Back to School
Thinking Outside The Classroom

New Pitt curriculum to help students develop life skills, build communications and leadership abilities, and maintain healthy lifestyles.
The year just closed was another period of exceptional progress for Pitt, and we enter the new year with great momentum. Among other things, both the academic standards and the fiscal health of the University were boosted by the fact that we reached historic highs in such mission-critical areas as applications for admission and research funding. Also, as private support has become increasingly important not only for Pitt but for all of American higher education, it is noteworthy that last year’s fundraising efforts produced institutional records in terms of total voluntary support, individual support, foundation support, and total number of donors; attracted the largest gift in our history, and pushed our capital campaign past the $1.7 billion mark.

As we celebrate these achievements, though, we continue to move through times that are presenting serious fiscal challenges. While our financial team has done an exceptional job of protecting our assets, avoiding problems that plagued many strong institutions, the growth of our endowment obviously will be impeded by the overall state of the economy. Dramatically rising costs in service areas ranging from energy to food will also affect our institutional budget, just as they affect the budgets of the universities of families who make up the Pitt community.

Adding to these more general challenges is the fact that Commonwealth funding for Pennsylvania’s public universities is still woefully below the levels of support provided to most of our competitor universities by the governments of their home states. This is not a new problem. The Commonwealth appropriation amounted to 32 percent of our overall budget in the mid-1970’s, shrank to less than 20 percent by the mid-1990’s, and is just 11 percent of our budget today.

To be clear, the overall rate of Commonwealth spending has not been shrinking. Indeed, from 2001 through 2008, the Commonwealth budget grew by 4 percent, though our appropriation increased by only 6.7 percent. That low, single-digit increase does compound unfavourably with inflation, which will have risen by about 30 percent over that same period—measured by the Consumer Price Index, while the increase in the Higher Education Price Index will be even higher. To take a single example illustrating the pressures this creates, our utility expenses have grown by nearly $31 million since 2001, while our appropriation has increased by less than $12 million during that period.

This year’s Commonwealth budget exceeded these trends. In a year in which the overall Commonwealth budget grew by 4 percent, Pitt’s appropriation increased by only 1.4 percent. This prompted sympathetic legislators from both political parties to observe that Pennsylvania’s public research universities clearly were not a Commonwealth funding priority—despite the key contributions that each makes toward the Commonwealth’s economy. Pitt’s academic and research contributions have grown by nearly $31 million since 2001, while our Commonwealth appropriation has increased by less than $12 million during that period.

Our increased costs in that one area are expected to be more than $5 million larger than our entire appropriation increase.

Dealing with these troubling trends has not been easy, either for the members of the University Planning and Budgeting Committee (UPBC)—which includes administrative, faculty, staff, and student representatives—or for the University’s senior management team. However, the budget recommended to and recently approved by the Budget and Executive Committees of our Board of Trustees is the product of committed and creative efforts to ensure that we can continue making investments that are essential to our progress. To give just a few examples, that budget provides for new investments in student-life programming, high-potential research initiatives, and campus safety.

Controlling tuition increases and providing the best possible salary-increase pool also were high priorities throughout the budget-building process. On the tuition front, as already has been publicized, tuition for Pennsylvania residents enrolled at the Pittsburgh campus will increase by 6 percent, while tuition for out-of-state students at that campus will increase by 4 percent. At our regional campuses, tuition for in-state students will increase by 4 percent and for out-of-state students by 2 percent. Tuition for both in-state and out-of-state students enrolled in the School of Dental Medicine and School of Medicine will increase by 4 percent.

We expect that increases at this level will be in line with increases at like institutions. It also is important to note that some meaningful relief from these increases will be provided by increases to our financial aid budget and from support provided by our fundraising efforts. From 1998 to 2008, we raised more than $150 million for scholarships and fellowships, and we have made attracting such support an even higher priority in our ongoing capital campaign. Believing that compensation should be a high priority but recognizing that any increases to our Commonwealth appropriation likely would be very modest, the UPBC recommended that the budget contain a 3.75 percent salary-increase pool and further urged that any additional funds made available as the Commonwealth budget was finalized be added to the salary-increase pool as a first priority. The UPBC further recommended that salary-increase funds be distributed on the following basis: 2.25 percent for all employees whose work has been rated as satisfactory; 1.0 percent for merit, market, and equity adjustments to be made at the unit level; and 0.5 percent to be distributed by senior officers to address market imbalances between various units of the University.

Unfortunately, no new Commonwealth funds were forthcoming. However, other adjustments permitted us to raise the salary-increase pool to 4 percent. That somewhat larger pool will be distributed as follows: 2.5 percent for all employees whose work has been rated as at least satisfactory; 1.0 percent for merit, market, and equity adjustments to be made at the unit level; and 0.5 percent to be distributed by senior officers to address market imbalances between various units of the University.

To better address market imbalances at the unit level, a unit-level budgeting process will be implemented that will enable units to identify profits and losses, and to make budget adjustments to redress any adverse impacts.

Our increased costs in one area are expected to be more than $5 million larger than our entire appropriation increase.

The University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown has received $4 million in state funds for the construction of a new nursing and health sciences building as part of the Commonwealth’s “Put Pennsylvania to Work” initiative, Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell announced Aug. 6 at a ceremony in Ebensburg, Pa. The funds, which will be used to train more nurses and other health care practitioners, will further the University of Pittsburgh’s commitment to contribute to Western Pennsylvania’s economic development by providing educational services throughout the region.

Pitt’s world-renowned Schools of the Health Sciences are known for having provided essential training for the medical professions and services that have become part of the foundation of Western Pennsylvania’s economy. Pitt-Johnstown will be working closely with the health sciences schools as it reaches out to the people of this region.

In accepting a ceremonial check from Rendell, Pitt-Johnstown President Jem Spectar said that it was a milestone in the history of Pitt-Johnstown: “We are very grateful for Governor Rendell’s support, and we are deeply appreciative of his commitment to the people of Cambria County and our health care needs. The generosity of the Commonwealth will help ensure that our hopes for improved health sciences education and quality health care are realized.”

Spectar added that the funding makes it possible for Pitt-Johnstown to build upon “its existing capacity and expertise in allied health care programs and nursing to develop and intensify cooperative partnerships with local health care providers.” The funding supports UPJ’s plan to develop a facility that will house health sciences programs.

Spectar said the funds also would help address a growing shortage of health care workers across the Commonwealth. “We anticipate that, over the next decade, our initiatives in health care areas will strengthen the workforce of our region,” Spectar said.

E. Jeanne Gleason, chair of the Pitt-Johnstown Advisory Board and a member of the University’s Board of Trustees, said, “We are delighted that the governor recognized the merit of this important initiative. This will enable Pitt-Johnstown to be at the forefront of contributing to the number of health care professionals to meet the needs of the Commonwealth.”

