State-related pleads case to legislators

Tuition increases are on the horizon at Pitt and Penn State if state funding for the coming year is cut, a state-related, state-university leaders said in a March 1 budget hearing before the Senate appropriations committee in Harrisburg.

Gov. Tom Wolf’s $32.34 billion state budget proposal for fiscal year 2018 holds funding flat for the four-state-related universities: Pitt, Penn State, Temple and Lincoln.

Pitt’s state appropriation stands at $144.77 million, made up of $144.21 million in general support and $3.56 million for rural education outreach. In its funding request last fall, the University had asked for a 5 percent increase in state support. (See Oct. 15, 2016, University Times.)

Pitt is trying to keep tuition hikes below inflation, currently 2.3 percent, Chancellor Patrick Gallagher told the Senate panel.

Pitt’s most recent tuition increase was 2.3 percent for in-state students on the Pittsburgh campus and 2.77 percent for their out-of-state counterparts. Tuition on Pitt’s regional campuses increased by 1.9 percent. (See July 21, 2016, University Times.)

Despite efforts to contain costs and hold the line on tuition expenses are rising, said Penn State President Eric Barron, citing tuition increases of 0.9 and 1.2 percent for the state and University Park campuses in the past two years. “If there’s not additional funding, we will have to increase tuition,” he said.

Lincoln University interim President Richard Green said tuition increases are expected to be on par with inflation. “Our board has held us firm at a steady 2 percent or so,” he said.

Temple University President Richard M. Englert said it was too early in the budget process to say: “The one thing that our board of trustees continually asks of me is: How do we keep tuition as affordable as possible?” he said.

In two and a half hours of testimony, the university leaders highlighted their quality education, value and economic impact, as well as their institutions’ role as drivers of the state’s economy.

Several lawmakers’ questions focused on the need for a longer-term vision and better alignment across the state’s higher education systems, suggesting the appointment of an official overseer.

“How do we, into the future, have more of a continuum of education across Pennsylvania?” asked State Sen. Bob Mensch (R-Bucks and Montgomery).

“We need more discussion about a continuum of education,” said Temple University President Richard M. Englert. “We have community colleges, state-related and state system institutions, he said. “Certainly each of you serve a discrete community and you do ask us, but you’re also overlapping and there is competition. We’re now bidding competition with our own dollars for our own dollars.”

Sen. Andy Dinniman (D-Ches.) said: “If we are in a time of less and less funds ... it is now or never that we at least, through legislation or through some kind of an agreement between the various systems, require the presidents to really meet and talk with each other.”

From our perspective, as one of the funders, we really see duplication, we see institutions next to each other,” he said.

“We need some coordination, even before you come into a budget hearing; it would seem to me if all the systems came together, we could get some sense of what’s taking place.”

In his report to Senate Council, according to testimony, the university leaders were questioned more to system-wide alignment across the state’s higher education systems, suggesting the appointment of an official overseer.

“Everyone knows I haven’t worked to restore higher ed.” Gallagher said: “If we are in a time of less and less funds ... it is now or never that we at least, through legislation or through some kind of an agreement between the various systems, require the presidents to really meet and talk with each other.”

Sen. Tom Wolf, who has worked to restore higher education funding that was cut under the previous administration, agreed that the way to do that is by connecting the state’s higher education leaders to build upon that. I want us to openly talk about these issues and how this should be handled — we’ve gone from sort of knowing what the ground rules are to sort of not understanding them,” Gallagher said.

He assured Council that the University is monitoring the situation closely. “One of our concerns is that we have to provide the best of our ability accurate information to affected, possibly affected individuals and also to the broader University community,” he said.

“At this kind of environment, being concerned is natural, it’s human. I’m concerned too. We’re all looking at the situation,” the chancellor said.

Citing discussion in a Provost’s current issue forum (Pitt 2 University Times) and a subsequent meeting with faculty, as well as letters he’s received on the issues, Gallagher thanked the University community for its engagement.

“They’re better off when we openly talk about these issues, seek and seek to understand them. That’s hard to do sometimes in this climate where people want to sort us into camps and have us throw rocks at each other,” the chancellor said.

“Everyone knows I haven’t made a sanctuary campus state... I want you to know I’ve been listening to the calls,” he said.

“Making a preemptive statement about our intent on how we would react to a hypothetical change in immigration policy will have some value to some people because it can be viewed as reassuring. But it also will have consequences,” the chancellor said. “In some respects it could narrow our options going forward.

“It’s also not the only thing the University can do: We have been very actively involved with the university associations across the country, in amicus briefs that are happening in support of court action, in direct outreach and advocacy to our federal and state officials. We have a very rich capacity to do things and some of that capacity could change based on our statements,” the chancellor said.

In light of the ongoing volatile climate, the University is “reserving as much capacity as we can to take action as needed as we go forward,” Gallagher told Council.

“I am deliberately not taking any options off the table,” he said.

University Senate President Frank Wilson added that legislation in the works to deny funding to cities that declare themselves sanctuary cities, as well as to campuses that declare themselves sanctuary campuses.

Along those is House Bill 14 (currently in the House state government committee) that declares any campus from receiving state appropriations.

“No, I don’t see there consequences. There are going to be choices and they aren’t going to be simple ones,” Wilson said. “We need to keep this in mind when we demand one thing, or think about an appropriate way to respond to issues out there in the public that we think we need to take a stand on.”

Wilson added that a difficult state budget year is ahead, noting that Gov. Tom Wolf, who has worked to restore higher education funding that was cut under the previous administration, seemed to be going in the same direction.
Teaching abstract concepts

Regardless of the disciplines we teach, we often need to help students understand or create concepts. More often than not, these concepts are those for which there is no physical referent, or for which the physical referents are outside of, or contrary to, normal space and time. We call these concepts abstract. Teaching abstract concepts can be one of the greatest challenges in the classroom because understanding abstract concepts requires a level of student thinking that goes beyond thinking about the here and now. Abstract concepts can be found in all areas of study. They include examples such as time, nation, gender, class, love and anxiety.

Research has shown that one of the best ways to teach abstract concepts is to make some connection with a concrete example in the real world. In other words, present abstract information in a tangible way.

• Simulations (games, scenarios, cases);
• 3-D models;
• Demonstrations;
• Simulations (games, scenarios, cases);
• Analogies and metaphors;
• Threshold concepts and concept maps.

