Chancellor Makes Pitt’s Case Before Legislators On “Damaging” PA State Budget Proposal

In testimony before the Appropriations Committee of the Pennsylvania Senate last week, Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg testified March 16 before the state Senate Appropriations Committee in Harrisburg. From left are Graham Spanier, Pennsylvania State University; Chancellor Nordenberg; Ivory Nelson, Lincoln University; and Ann Weaver Hart, Temple University.

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Pitt Publishes New E-Journal on French Philosophy

Academic manuscripts and essays on French philosophy are being solicited for The Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy (JFFP)—a new e-journal published by the University of Pittsburgh’s University Library System (ULS), a national leader in Open Access digital publishing. JFFP (http://jffp.pitt.edu) is an international, bilingual peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of French and Francophone thought. Founded in 1989, the journal will now be positioned to gain maximum visibility in French and Francophone philosophy. JFFP will consider publishing essays on prominent or lesser-known figures in French and Francophone thought and accepts peer-reviewed academic articles and book reviews written in both English and French. In keeping with its mission, JFFP will consider publishing essays on prominent or lesser-known figures in French and Francophone thought. JFFP is committed to fostering international communication and collaboration between francophone scholars. JFFP is edited by Scott Davidson and John Drabinos, under the direction of an editorial board comprising leading scholars in the field. The journal operates in coordination with the Société Américaine de Philosophie de l’Étranger (SAPFE). For more information about the E-Journal Publishing Program, visit http://www.library.pitt.edu/e-journals/.

—By Sharon S. Blake
Women's History Month

For Everyone’s Benefit

Nancy Gilkes Gives Her All in Helping Pitt Employees and Retirees

By Sharon S. Blake

It’s not unusual to see office lights shining well into the evening on Craig Hall’s second floor. That’s where Nancy Gilkes, benefits relationship manager in the Office of Human Resources, works. Gilkes has become a go-to person for anyone with employee benefits questions at the University. Her clientele is a large and diverse group of Pitt people—prospective students and employees, active employees, deans, officers, all retirees, and family members of deceased Pitt employees.

“We deal with a lot of ‘What if...’ questions in this office,” explained Gilkes, a petite and friendly woman who listens intently to others.

Callers may ask: “What if I retire before I'm 65?” or “What if my research grant runs out?” While most of the questions are readily answered by the 10-person Benefits Office staff, Gilkes is frequently called upon to research more difficult questions or scenarios.

“I think I'm good at conceptualizing,” she said. “If I don’t know the answer, I can figure out a strategy or course of action to get the answer.” Known for her painstaking attention to detail and problem-solving abilities, Gilkes will spend as many hours as it takes researching a case to find the correct information. In addition to staying late, she also is known to work early morning hours from home when colleagues in administrative offices can easily reach one another. This work ethic helped her garner the Chancellor’s Award for Staff Excellence in Service to the University in 2008.

Gilkes, a North Side native but an Oakland resident for 40-plus years, has worn many hats at Pitt, working mostly with personnel issues, employer relations, and project analysis and implementation. In her current job, she is alternately a researcher, compliance officer, gentle recruiter, and, at times, a hand-holder. She helps to ensure officers, all retirees, and family members of deceased Pitt employees. Gilkes’ willingness to assist others extends far beyond the office. She helped farmers hoist hay bales into the barn and toy collection efforts as part of broader philanthropic initiatives in the Mon Valley.

“Nancy Gilkes is a remarkable person who has remained in the background while getting things done for individuals. She never toots her own horn,” said Gwen Watkins, community activities coordinator for Pitt’s Office of Community and Governmental Affairs. “She is exceptional at guiding individuals in the right direction for staff information on benefits and educational resources.”

“Life is filled with unusual circumstances, and many times they involve benefit-related issues,” said Assistant Vice Chancellor for Benefits John Kozar. “Regardless of the time of day or night, Nancy will pursue a resolution to that issue.”

