When it comes to women’s events in cross country and track at UIC, there’s never been anyone like Tess Ehrhardt. This remarkable runner holds nine school records in track and field and two in cross country.

The only event in which Ehrhardt competes that she doesn’t hold the record for is the outdoor 1,500-meter race.

Her favorite run is the outdoor 5K. “I love cross country because it’s outside, and the 5K is kind of the standard distance for women,” she said. “I’m just comfortable with it.”

Ehrhardt has also played soccer, but finds running to be more satisfying. “You have more control over your individual success, or failure,” she said. “Anything you do, it’s all you.”

She started running at age 8 or 9, taking part in road races with her father — “nothing too competitive.”

In middle school, she took up cross country. “It was the only sport available for sixth-graders,” she said.

She kept running at Geneva High School, where “I was not the best on the team, but we did really well.” The team won the state title twice and placed fourth and fifth other years.

Ehrhardt says running cross country at Geneva High was a lot of fun. “The atmosphere — I haven’t seen it anywhere else,” she said. “There are a lot more fans [than in college]. The energy is really good at a high school cross country meet.”

A senior majoring in kinesiology, she has a full-ride athletic scholarship at UIC. She’ll work as a prosthetics and orthotics practitioner after she earns her master’s degree — preferably at Northwestern University “because I want to stay in Chicago.” If not, she could pursue her master’s at schools in California, Washington, Connecticut, Georgia or Texas.

Ehrhardt lives in a residence hall on campus. “A big thing for me is making my own food,” she said. “I did eat dorm food my freshman year, and it’s the most unhealthy I’ve ever felt. Some of it’s good — the salad bar, and they’ll make you a sandwich — but there’s also pizza and cake.”

She loves making ceramics and pottery and playing the piano. “These are things I’ve not had time for with school and running,” she said. “It’s worth it to sacrifice for now, but these are things I want in my life; I want to pick them up again.”

This year Ehrhardt is exploring Chicago, starting with her race training. “The coach sends us for a run — ‘Go run for an hour’ — and I like to find a new route,” she said. “The lakefront gets kind of boring when you do it over and over.”

Ehrhardt is an admirer of the Belgian street artist ROA. One of his murals can be seen in Pilsen — “I’ve taken the team down there,” she said. With a teammate, she found another of his works.

“We couldn’t find it on a run, but I heard you could see it on the [CTA] Brown Line,” she said. “We came to the last stop and there it was. I got really excited. It was cool to find.”

She plans to seek out more of his art when she and her family visit Europe over Christmas. “I really like his stuff,” Ehrhardt said. “He does animals. It doesn’t look like graffiti.”

“The trend of having LGBT characters as recurring characters that are other things — doctors, lawyers, parents — is a good trend. It shows people as complex human beings.”

Stacey Horn, professor of educational psychology, on the increase of LGBT characters on TV, Oct. 11 Newweek

“We have to seize this opportunity to show how a library can transform a neighborhood that is one of the most under-resourced in the city.”

Lisa Lee, director of the School of Art and Art History and member of the UIC Obama Presidential Library steering committee, on UIC’s proposal, Oct. 24 Chicago Tribune

“These animals will be gone and we won’t even know they existed.”

Roy Plotnick, professor of earth and environmental sciences, on species that may vanish without leaving a fossil record, Oct. 21 Nature
Happy celebration as Children’s Hospital welcomes former neonatal care patients

By Sonya Booth

The invitation said “Halloween Happiness.” And the 2014 reunion of graduates from the neonatal intensive care unit of the Children’s Hospital University of Illinois might have been one of the happiest parties in Chicago Saturday.

Hospital staff greeted kids they barely recognized, if at all — big, active healthy versions of the tiny patients they once cared for in the NICU.

“Happy Halloween reunion
youtube.com/uicmedia

“I love the focus you have on resiliency and hospital staff, had games, entertainment, pumpkin decorating and face painting. But the real attraction was the opportunity to compare then and now. “There’s deep roots and relationships,” said Jeanine Klaus, family support specialist for the NICU and intensive care nursery.

NICU after he was born early — 23 weeks and five days,” she said, “1 pound, 3-point-5 ounces.”

“It’s great, seeing everyone and just being here,” said Franklin, looking around at the younger children dressed as superheroes and bumblebees.

If you look at the disconnect between national health priorities, our patient resources and inadequate discussion, this funding toward answers has been slashed.

Suicide “is a topic that most people are uncomfortable with,” Kumar said, but data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more people die from suicide than homicide in the U.S. “This point alone is worthy of thought,” he said.

Patrick Kennedy speaks at the opening of the Center on Depression and Resilience. — Photo: Joshua Clark

Happy Halloween reunion

Graduates of the neonatal intensive care unit celebrate at a Halloween party. “We remember the moms,” says nurse manager Shirley Belocura. “We don’t know how the kids look now.” — Photo: S.K. Vemmer

Former congressman Patrick Kennedy launches Center on Depression and Resilience

By Rick Asa

Former congressman Patrick Kennedy bluntly told a capacity audience of his own bouts with mood disorders and substance abuse in an impassioned keynote speech Oct. 21 to launch the new Center on Depression and Resilience.

In a booming voice, Kennedy praised UIC for its vision of a multidisciplinary, translational approach that will attack mental illness in the same way any leading institution would go after cancer and cardiovascular disease: with leading edge science, technology and experts who “treat the brain like it’s an organ of the body.”

