



Jan. 20

Quiet morning on campus

The moon is setting over Morrill Hall in this pre-dawn shot of a frosty central campus.

Jan. 20

Payroll tax reduction means more money in your pocket

A federal payroll tax reduction of two percentage points will result in bigger paychecks for all ISU employees beginning this month. Human resource services suggests investing the extra funds in your retirement instead of taking a trip to the mall.

Jan. 20

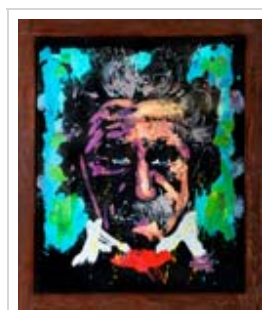
Where's Bob?

Do you know where university photographer Bob Elbert spotted one of our favorite physicists?

Jan. 20

Council learns more about recreation user fees

Professional and Scientific Council members learned more from administrators about increased recreation user fees at their Jan. 13 meeting. They also approved an effort reporting draft policy and a revised performance pay program.



Where's Bob?

Jan. 20

'Future' symposium reformatted, rescheduled to March 9

A half-day symposium on "The Future of Learning, Research and Collaboration" has been postponed from Feb. 1 and reformatted into a March 9 keynote session that organizers hope will allow more faculty, staff and students to attend.

Jan. 20

Faculty conduct policy changes on hold in senate

An expected vote on faculty conduct policy changes was tabled at the Jan. 18 Faculty Senate meeting until next month. The proposed change defines unacceptable performance of duty as faculty misconduct.

Jan. 20

That's a big carpet**Announcements**

- Fall 2011 Honors seminar proposals sought by Feb. 11
- Jan. 27 webinar summarizes research to interest girls in engineering
- Tax assistance available for qualified individuals
- Vet Med offers free seminar for horse owners Feb. 1
- Registration open for "Women in Motion" dance class
- Register now for Feb. 4 financial aid mini-conference
- Register for Veishea Service Day, Stash the Trash on March 26
- Remind students of the Study Abroad Fair Jan. 27
- Help planners identify projects, people with "green" success
- Feb. 11 is deadline for Student Employee of the Year nominations
- All are invited to STEM collaboration coffee Jan. 25
- New website highlights diversity

Receptions & open houses

Reception

- "Relationships" exhibit, Jan. 20

Open house

- SHOP food pantry, Jan. 27

Arts & events**Students to launch campus food pantry for students**

A learning community project evolved into what its planners hope is a long-term program: an on-campus food pantry for students, run by students.

Spring film series is under way

New titles from this fall and winter made the cut in the Student Union Board's spring film series.

Around campus

- Proposal deadline for student success event is Jan. 31

Crews are finishing up the project to replace the athletic turf inside the main track at the Lied Recreation Center.



Lied turf replacement

Jan. 20

Software aims to boost students' research writing skills

New software developed at Iowa State will guide students through their early ventures in research writing. Students plug in their text and the software responds with suggestions.

Jan. 20

Regents give green light to Des Moines veterinary clinic purchase

By the end of the month, Iowa State will purchase a private veterinary hospital in Des Moines for about \$4.5 million and operate it through a nonprofit organization affiliated with the university. The state Board of Regents approved the plan 7-0 during a special meeting Jan. 13.

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- [ISU researchers reach licensing agreement for shrimp vaccines](#)
- [Obama's foreign policy assessed by ISU's McCormick](#)

Inside tools

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Quiet morning

The moon is setting over Morrill Hall in this pre-dawn shot of a frosty central campus. *Photo by Barb McBreen.*

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Jan. 20, 2011



Payroll tax reduction means more money in paychecks

by Paula Van Brocklin

Iowa State employees will notice more money in their monthly paychecks beginning Jan. 31, thanks to a reduction in federal payroll taxes by 2 percentage points.

In 2010, 6.2 percent of each employee's gross paycheck went to FICA, a tax for the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. FICA is an employment tax imposed by the federal government on both employees and employers to fund Social Security and Medicare.