Gilkes has chosen to stay right where she is. “Strangers are often a part of Gilkes’ life as well. For as long as she can remember, Gilkes said, she and her husband have helped people in need of short-term housing, including high school cultural exchange students and college students. She remembers one night in particular when she was awakened at 3 o’clock by a knock on her door. She opened the window and saw a man in a long coat and scarf, and when she went to investigate, the man told her Gilkes’ brother had told him, “If you’re ever stranded in Pittsburgh, go to my sister’s house.” Sure enough, Gilkes looked at the piece of paper the man held and recognized her brother’s handwriting.

Graduate students studying opera stayed briefly with the couple and their two sons and had their recitals at the family home. The Gilkeses were also asked to host members of the St. Petersburg (Russia) Youth Chamber Choir, the Christ Church Cathedral Choir of Oxford (England), and the Texas Boys Choir when their tours brought them to Pittsburgh.

Gilkes’ philanthropic nature may have been instilled in her during her formative years. As an adolescent, she lived with her family in rural Washington County, where she learned to host and entertain guests. She remembers being asked to host people for farmworkers. When rain threatened, she and her mother and neighbors prepared meals for the workers. She said she never thought twice about it. “I can still throw a 40-pound bale, if needed,” she said, laughing.

But for now, the 25,000 Pitt employees and retirees whom the Benefits Office serves are grateful that Gilkes has chosen to stay right where she is.

In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Gilkes helped bring about important changes at Pitt. Her duties ranged from serving on committees about affirmative action—where she analyzed policy, drafted reports, and monitored implementation—to helping oversee the change from manual coding to computer automation, which increased the efficiency of record keeping for thousands of faculty and staff. Gilkes also served on committees that brought about equity in benefit programs between faculty and staff or same-sex and opposite-sex partners.

“There were things that needed to be done and those in charge found I was available to do them,” said Gilkes, who has a bachelor’s degree in social science from Pitt and earned a Pitt master’s degree in library science while a University employee. Gilkes’ willingness to assist others extends far beyond the office. She helped launch the University’s successful Christmas Day at Pitt program, which provides a hearty meal and winter hats and gloves for those in need. When the steel mills were shuttered in the 1980s, she spearheaded local clothing and toy collection efforts as part of broader philanthropic initiatives in the Mon Valley.

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Pitt Cosmologists Part of New Project to Create Largest-Ever Map of Universe

By Morgan Kelly

Pitt’s prolific cosmology group in the School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Physics and Astronomy will again lend its expertise to a multi-institutional endeavor to investigate the distant universe, further expanding Pitt’s role in the most ambitious efforts to unravel the inner workings of deep space.

The National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO)—the R&D arm of the National Science Foundation that oversees ground-based astronomy—recently granted conditional approval for the BigBOSS Collaboration to observe the universe for 500 nights using one of the world’s largest telescopes, the Mayall 4-meter Telescope housed in Arizona’s Kitt Peak National Observatory. A pivotal first step, NOAO’s approval means that BigBOSS can now move into the final design stage, said Jeffrey Newman, a Pitt assistant professor of physics and astronomy, who joined the project shortly after it was conceived in 2009 and was involved in the crucial proposal to NOAO.

Led by the U.S. Department of Energy’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, BigBOSS—or the Big Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey—will peer back into the past 10 billion years of the universe’s lifespan to find precise locations for almost 20 million galaxies and quasars.

BigBOSS, including using the resulting data to study the nature of dark energy and the development of galaxies over time, identifying the particular galaxies and quasars the survey should investigate, and developing new methods and tools to handle the immense data processing requirements and huge databases that will result from BigBOSS. This last objective will draw on the department’s collaboration with Pitt’s Department of Computer Science and the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center.

BigBOSS’s involvement in BigBOSS also sustains the University’s long involvement in large-survey astronomy that began in 1994 with the most influential survey project, the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS). Pitt cosmologists now help lead or participate in approximately a dozen different projects that document the active lives of celestial bodies—from colliding galaxies and tremendous explosions to star-gobbling black holes—in an effort to better understand cosmic objects and the universe’s evolution.

