Notre Dame staffers safe after earthquake devastates Haiti

Aftermath a testimony to the spirit of humanity, says Father Streit

BY SHANNON CHAPLA, PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

“I feel like I have my second life,” says Rev. Thomas Streit, C.S.C., founder and director of Notre Dame’s Haiti Program.

For Father Streit, the “horrible” experience of surviving the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated Haiti was also a testimony to the spirit of humanity. “I saw people with limbs torn from their bodies screaming in pain,” he says. “I saw children wandering who perhaps had lost their parents, bodies stacked four or five deep, and the churches were all gone…yet at night the people were praying and singing. They were holding hands—as perhaps the only thing they could hold onto without food or water. They turned to God.”

When the magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck on Tuesday, Jan. 12, Father Streit was at a meeting at Port-au-Prince’s Hotel Montana with colleagues Sarah Craig and Logan Anderson and post-doctoral student Marie Denise Milord. The group was in the capital to attend the semi-annual partner’s meeting for the Haiti Program’s financial manager. “Sarah, who is formerly an emergency first responder, went right into first aid mode. I took off my shirt and we started tearing it up and chanting,” Anderson says, “and the sound of more buildings coming down during the aftershocks. You could just hear thousands of people screaming. That will stay with me forever.”

The next day, U.N. troops arrived at the hotel and assisting with first aid, the four found a grassy spot near the hotel to rest and spend the night. “I could hear people praying and chanting,” Anderson says, “and the sound of more buildings coming down during the aftershocks. You could just hear thousands of people screaming. That will stay with me for a while.”

The next day, U.N. troops arrived at the hotel and the four walked with them to the U.N. Embassy, then to the American Embassy, where they spent another night. Craig, Anderson and Milord were flown home, while Father Streit stayed behind to help his Haitian colleagues. All four are now back at Notre Dame.

“Haiti needs our help now more than ever,” says Haiti Program manager Sarah Craig. “Our program is a mainstay in the community and we need to make sure we help where we can. After we help get the community settled, we can then address our global health program.”

Notre Dame’s Haiti Program, based in Léogâne about 30 kilometers west of Port-au-Prince, has worked since 1993 in conjunction with Hôpital Sainte-Croix on a major initiative to eradicate lymphatic filariasis, a debilitating mosquito-borne disease that affects some 120 million people around the world and manifests itself as elephantiasis. For now, the program’s focus will shift from public health to relief.

“There’s a Haitian expression ‘pa a pe’ (step by step),” Father Streit said. “We’ve been set back quite a bit, so we need prayers, financial support and involvement. The people of Haiti really depend on their faith that has gotten them through 200 years of difficulty, so I would urge anyone planning relief efforts not to forget this important element of nourishment for the Haitian psyche and spirit…that is faith.”
From brainstorms to breakthroughs

Power of people drives the Institute for Theoretical Sciences

By BILL SCHMITT, NDWORKS

The “Catalytic Materials by Design” workshop, held on campus Jan. 27 to 30, had a design of its own—a sign “workshop, held on campus Jan.” around the world, plus younger researchers and theorists in experimentalists workshop senior Hall—brought the Institute for Theoretical Sciences (ITS). ITS—a joint Institute of the University and Argonne National Laboratory, housed in the University’s Nearsun Science Hall—brought together for supervisors, managers and team leaders looking for practical skills in dealing with day-to-day supervising challenges.

The expectations are just as high for the institute’s initiatives in catalysis, another field that bridges energy and environmental sustainability, nanoscience and materials science. “It is my strong belief that this institute is one of the most effective ways of achieving some of the strategic goals the University has formulated,” says Jankó. A premier international university must be constantly attracting expertise in key, cutting-edge areas. These networks of high-impact scientists will include members of all generations, inspiring one another.

He recalls that ITS fellows have included physicists Nobel laureates Alexei Abrikosov and Anthony Leggett, as well as chemistry Nobel laureate Rudy Marcus. World-class scientists “act as a magnet” because they bring excellent colleagues as part of their visitor group. They inspire the students and post-docs who interact with them.

“That is an experience of a lifetime,” Jankó says of the young people nurtured by ITS activities. “It has a tremendous impact on the graduate and undergraduate experience here.”
**SUSTAINABILITY**

**Third Annual Green Summit**

Focus on food

BY RACHEL NOVICK, OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Green Summit III: The Footprint of Food, sponsored by the Office of Sustainability and ND Food Services, takes place Monday, Feb. 22, in the Joyce Center Monogram Room.