Another example can be taken from philosophy: Plato uses the allegory of the cave to explain the human condition, and how education can be transformative in our understanding of life, existence, and reality. Plato relates the story of a group of people who have lived chained inside a cave all of their lives, facing a blank wall. The people watch shadows projected on the wall from objects passing in front of a fire behind them. The shadows are the people’s reality. They cannot comprehend visual representations to one of those people who has escaped from the cave and comes to understand that the shadows are not reality at all. He comes to know the true nature of existence. However, the people in the cave reject what he has to say. They do not understand what he is telling them, because they know no other experience.

Of course, all such models have their limitations. Space-time is not a two-dimensional sheet, but that does not mean the model is not useful. We must be very clear in explaining to students what aspects of the model are instructive, and which are misleading. We make the same kinds of distinctions all the time. The Earth is not flat, but that has not stopped us from sequentially using maps as models for centuries. We just have to be clear about the limitations of our examples. You can combine different models—with different limitations—to explain the same idea.

It is important to choose models, diagrams and analogies that are helpful to make teaching abstract concepts difficult that we do not want students to make. This is why it is important to choose the right type of instruction. John G. Rudepgi13 is a teaching and learning consultant for the University of Pittsburgh.

Fake news in the news

The phrase “fake news” seems to be part of nearly every conversation these days. Despite the term’s current popularity, however, the principles behind a lack of skills in evaluating the information presented to you and the benefits of concern to librarians for as long as there have been students and instructors.

There has always been fake news, information put out that either was deliberately false or intentionally misleading. It’s become a concern recently because the internet has made it exceptionally easy for misinformation to be created and widely distributed and difficult to distinguish between the real and the fake.

Why do so many people believe fake news? Because of a lack of what librarians call information literacy skills, which help people to efficiently locate, accurately evaluate, effectively use and clearly communicate information in various formats.

What are these skills?

The first is the ability to understand the difference between popular, trade and academic news sources. Lots of web content with an aura of scholarship actually is or can be created or created by someone who is not knowledgeable of the subject. Scholarly content is written by experts; other content may not be.

Second is the ability, especially relating to online resources, to look at clues that speak to the credibility of your source and check it to ensure that the content is current and dated?

Does the URL hold any clues? Is it a .com, .org, or .edu? What can you glean about the parent source? Are the domain names .org, .edu, .gov, or .mil? Is the URL short or long? Is it a .com, .org, or .edu? What can you glean about the parent source? Are the domain names .org, .edu, .gov, or .mil?

This isn’t a problem only for the young, who haven’t yet developed these skills, or the old, for whom the internet may be a relatively new phenomenon, or for the less educated, who haven’t been exposed to academic rigor. Among the findings of a 2016 study by the University of Pittsburgh:

• Most college students didn’t suspect potential bias in a tweet from an activist group.
• Most Stanford students couldn’t identify the difference between a mainstream source and a fringe source (https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/20145/Summary%202016.16.pdf).

If you’re a faculty member who teaches, this probably news to you. You may have had students cite biased sources such as NRA press releases as if they’re objective facts.

A combination of factors has gotten us to this point. The internet has provided a platform for anyone with anything to say, regardless of their level of expertise or lack thereof. That platform is free, so there are no barriers to entry. This also means that many sources are outside of, or contrary to, traditional news outlets. Some sources have a lack of what librarians call credibility. It’s quite common these days to find information we consume have been rewritten or even a one-click way to filter out the noise. There’s also the issue of view. Social media also makes it easier for even a one-click way to filter out the noise. There’s also the issue of view. Social media also makes it easier for social media can help us even offer workshops on teaching abstract concepts. Call on us to help you make teaching and learning skills more effective in your institutional strategy.

John G. Rudepgi13 is a teaching and learning consultant for the University of Pittsburgh.

What can Pitt instructors do to help move the dial?

Information-seeking skills are critical to all our work. As students work through assignments and discipline coursework, ULS librarians can help students learn how to critically analyze and activities that blend informa tion literacy within the learning environment intended for your students. We can visit your class and tailor a session to the needs of your students, with an emphasis on library resources in your specific discipline. We also do this virtually by creating a guided tour of your course with some discussion about information literacy framed around your class assignments.

If you request your student to use the library’s resources, PITTCat+ connects them (and you) not only to books but to millions of articles in the journals and newspapers to which the library subscribes. In PITTcat+ there’s even a one-click way to filter out everything except scholarly and peer-reviewed content. (See “What’s New?” in the library’s Resources section.)

We can also help students design assignments and activities that blend information literacy within the learning environment intended for your students.

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Jeff Wisniewski is the web services and communications librarian for the University Library System.

Man pleads guilty in death of Hicks

David Witherspoon, who killed and then fled Pittsburgh, has faced a possible penalty of nine-to-18 years in jail, and a fine of $45,270, based on one count of causing an accident involving death; one count of involuntary manslaughter; two counts of possession of a controlled substance; and several summary violations, including driving with a suspended or revoked license and following too closely. Asked by the judge why he upheld guilty, Witherspoon spoke his only sentence in court: “Because I'm guilty and I just want to pay my debt.”

He was found to have synthetic marijuana. The man who killed him was driving his car when he crashed rear end a Toyota 4R4, which hit a Subaru Outback. The Subaru, which was caught between the two cars. Witherspoon’s license had been suspended because of a drug charge and the revocation was not due to expire until September 2016. Witherspoon will be sentenced on May 18. Pittsburgh was assistant director for the University Center for International Studies’ Center for Russian and East European Studies.

—Martin Levine

Jeff Wisniewski is the web services and communications librarian for the University Library System.

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—Martin Levine

Jeff Wisniewski is the web services and communications librarian for the University Library System.
Continued from Page 1

CoRA: Campus research administrators join forces

A new organization for research administrators will kick off with an invitation-only lunch tomorrow for all administrators who have earned certified research administrator (CRA) certification.

The Council of Research Administrators (CoRA) is a grassroots effort to support CRAs by providing opportunities for networking, mentoring and for the professional development necessary to maintain the Research Administrators Certification Council’s (RACC) CRA certification.

Committee members are president Thomas Berkoudt, director of the Office of Grants and Contracts for the Department of Psychiatry / WPIC; vice president Jean Zak of the Graduate School of Public Health Department of Environmental and Occupational Health; treasurer Yvonne Brewer, director of research administration and finance in the anesthesiology and surgery department; secretary Leslie Harter of the Department of Pediatrics.

Berkoudt outlined the inaugural CoRA board are communications coordinator Holly Gergely of the Department of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology; compliance coordinator Elly Bress of critical care medicine; website coordinator Matthew Weaver of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health; and local and on-campus workshops.

Another function of CoRA is to help CRAs form communities to strengthen the networking, Berkoudt said, noting that many administrators find it difficult to meet peers from different departments.

