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Inside UNLV

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CAEO Removes Barriers to Education

Program Assists Disadvantaged Students With College Goals

By Cate Weeks | Marketing & PR

The Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach has had a lot to boast about in the past few years. Since 2001 it has received more than a dozen multi-year grants to support its projects for low-income and first-generation college students. And it offers one of the nation’s largestest suites of federally funded projects that help disadvantaged students go to college and succeed.

Those accomplishments are great, said biological sciences professor Peter Starkweather, but they don’t tell the whole story. For that, he said, you need to look at how the center has enhanced the education of students like Anthony Quinn, a UNLV undergraduate.

As one of the center’s McNair Scholars, Quinn worked with Starkweather to research aquatic organisms in the desert. The experience helped prepare Quinn for the rigors of post-baccalaureate studies, the professor said.

“Anthony would make it under any circumstances,” Starkweather said, “but the center gave him the opportunity to work in research rather than flipping burgers. For me, the program offers more than another set of curious hands — it’s been a good reminder of what a joyous enterprise working with young students can be.”

Although the center was established nearly three decades ago, there are

Campagne Already Paying Dividends

UNLV Campaign Heads Down Home Stretch

By Brenda Griego | UNLV Foundation

Although UNLV’s Invent the Future campaign started quietly in 2002, its latest numbers speak volumes. “The campaign is right on schedule,” said John Gallagher, vice president for development. “UNLV is now two-thirds of the way through the campaign period and, at $332 million, is also two-thirds of the way toward the campaign goal.”

Dollars At Work Across Campus

Already, funds raised are enriching student opportunities by providing new resources for faculty, reinforcing the university’s academic reputation, and strengthening its fiscal posture. “The campaign has helped the School of Nursing better communicate with the community about our programs and greatest needs,” said Dean Carolyn Yucha. “And thanks to focused campaign fundraising efforts, Sierra Health Services recently funded three two-year fellowships for master’s and doctoral nursing students. These fellowships are helping our program recruit and retain the best possible students, and they’re also helping to address the critical shortage of well-qualified nursing faculty and nurse practitioners.”

Campaign Goal: $500 million
Gifts already received: $151 million
Pledges and bequest commitments: $181 million
Guidelines: NSHE guidelines for campaign standards, including timelines, pledge periods, and reporting, are followed.
Length of campaign: January 2002 - fall 2008. Seven years is the standard length for academic campaigns.

Jeff Koep, dean of the College of Fine Arts, said, “One of our biggest campaign priorities is student development funds — having the resources necessary to support students in their artistic and performance endeavors. Thanks to great communication and publicity, one of our generous benefactors recently created a fund to help meet those needs — The Bernice Fischer Fine Arts Fund. Bernice is truly helping to invent the future for UNLV’s fine arts students.”

UNLV also has received bequest commitments from many longtime, generous supporters. Bequests are a regular part of campaign fundraising; they played an important part in the recent and ongoing campaigns by such universities as Harvard, Duke, and UCLA, Gallagher explained.

$10 Million Gift

At UNLV, a bequest is an important part of a $10 million contribution from a prominent alumnus and his wife, said Fred Albrecht, vice president of university and community relations. “Part of the contribution is an outright gift to support the alumni gateway project and part is estate-based, which will provide future resources for the university. This is the largest gift ever committed by an alumnus, and we are tremendously grateful for the support. Watch for news in the coming weeks as UNLV publicly thanks these remarkable benefactors.”

Other major contributions are funding visiting professorships, scholarships for National Merit finalists, and a program supporting entrepreneurship and technology transfer in the Engineering College.

To meet the constant need for unrestricted funding, the phonathon program has been ramped up. Students now place calls throughout the academic year to encourage alumni to support their colleges. “Reaching out to all alumni and engaging them in the life of UNLV — in many ways and at all gift levels — will be especially important for the university,” said Matt Maddox, director of annual giving.

UNLV’s campaign will end in fall 2008. “As the campus community commemorates the university’s 50th anniversary, we will simultaneously be celebrating the successful conclusion of the Invent the Future campaign,” Gallagher said. “UNLV will have much to be proud of in the coming years.”
VP for Research and Graduate College Dean
Why It’s Open: Paul Ferguson left in July to take a higher position at the University of California, San Diego. President Ashley’s View: This person should have faculty roots and an understanding of graduate student issues. At the same time, he or she needs to have a sophisticated understanding of the critical issues involved in research, including those involving compli- 
ances, sponsored programs accountability, and working with human and animal subjects.

