Neal Kingston, director of the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, will oversee a $22 million grant to approve assessment methods for special education students.

Improving assessment

Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation land KU's largest ever grant to improve special ed

Researchers at KU have received a $22 million grant to develop a new assessment system for special education students in 11 states. The grant from the U.S. Department of Education will support development of the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System, led by Neal Kingston, director of KU’s Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation. It is the
largest grant in KU history.

“It’s long been realized that when accountability is based on test scores, teachers will teach to the test,” said Kingston. “The new system will turn around that process and design tests to model good instruction — to be driven by and be part of instruction instead of a standalone activity.”

The new system will rely on assessment that is built into the learning process, rather than on an annual exam. Teachers can determine throughout the year how each student is learning by using a “learning map,” which details relationships among thousands of skills students develop throughout their education.

“When you have really good diagnostic information that supports the educational process, you can address needs and remediate immediately,” Kingston said.

State departments of education in Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin plan to use the program beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

“The Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation has been a leader in the development of assessments for K-12 students for nearly 30 years,” said Rick Ginsberg, dean of KU’s School of Education. “This new grant is yet another example of CETE’s leadership nationally in developing assessments to assist educators with innovative approaches for supporting teachers in working with all students regardless of their academic abilities.”

Kingston said the new assessment model eventually could be used for all students.

“With this grant, the University of Kansas has an opportunity to improve the quality of education received by countless children,” said Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little. “By shaping the future of educational accountability, Neal Kingston and his team will help teachers better connect with students.”

In addition to the 11 participating states and the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, the Dynamic Learning Maps consortium includes faculty from several other departments and research centers within KU, including the Beach Center on Disability, Center for Research on Learning, Center for Research Methods and Data Analysis and Department of Special Education. Key external partners include AbleLink Technologies, the Arc, the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Edvantia.
Chuck Modig, director of Design and Construction Management, displays photos that were part of a time capsule found at the bottom of Potter Lake. Items such as the capsule, a bicycle and hub caps were found during the dredging of the campus lake.

Potter dredging turns up time capsules, trash and treasure

It’s not clear who James, Barb and Alison are, but they took great care to preserve their memories — in the bottom of a lake.

A time capsule with a bottle of wine and photos labeled with the names James, Barb and Alison and a reference to a favorite bartender at G. Willikers was among the unique discoveries when Potter Lake was dredged this year. The group of friends packed the bottle, photos and paper inside a cylindrical tube and dropped it in the lake. The container wasn’t water tight, and the photos were ruined, but the writing on the back survived although no dates are visible.
Jim Modig, director of Design and Construction Management, now has a collection of items pulled from the lake. It was recently dredged to remove excess sedimentation to improve the health of the historic campus pond. Dredging crews found a bicycle, a desk, pieces of chairs and a plastic hubcap beneath the surface.

Work crews also discovered a piece of goal post, but have been unable to pull it out because of excess vegetation.

“Hopefully we’ll have one more piece to add to the collection,” Modig said before the effort to dislodge the goal post.

The Kansas Union has stated interest in putting the piece of post on permanent display.

Undoubtedly, each of the items has a story, though it’s purely speculation what they would be. Modig guesses the bicycle, a kids BMX model, ended up in the pond when kids were ramping into the water, and it got away from one of them. The desk may have been an end-of-the-semester stress release. The hubcap is anyone’s guess.

Modig said he was almost more surprised at what they didn’t find. Several reports have been made over the years of rings lost in the lake. None have turned up yet, but it is still possible such small items could be found in the giant bags the sediment was filtered into. An alum also shared a story of someone who snuck into Strong Hall, grabbed a safe and tossed it in the water. No safe was found though, and the story was likely a tall tale.

The lake was dredged hydraulically, making it unnecessary to completely drain it. The possibility does exist for unfound items to still be resting on the bottom.

It’s not clear how old any of the items pulled from the lake are. However, none of them have been in the pond for more than 50 years. Potter Lake has been drained and dredged only once before in its nearly 100-year life, in 1957.

The School of Social Welfare has earned a five-year, $13.3 million grant from Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families to make family life better for children in
foster care who have serious emotional disabilities.

