A culture of support

Report backs ways to enhance work-life experience

Nicole Gerardo explores how insect ecology may hold clues to human health.

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Karama Neal’s "So What Can I Do" blog has become a medium for change.

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Work-life initiative goals include broadening access, options and programs for child and dependent care to support working parents like Donna Stephenson, associate director of alumni career services at Goizueta Business School.

By KATHERINE HINSON

Over the last two years, members of the Work-Life Initiative Task Force have met and discussed the work-life experience of faculty, staff and students, especially in light of the changing needs and expectations of today’s society.

The Task Force considered a wide range of practices, programs and processes that would address the concerns of an increasingly diverse faculty, staff and student population in a competitive global market.

“Given that the University is a special place unlike any other institution, a place where preparation for the future and immersion in the moment are interwoven, the Task Force envisioned an ethos of engaged reciprocity that encourages an active partnership and collaboration between the University and its individual members so that each feels a deeper commitment and sense of responsibility to the other,” said Rosemary Magee, vice president of Human Resources.

An important result of this engagement not only the audience but also the performers is associated with Emory’s current financial status, said Provost Earl Lewis, who chairs the Ways and Means Committee that develops the annual UOB.

While acknowledging the positive factors associated with Emory’s current financial status, signs of a prolonged national economic downturn made University leadership determined to “place people at the top of our list of priorities,” said Provost Earl Lewis, who chairs the Ways and Means Committee that develops the annual UOB.

In addition to Lewis, the committee includes Mike Mandl, executive vice president for finance and administration, and secretary of the University, Provost Earl Lewis, and chair of the Finance and Administration Committee that develops the annual UOB.

By NANCY SEIDEMAN

Budget to grow 5.1%

“Putting People First” could be the theme of the University budget for next year.

The University’s Unrestricted Operation Budget (UOB) will grow 5.1 percent in fiscal year 2009 to a total of more than $679 million that will support increased investments in faculty, staff and student resources.

Specifics include provisions for a 3.75 percent merit salary pool, significant commitment to faculty development and student leadership development, and establishment of a Work-Life Resource Center.

The Board of Trustees approved the UOB at its April meeting. When combined with other University resources and with Emory Healthcare’s budget, total operations will be an estimated $3 billion in the new fiscal year, which begins Sept. 1.

And for the second time in recent years, Emory has experienced growth in endowment payouts, resulting in an additional $3.3 million available to support next year’s UOB.

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By NANCY SEIDEMAN

People: Taking sustainability to heart

Campus: Earth Week at Emory

Discovery: Shattered Shangri-La

Events: Experts to discuss election

Special “News you Can Use” Insert

Chorus, orchestra to collaborate on composer’s opus

By JESSICA MOORE

The universal themes of love, life, grief and loss are brought into focus through the musical lens of Richard Prior, Emory's director of choral studies and coordinator of chamber ensembles, says he tries to keep his careers as composer and conductor separate; the decision to present the piece was made by Director of Choral Studies Eric Nelson. The staging of this work is the largest collaboration of the musical season, bringing together approximately 300 orchestra and chorus members and soloists. "Visually I always think that these collaborations are spectacular, having this large mass of bodies all unified in a moment of musical expression," Prior says.

Engaging not only the audience but also the performers is very important to Prior. He strives to provide sufficient technical and artistic challenges for all performers, from the solo soprano to the second clarinetist.

By NANCY SEIDEMAN

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YOUR SOURCE FOR UNIVERSITY NEWS
EMORY PROFILE: Nicole Gerardo

Nicole Gerardo, assistant professor of biology, takes a close-up view of life, both in her lab and when walking around campus. “When you look at a plant on a warm day,” she says, “you start realizing how much diversity of life is there. In many ways, it’s like looking at a whole forest.”

Following the ant trail

Insect ecology may hold clues to human health

By CAROL CLARK

Nicole Gerardo was prone on the sidewalk outside the Rollins Research Center when two passersby approached her with concern. “They laughed when I stood up holding a Petri dish,” says Gerardo, who explained that she had just lain down to nab some aphids she noticed crawling on a plant.

“That’s what I do, collect insects,” says Gerardo, assistant professor of biology, who has made field trips to Panama and Ecuador to dig up whole colonies of fungus-growing ants. Gerardo studies the evolutionary ecology of microbial host-parasite interactions. Aphids and ants happen to be tiny, living laboratories of these interactions.