Founded in 1927, Pitt-Johnstown is the first and largest regional campus of the University of Pittsburgh.
Sharpening the Competitive Edge

Pitt’s Outside the Classroom Curriculum is designed to encourage students to broaden their experiences, education

By Patricia Lomando White

Competition is the name of the game in academics, business, sports, and life—and University of Pittsburgh students are no strangers to the game. Now, Pitt students can enhance their skills outside the classroom and sharpen their competitive edge.

Beginning this fall, Pitt will introduce the Outside the Classroom Curriculum (OCC), a Universitywide initiative that includes a series of extracurricular programs and experiences to complement students’ academic studies. It is designed to help students develop important personal attributes and professional skills needed for future success.

More than two years in the making, OCC is unique in its scope. “There are some schools that have bits and pieces of a structured, outside-the-classroom curriculum,” said Kathy W. Humphrey, Pitt vice provost and dean of students. “But, from what we can determine, there is a program in place to support education of the whole student with this level of depth and breadth.”

The OCC is based on the Pitt Pathway, a set of resources—such as career counselors, faculty, and student organizations—that help students find their paths to academic, personal, and professional success. OCC focuses on nine key areas: leadership development, career preparation, communication skills, healthy lifestyle, understanding diversity, a sense of self, community participation, appreciation for the arts, and service to others.

For each of the nine categories, OCC offers a wide range of activities to choose from and specifies the years in which they are to be completed. The following sampling of the varied OCC activities in four categories reveals the program’s breadth.

In the leadership category, students can complete the Emerging Leaders Program, join a student organization, coordinate a book club or reading group, serve as an officer in a student organization, or serve as a facilitator in peer-mentor programs.

In the career-preparation area, students can participate in the Career Development Explore program, attend a career development session, meet with a career counselor, attend the mandatory book discussion on the new OCC program during orientation, or develop a résumé.

In the healthy lifestyle category, students can participate in a recreational or physical activity for two hours a week, visit the Student Health Service Open House, learn how to read a nutrition facts label, or maintain a healthy diet and body weight.

In the appreciation for the arts area, students can compose poetry, develop creative poster presentations for research or class projects, perform in a campus or off-campus production, serve as a PITT ARTS host, or assist with fundraising for the arts.

Students who complete the OCC requirements will receive an Outside the Classroom Curriculum “transcript” documenting their participation; they also will receive a green cord of distinction to wear at commencement. Most importantly, according to Humphrey, students will have numerous opportunities to gain and sharpen skills that will make them more successful as students and Pitt graduates.

Derived from goals for undergraduate students established by Pitt’s Office of the Provost, OCC was developed by a campuswide committee comprising students, faculty, and staff.

According to Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor James V. Maher, employers and admissions officers at graduate and professional schools, when surveyed, consistently express interest in graduates who write critically, make good decisions, and understand the diversity of cultures in the United States and throughout the world.

“In short, they are looking for a sophisticated, well-rounded person,” said Maher. “What excites me about OCC is that our campus collaborated to develop a structured way for students to accomplish this goal. This enhanced Pitt Pathway is flexible, yet intentional; it is designed to encourage and challenge.”

Humphrey said she hopes the OCC will “help students maximize their Pitt experience and gain a competitive edge in whatever field they choose to pursue. From the moment students arrive on campus, we want them to be thinking about their future—what skills and attributes they should be developing both in and outside the classroom.

“Mostly, we are eager to help students be transformed into the men or women they want to become,” she added. Incoming freshmen will be introduced to OCC at orientation training sessions. In addition, resident assistants will conduct training sessions on each floor of the residence halls to help students determine which programs and activities are best suited for them. Several of the OCC orientation programs fulfill OCC requirements, giving freshmen a jump start. Second-year students and upperclassmen will be able to join the curriculum as well.

While students can participate in workshops, for example, to gain a credit toward one of the nine goals, they also can obtain credit for such things as attending a basketball game or a concert. Humphrey noted that OCC’s goal isn’t to make students’ lives more difficult, but to give some credit in areas in which students already are involved. Other activities may put students outside their comfort zones and push them a bit.

The message being sent is that “connecting to this institution is important to us,” Humphrey said.

Pitt’s Computing Services and Systems Development customized a software package to allow students to track their progress through the program. Students will have the ability to register for programs, track their attendance through a swipe-card system, and ultimately generate a transcript.

“The key to this system is that students will be able to document that they accepted the challenge of gaining diversified sets of skills and experiences as undergraduates,” Humphrey said. “Plus, they will be able to articulate how their experiences have transformed their lives and made them the types of people a company wants to hire or that a school wants to admit.”

A 20-member development committee comprising representatives from the University’s administration and faculty as well as students worked two years to create the Outside the Classroom Curriculum. Pictured here are committee members: (from left) Kathy W. Humphrey, vice provost and dean of students; James Selker, assistant director of development services in Computing Services & Systems Development; Shawn E. Brooks, associate dean of students and director of Residence Life; Georgine Maternik, assistant to the vice provost and dean of students; Keith Cathell, director of career services and alumni affairs, School of Social Work; and Donna Britz, senior academic advisor, School of Arts and Sciences Advising Center.

Pennsylvania Hall to Offer Leadership Living-Learning Community

By Shawn Brooks

For several years, Pitt’s Office of Residence Life has provided upperclassmen in residence halls with more than just a home away from home. Partnering with various academic departments, Residence Life has been introducing Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) designed to extend learning beyond the classroom.

This fall marks the introduction of a Leadership Living-Learning Community in Pennsylvania Hall. One of its attributes is a partnership with Leadership Pittsburgh Inc., whose mission is to strengthen regional leadership through programs, partnerships, and connections.

Students selected to participate in this program will have opportunities to:

• Network with community leaders through the Leadership-Community Connections Program, a collaboration between Pitt and Leadership Pittsburgh;
• Work in teams to identify campus problems and develop strategies to address them;
• Participate in monthly leadership development workshops and Leadership Chat Dinners, informal meets with industry leaders;
• Participate in a Spring Leadership Summit—also open to students from other local colleges and universities—designed to maximize leadership potential both on and off campus;
• Participate in community-based service-learning programs and initiatives;
• Participate in an optional leadership service-abroad trip to Ireland during spring break 2009;
• Create personalized leadership development portfolios; and
• Receive Leadership designations on their transcript.

In addition, involvement in these programs can help students attain a Certificate in Leadership and Ethics within the College of Business Administration or a Leadership Certificate within the School of Arts and Sciences.

Residence Life offers 11 upperclassman LLCs as well as four first-year communities. More information is available at www.reslife.pitt.edu/competitiveedge/index.html.
New Pitt Faculty Bring Diversity, Commitment to Excellence in Teaching

The University welcomes a number of new faculty this year who bring a tremendous breadth and diversity of experience as well as a commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service. The profiles here offer an introductory sampling of those new faculty members.

Amy Ai, School of Social Work

Ai is a former associate professor at the University of Washington and a Hartford Foundation Scholar and Affiliated Researcher of Integrative Medicine in the University of Michigan Health System. She joins the University as a professor in the School of Social Work. Her research interests include the interdisciplinary study of aging, for which she won the Association for Gerontology in Social Work’s prestigious Leadership Award; the interdisciplinary study of health and related well-being; and the connection between post-traumatic stress disorder and post-traumatic growth following crisis or adversity. She received her PhD in psychology from the University of Michigan.

