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October 2005

University News

UNIVERSITY RESPONDS TO

HURRICANE KATRINA: The Washington University community continues its efforts to provide relief for those in need after the devastating events of Hurricane Katrina. Several ongoing projects are aimed at raising money and necessary supplies, and nearly eighty graduate and undergraduate students from affected areas have enrolled at the University on a visiting, non-degree-seeking basis.

To learn more about continuing Hurricanes Katrina and Rita relief efforts at Washington University, please visit the following websites:

[Community Service at Washington University: Hurricane Relief Efforts](#)

[Alumni Association Hurricane Response Website](#)

ENGINEERING DEAN TO STEP DOWN: Christopher I. Byrnes, Ph.D., dean of the School of Engineering & Applied Science and the Edward H. and Florence G. Skinner Professor of Systems Science and Mathematics, has announced his intention to retire as dean effective June 30, 2006. Byrnes is only the eighth dean the School of Engineering & Applied Science has had since 1870 and the third longest in tenure. After a sabbatical, he will return to the faculty.

UNIVERSITY ADDRESSES WAGES AND BENEFITS: Washington University has taken significant steps to address concerns about wages and benefits for lower-paid workers. Initiatives include creating an entry-level wage, continuing its long-standing membership in the Fair Labor Association, joining the Worker Rights Consortium, and creating two committees of students, faculty, and administrators – a Basic Service Contractors Review Committee and a Resource Priority Review Team.



Photo by Kevin Lowder

Bill Witbrodt (center), director of Student Financial Services, and Marilyn Pollack, interim director of Dining Services, chat with Liet Le during an orientation session for students attending Washington University from areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. Le, a joint M.D./M.B.A. student, is from Biloxi, Mississippi. He was studying at Tulane University but is now one of nearly 80 undergraduate and graduate students from affected areas who have enrolled at Washington University on a visiting, non-degree-seeking basis.

Research



Clint's DNA was used to sequence the chimp genome.

MAN'S CLOSEST

FRIEND: Richard K. Wilson, Ph.D., director of the Genome Sequencing Center at the School of Medicine and other scientists at the Center were part of a team that sequenced the chimpanzee genome. The group recently published the initial analysis of the chimp genome in the September 1 issue of *Nature*. The analysis largely consisted of human-chimp comparisons that have allowed scientists to identify some of the most

significant changes in the human genetic code.

WHY STUDY IN GROUPS?: More than twenty years of academic research has demonstrated that studying in groups helps students learn more effectively. But what exactly is it about group study that makes it so effective? R. Keith Sawyer, Ph.D., associate professor of education in Arts & Sciences and an expert in creativity and everyday conversation, has identified two patterns of group dynamics that show why group study is optimal.

FRESHMAN FIFTEEN: It may be the number of credit hours taken during freshman year, but more often, the term "freshman fifteen" refers to the infamous weight gained in college. In a study of Washington University students, a research team at the School of Medicine found that about 70 percent of students gained a significant amount of weight during the first two years of college. As the study continues and students make their way through college, preliminary results are not showing much behavior change in students, leading the team to examine ways to make it easier for college students to eat better foods and get more exercise.

Features

POWER OF FEMA DILUTED?: The devastating conditions in the Gulf Coast have left many Americans asking, "Why did the government fail when Katrina hit?" Nancy Staudt, J.D., professor of law and expert on government decision-making, says that several organizational changes rendered FEMA less adept to respond to Hurricane Katrina.

WHEN WELFARE TO WORK DOESN'T

WORK: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 ended low-income families' entitlement to cash assistance and changed the welfare program from a system of income support to one based on work. But what becomes of those who, because of barriers such as mental health issues, physical health problems, or lack of transportation, can't work? Yunju Nam, Ph.D., assistant professor at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, recently conducted a study that examines what is happening to these individuals.



Yunju Nam, Ph.D., assistant professor at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work says that one of the consequences of welfare reform is that "probably the most disadvantaged group left or were forced to leave welfare without having the proper means to live."

I NEED TICKETS: The National Football League season is gearing up, and once again, ticket prices are higher than ever. Fans who pay anywhere from \$50 to \$250 for a single ticket may grouse about the price, but Dan Elfenbein, Ph.D., assistant professor of organization and strategy in the John M. Olin School of Business, said football teams routinely under-price their tickets and online ticket scalpers are reaping the benefits.

Heard on Campus

"Pressure can be your friend....If you handle the adversity better than anybody else, you pick up an edge."
— Tony LaRussa, manager of the St. Louis Cardinals, during his talk at the Assembly Series on September 7.

Kudos

Carl Phillips, professor of English and African & African American Studies in Arts & Sciences, has won two prestigious poetry awards — The Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize and the Thom Gunn Award for Gay Male Poetry — for his recent collection *The Rest of Love: Poems* (2004).

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This newsletter is prepared by Special Development Communications Projects staff in Alumni and Development Programs. It is intended to provide a brief summary of what is happening at the University. Alumni, parents, and friends of the University for whom we have valid e-mail addresses automatically receive @ Washington University in St. Louis.

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