



# Universitas

Pittsburg State University • College of Arts & Sciences Newsletter • Spring 2007

## Undergraduate research training a good investment

Can any real research come out of Kansas? Can any real research come out of a small college like Pittsburg State? Can students be involved in research in a meaningful way?

These are three hard questions that many smart people would answer 'no' to, but Virginia Rider, professor in the Department of Biology, would have a different answer.

"Investing in collaborative research projects that actively involve undergraduate students is an outstanding investment," said Rider, who does research in the area of

endocrinology. "We've proven this with a paper published in the December issue of the **Journal of Endocrinology**."

The research—a collaborative effort among investigators at PSU, KU-Lawrence, and the University of Tokyo—uncovered a novel mechanism by which female sex-steroids control the proliferation and differentiation of uterine target cells.

Students Meryl Twarog, Stacy Jones and Brent Cameron did research that was instrumental in making this discovery. Twarog



*Back row (l to r): Rider, Brent Cameron, Meryl Twarog, Sara Gorjestani (graduate student in the lab), Stacy Jones. Front row: Dr. Laura Li, visiting scholar from China, and Tamara Hart, laboratory assistant.*

and Cameron are each now pursuing medical degrees at the Case Western School of Medicine where Cameron is also enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Jones has been accepted by early decision to the University of Kansas School of Medicine. Their research has been selected by the senior editor of the **Journal of Endocrinology** as a "hot topic."

## Students attend writer's conference

In October, 2006, four creative writing students attended the annual Nimrod Writer's Conference, sponsored by Tulsa University in Tulsa, Okla. All four students won scholarships to the conference, based on their fiction and poetry writing. The English Department paid for their travel expenses. The four students were Blair Croan and Angie Hine (students in the new graduate creative writing emphasis) and

(see Conference, pg. 7)

research

# From the Dean



Recently, I was asked by a prospective faculty member what distinguishes Pittsburg State University. How I responded reflects my observation of the College of Arts & Sciences. In the proverbial nutshell, I would say

that the collaborative learning environment between faculty and student(s) provides that distinctive element. In every academic unit within the College, I see evidence of faculty members serving as teachers, guides, models and mentors to undergraduate and graduate students. Whether in the laboratory, studio, or classroom, faculty members desire to transmit their knowledge and expertise to students. Quite often, students attend professional meetings with their faculty mentors, many times presenting their own projects or research or performance. In this way, they experience their field of study beyond PSU. This is an important part of their professional development.

As I prepare this message to you, it is the time of year when we review faculty accomplishments. As I read these reports I know I will find many examples of faculty and student collaboration resulting in expanded knowledge and skills as well as the possibility of discovery. This issue of *Universitas* highlights several student-faculty relationships in which students grow and benefit from opportunities to work with faculty side-by-side in specific areas of faculty expertise.

You may have had a similar experience while at Pittsburg State University. I often hear from our graduates about the positive impact a faculty member had on their educational experience. It is truly in the collaborative learning environment that students and faculty alike expand their knowledge and develop the skills necessary for a successful future.

We value each alumnus and friend of the College of Arts & Sciences. Thank you for your support of the College. We need your continued help in student recruitment, placement of graduates, as well as your financial assistance. Let us also know how we can continue to serve you.

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

## Toulouse 2007: Students changing their lives

A group of 11 PSU students will be spending the entire month of June in Toulouse, France, for a linguistic and cultural immersion. The students, Natalee Armfield, Justin Blanchard, Cathleen Garrison, Xu (Tracy) Guo, Melody Hutchison, Anna Italiano, Zeb Madsen, Dana Michael, Libby Pearce, Caitlin Veteto, and Georgia Wren will be accompanied by Dr. Myriam Krepps, assistant professor of French, who will help them discover the culture and beauty of her hometown.

Toulouse is located in the southwest of France, in the Midi-Pyrénées region. It is the sixth largest city of France with a population of about 760,000, and is known as “la ville rose” (the pink city).

“This is because of the pink glow given by the sun reflecting on its light-red brick buildings,” said Krepps. “Toulouse has a very rich past, being an important economic and cultural center already during the Gallo-Roman period. It has been a center of arts and culture for centuries and monuments throughout the city are a constant reminder of its glorious history.”

Today, Toulouse is also an important scientific center and a leader in the aeronautic industry: it is the home of the Airbus planes, the A320 and A380 (the gigantic A380 is brought in pieces from all over Europe and assembled in Toulouse).