Ai’s other areas of research interest include research methodology issues in clinical studies on mental-health behavior and faith-related intervention and mind-body medicine; complementary and alternative medicine; and the areas’ implications for integrative medicine and health care policy, and health care disparity and its implications for research, practice, and policy.

Ipsita Banerjee, Department of Chemical Engineering, Swanson School of Engineering

Banerjee pursuing postdoctoral research at the Harvard Medical School’s Center for Engineering in Medicine, Banerjee joins the Department of Chemical Engineering as a research associate professor. She received her PhD in chemical engineering from Rutgers University.

Her primary research interest is in process systems engineering application in different chemical and biomedical problems. She also is interested in reaction network modeling and the development of reduced reaction networks for energy-efficient combustion processes.

Daniel Balderston, Mellon Professor of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, Arts and Sciences

Balderston joined the School of Arts and Sciences in January as professor and Andrew W. Mellon Chair in Modern Languages in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures. A literary scholar and critic of Latin American literature, Balderston came to Pitt from the University of Iowa, where he held an endowed professorship. He received his PhD in Hispanic Studies at Harvard University, where he studied atomic physics and received the Harvard Foundation Fellowship for exceptional creativity and outstanding potential in research.

Balderston’s research has focused on how literature and culture shape communities and the role of identity in the construction and properties of nanostructured surfaces, as well as new research trapping extended molecules such as carbon nanotubes with atomic physics techniques.

Ira J. Fox, Department of Surgery, School of Medicine

Fox is a professor of surgery and director of the Center for Innovative Regenerative Therapies, a collaborative activity between Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and the Pitt-UPMC McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine (MIRM), and Pitt’s Department of Pediatrics. He serves as a core faculty member at MIRM. Fox comes to Pitt from the University of Nebraska, where he was the E.C. and James W. McLaughlin Professor of Surgery.

Fox’s research focuses on developing novel gene therapies to restore liver function and regenerate damaged livers. Fox has more than 100 publications and two patents to his credit. He serves as ad hoc associate editor for Liver Transplantation, on the editorial board of Stem Cells, and serves as a reviewer for several other peer-reviewed professional journals.

Mark T. Gladwin, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine

Gladwin joins the University as a professor of medicine in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine. He also will serve as director of the newly created Hemostasis and Vascular Biology Research Institute. Gladwin previously served as branch chief of vascular medicine and director of the functional genomics core at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Gladwin’s research focuses on nitric oxide and its many contributions to cardiovascular biology, including vasodilatation, pulmonary hypertension, vasospasm, and hemolytic- associated pulmonary hypertension in sickle cell disease. Gladwin was elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation and has received an NIH Merit Award as well as the NIH Director’s Award for Mentoring. He received his MD from the University of Miami Honors Program in Medical Education.

Kimberly Gomez, Department of Instruction and Learning, School of Education; Research Scientist, LRDC

Gomez, associate professor in the University of Illinois at Chicago’s College of Education and a researcher in its Learning Sciences Research Institute, joins the School of Education’s Department of Instruction and Learning and its Learning Policy Center as an associate professor. She also will undertake research in the Learning Research and Development Center.

Gomez’ funded research projects include a study of the relationship between reading and science achievement among high school students in technology-rich urban after-school programs, with a particular focus on the development of new media literacies. She recently published an edited volume, with Katherine Richardson Bruna, on The Frontline: Uncharted Cultural Classrooms: Talking Science, Writing Science (Routledge/Erbbaum, 2008).

Gomez earned her PhD degree in educational psychology at the University of Chicago.

continued on page 5
Continued from page 4

New Pitt Faculty Bring Commitment to Excellence

Louis Gomez,
Bellen Faison Professor, School of Education; Senior Scientist, URC

Gomez, currently Aon Professor of Learning Sciences, professor of computer science, and Learning Science Program cochair at Northwestern University, will join the University in January as the new Bellen Faison Professor of Urban Education. He will lead the school's Center for Urban Education and, in addition to holding his chair in the School of Education, will be a senior scientist in the Learning Research and Development Center.

Gomez has worked with local communities to create social arrangements and curricula that support school improvement. He will play a key leadership role in the University’s partnership with the Pittsburgh Public Schools’ University Prep 6-12 school at the former Milliones School in the Hill District.

Gomez has served as a trustee of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advance- ment of Teaching and is a member of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board and the Board of Directors of the Center for Education at the National Research Council. Gomez received a PhD in cognitive psychology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Jeffrey Kharoufeh,
Department of Industrial Engineering, Swanson School of Engineering

Kharoufeh, formerly of the Faculty of the Air Force Institute of Technology’s Graduate School of Engineering and Management at the Air Force Institute of Technology, is an associate professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering. He earned his doctorate in industrial engineering and operations research from Pennsylvania State University.

Kharoufeh is primarily interested in the application of probability and stochastic processes for the design, performance evaluation, control, and optimization of stochastic engineering service systems. His focus areas include queueing systems, reliability modeling and analysis, maintenance optimization, models for computer and communication networks and transportation systems.


Suzanne Staggenborg,
Department of Sociology, Arts and Sciences

Staggenborg joins the School of Arts and Sciences as a professor of sociology, coming to Pitt from McGill University in Montreal, where she was professor and chair in its Department of Sociology. Staggenborg works on political and social movements that originate in new grassroots movements that may influence politics, public opinion, government policy, and law. Her focus is on issues of gender, leadership, and culture in social movement organizations in the United States and Canada. She earned her PhD in sociology at Northwestern University. Staggenborg has authored an award-winning monograph published by Oxford University Press titled The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict, and she recently edited a major methodological compendium, Methods of Social Movement Research. Staggenborg is a past chair of the Collective Behavior and Social Movements section of the American Sociological Association.

Bennett Van Houten,
Department of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology, School of Medicine

Van Houten is a senior investigator in molecular genetics and branch chief for program analysis in the Division of Extramural Research and Training of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. He joined Pitt as a professor of pharmacology and chemical biology. Van Houten's research focuses on molecular aspects of nucleotide base excision repair in E. coli, yeast, C. elegans, and mammalian cells. He has been honored with an NIH Merit Award and also has received the NIH Director's Award and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Scholar Award in Technology. He earned his PhD in biomedical sciences and genetics at the University of Tennessee.

Jean-Pierre Vilardaga,
Department of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology, School of Medicine

Vilardaga, an assistant professor of pharmacology and chemical biology, was recruited from Harvard Medical School, where he was an assistant professor of medicine. His research examines the molecular basis underlying functional properties of G-protein coupled receptors, which are key initiators of biological signaling in every cell type. Vilardaga received the Santiago Ramon y Cajal Award in neuroscience from Spain and the Young Investigators Award from the Advances in Mineral Metabolism/American Society for Bone and Mineral Research. He received his PhD in biological chemistry from the Free University of Brussels in Belgium.

