Winter 2012


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Keywords
University of Northern Iowa. College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences--Periodicals;

Disciplines
Arts and Humanities | Higher Education | Life Sciences | Physical Sciences and Mathematics

Publisher
College of Humanities, Arts & Sciences; University of Northern Iowa

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SOLAR SPLASH:
UNI hosts international solar boat competition

plus:
Getting to the Root of the Matter

Southern Italy Becomes UNI Classroom
I write to you for the first time as Dean of the newly formed College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, the result of the merger of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and the College of Natural Sciences on July 1, 2011. While some issues of the merger still need to be resolved, we are excited about the new relationships resulting from the process. We are also benefiting from fiscal economies of scale. The education of our students, the creative and scholarly activities of our faculty and the outreach to the state of Iowa and beyond remain our focus.

Enrollment at UNI this fall was 13,168, down 33 students from the year before. The number of students studying in CHAS has remained strong, however, with 4,560 majors. (The timing and method of counting majors has changed this year, making comparisons between the two years problematic.) Thus, over one third of the students at UNI major in a program in our college.

We believe firmly in the value of communication with our alumni and friends, and we’d like to do this as sustainably as possible. This first issue of the Communiqué for CHAS actually has two editions, one focusing on the arts and humanities and one on the sciences. The edition you receive depends on which of the former colleges, CHFA or CNS, was yours. But we invite you to read the edition for the other half of our college online at www.uni.edu/chas/communique. We are also exploring ways to deliver Communiqué to you online next year. At present, we expect to send you a postcard to let you know when it is available. (You will still have the option of receiving a hard copy if you prefer.)

 Likewise, you are invited to visit the CHAS homepage www.uni.edu/chas and our calendar of events at www.uni.edu/chas/events to keep abreast of our activities. If you are a Facebook user, I invite you to like our College page at www.facebook.com/unichas.

Faculty and students continue to work together to benefit students’ learning and the cultural, social and economic development of the state, as is demonstrated throughout this issue of Communiqué. CHAS disciplines are the heart of the liberal arts core; educating our students for their future in the context of a strong liberal arts education is a point of pride among our faculty. The University of Northern Iowa has always sought to teach, nourish and foster the growth of its students. As part of this evolving and ongoing effort, we have embarked on a new beginning, one that focuses our strengths and sharpens our goals. We are excited about the opportunities that this merger has created for our students and staff and we look forward to a vibrant future.

Joel K. Haack
Solar Splash officials, as well as other teams, were extremely satisfied with the facilities and with UNI’s planning and organization of the event,” said Reg Pecen, professor of industrial technology and adviser to the Solar Panthers. UNI, which has participated in Solar Splash since 2000, will also host the event in 2012 and ’13.

During the event, Solar Splash teams earn points in seven categories, including technical inspections and reports, engineering design, visual displays, workmanship and on-the-water sprint, endurance and slalom competitions.

Beginning in August, individual solar boat teams focus on design objectives and improvements as they prepare the boat’s hull, solar-electric power system, mechanical or electronics controls, power storage and wireless/wired telemetry system for optimum data acquisition and telecommunications. Students must also prepare professionally written technical reports and technical display materials.

The Solar Panthers’ boat, named Hannah after their team leader Hannah Loan, is a foam and fiberglass craft outfitted with six large solar panels strapped to the exterior, which produce 480 watts of energy. The boat was built four years ago by earlier team members and has been modified each year since then.

Loan, an electrical engineering technology major who graduated in May 2011, was a member of the UNI solar boat team for three years and was the team leader for two years in a row. “Being involved in the solar boat team opened up so many opportunities for me—from networking and meeting people to experience with hands-on applications to finding out what I’m most interested in.” Loan now works at Rockwell Collins, Inc., in Cedar Rapids, as does Damon Knowling, another solar boat team member, who was hired for an engineering technology position.

This year’s Solar Splash was sponsored by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ Power Electronics Society (IEEE-PELS) with assistance from the Iowa Mathematics and Science Education Partnership, Waterloo Tent, Cedar Falls Utilities, Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau, Cedar Valley Sports Commission, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Solar Creations by Waterloo, Rockwell Collins, Inc., and the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber. The UNI solar electric boat project was sponsored by the Iowa Energy Center, with additional support provided by the UNI Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost and the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

All in all, it was a grand year for the Solar Panthers, UNI’s team in Solar Splash, the annual World Championship Intercollegiate Solar/Electric Boating competition. UNI hosted the event for the first time at George Wyth State Park in June 2011, and the Panthers came in fourth place, missing third place by a whisker (.66 of a percentage point). Winners of the four-day event were Cedarville University in Ohio [first place], the University of New Orleans [second] and Istanbul Technical University of Turkey [third]. This year’s event was one of the largest, with 21 teams competing. The Solar Panthers also won third place in the solar endurance category and best visual display.

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WHAT is Solar Splash

Begun in Milwaukee in 1994, Solar Splash promotes clean, zero-emission transportation technologies in U.S. waters and encourages interest on the part of young people in STEM [science, technology, engineering, mathematics]-related careers, according to Reg Pecen, UNI solar boat adviser. “Designing, building, testing and troubleshooting solar-powered boats have been excellent ways to involve students in these areas,” he said. “This competition allows undergraduates to be involved in applied engineering and technology research and to develop confidence in their abilities.”
Sometimes to gain an understanding of the big picture, it helps to place yourself in a totally different environment, one that makes it impossible not to take a fresh look at a question. That’s what students in Chad Heinzel’s Capstone course (Environment, Society and Technology) in southern Italy did last summer. The two-credit Capstone course is the culminating requirement of the Liberal Arts Core at UNI.

During the two-week-plus trips, students (18 in the first session and 16 in the second) investigated the environmental and sociopolitical implications of climate change on Mediterranean cultures. "Students often have a superficial view of the environment," said Heinzel. "They may think of the environment in terms of recycling and being green rather than in terms of larger issues, such as how the presence or lack of natural resources can impact a society, or the devastating effects of natural hazards such as earthquakes or volcanoes.”

