Robert Demaree, a student employee with the KU Surplus Property Recycling Program, sits among the office equipment in the program’s warehouse. The operation takes unwanted office equipment and finds new campus homes for it, saving money on purchase and disposal fees and providing an environmentally responsible option for getting rid of unwanted goods.

Turning trash into treasure

Surplus Property Recycling Program finds new homes for unwanted office goods

When a campus office was finally ready to get rid of the bright, 60s-era office furniture, it didn’t have to be thrown out. Turns out, it was right at home in the art department. In this case, KU’s Surplus Property Recycling Program helped prove the old adage that one man’s
trash is another’s
treasure.

Since 2007, the program
has been taking
unwanted office
furniture and finding
new homes for it across
campus and throughout
the community. The
program has not only
saved desks from the
dump, it has saved
dollars.

“It’s amazing the things
that are in people’s
offices,” said Sam
Pepple, maintenance
worker in the
Environmental
Stewardship Program, of
the transfer of unwanted
office goods. “It’s
usually pretty easy to
find people who can use
what someone doesn’t
want.”

As of Jan. 21, the
program had collected
and redistributed 5,921
pieces of office goods
— everything from
desks and filing cabinets
to artificial plants, white
boards, wreaths, three-
ring binders, packaged
ink cartridges and utility
sinks.

The program will pick
up unwanted office
furnishing — excluding
electronic waste — for
free, provided it is
located on the Lawrence
campus. Previously,
departments had to pay
removal fees.

Departments looking to
unload unwanted goods
can fax or campus mail
a letter listing the
unwanted items,
location and contact
information to Facilities
Operations Work
Management. Staff will
pick up unwanted items,
which should be in
good, reusable
condition, and take it to
the Facilities Operation
warehouse. That’s
where they set about
finding new homes for
the office goods.

The program has “store
hours” from 8 to 10 a.m.
Tuesdays, in which
people can browse
inventory at the
warehouse. Those
seeking material can
view inventory online at
www.surplus.ku.edu or
view goods by
appointment by calling
785-393-4256. The
office also maintains an
e-mail distribution list of
available material.

Anyone who would like
to receive it can e-mail
“subscribe” to
kurecycling@ku.edu.
There is a nominal
purchase and delivery
fee, but Hoins said the
cost averages about one
tenth of the price of
outfitting an office with
completely new
material.

People in the market
may not find what
they’re looking for
immediately, but the
Surplus Recycling
Program will keep them
in mind.

“We maintain a want
list,” said Celeste Hoins,
administrative manager
with the Environmental
Stewardship Program.
“If we get an item
you’re looking for, we
can contact you.”

On occasion, the
program will collect
items that aren’t
requested by another
campus department. In
those cases, the program
will donate goods to
nonprofit organizations
approved to receive
donations from KU,
such as local schools,
youth service groups
and local social service
organizations like the
Habitat For Humanity
Re-Store and Douglas
County United Way. If
items aren’t requested or
donated, they are put in
online auctions and go
to the highest bidder.
Revenue from the
program’s sales, as well
as income from scrap
metal of unwanted pieces, is reinvested in the program. To view the program’s current auction visit www.surplus.ku.edu and click on “acquiring surplus property from ESP.”

In addition to providing affordable office furnishings, the program has saved the university on disposal costs. In the past, when office materials were disposed of in a city trash receptacle, the university was charged a pick up fee based on the size of the receptacle in cubic yards, as well as tonnage.

“When those are combined, that’s a pretty significant savings,” Hoins said of purchase and disposal costs.

The program has handled small jobs and also worked closely with the Office of Space Management on large projects, such as the removal of a number of office materials generated by the relocation of several departments in Wescoe Hall. Additionally, staff work with the Department of Student Housing to collect clothing, reusable goods and non-perishable food items from students moving out of on-campus housing in the spring.

Hoins, whose office is completely outfitted with recycled furnishings, said the program has been both environmentally and financially beneficial to KU.

“It’s been really successful for us. I think having the option is a benefit to campus. To be able to dispose of things properly and to be able to get good material at a reasonable price is great.”

For more on the program, visit www.surplus.ku.edu. For more on the Environmental Stewardship Program, visit www.recycle.ku.edu.
Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little introduces KU's two new Eminent Scholars, Rakesh Srivastava, left, and David Volkin, right, at a Kansas Bioscience Authority conference Jan. 26 in the Kansas Senate Chamber.