Randall Walsh,
Department of Economics, Arts and Sciences

Walsh, associate professor in the Department of Economics, comes to the School of Arts and Sciences from the University of Colorado. He is an applied microeconomist whose research has focused on problems bridging environmental, urban, and public economics.

Walsh has adapted an empirical equilibrium model that handles spatially distributed data to explore the economic impacts of environmental improvements. His locational equilibrium models explore a range of environmental issues; other projects include addressing the impact of intrahousehold negotiation on household decision-making. Walsh’s work on data based on analysis of the game show The Weakest Link.

Walsh received his doctorate in economics from Duke University.

Nuclear Engineering Program Gets Three Federal Grants

By Morgan Kelly

The University of Pittsburgh received three government grants totaling $750,000 to bolster the nuclear engineering graduate and graduate certificate programs based in Pitt’s Swanson School of Engineering. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recently awarded 60 institutions nearly $20 million in Nuclear Education Grants meant to support course development, scholarships and fellowships, and faculty recruitment for nuclear energy-related programs.

Pitt’s two-year-old nuclear engineering certificate program—the only such track in Western Pennsylvania—and Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania were the only institutions in the state to receive an award. They join such institutions as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Purdue University, and Virginia Tech in obtaining NRC support.

These grants signify that the University of Pittsburgh is becoming a major player in nuclear engineering education and in meeting the workforce and research needs for the nuclear renaissance in the United States,” said Larry R. Foulke, director of Pitt’s nuclear engineering program, which includes the graduate and undergraduate certificate tracks.

The NRC grants will be instrumental in expanding the nuclear program’s research and teaching capability, Foulke said. Pitt will use a $450,000 Faculty Development grant to broaden the program to include nuclear-oriented faculty research in addition to the current emphasis on educating students in reactor operations and safety. A $200,000 grant will go toward establishing graduate scholarships, and a second-year award of $100,000 will promote the expansion of the graduate-level certificate program's distance-learning component. That builds on an initial $200,000 NRC grant in 2007 used to create a distance-learning module, a unique aspect of Pitt’s graduate certificate that is geared toward students across Pennsylvania and offering further education to nuclear engineers already in the workplace, Foulke said.

Westinghouse Electric Co. and FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co. submitted letters of support to the NRC endorsing Pitt’s program as a key source of the trained professionals both companies increasingly seek. With its unique concentration of nuclear engineering experts, Western Pennsylvania is emerging as a focal point of nuclear power’s budding resurgence in light of the rising cost of oil and the political and environmental concerns associated with fossil fuels.

Pitt nuclear engineering students work closely with professionals from Westinghouse, one of the world’s largest vendors of nuclear reactor technology; the Bechtel Bettis Inc. naval nuclear propulsion research laboratory in West Mifflin; and FirstEnergy, which operates the Beaver Valley Power Station nuclear power plant in Shippingport. In addition, an advisory committee of engineers and managers from these three companies took part in designing the curriculum to ensure that students learn the most relevant information, and experts from those companies also serve as adjunct professors.
The University of Pittsburgh Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business has added a key tool to its experience-based learning curriculum: a new state-of-the-art financial laboratory. The lab, which features a financial trading simulator, stock tickers, tote display boards, 58 computer stations, live news feeds, and classroom space, provides students with real-time stock market data and access to faculty who are seasoned in global financial markets.

John Delaney, dean of the Katz School and the College of Business Administration (CBA), made it a priority to put plans for the financial lab into motion upon joining Pitt in 2006. The recently completed construction of the $2.3 million, 3,000-square-foot lab in Mervis Hall will be used in courses tailored to give students a serious glimpse into the world of financial markets.

While finding trading rooms at business schools is not uncommon, most schools are not using the technology to its full potential, says Kuldeep Shastri, for example, will teach a spring semester course on market microstructure and trading in the lab. The trading room’s simulator software will provide a dose of reality by adjusting the price of the students’ virtual market, for example, to reflect the students’ buying and selling decisions.

A feature that truly exemplifies the capabilities of the lab is one that allows students to use technology to test their own market strategies with historically accurate data. Once refined, the developed strategies can then be applied and tested with real-time data.

Thomas says the business school faculty and administration felt strongly about installing a financial lab so Pitt students can compete successfully with graduates of schools with similar learning environments.

“The lab will allow students to develop the competencies they’ll need for careers in finance,” says Thomas. “It will allow them to hit the ground running. They’ll be familiar with the analytical tools and software commonly used in Wall Street trading rooms and corporate finance institutions at the highest levels.”

Marios Panayides, an assistant professor of finance in the University of Utah’s David Eccles School of Business, will join Pitt as a visiting professor this fall to teach a course on financial modeling. He says he plans to help the students become comfortable using financial models in Excel.

“Learning by doing” is a highly effective way of gaining deeper insights into financial models,” says Panayides. “Most of the corporate world requires finance graduates to have a deep knowledge of spreadsheets and Excel along with basic financial modeling. The class meets both demands.”

The lab “brings a lot more reality into classroom discussions,” he says.

John Delaney

New Financial Lab in Mervis Hall to Simulate Global Financial Markets

By Amanda Leff

The University of Pittsburgh Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business has added a key tool to its experience-based learning curriculum: a new state-of-the-art financial laboratory. The lab, which features a financial trading simulator, stock tickers, tote display boards, 58 computer stations, live news feeds, and classroom space, provides students with real-time stock market data and access to faculty who are seasoned in global financial markets. Kuldeep Shastri (above), the Roger S. Ahlbrandt Sr. Endowed Chair in Finance and professor of business administration at Katz, will teach a course in the spring on market microstructure and trading. Using the lab “brings a lot more reality into classroom discussions,” he says.

John Delaney

Pitt to Rework 11 Intersections On Fifth and Forbes Avenues

By John Fedele

The University of Pittsburgh has committed $250,000 to a project aimed at enhancing pedestrian safety at 11 intersections along Fifth and Forbes avenues.

Pitt is one of the institutional partners of the Hometown Streets Project, a $2.1 million undertaking cosponsored by the Oakland Transportation Management Association (OTMA) and the City of Pittsburgh. In addition to having committed financial support, the University will provide in-kind construction project management support to the effort, which began June 30 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

The project’s pedestrian safety and mobility improvements include pedestrian countdown signals, curb extensions, wider and more visible crosswalks, and enhanced lighting and plantings for traffic calming. They will be made at the following Fifth Avenue intersections: Thackery and Meyran avenues; South Bouquet, DeSoto, and Atwood streets; and McKee Place.

The Forbes Avenue intersections to be improved are South Bouquet and Atwood streets, Oakland and Meyran avenues, and McKee Place.

Pitt’s representative on the Hometown Streets Project Committee was G. Reynolds Clark, vice chancellor for community initiatives and chief of staff, Office of the Chancellor; Paul Supowitz, vice chancellor for governmental relations; and John Wilds, assistant vice chancellor of community and governmental relations. Ron Leibow, project manager for Pitt’s Office of Facilities Management, will oversee construction.

