Inside UNLV

Cate Weeks  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Brenda Griego  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

David Ashley  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Mamie Peers  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Shane Bevell  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

*See next page for additional authors*

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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 largest 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 added, 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

Campaign 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 Goals: $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 very 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 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 Maldonado, 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.”
Five Minutes with President Ashley

Building A New Team

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 programs early and aggressively. Ultimately, I expect that we will build a team that can and will ensure UNLV reaches its goals, particularly in advancing UNLV 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 candidates 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 overlooked is that searches are recruitments — in other words, the person we want for the job must also want to be here. When I was interviewing, many of you shared your enthusiasm for the university and its many possibilities 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 experience and ability to perform at a high level during this period of change. I do appreciate your commitment to the university and your profession.
participate in the final selection of the other open search. Ideally, the candidate who succeeds in working with a national search firm to expedite the executive vice president and provost position, because several of the positions flow from the searches following UNLV’s recruitment process. What approach are you taking to fill the positions?

What this 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.

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.

Some misconceptions about it on campus, said Keith Rogers, deputy executive director for operations. The center is not a UNLV recruitment program. The overall goal of the center is to help disadvantaged youth get into and succeed in college — any college. Its services for middle and high school students range from tutoring and college admissions counseling to parent financial aid workshops and teacher development programs.

“The choice of where to attend belongs to the students; we just try to remove the barriers of access to higher education,” Rogers said. “But, because we serve Southern Nevada students, many of them will choose to remain here for their college education. The center’s affiliation with UNLV enhances the students’ view of UNLV as a viable and welcoming choice.”

The center does not serve students based on race or ethnicity. Who qualifies for services is dictated by the requirements of the federal grants the center receives. The majority of the programs serve participants who are from low-income backgrounds or who are or will be first-generation college students. “Low-income and first-generation students have some particular challenges to college success,” Rogers said. “They often don’t have resources — such as extra help with their homework or an adult who understands the processes for admissions or financial aid — to help them succeed. Our programs don’t just serve the students; they reach out to the parents to help them be more influential in their child’s education.”

The center does not have unlimited resources. Although the center is one of the country’s largest collections of federally funded, educational-assistance projects for disadvantaged students, its reach is still limited. The center is funded to assist less than 8 percent of the disadvantaged residents of Clark County, according to Rogers. And keeping up with Clark County’s growth is also a challenge.

“We can only grow as fast as the grants allow us,” Rogers said. “So, we’re being careful to grow selectively. We know our core competency is with low-income and first-generation populations; by sticking to programs that serve them, we know we can serve them well.”

“That’s one reason we try to stretch our resources by communicating with other community agencies. We avoid duplicating the services that other programs offer.”

The center’s partnership programs include groups both on and off campus. In addition to working with professors at UNLV, it has partnered with local chambers of commerce, the Clark County School District, and the Boys & Girls Clubs. Another partner, Wells Fargo, has funded scholarships and provided workshops on financial literacy for students and parents.

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.
UNLV to continue to be at the forefront of these programs have allowed the state, totaling $186,667, to fund prevention education about problem gambling in Southern Nevada. This program targeting prevention education about problem gambling in the community, 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. 5-3953 or at larry.ashley@unlv.edu.

Graduate Nevada Stars GA Program Boosts Recruitment Funding The selection process for the Nevada Stars Graduate Assistantship program will be modified this year to enhance recruitment and retention of the most qualified 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 administered by the Graduate College are awarded at $12,000 and $10,000 per year respectively for doctoral and master’s degree students. The Nevada Stars assistantships are funded at a much more competitive level, approximately $24,000 per year. “UNLV must be able to offer GA stipends that are on par with those offered at the top institutions across the country if we are to recruit the most accomplished student scholars,” said Kate Hausbeck, associate dean for academic affairs. “The Nevada Stars program enables us to begin doing so by offering greater funding to a small group of doctoral candidates who will work closely with faculty involved in research of significance to Nevada.” For more information about the Nevada Stars program, contact the Graduate College at ext. 5-3320.