For 2011 and possibly longer, the employee portion of FICA has been reduced to 4.2 percent. All ISU employees will receive an increase in their paychecks because of the reduction. How much of an increase you'll see depends on your income. Here's what you can expect based on gross annual earnings:

- \$30,000 -- \$50 per month (\$600 annually)
- \$50,000 -- \$83 per month (\$1,000 annually)
- \$70,000 -- \$116 per month (\$1,400 annually)
- \$90,000 -- \$150 per month (\$1,800 annually)

FICA regulations state that only \$106,800 of an individual's income can be taxed, which means individuals who earn more than that only will be taxed for \$106,800. The FICA cap does not affect the Medicare portion of the tax; a Medicare tax of 1.45 percent is taxed on all earnings with no limit.

Options for your extra money

Before you start daydreaming of spending your extra dollars on the latest electronic gadgets or saving for a Hawaiian vacation, ISU retirement specialist Ann Doty offers this option -- invest it.

"These are not huge dollar amounts and won't make a significant improvement in one's lifestyle if the money is spent," she said. "However, if this money was saved for five, 10 or 20 years and grown either tax-deferred or after tax, this may be able to pay for a year of medical insurance premiums, allowing someone to retire a little earlier."

How to invest the money

Employees who choose to invest extra income from their paychecks must open a group supplemental retirement annuity with TIAA-CREF, VALIC, Ameriprise or MetLife. Contact information for these providers is available on human resource services' [benefits website](#).

To get started, print and complete an [elective payroll reduction form \(PDF\)](#), which gives ISU's payroll department the authority to take extra money out of your paycheck for retirement. Employees

who already have a supplemental retirement annuity and want to change the percentage or dollar amount they currently contribute also must complete this form. Requests for new accounts and changes to existing accounts made by the 15th of the month will go into effect for the end-of-the-month paycheck.

If you need additional help or have questions, contact **Doty** at 4-4800.

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Jan. 20, 2011



Where's Bob?

"Einstein" was created by performance artist David Garibaldi during his live painting show at the Memorial Union last April. The large art piece is displayed in the main hallway on the ground floor of the Memorial Union, and is part of the MU's Student Union Board collection.

Jan. 20, 2011



Council learns more about rec user fees

by Erin Rosacker

Executive vice president and provost Elizabeth Hoffman, dean of students Dione Somerville and recreation services director Michael Giles fielded questions about the **new rec services user rates for faculty and staff** at the Jan. 13 Professional and Scientific Council meeting.

In 2008, council members passed a **resolution (doc)** in favor of continued free access to some recreation facilities, using employee wellness as a supporting argument for the motion. Hoffman said the university's benefits committee did consider a wellness program component in its annual deliberations, but the cost was prohibitive when given its mandate to keep the university's health care costs and employee copays low.

"It really is an issue of cost," Hoffman said. "Everything we do requires that we balance one cost against another." For instance, Hoffman cited the university's ability to restore the university's full contribution to employee retirement funds.

President-elect Ken Kerns said it would be fair for faculty and staff to pay for operational costs, but not the debt that students agreed to assume when they voted for the renovation and expansion project.

"The fee is being assessed equally, but you have two different types of users," Kerns said. "I think that's something we can open for discussion: What are the reasonable charges for faculty and staff and the uses they have, compared to that of the students -- and for the commitments we did not make that the students did."

Giles said recreation services' transition to an enterprise (self-supported auxiliary) unit moved all operational costs under one umbrella. Fees are not earmarked to pay for singular items, such as maintenance costs or bond repayments.

"That's part of the reason why the fee is across the board for all users," he said. "Your money does not simply go for you to use just one building. It does provide you global access to everything within recreation services."