Each year the summit brings together hundreds of faculty, staff and students to develop a shared vision for how to expand sustainability efforts at Notre Dame. This year, participants will rotate through tables on topics of food and climate change, sustainable seafood, local food, food waste and bottled water.

At each table there will be displays, discussion and delicious sustainable foods to taste.

Green Summit IIll will open with welcoming remarks from Executive Vice President John Affleck-Graves, followed by a keynote address by Executive Chef Don Miller.

“After participating in the past two Green Summits, I am convinced it is one of the premier events on campus,” said Assistant Vice President for Development Micki Kidder. “The Summit provides an opportunity to engage with students, staff and faculty and also results in innovative yet practical suggestions.”

Registration and further details are available online at the Office of Sustainability Web site, green.nd.edu; the registration deadline is Friday, February 12.

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**LANDSCAPE SERVICES**

To get us to work on time, their day starts at 2 a.m.

BY CAROL C. BRADLEY, NDWORKS

Keeping roads, sidewalks clear is a lot of work

Landscape Services staffer John Helmick clears snow from sidewalks near Hesburgh Hall.

Tools with rotating brush brooms (they can also switch to snow blades) are maneuvered by the Bobcat Company and used to keep sidewalks cleared and can spread sidewalk melters or liquid ice melter at the same time.

In their line of work, McCauslin, says, “We miss holidays and times at home, but we come in and put the University first. You can’t find better people.”

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**HUMAN RESOURCES**

New HR sites launched

Sites are more functional, visually consistent

BY CAROL C. BRADLEY, NDWORKS

The newly revamped Office of Human Resources Web site (hr.nd.edu) debuted in January with a new look and a more functional design, says Todd Hill, director of HR information systems and HR strategy. The site was designed and built by AgencyND, agency.nd.edu.

“It’s better organized,” Hill says. “Most information can now be accessed within two or three clicks.”

The site is one of the most heavily trafficked of the University’s Web pages. Most of the site’s traffic—75 percent—is generated externally. The front-page link “Why ND” is aimed at that audience of prospective job applicants, and includes a link to a virtual tour of campus.

Under the “Why ND,” the “Community Connections” link answers questions out-of-town applicants might have about what it’s like to live and work in the South Bend community. The site is also dedicated to improving customer service for existing employees. A new “Faculty and Staff Resources” link includes forms, policies, tools, and FAQs. “We want to give people information when they need it,” Hill says.

A useful addition to the page is a list of the top five questions received by askHR, “My LinkedIn is not working, that was missing in the previous sites. There’s also a link to the newly created LinkedIn group, Notre Dame Jobs Network, which offers career advice and tips. “It’s a great way to receive career advice and job search tools,” Pett says. “Recruits have a chance to connect with applicants in a different way.”

The new HR site will continue to evolve, Hill adds. “We want to keep it fresh and exciting. There will be additional changes as we learn more and get feedback.”

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**SUSTAINABILITY**

Keeping roads, sidewalks clear is a lot of work

**BY CAROL C. BRADLEY, NDWORKS**

A big thank you from all of us who work—and park—on campus to the dedicated Landscape Services staffers who labor to keep campus sidewalks, roads and plowed lots cleared of snow and ice.

During the winter, the crews work three shifts, but a big snow means the whole crew gets called in at 2 a.m.

“We have to start at 2 a.m. to get the major lots done by 7 a.m.,” says Pat McCauslin, supervisor of Landscape Services. “We try to get as much coverage as we can. Everyone has a route.

The crew operates 2.5-ton trucks to plow big parking lots such as the library. A 1-ton truck does medium-sized lots like the bookstore and Stepan Center. A fleet of pickup trucks plows service drives and loading docks.

Each year the summit brings together hundreds of faculty, staff and students to develop a shared vision for how to expand sustainability efforts at Notre Dame. This year, participants will rotate through tables on topics of food and climate change, sustainable seafood, local food, food waste and bottled water.

At each table there will be displays, discussion and delicious sustainable foods to taste.

Many faces of campus now on Facebook

**BY BILL SCHMITT, NDWORKS**

Many faces of Notre Dame can be found on the social networking site Facebook.

You can join the “Notre Dame Faculty and Staff” group page, or become a fan of the Notre Dame Alumni Association or Notre Dame Magazine. Keep up-to-date on general news as a fan of the University of Notre Dame page, which currently has more than 13,000 members.

