



Nov. 3

**Making time for learning communities**

Lots has been written about how learning communities are good for students transitioning to university life. Faculty members talk about how learning communities are good for them, and why they find the time for them.

Nov. 3

**Regents lament another tuition increase**

Meeting Oct. 27 in Cedar Falls, the state Board of Regents gave a reluctant first look at proposed tuition increases for next year, thanked president Gregory Geoffroy for his leadership and achievements, and announced a revised start date, Jan. 16, for ISU president-designate Steven Leath.



Geoffroy and Lang

Nov. 3

**ISU, national coalition build next generation of science faculty**

ISU is part of a national coalition that believes boosting future professors' teaching skills will increase the number of students in science and technology fields.

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**Search committee, open forum set in Business dean search**

A 15-member search committee is ready to begin work to find the next dean of the College of Business. During a Nov. 9 forum, committee members will ask for input from the university community on attributes to be sought in the next dean.

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**Provider websites: Quick access to information -- lots of it**

Taking charge of your health and retirement benefits has never been easier, thanks to robust

**Announcements**

- Free STEM teaching webinar offered Nov. 7
- Daylight-saving time ends Sunday
- Alumni association seeks 2012 awards nominations
- ISU Printing open house is Nov. 16
- Nov. 8 forum topic is leadership for proposed School of Education
- Metro Des Moines homestay hosts sought for January
- Snow blower servicing is Nov. 11-12
- MBA information lunch is Nov. 8
- Benefits are topic of next forum
- Free HRS sessions offered
- Proposals being accepted for 13th annual ISCORE
- Science Café is Nov. 3 at Lucullan's

**Open Forums**

LAS dean finalists

- Beate Schmittmann, Nov. 3
- Douglas Epperson, Nov. 7

Assoc. VP for HRS finalists

- Rod Kelly, Nov. 3
- Warren Hills, Nov. 4
- Pamela Bowman, Nov. 9

Resource management budget model review

- Nov. 4

**Arts & events**



Love's Labor's Lost

provider websites. Find out how to register on these sites to get access to a plethora of useful information.

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#### *Love's Labor's Lost* opens Nov. 4

An ISU production of an early Shakespearean romantic comedy opens a two-weekend run Nov. 4 in Fisher Theater.

#### Around campus

- Astronaut Clay Anderson returns to campus Nov. 3-5
- ISU undergrads excel at CERN
- ISU architecture, landscape architecture programs among best
- ISU animal care program earns accreditation

#### Inside tools

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Theresa Windus and Jesudoss Kingston (standing center and right) were among a half dozen chemistry faculty members who joined freshmen from the department's learning community late Tuesday afternoon for an always-humbling game of Pictionary. *Photo by Bob Elbert.*

## Learning communities: They're good for more than freshmen

by Anne Krapfl

Record enrollment this fall, including the largest freshman class ever, led to another record for Iowa State: 4,747 students participating in a learning community, 3,572 of whom are enrolling directly from high school. That's a nearly 11 percent jump in freshman participation this fall for a nationally recognized program now in its 17th year.

Another group Doug Gruenewald would like to get more involved in learning communities isn't actually a student population. It's tenured faculty. "Most faculty tell us it energizes them to spend that extra time with students," said the co-coordinator of learning communities. Others have expressed interest in learning communities when their own children reach college age, or because they find a little extra time for other activities. Gruenewald said sometimes it's just a matter of being asked -- and for the right thing.

"We encourage our coordinators to attend their department meetings and talk about their learning communities. Some faculty just aren't that aware that one exists or what it's doing," he said. "Given

two or three specific ways they could be involved, with a specific time commitment, some faculty respond to the ask."

### Inefficient but important

Associate professor of ecology, evolution and organismal biology James Colbert has been involved with the Biology Education Success Teams (BEST) since the beginning, 1995. This year, he, academic adviser Denise Hix and 15 sophomore peer mentors are working with 160 freshman biology majors. Like most learning communities, they use the department's one-credit orientation course (110) to accomplish some of their goals. But Colbert said that in many ways, the learning community is less structured than it was 15 years ago. The residence hall component, for example, has been dropped. Students choose the activities they participate in and an online management system tracks who does what.

