



"...ONLINE NEWSLETTER FROM THE PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES"

Universitas



Summer 2009

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Transitions

A Message from the Dean



Transitions! This time of year is always filled with transitions. In May, we launched 321 graduates from the College of Arts & Sciences. Even with the difficult economy, many are off to exciting new careers and positions, or to graduate or professional schools. In June we began the process of enrolling incoming new students. Each Friday and Monday through the month and

into July, the campus is abuzz with these new students arriving with all of their hopes, dreams, and fears. Our department chairs and faculty meet with them to assist in selecting classes for fall semester.

Summer classes started June 8 and will continue through the end of July. Some faculty members are having international experiences this summer by attending conferences, teaching in the PSU in Paraguay program, traveling with students, and exploring new opportunities for learning and research.

As with every year, this is one filled with these ordinary transitions. But this year we face even more transitions. As you likely know, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Steve Scott has transitioned to become the next President of Pittsburg State University on June 29th. He has asked that I take on the role of Interim Provost and Vice

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President for Academic Affairs during the next year and I transitioned into that role on June 29th as well. That leaves the Arts & Sciences Dean position open. Dr. Stephen Meats has agreed to serve as Interim Dean and of course, that requires that a faculty member from the English Department be appointed Interim Chairperson. Dr. Celia Patterson has agreed to take on that role.

Not only is the leadership of the University and College shifting, due to budget reductions, we were forced to leave positions have been left open and their responsibilities shifted to chairs of other departments. This will be a challenging year for the College but we will continue to fulfill our mission, doing so with the great passion and compassion associated with Pittsburg State.

I will admit being a little melancholy right now as I sort through my office in Grubbs Hall and plan the temporary move to Russ Hall. I have so enjoyed the alumni, faculty, staff, and students in the College of Arts & Sciences over my eight years as Dean. The good news for me is that I remain at Pittsburg State University and will still be able to support the work of the college.

I want to give a special thanks to Dr. Bobby Winters for his continued efforts in editing Universitas and keeping us all informed of the remarkable things happening in Arts & Sciences at Pittsburg State University!

Lynette Olson

Dean

Dusty Peterson, working actuary

In the process of learning

Despite a tough job market, Dusty Peterson didn't have to worry about finding a job after recently finishing his master's degree in mathematics from PSU.

"I've been very fortunate," said Peterson, a Fort Scott native. "My job has been waiting for me since they offered it last August."

Peterson, who had already earned a BS in math with an emphasis in actuarial science, is joining State Farm Insurance after being offered a job as an actuary following an internship last summer. The company held the position for him until he was able to relocate to Bloomington, Ill., after May's graduation.

Actuarial science, or the use of statistics to assess risk for the insurance and finance industries, was not part of his plan when he first came to Pitt State. But after hearing about the new program and being persuaded by mathematics professor Ananda Jayawardhana, Peterson was in.

"He really helped me understand what it was and how high the expectations are in the field," Peterson said. "One other thing that caught my eye was the



high ranking of the actuarial profession."

The job of actuary has been consistently ranked as one of the four best jobs in the United States by the Jobs Rated Almanac, which judges based on work environment, income, employment outlook, physical demands, security and stress. The average starting salary for an actuary is about \$46,000, increasing to \$120,000 after 10 years on the job.

Jayawardhana said he has no doubt that Peterson will go on to be a successful actuary.

"He is an outstanding guy," Jayawardhana said, adding that several recent graduates have gone on to work in promising actuarial careers. "It's a great career for students to consider."

For more information on the actuarial science program at PSU, call the Department of Mathematics at (620) 235-4400.



K-INBRE: Students becoming physicians

Knowledge put to work

Stacy Jones came to Pittsburg State as a freshman. She enjoyed the first year here but it was difficult to find the resources to send her back as a sophomore until Virginia Rider managed to secure a K-INBRE Scholarship that she used to help defray her tuition.

"She worked on a research project in my lab for 3 years," says Dr. Rider. "And co-authored a paper published in the

Journal of Endocrinology, which is a top tier endocrine journal."

Stacy was accepted early decision to KU in 2007 and began medical school in the fall of 2008. Since she began there, she has continued to excel.

"I have been working on a retrospective chart review study looking at the incidence of venous thrombotic events in traumatic brain injury patients here at KU," says Jones.

Stacy just returned from San Diego, CA where she presented her research at the Southwest Surgical Congress national meeting and won best poster presentation at that meeting. It is expected that this will eventually be published as a paper and Jones will be first author.

"I wouldn't be in this position today if it weren't for the experience I gained working for Dr. Virginia Rider at Pitt!"

Telegrams from alumni

Knowledge put to work

Kent Tullis ('95 Biology) and **Dayna Murphy Tullis** ('96 BS Psychology) currently live in Turkey stationed at Incirlik Air Base. Kent works as the NCOIC of the Education and Training department. He continues to enjoy working in the medical field, and his current duties include teaching CPR classes, certifying other USAF personnel in EMT, and he wears many other hats. "We wear our Pitt State sweatshirts proudly!"