Kumar described the economic toll of mental illness, citing data from a worldwide study that put disorders of the brain at the top of the list. If conditions such as substance abuse and anxiety are included, it’s an astronomical drain on resources, he said. And yet, he noted, depression is severely undertreated, basic mechanisms responsible for mood disorders remain a mystery and funding toward answers has been slashed.

Suicide “is a topic that most people are uncomfortable with,” Kumar said, but data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more people die from suicide than homicide in the U.S. “This point alone is worthy of thought,” he said.

“If you look at the disconnect between national health priorities, our patient resources and inadequate discussion, this would be one of the topics.”
By Francisca Corona — fcorn3@uic.edu

The UIC Indian Student Association celebrates Diwali with dance, skits and stories in Student Center East. — Photo: Timothy Nguyen

I didn't know what Diwali was until Oct. 20, when I got to experience it first hand with the UIC Indian Student Association.

Diwali, a Hindu festival celebrated each autumn, is also known as "festival of lights" because of its spiritual roots — light shining over darkness, good overcoming evil and hope conquering despair.

Diwali isn't just a festival that gets celebrated every year by millions of people from around the world. It's also a way of building community and expressing family values that can sometimes be under-appreciated throughout the year.

The night of Diwali started with short skits where the board members of the UIC Indian Student Association acted out funny scenes while talking about the history of Diwali. Indian student dance teams performed between skits and everyone enjoyed traditional Indian food.

According to legend, Diwali celebrates the return of Lord Rama after years away from his home, Ayodhya. Lord Rama had just defeated the evil Ravana of Lanka and rescued his wife in the process. To celebrate Rama's return and his defeat of Ravana, they placed candles all around, lighting up the path of his return. Rama was then named King of Ayodhya. This is what Diwali celebrates every year, good overcoming evil.

"It goes from just being an idea to a completed project," he said. "It's a really good time." The team has 60 members, working on robots for three national competitions. Up next is the Jerry Sanders Design Competition in March.

Massey encourages all students to join the fun, no matter what their major.

"It's a great learning opportunity," he said.

"You'll learn about engineering, machine tools and how to project manage." The team accepts members throughout the year. Students interested in joining can email ChicagoEDT@live.com

The UIC Indian Student Association celebrates Diwali with dance, skits and stories in Student Center East. — Photo: Timothy Nguyen

Team members Krystian Gebis (from left), John Sabino and Basheer Subei put their heads together at the Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition.

In just seven years, UIC's Chicago Engineering Design Team has gone from not qualifying for the annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition to beating out some of the top universities in the nation.

It's the team's drive and dedication that's pushed them to succeed — snagging second place for robot design at the competition over the summer, said team president Jasen Massey.

"Over the years we've seen progression in our standing and our competitions," said Massey, a graduate student in engineering. "We've gotten better every single year."

This year's participants were challenged to build a robot that could complete an outdoor obstacle course, independent of an operator. The national engineering competition, held at Oakland University in Michigan, had more than 40 university robotics teams in attendance, including the Georgia Institute of Technology, Yale University, University of Texas and California State University.

The team streamlined its electrical designs, did an overhaul on the brains of the robot and made mechanical design changes to create a sleek, efficient design. Those improvements helped them make the jump from third in robotic design in 2013 to second just a year later.

The best part about designing robots is seeing designs come to life, Massey said. "It goes from just being an idea to a completed project," he said. "It's a really good time."

The team has 60 members, working on robots for three national competitions. Up next is the Jerry Sanders Design Competition in March.

Massey encourages all students to join the fun, no matter what their major.

"It's a great learning opportunity," he said.

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Read posts from “I am UIC” bloggers each weekday at uicnews.uic.edu
Celebrate Day of the Dead

By Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

Decorate sugar skulls, feast on Bread of the Dead and watch an exclusive theater performance at the Latino Cultural Center’s Day of the Dead events today and Thursday.

All events take place at the Latino Cultural Center, Lecture Center B2.

A communal altar to honor loved ones who have died will be created today, 1 to 4 p.m. Participants can bring photos or remembrance items, decorate sugar skulls and create paper marigold flowers for the altar. The altar is co-hosted by Mexican Students de Aztlán.

Chicago actors Laura Crotte and Jasmin Cardenas will present stories, songs and performances about the Day of the Dead Thursday, 3:30 to 5 p.m., at “A Celebration of Life and Death.” Bread of the Dead (Mexican sweet bread made for the Day of the Dead) and hot chocolate will be served.

“This is the grand finale because it’s a very special event,” said Mario Lucero, assistant program director of the Latino Cultural Center. “We’re really excited for this one.”

The Latino Cultural Center invites all students and employees to learn about and share the significance of the celebration.

“You don’t have to be from Latin America to connect to the Day of the Dead,” Lucero said. “The significance is to remember those that aren’t here with us anymore.”

Artwork created by UIC students will be on display Nov. 12 to Dec. 8 in Student Center East’s Montgomery Ward Gallery.

Show off creative talent at UIC Art Fest

By Ayah Chehade — acheha2@uic.edu

Students can showcase their talent at the UIC Art Fest next week.

Artists and novices will be provided with a canvas, paint and brushes to create masterpieces between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Students can sign up to participate through Friday at gp.uic.edu/ARTFEST

Artwork will be featured in the Montgomery Ward Gallery Nov. 12 through Dec. 8.

“We have really talented students here at UIC,” said Sladjana Grbic, assistant program director for Campus Programs. “This gives them a space to just be creative, relax and take their minds off their classes.”

During an opening reception Nov. 19, votes will be tallied for the “Best Painting” and prizes will be given to the top three artists.