Volkin, Srivastava named KU's second, third Eminent Scholars

Kansas Bioscience Authority commits $4.3 million to support professors

A prominent pharmaceutical scientist with 20 years of industrial research and development experience joined the KU faculty earlier this month, thanks in part to a five-year, $2.5 million financial commitment from the Kansas Bioscience Authority.

David Volkin comes to KU from Centocor R&D, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, as the Takeru and Aya Higuchi Distinguished Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry. He will establish his lab in the Simons Biosciences Research Laboratories, focusing on vaccine and biopharmaceutical drug development. He also joins KU’s Laboratory for Macromolecular and Vaccine Stabilization, located in the Multidisciplinary Research Building.

“KU is known nationally for our outstanding School of Pharmacy and its research achievements,” said Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little. “The cancer center initiative and strategic hires such as this one are building research and commercialization capacity in vital areas of human health that benefit all Kansans.”

Volkin will have one more title as well. In November, the Kansas Bioscience Authority Board voted to name him an Eminent Scholar. That designation carries with it significant startup and ongoing support from the organization.

“David Volkin adds another dimension to KU’s incredibly strong drug delivery and development programs,” said Tom Thornton, Kansas Bioscience Authority president and CEO. “His industry background complements those strengths and promises to bolster a KBA priority: translating university bioscience research into economic development for Kansas.”

Volkin was introduced Jan. 26 at a ceremony at the Capitol in conjunction with the annual Kansas Bioscience Day.

Speaking at that
ceremony were Gray-Little, Thornton and Kansas Bioscience Authority Chair John Carlin.

Also at the ceremony, it was announced that the Kansas Bioscience Authority Board of Directors has designated Rakesh Srivastava of the KU Cancer Center as an Eminent Scholar. He will be supported by a five-year, $1.8 million Kansas Bioscience Authority commitment. Srivastava came to the KU Medical Center last fall from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. He is a professor of pharmacology, toxicology and therapeutics.

Volkin and Srivastava are KU’s second and third Eminent Scholars. Blake Peterson, the Regents Distinguished Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, was first in 2008.

Volkin held senior director positions for Centocor in pharmaceutical research and development from 2002 through 2009. Before that, he held similar management as well as research scientist positions with Merck Research Laboratories from 1989 to 2002. He also worked for two years as a research technician at the Research Institute of Scripps Clinic.

Volkin’s academic background includes a bachelor’s in chemistry from the University of California-San Diego and a doctorate in biochemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“KU is an exciting opportunity,” Volkin said. “It has outstanding faculty in the School of Pharmacy and a clear vision for research and the education of future pharmacists. The west campus expansion is a tremendous investment, with two new research buildings in place and two other buildings — the School of Pharmacy classroom building and the Bioscience and Technology Business Center — scheduled for completion in 2010. I look forward to coming to Lawrence, and I very much appreciate the commitment the KBA is making in our research program.”

Hayes, Mihesuah, Rosenblum named Keeler Intra-University Professors

Faculty members will under take collaborative projects in 2010-11

Three faculty members have been named Keeler Family Intra-University Professors for the 2010-11 academic year.

• E. Bruce Hayes, associate professor of French and Italian

• Devon A. Mihesuah, the Cora Lee Beers Price Teaching Professor in International Cultural Understanding
The professorships give faculty members an opportunity to enhance their knowledge of an academic specialty, broaden the depth of a defined field of study or start a new academic endeavor and promote collaboration across disciplines. Keeler professors are granted one semester free of departmental responsibilities to engage in exchange with faculty from other disciplines, take courses, develop cross-disciplinary projects and/or team-teach in one or two courses in another department or school at KU.

Devon Mihesuah

Hayes will work with the Department of Classics. His research project centers on Roman satirical works as a crucial subtext for late 16th century French satire.

Mihesuah will partner with the Environmental Studies Program and the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Her research areas include American Indian history, Choctaw history and culture, traditional Indigenous foodways and environments, Indigenous women, activism, repatriation and stereotyping. She also is a novelist.

Brian Rosenblum

Rosenblum will work with faculty and staff at the Spencer Museum of Art to look at the evolving roles of museums and libraries in supporting teaching, learning and research in the digital age. His work at KU Libraries focuses on scholarly communication and digital publishing.
Study shows Barnett, economics department among world's top economic bloggers

The Department of Economics and William A. Barnett, the Oswald Distinguished Professor of Macroeconomics, are quite influential in the economic blogosphere, according to a new study.