Other business

- Council members endorsed an effort reporting and certification **draft policy**, which will go into effect Jan. 31. The policy helps ensure ISU's compliance with federal regulations, outlining the processes and requirements for documenting employees working on federally funded projects and activities.
- Council members also voted in favor of an extra-meritorious performance pay program for P&S staff. It was developed to replace a similar, but under-utilized, program implemented in 2008. The

program provides supervisors with a method to reward individuals for extraordinary performances or accomplishments that go beyond the normal scope of their duties. Lump sums can be awarded for up to 10 percent of the employee's base salary.

- Representation committee chair Sara Wilson reported that the council will lose one seat (in ISU Extension) due to a drop in employee numbers. She said ISU has 2,454 P&S employees, down from 2,576 last year.
- President Gregory Geoffroy will speak at the next P&S Council open forum. To accommodate his schedule, the open forum was moved to Monday, Feb. 21 (noon-1 p.m., Pioneer Room, Memorial Union), instead of preceding the Feb. 10 council meeting.

Jan. 20, 2011



'Future' symposium reformatted, rescheduled to March 9

by Diana Pounds

A half-day symposium on "The Future of Learning, Research and Collaboration" has been postponed from Feb. 1 and reformatted into a March 9 keynote session that organizers hope will allow more faculty, staff and students to attend.

The session will begin at 4:30 p.m. in 1148 Gerdin with a one-hour presentation by Donald Norris, a national expert on navigating change in universities and president of the Herndon, Va., consulting firm Strategic Initiatives, Inc. A reception will follow.

Norris' talk will help kick off a campus-wide dialogue about how students, faculty and staff at Iowa State will learn, collaborate and do research in the future, said Elizabeth Hoffman, executive vice president and provost.

"Amid the blistering pace of technological change, we need to look forward several decades and decide what kind of new learning environments and spaces we'll need not only to keep pace, but to thrive," Hoffman said. "A key part of that will be developing facilities that are flexible enough to accommodate the rapid changes ahead."

Several ISU work groups will begin exploring these issues in depth over the next few months, Hoffman added.

Jan. 20, 2011



Faculty conduct policy changes on hold in senate

by Erin Rosacker

Changes to the faculty conduct policy will have to wait until next month, after continued discussion dominated the Jan. 18 Faculty Senate meeting and an expected vote was postponed.

The *Faculty Handbook's* current conduct policy ([section 7.2](#)) lacks a procedure for dealing with faculty who are not fulfilling their duties. The proposed change, first introduced at the Dec. 7 meeting, adds unacceptable performance of duty to the types of misconduct (such as discrimination, harassment or conflicts of interest) defined in the handbook. If a complaint is properly documented and filed, it would move forward through the established review and resolution procedures outlined in the overall conduct policy.

Senators reviewed substantial modifications to the original document and adopted one of two amendments. Senators then voted to table the discussion, allowing them time to share the [modified document \(PDF\)](#) with their department colleagues before voting.

"This is a crucially important document that deserves an opportunity for the faculty, as a whole within each department, to have an in-depth discussion about what is going to be voted on," said Pete Sherman, associate professor in aerospace engineering and statistics.

The conduct policy's connection to proposed post-tenure review policy changes also weighed in their decision to table the discussion.

"There has been concern about the relationship this policy has with the post-tenure review policy that's new business," said April Katz, associate professor in art and design. "Perhaps the discussions could parallel each other and before we voted on one, the discussion could happen on both."

Post-tenure review

Proposed [revisions to the post-tenure review policy \(PDF\)](#) were introduced at the conclusion of the meeting. The changes further define the review timeline, outcomes and the roles of administrators.

"The underlying principle of our current post-tenure review policy stays. The post-tenure review is a peer review, it is not an administrative review," said Steve Freeman, senate president-elect. "The post-tenure review policy as proposed here can never result in dismissal of faculty."

The document will be up for discussion and a possible vote at the Feb. 8 meeting.