“Aphids are not just a gardener’s nightmare,” Gerardo says, pointing out that some aphid species are evolutionary marrows, carrying an arsenal against their natural enemies in the form of bacteria. One type of bacteria protects the aphids from a fungal pathogen, while another type combats heat stress and the larvae of a parasitic wasp that lays its eggs on aphids.

“What we’re realizing is not all microbes are bad. Some of them play a key role in the ecology and survival of the organisms around us — and of ourselves,” Gerardo says. Understanding the interactions between a simple system, like that of a bacterium and an insect, might give insights into how more complex systems operate — such as bacteria that promote human health or diseases.

A native of New Mexico, Gerardo joined Emory in January, after completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Insect Science at the University of Arizona. She moved to Atlanta with her husband, Josh; dog Rylee, and cat Luna. She opens a desk drawer in her lab to reveal a few others who made the trip with her: some Acromyrmex octospinosus fungus-growing ants, including two queens.

“She’s tending her garden,” Gerardo explains, holding up a Petri dish where a large, brown ant fusses over a marble-sized wad of fungus. “They have to weed and feed their fungus, just like a human gardener takes care of plants.”

There are more than 200 species of fungus-growing ants. They range from New Jersey to southern South America, but they especially flourish in the Amazon basin. The ants get nourishment from their fungus, and in turn, they feed the fungus and protect it from predators.

“Ants have been growing fungus for 50 million years,” Gerardo says. “That provides a lot of time for many adaptations to arise, and for the ants’ agricultural practices to become more advanced.”

One example of such an adaptation is bacteria found on the body of some ants that inhibits a killer of the ants’ fungus crop — which happens to be another type of fungus. “Humans go and buy an insecticide for a particular pest in their gardens, but those ants have the pesticide right on their bodies,” Gerardo says.

The fungal pathogen is also interesting, she adds. “It has been specialized to only recognize and attack the ants’ fungus, which makes it a really efficient predator.” Researchers have documented these basic relationships between the bacteria, the ants and the fungi. Now Gerardo wants to build on these findings by studying the chemical and molecular processes that occur during these interactions. Emory makes an ideal place for this work, due to its opportunities for interdisciplinary research and a strong Population Biology, Ecology and Evolution program, she says.

When she’s not working, Gerardo enjoys training to run in marathons. She is also a founder of the Invertebrate-Parasite Interactions Journal Club, which has members from Emory and Georgia Tech. The researchers hold potlucks where they discuss science articles.

These are dinner parties where the hosts never have to feel embarrassed by a stray insect. Gerardo, for one, says she doesn’t squash the occasional ant that wanders onto her kitchen counter. Instead, she just cleans up the invisible chemical trail it was following and returns the ant to the outdoors — or pops it into a Petri dish.

“I think they’re beautiful,” she says.

Amazing ants

• The longest lived ant on record was a queen, who died when she was 25 years old.
• A main defense of ants is to roll over and play dead.
• Leaf-cutting ants carry leaves that are 20 times their body weight to their nests, to feed their fungus gardens.
• Aphids excrete a “honeydew” that is like Gatorade for ants; in return, the ants protect aphids from predators.
• One of the greatest threats to ants is drought.
Sustainability: Walking the talk

By CAROL CLARK

Karen Salisbury, chief of staff to the vice president for Campus Services, has long recycled her magazines, newspapers, glass, cans and plastic. She even rinses out her baggies for re-use. Still, there was all that junk mail that she was tossing into the trash.

“No matter where you are in your life, you can start there and then take another step,” says Salisbury, explaining the spirit behind a program of personal sustainability initiatives started by the Campus Services’ leadership team.

Campus Services was a leader in helping Emory develop an ambitious sustainability vision. Among other goals, the University aims for a 25 percent reduction in energy use and a 65 percent reduction in the waste stream on campus by 2015.

When the managers of Campus Services held their recent annual retreat, they discussed what they were each doing as individuals to support that vision. “It’s walking the talk,” Salisbury said. “We can’t lead just by saying what people need to do. We need to lead by example.”

All 30 members of the leadership team decided to adopt a personal sustainability initiative—one more thing they could do, at home or at work, to make the world a greener place.

Bob Hascall, vice president of Campus Services, committed to walking, instead of driving, for at least 20 minutes a day. James Johnson, University architect, plans to get his two young children involved in recycling. Chief of Police Craig Watson committed to installing low-flow toilets in his house, and Brenda Watson, executive assistant to Hascall, plans to create a rainwater collection system at her house.