How do you find that particular page, other pages by the Office of Public Affairs and Communications? Through a number of “University of Notre Dame”-related pages emerge when you do a search using that key phrase.

“Look for the page with the most fans,” explains Julie Hurley of the OPAC public relations team. “It should come up at the top in a search, but if not, you can scroll through and look for the picture of the Main Building.”

Other campus-related Facebook fan pages include the Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore, Notre Dame Game Day, the Notre Dame Facebook Festival and the Center for Social Concerns—and the list is growing every day.

But Facebook is not the only online resource the Notre Dame community is using to allow others to connect to life on campus. For example, Facebook is a site that has been thrusting among folks interested in learning more about the Congregation of Holy Cross—in particular, among folks discerning whether they have a vocation to the Holy Cross priesthood.

The Rev. James Gallagher, C.S.C., director of the Office of Vocations for the Indiana Province and Eastern Province in the Congregation, reports: “Since launching the new site in the spring of 2008, there have been over 47,000 visits to the site, averaging about 100 hits a day. We receive about 10 to 15 new contacts each month through the Web site. Some of the more popular areas of the Web site include the Gallery with pictures and videos from past liturgies—Ordinations and Final Vows ceremonies. Visitors can also link to the Vocation YouTube page, which has received more than 2,500 visits since its launch about a year ago. "It’s not always an easy thing to admit that one has a vocation to the religious life, so to be able to think about it while researching on the Web is important,” Father Gallagher told us. “Also, it allows someone from other end of the country to see how we celebrate our important events without having to buy a plane ticket.”

Another major resource conveying aspects of the Notre Dame story has made the leap to online delivery in order to become more accessible. In this case, it’s the University’s annual report. Go to the Office of the Controller at controller.nd.edu, and click through to the 2009 annual report. You’ll find a cutting-edge presentation that incorporates videos and offers a more sustainable alternative to previous practices—a massive mail-out of printed annual reports.

For a more intimate online experience of the place called Notre Dame, don’t forget to check out tour.nd.edu, where you can take a “virtual tour” of Notre Dame via video, panoramic images, photos and text. It will bring you as close to many of the campus’s buildings as you could get without venturing into this snowy weather.

One email comment received from a site visitor said, “Hi. I love all the tour locations. They are all so beautiful and I look at them often. My son graduated from Notre Dame but he met with a tragic death several years ago. I know how much he loved ND and we do hope to get back there one more time. We have a bench out there with his name on it. Again, we love looking at all these beautiful places.”
A Holy Cross family

BY GENE STOWE, NDWORKS

Holy Cross priests presenting “Men In Black 2” to a full audience in Touch Hall flashed family photos on the stage’s twin screens, underscoring the point that they understand family.

“What I’ve learned from this all is that I haven’t lost family and home,” said Rev. Ralph Haag, C.S.C., the rector of St. Edward’s Hall and director of Hispanic Ministry, flashing a picture. “I have many sons and daughters.”

“Whether I’m taking a phone call or celebrating the Eucharist, I think I’m making God known, loved and served. Ultimately what I’m helping with is helping others find rest for their heart in the Lord. This has also afforded me a chance to deepen my own faith life.”


“We get to eat together and pray together just like a family,” said Father Doyle, one of seven children in a Virginia family. After more than 40 years in Holy Cross, he is more than friends—they are brothers.

“Though my parents and my family, God has touched me richly. I couldn’t imagine myself other than a religious ordered priest. My Holy Cross family is continuing to be that.”

Father Doyle, rector of Dillon Hall, recounted the influence of family members—knocking to pray, making the sign of the cross on his forehead—in a community that had a small Catholic minority, and how his ministry did not diminish the family life.

“I was never going to be a factor in mother and dad’s life,” he said. “I have plenty of siblings who have stayed close. The Lord does provide if we just step out in faith. Answers come. That’s my experience.”

In the Holy Cross novitiate, he was asked to explain why he had joined. “I was sure it would be a good education,” Father Doyle said.

“I knew a lot of Holy Cross priests and knew the formation would be good.”

“Continuing education is stressed and possible when you live in community,” with the opportunity for a range of service including parish priest, military chaplain or high school teacher. “You could do more than one of those things in a lifetime,” and retire to Holy Cross House with its excellent care for the elderly.