These projects include: SDSS III (Wood-Vasey), an international effort to better understand dark energy, the structure of planetary systems, and the genesis of the Milky Way; CANDELS (Newman), the longest single project ever carried out with the Hubble Space Telescope; and the half-billion-dollar Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (Kosowsky, Newman, Wood-Vasey, and Zentner), a 14-year collaboration between 23 institutions to construct the world’s largest digital camera (with 3 billion pixels) to record the movement and development of the universe over 10 years in a color movie of the sky.

Hunt for Genetic Roots of Evolution Earns Mark Rebeiz Honor of Being Named 2011 Sloan Foundation Fellow

By Morgan Kelly

How did the elephant first get its trunk or the turtle its shell? These are the types of questions University of Pittsburgh biologist Mark Rebeiz hopes to answer with his research. Rebeiz looks for that moment when a gene’s function and expression change to produce “novelties,” characteristics with no genetic precedent, such as the horn of a beetle or the eyespots on a butterfly’s wings.

His pursuit of errant gene activity recently earned Rebeiz, an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences in Piet’s School of Arts and Sciences, the honor of being named a 2011 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellow, a distinction that carries a two-year, $50,000 grant. In being named a Sloan Fellow, Rebeiz joins 118 young scientists from 54 universities in the United States and Canada, among them Cornell University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Pennsylvania. Rebeiz is the fourth Sloan Fellow from Pitt in the past three years.

Rebeiz works at the forefront of evolution, comparing the genes of an individual with a new trait to the genes of its predecessors. Genes contain regulatory switches that activate gene expression and, ultimately, the characteristics a genetic code will produce. A newly evolved characteristic is often simply the result of an old gene being expressed in a new way, Rebeiz explained. He seeks to understand how and why regulatory switches change to produce novelties.

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Many novelties like beetle horns evolved too long ago to detect such slight mutations in regulatory switches. Instead, Rebeiz examines recent developments in fruit flies, for which evolution can be traced in the laboratory. For instance, his lab is beginning to examine the development of the posterior lobe, a microscopic appendage found only in four fruit fly species that a male wasps during mating to grasp onto his chosen female. Rebeiz plans to compare the genome of fruit flies sporting this feature to those without it to determine the genetic alterations that gave rise to the lobe. Rebeiz said that his work could be applied beyond the private lives of fruit flies to human genetics as a way to better understand how switches are altered in ways that can lead to disease and deformities.

“When you look molecularly at how an existing biological structure develops, it is incredibly complex, with lots of moving parts,” Rebeiz said. “However, we know that these entities evolved through simple steps. The goal in my lab is to understand those short strides that generate the complex world around us.”

Other Pitt researchers recently named Sloan Fellows include 2010 Fellow Gurudev Dutt, an assistant professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy; and 2009 Fellows Brent Doiron, an assistant professor in the Department of Mathematics, and Michael Grabe, an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. Rebeiz is the 33rd Pitt researcher to be selected as a Sloan Fellow since the awards were established in 1955.
Nordenberg continued to express respect for the Governor and an appreciation for the difficult task he faces in dealing with the budget deficit that he inherited. “I’ve never had to close a $4 billion deficit, and I’ve never had to do it in six weeks,” Nordenberg told the committee. “I do understand the pressures under which the administration was operating. I also do understand that all of us will need to do our share to bring things into better alignment economically.”

Continued from page 1

The state-related universities had not contributed to the current state budget deficit, said Senator John Yudichak (R-14th District) noted that funding for the state-related universities had remained flat over the last several years while inflation and funding for many other programs had risen, and stated, “So you’ve been the beneficiary that is very, very bad. Already, with the economic impact you have on our communities, just it doesn’t make sense here you are getting targeted” for funding cuts.

