3-6-2009

Campus Report, Vol. 36, No. 7

University of Dayton

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Recommended Citation
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Honors symposium
A showcase of academic excellence
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Service, justice, stewardship

Maureen O’Rourke Marianist Student Award: Emily Klein

Senior Emily Klein has not merely studied the Marianist perspective; she’s made it a way of life. From her time as president of St. Vincent DePaul service club to a summer in an eastern Kentucky community, this undergrad seeks to serve.

For that commitment, she’s been selected to receive the Maureen O’Rourke Marianist Student Award, given since 2005 to students who live and serve in UD’s Marianist spirit and promote UD’s Catholic and Marianist character.

In Kentucky with the Center for Social Concern’s Summer Appalachia Program, Klein learned firsthand about solidarity with the poor.

“We lived very simply,” she said. “When you go into a place like that, you have a reality check.” Klein has maintained the friendships she made in Appalachia, and she and others have traveled back there for occasional visits.

UD Story

View an interview with Emily Klein online at http://www.udayton.edu/stories/story/0,1090,16956,00.html.

Miryam Awards: Caitlin Cronin and Sheila Hassell Hughes

The Center for Social Concern will honor two women March 25 for their work to increase the campus atmosphere for women and raise their potential for achievement.

Caitlin Cronin

Senior theater major Caitlin Cronin has been a catalyst for women on campus to explore spiritual-life, service and social justice. Using the theater program’s UD Monroe, she encourages thoughtful discussion on spirituality and justice. She leads a weekly women’s spirituality group on campus and has convened groups of women of varying faith traditions to foster dialogue and religious understanding.

“Her quiet and unassuming manner is, I believe, a major factor in why these activities are successful,” said Lisa Romerl, director of the Women’s Center. “Caitlin models for others that one can be a true leader without holding a position of formal authority. Even when she is in a position of authority, she readily shares that authority when she sees that doing so will improve the group’s outcomes.”

Cronin, a Marianist Leadership Scholar in 2005-06, has minors in international studies and human rights.

Sheila Hassell Hughes

English department chair Sheila Hassell Hughes played an important role in the institution of a faculty maternity leave policy in 2004 and has been an informal mentor to pre-tenure women faculty, particularly those struggling to balance teaching, scholarship and professional responsibilities, Romerl said.

As a member of the Association for Women organization on campus, Hughes also had a leadership role in developing programs that addressed issues of importance to women, particularly those in the Third World. She was director of UD women’s and gender studies program from 2004 to 2008.

The Miryam Award includes a plaque and a $1,000 honorarium that each winner can award to the organization or fund of her choice. The awards will be presented at a reception following a prayer service at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 25, in the Marianist Hall Chapel, RSVP by March 20 via e-mail to Kelly Bohrer (kelly.bohrer@notes.udayton.edu).
In defense of fens
Land-use analysis offers clues for wetland protection, restoration

In order to better understand how to restore natural wetlands damaged by human land use, biology and psychology major Anna Heinl undertook a historical analysis of land use in and around Creekside Fen, a natural fen in Greene County (Ohio) and correlated it with the biological quality of a fen — wetland — in the reserve. Heinl said assessing the impact of urbanization on wetlands could contribute to the development of more effective management and restoration of natural wetlands and, ultimately, the re-establishment of the plants and animals that depend on them. Her thesis adviser was Brother Don Geiger, S.M., of the biology department. Heinl presents for thesis, “Creekside Fen: Land Use and Its Impact on Biotic Integrity,” at 3 p.m. in Kennedy Union 211.

Students present their honors theses from 1 to 5 p.m. today, March 6, in Kennedy Union. Faculty, staff and students are welcome. Here’s a small sampling of the projects.

Honors Student Symposium: A showcase of student excellence

Download the presentation schedule at http://honors.udayton.edu

Barriers to success
First-generation college students reveal challenges they overcame

As UD and universities nationwide place greater emphasis on retention and graduation rates, an education student sought to investigate why first-generation college students drop out at higher rates than those whose parents went to college.

For her thesis, adolescent-to-young-adult education major Jessica Fentress interviewed six first-generation college seniors. Their state of mind, she said, is quite different from those whose parents went to college.

