CASCADE

SPRING 2014

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON COLLEGE OF ARTS + SCIENCES

Molecular Methods Help Anthropologists Dig Deeper

WHAT MAKES US HUMAN?

UPWARD TRAJECTORY

FORMER CAS DEAN PROMOTED TO PROVOST AND LEAVES A ROBUST LEGACY

In the winter edition of *Cascade*, I highlighted the major changes at UO this year: a new, independent board of trustees; the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement with our faculty union; the shifting landscape of higher-education funding in America; and rapid shifts in student demographics. As of February there is another major change—the appointment of Scott Coltrane to the position of Senior Vice President and Provost of the university.

Scott Coltrane previously served the university for five years as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, a period of major transformation in the college. During his tenure as dean, he oversaw an impressive suite of far-reaching changes with unflagging humor, care to individuals' needs and an absolute commitment to the liberal arts as the core of our research and education mission.

When Dean Coltrane arrived in early summer of 2008, he joined a university that had launched a major initiative to increase its student body. From fall 2007 to fall 2011, our student population grew from 20,400 to 24,500, a 20 percent jump in just four years. The large majority of this growth occurred in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Overseeing this rapid growth required immense dedication and work on the part of our faculty and staff—and tremendous leadership from our dean. The transformation demanded resourceful use of space, reallocation of budgets, growth in faculty numbers to parallel student growth, creation of academic units and majors to meet evolving interests of our new student body and development of a senior leadership team to manage these changes.

But student growth was not the only driver of change during this period. The Great Recession, associated declines in state funding for the UO (only about 5 percent of our total budget now comes from the State), subsequent tuition increases, decreased federal research funding, an increasing need for donor support, greater demand for university accountability . . . all these factors and more mandated new ways of thinking about the future management of our college.

In anticipation of these needs, Dean Coltrane reenvisioned college communications (*Cascade* is just one example among many); launched planning for development efforts centered on student access, success and research support; and invited all members of the college to participate in planning for its future.

Because of his dedication and hard work, the College of Arts and Sciences is now larger and stronger than ever before—and well poised to tackle the next set of challenges in these changing times.

One indicator of our forward momentum is the number of recent accolades bestowed on CAS faculty. In just the past couple of weeks, neuroscientist Helen Neville was named to the National Academy of Sciences (as a "foreign associate" because she is Canadian); biologist Joe Thornton received a Guggenheim fellowship; and psychologist Mary Rothbart and biologist Chris Doe were both elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. One of our students, too, has received a prestigious national award: UO junior Andrew Lubash is the eighth student in UO history to be named a Truman Scholar.

It is easy to see why the university chose Scott Coltrane to be our provost, our chief academic officer. As you page through this issue of *Cascade*, please contemplate all the scholarship, work and effort behind each story—and the fact that a great deal of that work was enabled by his leadership of our college over the past five years, a time of tremendous transition.

It's our privilege to build on the solid foundation that he has created for the future trajectory of our liberal arts and sciences mission. As Provost Coltrane steps into his new role, I hope you will take a moment to thank him for all he has done during his tenure as dean for the College of Arts and Sciences and for all the liberal arts at Oregon.

W. Andrew Marcus is interim Donald and Willie Tykeson Dean of Arts and Sciences. He is a professor of geography and proud parent of two UO graduates and a current UO student.

KELLY JAMES

W. ANDREW MARCUS, INTERIM DEAN

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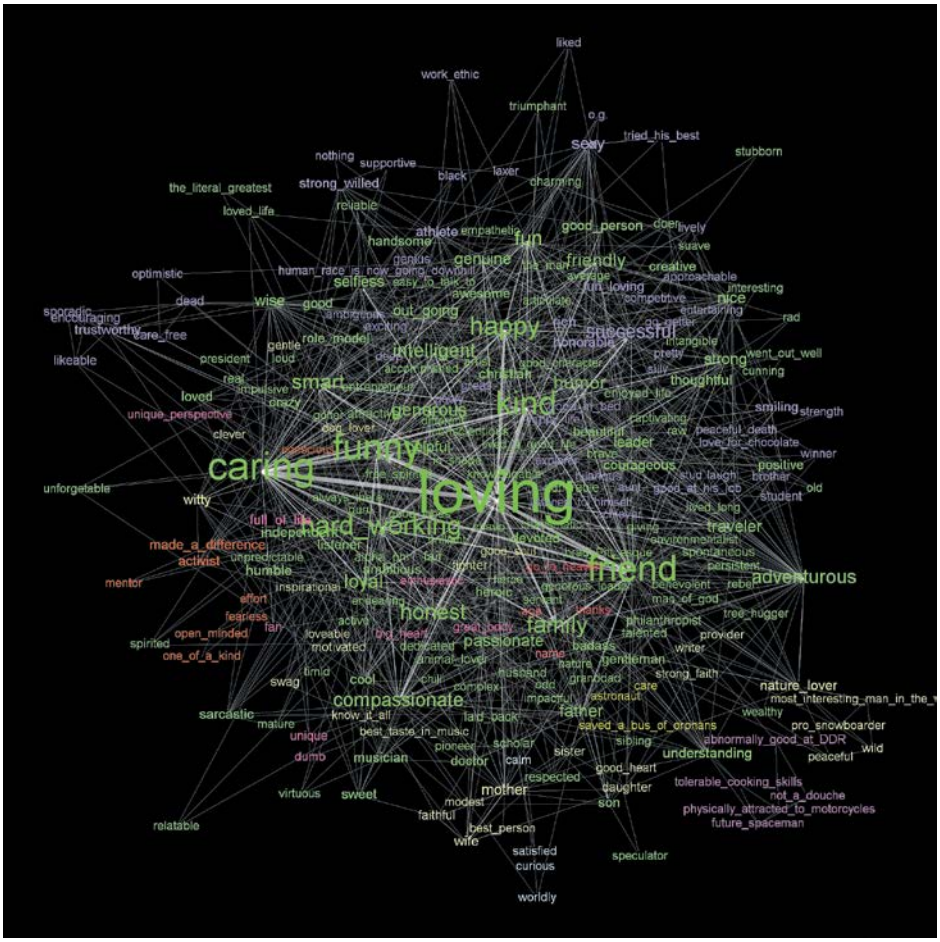


REST IN PEACE

What do you want your obituary to say about you? Mark Alfano, assistant professor of philosophy, posed that question in his introductory philosophy class of 300 students, and this was the result: students collectively created the "word cloud" above with software that Alfano uses to record student responses in real time and tally the results visually on a display in the classroom.

GOT MOOC?

Ever heard of a MOOC? That's "massive open online course"—the latest craze in higher education, which involves leading professors putting versions of their courses online, often for free, and attracting up to tens of thousands of students. The UO entered the game recently with the launch of a free, two-part course by the American English Institute that helps educators teach English as a foreign language.

STUDENT'S VIRAL VIDEO EARNS A PEABODY

Cinema studies major Samantha Stendal was so disturbed by the media's take on an Ohio rape case—some commentators blamed the victim for drinking too much—that she made a video. Working with the simple message that "real men treat women with respect," Stendal and cinema studies alum Aaron Blanton shot and edited *A Needed Response* in two days. The twenty-five-second PSA has been watched more than three million times since it was uploaded to YouTube in March 2013. The media industry took note, too: the viral video is the first-ever to win a Peabody Award, which since 1943 has celebrated the best of storytelling on television, radio and the Web. Said Blanton, "We submitted it without much expectation of hearing anything back and suddenly we're cast up in company with *House of Cards* and *Orange is the New Black* and *Breaking Bad*. It's beyond amazing that something we created that's such a different animal can get attention based simply on what the message is."

PEPPIS PROMOTED

New at the helm of the Oregon Humanities Center: Paul Peppis, associate department head in the English department, will become the OHC's permanent director in September (he is currently interim). Peppis is a modernist who specializes in early twentieth-century British literature, but his wide-ranging interests include the human sciences of ethnography, sexology and psychology. He is also known as a teaching star. When he won the university's Thomas F. Herman Award for Distinguished Teaching in 2012, the awards committee issued these generous words on his behalf: "Paul Peppis is a teacher's teacher. In charisma, intensity and vast knowledge, he exemplifies all of the characteristics of the best university teachers; in his teaching of pedagogy, a profound commitment to the next generation of teachers." No doubt his enthusiasm, dedication and vision will serve the OHC well in the years ahead.

THE RIGHT CHEMISTRY

It's the world's largest general scientific society—and Geraldine "Geri" Richmond (above) will be at the helm next year. In February, the UO Presidential Chair and chemistry professor became president-elect of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (founded in 1848), publisher of ***Science*** and other journals. In addition to advocating for science funding, Richmond sees the association as pivotal in scientific diplomacy and strengthening international collaborations. She is one of thirty-six current or retired UO faculty members recognized as AAAS fellows for the advancement of science; in November, biological anthropologist Josh Snodgrass (see p. 9) and biochemist Tom Stevens joined their ranks.

SHARK TANK FOR DUCKS

They called it the "Duck Tank": forty-six students on sixteen teams, competing for $15,000 during a months-long process to create the next cool app. Modeled on the reality TV series *Shark Tank*, the contest, which reached its grand finale last January, was the brainchild of Ed Colligan ('83, political science), who went on to a trailblazing career in mobile technology. Encouraged by a live audience, teams gave their "elevator" pitches,

answered questions from the judges and did their best to generate interest in products that don't yet exist. The Tastebuds team (above) won with a mobile app concept that helps users decide where to eat by crowdsourcing restaurant reviews. Said Colligan, "The passion for their product and the business opportunity showed brightly."

PAUL CARTER/THE REGISTER-GUARD

FIGHT KNIGHT

Talk about fighting to get into a popular class. . . . Students in Michael Furtado's War in the Medieval World course were recently treated to a demonstration of the weapons and tactics employed by European knights, courtesy of Northwest Fencing Academy. "The study of medieval warfare," Furtado said, "offers rich rewards to those seeking a better understanding of the socioeconomic, political, religious and cultural history of the Middle Ages in Europe."

Q+A

Does Obesity Begin in the Womb?

IN CARRIE MCCURDY'S RESEARCH, "YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT" IS PERHAPS NOT AS RELEVANT AS "YOU ARE WHAT YOUR MOTHER ATE"

There's a lot of debate about why people are becoming more obese.

More than one-third of U.S. adults are obese and about 17 percent of U.S. children are, too—not just overweight, but obese (overweight means having more fat than is ideal for health; obese means you might already be shortening your life). If Americans stay on the current path, more than 80 percent of men and 70 percent of women will be overweight or obese by 2020.

Carrie McCurdy, left, a new assistant professor in human physiology, has been studying diet and obesity for more than ten years. While obesity in and of itself isn't necessarily bad, it triggers or precedes diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and some cancers.

Working at the cellular level, McCurdy examines how fat and sugar are broken down, and the influence of obesity on this process. Her research combines a "whole-body" analysis of subjects with cutting-edge molecular techniques that are increasingly used by today's scientists.

One of your interests is obesity during pregnancy. What are you studying?
That gestational nine-month window is increasingly recognized as a critical window where the baby's metabolism is being set. We're trying to understand how the mother's diet, coupled with being overweight or obese, affects the fetus. We know that children who are born to women who are overweight or obese have an increased and earlier risk of obesity and diabetes [a condition of high blood sugar that can lead to heart disease or kidney failure]. What we don't know is whether it's the obesity during pregnancy that causes this, or what the mother is eating or some combination.

Pregnancy is a great topic for study because women are really motivated to make things better for their child. If you say a healthy diet during pregnancy will improve your child's health future—and you show them the data that supports it—if it's within their power, they're going to change their diet.

What have you found?
Working with other scientists and the Oregon National Primate Research Center, we feed Japanese macaques a typical American diet, higher in fat and sugar. They also get lots of snacks—peanut butter and gummy treats, things that are high in fructose. Junk foods.

INTERVIEW BY MATT COOPER

PREGNANCY IS A GREAT TOPIC FOR STUDY BECAUSE WOMEN ARE REALLY MOTIVATED TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR THEIR CHILD.

What we're finding is that one-year-old babies exposed to this Western-style diet, in utero, show signs of diseases that you typically wouldn't see: fat in the liver, fatty streaks in their arteries and damage in muscles. These are babies! Something about the prenatal exposure to a high-fat, high-sugar diet sets them up to have these health risks. Every tissue, every organ system we've looked at, is affected by this diet or obesity.

The good news is the situation can be improved. We've put obese moms on a healthy diet at the start of pregnancy and we see health improvements for the offspring—fat in the liver is reduced.

What are the other risks to offspring?
Exposure to a Western-style diet in utero also affected behavior. Elinor Sullivan [of Oregon Health and Science University and the University of Portland] found that female offspring displayed increased anxiety and stress; the males trended towards greater aggression. Even when they're grouped all together and eating a healthy diet, offspring from mothers that ate the Western-style diet spend a greater amount of time by themselves.

Initial data even shows that offspring from these mothers have different food preferences—they tend to choose high-fat, high-sugar food. If they had that in-utero exposure, there's something that's been changed in their brain's wiring that leads them to make bad food choices; these are otherwise healthy monkeys, self-selecting unhealthy behaviors. To me, that's really scary.

