




Washington University  
in St. Louis

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e-News for Alumni, Parents, and Friends

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### University News

#### Crimes Against Humanity project moves forward:

The School of Law's Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute has completed the first two phases of a two-year project to study the international law regarding crimes against humanity and to draft a multilateral treaty condemning and prohibiting such crimes. In conjunction with this project called the Crimes Against Humanity Initiative, the Institute has appointed six fellows who will be performing research on the commission of atrocities from 1900-2009 and working on the draft treaty.



2009 Crimes Against Humanity Fellows with Leila Nadya Sadat, the Henry H. Oberschelp Professor in the School of Law and Director of the Harris World Law Institute

#### CDC invests in preventative health care for Hispanics at home and in Latin America:

The Prevention Research Center (PRC) in St. Louis is launching a multinational research project focused on preventing the leading causes of death among Hispanics in the United States and Latin America. The PRC in St. Louis, a collaboration between Washington University and Saint Louis University, will conduct a four-year, \$2.8 million effort to apply and adapt evidence-based strategies for preventing heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity in the United States, Mexico, and Brazil.

#### Washington University awarded \$80 million in stimulus grants:

Washington University has been awarded nearly \$80 million in funding from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to support research across a broad range of projects, including: cancer, Alzheimer's disease, renewable energy, diabetes, and climate change. As of September 30, the end of the federal fiscal year, university faculty had received 207 awards. The largest chunk — \$10 million — went to the Genome Center for a project to generate comprehensive genetic maps of mutations that underlie 20 different types of cancer. Some \$73 million came from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), ranking Washington University among the top 10 academic institutions in NIH stimulus funds. Other awards were received from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy.

### Research

#### Amaizeing: Corn genome decoded:

In recent years, scientists have decoded the DNA of humans and a menagerie of creatures, but none with genes as complex as a stalk of corn, the latest genome to be unraveled. A team of scientists led by The Genome Center at Washington University School of Medicine published the completed corn genome in the November 20 issue of the journal *Science*, an accomplishment that will speed efforts to develop better crop varieties to meet the world's growing demands for food, livestock feed, and fuel.

#### Holiday cheer or holiday hunger?:

Holidays and tables full of delicious food usually go hand in hand, but for nearly half of the children in the United States, this is not guaranteed. "Forty-nine percent of all U.S. children will be in a household that uses food stamps at some point during their childhood," says Mark R. Rank, Ph.D., the Herbert S. Hadley Professor of Social Welfare at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. "Food stamp use is a clear sign of poverty and food insecurity, two of the most detrimental economic conditions affecting a child's health." Rank's study, "Estimating the Risk of Food Stamp Use and



Iowa State

Impoverishment During Childhood," is published in the current issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

**Dinosaurs were warm-blooded, new study says:**

Were dinosaurs "warm-blooded" like present-day mammals and birds, or "cold-blooded" like present day lizards? The implications of this simple-sounding question go beyond deciding whether or not you would snuggle up to a dinosaur on a cold winter's evening. In a study published in the journal *PLoS ONE*, a team of researchers, including Herman Pontzer, Ph.D., assistant professor of anthropology in Arts & Sciences, has found strong evidence that many dinosaur species were probably warm-blooded.

**Features**

**Washington University volleyball wins NCAA-Record 10th national championship:**

The No. 4-ranked Washington University volleyball team defeated No. 1-ranked Juniata College 3-1 to capture the 2009 NCAA Division III National Championship on November 21. In the process, Washington University increased its NCAA-record national championship total in the sport to 10. The Bears last captured the NCAA title in 2007.

**Recovering from the Great Recession:**

The key issue is not whether the official recession is over, argues Steve Fazzari, professor of economics in Arts & Sciences, but whether the economy can generate the growth necessary to put many of the unemployed back to work again. "In the deep downturns of the 1970s and early '80s, strong consumer spending growth led to strong recoveries. Unfortunately, I just don't see that happening this time." Fazzari's research on the consumer spending binge that fueled economic growth for nearly two decades predicted the great risk for financial collapse that contributed to the Great Recession.



**Heard on Campus**

"Classic architecture expresses completion, finality, perfection; Gothic Architecture expresses aspiration, growth, development. To the beholder the Classic says: This is the sum — Here is perfection — Do not aspire further. The Gothic says to him: Reach higher — Spread outward and upward — There are no limitations. Now, when we consider what a University is, can there be any doubt which of these two styles best answers to its idea?"

— Walter Cope, architect and partner of the firm Cope and Stewardson, whose proposal unanimously won the competition to design the layout and architecture of the Danforth Campus, during his presentation to the University board in November 1899

**Skills tests like 'connect the dots' may be early Alzheimer's indicator:**

A study of mental decline in the years prior to diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease suggests that changing the focus of testing may allow physicians to detect signs of the disease three years earlier. Current cognitive testing typically focuses on episodic memory, or the ability to remember things such as word lists or information from a reading. But School of Medicine scientists found that another class of mental abilities known as visuospatial skills begins to deteriorate up to three years prior to diagnosis. These skills are tested with tasks such as connecting the dots or using a guide to build a structure with blocks.

**Kudos**

Kaitlin Burlingame, a junior majoring in mechanical engineering, took part in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Motivating Undergraduates in Science and Technology (NASA MUST) five-day symposium in Orlando, Florida, and the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. As a MUST scholar, Burlingame also will receive year-round mentoring and tutoring and an academic scholarship of up to \$10,000.

The Cystic Fibrosis Center at the School of Medicine and St. Louis Children's Hospital was recognized with a 2009 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Quality Care Award at the North American Cystic Fibrosis

Conference in Minneapolis on October 17.

**Tim Holy**, Ph.D., associate professor of neurobiology, has received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director's Pioneer Award — one of only 18 given this year — to develop innovative ways to monitor the activity of many neurons simultaneously.

**Raj Jain**, Ph.D., professor of computer science and engineering, has received the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC)-Advanced Computing and Communications Society (ACCS) Foundation Award. The award recognizes outstanding dedication and support to the body of science in the fields of networking and communications.

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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