Her thesis adviser was Rachel M.B. Collopy of teacher education. Fentress said she hopes the research is useful to universities and guidance counselors.

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PCFJ

Download the presentation schedule at http://honors.udayton.edu

Honors program synthesized social sciences, economics for keynote speaker

In his keynote address at the Honors Student Symposium dinner, a 1986 graduate will share how the honors program’s multidisciplinary approach helped steer him toward research on economics and society.

In his address, University of Utah associate economics professor Thomas Maloney plans to describe the academic profession and share his research on the economic fortunes of both legal and undocumented immigrants in Utah during the past decade.

Maloney earned an honors bachelor’s degree in economics with minors in English and history and went directly to the University of Michigan for a doctorate in economics. After a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for the Study of Urban Inequality at the University of Chicago, he took a faculty position at the University of Utah.

Maloney said he appreciated the entire UD experience, but several faculty members had particular influence on his career path. He took an honors seminar in social sciences from the late Stan Saxton and Patricia Volland, both retired.

“I remember that I didn’t really take to the course right away,” he said. “The topics — family relations, marriage and child-rearing — seemed pretty distant from the kinds of policy and institutional analysis that I was becoming familiar with in economics classes. Over time, though, it broadened my sense of what one could study with social science methods.”

He also expressed appreciation for economics professor Elizabeth Gustafson and the late Larry Hadley, who introduced him to econometrics and urban economics. In their classes, he learned to consider economics’ human effects.

“Professor Hadley really forced us to think hard about the unavoidable tradeoffs that were part of any policy decision,” he said.

Professor emeritus John Rapp supplanted Maloney’s honors thesis, and Rapp’s leadership had a role in Maloney’s pursuit of graduate education. Maloney also had praise for history professor Pat Palmer, “a model teacher in many ways and also a great resource outside the classroom.”

Maloney is his department’s director of undergraduate studies and an investigator for the University of Utah’s Institute of Public and International Affairs.
take a break with...

Kurt Hoffmann

Environmental sustainability manager

When Kurt Hoffmann applied to work at UD, he described the listing as his dream job. Now in his first year, he says it’s living up to the title. Campus Report graduate assistant Luisa Edwards spent a half-hour with him recently.

What does an environmental sustainability manager do? In a nutshell, I would say it oversees any effort we’re making to “go green” or be more sustainable. That means that first and foremost, I chair the committee on environment just convened by the president. Right now the committee’s task is to absorb as much as we can and see how sustainable we are — what our baseline is. So we’ve been talking with others who manage our contracts with outside companies, residential properties, the student neighborhood.

What drew you to this line of work? As an undergrad, I was an environmental studies major, and I was able to focus on my studies on campus sustainability. So I was interested in being environmentally aware, but my direction became more focused on what that means to our universities.

How do you spend your time off? I love to sing in my free time. Before I moved here, I lived in Washington, D.C., and sang with the National Symphony Orchestra there. I recently auditioned for the Dayton Philharmonic Chamber Choir and will be singing with them. Performances start in early April. We do all kinds of music, but we’re working in the St. John Passion by Bach right now.

So music — what’s on your iPod? My favorite music is found in places like Starbucks or the backroom of a coffee shop. Mostly travel songs. Music is my hobby: listening, performing and discovering those hard-to-find gems.

Any books on your nightstand? Mostly travel books and topical books, like The Tao of Pooh. As a kid, I read a lot of books about the environment in my free time by authors like David Orr. He’s written about sustainability and the environment and how it all relates to higher education. —Laura Edwards

Prof’s glacier studies reveal ‘alarming’ trends

Visiting assistant professor Tushar Hat Natha’s research agenda is booked for the next five years. He’s working on a grant and a book.

If that brings to mind other intriguing activities such as watching grass grow or watching paint dry, think again. It’s a lot faster than it used to be in some areas of the world, said Hat Natha, who before coming to UD spent three years on a NASA post-doctoral project at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, tracking Himalayan glacier dynamics using satellite images.

“Cool research,” said Hat Natha, who as a quantitative geologist creates computer models and computational analyses of glacial melting. Such changes, he said, call for interdisciplinary research.

