



# Universitas

Pittsburg State University • College of Arts & Sciences Newsletter • Vol. 13 Issue 1

## Fee helps improve classroom technology

A small student credit hour fee earmarked for technology is making a big difference in classrooms throughout the College of Arts and Sciences.

The fee, known as the Instructional Equipment Fee, was included in tuition beginning in 2004.

In Biology, for example, the fee has enabled the department to purchase needed instruments and

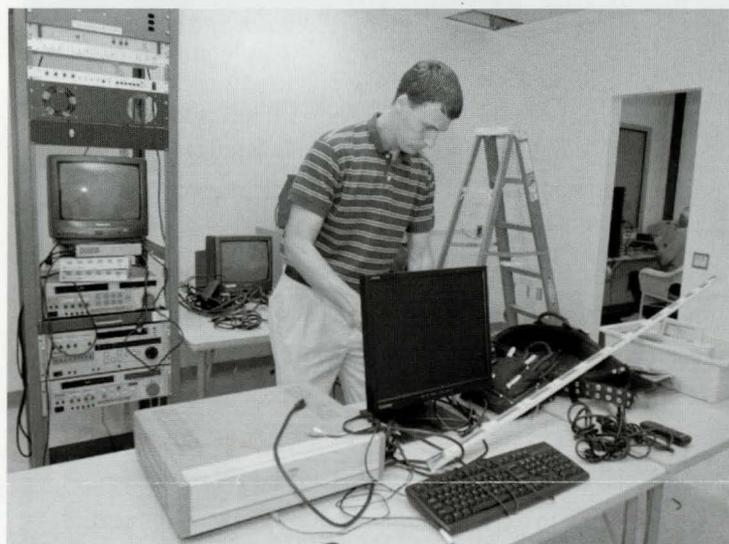
upgrade classrooms.

Department Chairperson Jim Triplett said the instructional equipment fee has made “a huge difference in our program.”

“We have been able to outfit two labs with A/V equipment to make them ‘smart’ classrooms. We were able to purchase new microscopes for the classrooms and will do the same this year for another classroom.”

In Yates Hall, two transmitter systems have

been purchased for use in the larger lecture classrooms. Students are assigned a remote device, much like a TV remote control, which enables the students to transmit their answers to multiple-choice questions to a projection screen. The computer receiving the answers immediately calculates and



*Troy Comeau, assistant professor of Communication, installs equipment in a new broadcast laboratory in Whitesitt Hall. A campuswide educational technology fee is making it easier for departments to update and improve the technology they use in classrooms.*

## Three Arts & Sciences alumni honored

Pittsburg State University and the PSU Alumni Association honored three alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences for their personal and professional achievements during fall and spring commencement ceremonies.

At the fall commencement ceremonies, Merle W. Allen, BFA 1968, received the Meritorious Achievement Award. Allen is the president and chief executive officer of the Mercy Regional Health

*(see Alumni, pg. 4)*

displays the number of students selecting each answer, providing the instructor with almost instant information regarding how well the students are grasping the concepts being taught.

The new technology is making a big difference in the Art Department, according to Chairperson Larrie Moody.

“This has made a huge impact,” Moody said.

She said the biggest change has been in the popular commercial art program, which is now four years old. That includes new computers and software that allows students to bring

together their artwork and digital technology. Currently, the department is renovating an area on the second floor to accommodate the new technology and the expanding program.

Additionally, Moody said, the technology fee has allowed the department to upgrade or introduce needed technology to just about every aspect of the Art program.

“This has given us a big boost,” Moody said.

The Department of Music has used their portion of the technology fee money to do a variety of important things. The department purchased

*(see Fee, pg. 7)*

# From the Dean

I continue to be impressed by the quality of graduates produced by College of Arts & Sciences departments. As I meet alumni, employers, professional school representatives, the theme is clear.

Our departments effectively equip students for successful careers, graduate and professional schools. While faculty members are the primary force behind that preparation, other factors enter in as well.

One of those factors is instructional equipment. As you have read in previous newsletters, students have been assessed a three dollar per credit hour student equipment fee as part of their tuition payment. This equipment fee resulted, for example, in the upgrading of a number of student use computer labs as well as media equipment for several classrooms across campus. Biology, chemistry and physics labs received funding for much needed lab equipment. Programs in the areas of interior design, commercial art, nursing, theatre, music and broadcasting have been able to expand programs due to new equipment. Many have described this equipment fee as a "life-saver." The College is committed to using these fees in such a way as to make it obvious to students that their dollars are a direct investment in their instructional needs. Students are involved in the process of planning, identifying areas of need and expenditure of funds at the department and college levels. In this issue of Universitas, we feature a number of these upgrades.