The bishop who ordained him promised that the sacrament would change him, Father Doyle recalled, and before long he found himself preaching freely instead of memorizing note cards.

“He said make sure you expect to be changed by this sacrament of ordination,” Father Doyle said. “It would be a tragedy if you truncated what God was trying to do by not expecting him to do anything.”

The session was part of an annual series—“Holy Cross Faith in Our Future”—focused on the Jan. 20 feast day of Congregation of the Holy Cross founder Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau. The tradition started after Father Moreau, who sent Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C., on the mission that founded Notre Dame, was beatified in 2007.

Designed to demonstrate the rich and real life of the order’s members, the evening also celebrated the relationship of Holy Cross and Notre Dame.

“The way in which you support us is kind of overwhelming every day,” Father Scully said. “It’s just an inspiration to us in the way you live your life. We are the ones who are changed all the time by your faith and inspired and edited.”

Steibe-Pasalich shares ‘Spirit of Holy Cross’

Award recognizes the contributions of lay collaborators

BY BILL SCHMITT, NDWORKS

Susan Steibe-Pasalich, director of the University Counseling Center, has received a 2009 Spirit of Holy Cross Award, given to lay collaborators and religious who serve with the Congregation of Holy Cross in the United States and abroad.

Steibe-Pasalich has served in her Notre Dame post for almost three decades. Over the years, she has also supported the work of the Congregation’s Office of Vocations, helping to screen applicants to Holy Cross seminary programs.

She was presented with the award on Jan. 20, the feast day of Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C., founder of the Congregation.

The Indiana Province of Holy Cross, in announcing the award, cited Steibe-Pasalich’s “high level of professionalism” and her inestimable contribution “to ensuring that the next generation of Holy Cross religious are well-rounded and well-equipped for their lives of service.”

Rev. David T. Tyson, C.S.C., provincial superior for the Congregation of Holy Cross Indiana Province, said in announcing the annual award that it recognizes and thanks the extraordinary efforts among “thousands of lay collaborators and others” who are “living out the Holy Cross mission.”

The 2009 award went to 11 individuals in places like South Bend; Phoenix; Portland, Ore.; Santiago, Chile; and Kampala, Uganda.

Recipients have assisted the far-flung Holy Cross ministries in educational, parish and mission settings.

Recognizing collaboration with the Holy Cross pastoral team at Saint Joseph Parish in South Bend, two other Notre Dame employees—Matt and Kate Barrett—also received the award. Matthew Barrett is a professor in Notre Dame Law School, and Kate Barrett works in the Office of Campus Ministry.

They have been involved in a number of ways as parishioners at Saint Joseph, including service on the pastoral council.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Robert F. Kennedy visits Notre Dame, 1968

Robert F. Kennedy spoke at St. Peter’s Center on his presidential campaign trail on April 4, 1968. Later that day he flew to Muncie to speak at Ball State University. He was boarding a plane to fly to Indianapolis to open his campaign headquarters and give a speech when he learned that Martin Luther King had been shot in Memphis. Just a few weeks later, on June 5, after addressing his supporters at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, Kennedy was shot by Sirhan Sirhan. He died in the early morning hours of June 6, 1968.

In late January, the DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts premiered the commissioned work “RFK: The Journey to Justice,” presented by the L.A. Theatre Works. The独脚戏, which focuses on Kennedy’s personal and political journey, opens in Los Angeles in mid-March 2010.

Making God known, loved and served
Holy Cross: Bringing Hope to Haiti

‘We shed tears, we hurt, but know we are not alone’

BY MICHAEL O. GARVEY, PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Since 1944, when Holy Cross missionaries first came to Cap Haïtien, the congregation—the same religious order which founded the University of Notre Dame a century earlier—has established numerous educational, social, and parochial ministries throughout Haiti. Holy Cross community is now organized there as the Province of Notre Dame de Perpetual Secours with 49 professed members, including two Holy Cross bishops, 25 temporarily professed members, five novices and six postulants.

Holy Cross religious are a vital presence in this already beleaguered nation, 80 percent of whose popula-
tion are members of the Catholic Church. And neither the Church nor the Holy Cross order was spared when the earth began to shudder.

Returning to Notre Dame after having miraculously survived the collapse of the Montana Hotel in Port-au-Prince, Rev. Thomas Streit, C.S.C., founder and direc-
tor of Notre Dame’s Haiti Program, describing the apocalyptic horror he had witnessed, said of the rubble of the city and noted that “the churches were all gone, all of them. Places that I had prayed in, places that mean so much to so many people. That was their source of hope.”