Were the problems associated only with offspring from obese mothers?
No. Some of the mothers in the study were lean but were fed a Western-style diet; their offspring also had fat in the liver, muscle damage and greater risk for disease.

So clearly, expectant mothers need to get off high-fat, high-sugar diets?
That's what common sense says, but we haven't proven it scientifically yet. We don't know if it's specifically the fat in the diet, or the sugar, or the calories or some combination. We also don't know if it's true for humans.

Think about the baby's environment after birth. There are lots of complicating factors for human research on obesity. For instance, childhood obesity often develops in a home where children are susceptible to eating a poor diet; if the parent is overweight or obese and eating a poor diet, that's probably what the child eats. You can't say whether the obesity risk is due to what they ate after they were born, or what they were exposed to in utero or a combination.

I think it's synergistic. If you have this prenatal exposure and that's carried forward as you grow up, I think your risk for obesity is greater. You might have one strike against you, but there's also the likelihood that you're not going to get obese if you eat healthy food and exercise.

IF THEY HAD THAT IN-UTERO EXPOSURE, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN CHANGED IN THEIR BRAIN'S WIRING THAT LEADS THEM TO MAKE BAD FOOD CHOICES.

Given all the possible causes for obesity, what do you target?
I focus on "insulin sensitivity"—that is, how well does your body use insulin? Your pancreas makes insulin, which regulates sugar and fat in the blood. The more sensitive to insulin you are, the easier it is to maintain a healthy weight.

In 2001, a study was published about 200 people who had been followed for up to ten years. The people least sensitive to insulin had the most cases of hypertension, cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes and stroke; those most sensitive to insulin had no such cases. This was regardless of weight—insulin sensitivity alone predicted health outcomes. I think insulin sensitivity is the key to everything.

Most people have probably never heard of "insulin sensitivity." What should we know?
Insulin sensitivity is basically your risk of becoming diabetic. When you get your annual checkup and the doctor gives you your blood screen, it will break out the insulin and sugar levels in your blood—those describe your risk for developing diabetes. If you're at risk, your doctor will talk to you.

So what's the message for expectant mothers?
I don't think the message is simple. We can certainly say for all people, "Eat healthy." For expectant mothers, we can't yet say, "Eliminate this or that," but some of those messages we've all heard over the years—"You can eat for two" [meaning "a lot"] and "You should carry a lot of additional weight"—we can clearly say those messages are bad.

You know the saying, "You are what you eat"?—well, we are finding that you may be what your mother ate. You've got a growing baby inside you, why wouldn't you give it the best building blocks or the best diet?

WHAT MAKES US HUMAN?

Molecular Methods Help Anthropologists Dig Deeper

BY MATT COOPER

Teetering on the cusp of extinction, African red colobus monkeys have long eluded all efforts to pin them down.

Spotting them is easy enough. Ranging up to twenty-six pounds, these tree-dwellers have dark, seemingly aged faces and fur that features black and white markings across the chest and shoulders and an orange blaze down the back. More challenging, though, is identifying the distinct ancestral lines within this simian's family tree—it's one of the longest-running unresolved issues in the classification of African primates.

As a result, conservation efforts are stymied: Given limited resources, which red colobus monkeys should be protected?

UO anthropologist Nelson Ting turned to the monkey's molecules. Then a doctoral candidate at the City University of New York, Ting isolated and unwrapped the monkey's DNA, comparing one red colobus to another at the most fundamental level. Among eighteen family lines, he found specific strains extending back as far as three million years; the extinction of these distinct-but-related lineages in western Africa would be a major loss of the monkey's evolutionary history, he argued.

The work is part biology, part anthropology. Those in the know call it "bioanth." Today, Ting, Kirstin Sterner and Josh Snodgrass compose a trio of young faculty members at the UO who pursue their research with detective methods straight from CBS's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. Their fascination with the largest anthropological questions—what makes a human a human?—inspires an exploration of life at its most reductionist level: the cell.

ANTHROPOLOGIST OR MOLECULAR BIOLOGIST?

The two-inch-tall test tube between Ting's thumb and forefinger is half-filled with a clear liquid. The liquid suspends precious cargo that is invisible to the human eye, but tells Ting everything he wants to know about the monkey in question.

Nelson Ting

Working in a lab, Ting has isolated from a feces sample the monkey's DNA, the molecule that dictates how organisms develop and function. He effectively dissects this complex double helix in a series of chemical reactions that play off the nature of DNA's four building blocks to bind to one another—adenine to thymine, guanine to cytosine. Using a computer, Ting can read the sequence of a particular fragment—AGTCTTG, for example—and compare it to samples from other monkeys to answer questions about the ecology and evolution of a species.

So is Ting a biologist who studies anthropology or an anthropologist who uses biology?

"That's a good question," Ting said. He acknowledges that the lines are blurring. "Many U.S. biologists these days aren't as interested in organisms as they are in biological processes." This is the deciding factor for Ting, in terms of defining himself as an anthropologist. Unlike biologists, "I've always been more interested in organisms," he said, "and anthropologists are, by definition, organismal—they study humans and our closest relatives."

Ting's interest in human evolution led to a fascination with primates and conservation. Genetics is a popular approach for addressing con-

servation questions, Ting said, because it can identify crucial lineages or populations within a species, as with the red colobus monkey.

"We can't save everything, unfortunately, and when you say one species is endangered you're saying it has a higher conservation priority than something else," Ting said. "How do you end up making that decision? People can use molecular methods to get the answer."

The biological method complements the other approaches of colleagues in the UO anthropology department, Ting says. Faculty members and students in the department also study humans through archaeology and cultural anthropology; areas of focus include ecology and the environment, gender and sexuality, indigenous groups, health and globalization.

Molecular methods can be especially useful in situations where an incomplete fossil record hinders discovery. Perhaps the watershed moment for molecular anthropologists came in 2010. Using the genetic code extracted from 40,000-year-old Neanderthal fossils found in Europe, researchers proposed that there was once breeding between Neanderthals and modern humans, a highly contentious point of debate in the history of anthropology.

HOW PATHOGENS ARE TRANSMITTED

Of late, Ting has turned his gaze to Uganda. He's taking part in a five-year project funded by the National Institutes of Health to determine how pathogens are transmitted within and among primate species in a community, including humans.

In one study, Ting was part of a team that identified two new strains of simian hemorrhagic fever virus, a lethal disease for captive macaques. In another, this group screened blood specimens from nine black-and-white colobus monkeys in Kibale National Park; they found new versions of simian immunodeficiency virus, the transmission of which led to the emergence of HIV, which subsequently jumped to humans. In that study, the group used an innovative approach called "deep-sequencing," whereby a computer reads the genetic code of a monkey hundreds of times over to improve the accuracy of results.

That's not to say there aren't limitations—or occasional headaches—with the biological approach to anthropology.

On an afternoon earlier this spring, Ting's phone rang: an urgent caller explained that a shipment of preservatives necessary for a new batch of fecal samples was unlikely to reach Uganda on schedule, and could prove much more expensive than originally expected.

After finishing the call, Ting leaned back in his chair and rubbed his forehead. "These are the kinds of logistics I deal with all the time," he said, a tired smile breaking across his face.

UNDERSTANDING OUR SUSCEPTIBILITY TO AIDS

It's a vexing question: HIV—predecessor to AIDS, a potentially lethal breakdown of the immune system in humans—came from the simian version, SIV. But many monkeys with SIV never even get sick.

Kirstin Sterner

Finding an explanation for that, Kirstin Sterner says, will help scientists understand our own susceptibility to AIDS and may lead to new treatments.

For many anthropologists, the allure is fieldwork in the farthest reaches of the globe. Sterner considers the laboratory her field—that's where she can explore how life functions at what she calls "the nitty-gritty" level.

Under a microscope, we have a lot in common with other primates, Sterner says; the sequence of molecules in one species is very similar to that in the other. Yet we look nothing like apes—understanding how so few genetic changes can produce such differences between humans and other primates can provide insight into human evolution and public health questions.

"I love the idea of mixing big questions about human evolution with how it all works at the molecular level," Sterner said. "It's those subtle differences in how and when genes are actually used that may explain why some primates have one reaction to a virus and humans have another."

When an immune cell detects a virus, the response is like runners in a relay race, passing a baton to the finish line. Proteins sitting on top of the cell are constantly scanning the environment for intruders; when they spot one, they pass a message to other proteins. This "baton" is passed from protein to protein until it arrives in the center of the cell—its nucleus—where a specific response is generated.

UNDERSTANDING HOW SO FEW GENETIC CHANGES CAN PRODUCE SUCH DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMANS AND OTHER PRIMATES CAN PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO HUMAN EVOLUTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH QUESTIONS.

LIKE A TRACK COACH

The nuances of this process make a big impact in how the body responds to a virus; there may be subtle differences between some monkeys and humans. Sterner, who teams up with Ting and Snodgrass on some projects, is like a track coach: She knows the precise path these molecules run to deliver their message.

Among her colleagues, "I have more of an interest in exploring these cellular pathways and how they work," Sterner said. "I enjoy studying how evolution has shaped different pathways so the outcome is slightly different in this species versus that species."

Consider the sooty mangabey, a monkey found in the forests of

West Africa. When infected with SIV, the monkey at first shows a surge in the virus throughout its body, similar to that seen in humans who have HIV. In both species, this "viral load" eventually drops and stabilizes. But in most humans, the virus will surge again, years later, as the immune system crashes; these mangabeys can carry the infection indefinitely without that breakdown.

Sterner's approach, like Ting's, relies primarily on breaking DNA into smaller sequences of molecules that can be read by a computer and compared against other samples. But she also wants to take the work an important—and demanding—step further.

Thanks to technological advances, biological anthropologists today can test whether slight differences in genetic sequences observed on a computer screen actually amount to anything in cells.

The anthropology department is developing a laboratory that will enable Sterner and others to manipulate DNA, using methods from molecular biology. She'll be able to custom-design cells that have been modified with a particular sliver of DNA; how—or whether—the cell responds will tell Sterner if the test sample actually plays a role in a particular question.

"The process is technically difficult, but it gets you closer to inferring function from DNA," Sterner said. "The differences in DNA sequences don't always lead to something. You need to test them to see whether they actually result in a different outcome."

A DROP OF BLOOD

A drop of blood can tell Josh Snodgrass a lot about the health of a community.

A DBS or "dried blood spot" sample is a simple finger prick that releases a drop of blood onto a piece of paper the size of a business card. Working closely with scientists, medical professionals and locals in the communities under study, anthropologists can quickly and painlessly (relatively speaking) collect scores of samples; the blood spots are later reconstituted in a solution.

Josh Snodgrass

Snodgrass can then measure the concentration in the blood of an antibody such as immunoglobulin E, which is a telltale sign that the body is defending itself against parasitic worms. With that, Snodgrass has what he needs to pursue questions about the differences in how human immune systems have developed in response to the environment in different regions; he can also share important public health information with the people he studies.

That second piece is especially important to Snodgrass. Biological anthropology, as he practices it, is not solely an investigation of human evolution in service to his personal curiosities; it's an opportunity to partner with local scientists and communities to improve the health of remote, often disadvantaged groups across the globe.

IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTNER WITH LOCAL SCIENTISTS AND COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF REMOTE, OFTEN DISADVANTAGED GROUPS ACROSS THE GLOBE.

In Siberia, Snodgrass is studying the health ramifications for indigenous peoples adjusting to a post-Soviet world. He's found that economic turmoil and marginalization have caused an overall spike in blood pressure, and obesity is rising as groups that long survived on physically demanding subsistence means—reindeer-herding, fishing, hunting—move to villages and towns and assume sedentary, wage-based jobs.

In Ecuador, he's examining how economic development and its suite of social and cultural changes affect the health of the Shuar, an indigenous group of 50,000 to 100,000. Working with UO colleagues and Thomas McDade of Northwestern University, Snodgrass learned that the Shuar have a different immune response from those of people in industrialized nations; he credits the group's high exposure to parasites and viruses, bolstering arguments that early exposure to pathogens (despite their risks) is good for long-term health.

Snodgrass is also part of a World Health Organization initiative to address the gap in reliable data on aging and health in low- and middle-income countries. Under the effort, called SAGE (Study on global AGEing), scientists are studying the factors that influence aging and why they're different between China and Ghana and the U.S. or western Europe.

"The SAGE project is really exciting," Snodgrass said. "It has a lot of potential because it's such an untapped, untouched area—this issue of aging and what it looks like cross-culturally."

A 'HUMAN BIOLOGIST'

Snodgrass liked biology as an undergraduate, but it was his experience in an anthropology class that he found, in his words, "mind-blowing." The discipline's wide-ranging reliance on environment and evolution in explaining the human condition resonated with Snodgrass' desire not to be pigeonholed in one field.

As an undergraduate at the University of California at Santa Cruz, he worked in conjunction with medical examiner's offices, using his knowledge of skeletal anatomy to create biological profiles of unidentified corpses. At the graduate level, Snodgrass discovered wide gaps in our understanding of the fossil record, based on what he calls "imperfect knowledge of the present." Snodgrass saw an opportunity to contribute by learning how human metabolism, immune systems and body sizes differ around the world.