“CoRA aims to provide CRAs with a cost-effective way to maintain their certification, said Berkoudt, noting that once certiﬁed, CRAs must accumulate 80 “contact hours” over ﬁve years — by attending or presenting at conferences or seminars — to keep their certiﬁcation active.”

It’s unfortunate if certiﬁcation is lost because it takes months to make up such certiﬁcation. The committee plans to offer monthly events September through December, which would provide 10 of the 16 hours required per year that are needed to stay on track for recertiﬁcation as an inexperienced local alternative to the 140 hours needed at the national level. CoRA’s website (cora.pitt.edu) will serve as a clearinghouse for local networking, including workshops and trainings — such as seminars offered by the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Pitt’s Institutional Review Board and the Office of Research — that may qualify for contact hours.

The site includes a spreadsheet to help CRAs keep track of their certiﬁcation status. As of December, there were 43 CRAs; she’s now studying to get her CRA designation.

It’s nice to start coming together to talk about issues and solve problems. It’s good also to be able to pick up the phone and know who’s on the line. We want to do the best we can for the whole research community,” he said.

“It’s easier working with people you know” when questions arise, he said. “If research administrators know each other, they can interact to ﬁgure out how to solve problems together.”

CoRA plans to host periodic social gatherings, such as an after-work get-together in May, and to celebrate National Research Administrator Day in June, and to celebrate National Research Administrator Day in June, and to celebrate National Research Administrator Day in June, and to celebrate National Research Administrator Day in June. The council is also working on a University-wide event.

As of December, there were 73 CRAs on campus, and their numbers are growing as the CRA community gains momentum, said Jennifer Woodward, associate provost for Research Operations.

The council unanimously approved a new policy on consensual
census, sexual, romantic and intimate relationships with students and between employees (www.uitimes.pitt.edu/Revised-Con-

census/Sexual-Romantic-Intimate-Relationship-Policy-Feb-2017.pdf). The proposed policy underwent several revisions prior to its adoption last month. (See Feb. 16 University Times.)

• The Senate ad hoc commit-

tee on non-tenure stream faculty issues is slated to present a ﬁnal report to Senate in December, said Wilson. The com-

mittee, which initially examined full-time NTS faculty issues, most recently has turned its attention to part-time NTS faculty at Pitt.

— Kimberly K. Barlow

Gallagher addresses concerns

Continued from PAGE 1

the previous administration, began the state’s fiscal year 2018 budget discussions by proposing that funding and Pitt’s fellow state universities remain flat funding for Pitt and its fellow state universities remain flat for Pitt and its fellow state universities remain flat for Pitt and its fellow state universities remain flat for Pitt and its fellow state universities remain flat

Wilson noted the importance of the March 21 Pitt Day in Harrisburg advocacy event.

“Each year, that is a very important event for us, and we’ve been no year more important than this year for us to show our visibility, our importance, our role in the enforcement of the University of Pittsburgh — in all of its schools — to the economy of the state.”

Noting that not everyone in Harrisburg understands the University, “We have to deal with them and hopefully change some of their thinking on the state budget deal,” Wilson said.

“We have our work cut out for us.”

Stephen Barron
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The museum’s opening will coincide with the christening of the building as the Marilyn Horne Hall, UPB President Livingston Alexander said.

In addition to the new museum, the ground floor will house a gift shop, cafe, meeting space and new offices for the Bradford Creative and Performing Arts Center.

Upper floors are occupied by Pitt-Bradford’s Division of Continuing Education and Regional Development, its Center for Rural Health, and private tenants.

The board also took action to name Pitt-Johnstown’s Engineering and Science Building the John P. Murtha Engineering and Science Building and officially named the John P. Murtha Center for Public Service and National Competitiveness, which will open in April.

Budget committee report
The University has completed the first phase of its plan to re-fund a significant part of its debt by issuing taxable bonds.

The action, affecting about 66 percent of Pitt’s outstanding bonds, resulted in an interest rate reduction of 1.64 percentage points, saving the University approximately $23 million in principal and interest, budget committee chair Herbert Shear told the board.

In the first phase, in January, the University refinanced its Series 2000, 2002 and 2009 tax-exempt bonds by issuing $512 million in taxable bonds. Another 30 percent of Pitt’s tax-exempt bonds are to be refinanced in a second phase, Shear said. The University intends to refinance the Series 2005 and 2007 tax-exempt bonds with a combination of fixed- and variable-rate taxable bonds between March 2 and May 31. The remaining 10 percent of the debt portfolio is unaffected.

The board’s property and executive committees in December authorized the issuance of taxable bonds to re-fund the entire Series 2000 tax-exempt debt portfolio. (See Dec. 8 University Times.)

In other business:

The board of trustees approved a combination of fixed- and variable-rate taxable bonds to refinance Pitt’s $23 million in Series 2000, 2002 and 2009 tax-exempt bonds in the first phase of a restructuring plan. The University had previously refinanced a portion of its debt in January, and the University will refinance the remaining 30 percent of its debt in a second phase. (See April 2, 2015, University Times.)

The annual rental cost for an additional 3,907 square feet of space, for the Swanton school’s electric power technologies lab, will be approximately $65,442 during the first five years; $68,685 for years six-10; $72,084 for years 11-15, and $75,679 in the event that the five-year renewal option is exercised.

—Katie Fike and Kimberly K. Barlow
Staff/administration salaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest-paid staff</th>
<th>Lowest-paid staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest average (by job category)</td>
<td>Highest average (by job category)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executives, administrators and managers</td>
<td>Technical, skilled and service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences</td>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources</td>
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<td>Executives, administrators and managers</td>
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<td>General Counsel</td>
<td>University Library System</td>
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<tr>
<td>$117,329</td>
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<td>Highest median (net by area)</td>
<td>Lowest median (net total by area)</td>
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<td>General Counsel</td>
<td>University Library System</td>
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<td>$117,329</td>
<td>$29,530</td>
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- **Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources**: 79 net total, $44,760 average, $32,155 median.
- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Chancellor**: 168 net total, $78,191 average, $55,412 median.
- **Chief Financial Officer**: 220 net total, $70,820 average, $55,412 median.
- **College of General Studies**: 15 net total, $42,479 average, $37,759 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences dean’s office**: 41 net total, $39,575 average, $50,436 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences social sciences division**: 22 net total, $36,564 average, $34,268 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences undergraduate studies**: 56 net total, $42,658 average, $37,949 median.
- **Dietrich School of Dental Medicine**: 187 net total, $38,675 average, $34,566 median.
- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Learning Research and Development Center**: 48 net total, $48,747 average, $38,413 median.
- **Secretary and clerical**: 57 net total, $48,747 average, $38,413 median.
- **Senior Vice Chancellor, Health Sciences**: 195 net total, $40,229 average, $35,566 median.
- **Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources**: 79 net total, $44,760 average, $32,155 median.
- **Business Operations**: 435 net total, $42,688 average, $39,978 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.