VP for Equity and Inclusion
Why It’s Open: A new position that elevates diversity initiatives to the cabinet level has been created. President Ashley’s View: This person should be a program-oriented facilitator who understands how to move across the university to achieve our goals in cultural and intellectual diversity. Nevada is becoming more and more diverse. I believe UNLV will and should be the single most important institution in the state for turning that increasing diversity into a positive asset.

Senior VP for Advancement
Why It’s Open: A new position to lead a new unit that merges all campus-level external relations areas. President Ashley’s View: This person should span all the areas of external relations, including development, marketing, and communications, as well as alumni, community, government, and media relations. Right now every different unit performs those critical roles through much informal coordination. A central office will enable more efficient, university-wide coordination.

“Title may change.”

Event to Aid Homeless
Set for Nov. 16

Harrah Hotel
College faculty and students are busy preparing for a Nov. 16 charity ban-
quet that will raise money to assist local homeless people.

All money raised through the fifth annual Friends of Nevada Banquet will go to Poverello House, a nonprofit organization that provides shelter to homeless people in Northern Nevada.

The past four banquets have raised a total of $20,000.

The event will take place in the Boyd Dining Room in Beam Hall.

The reception and silent auction will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m.

Five Minutes with President Ashley

When David Ashley became president in July, he immediately faced key vacancies, including the two top academic positions on campus. Since then, new positions and pending retirements have brought the list to eight senior leadership openings. Inside UNLV recently sat down with Ashley to discuss the openings.

What brought about the turnover in senior leadership positions?

One of the underlying questions about the vacancies is, “Did they come about by my design?” The short answer is no. My intention from the moment I was given the job was the opposite. I planned to build on the strengths of the team already in place while allowing some time for us to evaluate one another and plan the changes that will take UNLV forward. My intentions, however, don’t change the fact that we do indeed have several openings — and several opportunities.

How do these openings present opportunities?

We have an opportunity to shape UNLV’s pro-
gress early and aggressively. Ultimately, I expect that we will build a team that can and will ensure UNLV reaches its goals, particularly in advancing as a research institution and as an institution that is responsive to the changing needs of its community.

What approach are you taking to fill the positions?

These positions will be filled through national searches following UNLV’s recruitment process. Because several of the positions flow from the executive vice president and provost position, I’ve made filling it my top priority. We are working with a national search firm to expedite the search. Ideally, the candidate who succeeds in landing this position will be named in time to participate in the final selection of the other open academic positions.

Converting the Campus

New buildings on campus such as the student recreation cen-
ter, Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, and the Science and Engineering building are being designed for Internet Protocol tele-
phony. Remaining campus buildings will move to IP phones over the coming years as wiring and elec-
tronics infrastructure are upgraded.

More info: To learn more about IP Telephony at UNLV, call David Peers at ext. B-0703 or Lauren Dean at ext. 5-1303.

Access to a single network provides shelter to homeless people and an open bar will include cocktails, specialty beers, and wines selected by the students.

“Voice and data onto the same network, one for voice,” said David Peers, manager of network development and engineering. “By converging the voice and data onto the same network, UNLV will be able to focus its support and start up costs on one infrastruc-
ture. Phones at the student union can connect to a computer so that both share the same wall port for data and voice service, saving on building wir-
ing and equipment costs.

Future features will include seamless video conferencing, soft-
ware-based phones installed on comput-
ers, and wireless phones that use the UNLV wireless data network. Integration between voicemail and e-mail will create a single place to store all messages and allow access to those messages from a variety of devices.

Telecommuting

As space available for staff offices and parking becomes limited, the IP phone system could allow an opportun-
ity for telecommuting. Staff mem-
ers could work from home and still have five-digit dialing, easy voicemail access, and the convenience of an enterprise-grade phone, just as if they were in their offices.

The technology also enables staff who often travel to take advantage of phone software installed on their laptops to take calls while connected to a public wireless network. “These phones behave much more like cell phones,” explains Lauren Dean, direc-
tor of telecommunications.

