Sanft Named Interim AD

By E. J. Borghetti

Donna Sanft, Pitt’s senior associate athletic director for administration, student life, and compliance, has been appointed interim athletic director by Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. Sanft assumes the duties of Jeff Long, who on Sept. 11 accepted the athletic director’s post at the University of Arkansas.

“[Jeff] Long accepted my offer to become the athletic director at the University of Pittsburgh in the spring of 2003, the very future of our conference was in doubt,” Nordenberg said. “I always will be grateful to him for the determination that he showed during that challenging time, as we worked together to rebuild the Big East and to secure the future of Pitt athletics. In the years that have followed, Jeff and I worked closely on a broad range of other important matters. He is a principled professional who has made key contributions to our progress. As he leaves Pitt to assume his next assignment in what already has been a varied and distinguished career, we thank Jeff for his important contributions and wish him and his family the very best.”

“As we move forward, I am very pleased that Donna Sanft has agreed to serve as interim athletic director and I am honored to call her the University’s outstanding scholar-athlete. As a Panther gymnast, she served as team captain, was selected as its most valuable performer, and was honored as the University’s outstanding scholar-athlete of her graduating class. More recently, both on her accomplishments as an athlete and her contributions as a professional, she was honored by Pitt’s Varsity Letter Club as an Award of Distinction.”

Sanft, who has been significantly involved in the athletics department itself, no one enjoys a higher level of respect than Donna Sanft. I know that her appointment to this new responsibility will energize other members of the staff and that Donna now will play an even more visible role in promoting the progress of Pitt athletics, which already has been her life’s work.”

Sanft said, “I love the University of Pittsburgh, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I have been given as a student, athlete, and employee at Pitt. Through the leadership of Chancellor Nordenberg, within the athletic department itself, no one enjoys a higher level of respect than Donna Sanft. I know that her appointment to this new responsibility will energize other members of the staff and that Donna now will play an even more visible role in promoting the progress of Pitt athletics, which already has been her life’s work.”

“Donna is known throughout the country for her professionalism and has long been a highly regarded representative of the University of Pittsburgh.”

—Mark A. Nordenberg

Pitt Law School Faculty Places Among the Top 25

In the Nation Based on Scholarship’s Impact

By John Harvill

The University of Pittsburgh School of Law faculty is among the top 25 law school faculties in the nation, according to a new rankings study based upon a standard objective measure of scholarly impact: the number of publication citations for all tenure-stream academic faculty members from 2000 to the present.

The study, titled “Top 35 Law Faculties Based on Scholarly Impact, 2007,” is the latest law school ranking report by Brian Leiter, the Hines H. Baker and Thelma Kelley Baker Chair in Law, professor of philosophy, and director of the law and philosophy program at the University of Texas-Austin, who has been ranking U.S. law schools since 1997. The study includes the following rankings:

• A ranking by mean per capita citations, in which Pitt’s law school faculty places 21st, tied with those of George Mason University and the University of Minnesota;

• A ranking by mean per capita citations, in which Pitt’s law school faculty places 24th, tied with those of Boston University, Chicago-Kent College of Law, Emory University, George Mason University, Indiana University, the University of Iowa, and Washington University in St. Louis;

• A ranking by a combination of mean and median per capita citations, in which Pitt’s law school faculty places 23rd, tied with that of George Mason University.

The other law school faculties included in the top 25 combination rankings are those of Yale University, the University of Chicago, Harvard University, Stanford University, New York University, Columbia University, University of California-Berkeley, Duke University, University of Texas-Austin, Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, University of California-Los Angeles, the University of Michigan, Georgetown University, Vanderbilt University, University of Virginia, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota, George Washington University, Yeshiva University, the University of Arizona, Boston University, and Emory University.

Pitt has risen steadily in Leiter’s rankings in recent years: In his 2000/02 scholarly impact report, for instance, Pitt was tied for 43rd place with Rutgers University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of San Diego, and Wake Forest University; and in Leiter’s most recent prior scholarly impact report, issued in July 2005 and revised in April 2006, Pitt was tied for 35th place with Arizona State University, Ohio State University, and the University of Iowa.
Pitt Rep “Playing With the Classics”

By Sharon S. Blake and Sloan McCrae

The University of Pittsburgh Repertory Theatre is re-imagining some of theater’s classic plays for its 2007-08 season, as a way of celebrating the 25th anniversary of Pitt’s Department of Theatre Arts.

The Pitt Rep’s “Playing With the Classics” season kicked off Sept. 14-15 with Andreas Jungwirth’s Outside Inn, a moody thriller about globalization and alienation, produced in partnership with Germany’s Theater Rampe Stuttgart. The bilingual ensemble gave three performances in English and two in German.