In concluding the hearing, Sen. Jake Corman (R-34th District), the Committee chair, stated that the Governor’s proposal has forced Commonwealth residents to think about higher education and its relative value to other items in the annual budget. “Now the public is going to get engaged and hopefully put higher education at a higher level of priority in our budget.” Interestingly, polling results released two days after the hearing by the Center for Opinion Research at the Floyd Institute for Public Policy at Franklin and Marshall College found that only 28 percent of respondents favored balancing the state budget by “cutting state funding in half for the state’s public universities.”

Pitt and the other state-related universities will have the opportunity to take their case to Harrisburg again on March 28, when they appear before the Pennsylvania House Appropriations Committee, chaired by Rep. Bill Adolph (R-165th District). In an interview following the Senate hearing, Adolph said for the higher education budget reduction proposals came as a “complete shock” to the Legislature. “That will be looked at very closely, and we will get the information of how that will affect tuition and how that would affect the overall fiscal stability of the state system, and we will certainly evaluate that proposal,” he said. “I have always been an advocate for funding of higher education. I’m only speaking for myself, [but] I just don’t see how a 54 percent decrease can work.”

This year’s “Pitt Day in Harrisburg” will take place on April 5, when members of the University community, including undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni, will meet with legislators. Additional information about “Pitt Day in Harrisburg” can be found at www.govtrel.pitt.edu/events. html. Information about Pitt’s efforts in Harrisburg and other issues related to the budget can be found at the Pitt’s Progress Web site. www.progress.pitt.edu.

Nordenberg said that he left the Senate hearing encouraged by the strong expressions of support that came from committee members. How, however, he cautioned that the hearing was just one step in what continues to boom as a very clear the case that Pitt and the other state related universities have not been able to attain meaningful level of restoration to our appropriation,” he said, “this was nothing that represented us with a sizeable deficit. Therefore, we need to continue advocating for the cause of Pitt education, and for all those people who depend upon our universities, until the budget has been finalized so that we are as well positioned as possible to press forward with our important work.”

Pitt Deserves Better

This article originally appeared on page 1 of the Sunday Forum section of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on March 21, 2011. It is reprinted courtesy of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

This young man of modest means who grew up in Butler, I was able to attend University of Pittsburgh, the school of his alma mater, because of the low tuition that resulted from one of the nation’s best “value” colleges and universities. But with the state’s dwindling support, I’m not sure Pitt is.

Pitt is today a principal driver of Southwestern Pennsylvania’s economy, contributing $1.74 billion in state-related spending; $1.3 billion in personal income from 33,800 Pitt-supported jobs; $737 million in sponsorship and licensing revenues representing well in excess of four dollars in private support for every dollar of our state appropriation; and $1.5 billion paid to local governments, including sales, tax, and real estate taxes.

Pitt, to the community, when the state should be rewarding job generators like Pitt, the governor’s budget proposal would do just the opposite. And while I’m convinced that this level of reduction is both unwarranted and counterproductive, I’m not saying that the University expects to be writing blank checks. Rather, sacrifices that all are able to the overall fiscal stability of the state system, and we will certainly evaluate that proposal,” he said. “I have always been an advocate for funding of higher education. I’m only speaking for myself, [but] I just don’t see how a 54 percent decrease can work.”

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Nordenberg continued to express respect for the Governor and an appreciation for the difficult task he faces in dealing with the budget deficit that he inherited. “I’ve never had to close a $4 billion deficit, and I’ve never had to do it in six weeks,” Nordenberg told the committee. “I do understand the pressures under which the administration was operating. I also do understand that all of us will need to do our share to bring things into better alignment economically.”

Passed on to students. However, they also added that tuition increases that are far larger than usual, particularly in-state student tuition, are indicated on the absence of legislative relief and that dramatic reductions in state support could lead to a basic re-examination of the current tuition structure.

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Pitt had helped rebuild Pittsburgh after the 1980s collapse of the steel industry. “It would not have happened without the energy and resources of the universities,” he said, adding that securing adequate funding for the Commonwealth’s institutions of higher education “is not a Republican or Democratic issue.”

As a percentage of Pitt’s budget, the Commonwealth subsidy would help keep tuition levels low. That promise has eroded dramatically since then.