Because the phones run on the data network, the same cable lines as the Internet, the phones can “talk” to databases, such as the UNLV directory, where information is updated in real time.

More Advantages

Another advantage is that when a phone is moved, the information pro-
grammed into it automatically moves with it. For instance, if Backstrom were to move her phone from the second floor of the union to the first, technicians wouldn’t need to repro-
gram it. Once the phone was plugged in, the network would know it was Backstrom at the other end of the line.

When UNLV’s traditional phones are moved, all the information is lost and must be reprogrammed, which costs departments money.

Bringing all services onto one common infrastructure allows the campus to concentrate funding and staff expertise on a single network, improving service and managing costs, Dean said.

Tech Savvy

Union Debuts New Telephone Technology

By Mamie Peers | OT

A new ring tone greets Cyndi Backstrom as she enters her office at the student union. Her caller ID flashes her mother’s phone number, and Backstrom presses “forward to voicemail.” Not long after, she listens through her missed-calls list and then listens to voicemail. To return a few calls, she looks through the on-screen UNLV directory to get the numbers she needs.

Backstrom is using a telephone technology new to campus — and thus far only available at the stu-
dent union — that features Internet Protocol (IP) telephones. That means that the telephones run on the same infrastucture as the Internet.

Besides offering a wide range of practical benefits, there are many more practical benefits.

Cost Savings

The new technology will reduce infrastructure costs, according to office of information technology (OIT) staff. “IP telephony will save UNLV the infrastructure costs associated with running two networks — one for data, one for voice,” said David Peers, manager of network development and engineering. “By converging the video and data onto the same network, UNLV will be able to focus its support and start up costs on one infrastruc-
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VP and Provost

Why It’s Open: Ray Alden left in July to take a similar position at Northern Illinois University.

President Ashley’s View: I expect this person to share the same basic vision with me on UNLV’s organiza-
tional chart. That means that all vice presidents will report to both the EVP and president, and some will have a primary relationship with me while others’ will be with the provost. This model is used at both Berkeley and UCLA and ensures that the academic conse-
quences of decisions are more fully considered.

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Five Minutes with President Ashley

Building A New Team

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gress early and aggressively. Ultimately, I expect that we will build a team that can and will ensure UNLV reaches its goals, particularly in advancing as a research institution and as an institution that is responsive to the changing needs of its community.

What approach are you taking to fill the positions?

These positions will be filled through national searches following UNLV’s recruitment process. Because several of the positions flow from the executive vice president and provost position, I’ve made filling it my top priority. We are working with a national search firm to expedite the search. Ideally, the candidate who succeeds in landing this position will be named in time to participate in the final selection of the other open academic positions.

How should faculty and staff participate in the hiring process?

I invite you to the open forums for the can-
didates and would expect you to share your thoughts afterward. Though the decisions on who to hire will undoubtedly take into account a number of factors, you can expect us to pay attention to what we hear.

In addition, one point that is often over-
looked is that searches are recruitments — in other words, the person we want for the job must also want to be here. When I was inter-
viewing, many of you shared your enthusi-
asm for the university and its many possibili-
ties with me; I hope you’ll do the same as we bring finalists to campus in the next year. The interactions the candidates have with you will play a large part in their assessment of how the position fits them.

Any final comments for employees?

Just a word of thanks to the faculty and staff who are working without a permanent vice president or dean. We’re relying on your expe-
rience and ability to perform at a high level during this period of change. I do appreciate your commitment to the university and your profession.
GEAR UP

Who it serves
20,000 students and their parents at 12 middle and 8 high schools with large numbers of low-income students. GEAR UP serves entire school and follows students from sixth grade through high school graduation

How
• For Students: tutoring, career exploration, mentorship, and after-school programs
• For Parents: Empower parents to get involved with child’s education and conduct workshops to help parents meet educational goals for both their child and themselves (GED preparation, English as a Second Language classes, assistance with completing college admissions and financial aid applications).
• For Teachers: Funding to foster professional development education concentrating on working with at-risk students, funding credit-granting courses through the UNLV College of Education, and funding to enhance classroom environment