“Last year we got about 70 students interested and were only able to take 35 to 40 students,” Grbic said. “Because of the amount of students that wanted it to happen more than once a year, we started to put the event on once a semester.”

Students participating in the Art Fest can document their work as part of the UIC Experience program. For more information visit uicexperience.uic.edu

Share photos in #SustainableUIC contest

By Ayah Chehade — acheha2@uic.edu

The Office of Sustainability celebrates Campus Sustainability Day with a photo contest that challenges students, faculty and staff to showcase what makes them sustainable.

Winner will receive a $50 gift card to the UIC Bookstore.

“UIC has put so much effort into cultivating a sustainable campus,” says Lisa Sanzenbacher, program coordinator in the Office of Sustainability. “It’s great for students to recognize that effort and share it with folks outside of UIC.”

To enter, submit photos by Nov. 21 to the Office of Sustainability’s Facebook (facebook.com/SustainableUIC) or Instagram (facebook.com/SustainableUIC)

Upcycle T-shirt into scarf for good cause

By Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

Craft a fun gift for a good cause — using nothing but old T-shirts.

At “Gift Giving on a Budget,” 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday in 121 Burnham Hall, students and employees can learn how to remake old T-shirts into trendy scarves for local organizations that support women.

The event is sponsored by the student organization Donate By Design and the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women, Minority Women Concerns subcommittee.

Making the scarves benefits others, said Alison Chen, Donate By Design president. “Chicago is always cold so this gift is both functional and fun,” said Battee-Freeman, co-chair of the Minority Women Concerns subcommittee.

The organization makes and sells clothing and accessories and gives proceeds to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

“Just bringing in T-shirts that you don’t wear or that are too small can help keep someone else warm,” said Chen, a senior in biology.
White House adviser ‘impressed’ with UIC’s Asian American initiatives

By Christy Levy — christyb@uic.edu

It’s up to universities like UIC to help President Obama achieve his vision, says White House adviser Akil Vohra. “From the president’s perspective, we want to make sure that by 2020, we have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world,” said Vohra, senior adviser at the White House Initiative on Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI).

UIC was designated an AANAPISI by the U.S. Department of Education in 2008, meeting the requirements of having at least 10 percent of its student population identify as Asian American or Pacific Islanders, with at least half of the institution’s degree-seeking students eligible to receive federal Pell grants. Vohra visited the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center, the Asian American studies program and the Writing Center; sat in on an AARCC Lunchbox student discussion about the concept of love between Asian parents and their children; and talked with UIC administrators and faculty members.

“I’m very impressed,” Vohra said. “It’s great to see students who are involved and faculty and administrators who understand the community.”

“The Asian American Resource and Cultural Center provides a great environment for students to come together and have discussions. It provides a home away from home.”

UIC is the only university in the Midwest to receive designation and funding from the AANAPISI program, said Karen Su, principal investigator and project director of the UIC initiative.

“It really highlights the important role that UIC is playing in terms of supporting Asian American and Pacific Islander students in the Midwest,” said Su, clinical assistant professor of Asian American studies.

“A lot of times, people have the misconception that Asian American students do not need any support — that they’re all doing well academically and are economically well-off, and at UIC, that’s not really true. Our Asian American students are very much like all students at UIC — we have a high number of low-income, first-generation college students.”

Vohra should share its best practices for supporting Asian American and Pacific Islander students with the rest of the country, Vohra said. According to the U.S. Census data, the nation’s Asian American population “is only going to increase by leaps and bounds,” he added. States such as Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana, which typically had a small population of Asian Americans, are seeing that demographic grow.

“We want to make sure that the experiences that UIC has had with these populations is being shared, and that’s where UIC can play a critical role,” Vohra said. “We know that more is being asked of our institutions, but schools and universities are doing it with less. We want to make sure that although we recognize the capacity constraints, we are highlighting the federal funds that are available.”

UIC received two AANAPISI grants: a five-year, $1.86 million grant through fiscal year 2015 and a five-year, $2 million grant through fiscal year 2016. The first award provides student support in recruitment, retention and graduation by enhancing activities for the cultural center and academic programs. The second funds academic and writing skills development, college preparation and career advancement.

“It’s very unusual to have two grants,” Su said. “We’re serving Asian American students in the Chicago area in a significant way.”

The grants fund programs that are available to all UIC students — not just Asian Americans, Su said. Funding goes to UIC’s first-year writing program, Writing Center initiatives, student support programs at the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center and initiatives in the Asian American studies program, which are open to all students.

“Our AANAPISI funding benefits the campus as a whole,” Su said. The grant also funds a new college visit day, she said, with students recruited from area high schools, youth groups and cultural centers.

“When the students arrive on campus, it’s usually a very multiracial group,” she said. “They are the kinds of diverse students we want to see come to UIC and continue to contribute to our campus.”

For more information on the UIC AANAPISI Initiative, visit http://bit.ly/1ur0fJi
The University acknowledges and thanks all our UIC employees whose daily efforts shape this great campus. During Employee Recognition Month, the University of Illinois at Chicago is pleased to recognize and congratulate these outstanding employees.

NOVEMBER 2014
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION MONTH

Employee Recognition Awards Ceremony

The Employee Recognition Award Ceremony will recognize recipients of the Award of Merit, Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence Award (CAPE), INSPIRE and Luminary Awards, UIC employees celebrating 25 years through 50 years of service, and the campus accolades of UIC Woman of the Year, Janice Watkins Award, and University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences Systems’ Class Act and Academy Award.