The grant is the largest in the history of the School of Social Welfare and should result in improved outcomes for kids in Kansas as well as new employment in the state.

Tom McDonald

“This population is in need,” said Tom McDonald, professor of social welfare. “Half the kids who enter foster care have serious emotional disabilities. We’re talking about kids with mental health problems that substantially disrupt social, academic and emotional functioning. They stay longer in foster care and often have many placements because of some of their behaviors.”

McDonald and KU social welfare researchers Stephanie Bryson and Becci Akin are co-principal investigators for the new grant.

The funds will create a new initiative — the Kansas Intensive Permanency Project — to serve 2,160 Kansas families of children with the most severe mental health and behavioral problems.

Specifically, the grant will provide in-home therapy and resources to these families while their children are in foster care, with the aim of supporting permanent reunification of those families.

“Sometimes, kids’ behavior is so extreme that they present a danger to themselves or others, and it’s no longer possible to maintain the child in the home,” said McDonald. “For example, kids could be running away, setting fires or being aggressive to other kids in the home.”

McDonald added, “Yet, there’s good evidence that those children can be best cared for in those families of origin if the families themselves get the support they need.”

The foster care system in Kansas has been privatized since 1997. The grant funds will enable the four private nonprofit providers of family reunification/foster care services in Kansas — Youthville, TFI Family Services Inc., KVC Behavioral HealthCare Kansas Inc. and St. Francis Community Services — to give new resources to families and to hire new staff to work with those families.

“The grant will allow the foster care providers — who are the experts in these cases — to provide families whatever therapeutic or concrete support they may need,” McDonald said. “Funds will help agencies hire dedicated therapists who can work with families intensively. Funds could also help with things like housing, medical care or daycare for the child that would allow parents to be employed.”
At the same time, the children in foster care will continue to receive treatment and intervention, with the aim of making family reunification possible.

The grant is part of a federal effort to test child-welfare plans and promote effective initiatives nationwide. Nationally, Health and Human Services awarded six grants. The grant to the KU is the only such grant awarded to a university.

Working in conjunction with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, the school will coordinate the efforts of Kansas’ four nonprofit providers of foster care services.

“We’ll take a lead role in terms of working with outside consultants, conducting a thorough needs assessment before implementation, and ensuring fidelity to the program intervention,” said McDonald. “We’ll also come up with screening tools to identify families in need earlier in the life of a case. The hope is that we can change the trajectories of kids entering foster care in the future.”

Chancellors Club Research, Teaching Awards presented

This year’s Chancellors Club professor and researcher award recipients include two internationally known professors — a philosophy professor on the Lawrence campus and a pharmacology, toxicology and therapeutics professor at the KU Medical Center.

Richard De George, a University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, and Yu-Jui Yvonne Wan, director of the KU Medical Center’s Liver Center, will be honored Oct. 22 at the annual Chancellors Club celebration.

Richard De George

De George has received numerous honors at KU, including the HOPE (Honor for Outstanding Progressive Educator) Award in 1965 and a Higuchi-KU Endowment Research Achievement Award in 1986. He has authored or co-authored 20 books and more than 200 philosophical articles and has lectured at universities around the world. In 1996, he received an honorary degree, Doctor Honoris Causa, at Nijenrode University in the Netherlands (awarded with Bill Gates and Nelson Mandela). In addition, he has supervised 14 doctoral
dissertations and 11 master’s theses and served on 32 doctoral committees.

De George joined the KU faculty in 1959. In addition to his appointment in the Department of Philosophy, he has been a member of the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies since its beginning and has been a courtesy professor of business administration since 1988. He was named a University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy in 1972.

Ben Eggleston, chair of the Department of Philosophy, said that throughout De George’s career, he has focused on his students.

“His publishing career has tended to follow his teaching, rather than the reverse,” Eggleston said. “His teaching has been driven by student interests.”

De George’s teaching has not been restricted to students. He has taught faculty and led workshops on teaching. He was one of the founders of the Hall Center for the Humanities.