While in Toulouse, students will live with a French host family and attend morning classes daily, Monday through Friday, at the Institut Catholique de Toulouse’s language center and the Institut Universitaire de Langue et de Cultures Françaises (IULCF). Afternoons will be devoted to cultural experiences and explorations. Led by Krepps, students will visit Toulouse monuments, museums, varied neighborhoods and cultural sites.

Students will also have the opportunity to visit the region surrounding Toulouse. The group will travel on day-trips by train to Carcassonne to explore the walled-in Medieval City; to Foix in the Pyrenees Mountains, where they will visit Gaston Foebus’ castle, its picturesque city, and hike to the Pic du Saint Sauveur; to Gruissan, a fishing village on the Mediterranean Sea; to Cordes-sur-Ciel, a Renaissance village in the Corbière region; and to Albi where they will visit the Toulouse-Lautrec museum set in the painter’s family home.

“Studying in a French setting, and living with a French host family—this life-changing experience will deepen each student’s knowledge and understanding of French, and of different aspects of life in France,” Krepps said.

Students will also have the opportunity to remain in Europe at the end of the four weeks if they wish to travel in other European countries.

*experience*

# eHIKES enhances history instruction

As its letters tell us, eHIKES is a program to enhance History Instruction for Kansas Educators. It is a part of the U.S. Department of Education's Teaching American History (TAH) grant program and Kelly Woestman is assistant director.

"Teachers from Parsons USD #503 and other Kansas school districts began in the spring of 2004 and completed their work in the teaching and learning of American history this summer," said Woestman. "The capstone grant event was a trip to Washington, D.C., July 24-28, 2006. Teachers worked in the National Archives' newly redesigned learning classroom and toured other historic sites while we were there."

During summer courses in 2004, 2005, and 2006, teacher participants attended classes delivered by PSU faculty and guest historians from across the country at the Parsons Middle School. During regular semesters, they took online courses as part of this newly designated teaching track in the Department of History's master of arts degree.

Woestman coordinated activities among graduate advisers James Schick; John Daley, chairman of the History Department; and graduate faculty in the department as well as the staff of the Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies in order to offer this program to area teachers.

As a result of this, the U.S. Department of Education asked Woestman to make a presentation at the annual TAH project directors' meeting in Albuquerque



in September 2006. The presentation outlined this unique opportunity, which Woestman designed in order to meet the needs of area teachers who wanted to maintain their current teaching positions while pursuing a master's degree in history.

As one of their final course requirements, this year Project eHIKES teaching fellows researched, developed, and designed 3-D exhibits for use in their classrooms. Podcasts

about these exhibits, produced by the students themselves, are available on the Southeast Kansas Education Center-Greenbush Web site: <http://podcast.greenbush.us>. Some of the teachers also discussed theses during a presentation on "Blogs, Podcasts, and Wikis: Social Software for Social Studies Teachers" at the December 2006 annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies in Washington, D.C.

In addition to PSU, grant partners joining Parsons USD #503 included Greenbush, the National Archives and Records Administration-Kansas City, and H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. Project staff also included Jim Rodman, Julie Sneed, Lisa Blair, and Beth Towner of Greenbush. Sneed, Blair, and Towner are graduates of PSU.

Following Project eHIKES, Pittsburg State has partnered with Greenbush on two additional Teaching American History grants that continue to offer graduate coursework for area teachers in addition to regularly offered courses both on campus and online.

Teachers interested in working on a master's degree in history at PSU may contact John Daley at 620-235-4312 or [jdaley@pittstate.edu](mailto:jdaley@pittstate.edu) for more information.

## Distinguished alum Jim Harlin speaks at Math Honor Day

Math Honor Day, held on November 16, is a new tradition at PSU wherein high-achieving high school mathematics students are invited to hear presentations designed to broaden their horizons. While faculty take part in the event, this year the highlight was James Harlin (B.S. Mathematics '70, M.S. Mathematics '71).

"After he left here, Jim taught mathematics for a few years at Missouri State University, Springfield, Mo.," said Elwyn Davis,

one of Harlin's former teachers. "Then he spent about 18 years with Horace Mann Insurance Company, where he earned the rank of Fellow of the Society of Actuaries."

Harlin has had a distinguished career as an actuary and has most recently been a vice president of JPMorgan Chase & Co., with specific responsibility for insurance. After retiring from Morgan Chase, he began his own business in

which he is pursuing a new development in screening applicants for life insurance. This development promises to smooth the screening process and make a physical examination an unnecessary part of an application for life insurance.

In his speech, Harlin challenged students to build the foundations of success into their lives so that "the end can be predicted from the beginning."

He currently lives in Oklahoma City with his wife.