“This is a community-wide project that will benefit not only the students, faculty, and staff at Pitt, but the thousands of people who work, shop, and visit Oakland each day,” said Clark.

Joining Pitt as community partners are the City of Pittsburgh, the Oakland Taskforce, the Oakland Business Improvement District, the Oakland Community Council, and the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation. In addition to Pitt, funders include the City of Pittsburgh, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Also included in the project are the replacement of the street lights along Forbes Avenue from McKee Place to the University of Pittsburgh foot bridge and a replacement design for the Fifth Avenue bus lane railing.
Pitt’s School of Information Sciences Helps Kosovo University Build Telecommunications

By Morgan Kelly

Pitt’s School of Information Sciences (SIS) will lend its telecommunications expertise to the world’s newest nation to help launch a graduate program at Kosovo’s University of Pristina, the recovering Balkan nation’s primary university. The hope for the three-year, $450,000 project (supported by the U.S. Department of State) is for the program to serve as a source of ideas and experts that the beleaguered country needs to rebuild its infrastructure following years of war and unrest from the ethnic-Albanian majority’s push for independence from Serbia.

The program begins this semester with SIS faculty members training one Pristina professor each year in Pitt’s SIS telecommunications lab and also helping the visiting professors shape the experience into a curriculum for the new program. SIS will also help oversee the construction of a similar lab in Pristina next summer. Plans call for the first Kosovar students to enroll in the two-year program in fall 2009. The third year will be spent evaluating and fine-tuning the program.

Though the University of Pristina suffered during the war, it remains a prominent institution in the fledgling nation and affords the program the best chance to flourish and benefit Kosovo, said Pitt anthropology professor Robert Hayden, the project’s codirector. Martin Weiss, a SIS professor and associate dean. On one hand, the Pristina university has not had a lot of time or money to invest in essential technology. Yet, because of the fledgling nation’s technology gap, local academic and political leaders seem to support the program and acknowledge its potential to help foster economic independence, Weiss said.

“It is fair to say that modern technology has been inconsistently deployed across campus,” said Weiss, who traveled to Pristina to evaluate the university’s existing facilities. “There are pockets of relatively up-to-date technology and Internet access is often available, but outages are not uncommon and bandwidth is somewhat limited.

“If they want to be competitive in today’s world, there is no other choice, and they understand that,” Weiss continued. “The government has rebuilt a lot, but the damage is still extensive; if I were a leader I wouldn’t know where to start. They are going to need a lot of help to restore their infrastructure, and motivated students know that. They also know that other jobs are scarce.”

In constructing the Pristina program, SIS has the advantage of working with a blank slate on which it can incorporate the lessons learned from building and nurturing its own 20-year-old telecommunications graduate program, Weiss said.

SIS joins a long list of Pitt schools that are lending their expertise to universities in Eastern Europe and, it is the third school—along with Pitt’s Schools of Education and Law—to help build a program in Pristina, Hayden said. REES proposes projects in Eastern Europe to Pitt schools and faculty and provides much-needed guidance should they accept.

Although Kosovo is mending, SIS enters a country with an uncertain future. Since Kosovo declared independence in February, the United States and nearly four dozen other nations—including France and Britain—have recognized its sovereignty, but Serbia and such nations as China and Russia have not.

“We have expertise in administering programs in this region, which is not always easy,” Hayden said. “In Kosovo especially there is a very complex political situation. Often no one knows what to do or who’s in charge...” - Robert Hayden

“The influx of international visitors to our campus to assist in traffic control. Individuals parking in Soldiers and Sailors Garages will be able to exit onto University Place, but will be required to turn right toward O’Hara Street.

University Drive B (from Allequippa Street to University Drive) will be closed from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, Aug. 19-22. Because traffic on Allequippa Street is expected to be heavier than normal, Pitt Police will be stationed at Allequippa Street and University Drive to assist in traffic control.

Schenley Quadrangle, which is accessible from Fifth Avenue, will be restricted to individuals moving in and out of Schenley Hall.
There is no formal method for testing the strength of bamboo for building structures, so Derek Mitch has to invent one. The Pitt Swanson School of Engineering senior’s only resources are the texts of his college, a working knowledge of concrete construction, and a 22-page chapter of general guidelines from the Indian Building Code. A budding engineer couldn’t ask for a better challenge: “It’s a totally different way of looking at engineering,” Mitch says.

His conundrum—and opportunity—stem from a May trip to the Indian Himalayan region of Darjeeling and Sikkim, where he investigated the design and construction of bamboo buildings. Fellow students who accompanied him tackled issues ranging from slope stability to clean energy. Together, the aspiring Pitt engineers, led by Pitt civil engineering professor and William Kepler Whiteford Faculty Fellow Kent Harries, cut their teeth by helping an Indian engineering group, Sustainable Himal Engineering and Design (SHED), create and promote a plan for sustainable construction in an area desperate for new approaches. Harries hopes to make the journey to India’s Himalayan foothills an annual event.

Students would experience a level of involvement and need for innovation that few other environments could offer, Harries says. Sikkim and Darjeeling straddle the planet’s most unstable terrain. Traditional building methods involve masonry and concrete that have to be tracked along rugged, winding roads where uninsured contractors and temporary workers cobble together buildings that list on the soft-soil hillsides and crumble from frequent mudslides and earthquakes. Aside from being challenged by the terrain and resource limitations, engineers in this remote part of India lack access to the equipment needed to perform basic quality control and assurance testing. So, Pitt students like Mitch take the lead, drawing upon the Swanson School’s numerous labs—and sometimes creating test methods and standards that don’t exist.

“This is a fantastic environment for an engineering student because it presents a true engineering problem,” Harries says. “The issues are terrain, the weather, the available resources—are everywhere, but the solutions to each are very different.”

Structural engineer Gayatri Kharel, a former graduate student of Harries from the University of South Carolina, leads SHED. The group promotes basic principles of sustainable engineering and design. "In many developing areas a major emphasis in the Swanson School—harvesting potable water, supplying clean and efficient electricity, and preventing landslides—do not exist in Sikkim and Darjeeling," Kharel says. “People saw bamboo as the material of poor villagers. Concrete also looks safer than bamboo, but it’s not. We have to convince people that bamboo is safer.”

In a presentation to Pitt engineering students during a reciprocal visit to Pittsburgh in June, Kharel displayed photos of the 5.7-magnitude Sikkim earthquake of Feb. 14, 2006: severely damaged buildings followed by an unscathed bamboo-frame ikras. Some residents and builders in Sikkim and Darjeeling get the message in these photos, Kharel says.

“Many people are excited,” Kharel says. “They are happy we’re building with local material because they feel the traditional methods are dying. The bamboo structures are healthier for the environment and the economy, even in terms of tourism. People can visit Darjeeling and see traditional ikras instead of concrete buildings.”