The rest of the season will include a timely revival of a Restoration comedy about military salesmanship; a ribald deconstruction of Shakespeare’s Othello, told from the viewpoint of the play’s female characters; the Pittsburgh premiere of Arthur Miller’s The American Clock, set during the Great Depression and a contemporary take on Aeschylus’ The Suppliant Maidens, the Western world’s oldest surviving play.

This season is reinforcing one of the Pitt theatre arts department’s ongoing missions: bridging the gap between studying plays as literary/historical works and bringing them to life onstage. “We focus not only on performance and technical theater, but also on the theater’s history,” said Pitt professor and department chair Bruce McConachie. “This season will allow our students to experience a various range of performance styles while gaining knowledge about significant events in theatrical history.”

Pitt Rep plays and performance dates follow. All of the productions will be staged in the Stephen Foster Memorial’s Henry Heymann Theater except for The American Clock, which will play in the Foster Memorial’s Charity Randall Theater.

The Recruiting Officer
Oct. 10-21
Two slick British Army recruiting officers use silver-tongued salesmanship and empty promises to lure the lower classes into joining up, in Irish playwright George Farquhar’s satirical comedy, to be directed by Pitt teaching artist-in-residence Holly Thuma.

Desdemona, a Play About a Handkerchief
Nov. 7-18
With the men offstage, Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca dispense with giggling and curtseys and engage in shockingly honest girl-talk—shedding new light on one of the most famous props in all of theater—in Pulitzer Prize-winner Paula Vogel’s comedic deconstruction of Othello. Julie Costa-Malcolm will direct.

The American Clock
Feb. 20-March 2
Based on Studs Terkel’s Hard Times and featuring 20 actors playing 52 different roles, Arthur Miller’s drama recreates the Great Depression with a series of vignettes that simultaneously celebrate and indict the American spirit. C.T. Steele will direct.

The Department of Theatre Arts will hold a 25th anniversary alumni event in conjunction with The American Clock, welcoming back former students, artists, faculty, and staff.

Details will be forthcoming.

Big Love
April 2-13
A chaotic juxtaposition of poetry, music, and violence inspired by Aeschylus’ The Suppliant Maidens, Charles L. Mee’s play plunges audiences into a rollercoaster war of the sexes while rhapso- dizing the virtues of sisterhood, independence, and rare true love. Melissa Ryan Porterfield will direct.

For more information, visit www.play.pitt.edu or call 412-624-PLAY (7529).

Pitt’s Kuntu Repertory Theatre
2007-08 Season Opens Oct. 18

By Sharon S. Blake

“Celebrating the Next Generation with Blues, Gospel, and Jazz Poetics” will be the theme of the Kuntu Repertory Theatre’s 33rd season, which will include the following productions:

Good Black Don’t Crack
By Rob Perry
Oct. 18-Nov. 3
A revival of one of the Kuntu Rep’s more popular plays, Good Black tells the tale of a single mother from the Hill District who juggles the demands of her family, job, and need for intimacy. Penny, who cofounded and directed the Kuntu Writers Workshop until his death in 2003, wrote more than 30 plays and 300 poems. Kuntu Rep was founded in 1974 as a showcase for his and other African Americans’ plays. This season’s production will be directed by Kuntu Rep founder and artistic director Vernell A. Lillie, a professor in Pitt’s Department of Africana Studies.

Journey of the Spirits: A Celebration of Gospel Music
By Ernest McCarty
Jan. 24-Feb. 9
Directed by Herb Newsome, this new work tells the story of gospel music—from its roots in the rhythms of Africa, to its central role in the civil rights movement, to its roles on the streets and in churches today.

Lavender Lizards and Lilac Landmines: Layla’s Dream
By Ntozake Shange
March 9-April 5
A fresh look at love, life, relationships, and the need to be wanted, by the acclaimed author of For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf. Layla’s Dream will be directed by Linwood Sloan and choreographed by Candice Smith.

Ain’t Misbehavin: The Fats Waller Musical Show
Music by Thomas “Fats” Waller
Book by Murray Horwitz and Richard Maltby Jr.
May 15-31
Set in Harlem during the 1930s and featuring the toe-tapping, foot-stomping, soul-stirring music of Fats Waller, this award-winning musical features such classics as “I’m Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter” and “The Joint Is Jumpin.” Timothy Ware will direct.

For tickets and more information, call 412-624-7298.
Activists, Scholars, Publishers
Part of Pitt’s 2007-08 Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series

Inaugural Fred R. Brown Literary Award and a social responsibility panel discussion added to Pitt’s annual celebration of literature

By Anthony Moore

The 2007-08 Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series at the University of Pittsburgh will begin its 10th season with a reading by short story writer George Saunders at 8:30 p.m. Oct. 1 in Pitt’s Frick Fine Arts Auditorium.

