11-2008

Inside UNLV

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At 205,779 square feet, the new, soon-to-open Science and Engineering Building features some interesting architectural details. The four-story building includes offices, classrooms, and laboratories that will be used by research scientists and students. The building was designed to make it eligible for a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver rating.

A Light at the End of the Tunnel

New System Will Replace Slow, Outdated SIS

By Shane Bevell | Marketing & PR

Ever wonder how we survived with our slow, inflexible, and many times frustrating dial-up Internet connection? In a few years UNLV employees will be saying the same thing about our much-derided Student Information System, commonly known as SIS.

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is implementing a new system, called iNtegrate, for all things related to student information. It will be fast, reliable, and make users feel like they’ve emerged from the dark ages.

What is SIS?

SIS is a centralized system that supports student registration and course enrollment, grade recording, transcript production, admissions processing, and student accounting for all NSHE institutions. It was implemented in 1991, does not communicate with other university systems such as human resources, and was created prior to the Internet becoming the mainstream method for accessing information.

“The current system is old and inflexible,” Lynne Personius, iNtegrate project manager, said. “It works to post grades and create transcripts, but you can’t do anything that requires more advanced information. It doesn’t feel like a modern computer system; it feels like a dinosaur.”

Into the 21st Century

iNtegrate will provide students with more self-service capability. They will have better access to their records, including the ability to check bills, look at schedules, and change their addresses.

It will be more reliable, easier-to-use, and will allow faculty and staff to meet students’ needs for accurate information, timely decisions, and informed choices. The new system will be flexible and also provide better support for graduate and professional schools, Personius said.

Be Patient

The iNtegrate team has been working on the admissions and records modules since September. Personius said the campus community can help by being patient, allowing for more lead time, and understanding that it may take longer for those involved with iNtegrate to respond to phone calls or e-mails.

“Department heads who have a lot of interaction with student information are spending at least half their time working on the iNtegrate project and are responsible for a team of workers who are getting the modules up and running,” Personius said. “Some people who heavily rely on SIS have the added responsibility of helping implement iNtegrate.”

Pilot Program

UNLV and Truckee Meadows Community College are serving as pilot institutions. iNtegrate should be fully in place here to support the fall 2010 term, a year before the other NSHE institutions will implement the system.

Getting the system early isn’t the only benefit. “We also will have a system that is specifically tailored for what UNLV needs,” Personius said.

Although it will be two years before iNtegrate is fully functional, the university will begin using parts of the system next fall for admissions. The admissions module will go live first, followed in phases by the financial aid, enrollment, billing, transcripts, and advising modules.

iNtegrate Module Leaders

Department heads acting as module leads for the iNtegrate project are:

- Cem Sunata, registrar
- Norm Bedford, student financial services
- David Ellison, cashiering and student accounts
- Katie Collins, admissions

Holiday Card Tree

It’s Holiday Card Tree time. Each year, faculty and staff donate to UNLV’s scholarship endowment fund by donating to the tree. This program has raised more than $55,000 so far.

Donors will have their names included on a custom-designed holiday greeting card that will be sent to members of the campus community in early December.

To make your gift, go to foundation.unlv.edu/give. Click on “scholarships,” then select “UNLV Faculty Club scholarship endowment” from the menu.

More Info: Call Deborah Young at ext. 5-2818.
Keep that UNLV Can-Do Attitude

I am suspending my traditional question-and-answer piece this month to address a very important issue to me: the campus climate during these uncertain times.

When I came here two years ago, I immediately noticed that this is a place where staff and faculty are genuinely enthusiastic about being here. An entrepreneurial attitude permeates the entire community. This can-do attitude is giving way to the same apprehension and concern being felt across the country. Certainly, we have cause for that concern. This academic year, we are experiencing the strain that comes with substantial budget cuts, and the state’s financial projections for the next couple of years likewise are troubling. It is only natural for moments of frustration to percolate in such an environment.