SHED oversees several projects demonstrating ikras construction and other sustainable techniques, but these projects also illuminate the social and technical obstacles that remain. For instance, in building St. Joseph’s School in Mungpoo, near Darjeeling, SHED had to convince the rector that bamboo trumps concrete for safety and ease of construction—and to go against affluent alumni in the cement contracting and supply business, Kharel says.

Bamboo can crack, as Mitch observed at St. Joseph’s. SHED bolstered the material’s stability with a concrete foundation, but bamboo beams joined with bolts could split. Mitch says. Like a windshield crack, these tiny fissures grow. SHED needs to know the cause of the splitting, its relationship to the bamboo species used in construction, and the best methods for repairing and preventing the fractures. But the closest lab to Kharel lies down a treacherous road more than 50 miles away.

Upon his return to Pitt, Mitch set about developing an onsite material properties test that, like any other, would gauge the load a material can bear—except he’s testing a plant. One with about 1,000 species.

Mitch had no experience engineering bamboo, and his research suggested that few others do, either. He found two papers on the splitting of bamboo and the 22-page government manual on bamboo construction. To compare, the U.S. manual on building with steel contains about 2,200 pages and that for wood takes up more than 4,000, Mitch said.

“This is a fantastic environment for an engineering student because it presents a true engineering problem. The issues—the terrain, the weather, the available resources—are everywhere, but the solutions to each are very different.”

—Kent Harries

SHED largely focuses on reorganizing the ikras, a traditional bamboo-frame structure and the symbol of Mitch’s research. Because of the soft mountain soil, modern construction methods pose a great threat to environment and safety in Sikkim, Harries says. So to move local construction beyond concrete and brick, SHED turned to the past. The group worked with state-of-the-art engineering tools, but then you have to deal with implementation,” Harries says. “This is an area where construction methods are at times questionable.”

With limited resources and minimal oversight, contractors execute projects on the cheap and hire temporary workers that rotate every two weeks, Kharel says. Plus, most Indian engineers “learn to build on flat land,” not the slopes of Darjeeling and Sikkim, says Kharel, who earned her bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology in Nagpur, India.

Mitch’s construction experience is limited to that of a summer job, but while in India, he watched as a man in sandals tossed gravel into a cement mixer and concluded that the man wasn’t concerned with proper measurement. Nor did another man seem to find anything amiss in tamping concrete into the rebar-frame skeleton of a support beam with a hand trowel—while a machine meant for the job sat unused nearby.

“I saw some scary things,” Mitch says, scrolling through digital photos of completed buildings with their rusty rebar skeleton jutting through clumpy smearings of concrete.

“I saw a four-story concrete building perched on a 60-degree slope with almost no foundation or pilings. That’s why I’m making a single test: Getting multiple tests done would be impossible. Any testing at all has a much higher chance of happening with just one.”

From an engineering perspective, India is very fresh,” he continues. “There’s very little code and enforcement. As a student, that can be good—you have to do everything yourself.”
Pitt’s 2008 New Student Orientation Offers Full Schedule

The 2008 New Student Orientation will officially launch the college careers of more than 3,500 freshmen and transfer students at the University of Pittsburgh Aug. 19-24. “Your Journey Begins Here” will feature various programs and events geared toward assisting the class of 2012 and their families in making a successful transition to college life.

Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg and distinguished members of the University community will welcome the incoming class at the Freshman Convocation Ceremony in the Petersen Events Center from 3 to 4 p.m. Aug. 20. The Chancellor’s Welcome Picnic follows the ceremony from 4 to 5 p.m., giving students and their families the opportunity to mingle with University faculty, staff, and students.

The traditional Lantern Night Ceremony will be held in Heinz Memorial Chapel, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Aug. 24. Presentations and seminars will be held on numerous aspects of campus life, including student organizations, health services, and campus safety. Highlighting these informational activities will be “Campus Safety: What You Need to Know,” from 3 to 4 p.m. Aug. 19; “Student Life: The Importance of Getting Involved,” from 11 a.m. to noon Aug. 20; and “The Straight A’s of Personal Finance,” from 5 to 6 p.m. Aug. 20.

All events will be held in the William Pitt Union. A multiple guided tours of the University and the city of Pittsburgh also will be available. Tours include such landmarks as Pitt’s Nationality Rooms, Heinz Memorial Chapel, Phipps Conservatory, and the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History. Scheduled events are being planned to acquaint students and their families with the University and its surrounding community. Activities include “Getting to the Point: What’s Right About Pittsburgh and Our Region,” a lecture on Pittsburgh's economic and environmental transformation, from 4 to 5 p.m. Aug. 19; and “Get Lost!” an Oakland-area scavenger hunt, from 5 to 7 p.m. Aug. 22. Both activities will commence in the William Pitt Union.

Scheduled entertainment and social activities will include student-produced plays, film screenings, and a luau. The Pitt Program Council will host “Live @ the Union: Comedy & More,” a comedy and entertainment showcase, from 8:30 p.m. to midnight Aug. 22.

Nordy’s Place will be the scene for both the “Oakland Teachout,” from 11 p.m. Aug. 22 to 1 a.m. Aug. 23, and “Open Mic Night,” from 11 p.m. Aug. 22 to 2 a.m. Aug. 23. Pitt’s “Music Extravaganza,” beginning at 9 p.m. Aug. 23, will feature karaoke, a drum circle, dance party, and a late-night snack.

All events will be held in the William Pitt Union. Among the activities focused exclusively for parents and guardians will be “The Art of College Parenting,” from 10 to 11 a.m. Aug. 20 in the William Pitt Union, and “Educating the Whole Student: What Every Parent Should Know,” from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Aug. 20 in Alumni Hall. Both presentations will address questions and concerns of students’ parents and guardians as well as to provide information on University programs.

In addition, parents will have an opportunity to socialize with each other at one of two Panther Parents Association Information Sessions in the William Pitt Union, from 4 to 5 p.m. Aug. 19 and from 11:15 a.m. to noon Aug. 20.

University staff will be available to answer questions and provide information at “Orientation Station,” open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Aug. 19-22 in the William Pitt Union’s Lower Lounge. Students will be able to sign up for social activities and find out about programs offered through the New Student Orientation.

For more information or a complete schedule of events, call 412-648-1074 or visit www.orientation.pitt.edu.

Pitt's Traditional Lantern Night Ceremony Set for Aug. 24

Nearly 400 incoming freshmen and first-year transfer women will receive the “light of learning” from University of Pittsburgh alumni “flame-bearers” during the 88th annual Lantern Night Ceremony at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 24 in Heinz Memorial Chapel.

The student participants will gather at 7 p.m. in the Cathedral of Learning Commons Room to receive a lantern and prepare for the 7:25 p.m. procession to the chapel.

With unfurled lanterns, the women will process on the parallel sidewalks located between the cathedral’s Bellefield Avenue entrance and the chapel to the 7:30 p.m. ceremony. During the event, Pitt alumni “flame-bearers,” including several mothers and grandmothers of incoming students, will light the lanterns, which will remain lit for the remainder of the program. Carrying the burning lanterns, the new students will process back to the Commons Room for a reception.