While instructional equipment has been purchased, needs continue for upgraded classrooms and faculty offices. We were able to purchase new lab stools for three Biology Department classrooms this past year using our operating budget for the college. Several other classrooms have been updated with tables and chairs. While these may seem small purchases, replacing the uncomfortable, sometimes broken stools and chairs originally purchased 50 years ago requires several thousand dollars a classroom. If you are interested in helping us update classrooms in Grubbs, Heckert-Wells, McCray, McPherson, or Porter, we will gratefully accept your support. Contact me at lolson@pittstate.edu.

*Lynette J. Olson, Dean  
College of Arts & Sciences*



## PSU picks Pomatto to lead Nursing Department



Dr. Mary Carol G. Pomatto has been named chairperson of the Pittsburg State University Department of Nursing, according to Dr. Lynette Olson, PSU's dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Pomatto's selection followed a national search conducted this spring.

"We are pleased that Dr. Pomatto has agreed to assume this important leadership role for the department," Olson said. "Her strong academic background as well as her many years of experience in the region will serve our graduates well."

Pomatto earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing from PSU in 1974. She earned a master of science degree in nursing from Texas Woman's University in 1978 and an education specialist degree from PSU in 1983. She received her doctorate in education with an emphasis on human resources development and adult and continuing education from Oklahoma State University in 1992.

Pomatto has served as a professor in both the undergraduate and graduate nursing programs at PSU for the past 30 years. She is founding chairperson and was appointed and reappointed to the board of directors of the Sunflower Foundation, a \$100-million foundation dedicated to the improvement of healthcare for Kansans. In addition to her duties as a member of the Nursing Department faculty, Pomatto has served as the university's liaison to the Kansas Legislature for the past nine years.

## Annual Jazz Festival fills up early

Over its 31-year history, the annual PSU Jazz Festival, which draws middle school and high school bands from Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, has grown to the point that Director Bob Kehle has begun to have to turn late-comers away.

"It's great that so many schools want to participate," Kehle said, "but the downside is that we don't have room for everyone. There's nothing I hate more than turning students away." Kehle said. "That's why we strongly encourage the schools to sign up as early as possible."

This spring, more than 50 bands participated in the day-long event. During the day, the students perform and receive comments and ratings. There is a free improv concert featuring the PSU Jazz Ensemble over the noon hour in the Student Center. The highlight of the day, however, is always the big public concert in Memorial Auditorium. The draw for that event is always a big-name jazz artist. This year, the evening concert was performed by one of the world's preeminent jazz innovators, trombonist and seashellist Steve Turre.

## NASA picks another PSU student

NASA seems to like PSU students. This year, the space agency selected PSU senior Cassandra Renee' Stuckey to be a research associate at this summer's NASA Academy 2005 at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. Stuckey will graduate in May 2006 with degrees in physics and mathematics.

Stuckey is the fifth PSU participant in the 13-year-old NASA Academy program. Previous participants from PSU were Andrew Grey, Chris Hart, David Thompson, and Jacob Stich. The NASA Academy is designed to foster the next generation of leaders for the country's aerospace efforts. Stuckey is one of 18 students chosen from candidates worldwide to participate in the 10-week program.

At NASA, Stuckey will spend Mondays through

Wednesdays working in the lab with some of the world's leading researchers. On Thursdays and Fridays, she and the other assistants will take part as a team in give-and-take dialogues with selected experts. The subjects will range from spacecraft design to policy issues to group discussions and leadership development.

Stuckey, a 2002 graduate of Pittsburg High School, said she plans to obtain her doctorate in astrophysics and would like to work for NASA. Her ultimate goal is to be an astronaut (mission specialist).

Stuckey and Jeremy Burnison, a senior physics major from Carl Junction, Mo., were also members of a student team that had a research project selected for testing on a NASA research plane. The experiment, "Crystal Oscillator

Acceleration Sensitivity Testing" (COAST), was chosen for NASA's Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunities Program. That testing is now scheduled for October.