Tuesday, November 4, 2014
At the UIC Forum — 10:30 a.m. ceremony followed by reception.
The UIC Award of Merit is conferred by the university. This is a university-wide honor, recognizing outstanding academic professionals and civil service employees for sustained excellence in performance and commitment to their jobs.

Teresita D. Soto Plutz  
Executive Assistant to the Chancellor  
Office of the Chancellor

Kelsey (McCoy) Kapolnek  
Coordinator of Communications and Media, Institute of Government and Public Affairs (UA)

Lisa Junkin Lopez  
Project Coordinator and Interim Director, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts

Yolanda Rodríguez  
Associate Director of Operations Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services

Emily M. Jordan  
Assistant to the Head and Director of Grant Management, Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition, College of Applied Health Sciences

Stephanie Ann Johnson  
Executive Director, Pediatric Resource Center (PRC)  
College of Medicine, Peoria

Jie Chen  
Manager of System Services, Survey Research Laboratory, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs

Alejandra “Alex” Cantero  
Assistant to the Chair, Departments of Educational Policy Studies, Educational Psychology, Special Education, College of Education

Laura E. Knights  
Visiting Senior Research Specialist, Center for Literacy  
College of Education

Elena Lathos  
Project Coordinator, Department of Computer Science  
College of Engineering

Sharon Casillas  
Graduate Program Coordinator, Department of Criminology, Law and Justice, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Athanasia Papaioannou  
Assistant Director, Women’s Leadership and Resource Center Office of Diversity

Arnold S. Diaz  
Assistant to the Head, Human Resources, Department of Pharmacy Practice, College of Pharmacy

David Haschemeyer  
Research Specialist, Institute for Health Research and Policy

Yesenia Alverio  
EMG Senior Technician II, Department of Neurology and Rehabilitation

Susana De Leon Jinang  
Registered Nurse, 5 East Surgical Specialties and Rehabilitation

Caroline Deskin  
Specialist, Department of Speech Pathology

John J. Fino  
Supervisor, Department of Intraoperative Monitoring

Christina James  
Medical Social Consultant, Department of Psychiatry

Megan Kennedy  
Physical Therapist, Department of Physical Therapy
The UIC Award of Merit is conferred by the university. This is a university-wide honor, recognizing outstanding academic professionals and civil service employees for sustained excellence in performance and commitment to their jobs.

UIC Award of Merit

Kay McGee
Coordinator, Department of Occupational Therapy

TaNisha Nicole Taylor
Customer Service Specialist, 4E Neuroscience Center

Kathleen J. Walrath
Associate Director of Nursing, Department of Clinical Practice and Professional Development

Kevin R. Cisner
Laboratory Safety Coordinator, Environmental, Health, and Safety Office

Wanda Giles
Office Support Associate, Office for Capital Programs

Armando Juarez
Detective, University Police

Jeff Winter
Machinist, Facilities Management

Paula M. Benton-Pierce
Manager, Student Learning Resources Center, African American Academic Network

Wayne Lowell Odle
Multimedia Designer, Campus Auxiliary Services

2014 Campus Charitable Fund Drive

September 9, 2014 to November 26, 2014

UIC hosts the annual Campus Charitable Fund Drive (CCFD) in conjunction with the State of Illinois’ SECA campaign. There are twelve Umbrella Charities representing over 2000 organizations. For further information about the eligible charities, pledge forms, and donation instructions visit UIC Human Resources’ CCFD webpage at https://www.hr.uic.edu/paychecksinfo/charitable/.

Employees can contribute in two ways:

1. Continuous payroll deduction: Employees who contribute through continuous payroll deduction have a designated amount withdrawn from their check each pay period. Designations are ongoing and continue until the employee requests a change or forwards a cancellation request in writing. At any time throughout the year a UIC employee can create, adjust, or cancel their continuous payroll deduction.

2. One-time donation: Employees may also give a one-time donation to one or more charities of their choice by completing the One-Time Direct Gift section of the CCFD pledge form. An employee can donate as an individual or a group of employees can combine their efforts and make one larger donation. One Time Direct Gift checks are made payable to “Campus Chest” and should be submitted with the completed pledge form to UIC Human Resources, Special Programs/CCFD, MC 897.

Contact Us

UIUC Human Resources, Special Programs
Rebecca Fortier
Special Events Facilitator
312-413-2960
rfortier@uillinois.edu

Marilyn Sommer
Special Programs Coordinator
312-996-3504
msommer@uillinois.edu
JANICE WATKINS AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED CIVIL SERVICE

This award recognizes exceptional Civil Service employees, who have distinguished themselves by performing their duties with diligence and superior dedication.

This award is organized each year by the Staff Advisory Council in memorial to Janice Watkins, an individual who exemplified the highest level of service and dedication. Janice Watkins worked as a supervisor in the Insurance Office on UIC’s east campus and served as the President of the Staff Advisory Council.

Tina Kavukattu
Administrative Assistant, Office of Global Health Leadership
College of Nursing

Shelissa Rodriguez
Human Resources Manager
UIC Human Resources

Jerome Sides
Safety Officer I, Asbestos Coordinator
Environmental Health and Safety Office

CHANCELLOR’S ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE (CAPE) AWARD

The Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence Award (CAPE), established in 1988, recognizes the demonstrated excellence of academic professional staff and encourages their professional development. It indicates the institution’s high regard for the contributions of this key segment of our community. The CAPE Award is based on peer review broadly selected from the ranks of academic professionals. This year, there are six recipients of the CAPE Award.