Recognizing Father Streit as a priest, one surviving woman bellowed at him accusingly as he wandered the ruins. “The church fell down on the people as they were praying.”

“She and many others were clearly angry,” he said. “I can’t blame them. But they were the exceptions. I came away with an experience I would not have wished for, but one that has shown me the strength of the human spirit.”

An eyewitness, Father Streit Clot, C.S.C., who was being notified of the disaster, said: “Another, from Sister Maureen Fuellkell, C.S.C., reported the arrival of a Holy Cross priest from Port-au-Prince in Cap Haïtien. “He said he could walk on the main street for blocks and blocks and look at the ruins,” she said. Sister Maureen worked at a hospital that had been destroyed.

“Thanks to everyone for your prayers and solidarity,” she continued. “We shed tears, we hurt, but know we are not alone. Many things will be changed forever, but life will go on because we are loved by a Divine Presence in our midst.”

As they correspond with, pray for and orga-
nize relief efforts for the victims of the disaster, the members of the Holy Cross community in this country are sharing a striking appreciation of their kinship with those in Haiti. “Our constitutions tell us that ‘it remains only for us to find how even the cross can be a gift’;” says Rev. David Tyson, provincial superior of the Indiana Province of Holy Cross. “Haiti may end up teaching us that very thing. For now, I remember the change of our constitutions that ‘we are men with hope to bring. I want to do that for my Haitian confreres.’”

The Haiti Program is not a primary staff, and its prob-
lems are not part of the relief effort. The grants and facilities and the surrounding community have been affected by the earthquake, although the extent of the impact is not yet known.

If you’d like to help the Haiti Program rebuild, you may make a gift by calling Carol Bennison, direc-
tor of donor services, at 631-9385, or use the online donation fea-
ture “Make a Gift” at supporting. nd.edu, designation: Earthquake-
Haiti Program.

Donations may also be sent to the University of Notre Dame Develop-
ment Department, 1100 Grace Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556, Attention: Earthquake-Haiti Program.

In addition to the Haiti Program, the Congregation of Holy Cross has a strong presence in Haiti, and the destruction has had a devastat-
ing impact on their work. If you wish to support the Congregation, please send donations in care of Holy Cross Mission Center, P.O. Box 543, Notre Dame, IN 46556.

Holy Cross: Bringing Hope to Haiti

RESEARCHING THE BENEFITS OF WELLNESS

A holistic approach to a healthier campus

BY GENE STOWE, FOR NDWORKS

Gene Angst of the Mendoza College of Business is leading studies to find out how Notre Dame can do better at being well.

Angst, who came to Notre Dame 2½ years ago, heads the re-
search focus of a campus Wellness Committee and a gathering data to the health of Notre Dame faculty and staff and mea-
sure how health helps.

“Is this a new science?” Angst says. “It’s somewhat difficult to quantify the benefits of wellness.”

The effort includes Health-
Quotient, an extensive online questionnaire in a special WebMD portal at WhMD.com that scores the employee based on answers to health and lifestyle questions and suggests areas for improving health.

Based on that study, WebMD employees’ health behaviors to help you decide on a tack for improv-
ing your health,” says Angst, 40, who is in good health but aims at running several times a week and losing two or three pounds.

“Depending on the severity of the profile that’s generated about you, they’ll include you from these coaches to help you along with your wellness goals. They can identify whether you’re at risk for diabetes, depression, obesity, a variety of chronic conditions. If you’re reasonably healthy, you get maybe one or two calls a year that prompt you to continue to think about your wellness.”

Notre Dame devised a supplemen-
tary survey to focus more deeply on obesity, including questions about the person’s perception of their own well-being and their understanding of nutrition. As with HealthQuotient, participants’ identities are not included.

The survey tests objective knowl-
edge—which has more fiber, a banana or box of blueberries?—and gathers personal opinions.

“We want to get a sense of whether your physical active in some way is related to your view of yourself holistically,” Angst explains.

The survey, concluded in December, confirmed an expected weight problem on campus and a surprisingly strong correlation between poor knowledge of nutrition and weight problems. While people who know which foods are better can still make less healthy choices — the broccoli instead of the blueberries — the information apparently has considerable impact, he says.