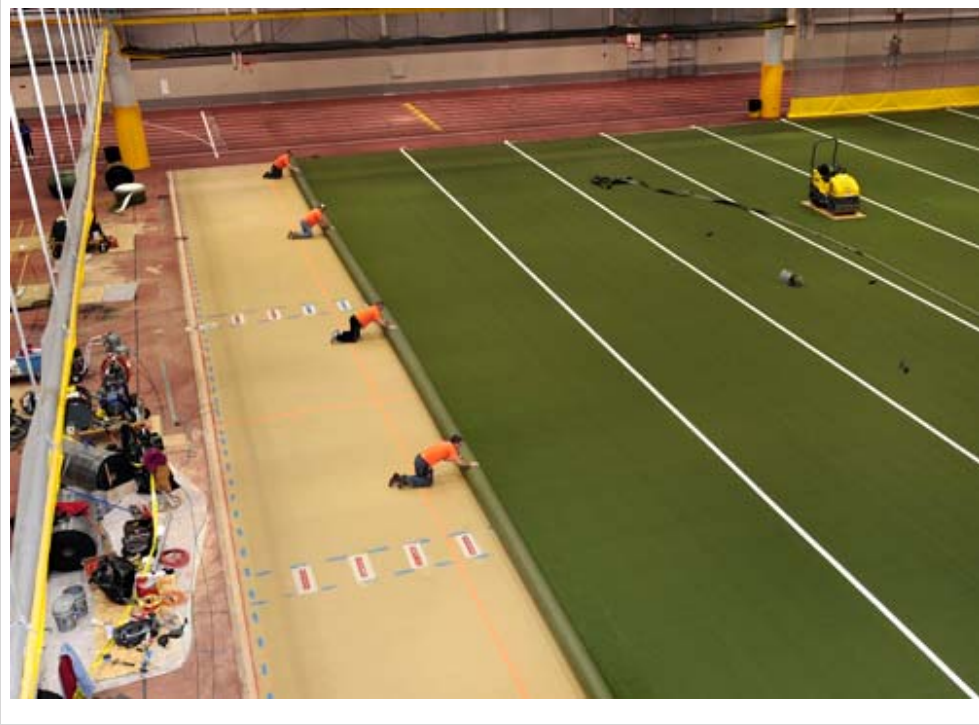
Other business

- Senators will vote next month on a department name change for plant pathology, which would become the department of plant pathology and microbiology.

- Ann Marie VanDerZanden, a professor in horticulture and associate director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, was elected president-elect for 2011-12. Jonathan Sturm, associate professor in music, and Robert Wallace, associate professor in ecology, evolution and organismal biology also were on the ballot.

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That's a big carpet

Crews are finishing up the project to replace the athletic turf inside the main track at the Lied Recreation Center. Damage caused by the Aug. 11 flood forced the university to replace the turf. The track surface also sustained damage and will be replaced after the conclusion of the college indoor track and field season. *Photo by Bob Elbert.*

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Jan. 20, 2011



New ISU software aims to boost students' research writing skills

by Diana Pounds

Students often struggle with the task of writing academic papers, such as research reports, theses, or dissertations. They're unfamiliar with the different writing norms in their fields of study and with the strategic rhetorical shifts and functions that are necessary to develop a scientific argument.

An app for that

Fortunately, Iowa State students will be able to receive guidance through their early ventures in academic writing. The Research Writing Tutor (RWT) is web-based software that analyzes students' writing and offers feedback especially tailored to their fields of study. The students plug in their text, and the software compares it with a collection of journal articles in their discipline and responds with suggestions for improvement. For example, RWT feedback might contain comments like this:

"Thirteen percent of your introduction is reviewing previous research, but most article introductions in your field have about 45 percent of review of previous research. You need to add more to your discussion of relevant literature."

OR

"Most introductions in your field highlight a problem to justify current research. You might consider identifying a problem based on your review of previous research. Click to learn more or to see examples of highlighting a problem."

"We developed the software to help both graduate and undergraduate students improve their academic writing. Our goal is to implement the RWT as a core component of a campus-wide, technology-enhanced research writing support system that will enable ISU to help the students excel academically," said Elena Cotos, leader of the RWT project.