According to "Blogometrics," an article in the Eastern Economics Journal, William A. Barnett is among the world's top economic bloggers. He co-authored the blog Inside the Economist's Mind, http://economistmind.blogspot.com/, with the late Paul A. Samuelson, professor emeritus of economics and Institute Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The article ranks the blog as the world’s fourth most influential economics blog. Samuelson, the first American to win the Nobel Prize in economics, was listed as the fourth most influential economics blogger, and Barnett was listed as 14th in the world. Samuelson recently died at age 94 and has been widely recognized as the most important economist of his generation.

The ranking of bloggers "was done through the Harzing database of citations to scholarly articles, books, and popular press essays authored by economist bloggers. For this study, economics bloggers are ranked based on citations per year" to their published research, Mixon and Upadhyaya wrote. As opposed to earlier rankings of blogs based on the activity on the blog, this new study ranks economics blogs, bloggers and departments based upon the visibility of the professional research publications by the economists who host the blogs.

Barnett has published more than 140 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 20 books, and his research has been published in seven languages. He signed a contract to write another book for MIT Press titled “Getting It Wrong: How Faulty Monetary Statistics Undermine the Fed.” A special issue of the prestigious Journal of Econometrics is forthcoming in Barnett’s
honor. That special issue was organized and edited by Nobel Laureate James Heckman at the University of Chicago and Apostolos Serletis, University Professor of Economics at the University of Calgary in Canada.

Attempting to determine the influence of economists is a practice nearly as old as the field of study itself. Often referred to as “the economics of economics,” the process has a new method of analysis.

“It is clear that economics blogging has become a serious endeavor since the advent of the Internet, and some of the nation’s and world’s top economists are engaging audiences worldwide through economics blogs of one form or another,” the study authors wrote.


Numerous events set to mark Black History Month at KU

A full slate of events has been scheduled to mark Black History Month at KU. Below is a listing of events, dates, times, locations and sponsors.

For more information about any of the events, contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at 864-4350.

Feb. 1

• You’ve Got Questions, We’ve Got Answers

Open forum discussion about suggested topics from the general assembly.

7:30 p.m., Gridiron Room, Burge Union

Sponsor: Black Student Union

Feb. 4

• Diversity Dialogue Series: Don’t Label Me

Panel discussion about the use of language and labels and how they affect students’ daily lives. Following the panel, students will decorate T-shirts to represent themselves.

6 p.m., Hashinger Hall

Sponsor: Office of Multicultural Affairs

• Eat Your Heart Out: Part 1

Women from Black Student Union will bring in dishes for the men to taste. The men will vote on the best dish.

7:30 p.m., location to be announced

Sponsor: Black Student Union

Feb. 8
• Eva Vega

Fusing elements of humor, Vega engages the most difficult topics through a personal lens and invites others to do the same.

7:30 p.m., Alderson Auditorium, Kansas Union

Sponsor: Office of Multicultural Affairs

Feb. 9

• Brown Bag Discussion: The State of Diversity in Higher Education

Roundtable discussions will be an opportunity to share dialogue on current issues regarding diversity in higher education.

Noon, Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center Classroom

Sponsor: Office of Multicultural Affairs

Feb. 10

• University Career Fair

Meet with corporate representatives and learn about internships and job opportunities.

2-6 p.m., Fifth floor, Kansas Union

Sponsors: University Career Center and Office of Multicultural Affairs

Feb. 11-12

• Tunnel of Oppression

Tours start on the hour and take approximately 30 minutes, e-mail Precious Porras, pporras@ku.edu, to reserve a spot.

The program is designed to create an awareness of types of oppression and their effects within society and the campus community. The primary goal of the project is to create an interactive program for KU students, staff and faculty. The program challenges participants in a safe environment. After going through the experience, participants process what they see and feel with trained counselors.

9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center

Sponsor: Office of Multicultural Affairs

Feb. 11-13

• Campus movie: "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire"

$2, KU students; $3, public; free, Student Saver Card

8 p.m., Woodruff Auditorium, Kansas Union

Sponsor: Student Union Activities

Feb. 15

• Black Jeopardy

An interactive game to test students’ knowledge of black history on topics ranging from sports to literature.