Current Challenges are Short-Term

It is important to remember that our current challenges are short-term. We must keep our commitments. We must try to remain positive in our interactions. Our discussions need to be constructive and focus on solutions. This may sound preachy, but my intent is sincere. For my part, I remain committed to transparency and collaboration, and I am seeking ideas from all levels. The newly formed President’s Advisory Council (PAC) is a key mechanism for that. With representatives from the students, faculty, classified staff, and professional staff, this group already has been very good at bringing issues to my attention in a constructive manner.

Graduate Student Perspective

For example, the president of the Graduate & Professional Student Association has made sure that the administration realizes that the recent cuts to part-time faculty have resulted in an increased load on graduate assistants. It also has been communicated to me that classified staff wish to be offered an early retirement buyout option similar to the one offered to longtime faculty and professional staff. There are legal roadblocks to this, but the administration will keep this issue on the table until we can work out a solution.

I firmly believe that what we do here is incredibly important to our community as a whole and to every student individually. Higher education transforms lives and improves the quality of life in a community. No other institution can do this as well as we can. And, I most sincerely thank you for all that you do for the university and your continued support during these extraordinary times.

Comments or Suggestions?
Contact any member of the President’s Advisory Council (PAC) listed at president.unlv.edu or submit a comment through the budget website at unlv.edu/budget.

Research Helps Nevada Get the Lead Out

By Tony Allen | Public Affairs

When new health reports come out, Nevada is frequently at the top of the bad list and at the bottom of the good list. Think that hurts? Imagine not even being on the list.

That’s what Shawn Gerstenberger, professor of public health and executive associate dean of the School of Public Health, found just three years ago. He was researching Nevada lead poisoning statistics with the local health district for what would become the state’s first coordinated effort to prevent childhood lead poisoning.

“Nobody had N/As across the board,” said Gerstenberger. “Nevada had N/As across the board, meaning both a lot of work and funding would be needed to catch us up.”

Catching Up

With a bit of research funding, Gerstenberger and his team caught Nevada up by tracking hazardous sources of lead entering the community in everything from household paint to imported candies, toys, and even artificial turf. It became apparent that the community’s Hispanic population was facing a disproportionate risk of harmful lead exposure, potentially due to tainted products imported from overseas and from Mexico.

To determine why this population was at a greater risk, additional funding was needed. Gerstenberger, along with history professor Maria Casas and environmental studies doctoral student Maria Castillo-Couch, applied for and received one of 10 inaugural President’s Research Awards (PRA) in 2007. Due to large faculty support and the early success of the program, the first round of PRAs, President Ashley continued the program earlier this year by awarding nine additional projects.

The research team already has partnered with several local churches and the Southern Nevada Health District to track lead exposure associated with the use of traditional cookware and home remedies. The team also is surveying the area’s Hispanic population on knowledge and beliefs about lead poisoning and has started distributing educational materials about its harmful effects.

“The PRA funding is allowing us to gain greater insight into the sources of lead exposure in the Hispanic community — insight that is incredibly important to our community as a whole and to every student individually. Higher education transforms lives and improves the quality of life in a community.” Gerstenberger said.

More info: Learn more about all of the 2007 President’s Research Award projects by visiting research.unlv.edu/innovation.
Part-Time Prof Donates $1 Million

Jeffrey Moskow Brings Real-World Speakers to UNLV Students

By Karen Sharp | College of Business

For part-time finance professor Jeffrey Moskow, discussing the stock market and how the current economy is more than a classroom task; it’s an opportunity that allows him to engage students in his class. In Moskow’s Current Business Topics class, a favorite among business students, the textbook is The New York Times and the syllabus changes with the ups and downs of the world. This class, which Moskow has taught for more than 10 years, is where his passion lies.

After he was diagnosed with kidney cancer, Moskow decided to create a forum outside of the classroom for students to learn about the world around them. “My students are what keep me going, keep me positive,” he said. “I wanted to generate a legacy of learning for them.”