The cultural center of the course is the Mediterranean—the Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans. Sicily and southern Italy are at the crossroads of the beginning of Western civilization, according to Heinzel, a stopping point on the route to Asia, Africa and Western Europe. This was the major reason, as well as Heinzel’s familiarity with Sicily, for selecting the area as the site of the course. [Some capstone courses are offered on the UNI campus; others at different overseas locations.] Heinzel taught two sections of the course last summer and hopes to teach it again in summer 2012.

During their stay in southern Italy, students visit archaeological sites, geologic outcrops, beaches, museums and more, while experiencing contemporary Mediterranean culture, from the landscapes of rural Sicily to the modern metropolis of Rome. Heinzel frames stops at different points of interest with what he calls scavenger hunts. For example, at Monte Polizzo, students are asked to find, document and return pieces of archaeological material; to determine and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in Monte Polizzo in 550 B.C.; and to write an essay entitled “Time” that addresses their own view of time.

"These exercises help students become aware of big questions,” said Heinzel. “These exercises help students become aware of big questions, such as the role of the environment in the quality of life, how environments change through time, sometimes quickly and sometimes over millions of years,” said Heinzel. "The students’ active experiences help them internalize their understanding of these larger issues.”

Students prepare for the trip by meeting approximately eight times during the spring semester for discussions of material they have read on Mediterranean archaeology, the land ethic, the relationship of environment, technology and society, as well as the fragility and evolution of humanity. During their stay in southern Italy, they document their experiences in a journal, including answers to questions, summaries from class discussions, thoughts about the course readings and summaries of what they have seen and done.

"In the end, this course is not about what I think," said Heinzel. "It’s about giving students an opportunity to examine what they have learned and develop their own human/environmental philosophy.”

Background: Students visit a volcano on Vulcano Island, one of the seven Aeolian Islands off the coast of Sicily.

Inset left: Capstone student Melinda Blakeman studies the tomb of St. Helen, the mother of Constantine I, in the Vatican Museum.

Inset right: Students hiking up the summit of Stromboli, a volcano that erupts about every 20 minutes.
• Carl Bollwinkel (CEE) received the 2010 Lifetime Achievement in Environmental Education Award from the Iowa Association of Naturalists and the Iowa Conservation Education Coalition.
• Karen Breitbach (Physics/Science Education; Lab School) was elected to the executive board of the Iowa Academy of Science.
• John Bursch (Chemistry and Biochemistry) served on the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Panel in February 2011.
• Shoshanna Coon (Chemistry and Biochemistry) is the first recipient of the MWOne Unique Academic Advising Award, sponsored by Midwest One Bank.
• Kavita Dhanwada (Biological Sciences) was elected regional director of the National Science Teachers Association of Naturalists and the Iowa Academy of Science.
• Chad Heinzel (Earth Science) was elected to the executive board of the Iowa Academy of Science.
• John Groves (Earth Science) was awarded a $65,000 grant from the American Chemical Society Petroleum Research Fund for his project “Tests for the Possibility of Anomalys in Late Paleozoic Fusuline Foraminifera.” He was appointed to a four-year term as a voting member of the International Union of Geological Sciences, Subcommission on Carboniferous Stratigraphy.
• Joel Haack (CAS Dean) was the guest lecturer for the UNI Department of Mathematics’ Hari Shankar Memorial Lecture in March. In “These Are a Few of My Favorite Things,” Haack discussed examples of connections between mathematics and the arts and humanities.
• Bill Harwood (Chemistry and Biochemistry) served as chair of a review panel for the National Science Foundation EPIC-12 proposals to develop research on improving science learning in the K-12 classroom.
• Chad Heinzel (Earth Science) was awarded the 2011-12 University Book and Supply Outstanding Teaching Award for CNS nontenured faculty. He was elected regional director of the National Association of Earth Science Teachers.
• Patricia Highy (CEE) was selected to serve on the Green Schools Committee Cabinet, which works with the Center for Green Schools team to provide guidance on the direction and development of the Green Schools Committee programs and initiatives.
• T.J. Hitchman (Mathematics) was elected chair of the Iowa section of the Mathematical Association of America and was appointed to the MAA’s Iowa NExT steering committee.
• Tom Hockett (Earth Science) is the author of How We See the Sky, a general audience book, published by the University of Chicago Press, that takes a cultural and historical approach to astronomy.
• Elizabeth Hughes (Mathematics) was elected to the board of directors of the Iowa Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators.
• Mohammad Iqbal (Earth Science) was presented the 2011 Dean’s Award for Research. He received the Milestone Award in 2010 for outstanding mentoring of graduate students; the award is given to members of the Graduate Faculty who have served as the major advisor of at least 10 graduate students at UNI.
• James Jurgenson (Biological Sciences) was elected a fellow of the National Academy of Engineering in 2011, in recognition of his “innovative leadership in the development, design, and construction of large-scale structures.” He was elected to the Academy of Achievement in 2011.
• Ayse Karadag (Chemistry and Biochemistry) was appointed to the board of directors of the Foundry Committee on Physics in High Schools, a new group aimed at promoting research and development in high school physics.
• John McCormick (Computer Science) received the 2011 Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Departmental Programs.
• Jeff Morgan (Physics) received the 2011 CNS Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Liberal Arts Core. He was awarded the 2011-12 University Book and Supply Outstanding Teaching Award for CNS nontenured faculty.
• Siobahn Morgan (Earth Science) is a member of a review committee evaluating research proposals for the Hubble Space Telescope.
• Jiwha Noh (Mathematics) received a 2011 Veridian Credit Union® Community Engagement Award for her work in building relationships with schools and mathematics teachers in the Cedar Falls and Waterloo school districts.
• Stephen O’Kane (Biological Sciences) received the 2011 Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching and Beta Beta Beta’s Excellence in Teaching Award.
• John Ophus (Biological Sciences) received the 2010 CNS Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Liberal Arts Core.
• Linda Paarl (Chemistry and Biochemistry) received the 2011 Regents Staff Excellence Award.
• Reg Pacen (Industrial Technology) is a board member for the Iowa Alliance for Wind Innovation and Novel Development. He received the UNI CARE Sustainability Award and the Milestone Award for outstanding mentoring of graduate students at UNI.
• Syed Kirmani (Mathematics) gave 20 lectures on quality control at the École Nationale de la Statistique et de l’Analyse de l’Information (ENSAI) in Brux, France, in November 2010 at ENSAI’s invitation.
• Min Ho Lee (Mathematics) was invited, based on his published research results, to deliver a three-hour lecture at a workshop on quasimodular forms, held in June 2010 at Blaise Pascal University in France.
• Kirk Manfredi (Chemistry and Biochemistry) was appointed to the awards committee of the American Society of Pharmacognosy.
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• Kurt Ponttasch (Biology) is a member of the nutrient technical advisory committee of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.
• Nagaszawa Rao Posaomintri (Industrial Technology) is editor of the International Journal of Mechanical Engineering.
• Mike Roth (Physics) received the 2011 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence.
• Karen Sabey (Mathematics) was appointed treasurer of the Iowa Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators.
• Ben Schafer (Computer Science) was invited to attend the NSF-sponsored Computing Education for the 21st Century in New Orleans in winter 2011.
• Aaron Spurr (Earth Science/Science Education; Lab School) was one of four Iowa teachers to receive the YagerExemplary Science and Mathematics Teaching Award. Yager, who received a B.A. in biology from UNI, is professor emeritus of science education at the University of Iowa, where he taught for 50 years.
• Bill Stiglami (CEE) was an invited speaker at the Erice International Seminars on Mayday Emergency, held in Erice, Sicily, in August 2011. The title of his talk at the session on climate was “The Chemical Time Bomb Concept Revisited in the Context of Climate Change and Other Recent Developments.”
• Jody Stone (Chemistry and Biochemistry/Science Education; Lab School) received the 2011 state Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. The awards are the nation’s highest honor for teachers of science and mathematics.
• Gerard Thié (Industrial Technology) received the American Foundry Society Scientific Merit Award at the 2011 Casting Congress in April. The technical paper he wrote on high-temperature properties of chemically bonded sand received the 2011 Howard Taylor Award for research that significantly influences the future of the metal casting industry. Thié is serving a four-year term as a national director of the Cast Metals Institute.
• Brian Townsend (Mathematics) was appointed Affiliate Connections Committee chair of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators.