7:30-9 p.m., Gridiron Room, Burge Union

Sponsor: Black Student Union
Feb. 18

- **Eat Your Heart Out: Part 2**
  Men from Black Student Union will bring in dishes for the women to taste. The women will vote on the best dish.
  7:30 p.m., Location to be announced
  Sponsor: Black Student Union

Feb. 20

- **Basketball Throwdown**
  Basketball tournament with teams of five people. There will be sponsors and for a set amount of points a team makes, the sponsor will donate money to an organization of the team’s choosing.
  Time and location to be announced
  Sponsor: Black Student Union

Feb. 22

- **Various Issues Plaguing the Black Community**
  Facilitated discussion about education, health and crime, and how these factors impact black and African communities.
  7:30 p.m., Gridiron Room, Burge Union
  Sponsor: Black Student Union

Feb. 25

- **The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship at KU: Adam Banks**
  Banks, associate professor of writing and rhetoric at Syracuse University, works with Syracuse’s writing program, where he teaches courses in African-American rhetoric, digital rhetoric, community literacy and rhetoric and composition theory. He is the author of the award-winning “Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground.”
  3:30 p.m. Alderson Auditorium

Feb. 26

- **Thurgood Marshall Law Day**
  Named in honor of the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice and hosted by the Black Law Students Association, Thurgood Marshall Law Day engages youth from select Kansas City and Topeka high schools in cultivating and enriching discussions on the life of Marshall and the impact his work has on their lives today. The students explore contemporary law topics, diversity in the legal profession and spend a half-day with the law school community. The program creates awareness of the sacrifices made by people like Marshall who became the symbol for America’s struggle for equal justice and the law throughout the 20th century.
  8:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 106 Green Hall
  Sponsor: School of Law
KU scientist shows potential of technology for autism research and treatment

Warren leads study into children's vocalization

For the first time, researchers have measured precisely the impact of autism on several aspects of how children learn language with a new technology that has enormous potential for researchers, practitioners and parents, according to Steven F. Warren, lead author of a study published online in the Nov. 11 Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

Using the LENA (Language Environment Analysis) system, an automatic vocal analysis technology, the study confirmed that young children with autism spectrum disorder vocalize significantly less than their typically developing peers of the same age — 29 percent less — and that these were often in the form of what the researchers called “monologues” rather than being directed to another person.

More importantly, researchers were able to document deficits in conversational turn-taking with adults — the hallmark of how we learn to communicate with others. Children with autism do this 26 percent less frequently than typical children and the exchanges are markedly shorter in duration.

“This is groundbreaking in that this is the first study based on an automatic measure of the vocal behavior of children,” said Warren, vice provost for research and graduate studies and child language development scientist.

According to Warren, the cumulative effect of this deficit is sobering. In one day, the children with autism had 146 fewer opportunities on average than typical children to engage in the give and take of learning language and social and emotional development. In a year’s time that would burgeon to 53,290 fewer conversational turn-taking occurrences.

But there is some good news: the LENA system also measured why therapy may be effective. It documented that when children were in treatment, there was a sharp increase in their
vocalizations and turn-taking as well as adult vocalizations to them.

“Providing this type of language-rich environment for a large part of the child’s day may be why some studies have shown that intensive intervention over two or more years can have such a large impact on the development of some young children with autism,” Warren said.

Warren predicts that LENA, which allows the inexpensive collection and analysis of large amounts of data unimagined in language research before now, could revolutionize the assessment and treatment of autism and the behavioral sciences in general.

Researchers and practitioners, for example, could assess the fidelity and effectiveness of interventions over many years, Warren said.

“We might have surmised that children with autism have markedly different experiences learning language, but until now, we have been held back by the lack of measurement technology.”

LENA could allow parents to continue and supplement language enrichment therapy at home and assess their own effectiveness for themselves, Warren suggested.

“In this way, LENA could function similar to the way a pedometer measures how much exercise one gets from walking. Autism interventions remain expensive and arduous. This tool may help us to develop cost-effective treatments and better understand how they work and how to keep them working.”

The study compared the 26 young children with autism spectrum disorder aged 16 months to 48 months to 78 typically developing children of the same age though the LENA digital language processor and language analysis software.

The processor fits into the front pocket of specially designed children’s clothing and records everything the child vocalizes as well as its “language learning environment.”

The analysis is not based on words but on sound patterns and theoretically could be used for speakers of any language, Warren said.

“LENA is a measurement breakthrough that lets us look at human behavior in a way that we have not been able to look at it before.”

The research was funded by the nonprofit LENA Foundation of Boulder, Colo. Warren and D. Kimbrough Oller, second author, are members of the Scientific Advisory Board. They do not receive consulting fees for these roles.
On-campus visit dates announced for CLAS, music dean searches

Provost candidate interviews to be scheduled soon

Searches for three key leadership positions are under way, and on-campus visits have begun. The first candidate for dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was on campus Jan. 24-26. Interviews for the dean of the School of Music begin Feb. 9.