Saunders, an assistant professor of creative writing at Syracuse University, won the National Magazine Award for fiction in 1994, 1996, 2000, and 2004. In 2006, he was awarded a $500,000 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, commonly called a “genius grant.” His fiction has appeared in such publications as The New Yorker, Harper’s, and Esquire.

This year’s series marks the debut of the Fred R. Brown Literary Award, which will be presented to author Don Lee on Nov. 8. The award, named for Pitt alumni Fred R. Brown (CAS ’73) and Melanie Brown (CGS ’96, KGSB ’90, KGSB ’93), recognizes the accomplishments of fiction novelists early in their careers.

The series also will hold its first panel discussion on writing and social responsibility, featuring nonfiction writers Elmaiz Abinader, Tim Bascom, Andrew Lam, and Sonia Nazario, on Oct. 10.

The complete Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series 2007-08 schedule follows:

Oct. 1—George Saunders, 8:30 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium


Oct. 17—Drue Heinz Literature Prize Reading and Awards Ceremony, 8-9:30 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

Kirk Nesset


Oct. 24—April Ossman, 8:30 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

Poet and author of Anxious Music (Four Way Books, 2007)

Martha Rhodes

Poet and author of Mother Quiet (Zoo Press, 2004); Perfect Disappearance (New Issues Poetry & Prose, 2000), and At the Gate (Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

Nov. 8—Fred R. Brown Literary Award presentation, 8:30 p.m., 343 Alumni Hall

Don Lee


Feb. 6—Ellen Bass, 8:30 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium


Feb. 27—2007-08 William Block Sr. Writer, 8:30 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

Philip Gourevitch

Editor of The Paris Review and author of We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda (Picador, 2000), and A Cold Case (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001).

Mar. 5—A Panel Discussion on Writing and Social Responsibility, 6 p.m., 501 Cathedral of Learning

Elmaiz Abinader

Author of Children of the Rosme; A Family’s Journey From Lebanon (University of Wisconsin, 1991) and In the Country of My Dreams: Poetry by Elmaiz Abinader (Sufi Warrior Publishing Co., 1999).

Tim Bascom


Andrew Luo

Editor with New America Media and author of Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora (Heyday Books, 2005).

April 2—Andrew Zawacki, 8:30 p.m., 501 Cathedral of Learning

Poet and author of By Reason of Breaking (University of Georgia Press, 2002).

The Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series is cosponsored by Pitt’s Humanities Center, Women’s Studies Program, and the University of Pittsburgh Press. All events in the Writers Series are free and open to the public.
September


18 Bush Leprosy: Cartoonists Take on the White House, including 80 political cartoonists’ best cartoons about George W. Bush and his advisors, through Sept. 28. The Frayn, 4755 Butler St., Lawrenceville, 412-385-2102.

2007 Artist of the Year Exhibition by Delanie Jenkins, professor and chair in Pitt’s Department of Studio Arts, through Nov. 4. Art in Architecture Center for the Arts, 600 Fifth Ave., downtown, 412-361-0873, www.pittarts.org.


28 Zydeco Dance, featuring the Zydeco Dogs, 7:30 p.m., IXM/ECC Hall, Allegheny Conference on Regional Development, 449 W. 8th Ave., West Homestead, 412-247-6604.


30 John Ludwig and Dan Mantovani, performed by Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by Yan Pascal Tortelier, featuring baroque violinist Daný Alessandro, 8 p.m., Symphony Hall, 125 N. Craig St., Oakland, Renaissance and Baroque Society of Pittsburgh, 412-361-2048, www.rbso.org.


October


26 University of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, performing works by Edward Grieg and John Cage, 8 p.m., Belkfield Hall Auditorium, 412-624-4125, www.pittsburghsymphony.org.

26 A Memory of Two Mondays by Arthur Miller and The Damascus Drum by Yukio Mishima, 8 p.m., through Sept. 30, Studio Theater, BTH272 of David August, University of Pittsburgh Department of Arts Lab Sessions series, 412-624-7529, www.gloy.org.


7 Lu Douy Viva: At the Crossroads of Italian Classical and Folk Traditions, with Danielle Perno. 2:30 p.m., McClintic Hall, Calvary Episcopal Church, Shadyside, Chatham Baroque, 412-687-1788, www.chathambaroque.org.


10 The Recruiting Officer by George Farquhar, through Oct. 21, Stephen Foster Memorial’s Henry Heymann Theatre, Pitt Repertory Theatre, 412-624-P.LAY(7529), www.play.pitt.edu.