“Professor De George over his long career at KU has demonstrated his teaching excellence in many ways, not only in the philosophy department, but also through his participation in team teaching, in teaching service courses for other departments in the College and for other schools in the university and in teaching faculty from KU and other universities,” said Eggleston.

Yu-Jui Yvonne Wan

Wan was recruited to the KU Medical Center in 2003 and has been the director of the Liver Center and the leader of Cancer Biology Program at the KU Cancer Center since 2007. Under her leadership, the center established a human liver specimen bank to which close to 800 specimens have been deposited. She has formally mentored 10 junior faculty members, 36 postdoctoral fellows, five visiting scholars and more than 30 students. Her numerous professional honors include the KU Medical Center’s Investigator Research Award and the Joy McCann Professorship and the SIG Elsevier Mentoring Award from the Society of Toxicology.

Wan is a scientific researcher and teacher. The major focus of her research is retinoic acid and its receptors in regulating liver functions and disease processes. Retinoic acid is a well-known differentiation agent clinically used to treat and prevent cancer. Wan discovered that the receptor for retinoic acid is crucial for maintaining normal liver characteristics and function. Recently, she further demonstrated the importance of retinoic acid in alcohol detoxification and alcoholic liver disease, fatty liver, liver inflammation and liver
regeneration. The data allowed her to identify therapeutic targets for treating liver injury and cancer.

Another area of Wan’s research concerns the genetic aspect of alcohol abuse. Her research has been supported by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. She has received continuous National Cancer Institute funding for the past 21 years, and her grant recently was renewed for another five years.

At the KU Medical Center, Wan is involved in teaching medical students, residents, research and clinical fellows and graduate as well as undergraduate students. In addition, she mentors junior faculty.

Wan has been serving National Institutes of Health study sections continuously for the past 12 years.

“Dr. Wan is an extremely energetic scientist,” said Paul Terranova, vice chancellor for research at the KU Medical Center. “She is actively involved in services at national and international levels, and she is an asset to the KU Medical Center through her dedicated and successful research and teaching.”

Each professor will receive an $8,000 award. The awards are provided through KU Endowment, the official fundraising and fund-management foundation for KU. Founded in 1891, KU Endowment was the first foundation of its kind at a U.S. public university.

KU reaches record level in research expenditures

University rises to 44th in national rankings

Federally funded research in science and engineering at KU increased by $5 million in 2009, to a record $127.4 million. That figure ranked KU 44th in a key category among national public research universities, according to an annual survey released last week by the National Science Foundation.

In the survey, KU ranked higher than any other public university in Kansas or Missouri, and fifth among the 11 Big 12 public universities. The report ranks a total of 689 public and private universities nationwide.

The largest public university on the list, Michigan, received $636 million for federally funded research in science and engineering, while the smallest, SUNY-Fredonia, received $9,000.

The survey also lists annual research spending since 2002. At
KU, spending in this category has increased every year during that time, something only 11 of the top 44 universities can claim.


“We have outstanding faculty at the Lawrence and medical center campuses who compete successfully for grants in all disciplines, not just science and engineering. The research that comes out of those grants has a positive influence on human health, education, energy and many other areas. That impact is harder to measure, but it matters much more than the dollars.”

Total KU sponsored projects spending from all sources of external grants and contracts exceeded $207 million in 2009. KU received 83 percent of its funding from a wide range of federal agencies. The three largest sources of federal research funding were the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. An annual report of sponsored research expenditures is online at www.rgs.ku.edu/-downloads/annual_reports/fy2009.pdf.

“Our focus now is research engagement,” said Paul Terranova, vice chancellor for research at the KU Medical Center. “We are exploring ways on both campuses to encourage more faculty to increase their level of active scholarship. This can include research grants, but it also includes scholarly publications, creative performances and other activities that energize the faculty and enhance KU’s impact as a research university.”

Professor profile: The art of pronunciation

Paul Meier, professor of theatre

People who can do a variety of accents may be a hit at parties and get laughs, but actors with a mastery of accents and dialects can be a hit professionally.