Gillian J. Coombs
Director, Faculty Affairs
College of Medicine

Elizabeth Herrera
Assistant Director
Office of Career Services
School of Public Health

Steven Kragon
Executive Assistant Dean
Graduate College
Administration

Karen Sholeen
Assistant Dean
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Hugo Teruel
Director, LARES (Latino American Recruitment and Educational Services)
Office of Diversity

Charu Thakral
Associate Director
Office of Diversity

WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award was established by the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women (CCSW) in 1990 to annually honor a UIC woman for her significant contributions to women at the university.

Dr. Robin J. Mermelstein
Professor, Department of Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Director, Institute for Health Research and Policy
The INSPIRE Award recognizes individuals who have consistently and over long periods of time based their every action on UIC’s Core Values, “Integrity, Nurture, Service, Pride, Intellect, Respect, and Excellence.” This year, there are eight recipients of the INSPIRE Award.

Kathryn S. Kirrish  
Coordinator, Projects & Operations, University Student Financial Services & Cashier Operations (USFSCO), Office of Business & Financial Services

Michelle Parker-Katz  
Clinical Professor, Department of Special Education College of Education

Barbara Travis  
Clerical Assistant, Center for Literacy College of Education

Priscilla Velarde Wilson  
Associate Director for Residence Life, Campus Housing

Mary Wais  
Assistant to the Head, Department of Computer Science College of Engineering

Brian Ward  
Academic Advisor & Program Specialist, Honors College, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Arnold S. Diaz  
Assistant to the Head—Human Resources, Department of Pharmacy Practice College of Pharmacy

Irma Hernandez  
Social Worker, Developmental Disabilities Family Clinics; Department of Disability and Human Development College of Applied Health Sciences

The annual UIC Luminary Award is given to the INSPIRE recipient who best represents the pinnacle of service to our campus and its constituents.

The “Class Act” award is given to an employee described as a role model who continuously demonstrates exceptional competence and compassion in the performance of his/her job responsibilities and is an outstanding example of the University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System’s five values, “Integrity, Innovation, Service Excellence, Safety and Accountability.”

Ronald Aslan  
Cara Bonwell  
Alexander Davis  
Maria Esperanza DeGuzman-DeVicais  
Christina Evangelista  
Yesenia Ovando  
Andre Johnson  
Jeanine Klaus  
Hilario Lechuga  
Linda Mars  
Heather Moky  
Senad Osmanovic, MD  
Latonia White

At the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System Employee Recognition Award Program, the recipient of the Academy Award is honored. The Academy Award recipient is selected by the employee recognition committee from the year’s Class Act recipients and the selected recipient is the Employee of the Year. The employee’s identity is announced at an annual dinner held in honor of the year’s awardees.

Andre Johnson  
Department of Social Work
During UIC's Employee Recognition Month we honor our service honorees with five or more years, in five year increments, of service. University employees who are eligible civil service employees, academic professional employees, and eligible faculty working at UIC are recognized.
Tonda Hughes
Researcher wins Betty Ford Award
By Sam Hostetter — samhos@uic.edu

Tonda Hughes, an internationally known researcher on women’s mental health and substance abuse, will receive the Betty Ford Award from the Association of Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse.

The award is given to an individual who has made a significant impact on the field of alcohol and drug abuse, particularly in women’s issues, substance abuse education and recovery.

Hughes will be presented with the award at the association’s annual conference in San Francisco Nov. 6.

Hughes, professor of health-systems science and associate dean for Global Health in the College of Nursing, has received nearly $20 million in funding for research on sexual-minority women’s health and substance abuse.

She was among the first researchers to receive major national funding for research on sexual-minority women’s health, an area identified by the Institute of Medicine as greatly understudied.

“Compared to heterosexual women, sexual-minority women have been shown to be at higher risk for a number of unsafe health behaviors and negative health outcomes, including being overweight, obesity, smoking and substance abuse,” Hughes said.

Her study of risk and protective factors for heavy drinking and drinking-related problems was the first study funded by the National Institutes of Health on sexual-minority women’s drinking behaviors and related risk factors.

Now in its 15th year, the study is the longest-running of its kind. Sexual minorities are one of six population groups identified in the federal Healthy People 2020 report as experiencing major health disparities. The document is the blueprint for national public health prevention and policy goals for the next decade.

“Health disparities among sexual minorities have long been explained on the basis of excess stress resulting from being part of a marginalized and stigmatized population group,” Hughes said. “However, our work on childhood victimization has begun to point to another potentially critical factor underlying these health disparities — namely, the enduring impact of sexual and physical abuse into adulthood.”

In a recent paper published in the journal Addiction, Hughes looked at the links between victimization and substance use using data from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. She found that compared to women who identify as heterosexual, women who identify as lesbian or bisexual are more than twice as likely to report victimization over their lifetime.

Three times as many lesbians as heterosexual women reported childhood sexual abuse.

“Given the enormous impact of childhood victimization on health, this work has major implications for improving the health and quality of life of both sexual-minority and heterosexual populations, and for progress toward eliminating health disparities based on sexual orientation,” Hughes said.

