




Washington University in St. Louis

July 2007
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University News

Washington University to invest \$55 million in renewable energy research initiative:

Washington University is creating a new International Center for Advanced Renewable Energy and Sustainability (I-CARES) to encourage and coordinate university-wide and external collaborative research in the areas of renewable energy and sustainability — including biofuels, CO2 mitigation, and coal-related issues. The University will invest more than \$55 million in the initiative, whose research activities will include international partner universities.



Students work toward sustainable engineering solutions abroad:

Washington University's chapter of Engineers Without Borders is sending faculty and students around the world to help communities rebuild after natural disasters, create sustainable living environments, and foster relationships that are as sustainable as the buildings they construct in some of the world's poorest countries.

U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals rules in favor of Washington University:

In an unanimous decision, the U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that tissue and blood samples donated to Washington University School of Medicine for prostate cancer research belong to the institution. The three-judge panel said the donors voluntarily made a gift to the University when they donated their biological samples, and therefore, the specimens belong to the school.

Research

Study affirms link between Neandertals and early humans:

For nearly a century, anthropologists have been debating the relationship of Neandertals to modern humans; in particular, did Neandertals contribute directly or indirectly to the ancestry of early modern humans? Erik Trinkaus, Ph.D., the Mary Tileston Hemenway Professor of physical anthropology in Arts & Sciences, has examined the earliest modern humans in Europe and concludes that early modern humans did exhibit evidence of Neandertal traits.

Doing more good than harm:

Efforts to improve Child Protective Services (CPS) would be more effective if they were based on evaluations of available data instead of assertions that are not supported by evidence, say child welfare services experts Brett Drake, Ph.D., and Melissa Jonson-Reid, Ph.D., associate professors of social work in the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. "We now have enough empirical evidence to scientifically evaluate many longstanding criticisms of CPS, and many of those criticisms appear to be without basis in reality," say Drake and Reid.

Scientists find first gene linked to scoliosis:

Physicians have recognized scoliosis, the abnormal curvature of the spine, since the time of Hippocrates, but its causes have remained a mystery — until now. For the first time, researchers at the School of Medicine and colleagues at collaborating institutions have discovered a gene that underlies the condition, which affects about 3 percent of all children.



Joe Angeles/WUSTL Photo

Erik Trinkaus, WUSTL professor of anthropology in Arts & Sciences, holding a Neandertal skull, says the evidence is very convincing that Neandertals and early humans mixed.



Joe Angeles/WUSTL Photo

Gerald L. Early, Ph.D., the Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters, who directs the "Teaching Jazz as American Culture" summer institute for high school teachers, hopes to show that jazz is not only relevant to youth today, but also essential.

Features

Teaching "America's music" to the next generation:

In the 1920s, jazz was "pop" music, but today it is often shunned by younger people in favor of rap, pop, and country. That begs the question: Can jazz, with its broad history and reputation for being "art" music, be relevant to youth today? Some of the country's leading scholars of jazz and American culture will address that question during the University's National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute in July.

Human interlopers:

A researcher at Washington University's Tyson Research Center, along with colleagues at the Saint Louis Zoo and Saint Louis University, are tracking timber rattlesnakes in west St. Louis County and neighboring Jefferson County. They are investigating how developing subdivisions invade the snakes' turf and affect the reptiles.

Overcoming a fear of hiring employees:

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 held great promise for protecting workers from discrimination in the workplace. Unfortunately, it has come to create a situation in which employers, protected groups, and the court system all lose as employment cases crowd out other forms of litigation. One way to get around this problem, says Anne Marie Knott, Ph.D., assistant professor of strategy in the John M. Olin School of Business, is to create a process that would enable employers to get a sense of whether a prospective employee is likely to sue for discrimination. The solution: an "anti-discrimination bond" — individual accounts to which employees make contributions through payroll deduction, and which are forfeited if the employee brings a suit against the company.

Kudos

Susan E. Mackinnon, M.D., the Sydney M. Jr. and Robert H. Shoenberg Professor of Surgery and chief of the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine, has been named president of the American Association of Plastic Surgeons.

Daniel R. Mandelker, J.S.D., the Howard A. Stamper Professor of Law, has been selected to receive the American Bar Association's prestigious Jefferson Fordham Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding service in the field of state and local government law.

Craig A. Micchelli, assistant professor of molecular biology and pharmacology in the School of Medicine, is one of 20 researchers selected as 2007 Pew Scholars in the Biomedical Sciences.

Washington University's Department of Athletics finished fifth in the 2006-07 United States Sports Academy Directors' Cup Division III standings, as announced by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, the United States Sports Academy, and USA Today. The fifth-place finish marks the Bears fifth-straight, top-10 ranking.

About @Washington University in St. Louis

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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Heard on Campus

"Can you think of any healthy, stable democracy anywhere in the world that is not nourished by strong and independent universities? Or the reverse question: Can you think of any authoritarian regime that tolerates academic freedom and independent universities? There is, I would argue, an inextricable link between long-term, steady democracies and strong universities, so too, with sustained economic development."

— Jonathan Fanton, President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation from his lecture on April 5, 2007. The lecture, "The Social Impact of a University," was part of the Danforth Lecture Series.