Public sessions will be scheduled for each candidate. Names and vitae will be released 48 hours before candidates’ arrivals on campus and posted on the search page at the provost’s Web site, www.provost.ku.edu/search.

The schedules are as follows.

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
— Second candidate, Joseph C. Shields, chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Ohio University, Jan. 31-Feb. 5
— Third candidate, Feb. 10-12
— Fourth candidate, Feb. 17-20

Dean of the School of Music
— First candidate, Feb. 9-12
— Second candidate, Feb. 17-20
— Third candidate, Feb. 28-March 3

The search committee for provost and executive vice chancellor anticipates scheduling on-campus interviews in February. Visit dates will be announced soon.

University Lecture Series at the Commons to examine 'Writing Jazz'

Presentations to enhance honors course

Jazz, a distinctly American art form, has drawn interest from all over the world and invited study from a multitude of disciplines. The spring 2010 University Honors Program Lecture Series at the Commons will explore “Writing Jazz.” All lectures, and a jazz concert, are free and open to the public.

The lecture series is designed to explore a topic with particular relevance to today’s society in a cross-disciplinary academic environment. The series
is sponsored by the University Honors Program and the Commons, a partnership between KU’s Biodiversity Institute, Hall Center for the Humanities and Spencer Museum of Art.

The lectures are designed to enhance the spring 2010 Commons Course, Writing Jazz, taught by Jonathan Mayhew, professor of Spanish and Portuguese. The honors course will explore the historical evolution of jazz music from the point of view of literary and intellectual history, highlighting the ways in which poets, essayists and novelists have responded to the innovations of major figures from Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington to Ornette Coleman and Wynton Marsalis.

Virtually from its inception in the 1920s, jazz has been of great interest to composers, writers and intellectuals on several continents. As a popular art with genteel and intellectual pretensions, subject to conflicting intellectual constructions, jazz offers multiple opportunities for teaching cultural history and critical thinking.

The course will concentrate on several key problems, especially the role jazz played in the development of the poetics of the beat generation and in the black arts movement of the 1960s. The major themes of the course will be cultural identity and hybridity and the dynamic of literary and intellectual appropriations.

Each year, the University Honors Program offers a new Commons course. This course and the University Honors Program Lecture Series were designed to encourage interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration with other departments and units from throughout the university. Speakers for the lecture series are selected from proposals submitted by KU faculty and staff.

All lectures and the concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. in Spooner Hall.

KU Faculty Jazz Combo, concert at the Commons, Feb. 24.

"Jurisgenerative Grammar: For Alto, For Black," Fred Moten, Department of English, Duke University, Feb. 25

"Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit: Constructing Black Women's Conversion Narratives in Jazz," Tammy Kernodle, Department of Musicology, Miami University, March 9

"From Hepcat to Rebel to Heroin Fiend: The Jazz Trope in the Popular Imagination," Paul Lopes, Department of Sociology, Colgate University, April 15
Heavyweight champ, entrepreneur George Foreman to visit campus

Student session, public panel discussion scheduled

Two-time world heavyweight boxing champion and internationally known entrepreneur George Foreman will visit KU on Feb. 4.

George Kimball

The Heavyweight Boxing Symposium will take place at 7 p.m. at the Kansas Union ballroom. It is free and open to the public. Foreman will be joined on the panel by George Kimball, a renowned boxing journalist and KU alumnus, and Robert Rodriguez, associate director of KU’s McNair Scholars Program and lecturer in Latin American studies. Rodriguez, a boxing journalist, will begin the program with “A Heavyweight for the Ages: George Foreman,” a presentation about Foreman’s extraordinary life and boxing career. Rodriguez will incorporate his own photos and writings.

George Foreman

Foreman will take part in a panel discussion and book signing and visit with students in the McNair and Multicultural Scholars Programs while on campus.

Robert Rodriguez

Kimball, a longtime boxing writer for the Boston Herald and author of the recently published book “Four Kings: Leonard, Hagler, Hearns, Duran and the
Last Great Era of Boxing,” will follow with “The Last Great Heavyweight Rivalry: Ali, Frazier, Foreman and Norton,” a discussion of Foreman and great heavyweight boxers of the 1970s. Kimball’s book quickly became the best-selling boxing book in the United States, Great Britain and Ireland. Named one of the top 10 sports books of the year by the American Library Association, it is the subject of a documentary film currently in production. In 1986, Kimball was awarded the Nat Fleischer Award for Excellence in Boxing Journalism, the highest honor for boxing writers.

