Technology Takes Center Stage
Upgrades, New Grading Method Highlighted at Faculty Convocation

The commitment to the campus-wide Cal U Fusion initiative was evident at the spring Faculty Convocation, where technology upgrades were announced and the faculty was introduced to a new technique for grading papers.

University President Angelo Armenti, Jr. announced that through a $7 million bond approved by the Board of Governors, all 74 classrooms on the main campus will be renovated to incorporate “smart” technology.

A more robust Wi-Fi system at all campus locations, including Roadman Park and the Southpointe Center, also is anticipated.

“Cal U Fusion is the fusing of technology with learning and life,” said President Armenti. “Soon every one of our classrooms will be state-of-the-art.”

Before the President’s regular State of the University address, Dr. Joseph Zisk briefly demonstrated a grading process that adds audio files to student work, allowing students to hear feedback in their teacher’s voice.

Zisk is a professor in the Department of Secondary Education and director of the online Master of Arts Teaching (MAT) program. He explained that students’ papers, submitted as simple Word documents through the Desire2Learn system, can be converted to PDFs using Adobe Acrobat Pro software. A faculty member easily can add a cover sheet to each assignment, insert written or audio comments, and return the annotated papers through D2L.

Student feedback has been positive, Zisk said. “Not only does this make it quicker and easier for us (to grade papers), but the students enjoy listening to our audio comments.”

Zisk will share his grading system by posting instruction online.

In other business:
• Dr. Michael Slavin, president of the local Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF), called for civility as he discussed the new collective bargaining agreement to be negotiated with PASSHE.
• The CBA is not a one-sided agreement, he said. “It’s not a faculty contract. It’s an agreement between the administration and the faculty.
• Participation in this important study,” said President Armenti. “The results will allow us to assess and improve the quality of our academic offerings, as well as the value of each and every student’s diploma upon graduation.”

The NSSE is administered by Indiana University-Bloomington. The national survey is short and easy to complete. It is administered to first- and senior-year students. It asks undergraduates about their interactions with educationally important activities and groups.

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Freshmen, Seniors Tapped for Online Survey

This spring, the Office of Continuous Improvement will be administering NSSE, the National Survey of Student Engagement, to a random sampling of first- and senior-year students.

The NSSE is administered by Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research in cooperation with the Indiana University Center for Survey Research at Indiana University-Bloomington. Through IUB, some Cal U students will receive an invitation to participate through their campus e-mail addresses.

The survey is completed online. This important endeavor has been authorized by Cal U President Angelo Armenti, Jr., who urges all invited students to participate.

Feedback from past surveys has led Cal U to take steps that enhance student satisfaction with academics and campus life. One example is the “common hour” set aside for guest lectures or other campus-wide activities. So everyone can participate, no classes are held between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays — an idea that arose from the NSSE results.

“I encourage all students to participate in this important study,” said President Armenti. “The results will allow us to assess and improve the quality of our academic offerings, as well as the value of each and every student’s diploma upon graduation.”

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Police Chiefs Assemble on Campus

Some 30 law enforcement professionals from local jurisdictions and the Pennsylvania State Police met in the Kara Alumni House Jan. 26 to inaugurate the Washington County Police Chiefs Association.

The meeting was hosted by Washington County District Attorney Steven Toprani, a Cal U alumnus, and organized in cooperation with the Institute for Forensic and Criminological Sciences at Cal U.

Before the association’s first business meeting, Dr. John Cencich welcomed the police chiefs and shared information about the forensic institute, which offers training programs and an array of professional services for law enforcement.

At no cost to local police departments, the institute shares faculty members’ academic and real-world expertise, explained Cencich, the institute’s director and dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Police agencies can consult with specialists in gambling devices, computer forensics, behavioral analysis of violent crime and forensic anthropology, as well as languages such as Spanish and Arabic.

The institute also offers professional training presented by The Academy Group Inc., some of the original criminal profilers from the Behavioral Science Unit at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va.

In addition, Cal U’s academic programs include a Master of Arts in Social Science (Applied Criminology) and a new certificate in Spanish for Law Enforcement. Both are offered through Cal U Global Online, ranked No. 1 in

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C al U’s Black History Month celebration continues with five events this week, including a performance Thursday by Black Violin, two young performers whose high-energy show blends elements of hip-hop and other popular music with classical violin.

Time Out New York Kids described their show as “a raucous, roasting, genre-busting performance piece that dares the audience to get up and dance.”

This week’s Black History Month events:

• **Tonight:** At 6 p.m. in Vulcan Theatre, multicultural educator and Cal U alumnus Brian C. Johnson ’94, ’96 will use Hollywood films to spark a discussion of diversity. Johnson is now a faculty member at Bloomsburg University.

• **Tuesday:** AVI, the University’s food service provider, will offer dining options from a region of Africa at the Gold Rush and Joe’s Contemporary American Grill.