Today, he calls himself a "human biologist"—someone straddling the line between biology and anthropology to better understand humans.

"Over my career, I've gone back and forth—'oh, I see myself as a biologist, I just wish I could be in a biology department, my anthropology colleagues don't understand me,'" Snodgrass said. Then he laughed: "The problem with that is that the biologists don't understand me, either."

SCHOO *of* Th

BY LISA RALEIGH

THE ARABOOLIES HAVE come to town and turned it upside down.

That's the main arc of the story that fourth-grade teacher Ben Dechter was reading to his class at Camas Ridge Elementary one day last February. He donned a microphone headset and held aloft a colorful book, strolling among his students and reading aloud *The Araboolies of Liberty Street*.

Dechter was preparing his class for its weekly philosophy discussion, to be facilitated by two UO students.

In *The Araboolies of Liberty Street*, all the houses on Liberty Street are painted white and look exactly alike. The neighborhood rules are enforced by General Pinch, who doesn't like noisy, game-playing children and routinely threatens to "call in the army" for infractions of the rules.

Then the fun-loving Araboolies arrive. They drive a Ken Kesey-like bus—painted wildly and bursting with outrageous characters: the Araboolies themselves, a multigenerational clan whose skin tones range from purple to green to canary yellow, and their menagerie of fanciful pets. They do not speak English. They do not conform to the rules. They paint their house with red zigzags and sleep together on a giant bed on their lawn. The neighborhood kids love them.

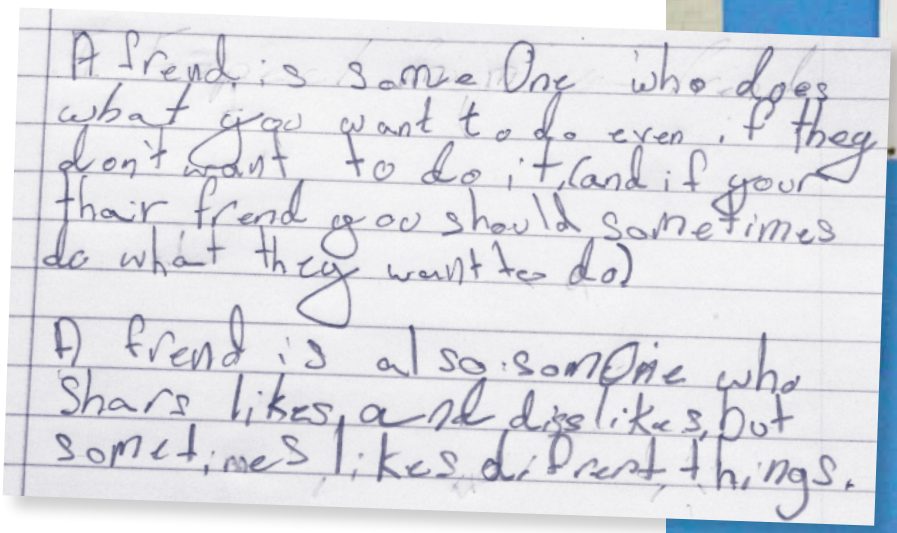
The General is not a fan. He actually does call in the army, directing the troops to remove the house that is "different." But overnight, the neighborhood kids paint all the houses—except the General's—with crazy patterns and colors. So the army naturally targets the house that now looks different: the General's.

This sets the stage for several thought-provoking questions: What is normal? What is weird? How can you tell? Who decides what the rules are?

Dechter finished the story and welcomed into the circle UO senior Cassie Lahmann and sophomore Chris Wilson, who would be leading the discussion, just as they had done each Wednesday all winter term.

Lought

Fourth-graders discover their inner philosopher with the help of UO students


A friend is some One who does what you want to do even if they don't want to do it, and if your their friend you should sometimes do what they want to do)

A friend is also some One who shars likes, and dislikes, but sometimes likes different things.

THE SKILL OF THINKING

Lahmann and Wilson were enrolled in Philosophy 399, Teaching Children Philosophy. This innovative learn-by-doing course—a collaboration between the Department of Philosophy and the College of Education—prepares UO undergraduates to go out into local elementary schools to facilitate philosophical discussions relevant to children.

"All of our questions are designed to help the children clarify their beliefs," said Paul Bodin, a UO instructor who designed and teaches the class. "We are trying to help children frame a personal thought related to experience. It's all about the skill of thinking."

The course gives UO students direct classroom teaching experience and trains them to assist children in "framing coherent points of view, revising opinions based on new evidence and applying elements of logical thinking to a wide range of questions," according to the syllabus. These questions range from "What is friendship?" to "Do animals have rights?" to "What does it mean to be brave?"

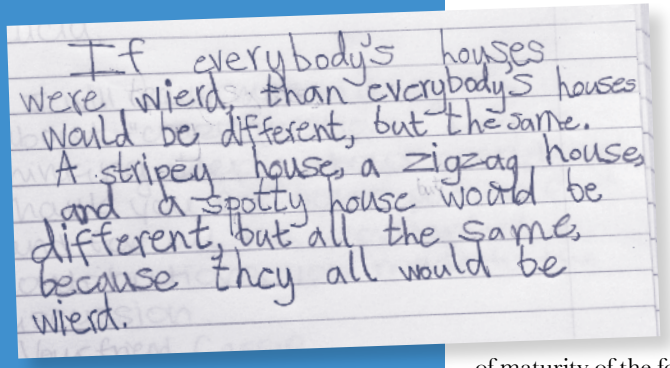
"By the end of the term, undergraduates have learned how to engage and excite young people when they enter into meaningful dialogue with each other," said Bodin.

Bodin, who taught elementary and middle school for twenty-five years in the Eugene 4J district, provides "discussion templates" that create a general framework for leading the fourth-grade and fifth-grade classes—but the actual outcomes can be "incredibly unpredictable," he said. And that's only natural, given the range of variables.

There were eighteen undergraduates enrolled in Teaching Children Philosophy last winter and they were assigned to seventeen different fourth-grade classrooms in the Eugene community (Lahmann and Wilson were one of only two teaching pairs). The sophistication and depth of discussion depended in large part on the skills and interests of the individual student teach-

Each week, the fourth-grade classrooms visited by UO students from Philosophy 399, Teaching Children Philosophy, discussed a focused theme such as friendship, bravery or honesty. The week they explored The *Araboolies of Liberty Street*, the classroom led by UO students Cassie Lahmann and Chris Wilson gravitated to the concepts of weird versus normal—which in turn led to a discussion about school dress codes and conformity: good or bad? In the excerpted transcript below, the regular classroom teacher, Ben Dechter, also chimed in.

CASSIE LAHMANN: Are there any rules in school for you to dress normal? [Students talk over each other; some agree, others disagree.]
LAHMANN: You don't have a dress code?
STUDENT: Sort of.
BEN DECHTER: At first I thought, well, we don't really have a dress code here at Camas Ridge, but somebody made it a little more clear to me and said that you can't wear T-shirts that have violent images on them. So that, in a way, is a dress code.
STUDENT: Or [you can't wear] inappropriate stuff.
DECHTER: Or inappropriate stuff.
STUDENT: Uh, well, there sort of is a dress code because you can't just go to school in your underwear or something. [Everyone laughs]



DECHTER: That would be weird, wouldn't it?
STUDENT: That would be weird.
STUDENT: That would be embarrassing.
LAHMANN: But we like weird though, right?
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> "THEY HAVE A MUCH HIGHER LEVEL OF THINKING THAN WHAT YOU WOULD EXPECT. THEY ARE SO ELOQUENT."

ers—although, as Bodin noted, "One of the harder things they have to learn is how to suppress a strong opinion if they have one about a particular topic."

Just as important, the flow of the conversation for each week's theme depended on the interests and level of maturity of the fourth-graders themselves.

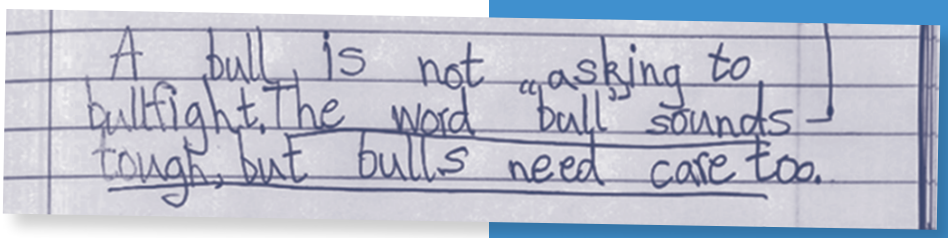
For instance, the week before the Araboolies provided grist for the weekly philosophy dialogue, the topic was "What can money buy?" To set up the discussion, Bodin wrote a short play that introduced the idea of a person donating money to a school and having her name put on the library. What did the children think of that?

In some classrooms—like Ben Dechter's—the children spent a long time grappling with the fairness of having an individual's name put on something that belongs to everyone. But in other classrooms, the idea of naming a building was too abstract and the conversation veered toward the idea of buying and naming pets because that was easier to comprehend.

Yet in other classrooms, children brought up provocative questions such as, What does it mean to pay to bring an adopted child into your family? Why do we need money—can't we just barter? Why is it okay to pay for marriages in some countries?

"Fourth graders are a lot smarter than what we give them credit for," said Darby Smith, an English major who took Bodin's class last term and was assigned to Bertha Holt Elementary.

LISA RALEIGH



Left: Chris Wilson and Cassie Lahmann prepare to lead a discussion in a fourth-grade class. The students then write in their journals on the weekly topic—which might range from animal rights to friendship—as illustrated in the journal excerpt above and throughout this article.

"They have a much higher level of thinking than what you would expect," she said. "They are so eloquent."

"WHAT IF" GETS THEM TALKING

Smith was sharing her thoughts as she and her fellow Philosophy 399 students debriefed the "what can money buy?" lesson in their weekly meeting with Bodin. The students represented a mix of majors—many from education studies and philosophy, but others from an eclectic range of majors. Their common interest was a desire to get out into classrooms for firsthand teaching experience.

As they reported back on their diverse experiences with that week's theme, it was quickly apparent that in every classroom—no matter what direction the conversation took—the children had been engaged and enthusiastic.

"I was worried I wouldn't be able to get them talking," said Jason Beck, a psychology major, reflecting on his early apprehensions about going out to teach in his assigned school (also Holt). "Now I can't get them to be quiet."

For Chase Huff, a philosophy major assigned to Adams Elementary, the questioning technique is everything. "The 'what if?' really gets them talking," he said.

He's referring to the questioning method Bodin trained the undergraduates to use: ask open-ended questions and continuously pose hypotheticals that cause the conversation to go deeper. What if the library might close if someone didn't donate money? What if following the rules hurts someone? What if you got paid for getting good grades? This probing sets the stage for precocious reflections.

For instance, the very smallest and quietest girl in Ben Dechter's classroom had a ready answer to the question of getting paid for grades: "You're getting paid by getting knowledge, so you can go to college and have a good life," she said.

The boisterous conversation paused momentarily as everyone pondered this thought.

"It's easy to underestimate how much kids can comprehend," said Wilson, the student cofacilitator in Dechter's class. "They blow you away and your jaw just drops."

CHANNELING ENERGY

Dechter, a UO alum (environmental studies, '04), has been teaching in the 4J district for eight years. This is the second year he has invited UO students into his classroom to lead weekly philosophical discussions.

"The kids are excited about it," he said. Even though the weekly session lasts an hour (plus fifteen minutes for journaling), "There's never enough time for the kids to say everything they want to say. Even the quietest kids raise their hands."

While this activity takes an hour each week out of his teaching schedule, he says it's not extra work because he doesn't have to prepare a lesson plan. And there's a built-in bonus: it dovetails with core teaching objectives such as the development of language arts skills.