At a glance

- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.
- **Business Operations**: 435 net total, $42,688 average, $39,978 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences dean’s office**: 41 net total, $39,575 average, $50,436 median.
- **College of General Studies**: 15 net total, $42,479 average, $37,759 median.
- **Computing Services and Systems Development**: 197 net total, $74,763 average, $67,397 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences social sciences division**: 22 net total, $36,564 average, $34,268 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.
- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.
- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources**: 23 net total, $53,046.
- **Business Operations**: 435 net total, $42,688 average, $39,978 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.
- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences social sciences division**: 22 net total, $36,564 average, $34,268 median.
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- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.

- **Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources**: 79 net total, $44,760 average, $32,155 median.
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Tasks performed by full-time employees:

- **Executive Vice Chancellor**: 32 net total, $104,865 average, $83,191 median.
- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division**: 44 net total, $36,757 average, $34,769 median.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Faculty salaries

- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences dean's office:** 28 office: total, $105,477 average, $119,449 median; 28 professors: $195,047 average, $199,098 median.

- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences humanities division:** 307 net total, $70,847 average, $66,625 median. 54 professors: $134,624 average, $113,710 median; 52 associate professors: $78,887 average, $76,951 median; 64 assistant professors: $69,286 average, $69,902 median; 29 instructors: $39,348 average, $41,000 median; 108 lecturers/other: $44,470 average, $43,823 median.

- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences natural sciences division:** 360 net total, $99,299 average, $104,342 median; 102 professors: $127,156 average, $121,144 median; 57 associate professors: $88,747 average, $89,224 median; 68 assistant professors: $73,213 average, $81,154 median; 16 instructors: $40,259 average, $42,114 median; 55 lecturers/other: $54,421 average, $53,724 median.

- **Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences social sciences division:** 120 net total, $92,277 average, $79,894 median. 25 professors: $137,315 average, $122,344 median; 32 associate professors: $102,586 average, $91,083 median; 34 assistant professors: $86,423 average, $77,149 median; 29 lecturers/other: $52,455 average, $52,000 median.

- **Education-University Service Programs:** 41 office: total, $66,194 average, $43,497 median. Four instructors: $46,194 average, $43,497 median.

- **Graduate School of Public Health:** 152 net total, $102,266 average, $87,382 median. 37 professors: $159,831 average, $141,333 median; 44 associate professors: $101,792 average, $96,619 median;

- Five executive, administrative and managerial employees: $79,305 average, $78,667 median; 96 other professionals: $51,818 average, $53,295 median; six secretarial and clerical: $28,326 average, $27,316 median.

- **University Honors College:** 12 net total, $47,639 average, $46,169 median.

- **University Library System:** 107 net total, $34,557 average, $29,530 median. 92 professors: $35,621 average, $30,539 median; 81 technical and clerical: $30,623 average, $22,314 median.

- **University of Pittsburgh at Bradford:** 125 net total, $46,086 average, $37,842 median. 12 executive, administrative and managerial employees: $104,076 average, $96,412 median; 76 other professionals: $42,140 average, $39,015 median; 31 technical and clerical: $30,127 average, $29,428 median; 16 technical, skilled and service: $39,103 average, $37,315 median.

- **University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg:** 102 net total, $38,871 average, $35,600 median. 12 executive, administrative and managerial employees: $70,306 average, $65,253 median; 52 other professionals: $73,635 average, $36,180 median; 12 technical and clerical: $24,802 average, $25,982 median; 27 technical, skilled and service: $34,698 average, $31,725 median.

- **University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown:** 177 net total, $41,204 average, $37,461 median. Eight executive, administrative and managerial employees: $85,275 average, $85,154 median; 81 other professionals: $44,510 average, $41,000 median; 27 technical and clerical: $29,228 average, $28,145 median; 61 technical, skilled and service: $36,598 average, $35,110 median.

- **University of Pittsburgh at Titusville:** 35 net total, $32,731 average, $30,331 median. 17 other professionals: $35,750 average, $36,259 median; eight technical and clerical: $24,480 average, $23,977 median; 10 technical, skilled and service: $31,533 average, $30,611 median.

- **Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement:** 133 net total, $63,197 average, $49,422 median. 46 executive, administrative and managerial employees: $99,389 average, $81,846 median; 87 other professionals: $44,061 average, $40,344 median.
Pitt prof tests theory with a latte

The most remarkable thing about the Everyday Café in Homewood is simply that it exists at all.

John Wallace, faculty member in the School of Social Work, Katz Graduate School of Business and the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences' Department of Sociology, founded the café last November. With scattered tables, chalkboard menu offering lattes and sandwiches behind a glass case of pastries, bright hand-woven baskets full of fresh produce for sale, it looks like every other coffeehouse in town.

But it's a new kind of coffeehouse, a venture of the local Bible Center Church, where Wallace is senior pastor, and a kind of experiment to see whether academic theories about gathering places creating community actually work on the ground.

At a luncheon on a recent weekday, Wallace points to one table where the head of the local service agency Homewood Children's Village sits with a Heinz Endowments program officer. At another table, a local meeting of the Swanson School of Social Work … as a scholar who wanted to be deeply engaged [in] practical, applied work in the community. "I'm thrilled to be affiliated with a university like Pitt that is seriously committed to its role as an anchor institution," he adds, citing the possibility that Home- wood may be one location for the new community engagement centers Pitt is developing. "We're not just focused on curing cancer and building robots, but we're focused on on-the-ground work, helping children..."

For Africana studies' Jerome Taylor, who lives nearby, Everyday Café already is accomplishing its central mission. "Inevitably, we run into people that we do know, that we don't know, that are involved in various aspects of community life," Taylor says. "It's something we missed in the city."

"It's unlike any place in Home- wood and unlike any place we know in the Hill District. Sure, a restaurant in the neighbor- hood may draw a crowd, he allows, "but it doesn't have the connecting power of people who are engaged and involved in the community. This place is better." —Marty Levine

Faculty salaries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

• School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences: 131 net total, $75,788 average, $71,992 median. 19 professors: $117,510 average, $108,330 median; 23 associate professors: $81,488 average, $71,627 median; 61 assistant professors: $70,346 average, $70,266 median; 30 instructors: $58,604 average, $57,220 median.