Salisbury, meanwhile, set up a simple system to recycle all of her junk mail. “Taking one step at a time is the best way to do sustainability,” she says. “We don’t want our initiatives to be a flash in the pan. We want them to be something that becomes part of our daily routines.”

Creekmore Award honors Martorell

By ALMA FREEMAN

Reynaldo Martorell, Robert W. Woodruff Professor of International Nutrition and chair of the Hubert Department of Global Health at the Rollins School of Public Health, was honored at the International Awards Dinner on March 31 with the 2008 Marion V. Creekmore Award for Internationalization.

The Creekmore Award, named for Emory’s first vice provost for international affairs, Marion Creekmore, was established in 2000 by Coca-Cola executive and Emory benefactor Claus M. Halle and is given each year to an Emory faculty member who excels in the advancement of the University’s commitment to internationalization.

Martorell’s research focuses on the fields of nutrition and human biology. He is recognized internationally for his groundbreaking longitudinal studies in maternal and child nutrition and for his research on micronutrient malnutrition.

“As an overwhelmingly respected leader in his field, Dr. Martorell has improved the lives of countless citizens of the developing world,” said Vice Provost for International Affairs Helli Semetko, chair of the award selection committee. “His voice in the struggle to fight malnutrition can be heard around the world.”

Martorell has led the Department of Global Health since 1996. During his tenure, the department has significantly expanded the size of its faculty and student body as well as research base and academic programs. A prolific author, Martorell serves as a member of the Advisory Council of Emory’s Global Health Institute, the Institute for Developing Nations, and Emory’s International Affairs Council. Martorell is vice-chair of the Pan American Health and Education Foundation Leadership, a director of the International Nutrition Foundation, and is an adviser to UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the World Bank.

“Dr. Martorell has done much to build Emory’s visibility on the world stage, and I can think of no one more deserving of this honor,” said RSPH Dean James Curran. “In addition to his prolific research, writing, leadership, and service, Roy’s steadfast dedication to his family and colleagues is admired by all.”

Also honored at the International Awards Dinner was Emory Law alum David Tsikhabashvili, a native of the republic of Georgia and the State Minister for Regional Issues, with the Sheth Distinguished Alumni Award.

Fair puts fun in synergy

The first-ever Synergyville Carnival featured rides, game booths, entertainment and more. The April 4 event was sponsored by Synergy, agrass-roots student organization that seeks to unite the campus and make it a friendlier, more inclusive place, and co-sponsored by more than 50 student groups.

Photos by BRYAN MEILTZ

ACCLAIM

James W. Flannery has been named winner of the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award for 2008 by his alma mater, Trinity College in Hartford, Conn. Flannery, director of the William B. Yeats Foundation and Winship Chair of Arts and Humanities, received the award, to be presented June 7, for his accomplishments as a scholar-artist and educator.

Flannery joined the Emory faculty 25 years ago to found the Department of Theater Studies and Theater Emory.

Gyula Kodolányi, visiting professor in Emory College’s Russian, East Asian Language and Culture and Film Studies, was elected a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts in Salzburg, Vienna, on March 9.

In addition to its intellectual pursuits, the Academy is a forum for the discussion of a wide variety of issues related to Europe and it offers proposals to the European Commission and Parliament.

As a senior visiting scholar at Emory, Kodolányi teaches interdisciplinary courses on the culture and politics of East Central Europe.

Eric Weeks, associate professor and undergraduate director of physics, has been recognized as an Outstanding Referee by the American Physical Society. APS instituted the program this year to give annual recognition to several hundred of the 4,000 physicists who have been exceptional in assessing manuscripts for publication in the APS journals.

This lifetime award is being presented in appreciation to all referees, whose efforts in peer review keep the standards of the society’s journals at a high level, the APS said.
Take Note

April 18. For more information, see http://college.emory.edu/news/e-newsletter/Transitions.

Seminar on race invites applications

Emory faculty can participate in a seminar May 14-22 to create new courses, adapt current ones or encourage students to pursue independent research on the University’s strategic plan theme of “Understanding Race and Difference.” The Transforming Community Project’s event will meet each day from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The goal is to put Emory’s racial history and current experiences in context within and across the schools of the University.

The TCP is encouraging courses and research projects on topics as well as creative projects about race at Emory and Emory’s experience with it. Application deadline is April 21. For more information, see http://college.emory.edu/news/e-newsletter/Transform.

