to participate in discussions on contemporary European topics with experts from other students and experts from across the U.S. and Europe.

The University Times Research Notes column reports on findings arising from University research. We welcome submissions from all areas of the University. Submit information via email to: utimes@pitt.edu or via the online guidelines, visit www.utimes.pitt.edu/?page_id=6807.

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The team ran the spindles through a series of tests, examining their performance in colony defense, prey capture, parenting skills and web reparation. The aggressiveness test measured whether the spider was willing to fight, or webbing the web, capturing prey and repairing their web. But they were away from their nursery.

Said Wright: “We didn’t know what the docile spiders did. Were they just freeloaders?” They were the ones who were capable of rearing large numbers of offspring.

They also created all docile, all aggressive, and mixed colonies of spiders. The docile colonies died out first, no one was there to protect them from “parasite” spiders that picked off their young and stole their prey. The colony of all aggressors died off second, as they were too aggressive toward their young. However, the mixed group thrived.

Reilly’s father viewed the development and firm establishment of an English literature major at UPJ and his long service as the chairperson of the Humanities Division helped to firmly establish one of the basic blocks in campus governance. Reilly also played a significant role in the development of a campus Senate and served as an officer of the Senate on several occasions. Of course, he served on more committees than I can enumerate, surprisingly without ever grumbling. Don was always one of those “go-to” people — always sane, always civil, always helpful. He was a role model for all students and teachers.

At Pitt-Greensburg he taught the European positions of France, Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and refugees in the European neighborhood. Reilly also remembers a classroom where Reilly had just given a lecture: “In the days before e-mail, when I had a query about the first version of our Kenneth Bell Nature Trail, so when I walked the trail I’m often reminded of Don Reilly.”

Amnestic service will be held on Saturday, Sept. 20, at 10 a.m. in the St. Andrew’s Scottish Rite Chapel, 1216 E. Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15221. Besides his son, Donald Reilly is survived by his wife of 52 years, Josephine; his daughter, Mary Karlyne; grandchildren Jordan and Megan, and sister Rosemary Thompson. Gifts in Reilly’s memory may be made to the Milestone Library at UPJ or the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America.

—Martin Levine

Research Notes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

much space they demanded from fellow colony members. Aggressive females demand much space they demanded from fellow colony members. Aggressive females demand much space...
**Thursday 17**

**HSLS Workshop**

"EndNote Basics," Andrea Ket- chem, Falk Library classroom, 2, 10:00 am (ketchum@pitt.edu)

**Friday 18**

• Summer 6-week-2 session deadine: students to submit monitored withdrawal forms to dean's office.

**HSLS Workshop**

"Prez for Presentations," Julia Dahn, Falk Library classroom, 1-3 pm (jcd@pitt.edu)

**Allergy Observation Lec- ture**


North Side, 7:30 pm (RSVP: 412/321-2400)

**Sunday 20**

Pitt Day at Kennywood

Purchase tickets online: my.pitt.edu

**Monday 21**

Bradford Campus Admissions Program

“Exploration Days”, UP, 10am (www.up.edu/excit)

CTSI Workshop

"Test Information Extraction System," S12 BT, noon (leog- wske@pncu.edu)

**Tuesday 22**

MIRM Seminar

"Decoding Acute Chest Syn- drome: The Keys in the Blood," Solomon Ofner, Acquah; Rangos aud., noon (linda.cherok@chp.edu)

HSLS Workshop

"Proctoring," Barb Folk; Falk Library classroom, 1, 1 pm (fl@pitt.edu)

Bradford Campus Lecture

"Food Choices: How They Affect You," 200 Seneca, UPB, 6-8 pm (register: contined@pitt.edu)

**Wednesday 16**

**HSLS Workshop**

"Focus on Behavioral Medi- cine: Searching for Pay-oFNO," Michele Klein Fedlysh, Falk Library classroom, 1, noon (michelle.klein@upho. edu)

Psychiatry Lecture

"BDNF Is a Negative Modulator in Morphine Action," Ja Wook Koo, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, 1695 BST, noon (murphree@bigcatbus.com)

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