• School of Information Sciences: 35 net total, $98,976 average, $94,587 median. 11 professors: $124,731 average, $130,605 median; 13 associate professors: $99,739 average, $102,313 median; 11 assistant professors: $72,320 average, $75,125 median.

• School of Law: 46 net total, $125,863 average, $114,560 median. 11 professors: $124,731 average, $130,605 median; 13 associate professors: $99,739 average, $102,313 median; 11 assistant professors: $72,320 average, $75,125 median; 11 clerks/other: $57,720 average, $60,937 median.

• School of Medicine: 2,211 net total, $75,768 average, $72,660 median. 508 professors: $118,147 average, $118,277 median; 55 associate professors: $60,075 average, $59,075 median; 1,028 assistant professors: $56,986 average, $40,909 median; 97 instructors: $48,238 average, $46,346 median; 23 lecturers: $23,655 average, $25,159 median.

• School of Nursing: 89 net total, $70,982 average, $76,985 median.


• School of Pharmacy: 72 net total, $101,767 average, $94,548 median. 15 professors: $143,102 average, $126,452 median; 22 associate professors: $101,984 average, $99,796 median; 35 assistant professors: $83,915 average, $85,009 median.

• School of Social Work: 29 net total, $80,562 average, $79,687 median. 13 professors: $91,364 average, $92,305 median; 16 associate professors: $71,785 average, $72,882 median.

• Senior Vice Chancellor Health Sciences: 24 net total, $60,412 average, $57,220 median; 24 lecturers/other: $60,412 average, $57,220 median.

• Swanson School of Engineering: 163 net total, $100,345 average, $99,345 median. 47 professors: $156,637 average, $146,336 median; 56 associate professors: $105,051 average, $103,977 median; 76 assistant professors: $62,006 average, $57,878 median; seven lecturers/other: $42,618 average, $38,172 median.

• University Library System: 64 net total, $54,956 average, $44,992 median.


• University of Pittsburgh at Bradford: 69 net total, $66,357 average, $66,903 median. 11 professors: $84,536 average, $78,775 median; 29 associate professors: $70,003 average, $71,664 median; 21 assistant professors: $58,145 average, $57,000 median; eight instructors: $49,702 average, $51,909 median.

• University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg: 76 net total, $61,413 average, $60,048 median. Six professors: $83,530 average, $82,042 median; 26 associate professors: $70,626 average, $69,184 median; 28 assistant professors: $58,817 average, $58,289 median; 16 instructors: $43,742 average, $45,982 median.

• University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown: 136 net total, $62,515 average, $60,459 median. 11 professors: $85,895 average, $81,732 median; 48 associate professors: $69,866 average, $69,806 median; 53 assistant professors: $56,405 average, $56,088 median; 24 instructors: $51,147 average, $48,914 median.

• University of Pittsburgh at Titusville: 23 net total, $54,228 average, $51,769 median. Four associate professors: $65,229 average, $65,415 median; 11 assistant professors: $55,108 average, $51,769 median; eight instructors: $47,519 average, $47,120 median.
MARCH 2, 2017

**A&S Open Door Project**

**1st Amendment rights: What can & can’t do**


"It's clear today that we really do need to focus on free speech. It's a central part of our nation; it's something we are proud of. But the expression fund on and we want to keep it that way," said Pamela W. Connolly, an exoneration for Diversity, and Inclusion, as a preface to a recent campus discussion on First Amendment rights.

Federal courts have held that the university is a traditional public forum, and thus not subject to First Amendment protection. At the same time, the university is a part of the community and have opportunities for people of all income levels to be able to be part of the community and have an opportunity to own a home and reside here in Oakland.

Right now that's becoming very challenging, which is a real issue of moderate income, she said. OPDC, which is among the community at a community land trust table, engages in a range of programs and services, including investment in affordable housing.

Through the community land trust, a new resident would buy a home, but would lease the land under a long-term agreement with the land trust. When the homeowner sells, the sale would occur as a sales tax and the proceeds would go to the land trust.

OPDC plans to acquire 46 properties for the land trust in the next five years. It aims to increase homeownership by 50 percent in targeted areas — blocks that without intervention could see owner-occupancy dwindle to 28 percent, Supowitz said.

At that level, more disinvestment, public safety issues and increased crime concerns would be expected, making it harder to attract new homeowners, she said. Additionally, it's important to make sure that we can maintain homes in the hands of homeowners," Wilson said.

"It's often a contentious issue. We're very concerned that there's no place that should have greater free speech rights more than a college campus," said Connolly.

At the same time, there's tension because concerns require the educational environment to be free from discrimination and unlawful conduct. "It really is complex," she said.

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At the same time, there's tension because concerns require the educational environment to be free from discrimination and unlawful conduct. "It really is complex," she said.
The future of black education is personal for Roderick Carey, postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Education’s Center for Urban Education — because so is the history.

Carey’s great grandfather, William James, founded the State of Georgia’s first public school in 1907 to serve black students shut out of local white schools. It was an era when African-American institutions sometimes were set on fire by citizens who objected to their very existence. After experiencing such a catastrophe, students and faculty at Barnburn funded the rebuilding of their school by farming a cotton field on the school property, Carey said.

Carey gave the keynote address for “Engaging the Past, Enacting the Present and Envisioning the Future of Black Education” on Feb. 15, sponsored by Pitt’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The event, billed as “a discussion of the history of systemic inequity in educational opportunities for black students, also included a panel featuring local educators.

“Black people have historically, do now and will always value education,” Carey told the capacity crowd in the O’Hara Student Center. “Black people have, do and probably always will view education as a project not solely for individual gain” but for collective good.

Being educated also is a counterforce to racism and racist power, he noted — something white citizens have long realized.

Carey points to current reading choices. “We see grossly disproportionate, for instance, the way that whites are tracked into different classes and industrial training. For jobs that just weren’t there anymore,” he added.

By the 1960s, black kids did not serve black students shut out of an educational system that failed them, he said.

It certainly did not help that there were few black leaders on teachers in the school district. Through the 1950s, only 5.3 percent of Pittsburgh Public Schools employees were black.

Pittsburgh has tried busing to integrate its schools and college scholarship programs to aid black students, but city schools, with 54 percent black and 33 percent white students, remain largely separate.

Carey discusses the need for black students to “reinvest in public education and fight against systems that have been known to oppress them.”