Stuckey and Burnison worked with students from the electronics engineering technology department and the commercial graphics program to design the experiment.

# Research



## Symphony crowd behaves like children

Southeast Kansas Symphony Director Stella Hastings wasn't bothered when some of the members of the audience talked during a recent performance. She didn't miss a beat, although some of the folks in the crowd laughed and cried out loud. In fact, that's just what she expected. Hastings and a select group of the symphony were prepared for all of that and more when they performed the first Baby Symphony concert for toddlers and their caregivers at the Family Resource Center in Pittsburg.

Hastings, who believes classical music should be accessible to all people, said a typical concert venue is not very friendly to youngsters and their parents. That is the reason she set about to create a symphony environment that would be welcoming to tomorrow's concertgoers.

The music selected as well as the environment was specially tailored for the audience. Parents and other caregivers sat on the floor with their toddlers. The music was brief and included pieces that might appeal more to young ears, Hastings said.

Years from now, many of these youngsters will enjoy a symphony concert in a traditional concert hall. Until then, Hastings hopes to take the music to them in a format and an environment that suits them.

## National group accredits Department of Nursing

The Pittsburg State University Department of Nursing received official notification from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education during the spring semester that the bachelor's and master's degree programs at PSU have earned national accreditation. Both programs earned a five-year accreditation, which is the maximum for which they were eligible.

Nursing Department Chairperson Carolyn Keil, who retired at the end of the spring semester, said the CCNE accreditation validates the quality and the strength of the BSN and MSN programs at PSU.

"Obviously, we're very pleased that the CCNE chose to award PSU the maximum accreditation for which we were eligible," Keil said.

Keil said the successful accreditation effort required the work and support of a wide group of faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of the department.

"This was a project that everyone contributed to," Keil said. "Preparing for this accreditation was a joint effort that included not just the campus community but many others."

## Coltharps honored for service to KATM

For the Coltharp family, mathematics is akin to the family business. That dedication to math education was recognized recently by the Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics when the group awarded Forrest, Hazel and Glenn Coltharp the Ray Kurtz award for extraordinary service to the association. The award was presented at the KATM's 100th anniversary conference, which was held on the campus of Washburn University.

Dr. Forrest Coltharp, PSU professor emeritus, served on the KATM board from 1967 through 1989. During his tenure on the board, he served as editor of newsletter, vice-president for elementary mathematics, president, membership coordinator, and Zone 4 representative. Glenn Coltharp, Forrest's son, is the head of the Department of Teacher Education at Missouri Southern State University. He has served KATM as president-elect twice (1982 and 1987), was president twice (1983 and 1988). He was NCTM representative for two years (1989-1990).

Dr. Hazel Coltharp, Glenn's wife, is a professor of mathematics at PSU. She has served as KATM Zone 4 representative (1994), for two years as vice-president for College Mathematics (1995-1996), as president-elect (1997), as president (1998), and for two years as the NCTM representative (1999-2000).

## Alumni

(from pg. 4)

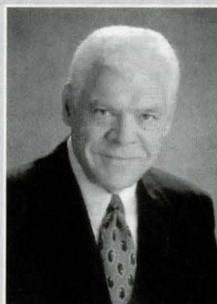
Foundation and is the executive vice president of St. John's Regional Medical Center foundation, both in Joplin, Mo.

Allen is a member of the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, the Joplin Rotary Club and the Association for Health Care Philanthropy.

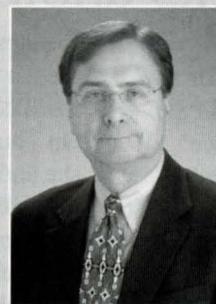
Allen graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a major in art from Pittsburg State University in 1968. He got his master's degree in education from Kansas State University in 1975. Allen lives in Joplin with his wife, Vicky.

At the spring commencement ceremonies, Daniel R. Hinthorn, BA 1963; and Jo Ann C. McDowell, BGS '76, MS '81, Ed.S. '82, received the award.

Hinthorn is a professor of internal medicine, pediatrics and family medicine and chief of infectious diseases at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kan. McDowell is president emeritus of Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC) in Valdez, Alaska.



Allen



Hinthorn



McDowell

In addition to his teaching duties at the University of Kansas, Dr. Hinthorn serves on the editorial boards of four medical journals. He is a reviewer for many journals and has written or co-written nearly 100 medical articles. Dr. Hinthorn has been a member of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Collaborative Antiviral Study Group since 1984.