What it does for UNLV
Helps ensure students who come to UNLV are prepared for college-level work. Most participants will remain in Southern Nevada for their higher education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEAR UP</th>
<th>McNair Scholars</th>
<th>Student Support Services</th>
<th>Upward Bound</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare low-income students for success in higher education</td>
<td>Diversify university faculty and research staff</td>
<td>Increase retention and graduation of college students</td>
<td>Prepare low-income students for college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About 25 undergraduates interested in pursuing doctoral studies. Participants must be both low-income and first-generation college students or from an underrepresented group in graduate education</td>
<td>300 UNLV students from low-income backgrounds and who are first-generation college students</td>
<td>200 high school students from low-income backgrounds and who are first-generation college students</td>
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Who it serves
Martin Middle School, one of the first GEAR UP programs, was the only low-income middle school in Clark County to rate as a “high-achieving school” last year.

How
• Offers paid research internships, enabling students to focus on studies
• Faculty provide mentorship while gaining additional funding for their research projects
• Funds undergraduate participation in professional conferences and workshops
• Offers GRE preparation and graduate admissions assistance

What it does for UNLV
Supports UNLV’s research agenda and enhances undergraduate programs
Provides disadvantaged UNLV students with additional services and resources
Helps ensure students who come to UNLV are prepared for college-level work. Most participants will remain in Southern Nevada for their higher education.

The center supports UNLV’s goals in diversity and retention.

Although not a “minority program,” the center does work with a large number of students from minority backgrounds. In secondary schools, its programs help ensure these students are ready for college-level work.

On campus, the center runs the TRIO Student Support Services program, which helps UNLV students overcome some of the academic and personal difficulties that can lead to dropping out of college.

The TRIO McNair program that brought Starkweather and Quinn together has the ultimate goal of promoting diversity in the ranks of college faculty. “The program clearly supports UNLV’s research agenda,” Starkweather said.

As the umbrella organization for the center, UNLV receives about 8 percent of the federal grant funding to support infrastructure, according to William Sullivan, associate vice president for retention and outreach and executive director of the center.

The center is accountable.

Rogers points out that in addition to submitting to periodic audits and reviews by the federal government, the Nevada System of Higher Education, and the university, the center must comply with well-established federal guidelines for fiscal accountability and records maintenance. In addition, all CAEO grants include standard evaluation components to ensure the programs are reaching their goals.

Prominently posted on the center’s website is a quote from President John F. Kennedy: “All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents.” That quote, Rogers said, aptly summarizes the center’s raison d’etre.
Across Campus

Business

Global Research Center Created

The college has joined forces with China’s Zhejiang University, Stanford University, the University of Cambridge, and Purdue University to establish the UNLV Global Entrepreneurship Research Center. The center will provide educational activities to inspire and build skills in entrepreneurship.

A group of 42 executive MBA students and faculty from Zhejiang, which is located in Hangzhou, visited UNLV on Oct. 11. The students participated in a one-day program as part of their EMBA study tour of the United States. They attended a session on leadership and then interacted with UNLV students and faculty at a luncheon in the Tam Alumni Center. The students then proceeded to the new St. Rose Dominican Hospital – San Martin campus for a presentation on “creating a healing environment” and a tour of the facility.

In June, Richard Flaherty, dean of the college of Southern Nevada, visited to Hangzhou to formalize the agreement concerning the global center with Zhongming Wang, executive dean of the Zhejiang University School of Management.

Education

UNLV Expands Unique Gambling Treatment Programs

The UNLV Problem Gambling Treatment program and the Problem Gambling Prevention and Awareness program are now helping residents of Southern Nevada as well as UNLV students, faculty, and staff. These programs are unique because they provide treatment for both adolescents and adults while increasing awareness of and providing prevention education about problem gambling in Southern Nevada.

Two generous grants from the state, totaling $186,667, to fund these programs will allow UNLV to continue to be at the forefront of American and international universities in addressing issues related to problem gambling, said Larry Ashley, who runs the programs. An addiction specialist in the department of counselor education, Ashley also serves as advisor for the department’s minor in compulsive gambling counseling. This minor is the first formal university academic program in problem gambling in the country, and emphasizes treatment, prevention, and education.

The problem gambling treatment program is now accepting clients seeking help with gambling issues. For information or appointments contact Ashley at ext. 5-3935 or at larry.ashley@unlv.edu.