"I've learned that it takes time to get to know students. This isn't efficient," Colbert said. "But it has helped me understand what they're interested in, what they're confused about, where they are in their development as young biologists. And that understanding makes me a much better teacher."

In 1998, after much brain-wracking to find an opportunity for his freshmen that weds service, team building, adventure and biology, Colbert started the Skunk River Navy, named for the east Ames river that benefits from the group's efforts. The navy, assisted by other volunteers, has removed more than 60 tons of trash from the river's watersheds while learning about water quality and land stewardship.

Colbert said the Skunk River Navy is one of his most important accomplishments, professionally, and notes it might never have happened absent a learning community to base it in.

### Intentional activities

University Professor of horticulture Gail Nonnecke had a long history with the horticulture learning community before helping organize a learning community ("GLOBE") for a new interdepartmental major in her college, global resource systems, in 2009.

The goal hasn't changed: help students be successful, but the learning community model has evolved over time, Nonnecke said.

"We add things that help them learn. [The changes] are very intentional," she said. For example, peer mentors lead study groups in locations where students live and organize social events for members. Service learning projects -- a local supper and an off-campus rock concert to raise funds for nutrition projects in Uganda, for example -- teach them about solutions to hunger in that part of the African

### Help a learning community

You don't have to be a coordinator to get involved with a student learning community.

Departments have successfully recruited faculty for activities such as:

- Icebreakers
- Informal lunches, department picnics or barbecues
- Campus lectures (attend with students)
- Service projects
- Conversations loosely resembling "speed dating" in which students talk briefly with numerous faculty members about their research or careers

continent, as well as about teamwork.

"Investing in learning communities is really time well spent," Nonnecke said. "When students adjust better to the university, they do better in class. I see that benefit all the time.

"As a faculty member, when you see them again in upper division classes, you know they have the skills, you know they enjoy being here."

### **Delivering on a pledge**

Howard Tyler, an associate professor of animal science, was recruited last fall to help lead another long-standing learning community -- for animal science, dairy science and pre-vet students -- as some of his faculty colleagues move toward retirement. The learning community has experienced about 7 percent growth annually for the last five years, this fall serving about 320 students in 20 peer mentor groups.

"I was not a big fan of learning communities back in the 1990s when they first developed," he said.

"I was completely wrong. Learning communities are a real asset to our students and a great mechanism to help keep them in school."

Tyler also happens to be one of the faces for his department during campus visits by prospective students. "I feel an obligation to make sure we're providing students with the experience we said we would," he noted. The learning community helps him do that.

Tyler credits his sophomore peer mentors with being the real eyes and ears of the learning community, but through them "I get to know the needs of all of our students individually, especially our high-risk and high-ability students," he said.

### **Responding to the ask**

Recruited by her chemistry colleague Joe Burnett, professor Theresa Windus was on the team that helped launch a learning community for freshman chemistry majors in the fall of 2010. There have been about 30 members each year.

"We were losing our chemistry majors from fall to spring in their first year, so it was clear we needed to help them acclimate and make the transition a little easier," Windus said. "We'd all heard of learning communities, but one didn't exist in our department."

She readily admits it's time-consuming. "I'm not in it because I have more time. I'm in it because I believe in it. I like to see people in a good state."

Windus co-teaches chemistry 110, which focuses on research and careers in chemistry. Because chemistry majors follow different avenues in their coursework, research is a more logical anchor for the orientation course. Other chemistry faculty come to class to talk about their research programs.

"When we were getting the learning community started, I sent a note to all chemistry faculty asking who wanted to be involved. About a dozen said they would," she recalled. "It takes a community to

make a learning community happen."