The panel discussion was moderated by Social Work Faculty member Keith Caldwell and featured:

• Angela Allie, executive director of the office of equity in Pittsburgh Public Schools;
• Linda Williams-Moore, associate dean of student affairs and director of student life in Pitt’s Office of Student Affairs;
• Gail Edwards, chief academic officer of Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter Schools.

“Students who have chosen to attend the University of Pittsburgh were not living in the city of Pittsburgh,” she said. “We want to dispel the myth that Pitt is too far away from the community. We have mechanisms to help them persist here, but we have to get them here.” She said Pitt now is sending RISE participants into city schools to tutor students and to show them that getting into Pitt is an attainable goal.

Black people do not believe that everybody has to have a four-year degree. But, he added, “A high school diploma is not enough. Some education after high school is absolutely critical.” Since the 2008 recession, he noted, 9 million jobs have been created, but 8.4 million of them went to people who had at least a two-year degree. “I wonder what those job offers are, and if we are doing what we said we were going to do,” he said.

The purpose of education for black people remains true to the past, he concluded. “When a child says that education under served populations is not enough, I would encourage that conversation about them.”

— Marty Levine
Above: N. John Cooper, the Bettye J. and Ralph E. Bailey Dean of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, delivers the keynote address at the University’s 41st annual honors convocation Feb. 24 in Carnegie Music Hall. Cooper, who has been dean since 1998, will step down from his post in August and return to the faculty. Behind Cooper are Provost Patricia E. Beeson and Chancellor Patrick Gallagher.

Above, left: Marcus Robinson is congratulated by Chancellor Patrick Gallagher and Vice Provost and Dean of Students Kenyon Bonner after being named Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) Senior of the Year. Robinson, a neuroscience and anthropology major with a minor in chemistry, is a former president of Pitt’s Rainbow Alliance, has advocated for members of the LGBTQIA+ community on campus and serves on the City of Pittsburgh’s LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council.

At left: Chancellor Patrick Gallagher and University Senate President Frank Wilson.

Below: Faculty and administrators participated in the honors convocation ceremony, which recognized faculty and students for their achievements in the past year.

HONORS CONVOCATION 2017

Photos by Mike Drazdzinski
Photographic Services
Why soy cuts heart disease risk for some

A product of digesting a micolonort found in soy may hold the key to why some people seem to derive a heart-protective benefit from eating soy foods while others do not, a Graduate School of Public Health-led study has discovered.

Japanese men who are able to produce equol—a substance made by some types of “good” gut bacteria when they metabolize isoflavones (micolonort found in dietary soy) — have lower levels of a risk factor for heart disease than their counterparts who cannot produce it, according to the research, published in the British Journal of Nutrition.

Said senior author Akira Sekikawa, epidemiology faculty member: “Scientists have known for some time that isoflavones prevent against the buildup of plaque in blood vessels, known as atherosclerosis, in monkeys, and are associated with lower rates of heart disease in people in Asian countries. We were surprised when a large trial of isoflavones in the U.S. didn’t show the beneficial effects among people with atherosclerosis in Western countries. Now we know why.”

All monkeys can produce equol, as can 50-60 percent of people in Asia, while only 1-2 percent of people in Western countries can.

Sekikawa and his team are pursuing funding for a much larger observational study to expand on their findings and eventually a randomized clinical trial to examine the effect of taking equol on various medical conditions and diseases.

“Our discovery about equol may have applications far beyond heart disease,” said Sekikawa. “We know that isoflavones may be associated with protecting against many other medical conditions, including osteoporosis, dementia, menopause hot flashes and prostate and breast cancers. Equol may have an even stronger effect on these diseases.”

Additional authors on this research included lead author Yasuhiro Nakatani, epidemiology faculty member, and Pitt colleagues Abhishek Vishnu and Rhobert Evans.

A number of studies have been published in the past few years, some of which showed that equol could be beneficial, while others did not.

Said lead author Sekikawa: “Our study uncovers a new mechanism of thyroid cancer, one that is actually quite common.”

The team on the ground to fly elevated EGF2BP3 also was presented recently at the World Congress of Gastroenterology.

“When we looked at other common cancers, such as those of the breast, lung, ovary and thyroid, we found that 5-15 percent of them had levels of EGF2BP3 expressed very strongly,” Sekikawa explained.

The team then performed cell culture and animal model experiments to determine if the growth of these tumors could be blocked by EGF1R pathway-inhibiting drugs.

A number of these inhibitors have been developed and tested in more than 25 clinical trials in the last several years, Nikiforov explained. Unfortunately, these trials failed because only a small percentage of patients responded to the drugs, and researchers were not able to determine which tumors would be susceptible to the treatment.

“Our results suggest that we now have a genetic marker — EGF2BP3 — that may be able to tell us who will benefit from these therapies. That’s really exciting is that our study could renew interest in the use of EGF2BP3 as a potential marker,” Sekikawa said.

We hope that the manufacturers of IGF1R and IGF2 inhibitors will perform additional clinical trials for these drugs specifically in patients whose tumors show high levels of EGF2BP3 expression.

Funding for the study was provided by NIH and David and Nancy Brenne.

Additional Pitt collaborators included the paper’s co-first authors Pedretta Panabedico and Lindsay Kelly, as well as Shao Zheng, Danjie Xiaxiong Wang, Aatul Singhi, Rajeev Dhir, Simion Chiosea, Shiwan Fan, Rohit Bhar, Georges Tzipori, Anil Vijay, Praveen Trivedi, Abigail Walt, Sally Carry, Robert Ferris, Adrian Pulford, and Debanjali Mohanty. Collaborators from the Swanson School of Engineering, with post-doctoral member Marina Nikiforova.

Using genes to determine best antiangiogenic strategy

A study submitted by School of Pharmacy faculty member Inmaculada Hernando, and Pitt colleagues also are common in the healing of wounds and bone fractures.

Bryan Brown, bioengineering faculty member in the Swanson school, said he is excited by his investigation into the immune system response to implanted medical devices.

The study will build on Brown’s previous research demonstrating that macrophage M1 and M2 polarization at early time points after the implantation of a biomaterial or medical material can predict long-term reactions by the host’s immune system. The information gathered by the study could significantly improve the success of biomaterial and biomedical implants by providing a readout from the patient’s immune system.

Said Brown: “Our current tests have to be invasive. We need to know whether the macrophages are present or absent. We will use a method we developed recently that will enable us to understand why and how these early events after implantation service as a predictor to the lifespan of the implant. Our research is suggesting, contrary to the classical view of host-biomaterial interactions, macrophages are used to provide positive outcomes for the implant and the patient.”