Contest tackles health care system

Essays on why and how the health care system needs to change can garner Emory graduates and undergraduate students a monetary reward and high-profile attention. The Institute for Advanced Policy Solutions and the Centers for Disease Control are sponsoring the contest as part of a seminar series on health system transformation.

Original 1,000-word single-strategy essays, which should also outline concrete suggestions for achieving change, must be submitted by April 21. First prize is $1,000; second is $500.

By BEVERLY CLARK

Following national trends, Emory saw record applications from a highly competitive class. The University admitted 25.8 percent out of 17,448 applicants for the class of 2012 during regular decision admission. By comparison in 2007, 15,368 applied and 27 percent were accepted.

"From our largest applicant pool in the history of the University, we have admitted a group of students who, we believe, will both add to and gain from Emory’s wonderful community with their incredible talents, their diversity, and their already exceptional achievements both inside and outside the classroom," says Jean Jordan, dean of admissions.

Additionally, Oxford College had 3,397 applicants from a diverse pool, an increase of 150 percent from last year, due in part to the new "One Vote" admissions strategy that gives prospective Emory students a full look at all undergraduate college options. Among the class for the first time are 12 QuestBridge Scholars, 11 for Emory College and one for Oxford. Emory earlier this year joined a select coalition of universities and colleges that have partnered with QuestBridge, a national nonprofit that links highly qualified, low-income students with full four-year scholarship opportunities at some of the nation’s best colleges. Over the next few weeks, families will be making final school choices as admission decisions and aid packages are released.

"The new budget continues our investment in the people who are Emory," said Provost Earl Lewis, people like psychology professor Kenneth Carter and his students at Oxford College.
WORK-LIFE: Resource Center is first step

Continued from the cover

The two-year initiative was the creation of the Work-Life Report, which was presented to President Jim Wagner last fall. The report sets out the following goals, each accompanied by separate recommendations:

- **Strengthen work-life culture**: Strengthen a work-life culture for individuals and families of all shapes and sizes within a university environment of engaged reciprocity.
- **Broaden resources that support Emory community**: Broaden access, options and programs for child and dependent care to support working families.
- **Develop work-life policies and opportunities for staff**: Develop and promote flexible, collaborative working environments that sustain personal growth, encourage professional development, and nurture community and family life.
- **Enhance work-life policies for faculty and graduate students**: Create a new, more flexible model for academic advancement that sustains personal growth, encourages professional excellence, and nurtures community and family life.
- **Promote a culture of joy**: Promote a culture of joy where respect for traditions, immersion in the moment, and preparation for the future are intertwined.

Engage in a vigorous campaign of support

Enhance Emory’s academic culture and community life through courageous leadership, dialogue and innovation — truly making Emory a destination university for the 21st century.

In the months following submission of the report, Magee and Barnes met with the University Senate and the Administrative Council as well as the Faculty Council, which unanimously supported the recommendations with some additional refinements.

Several of the report’s recommendations have already been initiated, including the approval to create a Work-Life Resource Center. The University has begun a national search to hire a manager for this center, which will collaborate with Human Resources and the Office of the Provost to support and coordinate many of the recommendations contained in the report.

“The resource center’s first steps will be to work with the University leadership, commissions, and councils to establish the priorities and processes for further consideration and implementation of recommendations,” said Barnes. To read more about the goals and recommendations of the Work-Life Initiative Task Force visit https://www.admin.emory.edu/StrategicPlan/WorkLife/.

SNAPSHOT

New Yerkes facility to support research

The Yerkes National Primate Research Center broke ground on the new Clinical Veterinary Medicine Administration and Research building at the Lawrenceville field station on April 5. The building will be the cornerstone for new programs that will use social colonies of genetically typed nonhuman primates to help researchers understand the interaction between genetics and environment and the roles they play in human health and disease.

Additionally, local area students in a new county-sponsored Science and Technology High School will have the opportunity of carrying out their senior honors theses under the mentorship of Yerkes researchers using the cutting-edge genetics and behavioral labs in the CVMAR.

—Emily Rios
Gender violence threatens Liberia’s rule of law

By CASEY DUNNING

Throughout much of post-conflict Liberia, gender-based violence threatens to subvert rule of law and becomes an obstacle to The Carter Center’s “Strengthening the Rule of Law and Combating Impunity” project.