Dr. Hinthorn earned a bachelor of arts degree with a major in mathematics from Pittsburg State University. He received his medical degree from the University of Kansas in 1967. His wife, Aletha S. Wehrman Hinthorn, is a 1964 graduate of PSU. They live in Overland Park, Kan.

Dr. McDowell earned emeritus status at Prince William Sound Community College this year after serving

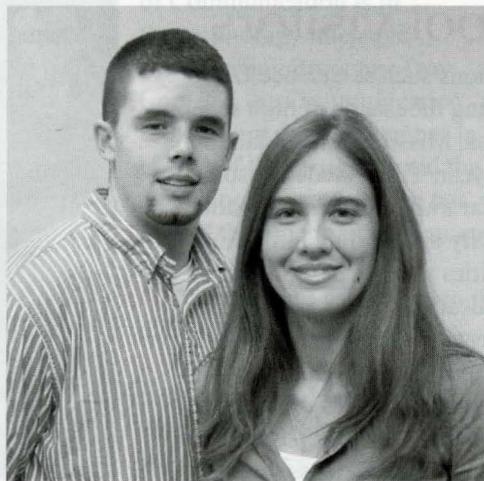
as the college's president for the past 12 years. The college is the only accredited community college in the University of Alaska system, serving a geographic area of more than 44,000 square miles encompassing 20 communities and villages.

Prior to her service at PWSCC, Dr. McDowell compiled a distinguished record of educational leadership in Kansas that included serving as president of Independence Community College and service on the Kansas Board of Regents from 1989-1992.

Dr. McDowell earned a bachelor of general studies degree, a master of science degree with a major in psychology and a specialist in education degree with a major in industrial education from Pittsburg State. She earned her Ph.D. in educational administration from Kansas State University in 1984.

## Research inspires students

For two PSU juniors, the opportunity to do research is opening doors to a future that neither might have imagined a few years ago. Meryl Twarog, Girard; and Brent Cameron, Bartlesville, Okla.; are two of just 14 students nationally who have been selected to participate in a



summer biomedical research opportunity at Washington University in St. Louis. Both are chemistry majors.

Twarog and Cameron had both dreamed of careers in medicine for some time. The research they have been allowed to do at PSU, however, has caused both students to ponder medical career paths that they hadn't when they arrived on campus.

"I originally wanted to be an M.D.," Twarog said, "but the more you get into research, the more (interesting the M.D.-Ph.D. program becomes)."

"The M.D.-Ph.D. program is really a good program," Cameron said. "Although it is expedited, it still takes seven or eight years. Only the top schools have medical scientist training programs."

Whether they pursue careers as medical scientists or M.D.s, both students say the research they have done at PSU and the research they are able to do in special programs such as this summer's has benefited them in many ways.

Dr. Virginia Rider, a member of the faculty in the Biology Department and a student research adviser, said research opportunities are especially important for undergraduate students.

"It is really the first time most students will gain insight into the mechanics of conducting a research project," Rider said. "Students develop better communication skills because they have to present their data and discuss its importance in the bigger body of knowledge. Undergraduates who generate research data and present at local and national meetings are more competitive for professional schools. Moreover, they grow so much personally that the

experience benefits them regardless of their final profession."

Rider said that several of the faculty members in the Biology Department at PSU are part of the Kansas-IdeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) program,

which provides research support for students at PSU as K-INBRE scholars. K-INBRE is a multimillion-dollar grant award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The student researchers give much of the credit for their success to Rider and their other research mentors at PSU. Both said that faculty throughout the college and elsewhere on campus have taken a real personal interest in them and their success.

"We are having Ph.D.s write us recommendation letters and they really know us," Cameron said. "They take the time to talk to us about what's going on in our lives beyond school."

For Rider and the other faculty research advisers in the department, working with the students has its own rewards.

"I love to see our students out in the world competing with the best this country has to offer," Rider said. "Many will choose to come back to Pittsburg because the quality of life here is great. But going out in the world and knowing where you fit is very rewarding."

Rider said that PSU's efforts to provide undergraduate research opportunities set Pittsburg State apart from many universities, especially large universities with a research emphasis. Few undergraduate students have the opportunity to do research, she said, "because it is time consuming for the mentor and expensive."