The research extends to new fields in understanding obesity, including the role that friends and coworkers play in a person’s attention to weight control.

Some of the results on campus could lead to strategies for reaching into the community with technology to help others, especially young people, improve their health and overcome obesity.

Personal text messages to teen-
gers, for example, could remind them to walk for 30 minutes and eat an apple or serving of vegetables — and congratulate them when they do.

“We surmise that just getting these kids to think we are interested in working with them and we want to help them will in some way improve or help them to monitor their weight,” Angst says.

Notre Dame is collaborating with Memorial Hospital on teenage obesity research in South Bend, discovering among other things that convenience stores substitute for grocery stores for some families.

“It’s been enlightening for me,” he says. “There’s so many social and socioeconomic ways of considering this problem. Nobody’s figured out obesity.”

Research with Notre Dame faculty and staff provides a more focused group with opportunities for closer communication and closer study than other populations.

The initiative joins other health-
promoting activities in the University, including disease management, incent-
tives such as mailed walking trails, organized competitions among groups, and athletic department programs.

Many Notre Dame’s faith tra-
tition helps foster a holistic approach to the subject.

“Part of wellness is asking questions about how much do you meditate, how much do you pray,” he says. “It’s refreshing that they take that view. It’s more than putting on your running shoes.”

Angst is a Michigan native who earned a degree in mechanical engineering at Western Michigan University and worked for a large industrial firm—including a stint in Australia—before he earned a Ph.D. at the University of Delaware.

He earned a Ph.D. at the University of Maryland in health information systems with a focus on health information systems, and was associate director of the Center for Health Information and Decision Systems at the university for three years before he came to Notre Dame.

“I really believe in this,” Angst says. “I think that wellness can make us a better institution. I think there are things we can do on campus to make our students healthier. I think there are things we can do on campus to make our students healthier.”

Ways to help Haiti

The University has experienced an outpouring of interest in assisting earthquake victims in Haiti and Notre Dame’s Haiti Program. For ways to contribute, links to various relief a-
cences can be found at hallidaysmiller. nd.edu/giving, the Observer’s Web site, observer.nd.edu, has a link to global relief effort Hope for Haiti Now, which allows online donations. Many have specifically asked about supporting the Notre Dame Haiti Program, directed by Father Tom Streit, C.S.C., which works to eradicate lymphatic filariasis, often called elephantiasis.

The Haiti Program is not a primary staff, and its prob-
lems are not part of the relief effort. The grants and facilities and the surrounding community have been affected by the earthquake, although the extent of the impact is not yet known.

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‘We shed tears, we hurt, but know we are not alone’

‘We shed tears, we hurt, but know we are not alone’

‘We shed tears, we hurt, but know we are not alone’
Administrative assistants update skills through continuing education program

“‘We can all continue to learn’

BY CAROL C. BRADLEY, NDWORKS

There are more than 500 staffers in administrative assistant positions across campus—and a new education program, Today’s Administrative Professional (TAP), is designed to help them develop their professional skills, says Kara McClure, manager of learning and organizational development in the Office of Human Resources.

Administrative assistants, McClure notes, “carry a lot of weight. This is a great source of resources to develop a group that’s already strong. We can play on their strengths, and develop new ones.” Administrative assistants, she adds, want information. “And they want to cut to the chase and get the skills they need.”

“I think it’s wonderful that the University is giving us this opportunity—not only to learn and expand on our basic knowledge, but we also get

to give input toward future TAP programs,” says participant Sue Kobel, senior administrative assistant in the Office of Academic Mission Support. “There’s a real sense of empowerment for the people who are participating. It’s a real affirmation of all that we do. We can all continue to learn.”

TAP was aimed at administrative assistants who want to update their skills and learn new technical, interpersonal and management competencies. Modules include listening skills, verbal and non-verbal communication, organizational skills, project and time management, business writing and conflict management.

An advisory team of administrative assistants from all areas, faculty and staff, met to observe the program. “Everyone came up with the idea of including technology seminars as part of the program, offering training needs in areas such as Web and software applications. Participants take a baseline proficiency pre-test, and are tested after the training, “to see how much the needle has moved,” McClure says.

Participants in the 39-session program are divided into two groups of 35, meeting two sessions a month in either the morning or afternoon. “They can’t be away from the office for a whole day,” McClure says.

There is no charge for the program, but very strict attendance requirements are enforced. At the end of the program, a certificate and continuing education credits are awarded through Rockhurst University, a national continuing education program.