Donna Sanft (EDUC ’74, ’89), Pitt executive associate athletic director, will give the Lantern Night Address. Other program participants include Patti Mathay (KGSB ’92), who will offer a greeting and history of Lantern Night; Whitney Hawkins, president of Pitt’s Panhellenic Association, who will provide the student welcome; Jack Smith (A&S ’69, MED ’73), Pitt Alumni Association president-elect, who will give the alumni welcome; and Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg who will deliver the University welcome. Following the remarks, “flame-bearers” will light the lanterns.

Lantern Night is one of the University’s oldest traditions. The alumnae Council of the Pitt Alumni Association and Pitt’s Office of Student Life cosponsor the ceremony.

Go Green Oakland Campaign Kicks Off

The Oakland Task Force, in partnership with Carlow University, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Pittsburgh, is unveiling Go Green Oakland, an educational campaign to highlight the green efforts undertaken by Oakland’s big and small institutions. The campaign features a call for the Oakland community to significantly reduce the use of plastic bags and to encourage use of reusable shopping bags.

The Go Green Oakland campaign will be launched with the distribution of a resource guide highlighting Oakland’s green initiatives, Oakland’s eco-friendly businesses, and listings of local and regional green organizations. The guide will be distributed inside a reusable shopping bag to the nearly 5,000 incoming freshmen at the three universities during this week’s new student orientation programs.

The Oakland Task Force is a partnership of institutions, community organizations, businesses, and public agencies working to improve the Oakland neighborhood in the city of Pittsburgh, the third-largest employment center in Pennsylvania. There are more than 25 Oakland Task Force member organizations, which boast a variety of small- and large-scale green initiatives that contribute to the environmental health of the Oakland community. Included among those initiatives are comprehensive recycling programs, a farmer’s market, furniture-recycling, green building initiatives, the Oakland Transportation Management Association’s annual walk challenge, and toxic waste and hazardous material remediation.

The Go Green Oakland educational campaign was funded by Pennsylvania State Senator Jay Costa and by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. More information is available at www.googreen-taskforce.org.

WELCOMING THE NEW

Incoming Pitt freshman Claire Ohry (left) and her mother, and Senior of Tokamea Park, MD, attended Pitt’s African American Alumni Council (AAAC) “Welcome Freshmen to Pitt Cookout and Sendoff” for the Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia region. Linda Wharton Boyd, president of Pitt’s AAAC, hosted the July 27 event for 30 people at her home in Washington, D.C.

An incoming Pitt freshman scales a climbing wall during Pitt Odyssey, a new student orientation program held this summer in the Laurel Highlands. The voluntary program was offered on five separate overnights at Outdoor Odyssey in Bissell, Pa. Participating students had opportunities to meet other freshmen, learn about campus life, and experience rope courses, rock walls, and other team-building challenges.
Eating Fish With High Levels of Omega-3 May Explain Japan’s Low Heart Disease Rates

By Clare Collins

Consuming large quantities of fish loaded with omega-3 fatty acids may explain low levels of heart disease in Japan, according to a study led by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH).

The study, published in the Aug. 5 Journal of the American College of Cardiology, also found that third- and fourth-generation Japanese Americans had similar, or even higher levels of atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries—a major risk factor for heart disease, compared to White Americans.

The very low rate of heart disease in Japan among developed countries has been puzzling. Death rates from coronary heart disease in Japan have been less than half of those in the United States. This holds true even among Japanese men born after World War II who adopted a Western lifestyle since childhood, and despite the fact that among these men, risk factors for coronary heart disease (serum levels of total cholesterol, blood pressure, and rates of type 2 diabetes) are very similar to those among men in the United States. Additional, the rate of cigarette smoking, another major risk factor, has been infamously high in Japan.

The study was conducted at two universities and one research institute in the United States and Japan to compare serum levels of omega-3 fatty acids and atherosclerosis among Japanese, White American, and Japanese American men. Based on data from 868 men between the ages of 40 and 49, Japanese men had the lowest levels of atherosclerosis and two times higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids than those of White Americans or Japanese Americans.

The differences in the levels of atherosclerosis between Japanese and White Americans remained after adjusting for other risk factors—serum cholesterol, blood pressure, cigarette smoking, body mass index, and diabetes.

“Our study suggests that very high levels of omega-3 fatty acids have strong properties that may help prevent the buildup of cholesterol in the arteries,” said Akira Sekikawa, the study’s lead author and a professor of epidemiology in GSPH. “Increasing fish intake to two times a week for healthy people is currently recommended in the United States. Our study shows that the much higher intake of fish observed in the Japanese may have a strong anti-atherogenic effect.”

Fish consumption among the Japanese is one of the highest in the world. Japanese men consume an average of 100 grams, equivalent to about 3.75 ounces, of fish every day from early in life. Meanwhile, Americans typically eat fish less than two times a week.

Researchers do not recommend that Americans change their diets to consume as much fish as the Japanese, owing to concerns about mercury levels in some fish. However, “increasing intake of omega-3 fatty acids in the United States could have a very substantial impact on heart disease,” Sekikawa said. “Given the similar levels of atherosclerosis in Japanese Americans and White Americans, it also tells us that lower levels of heart disease among Japanese men are much more likely lifestyle-related than a result of genetic differences.”

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat found primarily in fish. The two most potent omega-3 fatty acids are known as docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and are usually found in such oily fishes as mackerel, salmon, and tuna.

The study was funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.
Concerts


Exhibitions


Lectures/Seminars/Readings

“Complementary Approaches to Pain Self-Management,” free lecture by Ron Glick, medical director of the Center for Integrative Medicine, 5:30 p.m. Aug. 21, Shady Side Place, Suite 310, 580 S. Aiken Ave., 412-623-3023, http://integrative-medicine.upmc.com.

Poetry reading by Claudie Rankine, 7 p.m. Sept. 12, Frick Fine Arts Auditorium, 800-09 Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series, www.pitt.edu or cmoa@pitt.edu.

Opera/Theater/Dance


Auditions for 2009-10 Kuntu Repertory Theatre season, 6-9 p.m. Sept. 4, Seventh-Floor Auditorium, Alumni Hall, call-backs, 6:30-11:30 p.m. Sept. 5, 412-626-7298, www.kunta.org.


The Wonder Bread Years, by Pat Hazeltine, finds its special engagement, Lester Hamburg Studio Theatre at City Theatre, 1300 Bingham St., South Side, 412-431-2489, www.citytheatrecompany.org.

Miscellaneous

Pitt Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures graduate and undergraduate reception, noon-1:30 p.m. Sept. 30, all prospective, new, and returning majors invited; information, www.latinx.org, provided. Room 1228 Cathedral of Learning, 412-624-5225 or lad@pitt.edu.

Pitt PhD Dissertation Defenses

Sybil Streete, Department of Psychology; “Morality, Adolescent Attachment and Emotions in Romantic Relationships,” 2 p.m. Aug. 21, Second-Floor Auditorium, Pitt Learning Research and Development Center.