Some major funding agencies in the U.S. have tried to earmark resources to support undergraduate research because they understand that undergraduate research is important if the nation is to recruit biomedical researchers for the future.

## Listeners meet composers at PSU Festival of New Music

While it may be difficult to interest some people in classical music, getting them to try new music can be an even greater challenge, according to Dr. John Ross, a member of the faculty in the Department of Music and director of the annual Festival of New Music at PSU.

This spring, Ross directed the third Festival of New Music at PSU. He said that one exciting opportunity for listeners was the chance to meet and make a personal connection with the composers. The festival, he said, also allows music patrons the opportunity to hear music that otherwise would not be available in the area.

The week-long festival included a wide variety of pieces and diverse styles as well as panel discussions on music topics. In addition to concerts in McCray Hall, there was an improv in the Student Center and even a brief late-night concert in the McCray Hall lobby.

*Music*

## Preschool observation upgraded

For years, students in the Family and Consumer Sciences preschool program have had the opportunity to work with young children in both indoor and outdoor environments. The new Family and Consumer Sciences building has helped add one element that has been missing—the opportunity to observe from an unobtrusive position.

An observation booth has been included in the new preschool area. Students and teachers can now observe the entire room, using digital cameras and microphones. This allows the director or supervising teacher to video tape college students working with the class and then use the tapes for evaluation purposes. They can also be used for teacher training. For example, when discussing the play of three-year-olds, students can now record their own tapes of play in all of the areas of the room to use in class. This is part of a plan proposed seven years ago that has become a reality.

## McAfee wins NIH grant

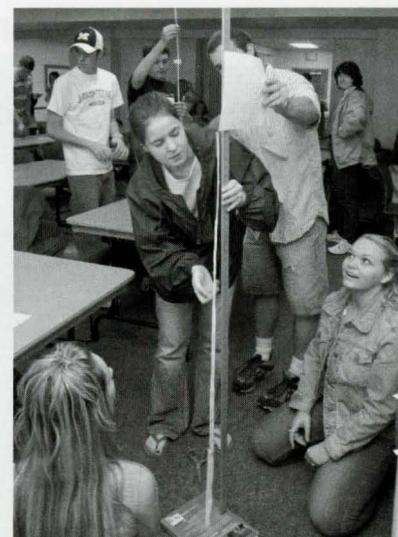
Dr. James McAfee, associate professor in the Chemistry Department, is the recipient of a National Institutes of Health Academic Research Enhancement Award in the amount of \$216,000 for work to be accomplished in the Chemistry Department in support of the Functional Analysis of an hnRNP C-Like Protein Research. Work on the project began during the fall semester. Graduate Research Assistant He (River) Huang from China has been working with Dr. McAfee.

## Competitions draw high school visitors

Annual competitions such as Science Day and Math Relays bring thousands of high school students from Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma to the campus each year. These students, some who come from as far away as the metropolitan schools of Kansas City and Springfield, compete in a variety of activities that are designed to be fun as well as educational. This past spring, more than 600 students participated in Science Day. Nearly 1,000 came for Math Relays.

On Science day, students tested their skills in physics, earth and space science, and chemistry. During the 37th annual Math Relays, students competed in topics such as Algebraic Equations & Inequalities, Algebraic Word Problems, Computational Mathematics, Geometry, Trigonometry, Number Theory, Probability and Statistics, and Programming.

Organizers say events such as these help students, the departments and the university. The events reinforce the fact that math and science can be fun as well as educational. They are also good recruiting tools for the university, bringing in many high school students who would not otherwise have an opportunity to visit PSU.



*In one of the Science Day competitions, students are challenged to build a tower of paper that will withstand a shaking table that simulates an earthquake.*

## Departments rely on annual giving

The PSU annual giving program includes all the ways that the university asks for gifts on an annual basis. That includes direct mailings, the Phon-A-Thon, Faculty/Staff Campaign, Senior Class Gift program, and the Community Campaign. As the cost of education increases and state support per capita declines, annual giving programs help the university maintain and improve its academic programs and provide support for deserving students.

Best known is perhaps the PSU Phon-A-Thon. Every gift to this program benefits the area that the giver designates. In the 2005 Phon-A-Thon, for example, the Music Department received \$2,187.50 that it used for equipment, instruments, technology, recordings, and scholarships. The funds designated for Chemistry and Physics go to student scholarships, which was \$2,120 and \$5,285, respectively in 2005. Donors gave the English Department \$3,775 during the Phon-A-Thon. That money is used primarily for scholarships and for students to travel to conferences when they are delivering papers or acting as panel members.