In a new KU YouTube video, Paul Meier, professor of theatre, discusses teaching accents to students, researching Shakespeare, producing plays in original pronunciation and why he came to KU.

“To be able to switch from one accent to another is just a wonderful party trick, and a very, very
important credential for an actor,” Meier said.

His classes that teach acting with an accent and using dialects are always among his most popular. He trains KU students to adopt accents for stage productions but has also coached actors in Hollywood productions and stage performances across the country. He also frequently consults with actors by videoconferencing.

Meier’s research focuses on his passion: Shakespeare. Recently he’s studied the pronunciation of the great writer’s plays in the time they were originally produced.

“These plays are very fresh, even 400 years later,” Meier said of Shakespeare's works. “But the language has moved on and the sound of the language is quite different.”

As there were no video or audio recordings of plays in Shakespeare’s day, many wonder how they can know what the pronunciation sounded like. There are several clues. First, people of the era spelled phonetically, as there was no such thing as “correct” spelling.

“People spelled just any way they wished,” he said. “Shakespeare himself spelled his name seven different ways. So when you got a letter from someone, you could hear their accent. When we get a letter from someone, we cannot hear their accent, because spelling has been regularized.”

The evidence is also in the plays themselves. In plays such as “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” the lines were written to rhyme. Although words such as eyes and fantasies wouldn’t rhyme if spoken today, they did at the time. Researchers can then cross-reference those rhymes to others found throughout writing of the period. Perhaps most fortunately for the researchers, there were early phoneticians documenting how things were pronounced at the time.

A native of England, Meier said he was drawn to KU because it gave him a chance to teach, research his passion and work with great students.

“There was this amazing job at a research university,” Meier said. “You get to teach 40 percent of the time, you get to research, you get to travel, you get to teach fantastic students from all over America. It’s a really wonderful job and it’s kept me enthusiastic for a little over 20 years now.”

To see the video, visit oread.ku.edu/~oread/2010/october/18/stories/profile.shtml.

Watkins offers flu shot clinics for employees
Student Health Services will offer a series of flu shot clinics over the next month for faculty, staff, retirees, affiliate employees and students. The vaccine is available as an injection or a nasal spray mist.

The cost is $15 for injection and $20.50 for the mist. The nasal mist is for ages 18 to 49 only and is subject to availability. Payment can be made by cash, check or credit card at the time of service. Medicare and Medicaid will not be accepted. The clinics will not be billed to insurance, but Student Health Services can provide a statement for submission for personal reimbursement.

Individuals wanting to get a vaccination can reduce their wait time by filling out a consent form, available on Student Health Services’ website.

Clinics are scheduled at the dates, times and locations below:

- 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Oct. 19, Kansas Union
- 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Oct. 20, Anschutz Library
- 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Oct. 21, Strong Hall
- 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Oct. 26, Burge Union
- noon–2 p.m. Oct. 27, School of Pharmacy building
- 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Oct. 28, Wescoe Hall Underground
- noon–2 p.m. Nov. 2, Nichols Hall
- 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Nov. 3, Strong Hall
- 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Nov. 4, Anschutz Library
- 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Nov. 9, Wescoe Hall Underground
- 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Nov. 10, Kansas Union
- 2–6 p.m. Nov. 11, Watkins Memorial Health Center

'Media Memes' exhibit takes collaborative approach to photo meanings

Display first of many planned between university, Spencer Museum

It’s Celka Straughn’s job to bring the academic side of KU to the Spencer Museum of Art. Mike Williams was looking for a way to take the work of the journalism school to a
wider campus audience. It was a perfect fit.

Straughn, the Andrew W. Mellon director of academic programs at the museum, and Williams, associate professor of journalism, collaborated to create the exhibit “Media Memes: Images, Technology and Making the News,” on display at the museum until Dec. 19. The exhibit examines how people view images, what meaning they take from them and how technology is used in shaping what becomes the news.

A meme, roughly defined, is a shared category or definition. Photos from museum’s permanent collection are placed into several recognizable categories such as sports or celebrity but, Williams said, others are put in less obvious groupings and it is up to the viewer to interpret what the photo says.