It's also obvious that he gets as much enjoyment out of it as his students do. "It's a

STUDENT: Yeah.
LAHMANN: Can someone give me an example of a bad kind of weird besides underwear?
STUDENT: Like not wearing shoes to school.
LAHMANN: Okay, that might be a bad kind of weird because you could hurt your feet?
STUDENT: Yeah.
LAHMANN: So maybe sometimes being normal helps you be safe?
STUDENT: Yeah, but you can't really be normal.
LAHMANN: So what if Camas Ridge had a dress code policy and came out with uniforms, and you all had to wear the same thing every day?
STUDENT: I would switch schools. [Students talk over each other.]
LAHMANN: Wait, how do you guys feel about this?
STUDENT: I would freak out.
LAHMANN: What about wearing shoes to protect your feet?
STUDENT: I never wear shoes.
LAHMANN: You're wearing shoes right now.
STUDENT: Well, yeah, because we have to.
CHRIS WILSON: So what do you guys think of this—would there maybe [be] some benefits to wearing a uniform?
STUDENT: No.
STUDENT: Um, not really.
LAHMANN: I can come up with an example. I went to an all-girls Catholic school, and I wore the same thing every single day, the same thing as everyone else at my school: a plaid skirt and a polo collared shirt.
STUDENT: Ew.
LAHMANN: And I actually really liked it because I never had to worry about what my clothes were. I just woke up five minutes before I had to go to school, put on my clothes, went to school. So, I liked it.
STUDENT: Did you have extra pairs? Because it would be kinda gross if you didn't wash them.
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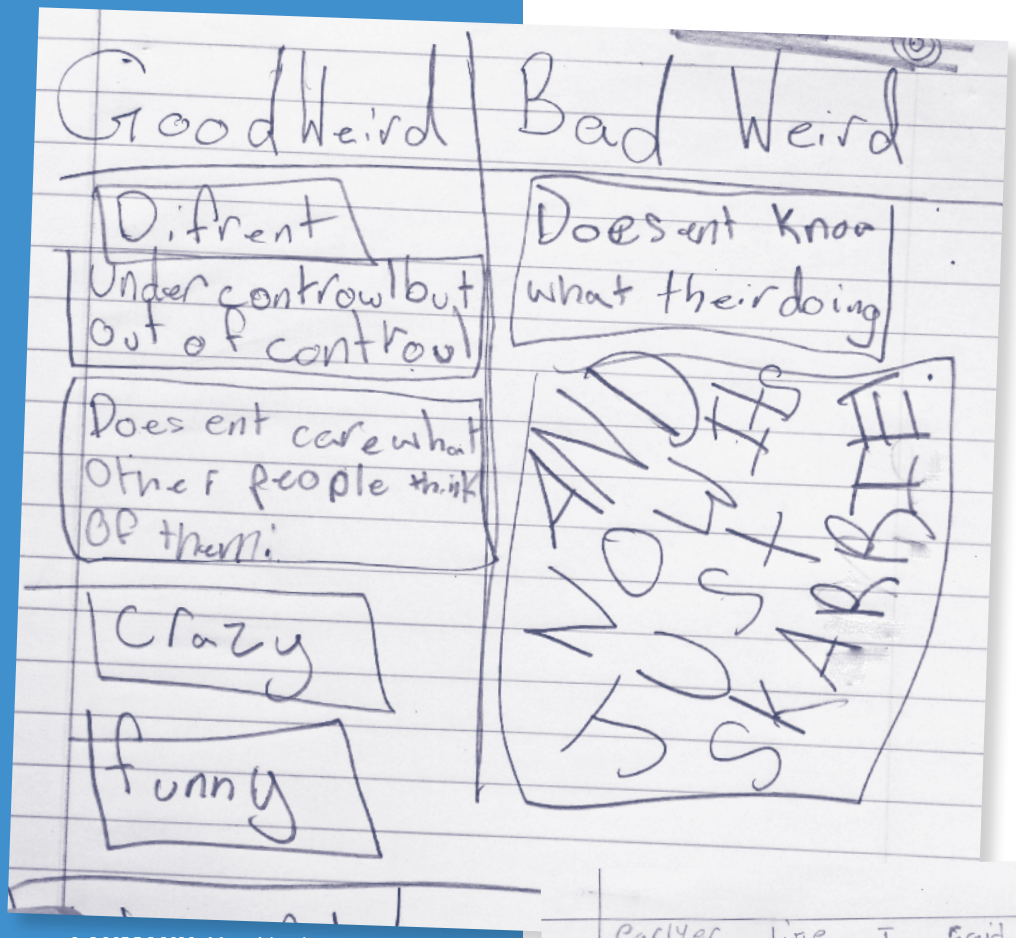
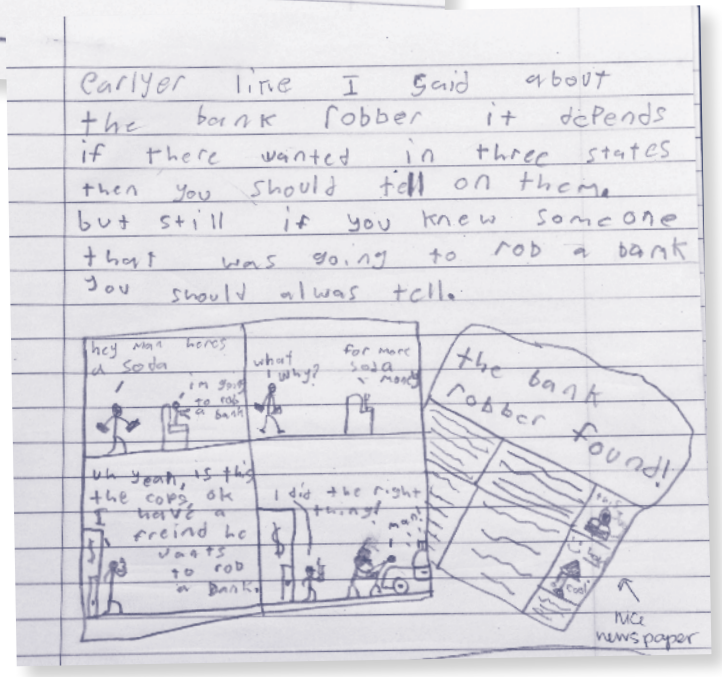


LAHMANN: Yes, I had lots of pairs of the exact same outfit.
STUDENT: Wow.
STUDENT: In most of the schools where you have to wear a uniform, I think it's because they're more civilized.
LAHMANN: What do you mean by more civilized?
STUDENT: I don't really know. They just take more pride in what they do.
LAHMANN: Okay. So raise your hand if you think you might like uniforms.
[A few hands raised]
STUDENT: Uh, nope. Never in a million years.
STUDENT: Maybe.
[Students talk excitedly over one another]
DECHTER: I think there are other good reasons for it as well. I lived in Mexico for a year and my kids had to wear uniforms. It takes away a lot of issues. If you think about people worrying about whether their clothes are as nice as the other person's clothes, or if they are stylish enough, it takes all that away.
STUDENT: Ooh, but then you can never show your style.
STUDENT: My mom went to school in Los Angeles, and she liked wearing her uniforms because they had different groups of people. Like some people wear surf outfits, and some people wear



fun role for me—to not have to be the leader," he said. "I'm often biting my tongue, but I let the UO students lead it."

As student teachers, Lahmann and Wilson have a tall order: they are charged with channeling the energy of an often-rambunctious class of fourth graders into a sustained discussion.

"I'm really impressed that they can keep the kids focused," Dechter said.

A typical session involves wrangling a circle of twenty-eight squirming, eager nine- and ten-year-olds, many with their hands thrust into the air at any given moment, talking over each other and their teachers. Lahmann, Wilson and Dechter all regularly issue gentle reminders that the kids need to take it down a notch so that the person who has the floor can be heard.

The day of the Araboolies discussion was no exception. It was the second-to-last day that Lahmann and Wilson would be visiting the class, and they employed a new strategy for getting the discussion started: they asked each child to write down a question about the story and then turn it in.

WEIRD IS NORMAL

Lahmann began by asking one of the children's questions: Why are the Araboolies so colorful?

Ideas began piling on immediately.

"Because they were born on an island that made them colorful."

"They were just born that way."

"They probably got a genetic trait for that."

Next question: Why doesn't the General like fun and noise?

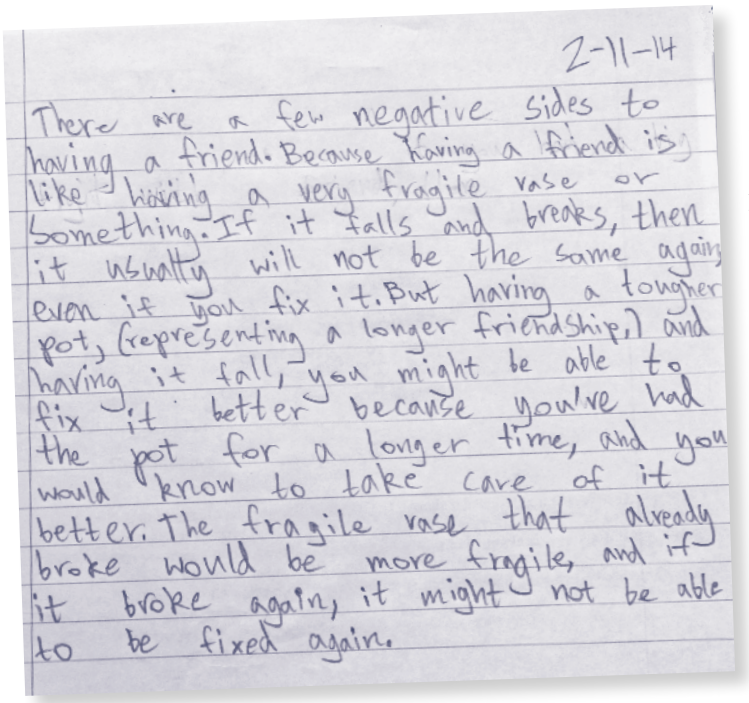
"He's the boss of a part of the army, so he thinks he can command everyone and tell them whatever he wants them to do."

"Maybe he just grew up around his parents and . . . they were too bossy to him. And so maybe he grew up around people who did that."

"He's probably used to being really stern because he's the general to the army and he's used to having people listen to him. So when people don't listen to him, he probably gets mad."

The question-and-response was nonstop and quickly led into an extended discussion about who's weird and who's normal. And what is normal, by the way? What is weird?

The consensus around the circle was that "it depends." The Araboolies are weird to the General because they don't conform to his rules. But the General is weird to the Araboolies because they don't speak English and don't know what he's yelling about.



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There are a few negative sides to having a friend. Because having a friend is like having a very fragile vase or something. If it falls and breaks, then it usually will not be the same again even if you fix it. But having a tougher pot, (representing a longer friendship,) and having it fall, you might be able to fix it better because you've had the pot for a longer time, and you would know to take care of it better. The fragile vase that already broke would be more fragile, and if it broke again, it might not be able to be fixed again.

In other words—and several children said this, in one way or another—it all depends on your perspective.

A dictionary definition of "normal" was read aloud: "Normal; adjective. As it should be; healthy and natural. The normal temperature of the body is 98.6 degrees. Number two: as it is usually. Like most others. Typically."

To which a girl responded, "That would make weird normal because lots of people are weird."

Another point of general agreement: weird can actually be better than normal, if it means being true to yourself.

A young boy summarized, "If you're just weird and that's who you are, it's a good thing because you're being who you are."

Not only that, but normal may actually be an unachievable abstraction. According to another boy, "Some people try to act normal, but really everybody is just weird."

NO RIGHT ANSWER

This rapid-fire torrent of ideas and counter-ideas is facilitated by the students breaking out of the normal classroom routine. It all begins with pushing their desks into a corner and pushing their chairs into a circle, which gets them out of their usual classroom rhythm, said Dechter.

But the biggest game-changer is the open-ended questioning format. In the day-to-day reality of classroom education, there's often an emphasis on getting the right answer. But that's not the goal here.

The questioning approach "is not a straight-line question and answer," said Wilson, about the methods he brought into Dechter's class. "There might be a possible answer, but you get to see the counterargument."

Wilson, a sophomore majoring in education, took Bodin's class to accelerate his exposure to classroom teaching, which would normally not be available to him until later in his program.

Lahmann, an English major and creative writing minor, aspires to a career in teaching, too. In addition to taking this class, she also volunteers along with several other UO students to lead a creative writing program at the John Serbu Center, a youth detention facility in Eugene.

This extracurricular activity has provided a perfect opportunity for her to apply the teaching techniques she acquired in Philosophy 399. When it was her turn to lead the class at Serbu, her topic was fiction versus nonfiction. But rather than tell the students what might distinguish one from the other, she opened the discussion with, "What do you think the differences are?"

This was not the usual approach in the Serbu setting, which would typically involve the leader explaining, say, how to build a plot or develop a character. Lahmann's method was to invite the students to explore their own thoughts and perspectives.

The result: "I had never seen them participating so much," Lahmann said, adding that her fellow UO volunteers were impressed with this technique.

For their final project in Bodin's course, Lahmann and Wilson each wrote a discussion template like the ones Bodin provided to them in preparation for each class. Lahmann wrote one about the idea of "it's only business" versus friendship and fairness, when two friends find themselves with competing lemonade stands. Wilson wrote his about a "no girls allowed" boys club, which explored the cultural assumptions about "boy things" versus "girl things."

"This was my favorite class ever," said Lahmann. "It pushed me more because I pushed the students. It made me develop *my* critical thinking skills."

like Goth, all black and stuff, and then when they would have to wear uniforms, no one would have to get really teased.
WILSON: So no one would really be excluded because of what they're wearing?
STUDENT: Yeah.
STUDENT: Yeah uniforms would stop bullying about clothes, stuff like, "Oh look at my clothes; they're so much better than yours." "Oh, those are gross; gag." But uniforms would be like [shrugs to indicate indifference].
STUDENT: I think that uniforms are good because, like, if someone's wearing a violent shirt, then it takes away the principal's time or the teacher's [to reprimand them]. But wearing a uniform, you just wear the same thing every day, so that's better.
LAHMANN: Okay, so it actually sounds like a lot of people are thinking uniforms have good things about them? So do you think that all the houses should be the same?
STUDENT: [yells] No!
[Students talk loudly over one another]
STUDENT: No, never.
LAHMANN: But it would have the same benefits, right?
[Multiple students disagree]
LAHMANN: Like with the uniform: no one would have to worry about [being] different or being made fun of.
STUDENT: Like the Atahooies, or whatever they're named.
LAHMANN: Araboolies. They weren't wearing uniforms.
STUDENT: Yeah, they just painted their houses zigzag, but it would be bad if all the houses are the same. You'd be, like, "Where's my house?" Like, if you go up to the neighbor and say, "Hey, mom." [She'd say], "Um, you live next door."
STUDENT: How did we get from being weird to houses?
[Students laugh]
LAHMANN: Well, in the story, we have the houses that are all white in the beginning. They're all the same. They're all normal.
STUDENT: They're not normal.
LAHMANN: But normal is when a lot of people do it, right? And all the houses are the same, and then the Araboolies come in and they're weird. And then all the houses change and weird becomes normal. Right?
STUDENT: And normal becomes weird.