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President Gregory Geoffroy received a plaque of commendation from state Board of Regents president Craig Lang during the board's Oct. 27 meeting at the University of Northern Iowa. The board thanked Geoffroy for his "enduring leadership style that provided stability and inspiration for more than a decade." *Photo by Sam Castro.*

## Regents wrestle with another tuition increase

by Anne Krapfl

Meeting Oct. 27 in Cedar Falls, members of the state Board of Regents expressed frustration with the trend of declining state support for public higher education and the resulting annual tuition increases frequently in excess of inflation. Their comments came as they made a first review of proposed tuition rates for the 2012-13 year.

"We need a renewed commitment from our state," said board member David Miles, who called higher education "a vital public good for Iowa."

Regent Robert Downer talked about the detrimental impact of high student debt on the state and the state's workforce. Iowa's relatively low wages also contribute to the problem, he said. Some costs of living in Iowa are lower, he noted, but student loan payback obligations are not.

Regent Ruth Harkin, who voted against the regent universities' last three tuition increases, said, "It seems that every year we say we have to find a better way to pay for an education. But again, we need a better business model than the one we have for our regents institutions."

As proposed, Iowa State tuition would increase \$240 (3.75 percent) for resident undergraduates and \$480 (2.63 percent) for out-of-state undergraduates. Proposed graduate tuition would increase \$280 (3.7 percent) and \$504 (2.6 percent) for resident and nonresident students, respectively. Iowa State proposes to hold mandatory student fees at this year's rates for all students.

Board president Craig Lang noted that the proposed rates depend on the 2012 Legislature approving state funding for the regent universities at the level requested. The board approved those requests last month.

Government of the Student Body president Dakota Hoben told board members the "marginal increase is more than fair" because it does no more than keep up with projected inflationary increases. Hoben said that, to date, he hasn't received a complaint from an Iowa State student about the proposed increase.

Hoben's counterparts at the universities of Iowa and Northern Iowa gave the board more reluctant endorsements of the proposed increases.

The regents are scheduled to approve 2012-13 tuition rates at their Dec. 8 meeting at Iowa State. One of the guides they use in assessing tuition increases is the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI). The HEPI forecast for FY13 is a range of 2.6 to 4.2 percent, with a median of 3.4 percent.

### **Differential tuition**

Iowa State is proposing differential tuition next year for four student groups: juniors and seniors in agricultural systems technology and industrial technology (both in the ag and biosystems engineering department), and undergraduate and graduate architecture students. The AST and ITec upper division students would pay an additional \$584, the second of a proposed three-year incremental increase to lower student-to-faculty ratios and provide excellent instruction and cutting-edge lab experiences. All architecture students would pay a proposed \$400 in additional tuition next year, intended to help hire more faculty to address the program's 30 percent enrollment increase since 2007.

If the differential tuitions are approved, these students would join upper division ISU students in the colleges of Engineering and Business who have paid differential tuition since 2006 and 2009, respectively.

### **Nonmandatory student fees**

Calling the long list of academic and administrative student fees "confusing," the board asked the three universities to consider simplifying the list or better communicating what it's for by next year. These nonmandatory fees cover the cost of providing specific services -- a certified transcript, application to the university, or replacing a lost ID, for example -- and students pay only for the services they use during their time in school. "Students and their families need to know what the real bottom line is going to be to attend a regent university," Harkin said.



The board reviewed the proposed 2012-13 fees list Thursday and will be asked to approve it in December.

### **Thank you, president Geoffroy**

At Lang's request, Miles offered a public thanks to president Gregory Geoffroy for his 10 years of service. Miles has been a board member nearly half of those years and board president for three years. He listed record enrollment and sponsored research levels, more endowed faculty positions, Iowa State's "remarkable approach to planning and budgeting" and its leadership spot in the bioeconomy, as well as Geoffroy's accessibility to students and constituent groups as hallmarks of his presidency.

"On many occasions, I relied on your judgment and perspective. It's been a pleasure to work with you," Miles said. "Thank you very much for your service."

During a private luncheon, the board also presented Geoffroy with a plaque to recognize his leadership and accomplishments at Iowa State.

### **President-designate Leath**

Regent Bruce Rastetter, one of two regents who served on the ISU presidential search committee, said Steven Leath agreed to move his start date at Iowa State to Jan. 16, earlier than the previously announced Feb. 1 date. Leath also will be a professor in the plant pathology and microbiology department. It is not a tenured faculty appointment.

