

Outlook

The University of Maryland at College Park Faculty and Staff Weekly Newspaper • Volume 9 Number 13 • December 12, 1994

Winter Commencement 1994

Merck Executive to Deliver Graduation Address

More than 3,200 students will receive early and well-deserved holiday presents on Thursday, Dec. 22—their undergraduate and graduate diplomas. The university's 213th Commencement will be held at Cole Student Activities Building at 9:30 a.m. on the 22nd, with graduation exercises to follow at the individual colleges and schools at noon, 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Graduates, led by student marshals, will process into Cole and be seated together on the main floor. Faculty in full regalia also will march in the procession and sit together in the stands.

From 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., a reception for graduates and their families, faculty, staff and special guests will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Stamp Student Union.

Alfred Alberts, vice president of biochemistry at Merck Research Laboratories, will deliver the commencement address. As a research scientist at Merck in the late '70s, it was his team that discovered and patented the compound lovastatin, a drug proven to inhibit the body's production of cholesterol. Lovastatin is now the most widely prescribed medicine for treating high cholesterol in the world.

He achieved his accomplishments through a propensity for taking risks, dogged persistence and by forever dreaming up creative solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems. "Anybody [who] wants to discover anything has got to be a dreamer," he says.

Alberts' eyes were opened to the wonders of scientific investigation by a microbial physiology course he was taking as a Ph.D. candidate in zoology here at College Park. He says it showed him a "whole new way of looking at things."

His desire to explore the field further pulled so strong, he departed the university before completing his dissertation to work at the National Institutes of Health as a chemist.

From there, he moved to the prestigious Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, working his way up from research instructor to a tenured associate professor—all without a Ph.D. In 1975, Alberts moved to Merck, lending his expertise to private industry, where today he is vice president of biochemistry.

Alberts' work has generated five patents and nearly 100 published arti-



Alfred Alberts

cles in leading academic journals. In 1988, he was presented with the most prestigious award in his field, the Inventor of the Year Award given by Intellectual Property Owners, Inc. He also received the 1989 Thomas Alva Edison Award and the 1992 Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association Discoverers Award.

But Alberts says, by the very nature of his work, not all of his investigations have been successful. As a scientist, he has had more than his fair share of disappointments. "Research, almost by definition, is failure," he says. "But you cry for about 10 seconds and...go on."

Students from the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences represent the largest number of undergraduate candidates at this semester's commencement—approximately 420, followed by Arts and Humanities (375), Business and Management (283), Engineering (204) and Education (170).

English tops the list as the most popular undergraduate major, with some 111 candidates earning degrees in the subject. Accounting, electrical engineering, criminal justice and government and politics ranked in the top five. Journalism, biology, history, economics and civil engineering round out the "top 10."

Civil engineering, business administration and electrical engineering are the most popular master's degrees.

Giving the student address will be Colleen Read, a 3.97 GPA student earning a bachelor's degree in Spanish language and literature. She'll complete another bachelor's degree next May.

Read is profiled on page 5.

Honors Program Competes with Ivy League

Talented students who have their hearts set on an Ivy League education but are concerned about the excessive cost, need look no further than the honors program at the University of Maryland. According to ARCO's guide, *Ivy League Programs at State School Prices*, the university honors program is one of the best in the country, and offers an Ivy League education at an affordable price.

The ARCO guide ranked honors programs at 55 state universities, using a three-star system to evaluate each program's quality, intellectual setting, entrance requirements and location. The University of Maryland was one of nine institutions given three stars.

According to the introduction, "A few universities have superb programs in great towns on beautiful campuses alive with intellectual life and at a cost which is beyond belief. These programs receive three stars."

ARCO's guide contends that public university honors programs, such as the one at Maryland, can offer students a better education than the regular programs at Ivy League institutions because students benefit from small classes and full-time professors instead of teaching assistants.

Furthermore, tuition and fees at the University of Maryland are approximately \$3,400 for in-state students—significantly less than that of an Ivy League institution.

The guide notes that Maryland's University Honors Program is "simply

and elegantly structured." It also points out that Maryland's "location is excellent, within shooting distance of Baltimore and Washington and only a few hours from Philadelphia...and the university itself is very good, as is the UHP program itself. This one's a good bet from any point of view."

Maynard Mack, director of the program, says, "The honors program has never stopped improving. Good students are finding out that they can come to this program and be challenged. The word is out that College Park should be taken seriously."

The University Honors Program is unique, says Mack, because of classes like Honors 100 and 200, which introduce students to the importance of liberal education and research. A new class titled "Knowledge and Its Human Consequences," also is being developed to give honors students a common academic experience that draws upon the numerous resources available at the university.

In addition to challenging academic experiences, honors students also participate in community service projects and cross-cultural activities.

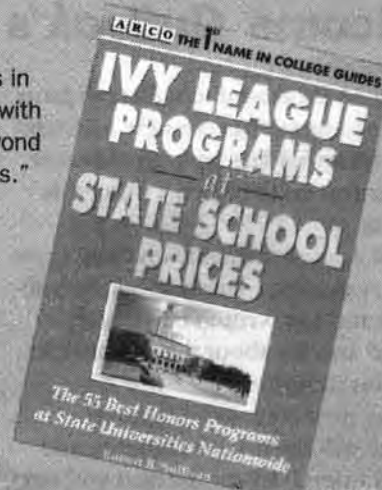
Admission to the University Honors Program is by invitation only. Students must first apply to the University of Maryland and indicate on their application if they wish to be considered for the honors program. Enhancements in the program resulted in approximately 16 percent more first-year students enrolling this fall.

Three-Star Schools

"A few universities have superb programs in great towns on beautiful campuses alive with intellectual life and at a cost which is beyond belief. These programs receive three stars."

—from the introduction to *Ivy League Programs at State School Prices*

University of California, Los Angeles
 University of Delaware
 University of Georgia
 University of Maryland at College Park
 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 Pennsylvania State University
 University of Texas at Austin
 University of Virginia



End quote

Other than your job, in what way are you involved at the University of Maryland at College Park?



"I have season tickets to the men's basketball games, I am taking classes in preparation for going back to school, I take advantage of the facilities—like the racquetball courts—in the North Gym and I ride the shuttle."

—Jay Eckerdt, associate director, Maryland Industrial Partnerships

"I'm the parliamentarian to the College Park Senate and a member of the athletic council. The parliamentarian advises the senators and the chair as to appropriate parliamentary procedure in the conduct of their meetings and their business, and I work directly with the executive secretary of the senate to review minutes and things like that. As a member of the athletic council, I review policies and procedures of the athletic department and work directly with the athletic director to give her advice."