College of Nursing professor Tonda Hughes receives Betty Ford Award for her work in substance abuse. — Photo: Alicia McConnell Hatch
Send information about campus events to Christy Levy, christyb@uic.edu

**OCTOBER 29**

**“FROM VISION TO LEGACY: LALS 40TH ANNIVERSARY”**
Kick-off event and fundraiser for LALS Student Scholarship Fund. Music and presentations on the history and future vision of the program
6–9 p.m. / National Museum of Mexican Art / 1852 W. 19th St.
$15 students / $30 public
bit.ly/ZZn3yy

**EXHIBITS**

**THROUGH OCTOBER 31**

“South Asian American History, Culture and Community”
Historical text, images celebrating South Asian American culture
Hours: Mon–Thurs, noon–9 p.m.
Fri, noon–5 p.m.
Montgomery Ward Gallery, SCE

**THROUGH APRIL 2015**

“Visualizing Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Pictorial Interpretations of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Novel”
Examining how characters and events are represented through the years
Hours: Mon–Tues & Thurs–Fri, 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Wed 10 a.m.–7 p.m. / Sat 12:30–4:30 p.m.
Daley Library Special Collections
go.library.uic.edu/Exhibit

**LECTURES**

**OCTOBER 29**

“Training Parents of Students with Disabilities: Using Technology to Enhance Civic Engagement”
Meghan Burke, special education, UIUC, and Linda Sandman, UIC Developmental Disabilities Family Clinic. Sponsored by the Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement
Noon–1 p.m. / 1-470 Daley Library

**OCTOBER 30**

“Youth Entrepreneurship”
Real Time Chicago Lecture Series sponsored by the Great Cities Institute
Noon–1:30 p.m.
CUPPA Hall, fourth floor

**OCTOBER 30**

“Digging in: Past, Place and Other Notions”
Virginia Nazarea, professor of anthropology and director of Ethnecology/Biodiversity Laboratory, University of Georgia. Chicago Area Food Studies Working Group, Institute for the Humanities
3–5 p.m. / lower level, SH

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**OCTOBER 29**

“Learn the Thriller Dance”
Get in the Halloween spirit with UIC Campus Recreation
4:30–5:15 p.m. / Multipurpose room, SRF

**NOVEMBER 4**

Employee Recognition Ceremony
Honoring campus award winners and employees with 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of service
10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
UIC Forum

**NOVEMBER 4**

“HardArt group”
Bassist John Elmquist leads evolving assembly of musicians. Free performance sponsored by the UIC School of Theatre & Music.
Tuesdays-at-One
1–1:50 p.m.
Recital Hall L060, ETMSW

FOR MORE UIC EVENTS, VISIT EVENTS.UIC.EDU
The University Scholar award, now in its 30th year, honors UIC faculty who are among the best in their fields — those who show superior performance and great promise in research and teaching. Winners receive $15,000 per year for three years.

**GHANSHYAM PANDEY**

*By Sharon Parmet — sparmet@uic.edu*

“Once we really know the biological causes of depression and suicide, we may be able to develop therapies to treat depression and prevent suicide,” Ghanshyam Pandey says.

Pandey is professor of psychiatry and director of the Mood Disorders and Suicide Research program, one of the only research programs of its kind studying the neurobiological causes of teen suicide.

Pandey’s main research interests are the underlying biological causes of depression and suicide, especially in teenagers.

He focuses on three main areas related to depression and suicide: neurotransmitters such as serotonin, the immune system and hormones.

He was one of the first researchers to discover that a subtype of serotonin receptor is often present at abnormal levels in the blood of depressed patients and in the brain tissue of suicide victims.

“This receptor is a valid biomarker for identifying people at a higher risk of suicide,” Pandey says. “Testing for levels of this receptor through a blood test can help these people get earlier preventive treatment.”

His studies of the hormones of the neuroendocrine system found that cortisol, a hormone produced in response to stress, doesn’t function properly in depressed people. They have abnormal levels of the hormone that causes the release of cortisol in the brain.

When Pandey turned his attention to the immune system, he found abnormal pro-inflammatory factors called cytokines in the blood and brains of people with depression and in brain tissue after death.

He is currently investigating signaling pathways in bipolar disorder and inflammatory markers in suicide.

Pandey began studying mood disorders because he was interested in brain function. Through his interviews with depressed and suicidal teenagers, Pandey realized that their risk factors, behaviors and characteristics were different than adults.

“This observation led me to believe that the underlying neurobiology of teen suicide and depression should be studied separately, rather than considered to be similar to neurobiological findings from adult patients,” he says.

GUİDO PAULİ

*By Sam Hostettler — samhos@uic.edu*

Guido Pauli sees more than beauty in plants. He is conducting groundbreaking research on how they can aid human health.

“Throughout history, plants have been used for countless purposes,” says Pauli, professor of medicinal chemistry and pharmacognosy. “Nutrients, essential factors and therapeutics, but also toxins, have given them an invaluable role in human development.”

Pauli, co-director of the UIC/NIH Botanical Center for Dietary Supplements Research, is developing new ways to identify what’s in botanicals and how they work. He developed quantitative nuclear magnetic resonance (qNMR) methodologies to evaluate the purity of a wide variety of natural products, including hops, licorice, eucalyptus and wild yam, as well as for the anti-TB drug he is developing in UIC’s Institute for Tuberculosis Research, where he is associate director.

Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy has become the best technique for determining the structure of organic compounds for over past 50 years. One major advantage for the work with precious natural product samples is that NMR is nondestructive and important data can be obtained from samples weighing less than a milligram.

Pauli has developed collaborations in natural products research that directly benefit investigators on campus and throughout the world. He recently established a translational research project with the Guanxi Institute of Botany in Guilin, China, where he is a Bagui scholar and visiting professor.

He also holds three patents, including one for the potential anti-tuberculosis drug.

The Center for Botanical Dietary Supplements Research is the oldest in the U.S. devoted to establishing the safety and effectiveness of botanical dietary supplements. It is the only such center continuously supported by the National Institutes of Health since 1999.

Judy Bolton, professor and head of medicinal chemistry and pharmacognosy, says Pauli is “uniquely qualified” for the University Scholar Award.