“He has covered most of the great boxing events of the past three decades,” Rodriguez said of Kimball.

Foreman will then present “From Heavyweight Champion to Knockout Entrepreneur,” an overview of his transition from a heavyweight boxer to a successful businessman. A short question-and-answer session will follow, then all three panel members will sign copies of their books. Oread Books will have copies for sale of Foreman’s “ Knockout Entrepreneur,” Kimball’s “Four Kings” and “American at Large,” for which Foreman wrote the foreword, and Rodriguez’s “The Regulation of Boxing: A History and Comparative Analysis of Policies Among American States.”

Foreman first entered the public spotlight when he won the Olympic boxing gold medal in 1968. He won the heavyweight championship in 1973 with a knockout victory over Joe Frazier. He then lost the title to Muhammad Ali in 1974. In 1977, he retired and dedicated his life to his ministry. Foreman returned to boxing in 1987. In 1994, at age 45, he became the oldest man to win the heavyweight title when he knocked out Michael Moorer.

After his boxing career, Foreman perhaps became more famous for his invention, the George Foreman Lean, Mean, Fat-Reducing Grilling Machine. The grills sold millions of units and spawned a whole line of related products.

Rodriguez, who organized a boxing symposium at KU for Hispanic Heritage Month featuring John Ruiz, the first Latino world heavyweight boxing champion, said he wanted to host a similar event during African-American History Month. He added that Foreman’s career longevity and duality compelled him to invite him to campus.

“When I ask students if they know who George Foreman is, they say ‘of course, he’s the grill guy,’ ” Rodriguez said. “But he had an extraordinary boxing career before that.”

While at KU, Foreman will visit with students in the McNair Scholars Program and Multicultural Scholars Program. The McNair program works to prepare low-income, first-generation college students and underrepresented minorities for doctoral studies. The
Multicultural Scholars Program recruits students from underrepresented backgrounds for a variety of majors and provides resources and support for them to be successful students and professionals.

Foreman’s visit and the panel discussion are sponsored by the McNair Scholars Program, Multicultural Scholars Program, Institute for Educational Research and Public Service, Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Equity, Oread Books, Genovese Restaurant, the Oread hotel and Coca-Cola.

Poppo invited to Nobel research symposium

Business prof one of few to attend international research event

Laura Poppo, professor of business, was among a select few chosen to attend a symposium Dec. 4 in honor of Oliver E. Williamson’s Nobel Prize at the BI Norwegian School of Management in Oslo. The event was attended by a small number of researchers whose work has been influential in the field of transaction cost economics.

The fact that Poppo, a strategic management professor, was invited to a symposium reserved for leading economists and scholars advancing the field is a testament to the traits she shares with the Nobel Prize winner. Both professors have spent their careers examining the benefits and limitations of markets and firms, expanding their research to include other academic areas.

Laura Poppo

“This is why Williamson’s work is so significant,” Poppo said. “His research has influenced many disciplines outside of economics – marketing, strategic management, international business, organizational theory – many other disciplines reference his work.”

Although Poppo was invited to the symposium specifically because of her contributions to Williamson’s specialty, this wasn’t her first encounter with the Nobel Prize winner. She met him 15 years ago while teaching at Washington University, where Williamson was a guest lecturer. Williamson also reviewed a recent publication of Poppo’s.
“I have spent most of my career examining empirically whether Williamson’s claims are supported or not,” said Poppo. “And how his ideas should be expanded to better explain the phenomenon.”

The study of transaction cost economics lends itself well to interdisciplinary study. According to Poppo, the field examines the role of firms in an economy and how firms can actually exist as hierarchical organizations, which coordinate specialized transactions more efficiently than markets.

“Williamson’s research proposed why a large firm could and should exist,” Poppo said. “Because markets fail. Prior to this time, economists believed that markets were the optimal form of organization and firms were incidental.”

Williamson is an Edgar F. Kaiser Professor Emeritus of Business, Economics and Law at the University of California-Berkeley. According to the Nobel Prize Web site, he received the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics for “his analysis of economic governance, especially the boundaries of the firm.” Williamson shares the prize with Elinor Ostrom of Indiana University, awarded for her “analysis of economic governance, especially the commons.”

Poppo’s academic interests include strategic management, international business and empirical tests of strategic, economic and sociological perspectives.