—Robert Hardy, chairman and director, human development, Institute for Child Study



"I'm a member of the President's Commission on Women's Affairs, I belong to the American Association of University Women and we co-sponsor a published women's luncheon series on campus for women faculty and staff who have published a book. We present their findings before a little luncheon. I attend cultural and sports events. Women's basketball is my favorite sports event."

—Terry Saylor, head of the interlibrary loan office unit, UMCP libraries

"I'm the chairman of the building committee in A.V. Williams and I am the representative for the college for the faculty/staff picnic. The building committee involves a lot of complaints and the faculty/staff picnic is getting every department to contribute gifts for the picnic."

—Karen Frost, administrative aide, department of math and physical sciences



Number of Never-Married Moms Triples over Two Decades

The number of never-married mothers with children tripled in both the 1960s and 1970s and more than doubled during the 1980s.

This dramatic finding is described by Suzanne Bianchi in her article, "The Changing Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Single Parent Families." Bianchi's work will be published early next year by The Haworth Press in *Marriage and Family Review* and *Single Families: Diversity, Myths and Realities*.

"This shift toward never-married, mother-child families is very problematic for the material well-being of children," says Bianchi, acting director of the Center on Population, Gender and Social Inequality. "Children in one-parent families...are economically, medically, psychologically and educationally disadvantaged compared to those who remain in two-parent families."

Using data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, where she formerly was employed, Bianchi found that never-married mothers are younger and less well-educated than divorced mothers. In 1992, only 59 percent of children living with a never-married mother lived with a high school graduate, compared with 82 percent of those living with a divorced mother.

Only 38 percent of children living with a never-married mother lived with a parent who was employed, compared with 70 percent of those living with a divorced mother.

In addition, never-married mothers' ability to garner income from the father of their children is much lower than among women who are formerly married. In 1991, two-thirds of children living with a never-married mother lived in poverty, compared with one-third of children living with a divorced mother.

While whites as well as blacks have seen an increase in single-parent and never-married-mother families, racial differences remain extremely large. According to Bianchi, in 1990 almost two-thirds of black births, compared with 20 percent of white births, were to an unmarried mother. In 1992, 31 percent of black children lived with a never-married mother, compared with only four percent of white children.

The majority of black children live in mother-child families, while only about one-quarter live with both biological parents. The overwhelming majority of white children live with two parents and almost two-thirds are currently being raised by both biological parents.

"Unfortunately, most black one-parent families will remain one-parent families," says Bianchi. Only 23 percent of black children in a single-parent family will become part of a two-parent family within five years and only 35 percent within 10 years, compared with 44 percent and 61 percent, respectively, among white children.

The percentage of households with children that included two parents was highest for Asians (86 percent), followed by non-Hispanic whites (82 percent), Hispanics (70 percent), Native Americans (62 percent) and African Americans (46 percent).

"One of the most interesting findings is that father-child families grew faster than mother-child families in the 1980s," says Bianchi. By 1990, almost one in five single parent families was maintained by a father."

Costello Named to Rice University Post



Kathryn Costello

After nearly five years with the University of Maryland, Kathryn Costello, vice president for institutional advancement, has accepted a position as vice president for development and alumni relations at Rice University. She will be leaving Maryland at the beginning of February.

Costello joins Rice with more than 20 years of senior management experience, including more than 10 years at the vice president level at both private and public universities.

A nationally recognized leader in fund raising and public relations, Costello joined the University of Maryland at College Park as vice president in 1990, overseeing all develop-

ment, alumni relations, special events and communication functions for the university.

Under her leadership, gifts to the university have increased nearly 100 percent, from \$18 million to \$35 million annually.

In early 1994 Costello oversaw the creation of the university's Board of Visitors, composed of high-profile business leaders who serve as counsel to the president as well as ambassadors for the university within business circles.

In addition, with her guidance the Alumni Association has been strengthened and she established alumni chapters in Taiwan, Korea and Japan.

Welcome Outlook's Latest Addition

Outlook is pleased to welcome Janet Chismar to its staff as the new assistant editor. Many readers have already met Chismar and enjoyed her writing this semester.

From August through November, she served as graduate assistant on the publication and has written many well-received articles about the people and events on campus.

In her new role with *Outlook*, Chismar will assist with planning and producing each issue. She also will continue to write news and feature stories.

Chismar brings more than three years of editorial experience to the position. The Akron, Ohio native was associate editor of the *Hudson Hub-Times* (in Stow, Ohio) where she

directed the content of the paper as well as wrote articles.

Prior to enrolling as a graduate student in the College of Journalism last summer, Chismar spent six months working as editorial manager for the Association for Suppliers of Printing and Publishing Technologies in Virginia. At the association, she was solely responsible for producing its monthly newsletter, quarterly international newsletter and annual conference promotional package.

Chismar earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Akron and is currently pursuing her master's degree in the area of public relations. She also is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists.



Janet Chismar

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AT COLLEGE PARK

Outlook

Outlook is the weekly faculty-staff newspaper serving the College Park campus community.

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Letters to the editor, story suggestions, campus information & calendar items are welcome. Please submit all material at least two weeks before the Monday of publication. Send material to Editor, *Outlook*, 2101 Turner Building, through campus mail or to University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Our telephone number is (301) 405-4629. Electronic mail address is jhawes@umd.edu. Fax number is (301)314-9344.

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Winning Season Earns Coach Cirovski Declaration of Congratulations

Athletic director Debbie Yow, (far left) and President William E. Kirwan (far right) present men's soccer head coach Sasho Cirovski with a declaration of congratulations by the Maryland State legislature, commemorating his team's play in the NCAA Tournament. The Terrapins upset No. 9 Georgetown University, 4-3, in overtime in the opening round of the tournament on Nov. 19. The congratulatory measure was originated by Del. Peter Franchot, who attended the game with his son.

In just his second season at the helm of Maryland soccer, Cirovski orchestrated the biggest turnaround in Atlantic Coast Conference history. The Terps fell to the University of Virginia 2-1 in the second round, giving them a 14-6-1 record. That gives the Terps 11 more wins than last season's 3-14 mark, and the most wins by a Maryland team since the 1986 team went 14-4-1.

Employees Volunteer for NIOSH Lead Exposure Study

For three days last October, some 16 employees from Physical Plant and residential facilities were the voluntary subjects of a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study conducted on campus. The study was part of a mandate NIOSH is under to conduct a comprehensive assessment of potential exposures and risks from lead to janitorial and custodial workers.

"This was not a complaint-based health hazard evaluation," says Donna McMahon, industrial hygienist with Environmental Safety. Rather, NIOSH contacted the university.

"NIOSH had conducted research at an Ohio hospital to monitor janitors during the course of their work day," says McMahon. "To expand the project, they were interested in operations and maintenance and custodial workers to fit their custodial profile."