One photo shows a woman running in a park. Williams said that when asked, viewers have attached ideas such as freedom, joy and frolicking to the photo. An occasional viewer will say something like escape. The photo is actually a shot of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis running from paparazzi.

“I’ve heard people say it makes them think twice about what a photograph means when they learn that,” Williams said.

The exhibit also explores photography’s past, with a display of several antique cameras — many on loan from Wolfe’s Cameras of Topeka — and a collection of photo editors’ tools. Several of the pieces, such as a light table, ratio wheel and even film, are rarely used anymore. Williams, a former photo editor, said many students who view the exhibit may have shot film but have never been exposed to many of the editing tools.

The future of photography and how it relates to media is explored as well. As viewers enter the exhibit space, they can use one of several iMacs or iPads to view photos from a number of different publications and experience their presentation in new media while viewing others from circa 1960s publications. The technology was provided by the Tech Shop in the Kansas Union. Users can also manipulate photos and use some of the digital tools of today’s photo editors. Viewers can also assign their own memes, write headlines, captions and brief news stories for photos as well on the museum’s website.

On another wall, a giant screen shows photos as they stream through the Associated Press photo wire in real time. The images contain the date and same caption information that editors see. The Associated Press provides the feed to the museum.

“These are the kinds of images you might see in everyday life,” Straughn said of the exhibit. “And the ones on the AP feed are more than likely the images you are seeing in everyday life.”

Media Memes, curated by Williams and Straughn with assistance by Luke Jordan, lecturer in the departments of design and visual art, is
one of an ongoing series of collaborative displays at the Spencer Museum of Art. Straughn’s position is part of a $1 million Andrew W. Mellon Foundation matching award. The award is intended to enhance the museum’s scholarly and research standing, while expanding the reciprocal relationship between faculty, students and the museum.

The museum’s Raymond White Teaching Gallery was recently home to “African Healing Journeys,” an exhibit organized by John Janzen, professor of anthropology. The display shared works of African art and was part of an academic conference organized by the Kansas African Studies Center in September. Straughn said there are plans to host future exhibits in collaboration with faculty from political science and perhaps economics, to show further how art can be used as an agent for teaching, learning and research, even in disciplines in which it might not normally be associated.

### Giving to KU reaches record $110 million

For the third year in a row, contributions to KU Endowment reached a new record. Donors gave $110.2 million in fiscal year 2010, which ended June 30, a 3.6 percent increase over the previous year.

The $110.2 million came in the form of outright gifts and pledges. Donors documented an additional $10.3 million in deferred gifts, which will benefit KU in the future. The number of donors also reached a new record: 45,192.

According to Giving USA, an annual report on philanthropy, contributions to higher education declined by 3.6 percent nationally in calendar year 2009.

“This demonstrates the confidence alumni and friends have in KU,” said Dale Seuferling, president of KU Endowment. “We are thankful for their support of the university’s leadership in teaching and research and of the University of Kansas Hospital for its outstanding patient care.”

“In light of the uneven economic climate, our donors’ generosity is truly impressive,” said Kurt D. Watson, chair of the KU Endowment Board of Trustees. “Their contributions enabled us to make a powerful impact on KU that will last for generations.”

In fiscal year 2009, outright gifts and pledges to KU reached $106.4 million, a 13 percent increase over the
previous year. In fiscal year 2008, contributions totaled $94 million, a 21 percent increase over the previous year.

Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little said support from private donors is vital for the university to maintain its mission of access, service and leadership.

“With the funding challenges facing higher education in the state, support from private donors has become all the more critical for KU,” said Gray-Little. “Their generosity helps transform students’ lives and provides the resources for our faculty to excel in discovery and teaching.”

Highlights of giving in fiscal 2010 include

— 54 new scholarships, fellowships and awards, which provide opportunities for students
— Four new professorships, which help recruit and retain outstanding faculty
— 69 new endowed funds, which will benefit the university in perpetuity

School of Business earns funding to support, expand programs with U.S. Army

The School of Business has received $1.28 million since May from multiple U.S. Army grants and contracts to support its initiatives with the U.S. Army. The money will support the school’s Brigade Pre-Command Course and the master’s of science in business with a concentration in supply chain management and logistics program.