The money raised during the Phon-A-Thon makes a great difference in every department. Please remember how you might have been helped while on campus by supporting annual giving in any way you can. Every dollar counts and makes PSU a better university!

For information, contact Johnna Schremmer, director of major gifts, in University Development at 620-235-4767, or by e-mail: [jschremm@pittstate.edu](mailto:jschremm@pittstate.edu).

## Book comforts kids

Susan Seglie and Jan Schiefelbein, Nursing, have teamed up to create a children's book to ease the fears of going to the hospital. "Sissy's Christmas Program," (El Programa Navideño de Sissy) is in English and Spanish and stars Sissy, Gus Gorilla's little sister who breaks her arm during a Christmas program and needs to take a trip to the emergency room. For more information, contact Seglie at [sseglie@pittstate.edu](mailto:sseglie@pittstate.edu) or Schiefelbein at [jschiefe@pittstate.edu](mailto:jschiefe@pittstate.edu).

## Fee (from pg. 1)

four timpani, and some new cellos for the string techniques class. They also purchased new music stands. One classroom has been equipped for technology mediated instruction. The departmental computer lab has been upgraded with new computers and a TV/VCR has been purchased for another room.

Faculty in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures are pleased to report that the days of overhead projectors are nearly behind them. Thanks to the student technology fees, Modern Languages and Literatures updated two classrooms last year and began work on a third this year. One of the features of the rooms is a projector capable of showing much more than transparencies. Instructors may now project maps, photos, and hard objects. The newly mediated facilities also allow students to view DVDs and videos with picture and audio that rival a movie theater experience. In addition, instructors can visit target language Web sites projected on the big screen to conduct, for example, a virtual tour of an art museum. These technological advances assure that PSU's students of French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish continue to receive the best training in languages and cultures.

One of the most visible ways the technology fee has affected the Department

of Communication is in the technology intensive Broadcasting Program. Troy Comeau, the Communication Department faculty member in charge of the program, said the technology equipment fee has helped the broadcasting sequence make great strides.

"It is helping us move into the digital age," Comeau said.

New equipment purchased for the broadcasting lab includes a new audio board, teleprompter, computer editor, character generator and two new digital cameras. Comeau said the addition of this technology helps students prepare for a work environment in which digital equipment is now the standard. The new equipment arrives at the same time that the program is moving into a newly renovated broadcasting lab in Whitesitt Hall.

Dean Lynette Olson said there is a long list of educational technology needs still unmet in just about every department within the college. Because the technology equipment fee is ongoing, she said, the funds will allow the departments to improve classroom technology on a regular basis.

"Educational technology is constantly changing and improving," Olson said. "This money, which is earmarked specifically for classroom technology, will help us keep current with technology that enhances and enriches the educational experience for our students."

## Instructor writes for young readers

Suzanne Arruda, a part-time instructor in Biology, has developed a second career as the writer of biographies for young adult readers. Her most recent book is "The Girl He Left Behind: The Life and Times of Libbie Custer." Arruda's previous books are "Freedom's Martyr," about Dr. Jose Rizal, and "From Kansas to Cannibals," about Osa Johnson. All are available at Amazon.com.

Arruda said she has signed a two-book contract with New American Library for historical suspense novels. The first book, "Stalking Death," is set in British East Africa just after WWI. It is to be released in January 2006.



## McClaskey outstanding faculty

Dr. Barbara R. McClaskey, associate professor in the Department of Nursing, was selected by students

to receive the Outstanding Faculty Award during Apple Day ceremonies this past spring. McClaskey teaches classes in Nursing and the Childbearing Family, Transcultural Health Care, and Nursing and the School-Age Child.

## Mathematics professor wins Fulbright scholarship

A Dr. Tadek Dobrowolski, an associate professor in the Department of Mathematics, is one of four recipients of Fulbright foreign scholarships in the sciences to spend time researching in Poland. He is a well-known active researcher in infinite dimensional topology and analysis, and he will divide his time in Poland during the fall of 2005 between Warsaw University and the Polish Academy of Sciences.

### Universitas Ron Womble, Editor

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# No news isn't always good news!

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