Prior to the study, there was no data on operations and maintenance in terms of exposure to lead. "Most studies were full blown cases of lead in renovated houses and things like that," says McMahon. "This study looked at how it affects site operators and maintenance workers."

Which is not to say that University of Maryland employees are at risk for lead. In fact, McMahon says the university has been very progressive in worker protection and safety issues. "We're probably more progressive than anyone in the country in lead issues."

Environmental Safety extended an invitation to anyone who wanted to participate in the program. All the unions were invited, says McMahon, but only AFSCME members volunteered.

The Friday before the study, all vol-

unteers attended a lead training session. In addition, they were shown the equipment they would use and provided with more information about the study in general.

"The volunteers were absolutely perfect—such professionals," says McMahon. "The study ran like clock-work."

Not only were housekeepers and their work part of the study, but also painters, carpenters, plumbers and plasterers. Tasks monitored by the three NIOSH researchers including anything from sanding a wooden floor to scraping outside windows and doors.

Housekeeping staff wore personal air sampling pumps to measure what they were breathing in. All tasks were monitored by the researchers.

Operations and maintenance workers, says McMahon, do not do full lead abatement but their duties may bring them in contact with lead and require them to disturb lead-painted surfaces.

In addition to the task monitoring, many of the volunteers agreed to have their blood sample taken. The volunteers will receive individual reports of their blood levels at their home at the study's conclusion.

McMahon expects to receive the results of the study by year's end.

In the wake of the study, McMahon says operating procedures and precautionary measures should not change drastically, as the university is already taking protective measures. "It may make us reassess different activities being done," says McMahon. "But as it is now, workers will test a surface for lead before proceeding." The workers also wear protective gear.

DAVID WARSH

A phone that didn't ring

FOR MOST CONSUMERS of economic knowledge, the telephone that didn't ring yesterday morning was perhaps more interesting than the three that did.

Thomas Schelling, 73, didn't win the Nobel Award in Economics, although a sizeable segment of the American community would have preferred he share the honors with one man who did, John Nash of Princeton University. They supported Schelling not for proving any deep mathematical theorem but rather for showing how game theoretic considerations entered into the most mundane corners of everyday life, everything from the "intimate struggle for self-mastery" of the smoker trying to break the habit to the most terrifying considerations of nuclear strategy between superpowers.

So the phone in Schelling's College Park, Md., home didn't supersede the alarm clock. There was none of the tea-sipping and champagne popping in his University of Maryland office that traditionally accompanies the welcome news from Stockholm.

Nevertheless, two years of intellectual history undertaken through back channels at the highest levels of the field has produced a remarkable insight into the existence of differing styles in economic science.

About the centrality of the contributions recognized yesterday by the Swedish Academy of Sciences there was little disagreement. "Nash equilibria," of the sort generalized by Nash, is indeed the rock upon which noncooperative game theory is founded, as the Nobel Committee said.

But it was Schelling who, as a professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for nearly 25 years, demonstrated repeatedly how the deepest theory could have the most practical applications, from thinking about dealing with terrorists to understanding the "tipping" phenomenon that afflicts racially troubled neighborhoods.

"Schelling is the world's foremost strategic thinker about social situations and human behavior," economist Richard Zeckhauser wrote a couple of years ago in introducing a volume of essays about Schelling's contributions. "He is an acknowledged expert in such areas as global warming (which involves many players), arms control and deterrence (few players), and smoking behavior (one player)."

Schelling's essays are models of clarity and suggestive power. Certain common threads run throughout his analyses: the centrality of credibility and commitment, the existence of significant spillover effects (such as reputation and status) in economic decision-making, the importance

of information flows.

But Schelling rarely chose to write in abstruse mathematics. And the one time he did identify a concept that has come to be recognized as absolutely fundamental to the understanding of strategic behavior—the idea he called credibility, which game theorists now call "subgame perfectness"—Schelling was unable to write it down with the required precision. Not because he didn't try, but because the mathematical language, the "tree" notation for games as opposed to the old fashioned matrix, hadn't been invented yet. It fell instead to German economist Reinhard Selten, writing on the analysis of oligopolies, to identify the concept of subgame perfectness—and yesterday, to share in the Nobel Prize with Nash and John C. Harsanyi of the University of California at Berkeley.

Perhaps no aspect of yesterday's award was more striking than the disparity between the way the key figures had lived their lives in the service of economic science. Nash, the principal laureate, spent his career as a pure mathematician rather than as an economist. He had little contact with the many scholars attempting to introduce game theory into economic analysis. At the height of the French discontent in 1968, he had a breakdown that was couched to some extent in terms of political disillusionment and left the field.

Schelling, in contrast, never stopped writing economics for a moment—even during the long years when he was regarded as an outsider in nearly every field. His students have been influential. At the time of the US invasion of Cambodia in 1970, he led a delegation of academics to Washington that credibly promised to shift their moral support to the Congress instead of the executive branch. And, having made his debut in the nuclear strategy debates of the Eisenhower years, he has remained active in the application of economic analysis to policy matters at the highest levels to the present days.

But the Swedes have made it clear from the start of the economics prize in 1968 that they prefer rigor to relevance. It is an austere standard, rather moving in its commitment to the highest standards of dispassionate science. But it occasionally can convey a misleading picture of how economics actually gets done.

When the first international workshop on game theory was held in 1965, 17 people participated; the fourth one, held at Cornell in 1978, was attended by more than 100 people. Today the number would run into thousands. That growth reflects the arc of Schelling's career, as much as the steady invention of tools of the toolbox for which the Nobel Prize is given.

Reprinted courtesy of The Boston Globe

October 12, 1994

Calendar Dec. 12-Jan. 18



Arts

Jazz Band Concert: Mon., Dec. 12, 1 p.m., free concert, UM Jazz Lab Band, Band Room, Tawes Fine Arts Building. Bring your lunch, take a break. 5-5519.

Monday Night Music Series: Mon., Dec. 12, Charlton Meyer, organ, 7:15 p.m., Memorial Chapel. 4-9866.

Guarneri String Quartet Open Rehearsal: Tue., Dec. 13, 5 p.m., Ulrich Recital Hall (formerly Tawes), Tawes Fine Arts Building. 5-5548.

Maryland Boy Choir Winter Concert: Sun., Dec. 18, 8 p.m., Memorial Chapel, \$8, \$4 seniors and students. 5-1150.*

Monday Night Music Series: Mon., Dec. 26, Holiday Singing, 7:15 p.m., Memorial Chapel. 4-9866.

Art Exhibition: Jan. 9 through Fri., Feb. 24, "Natasha Djukic: Costume Designs for Beaux Stragadem," Parents Association Gallery. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 4-8493.

Masquerade Reception: Fri., Jan. 13, 6-8 p.m., Parents Association Gallery. Reception for "Natasha Djukic: Costume Designs for Beaux Stragadem." 4-8493.