He donated $1 million to the College of Business to launch the Moskow Distinguished Speaker Series, featuring leading business professionals. Moskow wanted the series to be named for his parents, Morris and Sylvia, who he says taught him the importance of being intellectually curious and engaging lively debates. “This series is a permanent honor to those who impacted me the most,” he said.

He recalled that as a student he always enjoyed attending speaker presentations, and felt that today’s students need to know how current events impact the business world. “During my days at the Wharton School in Pennsylvania and University of California, Irvine, notable guests lectured frequently and students were always excited to see prominent names on campus,” he said. “I wanted to create that same tradition at UNLV.”

Advocate of Lifelong Learning

Paul Jarley, dean of the College of Business, said, “Jeff Moskow’s impact as a teacher and as an advocate of lifelong learning has a much greater impact than any dollar amount could have. We’re moved by Jeff’s courage and are thankful for his donation.”

New York Times op-ed columnist Maureen Dowd
and television critic Alessandra Stanley were the guests at the inaugural event of the Moskow Distinguished Speaker Series in October. The goal is to host three to four presentations a year.

“Business affects many facets of our lives,” Jarley said. “Having speakers from various disciplines gives students a great way to see how each field is related to another.”

Even while undergoing medical treatment this fall, Moskow continues to do what he loves most: teach. His main goal is to encourage his students to not only be informed, but also become passionate about the world around them. That, he said, is what the Moskow Distinguished Speaker Series is all about.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

Estate gifts provide important support for UNLV. As with any gift to the university, estate gifts may be designated for a specific campus program or may be undesignated, allowing UNLV to use the funds wherever the need is greatest. For more information on making an estate gift, contact Bud Beekman at ext. 5-2841 or at bud.beekman@unlv.edu.

SEND (Student E-Newsletters for Departments)

• Send students an e-newsletter
• Encourage students to check their accounts.
• Faculty and staff can help their Rebelmail accounts for news and distribute them through weekly
• SEND (Student E-Newsletters for Departments) information.
• Faculty and staff can help their Rebelmail accounts for news and distribute them through weekly

ISS Hosts Energy Speakers

UNLV’s Institute for Security Studies will launch its energy security policy program with a roundtable discussion and luncheon on Nov. 14.

The morning roundtable discussion, “Reducing U.S. Dependence on Foreign Oil: Lessons from Abroad,” will feature a panel of international energy policy and scientific experts. Panel members will include:

• Lord David Howell, foreign policy spokesman, Conservative Party, United Kingdom
• Professor Tatsuo Masuda, adviser to the chair- man of Japan Petroleum Exploration Co.
• Ian Walker, executive director, Windsor Energy Group
• Professor Oliver Hemmens, director of the UNLV office of strategic energy programs
• Professor Dennis Pirages, UNLV political science department

Jack Caravelli, former director of nonproliferation at the National Security Council, will serve as both panel moderator and luncheon speaker. He is titled “Energy Security Challenges Facing the Next Administration.”

The energy security policy program seeks to produce research that sheds light on the geopolitical and economic implications of pursuing a balanced and secure national energy plan and assesses the true costs and challenges of securing access to energy resources. The program also develops systematic frameworks to help policymakers devise solutions for plentiful, secure, and reasonably priced energy for America’s various enterprises and activities.

Energy Security Policy Program

When: 9 a.m. roundtable discussion; 11:30 a.m. luncheon
Where: Renaissance Hotel, 3400 Paradise Road
Cost: roundtable is free; luncheon is $40
RSVP: Reservations required for both events. RSVP at iss.unlv.edu/cesp/registration

More Info: Contact Nancy Brune, ISS director of research and outreach, at 939-4659 or by e-mail at nancy.brune@unlv.edu.