“Guido is an outstanding scientist, and he actively participates in training the next generation of natural product chemists,” Bolton says.

“He deserves to be recognized as a University Scholar.”

“Throughout history, plants have been used for countless purposes,” says Guido Pauli.

— Photo: Joshua Clark
He originally trained as a cognitive psychologist, but James Pellegrino’s work has evolved over four decades to focus on the learning, instruction and assessment of students from kindergarten through college.

Pellegrino, distinguished professor of psychology and education, combines cognitive science, assessment, educational technology, instructional practice and educational policy.

His goal is to better understand the nature of students’ knowledge in specific disciplines and the conditions that enhance deep understanding, inform the design of instructional practices and materials, and accurately measure what students know and don’t know.

“I’ve come to understand over a long period of time trying to work at this, that connecting theory, research and practice requires constant effort, attention and collaboration,” says Pellegrino, a distinguished professor in liberal arts and sciences.

He has led large-scale research and development projects for the National Science Foundation, the Institute of Education Sciences and the Office of Naval Research. He was the principal investigator for an NSF grant to the College Board to redesign and improve Advanced Placement science courses and assessments.

Pellegrino was elected to the National Academy of Education and named a fellow of the American Educational Research Association.

Much of his current research concerns assessment of student learning in mathematics and science. He is helping states and school districts measure the knowledge and skills students need to succeed under the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Testing has become a national obsession that tends to distort the entire education process, he says.

“There are aspects of testing and assessment that, when done well and woven into a larger scheme that integrates curriculum, instruction and assessment in a low stakes fashion, can be very informative and beneficial,” he says.

“We just happen to have jacked this up to a high stakes game in the United States. It’s high stakes for kids, it’s high stakes for teachers and it’s high stakes for schools.”

Pellegrino and his wife, Susan Goldman, also a distinguished professor of psychology and education and LAS distinguished professor, left Vanderbilt University for UIC in 2001 to establish an interdisciplinary center that grew to become the Learning Sciences Research Institute.

“I came to UIC in part because I sensed there was an environment here with people from multiple departments, multiple disciplines, who shared common interests about studying student learning, and studying teaching and improving schools,” he says.

“That perception of the possible has been realized over the 13 years that I’ve been here.”

He and his colleagues decided to cap each class at 20, but found that 15 or 16 typically finish the residency, which combines studies with a year of administrative work in the Chicago Public Schools.

Tozer initiated a doctoral program to produce urban school principals who could turn schools around. Tozer defines them as principals who know how to support teachers in developing quality instruction.

“We’ve known for 35 years that a great principal could go into a terrible school and dramatically improve it. The question for me was, can we produce such principals routinely, instead of waiting for them to come along, as geniuses?”

Thirteen students entered the first class preparing for a doctorate in urban education leadership in 2003. Tozer and his colleagues decided to cap each class at 20, but found that 15 or 16 typically finish the residency, which combines studies with a year of administrative work in the Chicago Public Schools.

Today, the program boasts 99 percent placement in administrative jobs, 70 percent of those as school principals. It has received increasing support from the U.S. Department of Education, including a recent grant of $1.9 million over the next three years.

“The beauty of this program as a lever is that there are only 400 principal vacancies annually in Illinois,” Tozer says. “The resources of this state — 30 universities — are more than adequate to educate 400 people annually to become change agents in schools.”

Three years ago, Tozer established UIC’s Center for Urban Education Leadership.

“The horizon for us is twofold: to assist the program in having better and better results in principals’ impact on schools, because nobody has it all the way right yet; and researching the result in a way that can move the field.”
PHILIP YU

By Jeanne Galatzer-Levy — jgala@uic.edu

We are living at the beginning of the era of Big Data, when buying something at the local big-box store can produce a personal profile the NSA would envy. “A lot of your daily activity is being captured,” says Philip Yu, distinguished professor and Wexler chair in information technology. While this may seem worrying, Yu sees things differently. He is one of the foremost experts on data mining — identifying patterns, then using them to extract information from huge data sets. Yu came to UIC in 2008 after 29 years at IBM, where he had become an internationally renowned researcher. His impact on the field is fundamental and shows no sign of slowing, says Robert Sloan, professor and head of computer science.

Since 2011, Yu has published 102 conference papers, 36 journal articles, co-edited a book and given 32 keynote and invited talks. “These are normal 23-year numbers, not three-year numbers, for a successful full-time professor,” Sloan says, adding that Yu’s lifetime publication total, 776 papers with a citation count of 49,390, is unprecedented. Yu has enormous enthusiasm for the possibilities in his field. “There is so much that we can use in a constructive way,” he says.

Yu envisions a time when we will be able to diagnose illness; understand pollution; know where and when a tornado is coming; and get dead-on recommendations from Amazon.

One of his current collaborations is with neuroscientists looking at brain images, fMRIs of the brain, to detect early anomalies in the brain related to disease. Currently, the changes to the brain wrought by diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's can't be seen until it's far too late. Yu is working on advanced techniques to detect these diseases more accurately and earlier, bringing the possibility of early intervention and, possibly, prevention.

Instead of analyzing the image, Yu maps the image into a network and looks at connectivity, comparing healthy brains and brains suspected of disease.

“The brain is a big thing with million of connections,” he says. “We are in this exciting era of big data with a tremendous opportunity to use this data to enrich our lives.”

SCOTT BRADY

By Sharon Parmet — sparmet@uic.edu

Scott Brady wants to understand the cell and the molecular biology of neurons: how they can get so large (as much as 1 meter or more long in humans), how materials get from one end of these long cells to the other, and how dysfunctions may underlie neurodegenerative diseases like ALS, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Huntington's disease.