Patricia Moteles, Department of Psychology; “Trajectories of Observed Maternal and Paternal Sensitivity in Early and Middle Childhood: Predicting Children’s Social Competence From Sensitive Parenting,” 10 a.m. Aug. 22, 4127 Sennott Square.

Eileen St. John, School of Education; “Cognitive Mapping of the Online Environment: A Look at How the Utilization of an Audio Support System Impacts the Web-Problem Solving Skills of Stratified Readers,” 10 a.m. Aug. 22, Room 5140 Purnell Hall.

Jared E. Knickelbein, Immunology Graduate Program, School of Medicine; “Nontoxocotic Lytic Granule-Mediated Maintenance of HSS-2 Neuronal Latency,” 9 a.m. Aug. 25, S1201 Biomedical Science Tower.

Stephen Wilson, Department of Psychology; “Self-Focused Versus Other-Focused Strategies for Coping With Smoking Cue Exposure,” 9 a.m. Aug. 26, 4127 Sennott Square.

Adam C. Solfelt, Department of Infectious Disease and Microbiology, Graduate School of Public Health; “Evaluation of Dual-Serotype Adenovirus-Based Vaccine Induced Cellular Immunity Following Preventative and Therapeutic Immunization Against Simian Immunodeficiency Virus,” 10 a.m. Aug. 27, Room 5125 South Biomedical Science Tower.

Fish Crow

Hillman Library, through August 25

Xia Jiang, Biomedical Informatics Graduate Program, School of Medicine; “A Bayesian Network Model for Spatiotemporal Outbreak Detection,” 10 a.m. Aug. 28, 5317 Sennott Square.

Adam Stroeb, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, Graduate School Public Health; “Mechanisms for Arsenic-Stimulated Sinosoidal Endothelial Cell Capillarization,” 2 p.m. Aug. 24, 5th Floor Conference Room, Bridgeside Point.

Nicole Zangrilli Hoh, School of Nursing; “BCL-2 Genotypes and Outcomes After Traumatic Brain Injury,” 1 p.m. Sept. 10, Room 446 Victoria Building.

Freshman Trombonist Wins 2008 Pitt-BNY Mellon Jazz Scholarship

By Sharon S. Blake

Incoming University of Pittsburgh freshman and trombonist Brandon Hang has been selected as the winner of the 2008 Pitt-BNY Mellon Jazz Scholarship. The $5,000 tuition prize is awarded annually to a Pitt music student after tapes of jazz standards are submitted and judged by a panel of nationally recognized jazz musicians. Hang will be honored for his accomplishment at the 2008 Pitt Jazz Concert on Nov. 1.

Hang, 18, is a graduate of Central Dauphin High School in Lower Paxton, Pa., where he won the 2008 award for the school’s Outstanding Jazz Musician.

Even though he had been taking formal piano lessons, Hang says he picked up a trombone at age 10 and liked it. Mastering the instrument was a plus for Hang throughout high school, where he performed on trombone in the wind ensemble, orchestra, and jazz band, and also played piano in the pit band for musical theater productions.

“The fact that Brandon plays piano is crucial, because it gives him a well-grounded base in music theory,” said Nathan Davis, director of Pitt’s Jazz Studies Program, adding that Hang represents the kind of well-rounded student the Pitt jazz program has attracted through the years.

Hang began composing in eighth grade, and in high school he composed and wrote arrangements for the jazz band. During his freshman year at Pitt, he performed trombone in the Harrisburg Youth Symphony and also has performed in bands sponsored by the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association. He picked up gigs in high school, including public jam sessions throughout the Harrisburg area.

Hang plans to major in pharmacy at Pitt and is looking forward to auditioning for the University of Pittsburgh Jazz Ensemble. Although pharmacy is his career goal, he says he will always make time for performing. This is the 22nd year Pitt and BNY Mellon Jazz have funded the scholarship. BNY Mellon Jazz supports nonprofit organizations engaged in live jazz performances and jazz education and recognizes individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to Pittsburgh’s rich jazz tradition.
Pitt’s Greek Community Emphasizes Community Service

Junior Chelsea Zimmerman, a member of Pitt’s chapter of the Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority, has found a number of excellent service opportunities through the University of Pittsburgh’s Greek organizations. Among her favorites: afternoons at the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Terrace, an assisted-living facility in Squirrel Hill.

Zimmerman and some of her Alpha Epsilon Phi sisters have planted flowers there, called bingo games, and lent their attentive ears to the facility’s elderly residents. The sorority maintains a regular schedule of volunteer activities at the facility.

An English writing and psychology major from Ambler, Pa., Zimmerman is the first to acknowledge that the experience has been as rewarding for her as for those she serves. “It’s one of my favorite service activities because I am able to provide the residents with some companionship,” she says. “They seem to appreciate having someone to tell their stories to because not all of them have families who visit on a regular basis,” says Zimmerman, Alpha Epsilon Phi’s vice president for programming.

It is this kind of commitment to community service that University officials have come to expect from Pitt’s Greek organizations, says Lauren Cavallaro, former coordinator for leadership in Pitt’s Office of Cross-Cultural and Leadership Development within Pitt’s Division of Student Affairs. (She left her Pitt position Aug. 6.) In the 2007-08 academic year, Pitt’s Greek organizations logged more than 20,000 hours of community service.

“All fraternities and sororities were founded on principles of service and leadership, and Pitt’s Greeks have really embraced those core values,” says Cavallaro, who served as the coordinator of Pitt’s 37 fraternities and sororities. “The exciting thing about Greeks at Pitt is that they are pushing community service. They already have a strong record, and they continue to show that they want to build on these principles.”

In 2005, Pitt’s Greek fraternities and sororities together pledged to raise $500,000 for the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI); to date, $285,000 has been raised. Yearlong fundraising activities are held to support UPCI and other charitable organizations, such as Ronald McDonald House, Make a Wish Foundation, and the Pittsburgh Food Bank. Collectively, the fundraising activities are part of so-called Greek Week—even though the activities occur throughout the school year. The fundraisers include events such as the 3K/5K Campus Classic, a dance marathon, and a dodge-ball tournament. Individual Greek organizations determine how their funds will be raised and distributed.

“We encourage them to seek out organizations they want to support,” said Cavallaro. “By allowing students to be creative and find activities they enjoy, the prospect of the Greek fraternities and sororities continuing with their fundraising activities is more likely.”

Nabil Rahman is the president of Kappa Sigma fraternity. His chapter has recorded more than 4,400 community service hours during the 2007-08 academic year with such activities as blood drives, auctions, and a choreographed dance competition. As a four-year member of Kappa Sigma, he says being active in community service helps make fraternity and sorority members become more well-rounded individuals.

“You’re making a contribution to society, but you are also learning about organizing events, communicating with people, and learning things about yourself,” says the senior economics major. “It is an all-around learning experience.”

By Anthony M. Moore