Mazza named interim dean for School of Law

Search committee formed to identify successor

Stephen W. Mazza, associate dean for academic affairs at School of Law, will be interim dean effective July 1. Mazza will assume the post when Dean Gail Agrawal leaves to become dean at the University of Iowa College of Law.

“There are many excellent leaders within the school, and Stephen Mazza stands out for his demonstrated effectiveness,” said interim Provost Danny Anderson. “He is ideal for this moment of transition. In his current administrative role, he has contributed to curricular changes, helped develop plans for meeting budgetary challenges and participated in faculty recruitment. He is a nationally recognized scholar, a highly regarded teacher and a knowledgeable administrator.”
Mazza joined the KU law faculty in 1998. An honors graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law, he received his master of laws degree from New York University School of Law, where he was managing editor of the Tax Law Review. After practicing in the tax section of a large Atlanta law firm, he returned to NYU as an acting assistant professor.

Stephen W. Mazza

“We’re disappointed that Dean Agrawal is heading to Iowa, but she’s left the KU law school in a very strong position,” Mazza said.

U.S. News and World Report’s “America’s Best Graduate Schools” ranks KU 32nd in the nation among public university law schools. In September, National Jurist magazine named KU a “best value law school” for its comparatively low price tag and for preparing students “incredibly well for today’s competitive job market.”

Mazza has expanded the number of tax offerings at KU, teaching separate courses in taxation of mergers and acquisitions, tax procedure and tax policy. He also coordinates the law school’s tax certificate program and VITA program. Mazza is a member of the tax section of the American Bar Association and a frequent speaker on tax issues. In addition to his numerous journal publications, he is co-author of the leading text on tax procedure; this text has become a standard work used at law schools throughout the United States and it was cited by the Supreme Court as authority in an important tax procedure case.

Anderson has announced members of a committee that will conduct a national search for a new dean.

“The opening of the dean position at KU law was big news at the American Association of Law Schools conference earlier this month,” Mazza said. “Several highly qualified candidates have already expressed interest in the position.”

Chris Drahozal, the John M. Rounds Distinguished Professor of Law and associate dean for research and faculty development, will chair the committee.

Other members are Mike Kautsch, professor of law; Laura Hines, professor of law; Elizabeth Weeks Leonard, associate professor law; Jelani Jefferson Exum, associate professor of law; Pam Keller, clinical associate professor of law; Todd Rogers, assistant dean for career services; John Gaunt, dean of the School of Architecture, Design and Planning; Mary Lee Hummert, vice provost for faculty development; Derrick Darby, associate professor of philosophy; Ganesh Nair, a first-year law student from Alexandria, Va.; and William Sampson, a 1971 graduate of the KU
School of Law and partner in Shook, Hardy & Bacon.

**KU lands sweepstakes for most wins in CASE communications contest**

Honors recognize photography, writing and design work

KU won the sweepstakes award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, which held its regional conference and awards ceremony last month in St. Louis.

The council, known as CASE, presents awards for higher education communications and public relations professionals. KU Alumni Association, KU Endowment and University Relations all won multiple awards. KU is a member of region VI, which includes Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Below are the departments and awards won.

**KU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Gold

Excellence in photography, series of photographs: Faces of Football

Excellence in alumni Web sites, electronic newsletter for alumni: KU Connection

**KU ENDOWMENT**

Gold

Excellence in writing, opinion/column/editorial: A New era on the Hill

Excellence in communications, overall publications, presidents/annual reports:

8 Great Things
KU, KU Medical Center enter new licensing agreement with Microsoft

Deal to expand access, upgrades

As an important outcome of Initiative One, the Lawrence campus and the KU Medical Center have entered into a three-year campus agreement with Microsoft. The new site license allows faculty, staff and students access to Microsoft Office for work and home use,
Windows OS upgrades, core Client Access Licenses and Windows server licenses for departmental use.

The campus agreement positions all KU users to have access to a suite of products that they rely on every day and to receive new product releases and upgrades when they become available to volume-licensing clients.

In addition to upgrades on campus machines, KU faculty and staff will be eligible for home use rights. Under home use rights, staff and faculty are authorized for one home installation of Microsoft Office Suite, which includes Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook and Access.

Information Technology is collaborating with KU Bookstores on the distribution of Microsoft Office media to KU students. As more details are available, they will be shared with student users.

Rolling out all of the products to campus is a huge undertaking; IT anticipates that the products will be available mid-to-late spring. As timelines are defined for product distribution, information will be shared with both departmental technical staff and users.