In other business, the board approved Iowa State requests to:

- Name the research/teaching wing and atrium of phase 2 of the biorenewables complex. Sukup Hall and Atrium will honor the Sukup family of Sheffield, who committed a lead gift of \$5 million for phase 2. When they are completed, Sukup Hall, Sukup Atrium and the adjoining Elings Hall -- an office and classroom wing named for Engineering alumnus Virgil Elings of Santa Barbara, Calif. -- will be home to the agricultural and biosystems engineering department.
- Name the expanded and remodeled small animal hospital the Hixson-Lied Small Animal Hospital in honor of Christina Hixson, sole trustee of the Lied Foundation Trust; and in memory of Ernst and Ida Lied.

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## ISU, national coalition build next generation of science faculty

by Diana Pounds

Call it the trickle-down theory of science and technology education. Help Ph.D.s and post-docs (future professors) become great teachers, and they, in turn, inspire students to succeed in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. The inspired students go on to become the next generation of scientists and engineers, helping to ease a projected shortage of such workers in the United States.

A national coalition of universities, including Iowa State, is on a mission to do just that by helping science graduate students become as skilled in classrooms as they are in labs. The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), began in 2003 with a handful of universities\* and recently expanded to 25 of the nation's top schools.

### A good fit

Holly Bender, a professor in veterinary pathology who directs the Preparing Future Faculty program in the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, led the team that submitted ISU's proposal for CIRTL membership. She attributed the success of that proposal to strong activities already under way at ISU, such as programs on [Preparing Future Faculty](#), [Strengthening the Professoriate](#) and scholarship of teaching and learning; nationally touted learning communities; and multiple campus initiatives focused on increasing diversity.

"We will take existing ISU programs and strengthen them by finding common visions and networking people together, both locally and with the other 24 institutions of the CIRTL network," Bender said.

The United States faces a shortage of workers with bachelor's degrees in science and technology fields, Bender said.

### Keeping students on the science track

"Currently, more than 60 percent of students who initially go into STEM fields in college become discouraged and change majors," she said. "If we can keep a quarter of these students engaged, that will help meet growing demand for workers with science backgrounds."

The CIRTL schools, and the National Science Foundation (NSF), which is supporting them, believe excellent teachers will keep students engaged and on the science track.

The universities will beef up doctoral students and post-docs' classroom skills by offering a smorgasbord of courses, seminars, learning communities and training exchanges. CIRTl also calls for diversity training for future professors.

"Problem solving is enhanced when people with diverse backgrounds are brought into the conversation," Bender said. "We need to find better ways to encourage women to go into fields like math and engineering and to encourage under-represented minorities to stay in STEM fields. By doing so, we advance these fields."

Bender and Craig Ogilvie, assistant dean of the graduate school, will co-direct ISU's CIRTl initiative.

"We're contacting leaders throughout the university to help us form a collective vision and coordinate efforts," Bender said.

### How to get involved

Bender encouraged anyone who wants to be a part of CIRTl activities to contact the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at [celt@iastate.edu](mailto:celt@iastate.edu).

"This is transformative," she said. "I really think this network is going to change the direction of higher education. It's going to make our teaching much more effective, not only for our graduates, but our undergraduates."

\*The original six CIRTl universities were: Howard University, Michigan State, Texas A&M, University of Colorado, University of Wisconsin (where CIRTl is headquartered) and Vanderbilt University.

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"Currently, more than 60 percent of students who initially go into STEM fields in college become discouraged and change majors."

Holly Bender

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## Search for next Business dean is under way

Executive vice president and provost Elizabeth Hoffman has appointed the remaining members of the search committee that will find a successor to Business dean Labh Hira. Hira expects to step down as dean on June 30, 2012.

Last month, Hoffman announced that dean of Human Sciences Pam White and associate provost for academic personnel and chief diversity officer Dawn Bratsch-Prince will co-chair the [search](#) committee. The group will begin its work this month; its timeline anticipates a new dean will be named by the end of spring semester and on the job no later than July 2012.