Art Exhibition Opening: Wed., Jan. 18, "The Helen D. Ling Collection of Chinese Ceramics," 5:30-7:30 p.m., The Art Gallery, Art/Sociology. 5-2763.

Art Exhibition: Wed., Jan. 18, through Mar. 9, "The Helen D. Ling Collection of Chinese Ceramics," The Art Gallery, Art/Sociology. Exhibition hours: Mon.-Fri., noon-4 p.m.; Weds. until 9 p.m.; Sats. and Suns., 1-5 p.m. 5-2763.

Lectures

Center for Global Change Lecture: Tue., Dec. 20, "History and Current Movement of Environmental Policy in Japan," Hideshi Kurasaka, Japanese Visiting Scholar, noon, Suite 401, 7100 Baltimore Ave., College Park. Please call ahead for seating. 403-4165.

Physics Lecture Series: Thu., Jan. 12, "Physics is Phun-Electricity," 7:30-8:45 p.m., Physics Lecture Hall. Call one week before program for more information. Doors open at 7 p.m. 5-5995.

Physics Lecture Series: Fri., Jan. 13, "Physics is Phun-Electricity," 7:30-8:45 p.m., Physics Lecture Hall. Call one week before program for more information. Doors open at 7 p.m. 5-5995.

Physics Lecture Series: Sat., Jan. 14, "Physics is Phun-Electricity," 7:30-8:45 p.m., Physics Lecture Hall. Call one week before program for more information. Doors open at 7 p.m. 5-5995.

Meetings

College Park Senate Meeting: The Mon., Dec. 12 meeting has been cancelled. The College Park Senate will meet again on Mon., Feb. 6.

Miscellaneous

Diversity Video Series: Through Sat., Dec. 17, "Honoring the Ancestors," direct connection between ancient traditional rites for honoring ancestors in the Congo and Central Africa with current African-American practices, Nonprint Media Services, 4th Floor, Hornbake. Plays every half hour, lasts 21 min. 5-9236.

University Book Center Book Sales:

Through Fri., Dec. 23, in support of "Significant Losses: Artists Who Have Died from AIDS" and AIDS Awareness Month, the University Book Center will offer a 20 percent discount on all AIDS-related titles, excluding textbooks. 4-BOOK (4-2665).

University Book Center Buy Back:

Mon., Dec. 12, through Fri., Dec. 23, Tortuga Room, Stamp Student Union. 4-4665.

Committee on Africa and Africa in the Americas Special Event:

Mon., Dec. 12, Kwanzaa Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Multipurpose Room, St. Mary's Hall. 5-2118.

Last Day of Classes—Fall Semester

1994: Mon., Dec. 12. Contact Gene Ferrick, Academic Affairs, with questions. 5-5252.

Final Exam Study Day—Fall Semester,

1994: Tue., Dec. 13. Contact Gene Ferrick, Academic Affairs, with questions. 5-5252.

Final Examinations—Fall Semester

1994: Wed., Dec. 14, through Wed., Dec. 21. Contact Gene Ferrick, Academic Affairs, with questions. 5-5252.

University Book Center Cap and Gown

Sales: Sat., Dec. 17, through Fri., Dec. 23, University Book Center, Stamp Student Union. 4-4665.

Diversity Video Series:

Sun., Dec. 18, through Sat., Dec. 24, "Masai Women," an ethnographic view of Masai culture and society, focusing on the preparation of young girls for marriage and life in their society, Nonprint Media Services, 4th Floor, Hornbake. Plays every hour on the hour, lasts 58 min. 5-9236.

Graduate Feminist Network Symposium

Submission Deadline: Tue., Dec. 20, "Works in Progress," request for 250-500 word proposals, separate cover page with name, department affiliation, campus and home address/phone, e-mail, third floor, department of English, South Campus Surge. 5-7709.

Fall Semester 1994 Commencement:

Thu., Dec. 22. Contact Paul Ferrick, Academic Affairs, with questions. 5-5252.

First Day of Classes—Spring Semester

1995: Wed., Jan. 18. Contact Paul Ferrick, Academic Affairs, with questions. 5-5252.

Seminars

Space Science Seminar:

Mon., Dec. 12, "Turbulence and Particle Transport in the Solar Wind," John W. Bieber, University of Delaware, 4:30 p.m., 1113 Computer and Space Sciences. 5-4855.

Personnel Staff Development Seminar:

Wed., Dec. 14, "Supervision Part II," 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 1101U Chesapeake Building, \$25. 5-5651.*

Personnel Staff Development Seminar:

Wed., Dec. 14, "Nuts and Bolts of Procurement," 9 a.m.-noon, 1101U Chesapeake Building. 5-5651.

Meteorology Seminar:

Wed., Dec. 14, "Organization of Storm Tracks in Zonally Varying Forms," Jeffrey S. Whitaker, University of Colorado, 3:30 p.m., 2324 Computer and Space Sciences. 5-5392.

Sports

Men's Basketball:

Mon., Dec. 12, v. Towson State University, 8 p.m., Cole Field House. 4-7070.

Women's Basketball:

Tue., Dec. 13, v. Towson State University, 7:30 p.m., Cole Field House, students free, faculty/staff half-off. 4-7070.*

Men's Basketball:

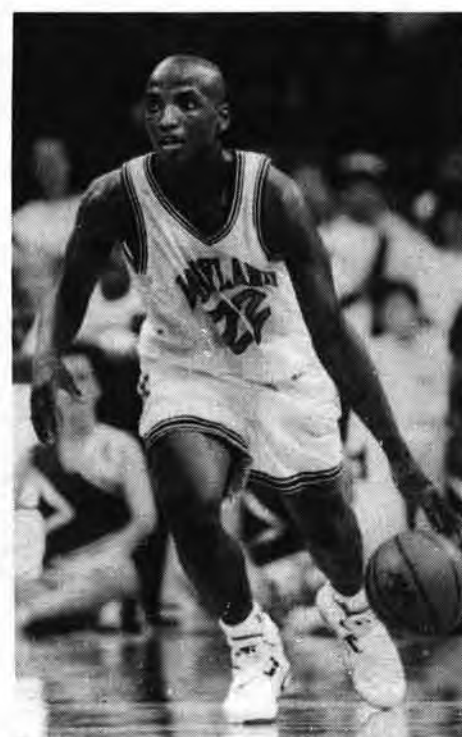
Fri., Dec. 23, v. Morgan State University, 8 p.m., Cole Field House. 4-7070.

Men's Basketball:

Tue., Dec. 27, v. La Salle University, 8 p.m., Cole Field House. 4-7070.

Women's Basketball:

Wed., Dec. 28, and Thu., Dec. 29, Dial Classic at Maryland: Butler v. George Mason at 6 p.m., and William and



Mary y. Maryland at 8 p.m., Cole Field House, students free, faculty/staff half-off. 4-7070.