Initiative One was established to identify strategies for maximizing KU’s information infrastructure through coordinated planning, purchasing and service delivery. The Microsoft campus agreement is an example of Initiative One strategies put into practice — providing cost savings and increased operating efficiencies for campus.

Ice-penetrating radar touted as 'game-changing development' in global climate change research

Engineers at KU detail a special radar array they developed that is capable of depicting a 3D view of bedrock hidden beneath ice sheets three kilometers thick in the cover article of the latest issue of the Journal of Glaciology.

Working at the National Science Foundation Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets at KU, the researchers, led by then-doctoral student John Paden, designed a Synthetic Aperture Radar system that provides a fine-resolution image of the bed over a wide geographic region, as well as the thickness of the ice. Topographic
characteristics of earth below the glaciers and ice sheets have long been sought after. It is considered essential to develop computer models that can better predict the role of ice sheets in global climate change and sea level rise.

The radar system is a game-changing development for researchers in global climate change. Previously, glaciologists could only know the thickness of the ice and bed conditions along a single line from a sole pass of a radar or at a single point where ice core samples had been drilled.

To get these innovative 3D landscapes, KU engineers constructed a special sled with several radar transmitters and receivers. The sled was then hauled over Summit Camp, a year-round science station that sits on top of the ice sheet in Greenland, following a precise grid of parallel lines 500 meters apart connected by perpendicular lines. The radar used both left-looking and right-looking beams in the frequency needed to broadcast television signals. Researchers used advanced signal-processing techniques that determined the directions of the echoing wavelengths. The team was able to collect data through opaque ice as much as three kilometers thick and reveal the ground from multiple points.

Because the same spot on the ice bed is imaged by radar from several tracks, the elevation is independently measured multiple times, Paden wrote in his paper. Paden received his doctorate in electrical engineering from KU in 2007. He’s now employed as a software development engineer with Microsoft’s Vexcel Corporation.

“While the 2D representations provide a consistent medium for comparison of point differences, a 3D representation provides better visualization and interpretation of surface features,” Paden wrote. To confirm accuracy, researchers compared their result with the length of the 3,027-meter-long Greenland Ice Core Project ice borehole and found their data to be within 10 meters at that site. The radar system is considered very accurate with an error of 0.3 percent in the index of refraction, well within acceptable limits for ice-penetrating radar.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has estimated that sea level would increase from 18 to 59 centimeters over the next century. The success of this radar system will help researchers create more accurate ice-sheet models that predict sea level rise, Paden wrote. The new radar also will help glaciologist identify locations ideal for future ice core sampling.

Paden worked with Chris Allen, professor of electrical engineering and computer science; Prasad Gogineni, the Deane E. Ackers Distinguished Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and director of CReSIS; CReSIS engineer Torry Akins; and then-graduate student David Dunson. All are KU engineering alumni.
'Science on Tap' series to take experts, pressing scientific topics to public

Hydroelectric power, trilobites and solar energy are on the discussion table for Science on Tap, a new series of community conversations organized by the Natural History Museum.

Science on Tap is modeled on a concept known as science cafés. Often held in restaurants and coffee shops, the events offer the opportunity to discuss science and technology topics in an informal setting.

For each event, a moderator will introduce the topic and provide a general overview. After a short break for food and drink, the moderator will encourage the crowd to ask questions about the subject and interact. The first event, which focused on hydroelectric power, drew a large crowd.

The Free State Brewing Company, 636 Massachusetts St. in downtown Lawrence, will host Science on Tap monthly. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for each event, and the moderator will begin the event at 7:30 p.m. Participants can come early for dinner or join the group just for the conversation. There is no purchase necessary.

To add to the conversation either in person or in advance of the event, people can send questions about the topic by e-mail to KUscienceontap@gmail.com.

The events

Feb. 16 — Trilobites, Evolution and Extinction. What can trilobites tell us about extinction? Bruce Lieberman, curator of invertebrate paleontology at the Biodiversity Institute, will introduce the more than 250-million-year-old, hard-shelled creatures that once dominated Earth’s ancient seas. Discussion will branch from there to how major astronomical events might have played a part in the extinction of trilobites and what that tells us about other mass extinctions.

March 23 — DIY Science: Tap into the Sun and Lower Your Energy Bill. Many people understand that the sun can provide energy on a large scale in sunny locales, but what can you do for your house, your television or your coffee maker? Alice Bean, professor of physics and astronomy, will discuss how to convert solar energy into power.