Honors 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: Fichot’s Trip to London” (History)
• “Aid, Trade Liberalization and Growth” (Economics)
• “Studies in Deterioration: The Shock Absorbent Padding” (Chemistry)
• “Eradicating Fear in Europe: Pinochet’s Trip to London” (Economics)
• “The Evolution of Heat-Related Illness and Implementations of Energy and Shock Absorbent Padding” (Mechanical Engineering)
• “Aid, Trade Liberalization and Growth” (Economics)
• “The Evolution of Heat-Related Illness and Implementations of Energy and Shock Absorbent Padding” (Mechanical Engineering)

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-only performance of familiar and new works. On Nov. 4, the UNLV 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 genre, Cobo was the first Hispanic to win consecutive Guitar Competition Gold Medals. For more information, call ext. 5-2787.

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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 America’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 departments 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. “In the future, I hope to provide online training sessions.”

The Shadow Lane library page is accessible from the School of Dental Medicine webpage at dentalschool.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 full texts.

“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 Cray, 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.

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 Pike, UNLV’s Rebel Recycling manager, who received the outstanding alumna 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.
Tara M. Emmers-Sommer (Communication Studies) co-authored “Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction in Online Romantic Relationships” in the June issue of the Journal of Communication Studies.

Spotlight On Accomplishments

E-mail entries to inside.unlv.edu. Items should be no more than 100 words.

Vicky Albert (Social Work) wrote an arti- cle, “The Prognosis: TANF Returns and Temporary Time Limits: A Propositional Hazards Model,” which has been accepted for publication in Social Work Research, a leading social work journal. In response to Nevada’s unique welfare-time limits requirements, the article examines patterns of receipt over time after sitting out for 12 months.

Darrell Hancock (Facilities) was selected classified employee of the month in the technical/service category for September. A construction project coordinator, he oversees contractors during all phases of construction. He began his 25-year career at UNLV in the grounds department.

Robert “Benji” Benedetti (Theatre) has been invited to deliver the keynote address at the statewide convention of the Texas Educational Theatre Association in Houston in January.

Melissa Rodrigue (Political Science) was selected as a reader as part of the month for August. An administrative assistant II, she works the front desk in her department. She previously worked in UNLV’s office at Nellis Air Force Base and in the Division of Educational Outreach. She has worked at UNLV more than two years.

Dan Stout (Journalism and Media Studies) was selected at a writer in August. As an administrative assistant, he works the front desk in his department. He previously worked in UNLV’s office at Nellis Air Force Base and in the Division of Educational Outreach. She has worked at UNLV more than two years.

Cathy “C.C.” Dyer (Graduate College) was named one of the classified employee of the month in the administrative category for August. A 15-year employee, she is an admissions and records specialist. Her primary duties are evaluating applications of students seeking admission to UNLV, and meeting with prospective students and their families.

Johnson was part of the solution, but in a nontraditional way. He joined the UNLV Student Health Center and in the civil engineering department. She earned a bachelor’s degree in health education and moved to the UNLV community from UNLV. She now is taking graduate courses.


Amanda Brewer (Enrollment Services) was chosen as one of the classified employees of the month in the administrative category for September. An admissions and records assistant III, her primary duty is to evaluate undergraduate students transferring to UNLV to determine their eligibility. An employee since 2001, she will earn a bachelor’s degree in university studies from UNLV next month.

Anthony Ferrer (Journalism and Media Studies) was elected research chair of the Entertainment Studies Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Julian Kikker (Journalism and Media Studies) co-authored “My Job Sucks: Examining Counter-Institutional Websites in the Academic Member Voice, Dissent, and Resistance,” in Member Communication Quarterly. He also made two confer- ence presentations in June: “Archive Lucida: Aesthetics of Damage in Digital and Photographic Media” at the 20th annual Visual Communication Conference in Midway, Utah; and “Watching Workplace Boundaries: Employee and Institutional Control over Online Discussions About Work” at the annual conference of the International Communication Association in Dresden, Germany, as part of a panel titled “Emerging Issues in Privacy.”