“The KU School of Business is playing a major role in helping forge a stronger connection between KU and the U.S. Army at Fort Leavenworth,” said Bill Fuerst, dean of the school. “We are extremely proud of the outstanding educational instruction we’re providing to a significant and ever-growing number of Army officers. The school’s successful relationships with the Combined Arms Center and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth provide a solid foundation for future growth and expansion of top-quality programs.”

The Brigade Pre-Command Course, which the grants fund for the next year, is an executive leadership program. The participants come from a highly select group of colonels who have been chosen for brigade commands.

The colonels are preparing to take on the
responsibility of leading brigades of 3,000-5,000 military and civilian personnel.

“These commanders are among the Army’s most promising leaders,” said Keith Chauvin, associate dean of academic affairs. “This group of colonels represents the pool from which future generals will be selected.”

At the U.S. Army’s request, the School of Business designed the program to introduce the colonels to business models in strategy, organizational change and leadership. The program is one week long, was first offered in January and is now offered monthly.

Several faculty members oversee the program. Tom Jindra, executive lecturer, is the primary instructor and director of the program. U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey gives presentations to each class. The program has graduated about 180 colonels, half of all brigade commanders in the U.S. Army, during the nine months it’s been offered.

The U.S. Army grants and contracts will also fund an additional 16 U.S. Army majors in the School of Business’ master of science in business with a concentration in supply chain management and logistics program. Established in 2008, the one-year master’s program bridges the gap between military and civilian logistics, leadership and management practices. Now in its third year, the program has 33 students, up from 11 in 2008.

“The school also has 10 U.S. Navy officers in the MBA program this year,” Chauvin said. “Most of these officers were selected by the Navy for the petroleum management concentration. Three of the officers specifically chose KU’s MBA program when the Navy offered to pay for their MBA degree.”

The U.S. Army grants and contracts will also fund an additional 16 U.S. Army majors in the School of Business’ master of science in business with a concentration in supply chain management and logistics program. Established in 2008, the one-year master’s program bridges the gap between military and civilian logistics, leadership and management practices. Now in its third year, the program has 33 students, up from 11 in 2008.

“After talking with friends in the civilian sector about the growing importance of supply chain management in the business world, I knew this was the degree that I wanted to pursue,” said Maj. Al Zehnder, who has spent more than 14 years as a U.S. Army logistics officer.

“Generations Project' to improve services to families with at-risk children
Researchers at KU have earned a $3 million grant to expand services such as home visits, crisis support and education for families with at-risk children.

The three-year grant is administered by the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project funded by the grant, the Generations Project, is a partnership between the Kansas Children’s Service League — the lead agency — and KU’s School of Social Welfare, Institute for Educational Research and Public Service and Center for Research Methods and Data Analysis.

The Kansas Children’s Service League offers a program to those in need called Healthy Families. Alice Lieberman, professor of social welfare and co-principal investigator for the grant, said the award will allow KU researchers to work with the league to enhance services already offered to families and to test the effectiveness of new services.

Families, who are referred to the league through a number of channels, will be placed randomly in a control group and a group with “experimental conditions,” which will be designed and tested by the institute’s evaluation team and center staff. Tracie Lansing, a KU School of Social Welfare graduate, is the league’s project coordinator.

Participants in the experimental conditions group will receive services the Kansas Children’s Service League has offered for years, such as counseling for parents of teenagers who become pregnant, as well as enhanced programs.

New services to be offered include a 10-week social and educational support class for families receiving the service. The researchers also plan to expand the program’s reach through social media, offering reminders for immunizations and healthy parenting tips via Facebook and text messages, indexed specifically for the age of the child.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to discover whether or not more is better,” Lieberman said. “We are just getting started, but we are excited. We think this can be a win-win situation.”

Teri Garstka, research associate at the Institute for Educational Research and Public Service, said her unit will use a rigorous experimental research design to gauge the effectiveness of the new programs, as compared to families not receiving the support program. Federal grant officials have shown a strong desire to fund rigorous evaluations of the programs to build evidence of their effectiveness on outcomes for pregnant teens and their babies.