CHAS EDITION

new faculty

Biology
Mark Sherrard, assistant professor (Ph.D., University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario)

Chemistry and Biochemistry
Melissa Cherney, assistant professor (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Industrial Technology
James Maxwell, professor and department head (Ph.D., Webster University; Ph.D., Indiana State University)

Scott Greenhalgh, assistant professor (Ph.D., Utah State University)

Antonio Scontrino, assistant professor (Ph.D., University of Palermo, Italy)

Mathematics
Glena Ostapyuk, assistant professor (Ph.D., Kansas State University)

Karen Sabey, assistant professor (Ed.D., University of Northern Iowa)

Olof Bjorn Steinhorstad, assistant professor (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison)

William Wood, assistant professor (Ph.D., Florida State University)

Physics
Rui He, assistant professor (Ph.D., Columbia University)

Retirements
Fred Behroozi, 33 years as professor in and nine years as head of the Department of Physics
Virginia Berg, 27 years as professor in the Department of Biology
Dorothy Brechelsen, 16 years as instructor in the Department of Biology
Diane Thiessen, 33 years as professor in the Department of Mathematics
Jack Wilkinson, 49 years as professor in the Department of Mathematics and 11 years as director of the UNI DoDEA Mathematics project

Position change
Shoshanna Coon, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, is associate dean for graduate academic affairs.
ELEVATE & INSPIRE
the Youds Challenge

Eileen (’80 Mathematics and Chemistry) and Bob (’80 Industrial Technology) Youds are issuing a challenge—Elevate and Inspire—to UNI alumni and friends: If you upgrade the gift you made last year to the CHAS Dean’s Fund for Excellence, they will match your upgrade dollar for dollar up to $15,000. The Challenge also applies to first-time donors.

Eileen and Bob believe that their UNI experience helped form the solid base from which they launched successful and fulfilling careers. Eileen is chief operating officer for shared services at Walser Automotive Group in Minneapolis. She has held significant global leadership positions with Honeywell, Kelly Services, Caridian and Pearson. Bob is an engineering manager of design automation with Medtronic in Minneapolis. His career has spanned commercial, industrial and defense industries. Eileen and Bob both serve on the UNI Foundation’s Imagine the Impact national steering committee, and Eileen was a member of the College of Natural Sciences Advisory Board.

“The Dean’s Fund helps students gain professional, social and cultural experiences that are vital for success in the business world, but those are things that can often go unfunded in today’s challenging economic times,” Eileen noted. The Dean’s Fund gives students opportunities for research experience, assists with living expenses when students take unpaid internships and helps fund professional presentations or study abroad.

You can answer the Youds Challenge and elevate your gift by going to www.adv.uni.edu/foundation/pledgeform.aspx. Scroll down the page to the section marked “Dean’s Fund” to make your contribution.

The budget situation for the Regents institutions continues to be challenging, especially for UNI. Because just under half of the UNI budget comes from state appropriations, state budget cuts in the past 10 years have disproportionately impacted UNI, compared with its peer Regents institutions. Recognizing this disparity, the Board of Regents has recommended to the legislature a special appropriation for UNI. If you agree that this recommendation be funded, I hope that you will let your legislators know. (More detail can be found in President Allen’s budget message at www.uni.edu/president/budget.)