Graduate

Nevada Stars GA Program Boosts Recruitment

The selection process for the Nevada Stars Graduate Assistantship program will be modified this year to enhance recruitment and retention of the best and brightest doctoral-level students.

The Nevada Stars program was established last year to attract top-notch doctoral students to UNLV in disciplines deemed of high priority to Nevada. The program provided 10 competitively funded assistantships to doctoral students in eight departments.

Although the goal remains the same, this year will bring greater collaboration with the deans of colleges with doctoral programs. A Nevada Stars assistantship will be offered to each of those deans for distribution in his or her college, as well as $1,000 in additional funds to aid with recruitment efforts.

Also, the selection process will be initiated earlier each year — in the fall instead of the spring — allowing deans and faculty more time to identify and recruit the most promising students.

Currently, state-funded GA stipends are available to students at UNLV in the arts, sciences, and engineering departments. The Nevada Stars program assists the Graduate College in attracting top-notch students in the fields of business, education, health, humanities, law, medicine, and other relevant areas.

The Nevada Stars GA program will continue to grow and be expanded to include more graduate programs. The selection process for the Nevada Stars program enables the Graduate College at UNLV to offer top-notch graduate students the opportunity to study in a highly competitive academic environment.

The department will continue to work closely with faculty involved in research of significance to Nevada.

Hotel

Pro Golfer Assists Program

Alumnus Chad Campbell, ‘97 BS Hotel Administration, a former UNLV golfer and member of the 36th U.S. Ryder Cup Team, recently designated $25,000 to the college’s Golf for Business and Life program. The funds will come through the PGA of America and supports its initiatives to increase participation in the game of golf. Each player designs $100,000 to the universities and charities of their choice.

The Golf for Business and Life program is designed to teach and improve the golf skills of UNLV students through instruction provided by PGA professionals. It also suggests ways in which the students can use golf as a business tool as they enter the professional world. With the grant from Campbell, UNLV’s program will continue to grow and strengthen.

Fine Arts

November Offerings Include Top Guitarist

The Nevada Conservatory Theatre Playwrights’ Repertory continues into November with five plays from the MFA playwriting program. Carissa Boak’s The Book of Nights (through Nov. 4) is about a woman who heals others in a safe house for abused and battered women but cannot heal herself. Cara Oglesby’s Click – Boom (Nov. 10 – Nov. 19) centers on a haunted combat photographer trying to re-create his past from pictures he has taken during the war in the Middle East.

The UNLV Performing Arts Center presents Wynton Marsalis on Nov. 1. Simply the most outstanding jazz musician of his generation, Grammy and Pulitzer Prize-winning Marsalis comes to Las Vegas for a one-night engagement.

On Nov. 4, the Performing Arts Center welcomes the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra. Acclaimed as one of the greatest orchestras in the rich tradition of Russian symphonies, the group performs around the world with a repertoire that includes Bartok, Schoenberg, Bernstein, and Joplin.

The UNLV Classical Guitar Series presents Ricardo Cobo on Nov. 21. One of the world’s supreme virtuosos of the new classic guitar generation, Cobo was the first Hispanic to win consecutive competitive prizes at the Guitar Foundation of America International Competition.

For more information, call ext. 5-2787.

Law

State Supreme Court Meets on Campus

A Boyd School of Law class was transformed into a courtroom for the Nevada Supreme Court on Oct. 11 and 12. Sitting as panels of three, Justices Michael Cherry, David Marino, and Ron Parraguirre, as well as Senior Justice Miriam Shearing, heard oral arguments on a variety of issues, including business litigation, family law, criminal law, attorney malpractice, and damages controversies.

After each argument was finished, the justices generously invited questions from the many students in the audience. The justices gave advice about law school and the practice of law, answered questions about appellate practice, and described their career paths to Nevada’s highest court.

The justices, court personnel, and the attorneys who argued their cases adjusted well to the classroom setting and were looking forward to next spring when the construction site immediately adjacent to the law school will have become the new state-of-the-art Thomas & Mack Moot Courtroom.

The 6,200-square-foot facility will function as a courtroom for appellate judges or can be converted into a complete trial courtroom, with a space for attorneys, jurors, and witnesses. The courtroom facility will offer outstanding teaching space, as well as an ideal location to place the Nevada Supreme Court, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, or state or federal trial courts to hold court at the law school. It will also serve as an auditorium to hold the entire entering law school class. The Thomas and Mack families, strong supporters of UNLV and of the law school, are the primary donors for the facility.