An open forum has been scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 9 (2-3 p.m., 3164 Gerdin). Faculty, staff and students are invited to share their suggestions for attributes to be sought in the new dean with committee members.

Nominations for the Business dean post may be submitted to co-chairs [White](#) and [Bratsch-Prince](#).

The 15-member Business dean search committee includes:

- Co-chair Pam White, dean of the College of Human Sciences
- Co-chair Dawn Bratsch-Prince, associate provost for academic personnel and chief diversity officer
- Diana Armendariz, graduate student in business administration and president of the MBA Association
- Jennifer Blackhurst, associate professor of supply chain management
- Steve Carter, director of the ISU Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship
- Arnold Cowan, Wells Fargo Professor in Finance
- Pol Herrmann, John and Deborah Ganoë Professor in Business and associate professor of management
- Qing Hu, Union Pacific Professor in Information Systems and chair of the supply chain and information systems department
- Helen Jensen, professor of economics
- Kelsie Kahnk, senior in marketing and president of the Business Council
- David Kingland, president and chief executive officer of Kingland Systems Corp., Clear Lake
- Sekar Raju, assistant professor of marketing

- Sue Ravenscroft, Roger P. Murphy Professor of Accounting
- Jane Sturgeon, chief executive officer of Barr-Nunn Transportation Inc., Granger
- Kathy Wieland, director of the College of Business career services

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## Provider websites: Quick access to information -- lots of it

by Paula Van Brocklin

Taking charge of your health and retirement benefits has never been easier, now that most providers offer robust websites that give you access to your personal data and other helpful information with the click of a button.

Here's a sampling of the information available at your fingertips from Wellmark/Blue Cross Blue Shield, TIAA-CREF, Delta Dental, Avesis (vision) and Medco (prescription drugs). Once you register on any or all of the websites, take time to browse the various links; you may be surprised at how much information you can find.

### Wellmark/Blue Cross Blue Shield

To access your personal information, you must register online. Look for the "Register Now" heading on the right side of the home page. Select "Member" and follow the instructions. During registration setup, you can choose to receive your explanation of benefits (EOB) forms electronically instead of having them mailed to you. If you choose the online option, you will receive an email when the latest forms are ready to view.

Wellmark lets employees create and customize their own personal health site. Through this site, you can access your benefits, claims and the latest health news. Some of the more unique options available include printing your own medical alert card, logging how much you exercise on the Activity Tracker (it will even generate a bar graph) and creating a claims summary to see how much you've spent on out-of-pocket health care expenses. The website even will create a report that shows how much you and your covered dependents have spent on health care during the dates you specify.

### TIAA-CREF

To register with TIAA-CREF, click the "Register for online access" link in the login box at the top of the home page and follow the instructions. Once you've registered and logged in, the website automatically takes you to your personal home page, which shows your current total retirement savings balance.

Under the "Manage Your Portfolio" tab, you can view your account information, manage your funds (i.e., switch funds or change contribution amounts) and update your profile, such as change your beneficiaries, modify your bank transaction information or review your password, security question

and phone numbers.

The "Help and Resources" tab lets you access planning tools and calculators to gauge if you're saving enough for retirement. And the Learning Center option helps you create a financial action plan.

## **Delta Dental**

To register with Delta Dental, click on "New users register here" in the green box on the left side of the home page and select "Subscriber" in the drop-down menu. Follow the website's prompts to complete the registration. At the beginning of the process, you will need to submit your "subscription ID" number -- this is your Social Security number, not the number that appears on your Delta Dental card. At this time, Delta Dental allows only covered employees to register online, not dependents.

Delta Dental gives you the option of receiving your explanation of benefits forms electronically. You also can access coverage for you and your dependents and download claim forms. The Delta Dental Risk Assessment Tool (click the "Oral Health" link under the "Subscribers" button from the home page) helps you take better care of your dental health by providing custom feedback based on your responses to certain questions.

