Phil Williams Named Posvar Chair, Director of Matthew B. Ridgway Center For International Security Studies

By Amanda Lefk Ritchie

Phil Williams, Pitt professor of public and international affairs, has been named the holder of the Wesley W. Posvar Chair in International Security Studies within Pitt’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). He is also the new director of the Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies, which is part of both GSPIA and Pitt’s University Center for International Studies (UCIS).

“Phil Williams will do an outstanding job as Posvar Chair and Ridgway Center director,” said John T.S. Keeler, dean of GSPIA. “His stature as one of the world’s leading experts on transnational organized crime will attract a steady flow of scholars and officials to the center. In addition, as one of GSPIA’s most inspiring and popular teachers, he is well positioned to engage our students in Ridgway activities.”

Williams, who previously served as the Ridgway Center director from 1992 through 1995, has published extensively in the field of international security, including the books Crisis Management (Wiley, 1976), The Senate and U.S. Troops in Europe (St. Martin’s Press, 1986), and, with Mike Bowker, Superpower Detente: A Reappraisal (Sage Publications Ltd., 1987). During the last 16 years, his research has focused primarily on transnational organized crime and he has written articles on various aspects of this subject in the journals Survival, Washington Quarterly, The Bulletin on Narcotics, Crime Law and Social Change, and International Peacekeeping, and in Scientific American. In addition, Williams was founding editor of the journal Organized Crime & Organized Criminal and has edited several publications on combating organized crime and the trafficking of women.

Williams has been a consultant to both the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime and U.S. government agencies and has given congressional testimony on organized crime. He was a joint author for a United Nations study on offshore financial centers and money laundering. Most recently, he has focused on alliances among criminal organizations, as well as on terrorist finances, drugs, and violence in Mexico, and complexity theory and intelligence analysis.

Williams has been a visiting professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, the U.S. Army War College, where he wrote two monographs—The New Dark Age: The Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy (U.S. Army War College, 2008) and Criminals, Mafias, and Insurgents: Organized Crime in Iraq (U.S. Army War College, 2009).

Williams received his PhD degree from the University of Southampton, England, and his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University College of Wales.

The University of Pittsburgh established the Posvar Chair to honor late Posvar, who died on July 27, 2001. Posvar, who had been a Brigadier General in the U.S. Air Force, served as chancellor of the University from 1967 to 1991 and was renowned for his early recognition of the importance of international studies, establishing UCIS during his years as Pitt’s leader. He was a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an advisory trustee of the Rand Corporation, and a founder and president of the International Studies Association. The Posvar Chair is always held by the professor who also serves as director of Pitt’s Ridgway Center.

The Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies was established at the University of Pittsburgh in 1988 under the auspices of GSPIA and UCIS. Dedicated to the American general whom many historians credit with saving the U.S. position after China’s intervention in the Korean War, the center addresses in innovative ways new security challenges facing the United States and the international community.

The City of Pittsburgh’s Unfair-share Tax

This is the print version of Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg’s Nov. 11, 2009, report to the Senate Council that relate to the city’s proposed “tuition tax.”

Four months and eleven days into the new fiscal year, we still are waiting for the Commonwealth’s budget, including our appropriation, to be finalized. To some extent, we are being held hostage to disagreements over particular provisions in gaming legislation now under consideration. We also are the victims of an unusually contentious climate in the Capitol. Almost every day, I get messages that some small steps in a positive direction have been taken in Harrisburg. Those messages are a cause for some hope, but we still do not have an appropriation, and even as the state is failing to give, the city is attempting to take away.

All of you, I am sure, have read of the mayor’s plan, announced on Monday [Nov. 9, 2009], to impose a tuition tax on all students attending institutions of higher learning in the City of Pittsburgh. As you also know, the education and health services sector has become an increasingly important part of the regional economy measured in virtually every way, but especially in terms of job growth. We now are the region’s largest employment sector and are the only sector that has added jobs each and every year since 1995.

If the mayor’s plan was to become law, we also would be the nation’s only higher education sector subject to such taxation. Particularly given the very positive national and international attention that Pittsburgh has received for the remarkable development of its “new knowledge economy,” the self-defeating nature of this approach, which would place one of the region’s key economic engines at a clear competitive disadvantage, is even more striking.

As calculated today, the amount of this tuition tax would range from $27 for a CCAC student to more than $400 for a CMU student, with the typical Pitt charge falling somewhere in between. That itself is a burden, and it is critical to remember that this is just today’s calculation. One week ago, the city administration was advocating for a tax tied to a percentage calculation that included not only tuition but also room and board charges and other fees, which would have produced an even higher number. And, if the city is allowed to collect 1 percent today, there is nothing that stands in the way of it collecting a higher percentage in the future.

Also, because the imposition of this tax is tied to the vague concept of the “privilege” of engaging in some activity within the borders of the City of Pittsburgh, there is almost no limit to what might become the target of future tax efforts. Even in the last few days, the mayor was considering, to give one other concrete example, the imposition of a tax on the privilege of receiving medical treatment in the city.

Two tellingly differing perspectives on the city’s authority to collect a tuition tax without legislative authorization were offered in an article in Wednesday [Nov. 11] morning’s edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. The chair of the Senate Education Committee stated clearly that such a tax could not be imposed without legislative approval. He then went on to say, “When the times already are tough for students and families, why would we add to this expense and why would Pittsburgh put itself at such a disadvantage, particularly to tax an enterprise (higher education) that is actually working in their city?”