Andy Pierce ('04 Communications), who is now working toward his Ph.D. at the University of Missouri-Columbia, was just awarded the prestigious Eugene O'Neill Conference Fellowship and he will be spending part of his summer at the O'Neill Playwright's Conference as a literary assistant and assistant dramaturg.

According to Cynthia Allan, Chair of the Department of Communications, "The dramaturg is a person with a specialty in dramatic composition. They are responsible for a lot of the research and

development of new scripts; historical accuracy, continuity, etc. They often work with theatre companies to consult on play script selection, etc. Dramaturgs

play a big role in developing new material and are the most scholarly part of the process."

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*Kent and Dayna Tullis
in Turkey*



Theresa Duran: Editing your future

"I heard 'A liberal arts education trains you for nothing but prepares you for everything' just the other day on the radio and groaned at the memory of being an English major with no clear plans for the future," says Theresa Duran.

When Duran left Pittsburg State University in 1992 with a master's degree, her only definite goal was to continue my graduate studies at KU.

"I may have entertained the vague notion of someday landing a teaching position at a university," she says, "but the thought of getting a job in the publishing industry certainly never crossed my mind."

But that's where she ended up only a few years later, as an editor at a publishing house in the San Francisco Bay Area. Today she works as a freelance editor, doing copyediting, indexing, and proofreading for a diverse and growing clientele.

Duran did achieve her goal of getting a PhD from KU, though she had to finish her dissertation long-distance from California, where she had moved the day after getting married in June 1995.

"I did apply for a few teaching positions at Bay Area colleges and private high schools (which don't require state certification), and took advantage of the local publishing scene by applying for editorial positions," says Duran. "I

knew absolutely nothing about book production, but I figured (rather naively) that since I was good at English grammar and mechanics, and had lots of experience grading papers, I could wing it as an editor."



As luck would have it, Duran got hired by Pomegranate, a small but reputable publishing company that specializes in fine art books and calendars. Pomegranate turned out to be the perfect place to learn the ropes of publishing.

"I soon discovered that my job would include not only copyediting and proofreading but just about any task necessary to get a publication out the door—researching, writing, working with authors, hiring freelancers, resolving copyright issues, collaborating with graphic designers on typesetting and layout, producing company catalogs, and even lending a hand in the warehouse."

After six years at Pomegranate, fed up with rising gas prices and the stressful freeway commute, Duran decided to launch her own editorial business in the comfort of home.

"My clients have included museums, university professors, curricula developers, self-publishing authors, and well-known trade and scholarly presses," she says. "I continue to do a lot of work for my former employer, Pomegranate, and for some of the contacts I made while working there."

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco was the source of two particularly memorable copyediting projects, one an illustrated encyclopedia of symbols in Chinese art, and the other a catalog for a large traveling exhibition of Ming-dynasty relics. Both jobs involved working with bilingual elements in the text (presented in Chinese characters and pinyin) and with authors who were non-native English speakers.

"Of course I speak no Chinese," laughs Duran, "so communication was sometimes rocky, but it did call to mind my experience working with international students at the PSU Writing Center!"

Physics students speak

In the process of learning

"Involvement of students into various research activities helps students to test and sharpen their theoretical and practical skills," says Dr. Alexander Konopelko, visiting professor in the Department of Physics. "While setting up the experiments, performing an observation, or working out computations, students gain knowledge."

According to Konopelko, students in the Physics Department are currently working on the research projects in various fields including Astrophysics.

"Mohamed Rawnan is developing a phenomenological model of the high-energy spectral data for a particular pulsar," he says.

Rawnan presented his results at the 141st Annual Meeting of The Kansas Academy of Science, at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas.

"I am very happy that Physics Department let me participate in the Topeka meeting," said Rawnan. "It was a good opportunity for me to talk to many researchers and get updated on various topics of the scientific research. I did present my results but also attended many other presentations, which expanded my horizons in science research."

In addition, Dong Qing Huang is currently analyzing data from VERITAS (Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System)

and looking into the absorption of gamma rays from the distant AGNs (active galactic nuclei).

"VERITAS," says Konopelko, "is a state-of-the-art experiment in Arizona built by the US, Canada, and Ireland.

According to him, "Such study may end up with an indirect detection of the most promising dark matter particles - axions."

Dong Qing reported his results at the 39th annual Mid-American Regional Astrophysics Conference (MARAC) 2009, held at the Linda Hall Library, Kansas City, MO.

"I appreciate this presentation opportunity given by the PSU Physics Department," said Dong Qing. "It was the first time for me to attend this kind of meeting and to give a speech in front of such a group in my life. Not only I improved my presentation skills, but also I got to know what other people are doing in the Astrophysics field, which expands my knowledge of physics greatly. I will remember this

a very long time, if not my whole life."