Response to the program, McClure says, has been overwhelming. “Not just in numbers, but in the level of energy and enthusiasm. We owe a big thanks to their managers, who encouraged people to observe the program. The interest in participating in TAP registration for the upcoming session will take place in early summer through Endeavor. Those currently serving in full-time, non-exempt administrative staff roles supporting at least one faculty or staff member are eligible for the program.

For more information on this and other learning opportunities, visit hr.nd.edu and click ‘career development.’

NEW EMPLOYEES

The University welcomes the following employees who began work in December:

Joshua D. Cameron, aerospace and mechanical engineering
Courtney Craig, Institute for Latino Studies
Serguei Fedorov, Center for Research Computing
Brian Kelly, football
Brian R. Patterson, investment office
Richard L. Tegmeyer, electrical engineering
Bianca L. Tirado, African American and African Studies
Maureen A. Wildey, human resources

HEALTHCARE

‘Learning at work’ graduates first class

Staffers can earn technical certificate or associate degree at work

BY CAROL C. BRADLEY, NDWORKS

In December the Notre Dame/ByTech College Community Learning at Work Skills Academy graduated the first class of students in the technical certificate program. The program offers regular full- and part-time employees the opportunity to earn a technical certificate or an Associate in Applied Science Degree through courses offered on the Notre Dame campus.

The 35 students who earned technical certificates all plan to continue the program, and will graduate next year with an associate degree. The accelerated curriculum fits four classes into a regular semester, plus two classes in the summer. The University pays for students’ tuition, books and technical fees.

“I feel that what’s good about the program is that my staff has been able to enhance their skills, which in the long run is going to prove very productive for our offices,” says Kevin Cannon, director of the Office of Student Financial Services. “We’re always looking for opportunities to grow as much as possible.”

The associate degree in applied science is one of many Learning at Work programs that are offered through Human Resources. New enrollees are added in the fall. For information on this and other Learn at Work programs, visit hr.nd.edu and click on the Learning and Development tab, or call the askHR help line, 631-5900.

HUMAN RESOURCES

From left, Mary Nucciarone, associate director of financial aid, Kevin Cannon, director of student financial services, Janine Meersman, senior administrative assistant, her husband Kevin Meersman, and Christy Miller, senior student services representative. Janine Meersman and Christy Miller received technical certificates at the recent graduation ceremony.

At top, graduates Dianna R. Beirne, left, administrative assistant in the registrar’s office, with Roberta White, senior administrative assistant in the Office of Public Information and Communication. Above, Dawn Denison, building support assistant in biological sciences.
FTT Talks presents Steerlin Harjo
3 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29
Browning Cinema
Harjo was selected in 2004 as one of the Sundance Institute’s first five Annenberg Film Fellows. Her movie “Four Sheets to the Wind” follows at 7 p.m.
Free but ticketed

Four Sheets to the Wind (2008)
Screen/Vace Film Series
7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29
Director and writer Steerlin Harjo is scheduled to be present.
A death in Oklahoma sets in motion events leading to something great, or so says a Muscogee-speaking narrator in this lovely tale of communication, family, forgiveness and “something resembling love” among a wonderfully odd-ball Native American family.
Free but ticketed

The Metropolitan Opera in HD: Verdi—Simon Boccanegra—Verdi
7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7 and 14, Browning Cinema
Plácido Domingo makes history singing the title role in Verdi’s story of a tragic father and his lost daughter.
$22/$15, subscriber rates apply

Notre Dame Symphony Orchestra Winter 2010 Concert: Musical Valentines
7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, Leighton Concert Hall
An afternoon of French melodic music, including Faure, Ravel, St. Saëns and others
$12/$5/$5

The Wild Bunch (1969)
PAC Classic 100
Free but ticketed

Gang presents “The Trial of the Catonsville Nine”
7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28 through Friday, Jan. 29, Browning Cinema
Directed by Steven D. Catanzarite.
$18/$18/$12

The Killing Fields (1984)
Screen/Vace Film Series
9:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6
Roland Joffe’s unflinching drama recounts the true story of New York Times journalist Sidney Schanberg and Cambodian journalist and translator Dith Pran, who found themselves trapped in the nightmare of the Khmer Rouge revolution in Cambodia.
English, French and Khmer languages with English subtitles
Free but ticketed

Broken Embraces (2009)
6:30 and 9:30 p.m.
Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Feb. 11, 12 and 13
Pedro Almodóvar’s tale of a blind writer who must heal the wounds of a brutal car crash 14 years earlier in which he lost his sight and Lena, the love of his life.
English and Spanish languages with English subtitles
Free but ticketed

The Ascent of Money” Panel Discussion (Part II)
10:40 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 5, Jordan Auditorium
Sponsored by the Creative MBA Association.