THE MAGIC OF SHADOWS

NEARLY A CENTURY AGO, a luxurious car pulled up to a movie set on the outskirts of Tokyo. From the car emerged the cinematographer Kotani Sochi, who had been working in Hollywood with the legendary director Cecil B. DeMille.

Grabbing a reflector from an assistant, Kotani climbed up on a wall and angled the reflector down from on high, transforming the mix of lighting on the set below into a dramatic contrast of dark and light. His Japanese filmmaking colleagues were astounded.

The year was 1920 and Kotani's legendary flourish is considered the "enlightening" moment that began a transformation of lighting styles in Japanese cinema. This transformation took place over many decades, complicated by conflicts between artistic tradition and innovation as well as evolutions in film technologies and political struggles across international borders (most notably, World War II).

Miyao

A scene from That Night's Wife, *one of more than thirty films shown during the Aesthetics of Shadow retrospective at both the New York Museum of Modern Art and the 2014 Berlin Film Festival. The retrospectives were inspired by a book of the same name by Daisuke Miyao, associate professor of East Asian languages and literatures.*

This unfolding drama is captured in *The Aesthetics of Shadow* (2013), a book by Daisuke Miyao, an associate professor and department head for East Asian languages and literatures. Miyao tells the tale of intriguing personalities—actors, directors, studio executives, cameramen, lighting specialists and more—whose efforts over the decades combined to shift the characteristic "bright and cheerful" look of Japanese cinema (inherited from Kabuki theater) to a more nuanced aesthetic that relies on the "magic of shadows" to convey emotion, dramatic tension and mystery. This became a distinguishing aspect of Japanese cinema and also influenced filmmakers around the world.

"Cinema is a medium of light and shadow," said Miyao. "Even in the age of digital filmmaking, lighting is essential. It's a technology of light."

Last year, New York City's Museum of Modern Art took note of Miyao's analysis and organized a film series inspired by his book, also called The Aesthetics of Shadow. In early 2014, the Berlin Film Festival followed suit and dedicated its annual retrospective series to the same theme, with the same lineup of films.

Featuring more than thirty films from Japanese, American and European filmmakers, both events explored how directors and cinematographers use lighting design for narrative effects such as suspense, danger and ambiguity. For instance, the Berlin festival program describes the Japanese crime film, *That Night's Wife*, as using extremes of dark and light to tell its story via details such as "the gleaming

> “THE DIRECTOR WREATHED HIS LEADING LADY IN A HALO SHINING DOWN FROM THE STUDIO HEIGHTS, WHICH STYLIZED MARLENE DIETRICH ACCORDING TO HIS REQUIREMENTS INTO EITHER A SEDUCTIVE VAMP . . . OR A MADONNA.”

white gloves worn by the law enforcement officer” as contrasted with the “black fingerprints left by the culprit on a bright pane of glass.”

Another festival theme centered on “lighting styles” that helped define the images of movie stars like Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Hazegawa Kazuo in Japan. In *Shanghai Express*, says the Berlin program, “the director wreathed his leading lady in a halo shining down from the studio heights, which stylized Marlene Dietrich according to his requirements into either a seductive vamp . . . or a Madonna.”

Miyao’s work has been the subject of a previous film series at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, based on his first book, *Sessue Hayakawa: Silent Cinema and Transnational Stardom*, which was awarded the 2007 Book Award in History from the Association of Asian American Studies.—LR

ART MEETS SCIENCE AND GOES TO THE MOVIES

SOPHOMORE JORDYN ROACH says she is inspired by Intel Corporation’s holographic whale.

The computer-generated, life-size whale made its debut at the 2014 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas—a 3-D projection of an undulating behemoth that “flew” over the assembled audience.

This is an example, says Roach, of how she might someday use the skills she acquires in her unusual double major: cinema studies and physics.

The cinematic field of computer-generated imagery (CGI), for instance, is a natural career path for someone inclined to both artistic expression and scientific discovery. After all, “cinema is story plus image,” said Roach. In physics, she is particularly interested in optics, a subfield with special relevance to film.

Roach is both an award-winning filmmaker and a talented physics student. She is one of only two young women in her upper-division physics class, but she is also quick to point out that filmmaking is another field where women are underrepresented, especially in leadership roles. Only one female film director, for instance, has received Oscar recognition for best director.

“These are both fields with a strong lack of women,” she said.

For her creative work, Roach has been honored two years in a row at the Girls Impact the World (GITW) Film Festival, sponsored by the Harvard College Social Innovation Collaborative and a nonprofit called Connecther. The festival invites high school and college students to submit three- to five-minute films that focus on global women’s issues.

In 2013, Roach won two GITW awards for her stop-action film *This Is a Girl*, which featured both her Claymation talents and the acting debut of two of her siblings (that’s her sister Skylar, above). The film, which creatively depicts the many obstacles women around the world face in overcoming poverty and discrimination, won third place overall and the Cisco Most Innovative Film Award, each of which earned her $1,000 scholarships.

Earlier this year, her short animated film *Broken Beauty*, which she describes as depicting “the media’s singular projection of beauty [as] an unreachable mirage,” won the Brave New Beauty Award at the 2014 festival, and this included a $2,500 scholarship.

Roach first became aware of the GITW festival while searching online for scholarship opportunities—but when she discovered GITW, it was just two weeks until the deadline for the 2013 event. She researched and produced *This Is a Girl* in a matter of days—a feat even more remarkable because she had never taken a course that provided her with the background and data for making a case for women’s education and self-determination. Instead, she assembled the facts on her own.

This fall, she will study animation in Prague and hopes later to have an internship in Tanzania to teach film skills, particularly to women whose stories might otherwise go untold. Her goal: “To give a voice to people who don’t have a voice.” —LR

DEPATHOLOGIZING DISABILITY

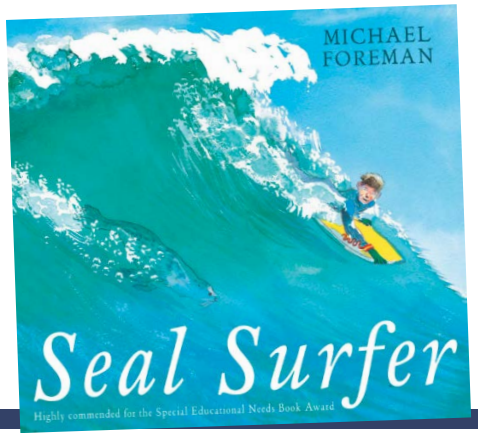
THE MUSICAL GENRE "krip hop" features disabled artists who share their view of the world through rap. This is one of several innovative forms of narrative that interest Betsy Wheeler, an associate professor of English.

Wheeler researches how disabled children and teens are portrayed in literature and new media—from toddler's picture books to graphic novels, music videos and poetry slams.

She also has a deep personal interest in this subject: she is the parent of a thirteen-year-old son with cerebral palsy and has also experienced a disabling migraine condition.

Wheeler's forthcoming book, *HandiLand: Kids with Disabilities in Literature and New Media*, explores how literary depictions of disabled youth have evolved in recent decades, and how youth are increasingly taking center stage in these narratives.

With krip hop, the artists themselves embrace the usually disparaging term "krip" (short for "crippled"—krip hop founder Leroy Moore, a rap artist with cerebral palsy, changed the C to a K to avoid association with the Crips gang). These rappers share their personal encounters with discrimination and harassment and their aspirations for acceptance for who they are.



For centuries, disabled persons served mainly as thematic devices in literature, says Wheeler. Tiny Tim, for instance, in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, isn't really developed as a character, she says, but instead "serves as a reflection of the moral character of the main character," Ebenezer Scrooge.

In addition to literature, an entire subgenre of nonfiction writing about disabled children has been authored by "experts" such as doctors, psychologists and parents. But who is most expert about the experience of a disabled person?

Wheeler has asked herself this very question about her own son. While she makes decisions on his behalf as a parent and has gained special knowledge as a mother raising a disabled child, "there are some things my son can learn only from someone who has ce-

TRAVELS TO RUSSIA AND THEREABOUTS

> "WITHOUT A LITTLE PIECE OF PAPER, YOU ARE AN INSECT. WITH A LITTLE PIECE OF PAPER, YOU ARE A HUMAN BEING." —RUSSIAN SAYING

THIS MAXIM CAPTURES a well-known fact of life in Russia—you must have your documents with you at all times. This was illustrated in a recent presentation by UO students sharing their tales of travel experiences in Russia and the former Soviet states.

At the UO, there are about thirty students majoring or minoring in Russian at any given time; each year several of them travel abroad for an immersive cultural experience.

Graduate student Eric Spreat, for instance, went to Moscow last year to teach English. He shared photos of his travels, including a trip he took to Kazan, where the metro police stopped him and asked for his documents. His papers were in order, but they questioned him because they saw that he was registered to visit Moscow, not Kazan—what was he doing there?

Fortunately, he was able to produce his train ticket, which showed he would be returning to Moscow. After detaining him, the police released him. The moral of the story? "You can be stopped at any time," Spreat said.

In general, there's a curiosity about visitors—not just by police, but by shopkeepers, people you meet at parties, in cafes, on the street, said Lindsay Stamsos, who recently studied abroad in Kiev. "People ask you, 'Why are you here?' It's not often that people want to go there."

Stamsos, who is studying Russian in preparation for a master's program, returned from Ukraine just weeks before the current political upheaval began.

IN RECENT DECADES, DISABLED TEENS AND CHILDREN HAVE INCREASINGLY MOVED FROM THE MARGINS OF STORIES INTO CENTRAL ROLES.

rebral palsy," she said—thus the importance of narratives that directly depict the point of view of someone with a similar experience.

In recent decades, disabled teens and children have increasingly moved from the margins of stories into central roles in picture books for children, chapter books for teens and young-adult novels, says Wheeler. This trend builds on the advent of special education in schools in the 1970s and the Americans with Disabilities Act in the 1990s.

"This shift puts the person with the disability at the center of the narrative," she said.

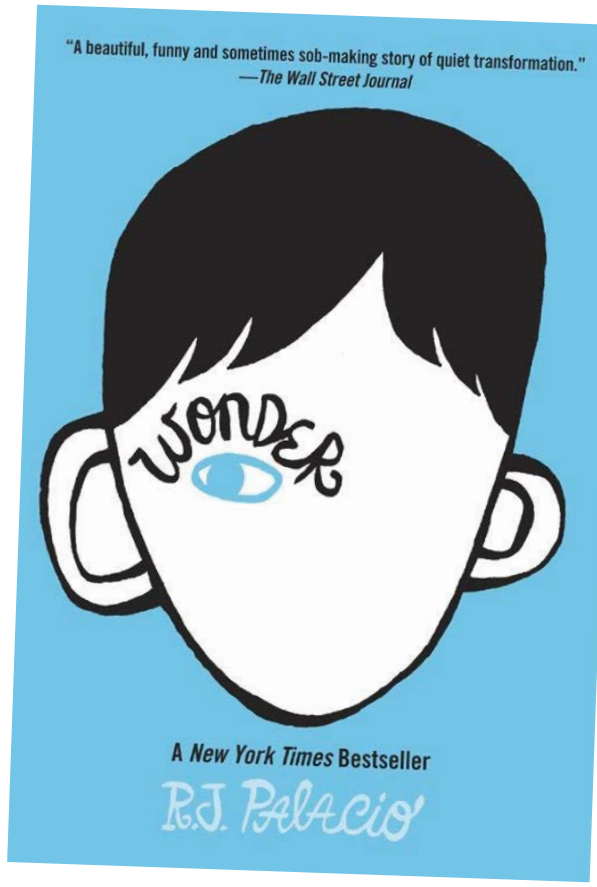
This serves disabled children, who now have main characters to identify with, and other children, who gain examples that help them better understand and value individuals with different abilities. The result is to depathologize disability, says Wheeler.

Examples of popular children's books include *Wonder*, a New York Times bestseller about a boy with a facial deformity who finally gets to enroll in a mainstream school; the Moses series (*Moses Goes to a Concert*; *Moses Goes to the Circus*) about the adventures of a deaf boy and his friends; and *Seal Surfer*, about a disabled boy's special bond with a seal.