A SPECIAL BUDGET message from the Dean

One expected impact of the budget strictures is that we will be forced to close some programs at UNI, not because of any concerns about their quality or because they do not produce well-prepared graduates, but solely because we cannot afford to continue all the programs we have. Of course, we will make sure that the students presently in the programs are accommodated, but I expect that you will hear of significant changes in UNI. It has been difficult for me to come to grips with this—I love the institution we have all created. But I firmly believe that UNI must be reformed to remain strong. My goal will be to make the process as transparent and fair as possible, while ensuring that, in the reallocation, we can strengthen the CHAS programs that remain.

I am very grateful for the financial support from our UNI alumni and friends; you make it possible for us to offer scholarships to students, support their research projects, purchase equipment for their classrooms and provide opportunities for faculty members to remain at the frontiers of their disciplines. In the proceeding column, there is information about a challenge grant from Eileen and Robert Youds. I encourage you to consider multiplying the value of your gift by taking advantage of their generous offer.
The CEEE worked with the Iowa Office of Energy Independence to provide energy-related materials and outreach presentations to Iowa K-12 teachers during the 2010-11 school year. Called Fabulous Resources for Energy Education (FREE), the program also offered professional development graduate credit courses to immerse teachers in energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energy.

Sustainability efforts in the college this year included offering a 3-credit-hour course on the subject, a public forum in April during Earth Week, when a group of freshman Presidential Scholars described their blueprint for a sustainable society in 2050, and the UNI Faculty Leadership in Sustainability Education program, a year-long effort by a group of 26 faculty members representing 19 different departments, to expand their vision of sustainability and how to teach it to their students.

The LEGO Llamas, a team of seven Cedar Falls middle school students, sponsored by the College of Natural Sciences and John Deere, Inc., went to the regional qualifier in Cedar Falls of the FIRST LEGO League to the state competition in Ames, where they won first place in programming. Students in the college described their blueprint for a sustainable society in 2050, and the UNI Faculty Leadership in Sustainability Education program, a year-long effort by a group of 26 faculty members representing 19 different departments, to expand their vision of sustainability and how to teach it to their students.

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student recognition

Kris Boss, a senior in industrial technology, was awarded a special scholarship of $2,000 for writing a paper demonstrating his interest in ductile iron from the Foundry Education Foundation at its annual College Industry Conference in Chicago in fall 2010.

Jack Kosmicki, a bioinformatics major in the Department of Computer Science, was awarded a second two-month internship at the prestigious Harvard-MIT Bioinformatics and Integrative Genomics summer institute. The institute offers hands-on research experience in biomedical engineering and medical science to outstanding undergraduate students.

Chelsea Meier, president of the American Chemical Society student affiliate at UNI, was recently awarded a $400 International Year of Chemistry grant from the American Chemical Society student affiliate at UNI, giving students across the country the opportunity to present their research to state legislators.

Josh Hanna, a science education graduate student and education technology teacher at Price Lab School/NUI High, was one of three U.S. teachers selected to involve his school and community on a Darwin Day road show tour by the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center.

Physics major Aaron O’Shea traveled to Washington, D.C., in the spring with Tim Kidd, assistant professor of physics, to participate in this year’s Posters on the Hill sponsored by the Council of Undergraduate Research. The event gives students across the country the opportunity to present their research to Congress. Only about 10 percent of applicants are accepted to present.

Pieter Ver Steeg, a professional science master’s student majoring in ecology management, was selected as a diversity intern by The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota for the summer of 2011. After an orientation at the world headquarters in Arlington, Va., Ver Steeg focused on the area of conservation planning.

Biology major Susan Meerdink received a NASA Iowa Space Grant Consortium research scholarship for the 2010-11 academic year. She researched climate, human activities and predators’ effect on spatial fidelity of Taimyr reindeer’s calving grounds in Eurasia.

A team of construction management students from the Department of Industrial Technology finished with high marks at the National Student Construction Management Competition in San Antonio, Texas, in spring 2011. Students Matt Burch, Nate Graves, Ryan Koopmann, Gavin Wicks, Kory McCracken and Brendan Miller finished in fourth place for total score in the categories of project management, estimating and safety. In the individual category of safety, the team finished second.

The Student Nature Society’s Fall Run for the Preserves

The Student Nature Society in the Biology Department received the Student Club of the Year Award for its work promoting the UNI Biological Preserves and the existing trail system through its design and support of the 5K Run for the Preserves, promotion of the UNI Greenhouses, assistance with the Wetland Project, interaction with other campus clubs and organizations and creation of two scholarships.

Physics major Byron Tassell received an honorable mention for the national Goldwater Scholarship competition for science and mathematics students with the potential to excel in research careers.

Purple and Gold Award recipients

The Student Nature Society’s Fall Run for the Preserves

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Three earth science students presented the results of their research at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America in Denver, Colo., in fall 2010: Jake Davidson, Matt Even and Jennifer Shepeck.

Mathematics education students in a class taught by Jihwa Nah, associate professor of mathematics, started a weekly after-school math club for students at Waterloo’s West High School in fall 2010. The UNI students taught lessons introducing or reviewing specific math concepts and connected the concepts to real-life applications and careers. They also provided homework help and ACT/SAT college entrance exam preparation. Nah received an outreach grant from the Iowa Mathematics and Science Education Partnership.

Corey Eichlerberger, an electrical engineering technology major in the Department of Industrial Technology, completed a project in summer 2011 that involved monitoring the quality of the electric circuit when each of three different types of light bulb—LED, compact fluorescent and incandescent—is used. Of the three types of light bulbs, he found that the LED bulb used the least amount of electricity—5 watts—but was comparable to a 100-watt incandescent bulb in terms of energy—5 watts—but was comparable to a 100-watt incandescent bulb in terms of...
Doug Shaw, professor of mathematics, reflects on solving the Turn-Around Problem (which would not of course be necessary if he stopped and asked for directions).

