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University News

Creating the best possible living experience for Washington University students:

The mission of Campus Life, as outlined in the Strategic Plan for Excellence in the Undergraduate Experience, is to “build and sustain an undergraduate experience of exceptional quality, where students, known by name and story, prepare themselves for lives of purpose and meaning.” At Washington University, Campus Life is composed of three areas: Community Service Office, Danforth University Center & Event Management, and Student Involvement and Leadership.



Joe Angeles

Helping students fully engage in the intellectual and social life of the Washington University community is one of the main goals of the offices that make up Campus Life.

Physicians provide top-tier care for patients with heart attacks:

Washington University physicians at Barnes-Jewish Hospital are in the top 5 percent nationally in the speed in which they treat heart attacks. When a patient having a heart attack arrives in the emergency department (ED), the clock is ticking. And the clock keeps ticking faster and faster. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that patients suffering heart attacks receive artery-clearing therapy as soon as possible. One option is balloon angioplasties within 90 minutes of arriving at the ED. Previously, the AHA recommendation for this procedure, called “door-to-balloon,” was 120 minutes. The association tightened the standard to save more lives.

Winning lottery strategy proposed by Olin visiting professor:

The record-breaking \$380 million Mega Millions multistate lottery jackpot drawing last month had two winners and may inspire more people to take a chance on being a millionaire. But Romel Mostafa, visiting professor of strategy at the John M. Olin School of Business, cautions lottery players on the odds of winning in an interview with NPR’s Michel Martin, broadcast on January 4.

Research

Storms, soccer matches hidden in seismometer noise:

If you wander up to a seismograph in a museum, unless you are lucky enough to be there right during an earthquake, all you will see is a small wiggly signal being recorded. What’s inside the wiggles is called noise by seismologists, because the signal is always there and originates from the normal activity of the earth between the jolts caused by large earthquakes. Up until recently, few researchers paid any heed to these apparently boring signals — analyzing them, it was thought, would be like critiquing elevator music. But now doctoral candidate Garrett Euler, and his co-advisor, Douglas A. Wiens, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences in Arts & Sciences, building on a serendipitous, humorous find of three years ago linking seismic noise and soccer, have discovered a source of seismic noise in Africa near the island of Bioko in the Bight of Bonny in the Gulf of Guinea.

Kidney gene implicated in increased heart failure risk:

Scientists have identified the first DNA sequence variant common in the population that is not only associated with an increased risk of heart failure, but appears to play a role in causing it. The variant, a change in a single letter of the DNA



Wikimedia Commons

The exploration of seismic noise was triggered by the chance observation that the noise spiked at key moments during the African Cup of Nations soccer games. The seismometers were recording "footquakes." So far there is no indication they pick up the cacophony of the vuvuzelas as well.



Photo courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery Elizabeth C. Childs, Ph.D., chair and associate professor of Art History and Archaeology (center) discusses the work of American painter John La Farge with Washington University doctoral candidate Matthew Bailey (left) and Calvin Brown, associate curator of Prints and Drawings at the Princeton University Art Museum. The three were part of a small study group organized last fall by Princeton and the Yale University Art Gallery.

sequence, impairs channels that control kidney function. "It's not a heart gene," says Gerald W. Dorn II, M.D., the Philip and Sima K. Needleman Professor of Medicine at Washington University School of Medicine and a lead investigator on the study. "It's a kidney gene. This protein is not even expressed in the heart. Nobody has previously considered that kidney-specific gene defects might predispose you to heart failure."

Deep genomics: Scientists probe the epigenome:

A Washington University team is participating in the modENCODE project, a massive ongoing effort to map all the elements in model organisms that affect whether genes are silenced or expressed. The work supports the more complex ENCODE project, which is tasked to map the same elements in the human genome. While the genome is the same in every cell, each cell type expresses a different set of genes. In people, moreover, roughly 95 percent of the genome is silenced. Together the projects will "put flesh on the bones" of the Human Genome Project, says team leader Sarah C.R. Elgin, the Viktor Hamburger Professor in Arts & Sciences.