Out of Egypt

Dr. Cynthia Woodburn, Department of Mathematics, returned from spending part of her sabbatical in Egypt, including Cairo, Alexandria, Aswan, Abu Simbel, Luxor, Esna and Edfu. This trip was taken in order to learn firsthand about the mathematics and applied mathematics of the ancient Egyptians to help in teaching History of Mathematics. It was a Mathematical Association of America mathematical study tour. The group Dr. Woodburn toured was composed of 30 participants among whom were a mathematician *cum* Egyptologist and the Executive Director of the MAA.

"I gathered a lot of information which will be useful in teaching History of Mathematics as well as other classes," says Woodburn. "I also took many pictures which will



first presentation ft presentation for

incorporated into lectures."

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Dr. Woodburn has already used this experience in class. "A student wrote, 'I appreciate the historical insights and travel stories you've offered. That kind of information makes math click for me.'"

Student writers earn distinction

Rebecca Bauman, undergraduate creative writing student at PSU, recently had some of her poems set to music by Ryan Jespersen, a doctoral candidate in composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas. His composition entitled "Birdsongs" was presented at the eighth annual New Music Festival at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Jespersen used eight of Bauman's poems that he felt have tone and rhythm, strong images, and intriguing sound that work well lyrically in a song cycle. He analyzed actual bird songs as a basis for the melody of the song based on Bauman's poem, "Birdsong."

Jonathan Brisbin, a senior in the undergraduate Creative Writing Program, has had a second story selected as Editor's Choice for Fiction for the journal *Relief: A Quarterly Christian Expression* (www.reliefjournal.com). His story is titled "The Life and Times of a Modern-Day Humpty Dumpty." Another of his stories, "Sins of the

Fathers" was selected as Editor's Choice for fiction for an earlier issue.

A beehive, metaphorically speaking, in English

Dr. Susan Carlson spent her sabbatical leave during the spring 2008 semester engaged in research for her study of how clinical depression and bipolar illness affected the creative work of five great writers and activists of the 19th and early 20th centuries: Mary Shelley, Charlotte Brontë, Florence Nightingale, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf. Carlson visited the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe in Cambridge and the Mental Health Sciences Library at McLean's Hospital in Boston. She also traveled to England and visited the British Library and the Wellcome Library in London and the British Library Newspapers in Colindale. On a return trip to England, she traveled to the University of Sussex in Brighton and the Brontë Museum in Haworth.

Four faculty took advantage of grants from the Department's William J. and Mary E. Eichhorn Endowment for Faculty Development to work on research and writing projects.

Dr. Kathleen De Grave took a course off in the spring semester to revise the manuscript of her novel "Fire Handed Down," and to write 100 additional pages.

Dr. Paul McCallum took a course off during the fall semester to prepare a conference paper, "Pope the Dramatist: The Strategies and Perils of Literary Reenactment," which he presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Chapter of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century. He also revised and prepared for submission a monograph on the Restoration theatre, *'Tis your business to be couz'ned here': Prologues, Epilogues, and Literary Authority in Restoration England*.

Dr. Paul "Skip" Morris took a course off in the fall semester to revise an essay on computers and writing center tutors that he sent to *Composition Studies* to be reviewed for publication. He also wrote two conference proposals, one of which, on ethics and technical writing, was accepted for the College English Association (CEA) conference. He also worked on a creative non-fiction essay tentatively titled "Learning How to Become a Man in America."

Professor Karen Stolz also took a course off in the fall semester to revise several chapters of her novel, "Arvetta," and for continuing background research for the novel. She also started two Jesse stories as part of a related story collection and submitted two completed Jesse stories to a number of literary magazines.

New Faculty on board

English

This past year, the Department welcomed three new faculty members, and a fourth was promoted to tenure earning status.

Christopher Anderson, a new assistant professor, earned his B.A. from Earlham College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut. His specialties include American literature, ecopoetry and environmental literature, science and literature, and creative writing.

Philip Rudd, a new assistant professor, earned his B.S.E. and M.A. at Southeast Missouri State University and his Ph.D. from Ball State University. His specialties include English linguistics, history of

the English language, second language acquisition, contact linguistics, and African linguistics.

Janet Zepernick, a new assistant Professor and co-director of the writing across the curriculum program, earned her B.A. from Bowling Green State University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University. Her specialties include rhetoric and composition and British medieval literature.

Karen Stolz, newly promoted from temporary instructor to assistant professor, earned her B.A. from the University of Kansas and her M.F.A., at the University of Iowa Writers Workshop. Her specialties include

creative writing (fiction and non-fiction), women writers, Southern writers, contemporary short story, and contemporary novel. She has published two novels: *World of Pies* (2000) and *Fanny and Sue* (2003).

History

The Department of history hired an Asianist last year. Jonathan Dresner (Ph.D. Harvard) come to Pittsburg State University from Hawaii- Hilo last March.

Social Sciences

Dr. Kristen Humphrey, Social Work, has a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. She is returning to PSU where she earned her BSW.

We would be glad to hear from you!

- Has there been anything new in your life that you'd like to share?
- Have you heard about anything good that one of your old PSU friends has done?
- Do you have any questions about goings on at the PSU College of Arts and Sciences?

If so, contact us by sending an e-mail to bwinters@pittstate.edu.



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