You are driving to a restaurant, you come to an intersection and you don’t know which way to turn. You turn left, drive a while and think, “I should turn around.” Not so fast. Turning around too soon is a catastrophe! Think: Backtrack to where you are now. Maybe you should turn around AGAIN, then all the way back to where you are now. Maybe you should proceed another quarter mile …

Assume there is some nice bell-shaped curve describing the restaurant’s potential location. When do you turn around? In theory, this is simple calculus: “Set up an expected value integral in terms of the turn-around point, take a derivative, set it equal to zero …” Here’s the answer you get. **Never** turn around. But that’s blatantly wrong! Half the time you would NEVER get to your destination! The problem isn’t with mathematics, but with the model. If I turned out to be wrong and turned around too soon, I would NEVER get to my destination, because I hadn’t put a SECOND turn-around point into my model—when do you turn back when you are going the other way? Then I’d need a third, and a fourth, etc.

Undergraduate Whitney Waechter and I worked on the problem this summer. We started by looking at an easier problem—assume that the road ends 10 miles in either direction and that the restaurant has equal probability of being anywhere on the road. Where do you turn around? Simple problem, simple answer. It turns out you go right 10 miles, to the end of the road, then turn around.

We then started playing with distributions on that finite road, until we found one with a nontrivial turn-around point. And then we started playing with distributions that looked like bell curves, only were finite (because the road ends). We found that if the “spreadness” of the curve was very narrow, then there would be an interesting turn-around point.

We added a second turn-around point, on the other side, then a third, each time looking for patterns, trying to work our way toward infinitely many turn-around points. And toward roads that do not end. Whether or not the road ends, the summer certainly did. My student made a wonderful poster and presentation at the undergraduate research fair, and we said goodbye … until next summer.

### NEWS in SHORT

**Scholarship**, to be given annually to a junior or senior majoring in mathematics education. The first recipient was Andrew Skinner. Conrad, former chief financial officer of Shrive Hattery of Cedar Rapids, is a former member of the CNS Advisory Board.

**CEEE** director, Kamyar Enshayan, receives a check from Grainger employees.

Doug Shaw and student Whitney Waechter confer on the best time to turn around.

The Grainger Foundation of Lake Forest, Ill., donated $5,000 to create the Grainger Graduate Assistantship for the CEEE. The grant will support a UNI graduate student who will coordinate the Iowa Green Schools Initiative, which will enroll several CEEE programs into one cohesive set of educational services. School administrators and teachers will learn how to make their school green and facilitate, and they will learn to teach students how to reduce their energy footprints.

With an additional $2 million in funding from the Department of Energy, the Center for Advanced Bio-Based Binders in the Department of Industrial Technology is continuing to investigate emission prediction and thermal degradation analysis of resin sand binders. Further data collection should enhance the predictive capabilities of the developed first-generation emission model.

The Department of Biology began an exchange program this past summer with National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taipei, Taiwan. In July, students from UNI traveled to NCCU, where they worked in research labs in the Institute of Neuroscience and took Chinese language and culture classes. NCCU students also came to UNI in July and participated in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program and took English language and culture courses from UNI’s Culture and Intensive English Program.

### STUDENTS in the NEWS

### Scholarship

**Continued from page 11**

**The Picasso**, located in Daley Plaza in Chicago. The replica, donated by the university and the center, was added to a new exhibit at the Waterloo Center for the Arts Phillips Youth Center.

Three DIAS students were selected to present their original work at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, at the end of March 2012. Kelsey Hampton will present her work on “Intra- and Interspecific Variations of Carapace Shape in Brazilian Fiddler Crabs (genus Uca).” Anne Shepherd’s paper is on “Understanding Emission Characteristics of a Foundry Sand Binder,” and Erik Wolter will present on “Electrical Transporting Anomalies in Nanometer Scale Manganese Films.” Their papers were selected from more than 3,500 submissions.

Contributing student Soe Hauserman admires the finished Picasso sculpture.

Taiwanese exchange students receive a tour of the UNI Botanical Center.
Floods and soil erosion, conditions that have been worsening in the Midwest over the last few years, can rob Iowa of its fertile soil. Although many solutions have been proposed, such as levees, terraces and wetlands, they are often short term. “To address the problem at its source, we have to look at the function of plants on the landscape,” said Laura Jackson, professor of biology.

Instead of looking at conventional solutions, Jackson is looking underground—at the roots of growing plants. Perennial prairie plants, with their massive root systems, help slow runoff, trap sediments and pollutants and rebuild the structure of damaged soil while storing atmospheric carbon, she explained. “Perhaps because these roots are invisible, many people lack a clear understanding of what native plants can do.”

Following this logic, Jackson decided that what was needed was to make prairie roots visible. With funds she received from the Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF) in 2009, she began a project to do just that—to grow the plants in such a way as to reveal the intricate network of roots and then create a public display of the native prairie underground, with supporting interpretive materials for a wide audience.

Using an idea pioneered at the Land Institute in Kansas, Jackson and her students constructed a “big pots” facility at UNI in 2009-10. The 34 pots, made of PVC pipe 10 inches in diameter and 10 feet long, were “planted” vertically in a plot behind UNI’s Biology Research Complex. Turface was used as a rooting medium for a variety of perennial species, and the plants were fed with an automated fertilizer-water system during the summer time.

The first growing season, in summer 2010, demonstrated that grasses were easier to establish than forbs, but there was also some winter kill. The first attempt at pulling pots and washing out roots was in fall 2010. Three pots were pulled out with a backhoe lift; roots were washed out and soaked in a glycerin solution for preservation. In one year the roots had grown between three and four feet. When pots were pulled in 2011, the roots of the plants were six feet maximum in length, with a fuller, thicker root ball than in 2010.

With continued LRTF funding approved in July 2011, the project’s goals for 2011-13 are focusing on developing and testing ways to transport, display and protect specimens; researching the interpretive material by collaborating with UNI faculty and end-users such as nature center directors and high school science teachers; and loaning out the 10 to 12 specimens as prototype exhibits.

In May 2012, Jackson and her students will begin to pull out and process one third of the 34 potted plants, while at the same time refining methods of preservation and storage. The following fall they will begin developing the exhibit, first by assessing the needs of their intended audience, such as county nature centers and science classrooms. They will also consult with a variety of UNI faculty and staff with expertise in biology, chemistry, science education, communication and design arts. The group will investigate collaborations with various campus organizations to construct root exhibits.