Many years later, as chairman and CEO of Westinghouse, one of the state’s most-respected international corporations, I discovered anew the power of Pitt’s programs of education and research. In fact, partnerships with Pitt helped drive the decision to build Westinghouse’s new campus in Western Pennsylvania, even in the face of attractive offers from other locations.

This personal and civic experiences drive my sense of deep feeling about the just-announced state budget proposal, which includes draconian cuts to Pitt’s appropriation. Direct and other state support would be reduced by more than $100 million.

Anyone who attended Pitt or whose life was touched in some other way by the university—working there or for its suppliers or spin-off companies, benefiting from its medical research; attending its cultural events; being helped by its community outreach; living in Oakland, where its police protection extends to all; or in in uncountable other ways—almost certainly shares those feelings as the state budget ax is poised to fall on us all.

In 1966, when the state agreed to convert Pitt to a public university, it promised that the Commonwealth subsidy would help keep tuition low. That promise has eroded dramatically since then.

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Freddie Fu Recognized for Advancing Diversity in Orthopaedics

By Stacey Simon

Freddie H. Fu, Distinguished Service Professor and David Silver Professor and Chair in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and renowned UPMC orthopaedic surgeon, was recently selected as the 2011 Diversity Award winner by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS). The Diversity Award recognizes members of the academy who have distinguished themselves through their outstanding commitment to making orthopaedics more representative of and accessible to diverse patient populations.

A native of Hong Kong, Fu was one of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery’s first Asian residents when he came to Pitt during the 1970s. As an assistant professor and fellowship director at UPMC, he helped found the UPMC Center for Sports Medicine in 1982 and subsequently trained a diverse group of clinical fellows in a then-new orthopaedic specialty—sports medicine. Fu became chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in the late 1990s and began to diversify the residency program and department faculty.

“As an immigrant, I have seen firsthand where it may be harder for someone who is a bit different to find opportunities and receive mentorship. Over the years, I’ve tried to understand and respect people of different backgrounds and to reach out to them,” Fu said. Under his leadership, the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery has become noted for its gender equity. Nationwide, only 4 percent of board-certified orthopedic surgeons and less than 10 percent of orthopedic residents are women, according to the AAOS. In the Pitt Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, however, women represent 20 percent of the full-time faculty and 30 percent of the orthopaedic residency program.

“Although much has changed over the years, our tradition of attracting the best and brightest faculty to provide quality patient care, teaching, and innovative research remains the same,” Fu said. Fu also has completed several traveling fellowships, lectured internationally, and has trained more than 600 orthopaedic and sports medicine fellows worldwide through the Pitt Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Fellowship Program he developed.

A world-renowned orthopaedic surgeon, Fu has become a leader in anatomic ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) reconstruction surgery. He and his colleagues are currently conducting a large clinical trial to compare patient outcomes of two types of anatomically correct ACL reconstructions, known as anatomic single-bundle surgery and anatomic double-bundle surgery. Though more research is necessary to compare the outcomes of these two procedures, preliminary studies have shown that both restore knee anatomy and function better than the one-size-fits-all approach of ACL surgery typically performed today.

Fu has been the David Silver Professor and Chair in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery since 1998. He also is chair of the UPMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, which currently is ranked eighth in the U.S. News & World Report annual Best Hospitals survey.

Pitt Wages Record-Breaking United Way Campaign in 2010

continued from page 1

Anne Franks (left) and Michelle Page

worked on the United Way campaign for six years, ensuring, according to Clark, that it is well structured and operates according to best practices. She and Page interacted frequently with the campaign’s 400 volunteers across the University.

Clark, who has been a cochair for the campaign for the past 10 years, said, “The success of our campaign is due singularly to the generosity of the Pitt faculty and staff. Our campaign steering committee members developed creative workplace programs and events to raise the awareness of their fellow employees to the services that the United Way agencies provide to individuals in local neighborhoods and communities who struggle with life every day. Reaching a new record of giving during these difficult economic times is a tangible example of the care and compassion that exist within the Pitt family.”