After several months of discussion on this issue between Emory’s Institute for Developing Nations (IDN) and The Carter Center’s Conflict Resolution Program, IDN formed a Working Group on Gender Violence in Liberia to identify ways in which research might provide information that would help inform practice and policy designed to reduce gender-based violence. The Working Group included Emory faculty and staff, Carter Center staff, and outside experts who spent spring break in Liberia exploring the intersection of gender violence and rule of law.

True to its commitment to undertake multi-disciplinary research in partnership with local scholars and experts, the IDN working group consisted of faculty from law, women’s studies, African studies, political science, and anthropology in partnership with social science and law faculty from the University of Liberia and international nongovernmental organizations. The working group met with various organizations in Liberia including the Ministries of Gender and Justice, the United Nation Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Gender Office, the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia, and the Bong Youth Development Foundation.

The group spent three days in Monrovia and traveled to rural Bong County so that it might be aware of a multitude of perspectives and attitudes. A seminar at the University of Liberia on possible research interventions that might address gender-based violence practice and policy concluded the group’s time in Liberia.

By KATHI BAKER

A new study led by Emory researcher Chuck Raison is the first to show that depression and anxiety are more prevalent in Tibetan refugees than they are in ethnic Tibetans born and raised in the comparative stability of exile communities in Northern India and Nepal. The findings were reported in the April 2008, online version of Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology.

“As political tensions within Tibet continue to erupt, it is estimated that approximately 2,500 Tibetan refugees per year cross the Himalayas into Nepal, seeking asylum there or in India,” says Raison, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences.

“The study was conducted in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh at two campuses of Tibetan Children’s Villages, the primary school system for ethnic Tibetans in exile in India and Nepal. Student volunteers were asked to complete a questionnaire widely used to measure depression and anxiety symptoms in refugee groups around the world.

“The students born in Tibet demonstrated significantly higher depression and anxiety scores than their Tibetans peers born in exile in either India or Nepal. Students who left Tibet at an older age or who had been in India for a shorter period of time had higher depression and anxiety scores, suggesting that experiences in Tibet may have promoted depression and anxiety, whereas time spent in India may have promoted an improvement of symptoms.

“Other risk factors for depression and anxiety in the group as a whole included being female and having limited family contact; however, these factors did not account for the association between being born in Tibet and having increased anxiety and depression.”

“Those findings highlight the cost of the ongoing human rights crisis within Tibet in human emotional suffering,” says Raison. Raison concludes that there is a need for continued support for refugee communities, even after prolonged periods of what seems to be successful adaptation in an exile environment. He suggests that providing increased international resources toward the improvement of emotional functioning for those adolescents and young adults could make a significant difference.

“By the time people think of politics and African American churches as emphasizing two things: protest and elections,” says Owens. “We all now have been paying attention to what African American churches do after the protests, after the elections.”

Those looking at the future of political engagement by African American churches and even mainstream and evangelical groups need to look beyond the stereotypes, he says.

Liberia’s Center Director will encourage people to see that if you really want to understand faith-based initiatives and the African American churches, you must begin focusing locally, not nationally,” says Owens.

Study shows depression, anxiety widespread in Tibetan refugees

Faith-based initiatives are likely to endure

By ELAINE JUSTICE

Whatever the outcome of the 2008 election, one legacy of the Bush administration that is likely to remain a permanent part of the American landscape is faith-based initiatives, says Michael Loo Owens, assistant professor of political science and an associated faculty member of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion.

In his new book, “God and Government in the Ghettos,” Owens uses both survey data and his own fieldwork in New York City to show that African American churches have used and can use their connections with public agencies to influence policy and government responsiveness in a way that has real benefits.

But those benefits may come at the expense of less involvement at the grassroots.

“African Americans, more than any other population, favor these alliances,” says Owens. And though none of this year’s presidential candidates have spelled out how faith-based initiatives might look during their administrations, all have voiced support.

“These initiatives may take a different form down the road, but the genie is out of the bottle,” says Owens. “There is tremendous public support for it.”

“For a long time, people thought of politics and African American churches as emphasizing two things: protest and elections,” says Owens. “We all now have been paying attention to what African American churches do after the protests, after the elections.”

True to its commitment to undertake multi-disciplinary research in partnership with local scholars and experts, the IDN working group consisted of faculty from law, women’s studies, African studies, political science, and anthropology in partnership with social science and law faculty from the University of Liberia and international nongovernmental organizations. The working group met with various organizations in Liberia including the Ministries of Gender and Justice, the United Nation Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Gender Office, the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia, and the Bong Youth Development Foundation.

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