“Our goal is to increase Iowa’s resilience to heavy rainfall, soil erosion, water contamination and flooding,” said Jackson. “Admittedly, this is a long-term and ambitious goal, but we hope that increased public understanding of how native perennial plants can contribute to a solution will be the first step to increasing the amount of perennial vegetation in the landscape.”

### GETTING to the ROOT of the MATTER

Students and a volunteer use hoses to spray down the roots.

Laura Jackson and students open a pot to reveal the roots and turface, which was used as a rooting medium.
Undergraduate students use a Robel pole to measure vegetation-height density.

Mark Myers, assistant professor of biology, and colleagues at the Tallgrass Prairie Center are determining optimal methods for managing prairie vegetation for biofuel production while maintaining high-quality habitat for native wildlife. Research plots in Black Hawk County were seeded in May 2009 with one of four treatments of native wildlife. Research plots collecting for optically stimulated luminescence dating have been dated, and they are now working with a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on additional dating of eolian deposits in northeast Iowa.

Hong (Jeffrey) Nie, assistant professor of industrial technology, is focusing on establishing a generic intra-vehicle, vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication platform that can provide drivers real-time vehicle, road, traffic and accident information so as to reduce accidents and improve traffic flow. With a colleague at the University of Michigan-Dearborn who is a leading researcher on WAVE (wireless access in vehicle environments) technology, he is working on National Science Foundation-funded research developing new wireless communication and signal-processing technologies to achieve a reliable data communication link even when vehicles are running at freeway speed.

Marius Somodi, associate professor of mathematics, is investigating zeta functions of finite graphs and graph coverings, specifically 11 families of graphs for which the zeta function and the spectrum of the adjacency matrix determine each other and 21 graph coverings in which prime cycles from the base graph have similar decomposition laws. He and his graduate student have had success in understanding the zeta functions of cones and cylinders, and they are currently looking to extend their results to joins of regular graphs and permutation graphs.

Andrew Stollenwerk, assistant professor of physics, is investigating electron transport through manganese thin films on silicon substrates using ballistic electron emission microscopy. Examining the differences after introducing a hydrogen atmosphere will be the first step toward the realization of a manganese/silicon hydrogen sensor. Secondary is the investigation of single electron charging in thin films, with possible high-density memory storage applications.

Geology student Jake Davidson excavates wind-sculpted boulders (ventifacts) from eolian deposits that contains an excellent exposure of eolian sand in northeast Iowa. He and one of his students discovered a site of four treatments of native wildlife. Research plots ing high-quality habitat for production while maintaining vegetation for biofuel methods for managing prairie at the Tallgrass Prairie Center sor of biology, and colleagues

Mark Myers, assistant professor of biology, and colleagues at the Tallgrass Prairie Center are determining optimal methods for managing prairie vegetation for biofuel production while maintaining high-quality habitat for native wildlife. Research plots in Black Hawk County were seeded in May 2009 with one of four treatments of native wildlife, ranging from a single-species monoculture to a diverse 32-species mix. Native plant establishment at the site was excellent, according to Myers. During the 2009-11 growing seasons, Myers and his students, Benjamin Hoksch, James Mason, Jarrett Pfirrman and Drew Miller, monitored wildlife responses to the newly established grassland habitat, finding significantly greater butterfly abundance and species richness in the more diverse treatments and documenting successful nesting in the biomass production plots by three grassland birds classified as “species of greatest conservation need.” Their results were published in the Journal of Insect Conservation.

Ultimately, Myers hopes the results of the study can be applied to developing methods for using marginal farmlands in biomass production in a manner that also provides improved habitat for Iowa’s grassland wildlife.

Jeff Elbert, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, is working to synthesize a model compound composed of an anchor moiety, a linker section and a drug reporter moiety. This model compound will be used to demonstrate local drug delivery and controlled drug release in a model biological system. Target drugs and/or drug mimics will be attached to a biological substrate via the anchor group photoch- emistry. The physiological benefits of a drug are expected to be enhanced by attaching it in a desired location using light activation of the anchor moiety. Last summer, Elbert and his students Hannah Steele and Lexi Frauf developed a convergent synthetic approach to successfully synthesize the first target molecule.

Ben Schafer, associate professor of computer science, has been working with a colleague on an infrastructure for a customizable student response system. With funding from the Grow Iowa Values fund, a summer research grant from UNI and the assistance of two undergraduates, he studied the use of Android apps as an input device in a collaborative classroom setting. Their framework expands on the idea of traditional “clickers,” with which students respond to basic multiple-choice questions, so that a diverse set of inputs will enable students to collaborate with each other and with professors in a classroom.

James Walters, professor of geology, is searching north-east Iowa for sites with relic ice-wedge casts and/or other relic periglacial phenomena and describing the features at such sites in an attempt to interpret the late glacial/periglacial environment of northeast Iowa. He and one of his students discovered a site

Geology student Jake Davidson excavates wind-sculpted boulders (ventifacts) from eolian sand on top of glacial till northwest of Cedar Falls.
Jennifer Erich graduated from UNI in 1996 with a B.S. in geology. A geoscientist with ExxonMobil since 2000, she recently established the Jennifer and Andrew Erich Undergraduate Research Assistantship in Earth Science at UNI. The first recipient of the award is Elizabeth Madsen, who is working with Earth Science faculty members Chad Heizner and Ken De Vault on a project on Iowa’s environmental sustainability, specifically heavy metal contaminant transport.

How would you describe your career path since you graduated from UNI? After graduation in 1996, I completed a master’s degree in geology at the University of Iowa. I was offered an internship with ExxonMobil in 1999 and joined the company in 2000 as a full-time geoscientist. The types of projects I have worked on have been quite varied and exciting. I have spent a lot of time as a petrophysicist, which involves interpreting well log data in drill wells. I have also worked as a prospecting geologist, looking at seismic data and creating maps to determine new locations to drill. I became an exploration supervisor in 2009 and recently switched to a supervisor in the Formation Evaluation core group in the Exploration Services sector.