Honor's

Myriad Topics Presented at Thesis/Project Poster Session

The Honors College hosted its 11th annual thesis/project poster session and reception in October. Twenty students shared their research with colleagues, faculty, and other members of the campus community. Research topics included:

• "Eradicating Fear in Chile: Fichol’s Trip to London (History)"
• "Aid, Trade Liberalization and Growth" (Economics)
• "Studies in Deterioration: The Choreographic Dilemmas of a Failing Society" (Dance Performance)

Mexican Delegation Visits College

A delegation from the Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA) in Puebla, Mexico, visited the Honors College last month to learn about its curriculums and other features. The delegation consisted of Rector (President) Fernando Fernández Font and Alberto Fischer Garcia, director of international relations for UIA. Susan Thompson, UNLV’s director of international programs, hosted the delegation.

Students will have the opportunity to learn first-hand about current trends in the gaming industry when the college participates in the annual Global Gaming Expo trade show in November. At an onsite booth, the college will distribute information about degree programs, certificate programs, and outreach services available to the gaming industry. Working with organizers of the Las Vegas event, complements of passes are offered to students and faculty, enabling them to expand their knowledge of this growing industry.
Liberal Arts
Professors Lead Celebration of U.S. Constitution
UNLV celebrated U.S. Constitution Day recently with two programs organized by history and law professor David S. Tanenhaus and political science professor Bradley Hays.

More than 100 people attended the panel discussion titled “The Twenty-First Century Constitution” held on campus in September. History professor David Holland, political science professor Bradley Hays, and law professor Sylvia Lazos delivered addresses on the founders, constitutional development, and the challenges that the 21st century poses to American constitutionism. Tanenhaus moderated this session, which included a question-and-answer period.

On Oct. 2 one of the era’s most accomplished constitutional law scholars delivered the inaugural UNLV Constitution Day Public Lecture series. Yale law professor Akhil Reed Amar, discussed his book American’s Constitution: A Biography, paying particular attention to the role of the American West in shaping the nation’s constitutional experience. This event was co-sponsored by the University Forum lecture series, the office of the executive vice president and provost, the College of Liberal Arts, the department of history and political science, and the William S. Boyd School of Law. The event was recorded and broadcast on UNLV-TV.

Libraries
Libraries Provide Support From Shadow Lane to Singapore
University Libraries provides virtual support to two of UNLV’s off-campus sites: the School of Dental Medicine on Shadow Lane and the newly created UNLV Singapore. The Libraries’ two online branches can be accessed from the Libraries’ homepage at library.unlv.edu.

The Shadow Lane library webpage was created to allow students and faculty to access library resources without coming to the main campus to do their research. The Libraries’ online dental, scientific, and biomedical journal collection is extensive, providing immediate access to current literature. A relatively new section of the webpage is dedicated to the orthodontics program.

“I communicate with the Shadow Lane patrons primarily via e-mail and telephone, providing reference and literature search assistance,” said Eva Stowers, medical librarian and liaison to the School of Dental Medicine on Shadow Lane. “I hope to provide online training sessions.”

The Shadow Lane library page is accessible from the School of Dental Medicine webpage at dentschool.unlv.edu by clicking on “virtual library.”

The Libraries support UNLV’s first international campus with a webpage, library.unlv.edu/singapore/index, developed to address the immediate needs of the Singapore students, providing access to electronic databases and delivery of journal articles.

“Our next step is to work with the college and the national library, which houses the Singapore campus, to develop a print collection for the program,” says Lateka Grays, hospitality librarian and liaison to the Harrah College of Hotel Administration.

Politics and Salsa
New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson speaks to the UNLV campus community in October (above) during Hispanic Heritage Month. Among the issues he addressed were immigration laws and the importance of voting. Richardson’s appearance was only one of several events commemorating Hispanic heritage. (Below left) Dancers perform, while, (below right), students sample salsa.

Sciences
Conversations with Earth Talks Real-Life Issues
UNLV associate professor of geoscience Adam Simon has created a new course, Conversations with Earth (geology 140), designed to attract, inform, and educate students who might otherwise avoid exploring the natural world, for fear of the highly technical language and methods of scientists.