Right now, he's looking at the transport of structures, proteins and signaling molecules along the cytoskeleton of nerve cells. “When neurons don't have the materials they need to function, they can lose contact with targets, whether other neurons or muscles,” says Brady, professor and head of anatomy and cell biology.

Neurons that lose connection with their target cells are programmed to die, Brady says. “Cell death is the final step in the lengthy neurodegenerative diseases like ALS, but we need to understand the earlier stages of disease, when treatments can make a difference.”

Brady and his colleagues have studied disease-causing proteins associated with a number of neurodegenerative diseases. For example, they found that mutations in a protein called SOD1, which cause about 10 percent of cases of inherited ALS, affect the motor proteins that move materials along nerve axons.

Using a technique that combines video and light microscopy, which allows him to observe the movement of materials in neurons, Brady saw that when he added the mutated protein to squid axons, transport slowed down. Following up on these studies, his laboratory identified how the mutant protein affects transport and nerve function. They found similar changes in Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease, each affecting a unique aspect of the neuron.

Brady also studied the stabilization of the neuronal cytoskeleton and the role of glial cells in supporting the architectural structure of neurons. His earlier work discovered a new kind of motor protein, kinesin, and showed that kinesin is the primary motor molecule for the transport of materials along microtubules in neurons.

In 2013, Brady was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is president-elect of the Association of Anatomy Cell Biology and Neurobiology Chairpersons.

SERDAR OĞUT

By Jeanne Galatzer-Levy — jgala@uic.edu

“My research lies at the boundary of materials science, physics, a little chemistry, a tiny bit of engineering,” says physics professor Serdar Oğut.

Oğut's research is related to energy and materials — trying to find better ways of harvesting and storing energy. “I do two separate things,” Oğut says. First, he develops methods to understand the very small materials called nanostructures. Most of what we know about materials that we can see and touch doesn't apply to the nanoscale, he says, and you need powerful computational methods to understand it. At that scale quantum mechanical effects are very important so you have to do a very detailed analysis to predict a material’s properties.

He also studies larger-scale materials and the interesting properties that arise from their interfaces, imperfections, impurities and flaws.

Although it sounds like a very theoretical, very solitary occupation, the power of Oğut’s research comes from collaboration. “This is a good time for computational materials science, he says, because other people recognize that using fundamental properties to guide experiments helps avoid dead ends.

When asked to explain the connection between a basic science problem and the real world, “I don't have to work very hard,” Oğut says. He prefers to tackle everyday problems. “I like to keep my feet on solid ground.”

For example, Oğut is working Robert Klie, an experimental physicist down the hall. Klie was interested in a material called calcium cobaltite and their conversations got Oğut interested, too. Two published articles have already emerged from their collaboration. Calcium cobaltite is relatively cheap and nontoxic. But it shows promise for turning waste heat into electricity, Oğut says.

Early in Oğut’s career, he got a number of job offers from industry. He was recently married and the money sounded good, but, his wife said, “I think you want to be in a university environment, because you love teaching.”

Like all new professors, Oğut taught 100-level courses his first years. He loved it. “I worked really hard on that course and lost 10 pounds,” he says. “I told my next class that I expected them to make me work hard enough to lose weight.”

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Dana Capocci is no ordinary student. Not only does she balance her studies with her role as a UIC softball player, but she volunteers her time to teach healthy habits to children around the world.

Capocci is traveling to Panama in December with the UIC chapter of Global Brigades, a student-led global health and sustainable development organization. She will lead the group’s efforts on child hygiene education.

She traveled to Honduras last year on a similar mission.

“It was an amazing, life-changing experience that I wish for everyone to experience,” said Capocci, a junior in communication. “It really makes you think twice about the things we take for granted like hot showers, clean food, clean water and medical care.

“It was the most humbling experience of my life.”

Students in UIC’s chapter of Global Brigades go on medical and public health missions to Honduras, Panama and Ghana. Another group of students will head to Nicaragua in January to provided preventive health methods and education.

“The cool thing about this trip is you go with fellow UIC students so I’ve made many friends and continue to hang out with them,” she said.

Last year, Capocci taught children how to brush their teeth by singing songs.

“Most of the kids have never brushed their teeth before,” she said. “The kids were putting their toothbrushes in the dirt because they didn’t understand the concept.”

A typical day as a volunteer abroad requires waking up at 6 a.m., eating breakfast and taking a bus about 30 minutes to the village. Volunteers work from morning until lunch, take a half-hour break, then continue working until dinner. Although the work was grueling, it was worth it, Capocci said.

“We built environmentally-friendly stoves and more sterile bathrooms from scratch,” she said. “We were literally mixing cement all day with our hands. When I came home I slept for, like, a week.”

Even when volunteers weren’t working, they were spending time with the village children.

“They don’t really have technology so we would just let them play on our devices,” she said. “They loved playing with the tablets.”

Capocci set up a fundraising campaign through UIC Athletics where students and employees can donate school supplies, dental and medical supplies and hygienic products. Donations can be dropped off at the Flames Athletic Center through Dec. 3.

Capocci set up a personal fundraising campaign online, empowered.org/Dana-Capocci, to help cover the cost of the trip.

After graduation, Capocci plans to study abroad in Spain and hopes to work in the medical field.

Capocci leads a busy life but loves her role as a student and an athlete on the softball team.

“It’s a great opportunity and a great responsibility,” she said. “We have three-hour practices every day. My team is like my family and my coaches are like having parents here.”