What are your undergraduate research experiences at UNI like? I have spent a lot of time as a student geoscientist. The types of projects I have worked on have been quite varied and exciting. I have spent a lot of time as a petrophysicist, which involves interpreting well log data in drill wells. I have also worked as a prospecting geologist, looking at seismic data and creating maps to determine new locations to drill. I became an exploration supervisor in 2009 and recently switched to a supervisor in the Formation Evaluation core group in the Exploration Services sector.

Why did you decide to fund the Erich Undergraduate Research Assistantship in Earth Science? My years at UNI were some of the most exciting experiences I had. The professors went out of their way to mentor me and to provide opportunities and scholarships to help my education. I was a teaching assistant for geology and astronomy classes and president of Sigma Gamma Epsilon. When I graduated, I was honored to receive the Lux Service Medallion. I have been supporting the Earth Science Department for years but decided to step up my donation in 2011 to honor my advisor, Professor Eugene Wallingford, and as a way to thank the faculty for their support and encouragement.

Parallel computing, in which many calculations are carried out simultaneously, is the latest seismic shift in the computer world. It operates on the principle that large problems can often be divided into smaller ones, which are then solved concurrently. The shift to parallel computing, on the computer hardware side, is bringing corresponding changes to software. Whereas programming for nonparallel computing is sequential, parallel computing requires that problems be decomposed into independent units. Multiple processing elements can then solve these independent parts simultaneously.

“Eventually most programming will be done in this way, and languages will be developed that help programmers think in terms of parallel operations. Right now, the hardware is ahead of the software, but this is only temporary,” Wallingford said. “Having this equipment gives our students the opportunity to stay apace with developments in the field.”

The State Farm Foundation grant keeps computer science students in the know.

$140,000 from the State Farm Foundation, this is the way we need to think about problems and solutions,” said Eugene Wallingford, head of the Department of Computer Science. Learning how to write the software, however, means that students have to have access to parallel computing hardware. And thanks to a recent grant of $140,000 from the State Farm Foundation, this is the way we need to think about problems and solutions.”

Jennifer Erich on an ExxonMobil field trip to Arches National Park, Utah.
John Deere Waterloo in September ‘09 after 36 years. He served in manage-
ment positions in manufacturing en-
gineering and time- and- motion study.
His current leisure activities include
restoring automobiles and maintaining an acreage.

1980s
• Gary Scholten, BA ‘80, received the
Alumni Achievement Heritage Honours Award, which recognizes outstanding
professional achievement as well as in-
volvement with the service to UNI from
the UNI Alumni Association in November
‘11. Now senior vice president and chief
information officer at Principal Financial
Group in Des Moines, Scholten has held
various positions within the organiza-
tion since he joined it in 1980 and now
leads a global staff of approximately 2,200 people. He has taken an active
role in developing programs aimed at
generating interest among Iowa middle
and high school students in information
technology careers. Scholten has been
instrumental in the growth and success
of the Technology Association of Iowa,
a nonprofit aimed at enhancing Iowa’s
high-tech industry. His long history
of support to UNI includes fostering
connections between Principal and the
university, serving as a charter member of
the Computer Science Department advisory board, and facilitating connec-
tions between universities and industry
as a member of the Iowa Department of
Economic Development’s Information
Technology Council. Scholten and his
wife, Melinda, have two grown children.
• John Quin, BA ‘84, and Kristine
Brunkhorst, BA ‘85, MA ‘95, are working
to create legislation in Iowa and Texas
related to the treatment of tick-borne
illnesses. Quin, who is project manager
of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, contracted
lyme disease 14 years ago and is an
advocate for longer term antibiotic
administration. As part of the degree
program, he received a fellowship at
the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2000s
• Hannah Haarhuus-Casey, BA ‘03, MA ‘11, a high school life science teacher in
Oakland, IA, moved with her husband,
Adam, to Brisbane, Australia, where she
began teaching biology and chemistry
at the Australian school system began in
February.
• Nathan Sandstrom, BA ‘04, was mar-
rried in ‘07 and had a daughter in ‘09, the
same year he started his own construct-
on company in Fort Dodge.
• Derek Thomas, BS ‘08, is a research
assistant in biophysics at Integrated
DNA Technologies in Coralville. He
recently completed an M.S degree in
chemistry at the University of Iowa.

2010s
• Jennifer Larsen, BA ‘10, began dental
school at Southern Illinois University in
August ‘11.
• Libby Reindl, BA ‘10, is pursuing a
master’s degree in occupational therapy
at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
• Jane Dietz, PSM ‘31, began the position
of manager of Campus Reef Field Sta-
tion, a biological field station operated
by Utah Valley University within Capital
Reef National Park, in summer ‘11. Her
position involves educating field visitors
to the ecology of the Colorado Plateau,
managing an “off the grid” solar facility,
including maintenance and budget-
ary aspects, supervising interns and
grant writing. She is a graduate of the
Biology Department’s professional sci-
cence master’s program in ecosystem
management. As part of the degree
requirements, she interned at the Rocky
Mountain Research Station, a branch of
the U.S. Forest Service, where she
worked on public and private forested lands.
The data were used to identify trends in forest ecosystem
health, fire effects and fuel loads, and
potential timber production. 

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chos-alum@uni.edu.

1950s
• Patricia (DeKoster) Ehebarger, BA ‘50, is active in Girl Scouts, her church
and with her teenage grandchildren. She
has traveled extensively in North America
and Western Europe.
• Jim L. and Jeanette Winegarden,
both BA ‘50, recently moved from Cedar Falls to North Liberty to be near family. They
celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary in August of ‘11.
• Robert and Charlene (Doty) George,
both BA ‘51, celebrated their 60th an-
iversary in July of ‘11. Bob is a retired
industrial arts instructor. He and Charlene,
who taught briefly at the start of their
marriage, live in Anamosa and have two
children and four grandchildren. They are
very active in the community with service
to the city council, library board and area
Republican committee.