Conversations with Earth explores the physical world — and particularly the unique environment of Southern Nevada — with the expertise of 12 UNLV colleagues, each a specialist in one or more aspects of Earth. The lectures and discussions are designed to introduce real-life issues, topics that affect health, economy, political decisions, national security, and survival on Earth.

Reaching for the Stars: More Astronomy Degrees Approved
The NSHE Board of Regents approved master of science and doctoral degrees in astronomy at its August meeting. This action recognizes the teaching and research efforts of several astronomy and astrophysics faculty members in the physics department.

Dean Ron Yasbin said that teaching and research in astronomy and astrophysics at UNLV has grown “at light speed” in recent years and that UNLV now boasts one of the most productive and respected groups in the nation. For information on the programs, contact professor Steve Lepp at ext. 5-4455 or e-mail lepp@physics.unlv.edu.

Urban Affairs
Environmental Studies Gives Awards, Hosts Presentations
History professor Hal Rothman was presented with the Aldo Leopold Award at the annual senior thesis poster presentation and awards reception hosted by the department of environmental studies.

Also honored was Tara Pife, UNLV’s Rebel Recycling manager, who received the outstanding alumni award. Former department chair Helen Neill was recognized for her years of outstanding service to the department by new chair David Hassenzahl.

Students Jennifer Ward and Shaun Elsasser received the James E. Deacon Scholarship, which is named after a UNLV emeritus professor. Elsasser also received the Solid Waste Association of North America Award.

Nine seniors participated in the event. Their yearlong research projects were supervised by class advisor Timothy Farnham and content advisors from campus and the local community, including the U.S. National Park Service and the Southern Nevada Water Authority. Topics included mercury concentrations in canned tuna, cost-benefit analysis of anaerobic digestion on a dairy farm, selenium content in Clark County wetlands park soil, and population trends of wintering bald eagles at Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Across Campus

Libraries
Libraries Provide Support From Shadow Lane to Singapore

Politics and Salsa
New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson speaks to the UNLV campus community in October (above) during Hispanic Heritage Month. Among the issues he addressed were immigration laws and the importance of voting. Richardson’s appearance was only one of several events commemorating Hispanic heritage. (Below left) Dancers perform, while, (below right), students sample salsa.

Inside UNLV | Page 3
In 1983 Darrell Johnson moved to Las Vegas to pursue a career in entertainment. Johnson was part of the solution, but in a nontraditional way. He joined the KC Troupe, a group that mixed talent management and sports. He found the group’s rules appealing because they instilled discipline, direction, and Christian principals in its members. The KC Troupe taught him good values, and he never thought he would be back representing the university 23 years later.

He most recently spent four years as the head of the department of public safety. He has worked at UNLV nearly 28 years. With the 120-day legislative session beginning in Carson City, Johnson decided to work for UNLV because of the players and the process in the capital City. Musgrove said he wants those on campus to know that he can serve as a liaison and point person to make sure their positions are heard, and then continue to follow these issues and advocate on their behalf.

Musgrove received a communications degree from UNLV and immediately went to work for a local television station as a cameraman, where he covered the 1983 Nevada Legislature. He never thought he would be back representing the university 23 years later. "I was always a political junkie," Musgrove said. "I was the only cameraman who volunteered to cover a legislative meeting or a county commission meeting and one of the few guys who would actually pay attention during a meeting."
Hot Springs Research Moves Full Steam Ahead

Hedlund Awarded Prestigious Grant

By Gian Galasso | Public Affairs

UNLV microbiologist Brian Hedlund never envisioned that his pursuit of scientific frontiers would land him in such hot water. Turns out, there’s no place he’d rather be.

“People have been interested in studying high temperature limits for a long time,” Hedlund said, “but there has not been a lot of research on the ecology of microorganisms get their energy from extreme environments.”

This past summer, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded Hedlund an Early Career Development Award to do just that. The five-year, $841,632 grant will support Hedlund’s research on how microorganisms thrive in hot springs located in the Great Basin of Nevada.

The research will allow scientists to better understand the foundations of life in geothermal habitats and will expand our knowledge about the biological diversity of life on Earth.