Kyle Ethelbah (Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach) was elected president of the National Educational Opportunity Centers Association at an annual conference in New York City in September. The association represents adult outreach programs in the United States.

David E. Reese (KLVN) was inducted into the Nevada Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame, which included an annual Hall of Fame Gala at Red Rock Casino Resort in August. Nominees must have served the broadcasting industry at least 20 years. Reese was part of the “junior” class with more than 30 years, and received as part of his award a com- mendation from Gov. Kenny Gains.

Todd Jones (Philosophy) wrote “We Always Have a Beer after the Meeting: How Norms, Cultural Conventions, and the Like Explain Behavior,” which is lead article in the September issue of Philosophy of the Social Sciences.

Emmitt Bryant (Student Life) was named classified employee of the month in the custodial category for September. A custodial worker II, he has worked at UNLV for two years.

Erika Engstrom (Communication Studies) presented “Intentional Use of Women and Sex to Create the Hard Rock Hotel Casino Brand,” “Gendered Communication: Multicultural Feminism and Western Physical Ideals,” and “Critiquing Gender, Love, and Romance in Real Television: Women’s Association convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in San Francisco in August.

Gregory Frost-Arnold (Philosophy) wrote “Too Much Reference: Semantics for Multi-Signifying Terms,” which has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Philosophical Logic.

Ramona Denby-Brinson (Social Work) co-authored Mental Health Care in the African American Community: A Life Course Perspective, a textbook for social workers and other mental health providers on the history and practice of mental health care in the black community. Published by The Johns Hopkins Press, it will be available in the late fall.

Kevin Thomas (Custodial Services) was named classified employee of the month in the custodial category for August. A custodian supervisor I, he is a seven-year employee.

Maraia Hearn Scalon and Carolyn Taylor (Center for Holistic Health Education and Outreach) presented “Establishing Effective Relationships Between EOC’s and the Military” at the National Educational Opportunity Centers Association conference in New York City in September. The association represents adult-serving outreach programs in the United States.

Susan Meacham (Life Sciences) attended the international conference The Mediterranean Diet: Fact or Fiction? sponsored by New York State University. It was held at the La Pietra estate and conference center in Florence, Italy, in May.

Kathy Melic (Economics) was selected as an employee of the month in the administrative category for August. An administrative assistant III, she serves as the entire office staff for her department. A five-year employee, she is a bachelor of science degree in health care administra- tion from UNLV.

Charles White (Planning and Construction) was named classified employee of the month in the construction category for September. A construc- tion project coordinator, he manages the remodeling projects on campus. He has worked at UNLV nearly 28 years.

Gregory Borchard (Journalism and Media Studies) wrote “From Pink Lemonade to ‘The Godfather’” for the spring issue of Journal of Health. He and Anthony Ferrer (Journalism and Media Studies), co-authored the paper “Ancient Rome and Las Vegas: Communicating Entertainment as Diversism,” which was presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in San Francisco in August.
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 extreme microorganisms get their energy from in 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 organisms that thrive in geothermal habitats and will expand our knowledge about the biological diversity of life on Earth.

The NSF awarded Hedlund the grant because the possibility for breakthroughs in his work is definitely high. He added that although major groups of microorganisms are completely unknown, that could either shake the foundations or just shift them a little,” Hedlund said, somewhat reticently.

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 tales are not yet complete, but he estimates that approximately 90 percent of the microbes in the springs he’s studying contain genetic signatures unknown to science.

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

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 relationships between members of the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe, UNLV students, and the scientific community through collaborative study of the biogeochemical, 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?”

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
Kick off 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 unlvtickets.com.
Wild, Wild Weather

Campus photographers Geri Kodey and Aaron Mayes have captured some wonderfully atmospheric moments around campus of 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.