• **Wednesday:** The Frederick Douglass Institute Lecture Series will present Dr. Michelle Torrerozago at 11 a.m. in room 103 of the Eberly Science and Technology Center. An FDI Scholar, she is an assistant professor in Cal U’s Department of Special Education.

• **Thursday:** Black Violin takes the stage at 6 p.m. in the Performance Center. Trained in classical violin, Florida natives Wil II and Kev Marcus create a signature sound by adding jazz, hip-hop, funk and a DJ to the mix. The group has released an album, “Black Violin,” and embarked on a campaign of social change, using youth orchestras and re-invigorated music programs to foster self-expression among urban youth.

• **Friday:** Cal U’s own Young and Gifted Gospel Choir will perform at 7 p.m. in the Performance Center. Their “Celebration of Gospel” will include a special appearance by recording artists King.

All events are free and open to the public. Visitor parking is available in the new Vulcan Garage, off Third Street near the campus entrance. For a complete calendar of events, video clips and more information about the performers and speakers, visit www.calu.edu.

When Mercury Drops, Signs Change Color

I t’s that sidewalk merely wet, or is it icy and likely to be slick?

Soon, more than two dozen devices on campus will answer that question by changing color in cold weather.

The University is making plans to install 25 IceAlert units at key locations near parking lots and campus walkways.

The units are designed to reduce the risk of slip-and-fall accidents by alerting pedestrians when temperatures drop into the “freezing zone” below 30 degrees Fahrenheit. The devices rely on the BlueStar technology already in use at leading corporations such as Motorola, General Motors, Alcoa, PPG Industries and Bayer Corp.

Cal U would be the first East Coast university to deploy the thermodynamic units, which turn from white to blue in freezing temperatures.

Visible from a distance, the 6-inch “blue star” symbols remind pedestrians to take extra care, and they clearly indicate to maintenance staff where de-icing or non-slip compounds should be applied.

Additional signs remind passers-by that “blue reflectors indicate freezing temperature.”

“As the campus becomes more pedestrian-friendly, it is important to provide the information people need to traverse campus safely,” said Christopher Johnston, director of the Parking and Transportation Office.

“The Cal U transportation network is committed to improving all modes of travel, including bus, bike and travel on foot.”

Plans call for installing 12 IceAlerts along campus walkways. Additional units will be placed near parking lots 2, 4, 5, 7, 20, 22 and 24.

HR Director Earns Certification

P amela M. Murphy, MSBA, PHR, interim director of human resources at Cal U, has earned certification as a Professional in Human Resources. The certification is awarded by the HR Certification Institute, which promotes the establishment of professional standards and recognizes professionals who meet them.

To become certified, Murphy passed a comprehensive examination and demonstrated experience in the field of human resources.

Freshmen, Seniors Focus of Student Engagement Survey

More than 1,000 four-year colleges and universities in the United States and Canada have used the NSSE to better understand the extent to which students and institutions are engaging in effective teaching and learning activities, and to develop programs and practices that foster student engagement. The results provide a “snapshot” of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college.

Institutions will use their data to identify aspects of the undergraduate experience, inside and outside the classroom that can be improved through changes in policies and practices.

The information is also intended for use by prospective college students, their parents, college counselors, academic advisers, institutional research officers and researchers in learning more about how students spend their time at different colleges and universities and what they gain from their experiences.

By the middle of this month, NSSE invitations will be sent to students’ university e-mail addresses. Follow-up e-mails will be sent to the students by IUB through March and Web survey administration will close June 1. Following analysis of the NSSE data by IUB, reports will be sent to the participating universities in August.

For more information about the NSSE survey, contact Norman Hrabuck, Special Assistant to the President, at 724-938-1673, or call the Office of Continuous Improvement at 724-938-1673.
Students in last semester’s inaugural Multimedia Journalism class have created digital stories, slide shows and videos for an audience of online readers.

“Some of the students had little previous journalism experience, and some had just basic digital experience, but all bravely dove in to use our new digital equipment and explore new ways to tell stories,” said Margo Wilson, associate professor of English and journalism.

“It really was gratifying to see the students’ efforts.”

To make the class possible, the English Department used $90,000 in technology fee funds to refurbish its computer lab in Manderino 230. New Macintosh computers and software, audio recorders, and video and still cameras were purchased.

Developing the course was a team effort, Wilson said.

Vice president Charles Mance and director Becky Nichols, both of University Technology Services, supported the tech fee request and helped to launch the project. Ryan Usher and C.J. DeJulius, also of UTech Services, helped to purchase, install and tweak the equipment.

Barbara Engle (now with Library Services) and Joyce Sheppick from the Purchasing Department helped to smooth out tangles in the paperwork.

Dr. Michael Hummel, former dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and associate provost Stan Komacek helped with chair purchases, scheduling of work, and other administrative support.

Dr. John Cencich, dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, supported hiring a graduate assistant.

Pamela Delverne, director of new graduate studies, and chair David Russell supported adding the class.