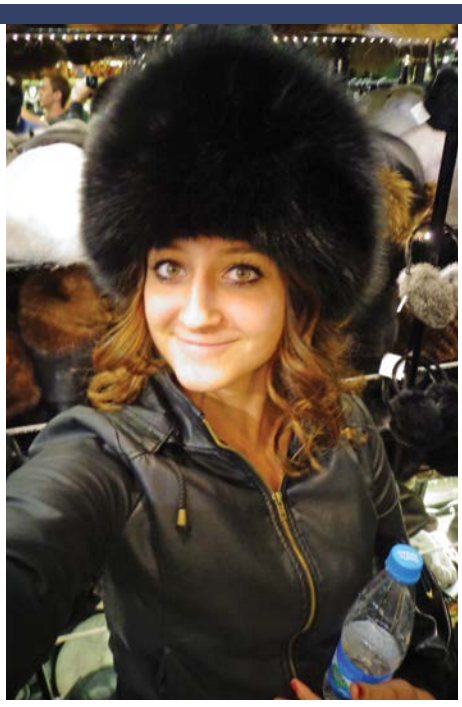
All these books are written by adults, but disabled youth are increasingly narrating their own stories, and this is where new media comes in. On YouTube, you can now find American Sign Language poetry slams featuring deaf artists and krip-hop performances.

Their first-person accounts challenge the assumption that disabled persons must strive to pass as "normal"—that is, to train themselves to speak and move in a way that others define as normal.

This strikes both a personal and professional chord for Wheeler.



"I have learned to resist attempts to normalize my son," she said. Instead of urging him to be someone he can't be, "I want to mirror my son back to himself." And that's exactly what literature can do, too. —LR



Liz Prishchenko takes a selfie while trying on a ushanka *in a St. Petersburg marketplace.*

SMILING IS SOMETHING AMERICANS DO A LOT OF, BUT RUSSIANS NOT SO MUCH.

Another cultural insight: smiling is something Americans do a lot of, but Russians not so much.

Undergraduate Liz Prishchenko discovered this as part of a bigger lesson in what it means to grow up in an American home where Russian is spoken—and then actually visit Russia. "I'm a heritage speaker, so I don't know what the grammar is," she said.

Prishchenko was one of several students in the presentation who comes from a "heritage" household—i.e., a Russian-speaking American household.

As many as 10 percent of UO students studying Russian come from a family where Russian is spoken in the home, said Jenifer Presto, director of the Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies program—reflecting the fact that there are almost 100,000 people from the former Soviet Union who now reside in Oregon.

Prishchenko elaborated on a blog she kept during her study-abroad experience in St. Petersburg: "One thing that throws everyone off is that . . . I look Russian, I talk like a Russian, but I don't exactly use the right grammar," she wrote in her first blog entry. "And I smile too much." —LR

ELDER WISDOM

TRADITIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM WELCOMES DON IVY TO CAMPUS

DON IVY, left, would be the first to say that being a tribal elder doesn't mean he's got all the answers.

During a visit to campus earlier this year, Ivy shared with an environmental studies class a story about a wetlands restoration project that he and his Coquille tribe helped coordinate—which went awry. In an effort to reclaim 400 acres of rich salt marshes along the Coquille River on the southern Oregon coast, conservationists unwittingly created the perfect conditions for the reproductive cycle of . . . mosquitoes.

The class released a sympathetic sigh, acknowledging the complex interplay of factors when pursuing environmental remedies. "But if you want to have healthy rivers and healthy wetlands," student Kathryn Alexander asked, "aren't you going to have mosquitoes?"

> "WHEN OUR ACTIONS AS HUMANS ARE SET IN PLAY WITHOUT OUR COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF A SITUATION, THERE CAN BE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES."

"It's not a question of whether we can learn to live with mosquitoes—of course we can," Ivy responded. "But when our actions as humans are set in play without our complete understanding of a situation, there can be unintended consequences."

It was one of many pearls of tribal wisdom that Ivy delivered during an inaugural program designed to improve the understanding and knowledge of Native American traditions among the UO community.

The Traditional Scholars Program, an initiative of the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, will annually bring to campus elders from Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, as well as representatives from other communities. Described by the office as "transmitters of knowledge and wisdom," these special guests meet with the president and other leaders, lecture in classes and provide public addresses to students, faculty and staff members and the public.

Ivy recently retired as cultural resources program coordinator and tribal historic preservation officer for the Coquille, who have traditionally lived on the southern Oregon coast. In addition to two public addresses on native and nonnative law, he met with various groups, including instructor Peg Boulay's aforementioned environmental studies class and an Introduction to Native American Studies class with Brian Klopotek, an associate professor in ethnic studies.

A plainspoken sort who—rather than lecture—endeavored to engage students in conversation, Ivy said in an interview that he could feel an "angst" around campus regard-

Don Ivy's visit to campus included a speaking engagement at the Many Nations Longhouse, where students and the community also recognized him with a blanketing ceremony (left), traditionally held in honor of those of high importance. Also in attendance were University President Michael Gottfredson, members of the Native American Student Union, faculty members and staff.

ing the sensitive topics of race and diversity. Ivy has endured his own struggles with race and identity—his birth doctor marked him as "White," he said, in an effort to make Ivy's life easier—and he urged the university community to focus on what is held in common, rather than emphasize differences.

Oral traditions, Ivy noted by way of example, are not the domain solely of native peoples; everyone has an oral tradition that addresses family and origins.

"When we get into this discussion of 'native' or 'tribal elder,' there's a heckuva lot going on there," Ivy said. "Let's talk about being human, first. And then let's examine native people as one constituency that have some unique qualities and perspectives relevant to the human experience."

Yvette Alex-Assensoh, vice president for equity and inclusion, said she was delighted by the enthusiastic response to Ivy's visit.

"This is a campuswide opportunity to recognize and celebrate the presence of native communities and students on our campus," she said. "It will also support our efforts in retaining and recruiting native students." —MC

JACK LIU (3)

IN MEMORIAM

A TREASURED STORYTELLER

GEORGE BUNDY WASSON was, above all else, a storyteller.

The Coquille Indian tribal elder had a gift for weaving vivid imagery into his histories of western Oregon tribes, captivating audiences with accounts at once both enlightening and entertaining. The talent served Wasson well over his half-century relationship with the university as a student, faculty member and administrator.

Wasson, seventy-nine, died at his home in Eugene earlier this year, the result of what police suspect was an attack by an acquaintance who then set fire to Wasson's house. The assailant died hours later in a gunfight with police in northern California.

Wasson first enrolled at the UO in 1953 as an undergraduate, studying music. But he struggled, taking a break before returning in 1968 to complete his degree. He earned two master's degrees here in 1971 and 1994, and a PhD in anthropology in 2001; he served as assistant dean of students until his retirement in 1989 and as an adjunct in history and anthropology, through 2011. Wasson helped found the Native American Student Union at the UO in the late 1960s.

George Bundy Wasson

"Even now I have a number of students tell me my advice or guidance changed their lives," Wasson said in a 1996 interview. "A lot of students have become some of my best friends. I have gone through their marriages, births and deaths. That is special and rewarding."

Wasson developed the Southwest Oregon Research Program, which features documents about Oregon Indian culture, stored at Knight Library. In teaching his anthropology class, he sought to fill gaps in Coquille and southwest Oregon history and to dispel myths about Oregon's native peoples.

"He was known and regarded as an inveterate, wonderful storyteller in native oral traditions," said David Hubin, senior assistant to the president.

Lake Oswego resident Brian McCarl, whom Wasson helped as a university counselor in the 1970s, recalled the tribal elder's gift for narrative in a tribute in the local newspaper:

"Like all good storytellers, George Wasson had the magical ability to transform himself. Sometimes he changed into a bird. On other occasions he became a plant, a place or a special person. It's a nice trick for a teacher and he generously shared with anyone willing to listen how and why the way things are. In addition to earning a PhD as a scholar in anthropology, and a couple of master's degrees later in life, George worked as a counselor at the UO for many years. He helped hundreds of undergraduate students get oriented in time and space. He did his job with gentle humor and care. He revered the water, stone, tree, mountain and natural wonder of southwest Oregon—Coquille, Hawkes Rest, the Siskiyou Range—all members of his immediate family. He opened the window for many on the unseen world of spirit, where distinctions are blurred between people and animals, the cycles of the earth and the migration of ideas. He shared ancient instructions for living peacefully with the processes of this world and the next. Although George Wasson no longer speaks as loudly when he teaches us how the Three Great Mountains came into existence or of the many great deeds of Tallapus (coyote) or Yelth (the raven) or Iguanat (the salmon), the seabirds' cry of Iquonequone carries over the water of Pistol River, revealing that George Wasson has gone into the fire and the light and that his story continues." **—MC**

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF FOOD

WILL TRANSFORMATIONS IN FOOD PRODUCTION FURTHER CHINA'S GROWTH OR DESTABILIZE THE COUNTRY?

China now has 20 percent of the world's population of seven billion people, but less than 10 percent of the world's arable land. This lopsided equation is of special interest to Dan Buck, an associate professor of geography.

But it's not just the disproportion that's worrisome, says Buck, who holds a joint appointment in Asian studies. China's overall approach to modernization—including the modernization of its food systems—adds layers of uncertainty to the equation.

"China is trying to solve the food problem by consolidating its small family farms into large-scale modern farms," he explained. "It hopes this will increase output and food supply, but will it succeed?"

And consider this complicating factor: Moving hundreds of millions of farmers into cities is creating demand for new food industries—and building cities for them to live in is driving China's economic growth. But while this is part of China's master development strategy, "those small family farms are still the economic safety net for hundreds of millions," said Buck. "Will they find enough jobs in the cities to buy the food they used to grow for themselves?"

If not, Buck fears this could destabilize China.

For the past several decades, China has been self-sufficient in terms of food production. Small farmers produced what China needed to feed itself. In fact, food self-sufficiency has been a deliberate national strategy at least since Mao Zedong, designed to protect China in times of hardship or war.

Agribusiness takeover of Chinese family farms should increase output, says Buck, but there's no guarantee it will be enough to maintain self-sufficiency, especially with a growing middle class that is consuming more meat and dairy every year—foods that require much more land than the traditional diet.

China is already a huge market for food producers elsewhere. For instance, government campaigns to get China's citizens to drink more milk have been an export boon for Oregon, New Zealand and Australian dairy farmers. Believing that milk products build bigger, stronger bodies (thereby "making the national body strong," says Buck), Chinese officials promote their equivalent of the "Got Milk" advertising campaign to encourage dairy consumption. Studies have shown that after just one generation, Chinese children are indeed getting taller (though meat and other factors are surely involved as well).

To avoid becoming reliant on other countries for food imports, China is following in the footsteps of Japan and South Korea. Those countries, once food self-sufficient, are producing food for their populations on immense tracts of agricultural land they have bought up in Brazil, Africa and Southeast Asia. The reason, Buck explains, is that like China they don't have much arable land compared to their large populations. They have found that it's much cheaper to grow food abroad than to produce it in-country.

Asia will comprise 40 percent of the global food market by 2020. All that growth is changing the world as food systems try to adjust to China's growing market and rising influence. As Buck travels throughout Asia

THE FOOD NETWORK

What happens when a foodie item like quinoa becomes so costly that the Peruvians who produce it (and have traditionally relied on it as a staple in their diet) can no longer afford it?

To examine issues like these and many more, the UO has launched a new graduate specialization in food studies.

Scholarship and research related to food have long been the province of agricultural schools, where the specialty of food science is a standard realm of study. In food science,

FOOD IS A human universal. It helps define a culture's unique identity (e.g., French cheeses, Louisiana gumbo). It has been a commodity since the beginning of humankind, with food products bartered between the earliest communities and now traded internationally for hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

The ways food is produced, distributed and consumed are subject to ongoing debate. Is the Big Ag takeover of organic producers a good or bad thing? What is the environmental cost of having fresh produce available year-round in the United States, when much of it is transported by plane and truck from Latin America?

to research these effects, one unexpected trend he has discovered is a contest of cuisines: each country is trying to promote its national cuisine to be the most popular across all of Asia.

"Right now, Korea seems to be winning," he said.

These dynamics—the intersection of food production systems, global economics, geopolitics and cultural norms—illustrate how the burgeoning field of food studies is about so much more than food itself.

Buck is a member of the advisory board for the UO's new food studies program (see below), which delves into these interrelationships.

Among the many courses he teaches are Geographies of Food, which examines the ways in which "food links together nature and society, country and city, third world and first world, local and global, and producer and consumer," and Food in Asia, which probes the questions: "How did different Asian cuisines develop and how are things changing with modernization, globalization and the rise of China?"

"Food is a vehicle for understanding globalism, in all its dimensions," he said. —LR

researchers emphasize the methods for producing and improving food products, and in many cases these same institutions also offer programs in nutritional science.