“The effects of climate change vary from one region to another,” said Hat Natha, who gets most of his data from remote sensing but also does field work in treacherous mountainous terrain. “I look at the images by decades, and it’s clear that the eastern part of the Himalayas is melting a lot faster than the western part. In general, the temperatures are rising, but temperatures in the higher-altitude region of the Himalayas are rising faster than the lower level.”

In some places, Hat Natha said, some of the glaciers in the eastern part are melting at an alarming rate, he said, using year-by-year images to illustrate. “In some places, it’s losing about 19 meters a year. It’s increased dramatically.”

In some areas of Pakistan, climate change is having an opposite effect. Glaciers are actually advancing in size. Stronger monsoons over the Bay of Bengal, argued about by warmer temperatures, meet cold air from the west, and the result is more precipitation — namely snow. With greater seasonal melting and larger avalanches, that means greater erosion and more denudation. Though a thinner layer of debris in a glacier will conduct heat and speed melting, a thick and dense enough layer can create an insulating effect, slowing the melting. The larger quantity of snowfall adds more bulk.

It’s important to understand these changes and their causal mechanisms, Hat Natha said, because they affect not just the environment and ecosystems, but also cultural practices, like drinking water resources and farming to the formation and expansion of glacial lakes — sometimes to the point of destruction of entire villages and cities.

Staff have stake in RISE, too, Sauer says

Though UD’s RISE Forum is the largest student investment forum in the world, students aren’t the only ones who can benefit from it, said the faculty member who co-founded it.

UD employees stand to gain just as much from the March 26-28 event, which included Sauer, director of the Davis Center for Portfolio Management and an associate professor of finance.

“Everyone is impacted by the volatile markets we’re experiencing,” Sauer said. “While no one has answers to all of the problems in the economy right now, our keynote speakers will be able to provide insights as to the causes and potential developments on the horizon. It’s applicable to anyone who has retirement investments or money in the various markets. Everyone is touched by the current market.”

All benefit-eligible employees who work more than 1,000 hours a year are eligible for continuing education funds to cover the fee, said Sauer, RISE’s managing director and program co-chair.

RIE, short for Redefining Investment Strategy Education, brings national and international leaders in business, economics, finance and government to UD to discuss markets, the economy, corporate governance, and global investment issues and opportunities. The forum also offers a Federal Reserve Perspective — this year from Richard W. Fisher, president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. The event runs from 8 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, at the University of Dayton Arena. Breakout sessions are in various campus locations March 27-28.

Robert “Dr. Bob” Froehlich ’75, chairman of the investor strategy committee at Deutsche Asset Management and a RISE trustee, recruits RISE’s keynote speakers, which this year include Andreas Holzet, chief global economist with UBS; Edward M. Kocherin, chief investment strategist with Citigroup/Smith Barney; Steve Liesman, senior economics and program co-chair.

Leaders report on enrollment, fundraising, diversity

Graduate enrollment climbed 13.1 percent for the spring semester, mostly in online education programs, interim provost Joseph Saliba said to the President’s Council Feb. 10.

Undergraduate applications continue to surpass last year’s record level, but “almost all universities are using a drop in deposits,” Saliba said. In the School of Law, applications are running about 10 percent over 2008’s volume, but “the yield might be challenging,” Dean Lisa Kloppenberg said.

Despite the worsening recession, UD remains “very healthy,” said President Daniel J. Curran, noting that the board of trustees at its winter meeting committed to moving forward with a major fundraising campaign.

At the end of January, UD had raised nearly $83 million in campaign commitments, reported Deborah Read, vice president for advancement. For the fiscal year, campaign commitments stand at $28 million.

Patty Bernal-Olson, compliance and affirmative action officer, shared recent work force analysis reports. Although the University’s affirmative action numbers have improved slightly over last year, Curran said he wants greater attention paid to the process.

“...We want to meet our affirmative action expectations for the institution,” Curran said. “I want to make sure all departments are clear about the process. It’s unacceptable not to consult with the affirmative action office.”

Bernal-Olson noted “a tension between grooming and promoting our own and improving diversity.” Curran has made improving diversity a major focus of his presidency.

—Teri Keri
March-April ’09