Part-time finance professor Jeffrey Moskow, left, talks to a student during his Current Business Topics class. He says he hopes the lecture series he has endowed in honor of his parents will help make students aware of how current events impact the business world every day.
Across Campus

Academic Success Center
Open House Set for February
The Academic Success Center is collaborating with Educational Outreach to provide an open house for all students who have participated in or completed a professional development program.
For those who are exploring an undergraduate degree at UNLV, the open house will take place 4-7 p.m. Feb. 11 at the Academic Success Center, Room 146.
Staff members will be on hand to answer questions about transferring to UNLV, returning to college, obtaining scholarships or financial aid, and getting academic advising.
To reserve a spot at the event, call Paula Castillo at ext. 5-0667. More info: Call Liz Baldizan at ext. 4-4616 or e-mail elizabeth.baldizan@unlv.edu.

Partnership with Colleges
Leaders to Successful Week
The Academic Success Center — in partnership with the 14 colleges, the Division of Student Affairs, University Libraries, and the office of enrollment services — hosted UNLV’s first Academic Success Week last month. Nearly 1,000 students participated in one or more of the events held throughout the week.

Business
Wells Fargo Gift Funds Global Entrepreneurs Program
The next “big idea” in the world of business may come from a UNLV student, thanks to a generous gift to the college from Wells Fargo.
The goal of the Wells Fargo Global Entrepreneurs Program is to attract creative, high-achieving high school students to UNLV to experience entrepreneurship on a global scale. Through a highly selective curriculum that combines immersive learning and leadership development with an international perspective, students will get hands-on experience in developing unique business models to bring new products and services to world markets.

Education
Grant to Fund Activities Related to “No Child Left Behind”
A $500,000 grant awarded to special education professor Kristin Sayeski will allow the department to continue its work related to the No Child Left Behind Act.
With the five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the department will continue restructuring efforts involving the redesign of key courses and student experiences to meet the act’s “highly qualified” designation.
The funding will support a variety of initiatives, including: intensive faculty development collaboration with faculty in the department of curriculum and instruction as well as in the sciences to strengthen students’ content knowledge collaborative partnerships with the Clark County School District for mentoring and field experiences innovative post-graduation support for beginning teachers.
The goal is to produce new cadres of special educators who possess the skills needed to be highly effective teachers.

Sport Education Center
Aids in Coaches’ Development
People interested in the promotion of sport and physical activity across the lifespan can find useful information at UNLV’s Center for Sport Education.
The center has developed a scholarly lecture series, which presented lectures last spring by Thomas L. McKenzie of San Diego State University and Joann Scott, a marketing representative from Nike.
The center participated in the Sport Career Conference held in conjunction with the NBA Summer League games. Additionally, the center is working with the National Federation of State High School Associations to strengthen programs and access to professional development for sport coaches.

Engineering
Professors Engineer a Difference
Engineering professors Edward S. Neumann and Brendan O’Toole are studying the biomechanical functioning of a lower limb brace used by individuals who have Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT) disease.
They are collecting data on gait, balance, muscle strength, and ground reaction force when patients are in Las Vegas for the final brace fitting prior to its delivery. Data is collected again after the braces have been delivered; usually eight to 10 weeks later, allowing the patients to adapt to the braces.
During the follow-up visit to UNLV, six of the 20 subjects will be selected for additional data collection involving the use of motion capture equipment. Two of those six will be fitted with a duplicate pair of experimental braces instrumented to measure the engineering behavior of the brace.
Neumann, director of the Center for Disability and Applied Biomechanics, and O’Toole, a civil engineering professor, said they are optimistic that the study will enable them to understand how variations in materials used to construct the brace might improve performance and quality of life for the patients.
They have published approximately 600 articles in national and international law journals. These books, chapters, and articles have been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court, many other federal and state courts, administrative agencies, legislators, and numerous lawyers and professors.