Macrophages are white blood cells charged with protecting the body from health threats, including foreign bodies like biomaterial implants. When an implant is placed inside the body, it is met with a macrophage response. If the presence and can exhibit either a pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory response to the implant. The team have developed methods for observing, measuring and controlling the activation of these macrophages. They will attempt to find optimal designs for biomaterials that not only improve functional performance of the immune system but promote positive interaction between the body’s natural defenses and the implanted material.

A variety of medical fields rely on biomaterial implants for patients: orthopedics for joint repair, ophthalmology to restore vision, cardiovascular surgery for heart valve and artery replacement and dentistry for tooth and bone repair. Biomaterial implants also are common in the healing of wounds and bone fractures.

Brown believes his study will provide researchers with a framework for understanding how the host’s immune system responds to implanted materials and how to improve the success and development of more successful procedures for any treatment involving biomaterials and medical devices.

Co-investigators are Pamela Moalli, faculty member in the Swanson School of Engineering, with post-doctoral member in the Swanson school.

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MARCH 2, 2017

NSF funding analysis of swallowing disorders

The swallowing disorder dysphagia affects nearly one in 25 adults, or approximately 150,000 hospitalizations annually. A patient’s risk for dysphagia is diagnosed by endoscopy, which requires a specialist for further evaluation. However, some patients who aspire to do so silently, causing doctors to misdiagnose.

To develop an improved screening method for dysphagia, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded a researcher and the Swanson school a CAREER Award through the NSF’s Division of Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental and Transport Systems. Ervin Sejdic, electrical and computer engineering faculty member, received a five-year, $549,139 award to further research using high-resolution vibration and sound recordings that would help doctors diagnose dysphagia and improve their ability to properly swallow while eating or drinking. For the first time, researchers began this research while a postdoctoral associate at the University of Toronto and Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Canada’s largest children’s rehabilitation hospital, explained that a non-invasive method to detect dysphagia could help to reduce patient risk and hospitalization.

Sejdic said, “By using modern data analysis we can compare and contrast the sound and vibration characteristics of normal swallowing against patients with dysphagia. This allows us to understand how the airway normally protects itself during swallowing to avoid aspiration, and how this is affected during dysphagia, without the need for surgery or intubation.”

Patients with silent dysphagia may pass a traditional screening, which increases the potential for choking and aspiration. Analyzing the sounds and vibrations from the neck would not only reduce the incidence of silent aspiration, but also the need for conservative recommendations that limit eating and drinking for individuals with neurological disabilities such as multiple sclerosis or ALS.

In addition to helping develop the technology, the award will allow Sejdic to collaborate with speech language pathologists to develop online learning modules to further education and outreach throughout the U.S. He would also like to use the data analysis to design a mobile device that would help patients while eating, but notes that possibility is several years in the future.

Endoscopy and fluoroscopy are still the gold standard for detecting dysphagia, Sejdic said. “For now we’re not looking at replacing them but rather enhancing and improving the screening process.

Poverty influences chronic medical conditions in kids

Researchers from Children’s Hospital have shown how poverty status influences the prevalence of three common chronic medical conditions: asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The study was led by Amy Elliott, PhD, chair in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and assistant professor in the School of Medicine, and is published in Pediatrics.

Researchers analyzed data obtained by the National Survey of Children’s Health for the years 2003, 2007 and 2011-12. They identified trends of each condition and other chronic medical conditions associated with these conditions may have.

Studious House said “Children living in poverty experience numerous threats to their well-being, including being at higher risk for multiple chronic conditions.”

Among study participants, the lifetime prevalence of asthma rose 18 percent; ADHD rose by 44 percent; and ASD rose nearly 400 percent. For children with ASD, the increase was most prominent among the poor, at nearly 26 percent.

For each condition, the current change by poverty status for ADHD was similar, though the rise in ASD was not as great as in the previous study. It also was found that children with asthma and ADHD from impoverished households were more likely to have additional chronic conditions.

The research team concluded that there is a need to further research and to devise efficient strategies to improve the health and well-being of children with poverty status.

Christian Pulcini of Pitt contributed to the research, as did colleagues from UCLA and Ohio State.

Chong awarded DFG Mercator Fellowship

Lillian Chong, faculty member in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Chemistry, has been awarded a DFG Mercator Fellowship for a research collaboration with Thomas Kiehlaber at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in Halle, Germany, titled “Conformational Dynamics of Peptides and Proteins on the Nanoscale to Microseconds Timescale.” The award supports travel, accommodation and salary for the researcher the next year or years.

The fellowships enable internationally outstanding junior scientists to establish or strengthen collaboration between researchers from both domestic and foreign institutions.

Humanities, social sciences projects funded

A total of 11 projects have awarded funding for 14 humanities and social sciences research proposals. The Integrative Social Science Research Initiative expands Pitt social sciences’ involvement in research that uses integrative approaches from multiple disciplines. Funding is awarded for new collaborations, up to $50,000 per project.

The Special Initiative to Promote Scholarly Activities in the Humanities supports proposals for authors whose work seeks to advance existing efforts. The maximum funding amount is $20,000, and it is extended to researchers with $5,000 or less. The initiative is open to individuals or groups of researchers to support new or emergent humanities programs in the humanities.

The awardees and projects for the Integrative Social Science Research Initiative are:

• “Clouded Judgment: Air Pollution and Decision Making in China,” by principal investigator Iza (Yue) Ding, political science faculty member, and co-investigators Andrea La Nauze, faculty member, and Graham Beattie, postdoctoral research fellow, all in the Dietrich school;

• “We Are Strong! Leveraging Information to Empower Marginalized Communities,” by principal investigator Rosalba Peralta, political science faculty member, and co-investigators Jaime Booth and Benjamin Blank, both in the Dietrich School of Social Work faculty members;

• “Development of Interdisciplinarity and Geochemical Methods for the Analysis and Spatial Modeling of Paleoclimate,” by principal investigator Gaetan Hanks, faculty member and chair, Department of Anthropology, and co-investigator Rosemary Capo, faculty member in the Swanson school of Engineering in Environmental Science in the Dietrich school;

• “Chinese Nuclear Power: Growth Prospects, Challenges, Global Impact,” by principal investigator Rachel Rouse, political science faculty member, and co-investigators Alexandria Foundation International Conference chairelho, business administration faculty member, Alexis Foundation International Conference chairelho, Department of International Business Development, Patel Graduate School of Business; and co-investigators Daniel G. Cole, faculty member and director of the Stephen R. Forecase nuclear energy program, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science in the Swanson school; Thomas G. Rawski, economics and history faculty member in the Department of Economics and UCIS Research Professor; and Kaoru (Kyor) Shirazi, Department of Economics.