Robert Young Pelton, writer, 7 p.m., Paquitaque Performing Arts Center, Frank J. and Sylvia T. Paquitaque Lecture Series, Pitt Johnstown, www.upj.pitt.edu/ArtsCenter.


12 Beethoven No. 5, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, performing music by Beethoven and Wagner, 8 p.m., also Oct. 21, Heinz Hall, 600 Penn Ave., downtown, Mellon Grand Classic Series, 412-392-4900, www.pittsburghsymphony.org.

13 The Heinz Chapel Choir Fall Concert, 7:30 p.m., Heinz Chapel, 412-624-4125, www.pitt.edu/arts/news/tiakalo.html.

14 Heinz Chapel Choir Fall Concert, 7:30 p.m., Heinz Chapel, 412-624-4125, www.pitt.edu.

15 Tribute to the Cannonball Adderley Quintet, jazz performance, 8 p.m., Blakely Program Center 1908 Wylie Avenue; Hill Phoenix Hall, 412-392-3144, www.hillhouse.org.

16 Women in Film and Media, awards ceremony, 6 p.m., Cabaret at Theater Square, 655 Penn Ave., downtown, 412-325-6769, www.dancealloy.org.

17 Steven Wright, comedy performance, 7:30 p.m., 101 Sixth St., downtown, 412-456-1350, www.pgharts.org.

18 Drue Heinz Literature Prize Reading and Award Ceremony, featuring prize winner Kirk Nessel and judge Hilary Masters, 7:30 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, 412-624-6506, www.english.pitt.edu.

Eight Annual Young Playwrights Festival, various times and plays through Oct. 28, 3:00 Bingham St., South Side, 412-431-2489, www.citytheatrecompany.org.


You Can’t Take It With You, theatrical performance, continues through Oct. 28, Pitt-Johnstown’s Studio Theatre, Pitt-Johnstown theatre department, www.upj.pitt.edu/ArtsCenter.

20 Good Black Don’t Crack, 8 p.m., continues through Nov. 3, Alumni Hall’s 7th-floor Auditorium, Kuntu Theatre Company, 412-624-7298.


27 Emily Dickinson: The Poet Lights the Lamp, Yvon Hudson’s one-woman show about the American poet, 4 and 6 p.m., 144 Cathedral of Learning, 1-800-258-7488, www.alumni.pitt.edu.


NIGHTMARE IN VENICE, Red Priest performing music by Vivaldi, Johnson, and Taraf, 8 p.m., Synod Hall, 125 N. Craig St., Oakland, Renaissance and Baroque Society of Pittsburgh, 412-361-2048, www.rbsp.org.


November


December

1. **Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4**, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mariss Jansons, 8 p.m., through Nov. 11, Heinz Hall, 600 Penn Ave., 412-392-4900, www.pittsburghsymphony.org.


14. **Bohemian Rhapsody: Eastern European Elegance**, featuring Harry Baugniet (baroque trumpet) and Webb Wiggins (chamber organ), 8 p.m., St. Paul’s Neighborhood House, 214 2nd St., Oakland, also 2-8 p.m. Dec. 9, Chatham University’s Laughlin Music Center, Woodland Road, Shadyside, Chatham Baroque, 412-687-1788, www.chathambaroque.org.


Pitt’s International Week 2007, “Your World, Your Health”—celebrating the diversity of the University, Oakland, and the greater Pittsburgh community—will include panel discussions, lectures, and international food, dance, art, music, and films. The Sept. 23-30 event is sponsored by the University Center of International Studies’ Global Studies Program and Student Affairs’ Office of Cross-Cultural and Leadership Development, in collaboration with a number of campus, student, and community organizations.

International Week aims to expand the awareness of and interest in global learning opportunities by celebrating the intercultural diversity of campus life. It also supports and complements the University’s academic and public service missions.

Also part of this year’s International Week festivities are the fifth-annual African Festival and the 28th-annual Latin American and Caribbean Festival that take place Sept. 28 and Sept. 29, respectively.

Other International Week highlights will include the following:

**Sept. 24**
Lecture, “The Debt Can Go to ‘Hell-th’: The Effects of the Global Debt Crisis on the Public Health Crisis in Africa” 4 p.m., Bellefield Presbyterian Church (Fellowship Hall, basement), 4001 Fifth Ave., Oakland

**Sept. 25**
Lecture, “Human Rights, Human Security, and Health” 4-5:30 p.m., 3911 Posvar Hall Students in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs’ International Development master’s program will discuss their experiences in human rights NGOs, refugee camps, and other international placements.

Oakland International Restaurant Tour 6-9 p.m., various Oakland restaurants Sample a variety of international foods at participating restaurants with the purchase of a $10 ticket. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the William Pitt Union Ticket Office or the Office of International Services, also in the William Pitt Union.