Doctoral student Peter Gough was awarded a President’s Fellowship to support work on his dissertation on the New Deal Federal Music Project. Another graduate student, Julia Stetter, received a GREAT Assistantship from the Graduate College to fund her oral history of Wyoming’s Korean War veterans.

In addition, the department hired two new faculty last spring, Marcia Gallo and Greg Hise. Gallo is the author of the book Different Daughters: The Daughters of Bilílis and the Roots of Lesbian and Women’s Liberation, 1935-1970 (2006), which won the Lambda Literary Foundation Award. Hise is the author or editor of four books, including Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis (1997), which received the Spirew Koosth Book Prize from the Society of Architectural Historians and the Pflueger Award from the Historical Society of California.

Libraries

“Honor with Books” Offers a Meaningful Way to Memorialize

Nearly 60 people were honored last year through the Honor with Books program, which acknowledges a friend or loved one on a nameplate in a book in the subject area of the donor’s choice. Scores of people used the program last year to pay tribute to friends and loved ones. Sometimes the bookplates are used to celebrate events or organizations. Donations to the program have become a growing tradition, especially during the holiday season. “Gifts of all sizes have a tremendous impact,” said Dean Patricia Iannuzzi. “Unrestricted gifts like Honor with Books tributes provide funds that can be used to directly benefit students and research.”

In addition to the bookplate, a searchable listing of all donors, recipients, and bookplated titles is available online at library.unlv.edu/giving/bookplates and includes a reproduction of the actual bookplate. Each $100 contribution is tax-deductible.

More info: Call ext. 5-2286 or e-mail librariesdevelopmentoffice@unlv.edu.

Sciences

Students Receive Fellowships

Two of the college’s students recently received fellowships from scientific organizations. Brian Alliard, a master’s candidate in geoscience, received a graduate student fellowship from the Society of Economic Geologists Foundation, while undergraduate Mary Ehrsam received the American Society for Microbiology Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

Alliard will work with geoscience professor Adam Simon and UNR faculty member John Muntean to constrain the evolution of copper and gold ore deposits in the Maricunga Belt of Chile. The project will examine the physical and chemical connectivity of epithermal and porphyry ore.

See ACROSS CAMPUS, Page 7

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Technology and Society Magazine which appears in the fall issue of Hazard Responses on Small Islands,” is the author of a refereed article on interpersonal violence.

Amina Vining, Jessica Perkins, and Anita Austin (CAEO) presented a workshop, “University of Nevada, Las Vegas GEAR UP: Successful Practices for a Teacher Development Program,” at the NCCEP/GEAR UP annual conference in Washington, D.C., in July. The theme of the conference was Celebrating Our Past, Shaping the Future.

Santos Marquez (Facilities Management) was named a classified employee of the month in the custodial category for September. A custodial worker I, she has worked at UNLV since March 1997.

William J. Smith, Jr. (Environmental Studies) is the author of a refereed article, “Geographic Factors Complicating Hazard Responses on Small Islands,” which appears in the fall issue of IEEE Technology and Society Magazine.

Jim Stinar (Campus Life) was named classified employee of the month in the technical/service category for September. An HVAC specialist IV supervisor, he and the six employees he supervises work to maintain the air conditioning and electrical services in all student affairs buildings, including the residence halls and the Student Union. He has worked at UNLV for a year and a half.

Eunja Kim (Physics), Philippe Weck (Harry Reid Center and Chemistry), Stephen Lepp (Physics), and Nandovath Balakrishnan (Chemistry) are among the authors of the cover story in the Sept. 14 issue of the journal Physical Chemistry Chemical Physics. The article, which was written with H.R. Sadeghpour (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics), is titled “Dimer-induced Stabilization of H Adsorbate Cluster on BN(0001) Surface.”

Rebecca Rogers, Robin Wood, and Dwanne Wedlow (CAEO) presented a workshop, “Using Supplemental Services to Improve Academic Achievement and Student Success,” at the NCCEP/GEAR UP annual conference in Washington, D.C., in July.