If the new services prove effective, not only will it result in better programs and outcomes for families in Kansas, but also provide the kind of critical data the federal government can use to make decisions about funding programs that work for families in need, Garstka said.
Funds for the first year of the project total $825,245 — 30 percent of which is cash and in-kind matching funds from the project partners.

The Generations Project hopes to serve 220 families over five years in Shawnee and Wyandotte counties. KU is one of only 10 new recipients of the grant in the nation this fiscal year, and the $3 million figure was the maximum available grant amount.

“Our goal is for all families in Kansas to be healthy and prosper,” Lieberman said. “However we can contribute to that, I’ll be glad to be a part of.”

Researchers work to improve cancer prevention among Latino, American Indian communities

Researchers at the KU Medical Center have been awarded more than $4.4 million to improve prevention and the odds of surviving cancer for rural Latino and American Indian communities in Kansas.

A group of scientists at KU Medical Center have spent years establishing partnerships with Latino and American Indian communities throughout the state. This work has led to innovative, culturally appropriate initiatives such as All Nations Breath of Life, a smoking-cessation program for American Indians that recognizes the traditional use of tobacco for spiritual and cultural purposes, and the Touch to Screen project that uses Spanish-language computer kiosks to inform Latinos of medication, cancer screening and counseling resources in safety net clinics. Also, over the past two years, the medical center-based Midwest Cancer Alliance has strengthened its network of health professionals leading the fight against cancer throughout Kansas, building a clinical trial infrastructure and support system for cancer patients from Kansas City, Mo., to Goodland, near the Colorado border.

With the new award from the National Institutes of Health, medical center researchers will capitalize on these relationships to create the Kansas Community Cancer Health Disparities Network to address the needs of
populations that are drastically underserved.

“It’s a big deal when you get diagnosed with cancer and have to drive a couple of hours for treatment,” said Allen Greiner, associate professor of family medicine and the principal investigator on the project. “These people may not have oncologists within 200 miles. They may not have health insurance. And they’re seriously high risk, as our colon cancer screening research shows.”

Greiner will lead a dozen researchers specializing in areas such as social psychology, public health, epidemiology, rural and primary care, telemedicine, medical anthropology and biostatistics.

The Kansas Community Cancer Health Disparities Network includes an array of collaborating organizations, including the United Mexican American Ministries Clinic in Garden City, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, the regional Coalition of Hispanic Women Against Cancer, the Kansas Physicians Engaged in Prevention Research — a rural primary care practice-based research network — the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved and the KU Center for Telemedicine and Telehealth, among others.

“In partnership, we will develop an extensive and robust collaborative for developing cancer prevention, treatment and research programs across our large, rural and increasingly diverse state,” Greiner said.

“We are very excited about the opportunity and the potential impact this network has to make on the community,” said Stephanie Waggoner, chief executive officer of the United Mexican American Ministries Clinic in Garden City. “Partnering with Dr. Greiner and his team will allow additional services and education to reach uninsured and underinsured populations in southwest Kansas. Many people don’t have the resources to obtain healthcare and don’t really know how to navigate the healthcare system, which contributes to health disparities. This program will assist with that and provide other services that currently aren’t available.”

Beyond funding the efforts to meet a crucial need for underserved Kansans, the new award strengthens The KU Cancer Center’s position as it seeks to earn National Cancer Institute designation.

“Fewer than 3 percent of all adult cancer patients participate in clinical trials. Participation is even lower for patients from vulnerable populations,” said Roy A. Jensen, director of the KU Cancer Center. “We have built outstanding relationships with communities across the state, and this approach holds great promise in increasing minority participation in cancer clinical trials.”

Greiner estimated that the majority of grants such as the medical center’s new award go to cancer centers that already have NCI designation. Though the KU Cancer Center is not yet NCI-designated — it
will apply for designation in September 2011 — this award, Greiner says, “speaks to our increased community prevention effort.”

Funders wanted to see projects that were ambitious, Greiner says, and this project is far-reaching.