Film Screening, Blood Diamond, directed by Edward Zwick 6:30-9 p.m., William Pitt Union’s Assembly Room

Film Screening, Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge, (the first of a three-part series), directed by Mike Beckham, Richard Dale, Sarah Holt, Tabitha Jackson, Rob Whittlesby, Gail Willumsen, and Andrew Young 7-9 p.m., 4130 Posvar Hall

Film Screening, Ho-Buah (The Bubble), directed by Eytan Fox 8:30 p.m., G-24 Cathedral of Learning

**Sept. 26**
Lecture, “Contemporary Slavery: Implications for Global Health and Policy” Noon, 4130 Posvar Hall Representatives of the Project to End Human Trafficking, a nonprofit organization working regionally, nationally, and internationally in the anti-slavery movement, will describe human trafficking and ways that policymakers, public health professionals, and concerned citizens can help to eradicate it.

Cultural Event, “African Cultural Workshop” 5-9 p.m., William Pitt Union’s Ballroom Participants will learn about African music, dance, and more.

Film Screening, Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge, (the second of a three-part series) 7-9 p.m., 4130 Posvar Hall Performance, “The Damask Drum” 8 p.m., Studio Theatre, located in the Cathedral of Learning basement Performances run through Sept. 29 at 8 p.m. with 2:30 p.m. matinees on Sept. 29 and 30.

Cultural Event, “Salsa Lessons” 9:15-10:15 p.m., Posvar Hall’s first floor Galleria Instructor Marlon Silva will teach the basics of Salsa dancing.

**Sept. 27**
Lecture, “Emergency USA” 10-11 a.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m., 4130 Posvar Hall Alberto Colombi will give an overview of the work that Emergency does all over the world to aid in medical and surgical assistance and rehabilitation in war zones.

Lecture, “Asia Over Lunch Lecture Series: Human Trafficking in Asia Linked With International Migration to Japan and South Korea” Noon, 4130 Posvar Hall A lecture by Minwoo Yun, assistant professor of criminal justice at Wheeling Jesuit University. Pizza will be served; bring your own drink.

Lecture, “UAE-U.S.: Common Interests; Shared Vision” Noon, William Pitt Union’s Kurtzman Room

**Sept. 28**
International Fair 11 a.m.-3 p.m., William Pitt Union Lawn The fair reflects the diverse cultures represented on Pitt’s campus and the University’s many study abroad options.

Cultural Event, African Festival 2007 3-8 p.m., William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge The festival features art exhibitions; music and dance, with a performance by the Umeja Arts Company; food, featuring “Congo Cuisine”; and a roundtable discussion of the fight against poverty in Africa. Also featured will be student presentations on studying in Africa.

**Sept. 29**
Pitt’s 28th-Annual Latin American and Caribbean Festival 10 a.m.-midnight, William Pitt Union The diversity of Latin American and Caribbean cultures will be displayed through exhibitions, food, arts and crafts, fine art, music, and dance. The festival will include the Carnival Exhibit at the nearby Carnegie Museum of Natural History and Remakes, an art exhibition by Cuban artist Elio Rodriguez, in Pitt’s Frick Fine Art Gallery.

Panel Discussion, Cross Cultural Forum 6-7:30 p.m., 630 William Pitt Union Panelists will share funny acculturation stories about the United States.

For more information and a complete calendar of events, visit www.ucis.pitt.edu/global/internationalweek.
Student Pianist Wins 2007 Pitt-Mellon Jazz Scholarship

By Sharon S. Blake

Pitt sophomore Ben Bromfield—who carries a double major in music and psychology—has won the 2007 Pitt-Mellon Jazz Scholarship. Funded jointly by the University and The Bank of New York Mellon, the $5,000 tuition prize is awarded annually to a Pitt music student based on submitted tapes of jazz standards that are judged by a panel of national jazz musicians.

Bromfield, 19, graduated last year from Newton North High School in Newton, Mass., and already has a repertoire that includes jazz, classical piano, and hip-hop. He was studying jazz piano by age seven, and has performed with a gospel choir, in high school musicals, and in a five-member rock band called The Press with high school classmates. The Press has just recorded an album and is seeking a label.

In Pittsburgh, Bromfield is the keyboardist for The Known World, which performs monthly at the Club Cafe on the Southside, and for the more production-oriented BMVz, which performs hip-hop. He is a member of The Pitt Jazz Ensemble and traveled with the ensemble to Negril, Jamaica, last May to meet and perform for rural schoolchildren. He can be spotted jamming with professional jazz musicians at Gullifty’s on Wednesday nights, and his own Ben Bromfield Trio is called upon for off-campus receptions and parties.