John Massengale (Kinesiology and Nutrition Sciences) will be the recipient of the Presidential Award from the National Association for Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education (NAKPEHE), at its next annual conference. NAKPEHE gives this award when someone contributes a lifetime of service, scholarship, and leadership to the organization.

Janice Klaasen and Deborah Keil (Clinical Laboratory Sciences) were selected to receive an ASAYR member as part of the Abbott Diagnostics Labs Are Vital grant program. The analyzer sells at retail for $127,000. The three-year equipment grant will bolster both short-term opportunities and research in immunochromistry.

David Hassenzahli (Environmental Studies) served as guest editor for the fall issue of IEEE Technology and Society Magazine. His guest editor’s introduction, “Chronic Disease, Homeland Security, and Sailing Where There Be Dragons,” centers on risk analysis in a variety of contexts.

Monica Moreno (Education Advising Center) was named a classified employee of the month in the administrative category for September. An administrative assistant II, she serves as office manager and receptionist and performs a variety of other duties. A UNLV employee since May 2007, she is working on a bachelor’s degree in elementary education.

Eva Simmons (CAEO) presented a workshop, “Keys to Developing a Collaborative Relationship” at the NCCEP/GEAR UP annual conference in Washington, D.C., in July.

Tired of returning paper pay stubs that weren’t good for employees because they have quicker access to information and convenient deposit of payroll to the bank, and good for UNLV because it reduces payroll distribution costs.

We’ve all heard of New Year’s resolutions, but what about year-end resolutions? Make signing up for paperless pay stubs one of yours. Otherwise, you will soon have to check your campus pay stub mail box and order paper pay stubs. Effective Jan. 1, the university will no longer deliver cheques or paper payroll stubs to individual offices. Instead, employees will have to pick them up in the payroll office in the Campus Services Building, where they will have to present ID and provide a signature, said Controller Brent Morgan.

The change to a central payroll distribution location will reduce costs and increase security for employees because they have quicker access to information and convenient deposit of payroll to the bank, and good for UNLV because it reduces payroll distribution costs.

If you already have direct deposit and receive a paper pay stub, follow these steps to receive electronic notification:

1. Log in to EQUIS at hr.unlv.edu/equis_external
2. Click on the “payroll” tab at the top of the page
3. Click on the “direct deposit” link at the top left
4. Change from printed to web advice on the drop-down of Marketing & Public Relations.

If you don’t know your employee ID number or password, call human resources at ext. 5-3825 or go to payroll.unlv.edu/forms.

Sign Up for Electronic Pay Stubs

The Best Possibilities are Paperless

Get Travel Reimbursement Faster

Employees who are signed up for direct deposit with paperless payroll advice will now receive travel, hotel, and expense reimbursements directly to their bank account within days of submitting their request. If you are enrolled in the direct deposit program for payroll, you don’t need to do anything to participate. An advice will be e-mailed to you when reimbursements are deposited.

“arly on, you will see a reduction in the number of paper documents that you need to sign. This will save you time and effort, and help to reduce our environmental impact.”

Information Still Private

Personal information is more secure with the University’s electronic pay stub system, Morgan said. The e-mail you receive two business days prior to payday is only a notification saying your online pay stub is ready for viewing.

In other words, your electronic pay stubs are not distributed, but are accessed electronically in the same manner you might access banking or credit card information, he said.

Employees can access their pay stub by following a link in the e-mail notification to the employee query and update system (EQUIS) website. Once there, login with your employee ID and password to view your pay stub.

Direct deposit with paperless pay stubs is a win-win-win opportunity,” Morgan said. “It’s good for the environment because it is saves paper, good for employees because they have quicker access to information and convenient deposit of
Perfect day: A typical and perfect day is being in contact with students. Checking a thesis or dissertation and reassuring an anxiety-filled master’s or doctoral candidate that “everything will be all right” or talking with a new undergraduate who may be having a difficult time adjusting to university life continues to motivate me to come to work each day. Knowing that I have helped somebody along the way is both an honor and a blessing. Can’t work without: Cynthia (Chavez), my assistant. That’s the truth.