Men's Basketball:

Fri., Dec. 30, v. American University, 8 p.m., Cole Field House. 4-7070.

Men's Basketball:

Wed., Jan. 4, v. Georgia Tech, 8 p.m., Cole Field House. 4-7070.

Women's Basketball:

Sun., Jan. 8, v. Duke University, 7 p.m., Cole Field House, students free, faculty/staff half-off. 4-7070.

Women's Basketball:

Wed., Jan. 11, v. Clemson University, 7:30 p.m., Cole Field House, students free, faculty/staff half-off. 4-7070.

Men's Basketball:

Sat., Jan. 14, v. Wake Forest University, 2 p.m., Cole Field House. 4-7070.



Men's and women's basketball highlights this holiday season at Maryland. Both teams will play throughout December and January, including the women's Dial Classic on Dec. 28 and 29 at Cole Field House. Come out and support the teams.

Robot versus Robot—Race for the Gold

It's machine versus machine and student versus student as robots take the field for the second annual Mobile Robot Competition. This year the competition is open to anyone whose robot can satisfy the rules and restrictions of the competition.

Among those participating for the first time will be a team of students—and their robot—from Richard Montgomery High School. The competition takes place on Friday, Dec. 16, from 1 to 4 p.m., in the Atrium of the Stamp Student Union.

Originally modeled after the robot competition held each year at MIT, the university contest serves two purposes—it functions as the final examination for the students in an undergraduate computer science course, and it is an open competition for robotic hobbyists both on and off campus. This year's competition is expected to feature about 10 to 15 teams, each made up of two or three students. Two classes of robots will be entered—those made from Legos (TM) and those made from other low cost parts. All robots in the competition must be completely autonomous—that is, able to function without any human control or aid.

The competition is being hosted by the department of computer science.

Calendar Guide

Calendar phone numbers listed as 4-xxxx or 5-xxxx stand for the prefix 314- or 405- respectively. Events are free and open to the public unless noted by an asterisk (*). For more information, call 405-4628.

Listings highlighted in color have been designated as Diversity Year events by the Diversity Initiative Committee.

Colleen Read Slows Down to Speak at Commencement

It's a good thing classes come to an end before Commencement. That's the only way Spanish language and literature major Colleen Read could pencil in time to give the undergraduate commencement address this month.

But those undergraduate classes will not end entirely for Read, because she will earn her second degree, a B.A. in government and politics, this May.

"It was a big surprise," says Read, who speaks five languages, including a little Quechua, an indigenous Andean language in Ecuador. "I wasn't expecting this."

Read does not come across as arrogant in any way, so, when asked why she thought she was chosen, her immediate response amounted to a nervous laugh.

"I've had a wide range of experiences here at Maryland," Read says. "I had the grades, the Phi Beta Kappa and all that. But besides my schoolwork, I think I've really dedicated myself to serving the campus and the community."

A double major can put a serious crimp in a student's free time, but add maintaining a 4.0 GPA in each major to the mix and T.V. almost becomes a meaningless acronym.

"It's a big time waster, even though it's relaxing," says Read, who admits she has a few favorite programs. "Last night I felt really guilty because I watched a little bit of *Melrose [Place]*."

At the time of the interview, Read had not written her speech, but after hearing what motivates her it's not hard to guess what a major portion of her talk will address.

"That's what I really want to talk about at graduation is community service and involvement and making a difference," Read says.

Read first caught the service bug at Quince Orchard High School, where she was in the new school's second graduating class. She says she brought many of the ideas she had from high school to Maryland, where she became the president of Alpha Phi Omega, the coed service fraternity.

Such ideas led to her organization of a clean-up of the Merkle wildlife sanctuary in Upper Marlboro, where about 75 volunteers showed up on a Saturday afternoon. Read says the group pulled out trash and appliances and car parts from a creek that the former land owners dumped, prior to the federal government taking over the land and making it a wildlife preserve.

"That was a really good experience for me," Read says.

After that, the volunteer work Read did "sort of snowballed," into other projects such as spending Fridays with underprivileged children from Langley Park.

Read says maintaining such a pace makes her "incredibly tired. My naps



"It's always a feeling that I could have done more. I'm my harshest critic and I expect a lot of myself."

—Colleen Read

are about every afternoon from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., before dinner. I sort of rejuvenate then. It's sort of my Spanish siesta."

As for her plans after school, which she plans to culminate with a Ph.D. in Spanish literature, Read wants to teach at a major university.

In addition to finishing up an 18-credit course load this semester and preparing for her speech, Read is in the process of applying to graduate school at Yale, the University of California at Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Though she still has some time before it happens, Read, a Gaithersburg native, says that leaving her family and friends from school will be what she misses the most.

"We have a really small, tight-knit family and I was the only child in my family to go away and I haven't really even gone away yet," says Read. "So I think if I do go away it would be a real shock to them."

Read is not one to sit back and admire all that she has accomplished. To do so would be in direct contrast to the way she approaches everything.

"It's always a feeling that I could have done more," Read says. "I'm my harshest critic and I expect a lot of myself."

Read considers herself a perfectionist, one who demands more of herself than most people would demand of themselves. "I never look back and say, 'Wow, this is incredible.' I say 'You know, Colleen, if you had it to do again you should really do it better.'"

—CHAD CAPELLMAN

Schedule of Events

Following the Commencement, individual graduation exercises for colleges and schools will be held at several campus locations. Ceremonies are scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m., noon, 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Guests are urged to be seated approximately one half-hour prior to the designated time for the ceremonies if they wish to observe the student and faculty procession.

Graduates, their families and friends, are cordially invited and encouraged to join with university officials and members of the faculty at the reception to be held in the Grand Ballroom of Stamp Student Union.

Shuttle bus service is available, providing free transportation across the campus throughout the day.

Campus-Wide Commencement

9:30 a.m. Cole Student Activities Building

Agriculture Graduation Ceremony

2:30 p.m. Memorial Chapel

Architecture Graduation Ceremony

Noon Architecture Auditorium

Arts and Humanities Graduation Ceremonies

11:30 a.m.