“Some of the biggest jazz programs are more structured, and you can’t pursue as many projects. Here, I am studying psychology—the academic subject that interests me the most—and playing jazz, the style of music closest to my heart.”

—Ben Bromfield

By Sharon S. Blake

An up-close-and-personal look at Pitt’s Department of Music is now available through the department’s new blog: www.music.pitt.edu/blog.

Music is one of the first Pitt departments to post a blog on its University home page. “It’s a much more dynamic way of distributing information, and frankly, one that most of our students are completely accustomed to,” says Phil Thompson, the department’s communications coordinator.

Music’s blog includes a TV interview with Pitt professor Andrew Weintraub and updates on performances, auditions, and rehearsals; visitors to the blog can not only read about upcoming performances, but also interact electronically with the performers.

Mellon Fellow J. S. Kofi Gbolonyo plans to post updates on his research as he travels the world, and Thompson plans to include audio and video recordings of music department events and, eventually, podcasts. RSS feeds are available.

The department’s students enjoy posting privileges, to spread the word about their upcoming gigs and other news. And, says Thompson, the blog will give prospective Pitt music students a fuller look at opportunities available to them on campus as well as abroad.

CHANCELLOR’S AWARD FOR STAFF FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY 2008

Help Reward Staff Excellence in Service to the Community

Nominations are being solicited for this University-wide award to recognize staff members whose dedication and effort have made their community a better place to live and improved the quality of life for others. This award is given annually to part-time or full-time staff members who have been employed at the University for a minimum of five years. Nominations can be made by individuals, groups, students, or alumni. Self-nominations are allowed. If you know of a staff member whose work demonstrates a consistent pattern of dedication to the University, please submit a nomination form to Jane W. Thompson, Chairperson of the Selection Committee, University of Pittsburgh, 1817 Cathedral of Learning, 4200 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. The nomination deadline is Friday, September 28, 2007. Please use the nomination form that has been mailed to all University faculty and staff and is available online at www.hr.pitt.edu/awards.htm. The nomination form will be reviewed to confirm that the nominee is eligible, after which the nominee, nominee’s supervisor, and nominator will receive notice of the nomination, along with a request for additional information.

A committee appointed by the chancellor will review the nominations and materials submitted and will select up to five persons to be honored. For more information, call 412-624-5576.

CHANCELLOR’S AWARD FOR STAFF FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY 2008

Help Reward Staff Excellence in Service to the University

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A committee appointed by the chancellor will review the nominations and materials submitted and will select up to five persons to be honored. For more information, call 412-624-5576.
Pitt Study Links Low Vitamin D During Pregnancy to Preeclampsia

By Michele D. Baum

Vitamin D deficiency early in pregnancy is associated with a five-fold increased risk of preeclampsia, according to a Pitt study reported this month in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism.

A serious complication of pregnancy marked by soaring blood pressure and swelling of the hands and feet, preeclampsia is the leading cause of premature delivery and maternal and fetal illness and death worldwide, conservatively projected to contribute to 76,000 deaths each year.

Preeclampsia, also known as toxemia, affects up to 7 percent of first pregnancies, and health care costs associated with preeclampsia are estimated at $7 billion a year in the United States alone, according to the Preeclampia Foundation.

“Our results showed that maternal vitamin D deficiency early in pregnancy is a strong, independent risk factor for preeclampsia,” said Lisa M. Bodnar, an assistant professor of epidemiology in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) and lead author of the study. “Women who developed preeclampsia had vitamin D concentrations that were significantly lower early in pregnancy compared to women whose pregnancies were normal. And even though vitamin D deficiency was common in both groups, the deficiency was more prevalent among those who went on to develop preeclampsia.”

For this investigation, Bodnar and her colleagues evaluated data and banked blood samples taken from women and newborns between 1997 and 2001 at Magee-Womens Hospital of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and affiliated private obstetrician practices. Data were analyzed for 1,198 women enrolled in the Pregnancy Exposures and Preeclampsia Prevention Study, a prospective survey designed to examine factors that may predispose women to preeclampsia. Out of this group, 55 cases of preeclampsia and 220 controls were selected for further study.

Samples of maternal blood were taken prior to 22 weeks pregnancy and again just before delivery. Samples of newborn umbilical cord blood also were tested for 25 hydroxyvitamin D, an indicator of vitamin D status.

“Low vitamin D early in pregnancy was associated with a five-fold increase in the odds of preeclampsia,” said Bodnar, who also is an assistant investigator at the Pitt-affiliated Magee-Womens Research Institute (MWRI). “Data showed this increased risk persisted even after adjusting for other known risk factors such as race, ethnicity, and prepregnancy body weight. Also troubling was the fact that many of the women reported taking prenatal vitamins, which typically contain 200 to 400 International Units of vitamin D.”