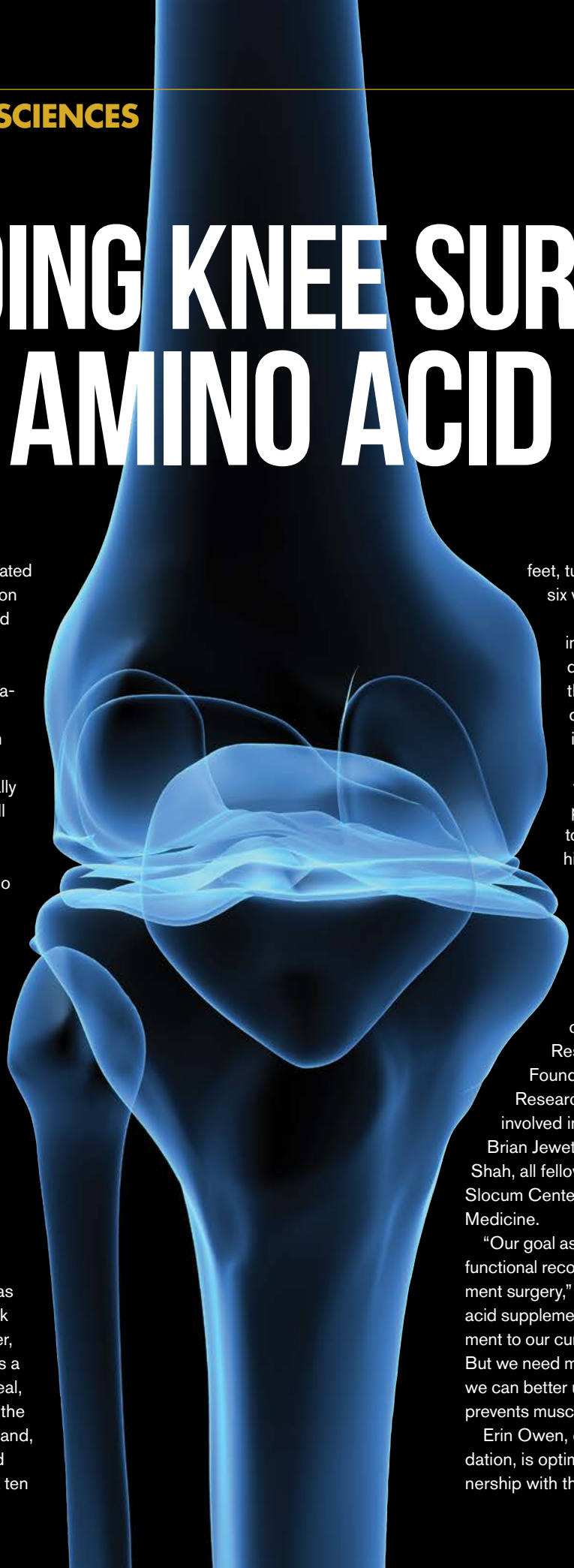
At the UO, a new type of food studies is emerging—one that brings together scholars from numerous arts and sciences fields to explore the essential role that food plays in human life: how food has shaped our cultures, traditions, history and systems of commerce, as well as our relationship to the natural world.

"The program developed out of a growing recognition that an integrated perspective on food matters is vital to developing fuller understandings of complex food-related issues," said Stephen Wooten, a cofounder of the program. Wooten is an associate professor of international studies and anthropology, and director of the UO's study-abroad program.

Faculty members and graduate students from across the humanities, social sciences and sciences—from English, folklore, environmental studies, biology, anthropology, Asian studies, history, geography and more—have combined forces to launch this new graduate specialization, which made its debut in fall 2013. Through the program, graduate students who are pursuing a degree in any field of study can take 18 credits among a select group of courses and earn a food studies certificate along with their advanced degree. Next on the horizon will be a minor in food studies for undergraduates.

Courses range from a literature course in African American foodways (the cultural, social and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food) to an environmental studies course in sustainable agriculture to an anthropology course on plants and people. Several biology courses are included as well: botany, mycology, and biology and politics. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in internships, research colloquia and career workshops. —LR

SPEEDING KNEE SURGERY R
WITH AMINO ACID SUPPL



BY 2030, IT'S estimated that nearly 3.5 million Americans will need total knee surgery each year.

Many of these patients will be 60 or older, and for them the road to recovery will be especially rocky. Postsurgery muscle loss will hinder their ability to walk, climb stairs or even rise from a chair.

But for them, and for anyone who faces a total knee arthroplasty, Hans Dreyer is zeroing in on a remedy that appears to speed recovery and is as easy to follow as eating a bowl of pudding.

A research team headed by Dreyer, an assistant professor in human physiology, found that taking essential amino acids slows atrophy in the quadriceps, a group of four muscles on the front of the thigh. The finding appears in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

Essential amino acids are not produced by the body and must come from ingested protein such as soy, eggs or meat. During the week before surgery and two weeks after, subjects who took eight teaspoons a day—a white powder mixed in cereal, pudding or a drink—had one-third the muscle atrophy of a control group and, unlike the control group, recovered the ability to rise from a chair, walk ten feet, turn around and sit back down six weeks after surgery.

"I was surprised by the findings," Dreyer said. "It really does help patients. Ultimately this is perhaps a way to reduce health-care costs and improve quality of life."

Research shows that patients who suffer muscle atrophy and weakness following total knee replacements have higher use of health-care services, including additional hospitalization.

The findings are part of an ongoing collaboration among Dreyer and members of two Eugene-based organizations, the Slocum Research and Education Foundation and the Oregon Research Institute (ORI). Physicians involved in the research include Brian Jewett, Brick Lantz and Steven Shah, all fellowship-trained surgeons at Slocum Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine.

"Our goal as surgeons is to facilitate rapid functional recovery following knee replacement surgery," Shah said. "Essential amino acid supplementation may be a nice complement to our current rehabilitation programs. But we need more research participants so we can better understand if supplementation prevents muscle loss in the long term."

Erin Owen, director of the Slocum foundation, is optimistic about the ongoing partnership with the UO and ORI.

ECOVERY EMENTS

"The foundation is focused on identifying opportunities for delivering value to patients without adding significant costs," Owen said. "Integrating effective, relatively simple and inexpensive interventions into routine clinical practice has implications for patients locally and beyond."

Keith Smolkowski, an ORI research scientist who coauthored the paper, said he

> "IT REALLY DOES HELP PATIENTS. ULTIMATELY THIS IS PERHAPS A WAY TO REDUCE HEALTH-CARE COSTS AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE."

felt personally motivated by the project, noting that his mother underwent total knee surgery just after the team wrote its first draft.

"It is exciting to be involved in this kind of translational, 'bench-to-bedside' research, with collaborations across scientists, clinicians, disciplines and areas of expertise," Smolkowski said. "It is not often that our research has direct implications for the people in our lives."

The research was funded by the National Institutes of Health. Dreyer next plans to determine how essential amino acids improve muscle retention and whether the benefits are maintained over the long term. —MC

VP FOR SKYPE

UO ALUMNUS GURDEEP SINGH PALL

Imagine: You're stuck in the checkout line so you say to your phone, "Hey, am I running late?"

In an instant, your phone considers the time of day, your location, your 2 p.m. appointment and the traffic between you and there.

"Yup—you're running late," your phone responds. "Would you like me to call your appointment and tell them you'll be arriving at 2:15?"

UO alumnus Gurdeep Singh Pall says this future is closer than you think.

Pall, MS '89 (computer and information science), a longtime Microsoft executive, was recently named corporate vice president for the Skype division. In his previous role he was guiding various aspects of the Bing search engine.

This kind of work has always been exciting for Pall, who grew up in India. As an undergraduate, he had the chops to gain entry to a selective college where he could develop his computer-engineering skills; as a master's student in computer and information science at the UO, Pall capitalized on the availability of veteran professors such as Virginia "Ginnie" Lo, receiving guidance on advanced-computing problems and other subjects.

"I was like a sponge in those days," Pall said. "If a department is too big, you don't get that (access), and if it's too small, you don't have enough interesting things to take on. I just really enjoyed that department—it was the perfect size."

Pall draws a big distinction between true computer science and "hacking." What's the difference?

When faced with a task, a hacker immediately turns to a programming tool and starts writing code, Pall said. But a true programmer will move much more methodically, considering what the program should do, how it should be designed and built and where the potential pitfalls are.

"I was a hacker until I got to the UO—if you write the code first, then you're always hacking and hacking and hacking to fix all the problems," Pall said. "I came to this rule that when you really approach a problem well, you spend 80 percent of your time designing it and 20 percent writing code."

Pall credits the CIS department for teaching him to think abstractly—a critical skill for today's computer-science students, he added, as the industry increasingly prizes engineers who can conceive and build systems that learn from data.

This is "machine learning," a branch of artificial intelligence that involves the development of systems that can "think"—taking actions to maximize the chance of success (remember the Hal 9000 in the "Space Odyssey" series?). AI, a buzzword in the 1980s, is making a comeback, Pall said.

Computers have long been viewed as "dumb instruments" that don't understand how humans think and work, placing the onus on us to carry the cognitive load, Pall said. But that's changing.

"We've always adjusted ourselves to the computers—we map the things we want to do and break them down into steps that the computer can follow," Pall said. "But we're going to see a shift where the computers are smart enough to understand what humans want in a way that is very easy for humans to express it. It's going to be an interesting decade." —MC

BETTER LIVING THROUGH MICROBES

ONE IN TWENTY patients gets an infection while hospitalized. But what if we could design hospitals for zero infection risk, using the microbial world that surrounds us?

Associate professor of biology Jessica Green touched on this idea during a recent TED Talk; in fact, as a TED fellow, she has been promoting the concept of better living through microbes at numerous TED Talks over the last few years.

Green is fascinated by the invisible, microbial world of bacteria, viruses and fungi that cover everything around us—and the world of microbes covering our bodies, too. These worlds interact constantly; the interactions could be used to improve our health in unprecedented ways, she says.

To better understand the microbiology of indoor environments, Green and a team of biologists and architects recently "swept" the UO's Lillis Business Complex, using special vacuum cleaners to collect samples of microbes found throughout the building—classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, offices and elsewhere.

Reporting in the *Public Library of Science*, the team found that the design of the building clearly influenced what microbes were found where. Alphaproteobacteria, for example, were abundant in offices, while Lactobacillus—associated with the human gut—were most prevalent in bathrooms.

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE MICROBIOLOGY OF INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS, GREEN AND A TEAM OF BIOLOGISTS AND ARCHITECTS RECENTLY "SWEPT" THE UO'S LILLIS BUSINESS COMPLEX.

The building's air-handling units and ventilation system played a fundamental role in determining which microbes were present and where they were found, the team reported. For example, offices, especially those with windows, tended to have higher levels of soil-dwelling Methylobacterium. Mechanically ventilated offices, on the other hand, had more Deinococcus, which may be better suited to the hot dry air pumped out by the heating system in these rooms.

In a related study, the team explored the impact of an energy-saving ventilation strategy for classrooms throughout Lillis.

They found that the building's unique capacity to "night flush" air resulted in airborne microbiota inside classrooms that closely mirrored outdoor air. In contrast, when the night flush system was turned off, the airborne microbiota remained relatively stagnant inside.

The work was done by the university's Biology and the Built Environment Center, which is headed by Green, biology professor Brendan Bohannan and architecture profes-

BUILDING A BETTER CONDOM

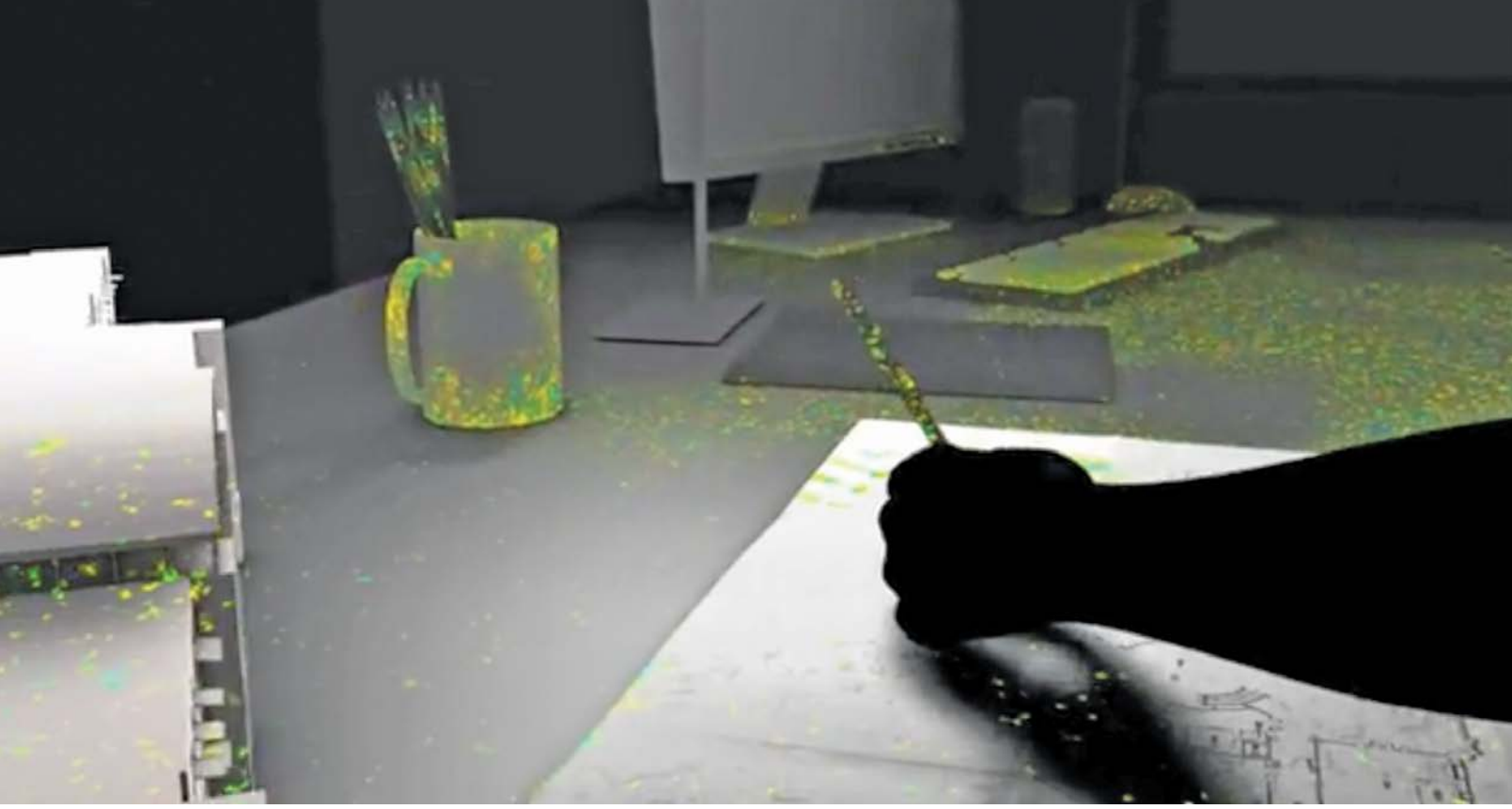
It can be hard to pique curiosity when your research is fuel cell membranes. But when you tell someone you're building a better condom . . .