Students begin using the RWT

The implementation of the RWT begins from the very first semester of the project. Students in English 101D, a writing course for international graduate students, are using the software this semester. Other ISU students soon will be getting academic writing advice from the RWT.

Later in the semester, the Graduate College will use it in its new Thesis and Dissertation writing seminars. Also, staff in the Writing and Media Help Center and Academic Success Center will begin showing students how to take advantage of the new software when working on research papers.

Behind RWT

See RWT development and project implementation teams.

Students will access the RWT website with their university IDs and passwords.

The RWT project is a work in progress, Cotos said. The functionality of the existing prototype of the software is being expanded to include additional modules, and new versions of the software will be rolled out each semester. Iowa State faculty, staff, and students joined efforts to improve and refine the RWT, and a number of units on campus (for example, Graduate College, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering, Writing and Media Help Center, Academic Success Center) committed to its implementation as a free-access resource as well as through workshops, writing courses, and individual tutoring.

Funded by student technology fees

A two-year \$362,116 grant from the Computation Advisory Committee, the group that oversees spending of student technology fees, will fund continued work on this project.

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Jan. 20, 2011



Iowa State gets green light to purchase Des Moines veterinary hospital

by Anne Krapfl

By the end of the month, Iowa State will purchase a private veterinary hospital in Des Moines for about \$4.5 million and operate it through a nonprofit organization affiliated with the university. The state Board of Regents approved the plan 7-0 during a special meeting Jan. 13, with regents Ruth Harkin and Craig Lang absent. The anticipated closing date for the purchase is Jan. 31.

Founded in 1980, Iowa Veterinary Specialties offers 24-hour small animal emergency care as well as surgical and internal medicine specialty care. Located on Creston Avenue just off 63rd Street in Des Moines, it's owned and operated by a team of veterinary doctors. Iowa State will buy the land, building and the active business. The hospital will have a collaborative relationship with the Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

John Thomson, in his final week of service as dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, told the regents the hospital would bolster the college's educational mission on several levels: It will expand opportunities for real-life experiences for veterinary students and faculty, and provide a venue for the college to improve its continuing education offerings to veterinarians and technicians in the Des Moines area. It also gives faculty and other scientists a venue to transfer their clinical research into practice.

"A primary goal of the college is to enhance and regain academic preeminence in the United States," he explained. "Serving the main metropolitan area in Iowa is one part of that process."

Paying for a hospital

The regents approved Iowa State's proposal for purchasing and operating the veterinary clinic.

Vice president for business and finance Warren Madden said the land and building (\$1.55 million) will be financed through the regents' master lease program (administered through the ISU treasurer's office). Wells Fargo will be the funding source for a 10-year loan that will be paid off from the clinic's operations.

A trust created from Iowa State's sale of WOI Television to Capital Cities Communications Inc. in 1994 is the fund source for purchasing the non-real estate aspects of the business (\$3.01 million). Over 10 years, this amount will be repaid to the trust, with interest. The trust also will be the source for a \$450,000 loan needed to meet initial business operations needs.

Iowa State will restructure its existing nonprofit entity, ISU Equities, which has seen no business activity since the university sold WOI TV. The renamed ISU Veterinary Services Corp. will operate Iowa Veterinary Specialties and keep its tax-exempt status with the IRS. Its five-member board of

directors will include three Iowa State administrators and two Des Moines-area practicing veterinarians. Dr. Lee Holmes, a veterinarian at the hospital, will be the chief executive officer of ISU Veterinary Services Corp. and report to the board of directors.

The hospital staff includes six full-time emergency doctors, two surgeons, an internist, a dermatologist, 30 veterinary technicians and six receptionists.

Madden said nearly all the hospital's employees will stay on and will be employees of the non-profit corporation. He said there are no immediate plans to transfer ISU employees to the hospital, but noted that joint appointments for faculty (Ames and Des Moines) might be possible in the future.

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Jan. 20, 2011



Students launch campus food pantry for students

by Anne Krapfl

A fall semester learning community project to look at food assistance needs in the Ames community has evolved into what its planners hope is a long-term program: an on-campus food pantry for students, run by students.