What about your job makes you happy? One of the things that is really important to me is to “leave the pile higher than when I found it.” A whole lot of “somebodies” helped me get to where I am. As a result, it is not only my commitment but also my responsibility to pay it forward. I measure my success based upon the success of others I have helped.

People would be surprised to know that: I’m a Godfather fanatic. I went to see the first movie when it came out and that was it. I’ve been hooked ever since. I can recite lines from all three movies. A couple of years ago, my family bought me the Godfather computer game for my birthday. (Many of my colleagues in the Graduate College were interested in my projects. It was great fun!)

A typical and perfect day is being in touch with students. Over the years, I have had students from all over the world. People would be surprised to know I have a passion for cat lovers. (However, as the title suggests, cat lovers may find it somewhat offputting.)

Urban Affairs

Journalism and Media Studies

Faculty Participate at Convention

Faculty in the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies participated in the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual convention held in Chicago in August. The meeting serves as one of the major conferences for educators in mass communication.

Stephan Bates presented his refereed paper, “Standardization in Television and Video Technology,” and served as a session panelist for “‘Of Presidents and Polonies: Perspectives on Political Advertising.”

Anthony Ferri served as paper discussant and was appointed to serve as the head of the entertainment studies interest group.

Lawrence Mullen served as a session panelist for “Teaching Visual Communication with Second Life.”

Susanna Priest presented her co-authored, refereed paper, “Making Sense of Emerging Nanotechnologies: How Ordinary People Form Impressions of New Technology,” and served as a session panelist for “Theory in the Practical World of Science Communication,” and discussant for the research paper session “Winner’s Panel in Science Communication.” She also served as a panelist for “Journalism and Communication Monographs: A New Mission.”

Daniel Stout, editor of the journal Mass Communication and Religion, and Priest, editor of the journal Communication Monographs: A New Mission.”

Each month, randomly selected UNLV employees will be profiled in Another Take, a section that lets you see another side of your colleagues.
Setting the Scene

By Cate Weeks | Marketing & PR

UNLV’s scene shop is hidden behind a hard-to-find door beyond a nondescript chain-link fence on the backside of Judy Bayley Theatre. The smell of sawdust is strong as students work under the watchful eyes of Scott Hansen, theatre professor and technical director.

The process starts when the materials budget is set for each production before the start of the season. Then a designer is hired. Hansen noted that scripts seldom dictate the details of the scene. “A lot is left to the imagination of the director and set designer,” he said. “Shakespeare’s plays are especially vague, so the designer and director work to establish the mood the set should project.”

Once the designs are drawn, a model is made, and the ground plan is drafted, the work is turned over to the scene shop to execute. Building a set takes six to eight weeks. “The design keeps changing from the moment we start building to the day we stage the play and sometimes even after, if something didn’t quite work,” Hansen said.

For last month’s Shining City performance, the shop needed to create the look of old, leaded glass. The designer recommended a product that had worked well for productions in other cities. But Las Vegas’s dry climate caused the gel to dry too quickly. “That sort of thing will happen with every production,” Hansen said. “It was a mess, but we call those mishaps a discovery.”

Once the play is done, the sets are stripped of metal fasteners and hardware. The cheap wood used to build the sets walls and furniture can seldom be reused, although this month’s Marriage of Bette & Boo did use a lot of recycled materials.

More info: The scene shop and other hidden gems on campus are included in the web feature “Great People. Great Places.” To see more, go to unlv.edu/greatpeople. For performance information, visit pac.unlv.edu.

Technical director Scott Hansen (left) hires both student workers and professional carpenters to build sets for plays in the UNLV scene shop. The combination ensures that audiences will see well-staged performances while students learn the craft.