1960s
• Donavon L. Roberts, MA ‘60, is a retired
high school teacher and coach living in
Inver Grove Heights, MN.
• George C. Coffin, BA ‘61, of Kahoka, MO,
retired after 44 years as a middle school/
high school science teacher. He and his wife
recently visited Gilbert, AZ, where they met
their new granddaughter, Kaitlyn Elizabeth,
August ‘11. She joins brothers
Peyton, 11, and Andrew, 4.
• Lyle W. Bingaman, BA ‘69, retired after 30
years of teaching industrial arts and other
vocational courses in Wyoming schools.
During those years, he earned an MA degree
from the University of Wyoming, was
voted favorite teacher several times and
was the senior head of the school district’s
vocational department.
• Steven Heilmann, BA ‘69, was recently
honored by 3M for reaching the 100-
patent milestone. Only five other 3M
employees have been awarded 100 or
more U.S. patents. Heilmann, who worked
at 3M from 1973 to 2007, was an inaugu-
ral member of the College of Natural Sci-
ences Advisory Board, on which he served
until ‘04. His major research interests
are electro-organic chemistry, synthetic
organic chemistry, organosilicon chemis-
try, photopolymerization reactions, PSAs,
reactive polymers, azole chemistry and
dezymatic syntheses. After his retire-
ment from 3M in ‘08, he began working
part-time as a research associate at the
University of Minnesota Biotechnology
Institute, where he conducts research
on biomass conversion into fuel, mostly
involving algae.

1970s
• Edward R. Hoepner, BA ‘70, retired from
the 721st Civil Engineering Squadron of
the Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station,
an Air Force military squadron with civilian
engineering personnel, in ‘08, where he
was an engineering tech/construction
contract inspector. He became a member
of the board of directors of Northern
Churches Care, a family crisis center, and
is now BoD chairman. The group provides
rent assistance, utilities, food, medi-
cal assistance, legal advice and free tax
preparation. In addition to Hoepner, his
mother and her aunt, his three sisters,
and his daughter are UNI graduates.
• Rick Hofmeyer, BA ‘78, MA ‘84, retired in
spring ‘11 after 35 years of teaching
high school chemistry and physics, most
recently at North Fayette High School in
West Union. He was selected as Assistant
Girl’s Basketball Coach of the Year by the
Iowa Girls Basketball Coaches Association.

1980s
• James Klipping, BA ‘79, retired from
John Deere Waterloo in September ‘09
after 36 years. He served in manage-
ment positions in manufacturing en-
gineering and time- and- motion study.
His current leisure activities include
restoring automobiles and maintaining an acreage.

1990s
• Rodney Zehr, BA ‘91, MA ‘92, began a
new position as a mathematics instructor
at North Iowa Community College in
Lake City in fall ‘10. He also teaches
develomental mathematics courses
through the Mathemst Math program.
• De Anna Tibben, BA ‘92, MA ‘94, received
the Excellence in Earth Science Teaching
Awards for both the state of
Iowa and the central region, a 10- state
area, from the National Association of
Science Teachers. The annual award,
administered by the Geological Society
of America, recognizes excellence in
dearth science teaching at the precollege
level. An earth and space educator
at Ames High School, Tibben is a member
of the UNI Earth Science Department
advisory board, and will chair the Iowa
Science Teaching Section of the Iowa
Academy of Science in 2012-13. “I feel
very confident in my teaching due to
the education and experiences I received
while attending UNI,” she said.
• Three UNI graduates were recognized
for excellence in science teaching during
the 2011 Iowa Academy of Science, Iowa
Science Teaching Section, conference in
October in Ames: Aileen Mahood Sulli-
van, BA ‘96, Ames High School; Justin R.
Johnson, BA ’80, Central Middle School
in Muscatine; and Kathy D. Hobson, BA
‘92, Atlantic High School.
• Doug Kilburg, BA ’99, MA ’03, is a
mathematical statistician with the
USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics
Service in Washington, DC.
It takes a lot to put our kids through college these days. It takes commitment from both the student and the faculty to do their respective jobs in the classroom; from family, friends and mentors to support their student—financially if they can, most certainly with their moral support and encouragement.

Luckily, though, our students also have the commitment of people whom they don’t know and will likely never meet: people like you, our friends and alumni, who make an impact every day with your generosity. Never underestimate the difference you make—whether you make a one-time gift that endows a scholarship or creates a professorship.

Our students bring their hopes and dreams to UNI, and our goal is to send them into the world equipped to tackle career and life challenges. Thank you for your partnership in helping us to do that. Your gifts, no matter what area you support, will impact our students for the rest of their lives. That’s real commitment.

Gary and Myrna Floyd have created an endowed professorship through an estate gift to the UNI Department of Biology. The Dr. Gary and Myrna Floyd Endowed Professorship in Plant Biology will provide funds for faculty salary, professional development, equipment and technical support, as well as funding for undergraduate and graduate research assistants. As lifelong educators, the Floyds know how important such additional support is, and they want to make sure future UNI faculty have the resources to be the best educators they can be.

“The most significant impact on our careers has been our start at UNI,” said Gary. “We still remember the names and faces of our instructors. I think UNI is just the right size: large enough to hire super-quality faculty and small enough for students to receive individual attention.”

Gary and Myrna taught in Grinnell before moving to Oklahoma, where Gary earned his master’s degree at the University of Oklahoma. Myrna continued teaching middle school science and earned her master’s at Miami University in Ohio. After Gary accepted a position to teach botany there and began work on his Ph.D., Gary then became a professor of biology at Rutgers University in New Jersey, and Myrna taught junior high science. In 1973 they moved to Columbus, where Gary eventually became dean of the College of Biological Sciences at Ohio State University and Myrna taught general science. They both retired in 1986 after teaching for a combined total of over 60 years.

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A UNI chemistry student cradles a fireball in her hands after methane-filled bubbles were ignited during the Chemistry and Biochemistry Magic Show at Family Weekend.