Music: Tawes Recital Hall

Philosophy: Skinner Building, Room 1119A

Noon

American Studies/Dance/English/Comparative Literature/Speech Communication/Radio, Television, and Film/Theatre: Tawes Theatre

Art Studio/Design: Art-Sociology, Room 2203

Art History: Art-Sociology, Room 2309

History: Skinner Building, Room 0200

Foreign Languages/Classics/Linguistics: Jimenez Hall, Room 0220

Behavioral and Social Sciences Graduation Ceremony

2:30 p.m. Cole Student Activities Building

Business and Management Graduation

Ceremony

Noon Cole Student Activities Building

Computer, Mathematical and Physical Sciences Graduation Ceremony

Noon Memorial Chapel

Education Graduation Ceremony

Noon Reckord Armory

A. James Clark School of Engineering Graduation Ceremony

2:30 p.m. Reckord Armory

Undergraduate Studies Graduation Ceremony

12:30 p.m. Anne Arundel Hall

Health and Human Performance Graduation Ceremony

Noon Health and Human Performance Building, Room 2240

Journalism Graduation Ceremony

Noon Hoff Theatre

Library and Information Services Graduation Ceremony

Noon Zoology-Psychology Building, Room 1240

December 21, 1994

Life Sciences Graduation Ceremony

7:30 p.m. Memorial Chapel

The 10 Commandments

The freshman 10 is a well-known curse—causing much angst across campuses nationwide. But freshmen at Maryland from the mid-1920s to the early 1940s had a different 10 to contend with—The Ten Commandments.

Published in the "M Book," a guide for new students, these rules were enforced by the upperclassmen at the University of Maryland:

- (1.) Wear rat hat, name plate and M tie at all times.
- (2.) Get the "Hello" habit.
- (3.) Learn all Maryland cheers and songs.
- (4.) Memorize the Ten Commandments and all bylaws.
- (5.) Do not cut across the grass.
- (6.) Do not for any reason walk on the upperclass walk.
- (7.) Do not smoke on campus, except in the student lounge.
- (8.) Do not wear large prep or high school insignia.
- (9.) Show proper respect for upperclassmen and obey all reasonable requests.
- (10.) Attend all campus activities, social as well as athletic.

The bylaws sometimes varied from year to year, but included items such as:

- (1.) All freshman girls must wear

their hair in pigtails.

- (2.) Freshmen cannot loiter for more than two minutes on the library steps.
- (3.) The library is a place to study, not make dates.
- (4.) In the dining hall, you must not sit at the ends of rectangular tables.
- (5.) Slacks, jeans and shorts must be worn only during sports or while in one's room.
- (6.) Freshmen cannot keep their hands in their pockets.
- (7.) No freshman can attend football games with dates.

In the past, freshmen were also required to work in *The Diamondback* office every Tuesday and remain in their rooms from 8:30-11:30 p.m. every night.

According to the "M" book, "The Ten Commandments have been set up by upperclassmen to be read, feared and obeyed by the freshmen. That you obey these commandments and their associated bylaws is of concern to everyone who once was a freshman at Maryland. It is up to you to identify yourselves as loyal Maryland men and women by living up to these established customs."

Exploring Knowledge and Its Human Consequences

That the University Honors Program is ranked one of the best in the country (see cover story) is in part due to continuous efforts to create exciting and challenging courses for honors students. Such a course is currently in the works—for 1996—and faculty are needed to help teach it.

Called Knowledge and Its Human Consequences, the course is described by Maynard Mack Jr., director of the honors program, as a revolutionary new course that would recenter learning.

"We need to get some kind of common academic experience that will bring students together—something that all or most of them will do each year," says Mack. "This course would get the students reflectively thinking about the kind of learning that goes on in the different disciplines."

The format for the class, which will be introduced as a pilot course in the

spring of 1996, consists of six pairs of lectures by six different faculty members on their favorite text. But "text" doesn't necessarily mean book. Rather, it could include a painting, building, cultural tradition, experiment or discovery, says Mack.

While the first lecture would be an introduction to the text, the second would be "a kind of meta-lecture about the knowledge talked about in the first one—how the discipline gets here, how the faculty member gets here and what the human consequences are of this kind of knowledge," he says.

In addition, there would be twice-weekly sections run by faculty who would be considered "master-learners." This summer, both the lecturers and the section leaders will spend two weeks preparing for the course.

"The first thing we will do is put together a short list of reading about

knowledge—theories and definitions," says Mack. "There will be two or three books that every section leader can use as a foundation."

With the light reading list as a common reading experience, when the course is officially introduced, both the students and the master-learners will go to the lectures. This will enhance discussion of the lectures in the twice-weekly sections.

"The way the honors program has operated in the past is to offer honor seminars limited to 20 students, taught by campus and some adjunct faculty," says Mack. "They are quite good, but totally atomistic." Too many of the courses, he says, are one-shot offerings.

Because the current honors seminars draw students away from each other in groups of 20, says Mack, it is extremely difficult to build up any academic community in the program. "In fact, our

seminars do quite the opposite, they draw students away from each other in little groups of 20."

At this stage, Mack says the honors program is seeking faculty to submit proposed lectures or to serve as master-learner section leaders. All faculty received a letter regarding the pilot course.

"All of this is an idea, not a reality," says Mack. "If it works well, we'll get the lecturers selected this spring and mount a pilot of 100 students."

Launching the course is possible through a NEH planning grant awarded to the honors program. \$3,000 is currently available to pay for the training this summer of faculty section leaders preparing for the Spring 1996 pilot. Another \$2,000 is available for the selected lecturers.

For more details call Mack or grant co-director James Airozo at 405-6658.



Two Eggs, Over Easy, Heavy on the Sunshine

Freshman engineering students used ingenuity—and apparently a great deal of high-tech aluminum foil—to design solar-powered cookers, such as those pictured above, powerful enough to boil eggs. The devices, which were tested Nov. 30 through Dec. 8, were required to be portable and cost less than \$150. Teams of six students designed the solar cookers using computer-aided design and spreadsheet skills learned during the semester. Testing took place outdoors in direct sunlight and indoors under a simulated 4,000-watt sun. Limited by the spending cap, students became fairly inventive, with landfills being a favorite source of material.

User Interface Strategies 1995: The Information Superhighway

Leaders in the field of human-computer interaction will discuss the latest developments in user interface strategies, the reality behind the hype of interactive TV, the implications in reshaping training and education and the development of usable interfaces during a live, interactive symposium broadcast via satellite TV.

The symposium will be broadcast Tuesday, Dec. 13, from 11 am to 5 pm from the university television system and on the National Technological University Network. Featured speakers include: Ben Shneiderman, director of the university's Human-Computer Interaction Lab and organizer of the symposium; Frank Stein, of IBM; Kent Norman, associate professor of psychology; Rex Hartson, professor of computer science at Virginia Tech and founder of the Human-Computer Interaction research project at Virginia Tech; and

Deborah Hix, research computer scientist for Virginia Tech and the Naval Research Laboratory.

The symposium is designed to provide user interface designers, programmers, software engineers and managers and others with the skills to better apply visual information seeking principles, design education and training as key components of the information superhighway, and acquire processes for developing effective and efficient user interfaces.

"This symposium is all the more important because it represents the first time major attention has been given to the importance of user interfaces to the future utility of the information superhighway," Shneiderman notes.