## Program success in FACS education

by Cristine Elliott, Teacher Educator, Family & Consumer Education

Anyone visiting a Family and Consumer Sciences classroom in the Midwest is likely to see lots of gorillas.

Posters of Gus are displayed on walls. Proud, stuffed gorillas perch on file cabinets. Gorilla key chains rest atop the teacher's desk hosting a horde of school keys. Gus coffee mugs remain half full of cold coffee. Teachers are seen wearing Pitt State shirts on "college day." Gus is undoubtedly making an impact in FACS classrooms.

Over the past few years, enrollment in the Family and Consumer Sciences teacher education program has increased by more than 300 percent. In addition to the large enrollment increase, there is a 100 percent employment rate for last year's graduates. Our graduates are in demand just about anywhere they desire to go. For example, Chrissy Cook, a 2006 graduate, is now teaching FACS at Ponderosa High School in the Las Vegas School District.

"Students coming through our program can take their degree[s] and go anywhere and be in high demand," said Duane Whitbeck, FCS department



*Fawn Mace Plummer, FCS Teacher Education, displays a learning unit she designed which focuses on healthy foods and nutrition labeling. Fawn just completed her student teaching experience and will teach full-time next semester at Ottawa High School.*

chairperson. "This is not something limited to a brief moment in time. The skills and knowledge we teach in FCS Teacher Education and which in turn are taught in FCS classes in secondary school systems, have critical importance for the success of the next generation, whether they are acting as consumers, as individuals, or on behalf of their families seeking healthful living."

Another indication of program success is the feedback received from our graduates and the school administrators who employ them. Emily Martin, FACS teacher at Oswego High School, commented that she believed the classes in her teacher preparation program equipped her to make decisions and meet the challenges of today's classroom.

Having teachers in the classroom, also feeds the success of our program at the university. On Family and Consumer Sciences Career Day, an annual event held last year on December 6, this was confirmed when a host of former graduates brought their own high school students along so they could learn about career opportunities in family and consumer sciences.

School administrators have become keenly aware of PSU's success in teacher education and are making direct contact when they are faced with upcoming vacancies. This occurred during the fall semester when Ottawa High School requested that Fawn Mace Plummer be able to complete her student teaching in

Ottawa and become a full-time teacher for their district in January.

As our program matures, our students gain benefits during their professional semester by working with caring cooperative teachers who are themselves PSU graduates. For example, Deborah Noakes, FACS teacher at Chanute High School and a PSU graduate, will be hosting her third student teacher this coming spring when Marla Sterling joins her.

"The preparation that I received at Pittsburg State University was vital to my success," said Noakes, who has received the Clyde U. Phillips Award, served as president of the Kansas Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences, and is currently

*(see FCS program, pg. 5)*

# Southeast Kansas Symphony a source of pride

Perpetually a strong program, Pittsburg State's symphony orchestra, known as the Southeast Kansas Symphony, continues to be a source of pride for the entire university. In addition, it is also a source of opportunities for our students. This was demonstrated during the 2006-2007 season when a student winner of the Concerto & Aria Competition, Erman Turkili, performed a complete concerto for the November 2006 concert.

"The tradition of the SEK Symphony Concerto & Aria Competition reaches far back into the group's rich history," said Stella Hastings, artistic director and conductor of the symphony. "The competition itself affords students the opportunity to gain valuable performing experience as a soloist with an orchestra. In years past, multiple student winners would be selected to perform one movement of a concerto or operatic aria with the symphony. In the past two years, the structure of the competition has changed; the students' high level of performance capabilities has forced the competition to become more intense."

Hastings said that in previous years students had been invited to perform only one movement rather than a complete concerto. This was a first for the ensemble.

Erman Turkili, a graduate student from Turkey, won the Concerto & Aria Competition in January 2006 with his performance of the first movement of Nicola Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 2 in B minor ("The Little Bell"). He is the first student winner of the annual competition to perform all three movements of the virtuosic concerto.

Another graduate student, Scott Allison, conducted a concert series held March 14th in Pittsburg's



Turkili



Allison

*Turkili is a graduate violin student, and winner of the 2006 Concerto & Aria Competition.*

*Allison is a graduate conducting student, and guest conductor for the March 2007 concert.*

Memorial Auditorium. The series featured Bach's Orchestral Suite in D as well as two works by Brahms, "Academic Festival Overture" and the monumental Symphony No. 1. Allison conducted "Academic Festival Overture."

Hastings is characteristically enthusiastic about the current concert season.

"Recently, the SEK Symphony performance featured a variety of music spanning over 300 years," she boasted.

