

A Letter From Outreach and the College of Health and Human Development

The cover story in this issue highlights a couple of programs involving Penn State faculty working to promote equity in health with colleagues in South Africa, where prevalence of HIV/AIDS is the highest in the world. There are 1,500 new HIV infections daily in South Africa, and 60 percent of all new infections occur in people aged 15–25.

HealthWise is a school-based initiative aimed at reducing drug use and risky sexual behaviors in high school students in the Cape Town area. Co-led by College of Health and Human Development (HHD) faculty Drs. Ed Smith and Linda Caldwell with a team of colleagues from two universities in the Western

Cape area, *the project is focused on health promotion and healthy use of leisure time*. The good news is that the local school system has recently decided to expand the initiative to nearly 60 additional schools—involving 18,000 youth.

In another effort, led by Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa, head of HHD's Department of Biobehavioral Health, faculty and historically disadvantaged students at two universities in South Africa were trained to engage in focus group discussions with community members to *try to understand the notion of HIV/AIDS stigma and craft interventions to reduce that stigma*.

These types of projects are in line with HHD's mission: apply health-related knowledge to enhance the well-being of people not just in Pennsylvania but also around the globe. The projects also reflect the college's historical strength in youth-focused projects, as well as a growing intent in the college to address health risks in South Africa.

Issues of global health do not respect borders: Diseases such as AIDS and malnutrition are important health concerns; they are relevant to everyone. The increasing interest in these issues is leading to discussions about a possible new global health minor in the college, which will *provide interesting new ways for faculty to coalesce teaching, research and service*.

Service and outreach are important parts of the HHD faculty role, and the college now tracks such activities as part of faculty members' annual activity reports.

HHD and Penn State Outreach are allies, having many interests in common. In a strategic analysis, the Outreach organization identified health as one of the issues vitally important to the Commonwealth—an interest front and center to the college. ♥



Dr. Nan Crouter, dean of the College of Health and Human Development, with Vice President for Outreach Dr. Craig D. Weidemann

THE STRONGEST LINK

IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, the field of supply chain management has become a strategically essential discipline for business—linking together manufacturers, retailers, logistics providers and customers to make a flowing network.

“Companies are seeking supply chain professionals who have the higher-order skills and abilities needed to think in tandem about people, processes and technology,” said Dr. Gary Gittings, online supply chain instructor in Penn State’s Smeal College of Business.

Marketplace needs have led to the creation of the new online Master’s in Supply Chain Management, offered by Smeal College in conjunction with Penn State World Campus, one of the few online graduate degree programs in supply chain management in the country.

“Academics and professionals recognize Penn State as a top-tier university in supply chain management education,” explained Gittings. “Penn State was partially addressing the need for online supply chain management graduate education through its 12-credit online graduate certificate program. The market, however, particularly a number of certificate graduates and sponsors of Penn State’s Center for Supply Chain Research, were asking for an online master’s degree program.”

The two-year program (<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/MasterinSupplyChainManagement>) was launched last year. Some students, who had certificate credits, will be completing the program this fall.

POLISH FOR THE WOOD INDUSTRY

THE WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY is big business in the eastern United States, but industry members are suffering from both the housing bust and foreign competition. That led the federal government and a key industry trade group to team up and approach Penn State for help in developing education programs to increase the management skills of industry leaders.

Dr. Judd Michael, faculty member in the College of Agricultural Sciences’ School of Forest Resources, and Dr. John Park from Penn State Outreach’s Management Development Programs and Services, secured a federal grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Wood Education and Resource Center to deliver a customized training program to executives and managers from a variety of wood manufacturers. The federal grant had matching funds from the National Hardwood Lumber Association.

The two-day short courses were delivered in March and June.



Wood industry professionals take part in leadership training.

As part of the grant, Michael and Park are also conducting a study of the competencies that managers and supervisors in this field need to succeed.

Lakshman Yapa ON ENGAGEMENT



DR. LAKSHMAN YAPA (left), professor of geography in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences at Penn State, decided to investigate whether it was possible to improve the quality of life in West Philadelphia—a community with a high poverty rate and a legacy of unsuccessful funding initiatives—believing that more jobs

and money might not be the answer. The result was *Rethinking Urban Poverty: the Philadelphia Field Project*, a unique service-learning course that has generated more than 60 student-run projects addressing critical needs in areas as diverse as credit cooperatives, transportation and nutrition.

For his efforts, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the Outreach Scholarship Partnership recognized Yapa, a past recipient of the Faculty Outreach Award, with the Northeast region’s 2008 C. Peter Magrath Engagement Award.

As part of the national competition among the regional Magrath winners, Yapa prepared a presentation about his work for the 2008 Outreach Scholarship Conference on Oct. 7–9 at Penn State. Conference planners include the Partnership—Penn State, University of Wisconsin–Extension, Ohio State University, University of Georgia, University of Alabama, North Carolina State University, Michigan State University, University of Kentucky and Purdue University—and Penn State Outreach’s Conferences unit.

Yapa offers some passionate words about scholarly engagement, as evident in his commencement address to the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences: “The university is one of the most important institutions in the world, for it alone has the capacity to challenge our imagination; it alone has the vast reserves of skills, competencies and personnel, and it alone through its colleges, departments and institutes has a unique organizational structure to deploy nonsovereign power to make the world better.”

MULTICULTURAL PROGRAM RECOGNIZED

EXPLORING THE INDIGENOUS WAYS of Knowing of the Ojibwe, jointly sponsored by the Colleges of Education and Agricultural Sciences in partnership with Penn State Conferences, has been selected to receive the 2008 Rose Duhon-Sells Program Award. This survey course, led by Dr. Bruce Martin, allows participants to fully immerse themselves into the Ojibwe culture in northern Minnesota.

WORLD CAMPUS STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Using GIS for Public Health

BY PLOTTING the distribution of cases in an 1854 cholera outbreak in London on a map, physician Dr. John Snow was able to pinpoint the source of the epidemic—a contaminated well. Penn State World Campus Geographic Information Systems (GIS)



Chris Goranson left the Big Apple for a prestigious fellowship in Japan.

master’s student Chris Goranson is following in the footsteps of this pioneer, but with some high-tech help.

Goranson, director of the GIS Center at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, received a National Science Foundation fellowship to work with scientists from Japan’s National Institute of Public Health on a project that uses computer modeling to detect patterns that may indicate potential health concerns.

Goranson said that the online GIS courses, offered in conjunction with Penn State’s College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (<http://www.world-campus.psu.edu/MasterinGIS>), were instrumental in attaining the fellowship. “I have enjoyed the online GIS classes immensely,” Goranson said. “I wouldn’t have even considered applying for the fellowship if it wasn’t for the program.”