More than 70 companies and research organizations from around the world have signed up to participate in the interactive symposium.

Campus Gears up for Winter Weather and Snow Closings

You wake up early, grudgingly as usual, and see the beginnings of a snowstorm forming a white blanket on your street. Does this mean what you desperately hope it does, that you don't have to show up at the university today?

All it takes is a radio or T.V. to let you know for sure.

Students faculty and staff should tune into local radio and television stations (by 6 a.m.) to hear one of the following messages:

The University of Maryland at College Park campus is closed or the University of Maryland at College Park campus opening will be delayed for a specific number of hours, usually two or three.

If no information is given on designated media, personnel should assume that the campus is open. If closed, both day and night classes are canceled.

When the campus is closed or opens late, the decision applies to everyone, except those individuals designated as "essential."

But how is that decision—which lets you stay in bed for a while longer—made? It requires someone not only to get up and out of bed, but also arrive on campus before the sun comes up.

Frank Brewer, director of Physical Plant, arrives on campus between 4 and 4:30 a.m. to observe conditions of roads, parking lots, sidewalks and steps. He then calls Provost Daniel Fallon to review conditions and make closing recommendations. After a decision is made, the office of public information is contacted and that office distributes the decision to selected media (see boxed list, right).

Brewer said that in a typical winter, the campus is closed two days. Last winter, however, was anything but typical.

"We were in a pretty desperate situation there," recalls Brewer, who had the unenviable task of figuring out how to uncover the campus from the solid sheet of ice that it found itself under last January.

Last winter marked the first time in university history that the weather forced the school to shut down for an

entire week.

Brewer said the biggest hassle he had to face was the danger of running out of supplies to combat the elements that "effectively turned the campus into an ice rink."

A frozen Potomac River prevented large shipments of salt and sand from being delivered to local distributors and could not be delivered to campus. Brewer said that Physical Plant has a stockpile of such materials that is "about twice what we think we would use in a year." Last season that supply was nearly depleted—in about a week.

The campus did avoid one serious problem last winter, but just barely. Oil that the steam generators depend on to heat 90-95 percent of the campus buildings was also held up by the frozen Potomac.

—CHAD CAPELLMAN

Snow Announcement Stations

Washington Area TV

WRC-4

WTTG-5

WJLA-7

WUSA-9

Flagship Channel: UMCP-8 PGCC-TV

Cablenews-21

Washington Area Radio

WMAL-AM 630

WTOP-AM 1500

WMUC-FM 88.1

WKYS-FM 93.9

WLTT-FM 94.7

WPGC-FM 95.5

WASH-FM 97.1

WMZQ-FM 98.7

WHFS-FM 99.1

WGAY-FM 99.5

WWDC-FM 101.1

WGMS-FM 103.5

Baltimore Area TV

WMAR-2

WBAL-11

WJZ-13

Baltimore Area Radio

WCAO-AM 660

WBAL-AM 1090

WLIF-FM 101.9

Take note

December Flagship Channel Schedule Highlights

Commencement ceremonies, encores of the popular Andy Wolvin interview series and live broadcasts of Maryland women's basketball highlight the December schedule for The Flagship Channel on Prince George's and Montgomery County cable television systems (channels 59/12 in Montgomery County and 32A and 30B in Prince George's County).

The Flagship Channel will broadcast live commencement ceremonies beginning at 9 a.m., Dec. 22. The commencement address will be delivered by Alfred Alberts of Merck & Co., one of the nation's leading experts on cholesterol. Alberts, a senior scientist at Merck, headed the team that discovered lovastatin, the drug that is now widely used to combat high cholesterol. In recognition of his work, he will receive the honorary Doctor of Science degree.

The popular talk show hosted by campus professor Andy Wolvin also encores in December. Wolvin's program airs Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 6 p.m. If you're planning to buy a new computer for the holidays, find out about the exciting world of the Internet when Glen Ricart of the Computer Science Center discusses the history of computer science and its latest applications with Wolvin (Dec. 16, 17 and 18).

Follow University of Maryland women's basketball with The Flagship Channel this month for two live games: Dec. 13 vs. Towson State at 7:30 p.m., and the Dec. 28-29 Dial Soap Classic. Start time for Dec. 28 is 8 p.m. (opponent to be determined). Teams in the classic include Butler, George Mason and William & Mary.

Your Earnings, Your Taxes

When you receive your W-2 earnings statement in January, be sure to read the "Your Earnings, Your Taxes" flier that comes along with the W-2. It explains, among other things, how to handle the retirement pickup amount on your tax return. The pickup amount is your personal mandatory contribution to one of the following state retirement of pension programs:

- * State employee's pension system (employee contribution only)
- * State teachers pension system (employee contribution only)
- * State employees retirement system
- * State teachers retirement system
- * Judges' retirement system
- * DNR police pension system (employee contribution only)
- * DNR police retirement system
- * Legislative retirement system

Your contribution to any of the above programs is exempt from federal income tax, but not from Maryland income tax or Social Security tax. Incorrectly accounting for the pickup amount is a common mistake made by state employees on their Maryland income tax returns.

The flier also will help you understand the difference between the year-to-date earnings shown on your last pay stub for calendar year 1994 and the taxable wages shown on your W-2. You will notice that health insurance and certain other voluntary deductions are

exempt from federal, social security and state taxes. If the flier is not distributed with your W-2 statement, ask your supervisor or payroll office to give you the flier, "Your Earnings, Your Taxes."

University Participates in Scholarship Day

Patricia Walton, assistant director of undergraduate admissions, met with prospective students to discuss scholarship opportunities at the University of Maryland during the Freedom Forum/Project Excellence Scholarship Day held Nov. 4. Nearly \$4.6 million in scholarships and financial aid was awarded to 190 Washington-area high school students at the event.

Five hundred students from more than 100 local high schools, met with representatives from 40 colleges and universities. Public, private and parochial schools from D.C., Maryland and Virginia were represented and students who participated had a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher.

Syndicated columnist Carl Rowan, founder of Project Excellence, developed the idea of Scholarship Day in partnership with The Freedom Forum after talking to university presidents, deans and recruiters who were looking for help in increasing enrollment of black students at their schools. Because of limited funds, each year Project Excellence must turn away many qualified students. Scholarship Day was designed to help colleges and universities tap into this pool of talented students.

Teachers Minding Their Business

Three faculty members of the College of Business and Management were recently nominated for outstanding teacher on campus by the Panhellenic Association. John Haslem, who teaches finance, was nominated for the first time; Daniel Ostas, who teaches law, has been nominated for the award in the past; and William Nickels, who teaches marketing, has been nominated numerous times. He was the first faculty member on the campus to be selected by the association as outstanding teacher.

These nominations reflect the increased emphasis the College of Business is placing on teaching and the number of good teachers in the college. Nominations take the form of essays describing the outstanding characteristics of the teachers.