The Southeast Kansas Symphony is financially supported by the Friends of the SEK Symphony, which allows the group to provide scholarships for wind and percussion students, hire auxiliary performers, as well as continue to build the rich library of musical scores and parts that allows the group to perform standard repertoire as well as modern and even commissioned works. The symphony was the recipient of a 2006 Kansas Arts Commission operational support grant.

Concert schedules and ticket information can be found at <http://library.pittstate.edu/sekso/concerts/>.

## FCS program (from pg. 4)

speaking nationally on the topic of teaching sexuality and wellness in the classroom.

"From quality educational experiences to the student teaching semester, PSU ensured that I was ready for the classroom. I am pleased to support my profession and the university by training future teachers during their professional semester. In the spring, I will be returning to PSU to begin working on my master's degree. I have no doubt that the experience will be equally as rewarding."

Without doubt, the FACS teacher education program has experienced unprecedented growth over the past decade and is proving quality through the success of its graduates. Using feedback from graduates, high school administrators, KSDE program consultants, a local advisory board, and PSU administration has resulted in a program producing highly qualified graduates and, last but not least, more Gorillas in the classroom.

## Universitas

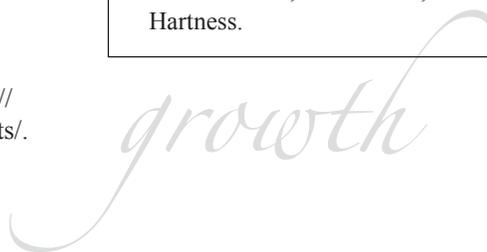
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**Special Thanks to:** Stella Hastings, Kelly Woestman, Cris Elliott, Virginia Rider, Elwyn Davis, Myriam Krepps, Bruce Shields, Blair Croan, and Lori Hartness.



## Private support makes the difference

With the competition continually increasing for limited state dollars, the university must rely on alumni



and friends to provide the support needed for scholarships, faculty development and equipment in all the academic programs offered in the College of Arts and Sciences. Over the years, Pittsburg State University has been blessed with strong support from alumni, friends and corporate partners. Private gifts make it possible for the university to maintain the level of excellence our students deserve. Past gifts have made a tremendous difference but many needs remain.

Whether you are interested in establishing a scholarship, supporting a specific academic program's equipment needs or providing resources so that the university can compete for the most talented faculty, your gift will be welcome. The PSU Foundation, Inc., accepts and manages all gifts made to the university. There are many ways to support the university through either a cash gift or a planned gift. Staff members in the Office of University Development are ready to assist you. Know that your gift will make a difference in the lives of Pitt State students.

### For information on making a gift, contact:

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Pittsburg, KS 66762  
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ecarter@pittstate.edu

## Recruiting students in (and out) of Kansas

“Recruiting quality students to Pittsburg State is quite easy if you have a school like this one and a high quality of students,” said Maj. Jim Snyder of the Pittsburg State Department of Military Science.

Snyder is a recruiter for the Army ROTC at Pitt State. He is working hard to bring new students to the program, which has a rich past and glorious tradition that reaches many years into the past.

“To hear Jack Overman tell it,” said Snyder with a smile, “he danced with every girl at the Military Ball. It was quite a gala event in those days.”

Snyder, a long-time recruiter, approaches his job of attracting prospective cadets onto our campus with enthusiasm. He has found the 19 community colleges around the state very adept at preparing students to receive the most of the ROTC program at Pitt State.

“For example,” said Snyder, remarking on a particular student, “Cadet Brad Lind from Hutchinson Community College possesses very high marks in all of the areas we need for a potential cadets. He is academically fit, medically fit, physically fit, of good moral character and has a desire to serve his country as Army 2nd lieutenant after graduation.”

Also in the group recruited by Snyder were Cadets Travis Blackburn and Justin Martens from Blue Stem High School and Cowley County Community College. They have gone on to receive their commissions and have become lieutenants. Dusty Randall, who is from Dexter, Kan., has also received his commission.

“Cadet Tyson Patrick, who is another fine potential young Army officer, comes to us by the way of El Saline High School, which is near Salina, and Highland Community College, where he was a football player,” said Snyder of one of his more recent efforts.

Snyder also recruits from out of state.

“The Army is very willing to pay out-of-state tuition for quality cadets,” said Snyder. “At this time, 90 percent plus of ROTC cadets are on scholarship. This includes tuition, books, fees, and a stipend each month.”

When asked about his most unusual cadet, Snyder mentioned Jim Rachael of Chicora, Pa.

“One afternoon about two years ago the phone rang and the voice on the other end asked if this was THE Pittsburg and I said yes. Then he said, ‘I want to be an ROTC cadet.’ Later—about three months had passed—his mom called.