In addition to raising the most money for the United Way in Pitt’s history, the 2010 campaign featured other positive numerical trends, including 450 Pitt faculty and staff who increased their gifts from previous years, 718 new donors, and a 9 percent increase in leadership gifts (donations of $1,000 or more). The online donation option—made possible by the efforts of Pitt’s Computing Services and Systems Development—was another strong factor in the 2010 campaign’s success.

Prior to joining Pitt, both Franks and Page had worked in the nonprofit sector for United Way-supported agencies. Their experiences there helped to make them true believers in the organization’s cause, they commented.

“We’ve been on the other side—working at these nonprofit agencies that depend on funding from the United Way to survive and run their programs,” said Franks. “When people ask why they should donate, I feel perfectly comfortable telling them why.”

Franks also reviews agencies and their proposals seeking to be accepted as official United Way organizations. “I know what a stringent process you have to go through to receive United Way funding,” she added.

The top three agencies that Pitt staff and faculty support through the United Way campaign are Catholic Charities, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, and the Women’s Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh. Individual departments within the University get very creative with their fundraising efforts. Franks said her favorites have included flea markets, recycling programs for electronics such as cell phones, silent auctions, the creation and sale of cookbooks, and snack carts.

“I see these fundraising activities as real team-building exercises,” she said.

Plans for a successful 2011 campaign are already underway. This is the time of year when Franks and her team reflect on the previous year’s campaign—discussing its challenges and strategizing ways to overcome them in the upcoming campaign.

“It’s exciting to see the generosity of the University community—to see how people really step up, even when budgets are tight and everyone is struggling,” Franks said. “Pitt demonstrated its commitment to Live United for a Greater Pittsburgh by raising more than $600,000 to support the people in our region who really need our help.”
Concerts


The Gospel at Colonus, conceived and adapted by Lee Breuer, music composed by Bob Telson, featuring the Mt. Airy Community Choir, conducted by Lee Breuer, William Brice, Pitt-Johnstown professor in music and planetary science, 5 p.m. March 25, University Club Library, 412-648-1299, leers@pitt.edu.

Exhibitions

Frick Art Museum, Frick Art & Historical Center, Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings From the Blanton Museum of Art, featuring more than 60 drawings produced over a 400-year period, through April 17, 5777 Reynolds St., PNC Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh, 412-456-7100, www.frickart.org.


Film

In the Mother of the Jung Hae (Dean Boshari Liem, 2010), film screening with discussion to follow, 7:30 p.m. March 24, 419 Cathedral of Learning, Pitt Asian Studies Center, Film Studies Program, and Women’s Studies Program, www/english.pitt.edu.


Lectures/Seminars/Readings

“Quantum Deviation From Einstein Distillation of Instantaneous Quantum Lifeline,” Gordon Fleming, professor emeritus of physics, Penn State University, 12:50 p.m. March 25, 817R Cathedral of Learning, Pitt Center for Philosophy of Science, 412-624-1032, pittcrs@pitt.edu.


Wilson Center for African American Culture, 980 Libert Ave., Downtown, also 2 p.m. March 25, 501 Cathedral of Learning, Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series, Pitt Department of English, Book Club Center, University of Pittsburgh Press, 412-624-6508, www.creativewriting.pitt.edu.

“The News: Who’s Going to Pay for This?” panel discussion featuring news professionals from around the country, 7:30 p.m. March 24, University Club, Pitt University Honors College, uhcevent@pitt.edu.


“Philosophical Issues in Psychology” Kenneth Kendler, professor of psychiatry, Virginia Commonwealth University, 3:30 p.m. March 25, 817R Cathedral of Learning, Annual Lecture Series, Pitt Center for Philosophy of Science, 412-624-1052, pittcrn@pitt.edu.