Rossellini’s Distinguished Woman Lecturer: Tolstoy and Shakespeare
5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, McKeown Hall, Auditorium, reception to follow
Caryl Emerson, A. Watson Armour III University Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Princeton University

University of Notre Dame Diversity Conference 2010
6 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5
9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6
The theme of the third annual conference is “Diversity and the Bottom Line: Why Diversity Matters to You.” Sponsored by the Notre Dame Business School. Registration deadline is Monday, Feb. 1. The conference is open to the public and free to participants.

Proven’s Distinguished Woman Lecturer: Tolstoy and Shakespeare
5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, McKeown Hall, Auditorium, reception to follow
Caryl Emerson, A. Watson Armour III University Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Princeton University

Ten Years Hence Speaker Series: “The Ascent of Money” Panel Discussion (Part II)
10:40 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 5, Jordan Auditorium, Mendoza College of Business

CAMPUS LECTURES, CONFERENCES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ten Years Hence Speaker Series: “The Ascent of Money” Panel Discussion (Part II)
10:40 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 5, Jordan Auditorium, Mendoza College of Business

Discussion (Part II)
10:40 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.
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Sponsored by the Creative MBA Association.

ANouNcemeNts

The University of Notre Dame’s Office of Government Relations announced the University’s proposal for $25.5 billion in a capital campaign, one of the largest in history.

The opening rounds of the 80th annual Bengal Bouts, benefiting Holy Cross missions in Bangladesh, begin Saturday, Feb. 13, in the Joyce Center. For ticket information, visit und.com/tickets or call 631-7356.

80TH ANNUAL BENGAL BOUTS

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The Science of Avatar

BY CAROL C. BRADLEY

It’s shown for only moments in James Cameron’s movie “Avatar,” but the superconducting crystalline material “Unobtainium” plays a central role in the movie. It’s the stuff the mercenaries are ready to destroy the planet Pandora—and the native Na’vi—to obtain: A substance that superconducts electricity at room temperature.

In one scene (at left, second from top) a sample of Unobtainium levitates on an invisible magnetic field.

Here on Earth, in a physics lab in Nieuwland Hall of Science, physics professor Morten Eskildsen displays a chunk of a ceramic superconducting material. “Unobtainium,” he jokes. By supercooling the material to minus 321 degrees Fahrenheit with liquid nitrogen and placing it above a track of powerful magnets, the material levitates. “It’s usually quite impressive when people see it for the first time,” he says.

It may look like movie magic, but it’s the same technology that makes experimental high speed Maglev (magnetic levitation) trains run on test tracks in Japan. Another common application is in magnetic resonance imaging machines (MRIs).

But in the real world, superconductors work only when they’re supercooled, which is expensive. Unobtainium—a material that superconducts energy at room temperature, really would be the Holy Grail, Eskildsen says. Still, he found the movie enjoyable. “It’s not whether it’s realistic, it’s whether it’s well done. I thought it was well done. It’s like the Harry Potter books—they’re so well written, you just believe it.”

Agustín Fuentes, director of the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts and professor of anthropology, has mixed feelings about “Avatar.” “The biology and ecology were great. I was emotional, it was so beautiful. But the story is a joke. It’s the most standard story in Hollywood—the hero’s journey. Thirty seconds in, you knew everything that’s going to happen.”

From an anthropological standpoint, he says, the Na’vi are a hodgepodge of Native American, Balinese and West African cultures. “The natives are in tune with nature, the greater good of the universe. But who makes the best native? The colonial soldier. The white man is the savior. It’s standard American mythology—Pocahontas, ‘The Last of the Mohicans,’ Westerns.”

“Avatar” has set a new bar for visuals and the use of 3-D, Fuentes says. “The movie is cool. But the script was very poor.”

Jason McLachlan, assistant professor of biology, is a global change biologist. When he saw “Avatar,” he had a similar reaction. “On the plus side, it was like flying through a Maxfield Parrish painting,” he says. “On the minus side, I was disappointed...