“Without dramatic changes in the direct involvement of community members, health disparities will keep festering in urban and rural neighborhoods all across the country,” he said. “Most people don’t think of Kansas as a highly diverse state. But it has significant pockets of diversity — and serious health disparities across large geographic regions, involving minorities, the poor, the elderly, the geographically isolated and others.”

The good news, Greiner said, is that Kansas is highly networked, and a broad array of organizations can help inspire greater community participation in clinical research.

“We’re pulling in several underserved groups,” he said, “and trying to make things better for them.”

Shankel takes part in 10th version of cancer research conference born at KU

Del Shankel humorously refers to himself as a utility infielder during his long, versatile career at KU. That is, a utility infielder who is a world-renowned expert in antimutagenesis and anticarcinogenesis as well as an interim chancellor and athletic director.

Anticarcinogenesis, a conference he launched at KU in 1985. This year’s conference was held in Guarujá, Brazil, about 70 miles east of Sao Paolo. For the first time, it was merged with the International Conference on Nutrigenomics, a relatively new field of study in the biology of cancer.

From the early points of his career, Shankel was studying mutagenesis, or the mutations of cells that can cause cancer. In the early ’70s, he began researching...
antimutagenesis, or methods that can slow down such mutations. Eventually he moved into the field of anticarcinogenesis, or the study of preventing cell mutations that initiate cancer. Throughout this research, he has worked with students and colleagues such as Les Mitscher in medicinal chemistry. The field was growing and Tsuneo Kada of the National Institute of Genetics in Mishima, Japan, proposed an international conference be held.

It was decided the United States was centrally located between Europe and Asia, and Kansas was centrally located within the United States, so KU was chosen as the home of the first conference.

After organizing the first event, Shankel had a hand in organizing subsequent conferences in Japan, Italy and Michigan. This year in Brazil, he presented a history of the conference and chaired a wrap up session. The session featured experts in the field from the National Cancer Institute, Italy, Mexico, South Korea, Japan, France and Australia presenting research.

This year’s conference was unique in the fact that it was paired with the conference on nutrigenomics. That field explores the effects of food and food constituents on gene expression and how it could potentially help prevent cancer. Certain foods, such as Japanese green tea, licorice, leafy green vegetables, certain vitamins, blueberries and garlic have chemical components with the ability to prevent or fight cancer.

The next conference will be held in Austria, but Shankel hasn’t decided if he’ll attend. He retired in 1996 after a long career at KU in which he taught, researched and stepped in as interim chancellor and athletics director on more than one occasion. The Structural Biology Center on west campus was named in his honor earlier this year. He now spends his office time advising, serving on committees, editing papers and writing letters of recommendation.

“It’s been a very full life,” he said.

Faculty, staff encouraged to help stock professional clothing closet for students

Delta Epsilon Iota, a career-focused honor society, is holding a clothing drive during October and encouraging faculty and
staff to help stock a professional clothing closet for KU students.

The professional clothing closet will provide students with free, gently used clothes that can be worn to job interviews and career fairs.

“First impressions are crucial when it comes to looking for a job,” said Nate Phillips, Delta Epsilon Iota president. “Many students don’t have extra money to spend on professional clothing, and we want to give them a way to look and feel confident.”

The clothing closet is seeking:

- Full suits (coat and pants or skirt)
- Contemporary suit jackets or blazers
- Shirts/blouses appropriate to wear underneath a suit coat
- Dress slacks
- Skirts in darker colors such as black, brown or dark gray
- Ties
- New dress socks and nylons
- Briefcases
- Portfolios

Donations can be dropped off year-round at the University Career Center, 110 Burge Union, or during the month of October in designated bins at several locations on campus, including:

- Anschutz Library
- Business Career Services Center, 125 Summerfield Hall
- Anschutz Sports Pavilion, Room 2619
- Lewis Hall
- Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center
- Student Involvement and Leadership Center
- University Advising Center

Those making donations can request a receipt for tax purposes. Any unusable clothing will be donated to the local Goodwill.

The professional clothing closet will open to all KU students Feb. 1. It will be located at the University Career Center.