Miscellaneous

31st Annual Latin American and Caribbean Festival, local and international musicians, handcrafts and crafts, authentic Latin cuisine, traditional dance performances, and children’s activities, noon to midnight March 26, William Pitt Union, Pitt Center for International Studies, 412-624-7394, www.ucis.pitt.edu. (See page 2.)


TIES Informational Lunches for Researchers and Research Assistants, talk on Text Information Extraction System, presented by Rebecca Crowley, director, Biomedical Informatics Graduate Training Program, Pitt School of Medicine, 11 a.m.-noon March 30, UPMC Cancer Pavilion, Suite 306, Conference Room 241, open to psychology faculty, staff, and students, registration required, http://ties.upmc.com/register/index.html, 412-623-4752.

Pitt PhD Dissertation Defenses

Ellen P. Motohoshi, School of Education’s Department of Administrative and Policy Studies, 11 a.m. March 21, “Kakkeishi or Bridging the Divide: The Power of Pedagogical Philosophy and Innovative Practice to Drive Culturally Responsive Reform for African Brazilian Children in a Rural Public Elementary School in Japan,” 4321 Posvar Hall.

David Sturman, School of Medicine’s Department of Neuroscience, noon March 21, “Carrying on Modernity: Migration, Work, and Masculinity in China,” 3106 Posvar Hall.

Xia Zhang, School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Anthropology, 3 p.m. March 21, “Carrying on Modernity: Migration, Work, and Masculinity in China,” 3106 Posvar Hall.

Constance Demore Borgman, School of Education’s Department of Administrative and Policy Studies, 11 a.m. March 23, “A Phenomenological Study of Information Teacher Leadership From the Perspective of Those Who Choose to Lead,” 4321 Posvar Hall.

WendySink, School of Education’s Department of Instruction and Learning, 10:30 a.m. March 23, “Effective Content Knowledge Planning Tools: How Are They Transformed and What Factors Impact Those Changes?” 5101 Posvar Hall.

Joost Wegenaar, Swansea School of Engineering, 1 p.m. March 23, “Using Primary Affluent Neural Activity for Estimation of ‘Natural Correlates,’” 4120 Starzl Biomedical Science Tower South.

Ashley Felix, Graduate School of Public Health’s Department of Epidemiology, 2:30 p.m. March 25, “Tumor-Stromal Interactions in Type I and Type II Endometrial Cancer: The Role of CXCL12/CXCR4 and HGF/Sc-MET/BFGF in a Large Cohort of Endometrial Cancer Patients,” 109 Parran Hall.

Pitt Opera/Opera/Theater/Dance


The David Berg Center for Ethics and Leadership at the University of Pittsburgh has developed a new scorecard—the Food Abundance Index (FAI)—to measure food security within a neighborhood or geographic area. The index was created to determine the access to and availability of healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food and to eliminate food deserts—areas where healthy, affordable food is difficult to obtain.

“While awareness of the growing number of communities that are impacted by low-food security has increased, existing tools to detect the presence of food deserts and measure the levels of food security have numerous limitations,” said Audrey Murrell, coauthor of the FAI report, director of the Berg Center, and a professor of business administration and psychology at Pitt. “The FAI attempts to combine the strengths of existing measures of food access and availability and examine food security based on five criteria: access, diversity, quality, density, and affordability.”

The technical report that outlines the creation, use, and impact of the FAI as well as the potential contributions it can make and benefits that can accrue through its deployment is available through the Berg Center. In addition, the center offers a user’s toolkit and training workshops in an effort to eliminate food deserts. The report provides an overview of the FAI scorecard to help individuals, communities, and regions lay the foundation for improving food security and raising communities’ economic status, health, and overall well-being.

The Berg Center has recognized three Pittsburgh-area organizations for their work to improve food distribution and access within their respective communities: Hill House Economic Development Corporation (Hill District), Kingsley Association (East Liberty), and Blackberry Meadows Farms (Braddock).

For more information about the FAI or to schedule training, call 412-648-2169 or visit www.business.pitt.edu/berg.

The Berg Center is part of Pitt’s Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business and College of Business Administration.