• “From Barely Making It to... Effects of Raising Wages Among Minimum Wage Workers,” by principal investigator Jeffrey Shook, faculty member and doctoral student Michael Bohanich, both in Social Work; and co-investigators Waverly Dougall, sociology faculty members in the Dietrich school; Rafael Engel, School of Social Work faculty member; Sara Goodkind, faculty member in the School of Social Work as well as the Department of Sociology; and gender sexuality women’s studies program director in the Dietrich school; Rachel Fusco, graduate member in Social Work; Social Work, Clinical and Translational Science Institute, and direct practice concentration chair; and Sera Lindari, faculty member in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and the Dietrich school’s Department of Economics.

The Special Initiative to Promote Scholarly Activities in the Humanities awards are: Christine Houlihan, political science faculty member, in collaboration with the University of Virginia project, “Historian of Film: The History of Film and the Film Collection at the Los Angeles Conservatory,” led by principal investigator Marilyn Anderson, faculty member in the Department of English, Dietrich school.

• “Digital Mirfot Project Initiatives: Prospography Research, Interface Design and Data Visualization” by Elisia Beshero-Bondar, English faculty member, Pitt Greensburgh;

• “Lombards Abroad: Aesthetics, Abstraction and Identity in Medieval Italy,” by principal investigator Sharon Poznansky, political and women’s studies program director in the Dietrich school; lead investigator Shani Zifon, faculty member in the history of art and architecture, Dietrich school;

• “Genealogies of the Transgender Child: Sex, Race and Body Race” by Gill-Peterson, English faculty member, Dietrich school;

• “Advancing the Birchbeck-Pittsburgh Collaboration: Summer Workshop on Urban Change” by NW. Jonas Professor of German film and cultural studies chair, Christian Pulcini, Dietrich school;

• “Between Religious Aesthetics and State Discipline: The Erotic Artistic Scene in the UK” by Jeanette Joulli, religious studies faculty member, Dietrich school;

• “Save Canen Oral History Project,” by Stephen Martin, English faculty member, Dietrich school;

• “Fieldwork in China” by Michael Morrill, studio arts faculty member, Dietrich school;

• “Tenderloin Project” by M. Elizabeth Weikle-Mills, faculty member and director of the children’s literature, commerce, and relationality in the early years project, Dietrich school.

Annual PCP visits should include skin cancer screenings

School of Medicine/UPMC research suggests that if full body skin cancer screenings became a part of routine annual primary care visits, significantly more skin cancers would be discovered and at earlier stages.

The results of the study, led by Laura Ferris, Department of Dermatology, and John Kirk, Department of Surgical and Trauma Medicine in the School of Medicine, were published in JAMA Oncololgy and also launched a skin cancer screening program done in 2004 in Germany.

“Nearly all of all skin cancers are found by patients and half by physicians. However, those skin cancers that are not detected may tend to be more advanced than those detected by physicians. “We can’t really detect by the naked eye,” said Ferris. “We hope to gather enough data to develop a recommendation for screening guidelines so melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, can be detected earlier.”

UPMC-employed PCPs were offered access to a web-based training program on skin cancer identification. Patients were considered eligible for the screening if they were age 35 or older and saw a UPMC PCP during 2014. The study found significantly more electronic health records of more than 300,000 patients who visited UPMC had a skin cancer screening. Among the study’s 300,000 patients and approximately 53,000 patients who were in the eligible category during the study period and more than 280,000 were not.

Researchers found the incidence of skin cancer for the screened population was more than double that of the unscreened population, and the melanomas discovered in the screened patients were thinner than those of the unscreened population.

“The thickness of a diagnosed melanoma is the most important predictor of the risk of dying from this cancer,” said Ferris. “So finding thinner tumors has the potential to reduce melanoma deaths.”

Researchers expect more patients to participate in the screening as they continue to study the screening process.

The study’s principal investigators who worked on the study were Melissa Saul, Yan Lin, Fei Ge and William A. Neuren, Spandana Maddukuri and Francis X. Solano. Saul is a graduate student at University of Harvard and also contributed.

The Integrative Social Science Research Initiative is a part of the Swanson school’s National Cancer Institute and the Melanoma Research Alliance provided support.

—Compiled by Marty Levine
Thursday 9

CTSI Workshop
“Preliminary Analysis for Data on Analysis”; 7039 Forbes, noon (register: www.cinsev.ccts.pitt.edu/Events/CurrentEvents)

CTSI Workshop
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Friday 10

Spring Holiday, University closed.

Chemistry Lecture
“Toward Controlled Assembly of Ligand-Stabilized Noble Metal Nanocloisters”; Harmi Hakkinen, U of Jyvaskyla, Finland; 307 Eberly, 5:30 pm

Saturday 4

Music on the Edge Concert
Fidelio Trio; Warhol Museum, North Side, 8 pm

Sunday 5

• Spring recess for students begins.

Monday 6

PLRC Seminar
“Chronic Liver Diseases”; Gerald Vokeley & Xiaohao Ma; S123 BST, 5:30 pm

Tuesday 7

UPMC Health Plan Biometric Screening
WPU lower lounge, 7-11 am

CTSI Workshop
“For the Sake of All: Translating Evidence Into Action for Advanced Health Care;”; Jean Purnell, U of St. Louis; 2017 CL, noon

HSLS Workshop
“Emory EndNote Basics,” Melissa Rajanekal, Folk Library classr., 2, 1:30 pm (mail@pitt.edu)

Povroz’s Inaugural Lecture
“Exploring the Scoping of the Adolescents Brain: Neuroimaging Studies of Cognitive Maturation,” Beatrice Luna, psychology; Lecture room, 6, 4 pm

Wednesday 8

Clinical Oncology/Hematology Grand Rounds
“Targeting Inflammation in the TME; UPCI 13-105,” Divakar Dhar, Illinois Cancer Center; Hor, 8 am (millerslij@upmc.psu.edu)

Pancreas Express Training
“The New Travel & Expense Management Program”; WPU Krumrine, 10 am

Pathology Lecture
“DDSEIP 5-BID, Prechita Chinnamani; Presby admin. conf. rm. 3703 Posvar, noon

UPCI Basic / Translational Seminar
“Immunotherapy & Lung Cancer,” Howard F橘; Fox Chase Cancer Ctr.; Cooper Conf. rm. D, noon

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“On the Persistence of the Electromagnetic Field,” Marion deGroot, Hungarian Acad.of Sciences; 8T3, 12:05 pm

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