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A Unified, Resounding “No”

Eight local college and university presidents held a Nov. 10 news conference Downtown to voice their opposition to the mayor of Pittsburgh’s proposed 1 percent property tax on students in Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education (PCHE) organized the conference and participants vowed to fight the proposed tax. “We cannot afford to have extra burdens placed upon our students,” said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg (above). Behind Nordenberg, from left, are Candace Introcaso, La Roche College president; Mary Hines, Carlow University president and PCHE chair; and Paul Hennings, Point Park University president.
TELLING AN UNTOLD STORY

Erin Dyer, a senior editor at Pitt Magazine, delivered a multimedia presentation, “The Untold Story of Charles Florence,” about Pitt alumn Charles Wilbur Florence to the Brownsville-Alaqua Schools Alumni Association on Aug. 7. Florence graduated from South Brownsville High School in 1907 and the Brownsville association named him one of its 2009 Distinguished Honorees. By 1919, Florence had earned an undergraduate degree in education at Pitt, where he broke racial barriers by becoming the first African American to be captain of the University’s championship football team. He later attended Harvard University, became president of Lincoln University in Missouri, and was dean of education at Virginia Union University when he retired. Dyer’s original research helped to chronicle Florence’s accomplishments. Following her presentation, Dyer was handed the original 1909 diploma that Florence earned at Stowe College Normal School.

THE ART OF MEDICAL COOPERATION

More than 600 first-year health sciences students attended Pitt’s 2009 Interprofessional Forum: Educating Health Care Teams of the Future, on Oct. 2 in Scaife Hall auditorium. Presenters stressed the importance of interprofessional team collaboration in providing high-quality, affordable, and accessible health care. From left: Stephen Kukens, clinical director of the Multidisciplinary Dental Implant Center and assistant professor in Pitt’s School of Dental Medicine; Christine Ruby-Scelsi, assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics and Division of Geriatric Medicine, School of Pharmacy and Medicine; Margaret (Peg) Borrozawitz, assistant professor in the School of Nursing; and Catherin Palmie, director of the Center for Audiology and Hearing Aids in the Department of Otolaryngology, Eye and Ear Institute.
Concerts


Selected Prints Exhibition From the Barry Rosensteil Japanese Prints Collection, Hillman Library, through December 19

Lectures/Seminars/Readings


Exhibitions


Hillman Library, Selected Prints Exhibition From the Barry Rosensteil Japanese Prints Collection, through Dec. 19, Special Collections department, third floor, Historical Exhibition of African American Progress at Pitt, ongoing, third floor, 412-624-7710, 412-624-4910.


Miscellaneous

Ethics and Regulation of International Research, interactive workshop designed for faculty, staff, and students interested in research in an international setting, 8 a.m. Nov. 20, 109 Parham Hall, School of Medicine, Center for Continuing Education in the Health Sciences, 412-624-6985, www.globalhealth.pitt.edu.

“Angels in the Dust,” 2007, Louise Hoggar, documentary screening. 2 p.m. Nov. 14, A1135 Crabtree Hall, Global Health Student Association, Center for Global Health, tao@cm.pitt.edu.


Cristine Glesheen, Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Epidemiology, “Exposure to Pre- and Postnatal Depression and Anxiety Symptom Trajectories: Effect on Adolescent Psychiatric Symptoms,” 2:50 p.m. Nov. 26, 160A Heinz Hall.

Down Secker, School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, “Engendered Center: The Contemporary Russian Buddy Film,” 10 a.m. Nov. 23, 1218 Classroom of Learning.

Jiangshu Zhu, School of Medicine’s Cellular and Molecular Pathology Graduate Program, “Role of Focal Adhesion Protein Membrane in the Regulation of Cell Survival and Cell Cycle,” 2 p.m. Nov. 23, A2113 Starzl Biomedical Science Tower.

Dan Swuye, Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, “Public Health 2.0: An Analysis of Social Support Networks for Type 2 Diabetes on Web 2.0 Sites,” 2:30 p.m. Nov. 23, 2nd-floor conference room, Partran Hall.


Elkeen Kanum, School of Engineering, “Continuing Education Grand Rounds, School of Medicine’s Department of Public Health’s Department of Biostatistics, “Statistical Assessment of Medication Adherence Data: A Technique to Analyze the I-Shaped Curve,” 3 p.m. Nov. 18, 308 Parham Hall.

Stephen P. Kandel, School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Geology and Planetary Science, “Aeolian System Dynamics Derived From Thermal Infrared Data,” 10 a.m. Nov. 20, 203 Thaw Hall.

Allison Longenberger, Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Epidemiology, “Multivariate Proportional Hazards Models as Risk Factors for Diabetes Mellitus and Influenza Resistance Among HIV-infected and HIV-Infected HIV-Infected Men in the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study,” 2 p.m. Nov. 20, A2135 Crabtree.

Changyi Wei, Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, “An Examination of Protective Factors and Risks for Health-related Quality of Life Among Asian/Pacific Islanders who Have Sex With Men,” 2 p.m. Nov. 20, Storer Conference Room, 2nd floor, 3250 Fifth Ave., Oakland.

Min Ji, School of Arts and Sciences’ Intellgient Systems Program, “Do-Sleep-Learnt Vessel Categorization Models: iLearnt: An Efficient Algorithm to Induce Pedagogical Tutorial Tactic,” 3 p.m. Nov. 28, 2nd-floor auditorium, Learning Commons, University Library and Development Center.

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Jazz!!!