Another benefit Delta Dental offers subscribers is a vision care discount through EyeMed Vision Care. It includes discounts on eye exams, contact lenses, eyeglasses, and LASIK and PRK (photorefractive keratectomy) procedures. There is no additional cost for this benefit, but it cannot be used with Avesis vision care.

## **Avesis**

Select the "Visions Programs" tab and click the "Members" link on the left side of the home page. Avesis does not require you to register to gain access to most of its general information, such as claim forms, FAQs or a vision glossary. But if you wish to access your personal information, you'll need to enter your Social Security number and your last name in the login box on the left side of the page. From there, you can review benefit summaries and the current eligibility dates for you and your covered dependents. You also can search for local providers and print an ID card.

## **Medco**

Only faculty, professional and scientific, and supervisory merit employees have Medco prescription coverage. To register, select the "Click here to register" link under the login box on the home page. Follow the prompts. After you've registered, you can sign up to have prescriptions mailed to you. If you choose to receive a 90-day supply of the generic version of those prescriptions, there is no cost to you.

Medco offers a service called Safety Net, which monitors your prescriptions and lets you know if there are any risks associated with your prescription use. Once you **register** for this service, you will receive an alert when you log into Medco if there is a possible drug interaction problem or medication-related gap that could put your health at risk. To register for Safety Net, you must provide your prescription drug ID card number and a recent prescription number. Any covered dependents ages 18 and older must register separately to receive alerts. For those with iPhone, BlackBerry and Android smartphones, Medco offers a free app (Medco Pharmacy) that provides many services on the

go, including drug safety alerts, refill reminders and access to your prescription card details.

Lost your Medco card? Not a problem; you can print a new one. The website also provides information on how to save additional money on prescriptions as well as articles on various health care topics.

The Medco Health Store is an online pharmacy where you can purchase everything from vitamins to bandages to shampoo. Standard shipping on all orders is 99 cents. An online coupon offers \$10 off your first order of \$40 or more; enter the special code (shown on the coupon) at check-out.

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In Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*, the princess of France (Kelsey Kovacevich, third from left) and her ladies in waiting (from left, Brittny Rebhuhn, Heather Smith and Sara Jensen) arrive just as the king and his lords swear off women. *Photo by Dan Neubauer.*

## Shakespearean 'romcom' brings young love to Fisher Theater

by Erin Rosacker

Get ready for a romantic comedy, Shakespearean style. *Love's Labor's Lost*, believed to be one of William Shakespeare's early works, is ISU Theatre's next production and begins a two-weekend run at Fisher Theater Nov. 4.

King Ferdinand (senior Ben Millar) vows to devote himself to scholarly studies for three years without the distraction of women. Three of his lords -- Berowne (senior Colin Morgan), Longaville (senior Michael Brandt) and Dumaine (junior Drew McCubbin) -- pledge to join the king.

As if on cue, the princess of France (junior Kelsey Kovacevich) arrives for a visit with three ladies in waiting -- Rosaline (senior Heather Smith), Maria (junior Brittny Rebhuhn) and Katherine (senior Sara Jensen). The scholars immediately fall in love, but each tries to hide his feelings from the others while expressing his devotion to his lady in verse. Delivery mishaps and eavesdropping reveal the broken scholarly oaths, and a series of playful tricks and masquerades ensue between the men and women.

"It's a play about young love," said Matt Foss, lecturer in music and theatre and director of the

production.

Foss said his adaptation of the play does not stray far from the original -- adding appropriate songs and sticking to Shakespeare's original dialogue.

"We made some cuts and rearranged some of it without losing the unique nature of the play," Foss said. "We tried to streamline and distill the story to one about boys who are learning about love through their pursuit of young ladies."

Show times for *Love's Labor's Lost* are 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays (Nov. 4-5 and 11-12), and 2 p.m. on Sundays (Nov. 6 and 13). Tickets, available through [Ticketmaster](#) and the Iowa State Center box office, are \$16 for adults, \$14 for seniors and \$8 for students. Tickets also will be available at Fisher prior to each show.

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