Students Ready for History Day

Young historians will prepare for regional competition at the fourth annual California University of Pennsylvania Primary Sources History Day.

The competition is set for 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 14 in the Performance Center.

Sponsored by the Library of Congress of the National Archives, the event is modeled after the National History Day™ competition.

This year’s contest mirrors the National History Day Theme, which is “Debate and Diplomacy in History: Success, Failures and Controversy.”

Participants in junior (grades 6-8) and senior (grades 9-12) divisions will compete in both individual and group projects. Cal U faculty members, students and other community volunteers will judge exhibits, documents, websites, performances and historical research papers.

All students receive framed certificaties, and prizes will be awarded for first, second and third places in both group and individual divisions at both the junior and senior levels. Students from the Belle Vernon Area, Charleroi, Trinity and Uniontown Area school districts will participate.

The regional competition, known as NHD Pitt, will be held March 12-13 at the Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh for schools in Allegheny, Washington, Greene, Fayette, Westmoreland and Somerset counties.

“Several years ago I served as a judge at the regional competition and noticed that hardly any of our area schools were there,” said Dr. Michael Brna, TPS director. “So we set up a go-between local competition to prepare these schools for the regional competition. This is a win-win for everyone involved.”

Last year, after competing at Cal U, Sarah Sebitich of Bellmar Middle School was a regional winner in the Individual Performance category, and Belle Vernon Area’s Megan Planey and Jenna Chirstner were winners in the regional and state Group Documentary category. They were the first two state winners from their school.

The late Rep. John P. Murtha brought the Library of Congress TPS program to Cal U so local educators and students would have opportunities to take advantage of the vast array of online resources available through the Library of Congress.

For more information, call Lynne Berdar at the TPS office, 724-938-6025, or e-mail berdar@calu.edu.

A Winter’s Walk

Erica Richardson, a graphic design major, walks through the early morning fog to her first class. Due to the snow and poor road conditions, Cal U closed early on Jan. 26.

See Their Work

To view the digital story packages created by the Multimedia Journalism class, visit http://sai.calu.edu/mmjournalism

Students in last semester’s inaugural Multimedia Journalism class have created digital stories, slide shows and videos for an audience of online readers.

Police Chiefs Gather On Campus

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Police Chiefs Gather On Campus

nation for online education programs.

“The past two years, we have trained hundreds of police officers, as well as members of the Pennsylvania State Police and the FBI,” Cencich said. “One key to our success has been the support and cooperation of the Washington County District Attorney’s Office.”

The meeting included a presentation by Todd Merlina, enforcement supervisor with the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement.

A 25-year liquor enforcement employee of the state police, Merlina supervises the statewide compliance check program that works to identify and sanction establishments that serve liquor to minors. He discussed effective approaches to liquor law enforcement, with a special emphasis on the problem of underage drinking.

Underage drinkers are not the only ones who maybe penalized, he explained. Individuals can face steep fines if they purchase alcohol for minors or host a party where underage drinkers are served.

“We’re trying to save lives,” Merlina said. “We’ve all seen tragedies because of alcohol and underage (drinking) parties.”

Among those in attendance was University Police Chief Bob Downey Jr., who welcomed the visit from his Washington County colleagues.

“This was a good opportunity to show the facilities we have here at Cal U and to demonstrate our commitment to law enforcement,” he said.
In accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the California University Foundation, a timetable for faculty and student representatives’ elections has been established.

The goal is to have all representatives in place for the first meeting of the Forum on Tuesday, September 6, 2011. All tenure and tenure-track faculty who were hired to begin work prior to or in Spring 2009 and who have the rank of assistant professor or higher are eligible for nomination. (See the list of eligible faculty on this page.)

Eligible faculty members may self-nominate or offer a colleague’s name into nomination. A member of the University Community (staff, students, managers) may nominate a faculty member.

Nominations must be postmarked or received on or before February 23rd and 24th. Office of Development and Alumni Relations (OSD) will schedule a small-group meeting for semester registration; keyword “disability.” Interested students are invited to call OSD for an appointment.

The Addy Awards professional competition for the American Advertising Federation of California was held Jan. 27-28. The judging was held Jan. 27-28.

Attention University Community!
Call for Nominations for Election to Cal U Forum

In accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the Forum, the four faculty being elected are two (2) must come from the Eberly College of Science and Technology; and one (1) must come from the College of Liberal Arts and one (1) must be elected at-large (from College of Education and Human Services, College of Liberal Arts, Eberly College of Science and Technology or No College Affiliation.) Faculty members who are currently serving as faculty senators on the Forum are eligible to serve consecutive terms. The term of these four faculty representatives will be two years. A plurality of votes cast will be necessary to win election.

Details of the student nomination and election process will be available in future issues of the California Times.

The Journal is printed on paper made from trees harvested under the principles of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (www.SFIprogram.org).

The California Journal was published weekly by California University of Pennsylvania, a member of The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.