The SHOP (Students Helping Our Peers) opens Feb. 1 in room 2616 in the northeast part of the **Food Sciences Building** ([PDF](#)). Initially, service hours will be 3-6 p.m. on Tuesdays; those could increase depending on need and use.

The university community is invited to donate non-perishable food items during an open house at the shop Jan. 27 (3-6 p.m.). Bring four items to the open house and receive a T-shirt.

Student org status

Between 20 and 30 students have joined the new student organization that will oversee the shop. Sophomore Hailey Boudreau and junior Sarah Schwanebeck, both dietetics majors, are co-presidents of the SHOP student organization. They were members last fall of a food science and human nutrition learning community that volunteered at local food pantries and free meal programs to learn more about who's using them -- and who's not. They learned that college students are not using food assistance programs in noticeable numbers.

The SHOP will have collection boxes on campus for nonperishable food donations.

But in checking with student financial aid leaders at Iowa State, they learned that the number of Pell grant recipients (federal, need-based financial aid) at Iowa State rose from about 4,300 in 2008-09 to 5,300 in 2009-10. They believe the need exists for a food pantry, and they contacted student pantries at other universities, including Michigan State and University of California, Los Angeles, to find out how they operate.

Clients remain anonymous

Unlike some of those schools, Iowa State's food pantry will allow anonymity. Iowa State students need only show their ID card to receive food. Boudreau said volunteers will track what food items are most popular with clients, but they won't track who's taking what.

"We did some research on the stigma attached to using a food pantry," she said. "We want students to utilize the service, and we think allowing them to remain anonymous will encourage that."

Donations welcome

The pantry will be stocked with donations, either food or cash used to purchase inventory options.

Boudreau said organizers would be grateful for donations from faculty and staff. She said they'd also appreciate help in spreading the word about the pantry -- to would-be student clients as well as would-be student volunteers.

SHOP organizers also struck a deal with ISU Dining for spring semester, in which students with meal plans can skip a meal on Thursdays and donate the proceeds to the pantry.

A healthy options pantry

Schwanebeck said student organizers are particularly interested in stocking the pantry shelves with healthy options -- peanut butter, tuna, canned fruit, whole grain cereals -- and hope to offer recipes that feature items from their inventory. Those making donations are invited to submit recipes as well.

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Jan. 20, 2011



Catch the latest popular titles in spring film series

Titles recently were announced for the spring lineup of the **SUB Film Series** at the Memorial Union. All are popular films released in the last few months. Admission is free to members of the ISU and Ames communities.

Each engagement includes two Thursday showings (7 p.m. and 10 p.m.) in the South Ballroom and a Sunday showing (7 p.m.) in the Soult's Family Visitor Center, ground floor of the south addition. Thursday shows include free popcorn and a discount on fountain drinks.

The film series is sponsored each semester by the Student Union Board, a student group that organizes cultural, recreation, educational and social activities on campus for students.

The film series opened last week with *The Town*. Following is the lineup for the rest of the semester:

- *Jackass 3* (rated R), Jan. 20 and 23
- *The Social Network* (PG13), Jan. 27 and 30
- *Due Date* (R), Feb. 3 and 6, additional show Feb. 4 (9 p.m., Great Hall)
- *For Colored Girls* (R), Feb. 10 and 13
- *Megamind*, animated (PG), Feb. 17 and 20
- *Unstoppable* (PG13), Feb. 24 and 27
- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part One* (PG13), March 3 and 6, additional show March 4 (9 p.m., Great Hall)
- *127 Hours* (R), March 10 only (due to spring break)
- *The Tourist* (PG13), March 24 and 27
- *Tangled*, animated (PG), March 31 and April 3
- *The Dilemma* (PG13), April 7 and 10, additional show April 8 (9 p.m., Great Hall)
- *The Green Hornet* (PG13), April 14 and 17
- *True Grit* (PG13), April 21 and 24