"People start talking about it," said Casey Check, a postdoctoral research associate in chemistry and biochemistry. "It's something that's really helping people in some of the poorest areas of the world."

While Check found his previous work in fuel cell membranes fulfilling and important, his participation in Richard Chartoff's condom project is likely to continue to draw a lion's share of the attention.

Chartoff, a research professor, is one of more than eighty recent winners who each received a $100,000 grant from the Seattle-based Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, eleven of them for projects related to condoms. The Microsoft founder's philanthropic arm is funding research to enhance condom sensitivity and increase their strength, reliability and use as a means to protect both partners. Only about 750 million people worldwide consistently use condoms to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, a figure Gates aims to double.

As the polymer laboratory director for the Center for Advanced Materials Characterization in Oregon (CAMCOR), UO's advanced materials characterization center, Chartoff is an expert in polymer research, manufacturing and how to convert good science into marketable products. His winning proposal: Develop a new polyurethane material that changes shape when activated by heat; the next-generation prophylactic would be less than



***COVERED IN GERMS:** A microbial world lives on everything around us, including our office environments. Buildings can be designed to accommodate microbes that lead to better health, says biologist Jessica Green; learn more in this video: http://bit.ly/1gQxXvU*

sor G. Z. "Charlie" Brown. The goal of the BioBE Center is to improve the design and operation of buildings to promote human health and environmental sustainability.

The prevailing wisdom for the design of many buildings is to "keep the outside out," Green said—but we don't know if this is always healthiest for the occupants.

Green calls her concept "bioinformed design": the idea that everything we design and create—from buildings to vehicles to handheld devices—could be done with an interest in promoting interactions with the microbial world that improve health.

Airplanes, long considered vectors for the spread of disease, could use bioinformed design, for example. Green's idea could be adapted to almost anything—even telephones could possibly be designed with beneficial microbes that would enter our bodies and improve our health every time we speak into a handset.

One of Green's favorite beneficial microbes is called BLIS (bacteriocin-like inhibitory substances). It's a probiotic for the mouth and throat.

"It's been shown to both ward off pathogens and bad breath," Green said. "Wouldn't it be great if we all had BLIS on our phones?" —MC

half the thickness of the best current condoms and would accommodate nanoparticles containing drugs that combat STDs.

"The idea we've put forward is you can develop a product that fits everyone," Chartoff said. "The problem with condoms is they don't fit quite right or they break. They've got many shortcomings."

Chartoff and his research team will collaborate on the project with Béla Pukánszky, a prominent Hungarian scientist at Budapest University of Technology and Economics, who specializes in polymers and biomedical applications of polyurethanes. A colleague of Pukánszky's from Hungary, Belazs Imre, also recently joined the project team at the UO.

> "THE IDEA WE'VE PUT FORWARD IS YOU CAN DEVELOP A PRODUCT THAT FITS EVERYONE."

Working with various molecular combinations, the team will create polymers from "chemical cocktails" designed to meet expectations for elasticity and strength. Under one possible approach, a test solution could be heated and a form dipped into it; the solution then hardens around the form into a polyurethane, giving it the appropriate shape.

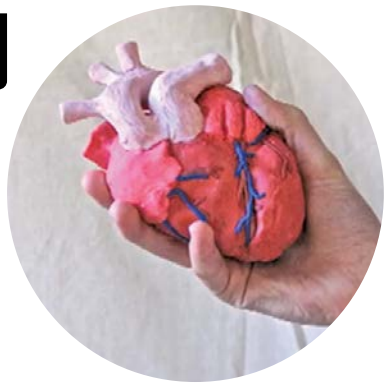
If the team is successful, they'll have a chance at a second grant of as much as $1 million to determine how to mass-produce the item and bring it to market.

Although Chartoff's synthetic materials have historically been used for industrial, military and aircraft needs, he said the condom project is similar in how it motivates him.

"I get a lot of enjoyment out of creating something interesting that helps people," Chartoff said. "It's like composing music or any other creative thing—you play it for people and if they appreciate it, that's very satisfying." —MC

ONLINE EXTRAS

1



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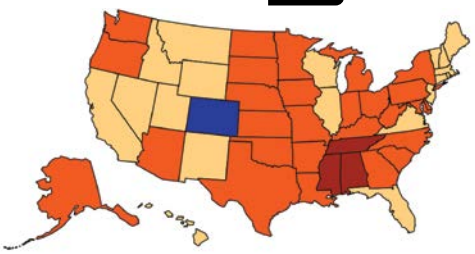

1) Big Wins for Student Videos. An anti-rape video by a cinema studies student won the first-ever Peabody Award for a viral video (see p. 2). Another cinema studies student has taken home prizes two years running at the Girls Impact the World film festival (p. 17). Watch them all in the Online Extras section at **cascade.uoregon.edu.**

2) Fatter and Fatter and . . . Carrie McCurdy's research (p. 4) contributes to the urgent nationwide imperative to understand what is making Americans so fat. How fat? Maps from the Centers for Disease Control, progressing year-by-year for three decades, show how obesity is increasingly claiming wide swaths of the U.S. (Oregon, by the way, does not look so good.) Watch a slide show of the year-to-year progression at **cascade.uoregon.edu**.

3

3) Krip Hop. The Krip Hop movement provides disabled individuals the opportunity to express their point of view in a creative, musical medium. Another creative phenomenon found on YouTube: poetry slams in American Sign Language, giving deaf individuals a vehicle for personal expression. Watch examples at **Cascade Online Extras**.

4

4) St. Peters-blog. "You have to keep a blog!" This was Liz Prishchenko's exhortation to her fellow Russian-language students when she gave a presentation about her study-abroad experience in St. Petersburg (p. 18). If you go abroad, you should definitely blog about it, she insisted. And blog she did, sharing culinary, cultural and language-learning insights. Read her blog at **cascade.uoregon.edu**.

Visit Online Extras at **cascade.uoregon.edu**

CORRECTION: A photo we ran in the Winter 2014 issue of *Cascade* showed Microsoft cofounders Bill Gates and Paul Allen with a third person, who was misidentified as Harlan Lefevre, UO physics professor emeritus; it's actually Bob Barnett, business manager for Allen's Living Computer Museum.

CASCADE

***Cascade* is the alumni magazine for the UO College of Arts and Sciences**

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DUCK?

The College of Arts and Sciences posed this question in a survey that went out to hundreds of undergraduates last year. Judging from the 429 responses we received, our undergraduates strongly equate being a Duck with being part of a community.

This is made dramatically visible in the word cloud above. We poured the students' answers into a software tool that aggregates responses and then displays terms in a larger or smaller type size, depending on how frequently they are used. As you can see, many of the most popular words emphasized a sense of community as well as academics, spirit and pride.

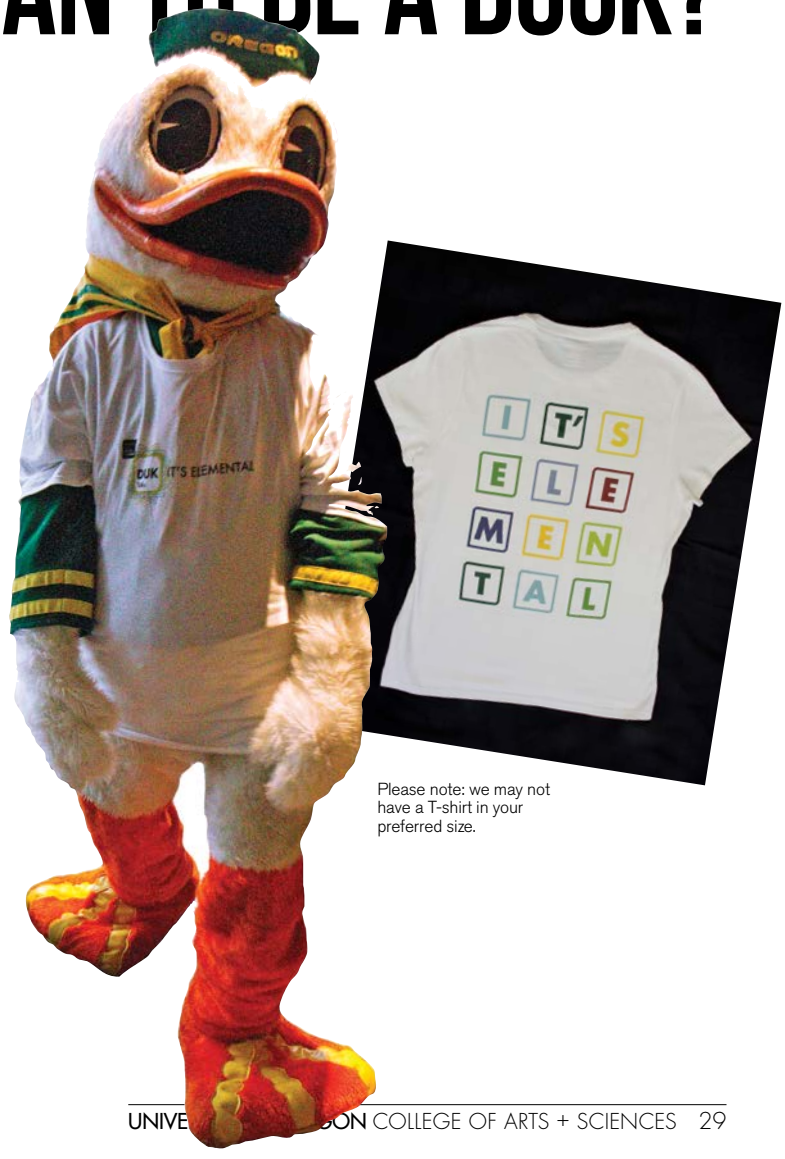
Football, athletics and sports are also frequently mentioned, and you'll see other terms that might be expected to arise: e.g., mascot, campus and environment. But the emphasis on community is telling, and exactly parallels the personalized pride that the UO Alumni Association has also found in its own surveys.

The UOAA discovered an interesting pattern when interviewing alumni: rather than refer to their experience at the UO in the past tense, they consistently referred to themselves by saying "I *am* a Duck," suggesting that this sense of belonging carries through into life beyond the years spent on campus.

You're receiving *Cascade* because you're a Duck, too. And we invite you to tell us yourself: What does it mean to be a Duck?

Visit our Facebook page—facebook.com/uocas—and tell us! What one word or short phrase summarizes it for you?

Be among the first fifty to post your response on the College of Arts and Sciences Facebook page and win a DUKTalks "It's Elemental" T-shirt, as modeled here by the Duck mascot. (Back of T-shirt is shown in inset.)



Please note: we may not have a T-shirt in your preferred size.

MICKEY STELLEVATO

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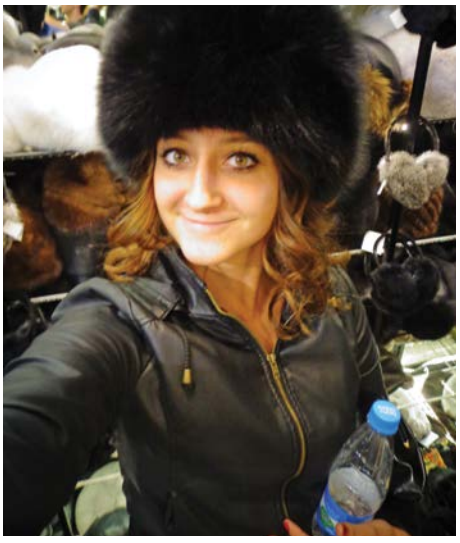

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