The central focus of the study is to examine the metabolic processes that provide energy for the microorganisms in geothermal environments. Since photosynthesis doesn’t occur above 163 degrees Fahrenheit, organisms that thrive in geothermal waters must gain energy through chemolithoautotrophy, a process that uses energy from inorganic chemical sources instead of light.

Ultimately, he hopes to cultivate those organisms in the laboratory so they can be studied in greater detail.

Collaborative Approach

To accomplish his research goals, Hedlund has had to employ an interdisciplinary approach, collaborating closely with colleagues from the fields of genomics, geochemistry, and mineralogy, to name a few. He admits that the collaborations were somewhat uncomfortable at first — particularly stepping outside his disciplinary approach, collaborating with others from different fields of genomics, geochemistry, and mineralogy, to name a few. He admits that the collaborations were somewhat uncomfortable at first — particularly stepping outside his somewhat uncomfortable at first — particularly stepping outside his comfort zone.

He added that although major groups of microorganisms are discovered somewhat regularly in geothermal environments — such as in Yellowstone and other places around the world — he has never seen studies that produced higher percentages of unknown major groups than the ones he and his colleagues have found in the Great Basin Hot Springs. His colleagues and he are yet not complete, but he estimates that approximately 90 percent of the microbes in the springs he’s studying contain genetic signatures unique to science.

“An argument could be made that the hot springs that I’m looking at in Nevada are among the least understood habitats on Earth.”

These microbes are important to study, he says, because, through generations of natural selection within extreme environments, they’ve developed characteristics that are more varied than those encountered in plants or animals.

Unique Characteristics

Ron Yasbin, dean of the College of Sciences and a microbiologist himself, says these unique characteristics could shed light on the relatively unknown world of hot springs while also providing some more tangible benefits.

“Brian’s research could have diverse and far-reaching implications, not just for the advancement of science and our knowledge about the origins of life, but it may also aid in the identification of bio-products that will enhance the quality of life for all of us.”

Such advancements are possible because the high-temperature environment in which these microbes thrive is often similar to that of some industrial processes, making them ideal sources for a variety of products and applications, including the development of more efficient and cost-effective alternative fuels, as well as various biomedical and pharmaceutical breakthroughs.

Sharing with Students

But even the potential for achieving some of those admirable aims cannot overshadow Hedlund’s genuine love for the pure science and the opportunity to share his work with his students. In fact, the NSF recognized the educational component of his research proposal, which he designed to help generate increased interest in the scientific process and inspire future generations of students to pursue careers in the sciences.

As part of the grant, Hedlund will conduct a one-week field course each year in Northern Nevada, during which he hopes to help foster partnerships between members of the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe, UNLV students, and the scientific community through collaborative study of the biological, cultural, and sociopolitical importance of the Great Basin’s geothermal resources.

“I’ve taught close to 1,000 students since coming to UNLV, and watching them go on to do good things is one of the most rewarding things for me,” he says. “Although it’s really hard work at times, it’s also a lot of fun. And what could be better than that?”

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Homecoming’s Here

Nov. 3

See the students light up the night with the Homecoming Light Parade. A tradition since 1961, this year’s parade will feature student floats, the homecoming court, the marching band, and some community dignitaries. The festivities will take place at 7 p.m. on the academic mall.

Nov. 4

Kickoff for the Homecoming game pitting the Rebels against the Horned Frogs of Texas Christian University is set for noon at Sam Boyd Stadium. To buy tickets, call 739-3267 or go to unhvlics.com.

Holiday Card Tree

Get in the Holiday Spirit: Support UNLV Students

Now in its 39th year, UNLV’s Holiday Card Tree provides scholarships for UNLV students. To contribute, look for a flyer to arrive in your campus mailbox or donate online by going to foundation.unlv.edu.

For your name to appear on the holiday card distributed to campus, donations must be received by Nov. 28.

Questions? Call Deborah Young at ext. 5-2818.
Wild, Wild Weather

Campus photographers Geri Kodey and Aaron Mayes have captured some wonderfully atmospheric moments around campus late — the Lied Library amid dramatic clouds (above), a laborer working on the new student recreation center at dawn (below), students walking to their cars in front of the Thomas & Mack Center (left) and folks grabbing a quick photo of a rainbow over campus (below left), among them.