“Even a small decline in vitamin D concentration more than doubled the risk of preeclampsia,” noted the study’s senior author, James M. Roberts, professor of epidemiology, and MWRI founding director. “And, since newborns’ vitamin D stores are completely reliant on vitamin D from the mother, low vitamin D levels also were observed in the umbilical-cord blood of newborns from mothers with preeclampsia.”

Vitamin D deficiency early in life is associated with rickets—a disorder thought to have been eradicated in the United States more than 50 years ago—as well as increased risk for type 1 diabetes, asthma, and schizophrenia.

In the developing world, preeclampsia accounts for up to 80 percent of maternal deaths. And while treatment is more available in developed countries, preeclampsia remains the leading cause of maternal death. Infants born to mothers with preeclampsia have a risk of mortality five times greater than those born to women with normal pregnancies. In the United States alone, nearly 15 percent of preterm deliveries result from preeclampsia.

Pitt’s study was funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Tobacco Ads Target Blacks, Study Led by Primack Finds

By Megan Grote

African Americans are exposed to more pro-tobacco advertising than Whites are, according to a Pitt School of Medicine study published last month in Public Health Reports.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States, causing more than 440,000 deaths annually and costing more than $150 billion in direct and indirect costs each year. African Americans currently bear the greatest burden of this morbidity and mortality.

Although exposure to pro-tobacco media messages is now known to be a potent risk factor for tobacco use, whether Blacks are, in fact, exposed to more pro-tobacco advertising has been unclear until now.

“This review and meta-analysis demonstrates that African Americans are indeed disproportionately exposed to pro-tobacco mass media messages in terms of both concentration and density,” said Brian A. Primack, senior author of the study and a Pitt assistant professor of medicine and pediatrics. “These findings will help us develop interventions and further research aimed at reducing tobacco-related health disparities.”

In the study, Primack and colleagues evaluated data from both predominantly African American and White markets using studies from peer-reviewed journals. By extracting the number of total media messages, the number of tobacco-related messages, and the number of residents living in each market area, they were able to calculate the concentration and density of tobacco advertising in each market.

Concentration of tobacco advertising can be defined as the number of tobacco advertisements divided by the total number of advertisements.

According to our data, the concentration of pro-smoking signage is approximately 70 percent higher for African Americans. Our results also showed that there are about 2.6 times as many advertisements per person in African American areas as compared to Caucasian areas.

The findings suggest that Blacks may be special targets of the tobacco industry.

“This population may require specific public health interventions to counter the effect of unbalanced pro-tobacco promotion,” Primack said. “Knowing that they may be targeted could motivate African Americans to refuse to fall prey to industry tactics and help them avoid smoking.”

Primack and his fellow researchers pointed out limitations of their study. In particular, they said, the studies that met criteria for inclusion in this review focused on older forms of advertising and promotion, such as billboards and magazines.

This suggests that additional research is needed on current media portrayals of smoking, such as tobacco promotions and smoking in films.

Coauthors of the study included James E. Bost, a professor of medicine in the Pitt medical school’s Department of Neurological Surgery; Michael J. Fine, professor in the medical school’s Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences; and Stephanie R. Land, research assistant professor in the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Biostatistics.

Primack’s research was supported by a Physician Faculty Scholars Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a career development grant from the National Cancer Institute, and a grant from the Maurice Falk Foundation. Fine’s work was supported in part by a career development award from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.
**Happenings**

**Lectures/Seminars**

“Changing Sexuality in China,” 7 p.m., Sept. 17. “Gender Equality in China,” 5:30-7 p.m., Sept. 17. (Both lectures in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge.)

“Makeshifts in the Physicist’s Office,” 5 p.m., Sept. 17. (Discussion in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge.)

“Rhetoric and Democracy,” 5 p.m., Sept. 17. (Discussion in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge.)

“Intelligent Systems and the Future of Computing,” 5 p.m., Sept. 17. (Discussion in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge.)

“Human Tumor Antigens and a New View of Cancer Immunovaccination,” 5 p.m., Sept. 17. (Discussion in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge.)

**Event of the Week**

**STRIKING UP THE BANDS AND TAMING THE TIGERS**

Pitt defensive back Lowell Robinson (right) is pursued by Grambling State Tigers after making an interception during the Panthers’ 34-10 win over Grambling, Sept. 8.

**Farmed’s Market, 3:30-6:30 p.m.**

Every Friday through Nov. 16.

Fictioned above: Pitt senior nursing student Anne Whitaker at the market.

**miscellaneous**

**Pitt PhD Dissertation Defenses**


**University Special Events/Metings**


**Field Education Agency Fair**

Featuring information about internship and employ- ment opportunities at Pittsburgh human service agencies, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sept. 18, William Pitt Union’s Assembly Room, sponsored by Pitt’s School of Social Work, 412-624-5969.