Features

A moveable feast:

In 1890, the American painter John La Farge embarked on a yearlong journey through the islands of the South Pacific. Just months later, Paul Gauguin began his own Polynesian odyssey. Though the two artists never met, their paths nearly crossed in Tahiti, with Gauguin arriving a mere four days after La Farge departed. So it is perhaps fitting that, last fall, a group of five graduate and undergraduate students from the Department of Art History and Archaeology in Arts & Sciences set out on their own mission of travel, visiting a pair of East Coast exhibitions that focused on works by the two artists.

Beer industry's David and Goliath form friendship at Olin Business School:

What do beer industry giant Tsingtao and the midwest's handcrafted Schlafly brewery have in common? Hops, barley, and business school. Schlafly's brewmaster and Tsingtao's president are recent graduates of the John M. Olin School of Business' Executive MBA program that provides a unique experience for students to network with peers around the globe and share stories from the executive suite over a glass of beer.

Heard on Campus

"You can be the generation that beats global warming, beats the global recession, and makes America not a global superpower, but a moral superpower. The hateful people who want to fight it will fade to the background."

— Van Jones, author, attorney, and former special advisor on green jobs to President Barack Obama, during his Assembly Series talk, titled "Beyond Green Jobs: The Next American Economy," in Graham Chapel on November 30, 2010

One year after Haiti earthquake, Brown School public health expert Iannotti continues work on the ground:

On January 12, 2010, Lora Iannotti, Ph.D., nutrition and public health expert at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, was in Leogane, a seaside town 18 miles west of Port au Prince, Haiti, working with local officials on improving the health of Haitian children. That's when a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake struck the poverty-stricken country. Its epicenter, Leogane. Iannotti survived, but some 230,000 perished. Haiti was devastated: an estimated 3 million were affected by the earthquake in a country already known as the poorest in the Western hemisphere. Since last January, Iannotti, assistant professor at the Brown School, has returned to Haiti a number of times to continue her work on undernutrition and disease prevention in young children. She is back in Haiti again, one year later.

Kudos

Peter Benson, Ph.D., assistant professor of anthropology in Arts & Sciences, has received the 2010 Outstanding Transdisciplinary Scholar Award from the Institute for Public Health.

Stuart A. Kornfeld, M.D., the David C. and Betty Farrell Professor of Medicine, has received the E.B. Wilson Medal, the highest scientific honor awarded by the American Society for Cell Biology.

Wayne M. Yokoyama, M.D., the Sam J. and Audrey Loew Levin Chair for Research in Arthritis and director of the Medical Scientist Training Program at Washington University School of Medicine, received the Lee C. Howley Sr. Prize for Arthritis Research from The Arthritis Foundation. The award is one of the highest in arthritis research.

Three Washington University faculty have been named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society. Of the Washington University honorees, two are from the School of Medicine and one is from Arts & Sciences. They are:

- Peter M.J. Burgers, Ph.D., the Marvin Brennecke Professor in Biological Chemistry, was elected to the Section on Biological Sciences for distinguished contributions to the fields of DNA replication and DNA damage response mechanisms. He is an internationally recognized leader in the biochemistry and genetics of DNA replication and cellular responses to DNA damage.
- Tamara L. Doering, M.D., Ph.D., professor of molecular microbiology and director of the Graduate Program in Molecular Microbiology and Microbial Pathogenesis, was elected to the Section on Medical Sciences for distinguished contributions to understanding the fundamental biology of the pathogenic fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans*.
- Fiona B. Marshall, Ph.D., professor of anthropology and of African & African-American studies, both in Arts & Sciences, was elected to the Section on Anthropology. She is one of the world's pre-eminent scholars on the origins of agriculture in Africa and on donkey domestication.

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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