“She said, ‘You have sold our son on your school, and the ROTC program. He really wants to attend Pittsburg.’ I said that was great. In early September I got an e-mail from him saying that he would begin in the spring semester and asking, ‘Where can we meet you? We are only one hour from Pittsburgh.’ I told him we were in Kansas, not Pennsylvania.

“Cadet Rachael did come that spring, with Mom in tow. They had never seen PSU prior to this. He is a junior at Pittsburg State now, a superb cadet, a dorm RA, and has become a real Gorilla. It goes to show, we have the right stuff to get the best.”

## Conference (from pg. 1)

Lori Hartness and Bruce Shields (undergraduate creative writing majors). Bruce Shields, with help from Blair Croan and Lori Hartness, wrote the following description of their experience:

The 2006 Nimrod/Hardman Awards Conference was a great opportunity for novice writers to participate with professionals involved in the craft. It was an all-day event that featured 31 published authors. The day was divided between morning and afternoon masterclasses, in which those present were invited to attend their choice of focused lectures. The morning began with a panel discussion, in which authors talked about the theme of “marking time and place.” This topic offered a varied perspective amongst the authors, such as what setting does for a story and how perspective towards art changes over time. The conference also provided writers with an opportunity to sit down with award-winning writers and editors and have their work critiqued.

The masterclass that one PSU student attended was “Fiction II: Unpacking a Novel in 50 Days or 50 Years,” presented by Rilla Askew and Carol Johnson. The class was full of practical knowledge for those who were in their first 100 pages of their first novel or for those who had an idea for their first novel. One of the most important pieces of advice was to make sure you, as a writer, knew exactly what your publishing contract stated. Otherwise, you might find yourself in an unfortunate position. Another interesting fact was that when a writer is shopping his or her novel to an agent it is important to be able to categorize the style of the novel: literary, mainstream, humor, genre, etc. The problem is that, if neither the writer nor the agent can categorize the novel, then it would be much more difficult to interest a publisher. These pieces of knowledge, as well as many helpful hints these presenters offered, made the conference worthwhile for the student who attended.

Another student submitted work to have an editor review the piece and give comments in a one-on-one meeting. The student met with Diane Burton, of the University of Tulsa, for 45 minutes after the last workshop. This meeting was encouraging for the student, giving her a viewpoint to supplement the comments she receives in her classes.

The highlight of the day was the lunch and keynote address, in which Myla Goldberg, author of “Bee Season” and “Time’s Magpie” gave a lively oration, detailing the creation process of her newest novel, “Wickett’s Remedy.” Besides being an accomplished writer, she is an energetic presence and she delivered her address with casual frankness and humor. The lunch cost a small fee, but given the opportunity to hear Myla Goldberg’s address compensated for the cost.

What made this event most notable was the silent camaraderie among those present. Everyone seemed intently aware that they were a part of a larger community; that their works weren’t fruitlessly labored over. There was a kinship among those who attended and an awareness that their creative efforts gave them a voice among many who share a common love: to write.



## Making a gift to Pittsburg State University through your estate

Most of us would like to make a difference—to do something that would make our world a better place. You can make a difference. Your contributions to Pittsburg State University, to our future, make a statement about you. Why not continue that support through your estate plan?

**Consider a bequest.** Gifts through your will can be a particular item or a percentage of your estate. They can be contingent (passing to PSU only if another beneficiary dies before you) or in trust, providing income to your spouse or children before passing for our benefit.

**Give life insurance.** You can name Pittsburg State as the beneficiary of a policy on your life or contribute an old policy that you no longer need.

**Leave financial accounts.** Savings, CD’s or other financial accounts—including IRA’s—can be payable to PSU upon your death. Ask the account custodian for details. Bequests of IRA’s save significant taxes.

**Include PSU in your revocable trust.** Lifetime trusts (revocable living trusts) are popular for many reasons. They relieve the property owner of management responsibilities, reduce probate costs, afford privacy and can be changed without the formalities of a will. You can include PSU as a beneficiary of your revocable trust.

Whether you already have an estate plan or are just thinking about one, it is always a good time to review your objectives and make the plan work for you. If you have any questions regarding these giving options or need any assistance, contact:

**George O. Pickell,**

Associate Director of Planned Giving & Major Gifts  
Pittsburg State University, Office of Development,  
1701 South Broadway, Pittsburg, KS 66762-7518  
Telephone: 620/235-4863.

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# No news isn't always good news!

Please drop us a line and let us know about your latest endeavors.

**Mail to:** Kris Hartley, Office of Development/Advancement Services,  
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