“Promoting Research-related Writing Skills in Upper-Division and Graduate-Level Courses,” 1-4 p.m., Sept. 18. 149 Cathedral of Learning, Pitt chemistry seminar series, www.chem.pitt.edu.


**University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association Fall Family Picnic for postdocs and their families, 4-7 p.m., Sept. 20. Schenley Pavilion. To register, visit www.updpd.org.**

“Prolotherapy Encourages Natural Healing,” 7 a.m., Sept. 21. Weirton Medical Center, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

“The Case of Sophocles’ Antigone,” Wolfgang Bauernfeind, faculty member, University of Rostock, 4 p.m., Sept. 21. 244A Cathedral of Learning, Pitt Department of Classics, 412-624-4494.


“The Self and History,” Franziuka Meurt, professor of romance philology, University of Gottingen, Germany, 5 p.m., Sept. 25. 149 Cathedral of Learning, Pitt’s Department of French and Italian Languages and Literatures, www.frenchanditalian.pitt.edu.


“Human Tumor Antigens and a New View of Cancer Immunovaccination,” 5 p.m., Sept. 17. (Discussion in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge.)


“Promoting Research-related Writing Skills in Upper-Division and Graduate-Level Courses,” 1-4 p.m., Sept. 18. 149 Cathedral of Learning, Pitt chemistry seminar series, www.chem.pitt.edu.


**TRIUMPHING OVER THE BANDS AND TAMING THE TIGERS**

Pitt defensive back Lowell Robinson (right) is pursued by Grambling State Tigers after making an interception during the Panthers’ 34-10 win over Grambling, Sept. 8.

**Farmed’s Market, 3:30-6:30 p.m.**

Every Friday through Nov. 16.

Fictioned above: Pitt senior nursing student Anne Whitaker at the market.
Twilight of the CD? Pitt’s Ahmed Amer Sees It Coming—But Not Quite Yet

CDs debuted as a way to digitally record and distribute music, but they are essentially a storage medium for digital data. They were simple and convenient. They became more useful as movies, photography, and other media became digitized. In fact, the basic CD has not had any fundamental change in capacity since its introduction. It was the technology to read and encode them that became more robust. CDs were useful at the right time and remained so, thanks to the way content and data changed.

Was the CD really the superior technology?

CDs are an example of practicality and usability outweighing pure technical performance. There was a fair degree of disillusionment with CDs, particularly when people realized that they don’t actually last forever. But the most popular technology is not always the best technology.

Digital Audio Tapes (DAT) and MiniDiscs were advertised as CD-killers in the mid-80s and early-90s. They were digital, in some ways more durable, and could be rewritten, but they failed to replace CDs. Audio CD players and CD-ROM drives had taken hold in the market. In spite of the CD’s deficiencies, its availability—and then the introduction of recordable and rewritable CDs—made it hard to replace. It was simpler to stick with CDs and come up with ways to improve their performance.

What threatens the CD now?

People don’t erase data anymore and they want more space. In 2006, a study by International Data Corporation, a technology market research and analysis firm, estimated that computer users generated more than 160 exabytes—that’s the number 160 followed by 18 zeroes—of raw data. That amount has been compared to 12 stacks of books each reaching from the Earth to the Sun.

With music libraries and video files, we will soon need to back up computers to physically move data, and the de facto method of publishing and distributing music. As long as a blank CD costs 10 cents to a quarter, I’ll still burn my holiday photos to it and send a copy to my friends and family. I can still burn a few songs to a CD and have music for a road trip. Plus, as long as it doesn’t break it will always be there. The idea that this shiny disc can save your music or home video forever is appealing, even if it’s not entirely true.

What is the CD’s legacy?

It is an icon of the mass adoption of digital technology. It wasn’t the first popular digital medium—floppies were digital—but it has been the most successful and, surprisingly, long-lived. The CD made digital media widely accessible and people embraced its flexibility. The DVD and its successors use the same basic form as the original CD. I don’t think that’s going to change for a long time.

Does the rise of other digital devices mean the CD will vanish soon?

Not exactly. What determines a technology’s future is if it is cheap, convenient, and useful. CDs are still all of those. They are the cheapest backup medium for the home computer, the easiest way for some to physically move data, and the de facto method of publishing and distributing music. As long as a blank CD costs 10 cents to a quarter, I’ll still burn my holiday photos to it and send a copy to my friends and family. I can still burn a few songs to a CD and have music for a road trip. Plus, as long as it doesn’t break it will always be there. The idea that this shiny disc can save your music or home video forever is appealing, even if it’s not entirely true.

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