UMCP Named to Council on Work Exchanges

The university has been recognized as a member institution of the Council on Work Exchanges (COWEX). Formed in 1985, COWEX honors individuals and institutions that have contributed to the field of international experiential education by consistently encouraging students to participate in Work Exchange programs. COWEX is affiliated with the Council on International Exchange (CIEE), of which the university also is a member.

In 1994, 29 students from the university participated in CIEE's Work Abroad Program, placing the school among the nation's 30 leading institutions in total number of students participating. The program assists students in finding jobs overseas by offering a legal work permit and job and housing assistance.

Building a Cycle of Improvement

"Insanity," W. Edwards Deming said, "is doing something the same way but expecting different results." Creating a mechanism for perpetual change is a fundamental idea of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and major components of the CQI initiative have recently shown their use of the Shewhart Cycle as a means for improvement.

The Shewhart Cycle is named for Walter Shewhart of Bell Telephone Labs who developed the theory of statistical quality control in the 1920s. He described a three-stage cycle of activities necessary to manage a production process: specify, produce and inspect. Shewhart likened these activities to the steps of the scientific method for acquiring knowledge: formulate an idea, test the idea and, if it works, standardize the idea. Shewhart's ideas about quality control were widely accepted by the 1940s and were so successful to the war production effort that some were even classified as military secrets. Over the years, a four-step process for continuous improvement, called PDCA, has evolved:

PLAN: Establish a plan for improvement based upon a data-based study of the current situation.

DO: Test the plan on a small scale.

CHECK: Check to see if the trial produced the expected results.

ACT: Reflect on what has been learned to decide what you will continue doing (standardize).

Recently, the university's quality improvement efforts have reflected on their activities using a PDCA model. Judy Olian, director of the IBM-TQ Project, led a team of campus administrators through a comprehensive review of the project and planning for its future. During the process, a team of three executives from IBM also visited the university to assess its progress and follow-through on the \$1 million grant awarded in 1992. Maryland's success was confirmed when IBM announced that the university was one of only four (out of the eight original) schools nationwide who will receive 100 percent continued funding.

Just prior to Thanksgiving, the CQI Council conducted a self assessment. John Meyers, an internal quality consultant at AT&T, facilitated a day-long examination of areas such as CQI projects, future planning, campus-wide involvement and council effectiveness. President William E. Kirwan is now leading a discussion of actions that will be taken based on the comments that were received. After the assessment, Meyers said, "I was struck by the council's candor and engagement...the format was demanding and required patient listening...there was clear alignment on the problems and a desire to make things better for everyone."

Prior to the self assessment, the CQI Council examined how its original Fall 1993 plan for four campus-wide CQI projects had evolved. Each of these projects were focused on improving the student experience at the university. When each team concluded its work, an evaluation of the project was begun by Nehama Babin (Institutional Studies) and Stan Lacienski (University College). "Check" stage activities included written evaluations, a focus group and interviews with the team leaders and sponsors.

The evaluation showed support for elements used to structure the projects (such as cross-functional membership, focusing on students and facilitation) and for the use of the CQI problem-solving process. On the basis of the feedback, the council received recommendations for what it should and should not change with future projects.

Geno Schnell, Janet Schmidt and Monika Springer Schnell also reported to the council how they had used the Shewhart cycle to evaluate and improve the four projects during their terms as team facilitators. Each week, these facilitators met to exchange lessons learned.

The facilitators had documented ideas for future improvement as well, and as part of the "Act" step, presented their recommendations for a standard team formation process and typical "duties" for each role in a project (e.g., sponsor, leader, facilitator). The facilitators recommended that several elements proven to work with these four teams, such as small team size, team charters, completion deadlines, facilitation and final presentations, could be used with more projects throughout the university, not just with CQI projects.

George Dieter, director of CQI, noted that "these four projects represent the 'Do' step in the university's plan to implement CQI because instead of creating a large number of projects, the CQI Council chose to focus on a small number that could teach us how CQI works."

Plan—Do—Check—Act is a simple idea and very familiar to scholarship and research in academia, but its implementation appears to be much more elusive. The aim of CQI is to complete all four steps of PDCA, trying to align each step with its predecessor and successor, and, with each cycle, to institutionalize improvements in quality for many of the university's customers.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Barry Pearson Rhapsodizes the Blues

Grammy Nominee Explores African-American Folk Traditions

There it is—the grammy nomination—sharing a wall with concert posters that harken back to his days with the Bowling Green Blues Trio. Over here, shelves stacked with scores of albums and rows of scholarly texts.

If decor is any reflection of a person's life, Barry Pearson's South Campus Surge office emanates the English professor's two loves: folklore and the blues.

It is also evident when a colleague pops in to borrow one of the albums for taping—Pearson loves music and people around here know it.

"The blues was the first form of music that inspired me to go out and buy records and eventually learn to play a little bit," Pearson says. Academic involvement came later.

"I spent a lot of time as I grew up in Chicago, talking to musicians and hanging out where they'd be hanging out," he continues in discussing his passion. "As soon as I was able to get into the clubs where they were playing, I did that. But I never thought much about it until I was done with college."

Throughout his undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan, Pearson pursued his interest in the blues via performing, listening to records or seeking out musicians.

During graduate school at Indiana University, he began to focus on doing research in folklore, specifically African-American folk and popular music.

"As I got closer to deciding on a topic for my dissertation, I became more interested in the interview process and what I call the life story of blues musicians. I began to wonder, 'What do we know about the blues? What are the sources that we've used?'" According to Pearson, some of the recordings, handbills and general reference works that exist are wrong or disseminate misinformation or stereotypes.

"I focused in on what I consider to be the primary source of information—the musicians' community," he says, "and I became more and more interested in the way blues musicians spoke of their lives and the things that seem to have impact on their lives."

Pearson unearthed tales of musicians making their own guitars and home-made instruments. "The whole thing about improvisation and making do is so dominant in discussions of their lives," he says. He also heard about country house parties and jook joints, "things that when I spoke to them, you could see people's eyes light up."

These personal narratives were recounted in Pearson's book, *Sounds So Good to Me: The Bluesman's Story*, which treats life story as a type of cultural document and reveals common patterns, like instrument construction, that showed up in many musicians' stories.

In perfecting the process of interviewing musicians, Pearson grew to realize he never had quite enough information: "I felt I had too few interviews with too few people."

So in his next book, *Virginia Piedmont Blues: The Lives and Art of Two Virginia Blues Men*, he delved in a little deeper to uncover the relationship between the life stories and repertoire



Pearson spreads the good news of the gospel of blues to whoever will listen: "Blues music is not sad, it is medicine for the soul—something to fix you up when you are down."

of two local musicians.

The first book studied the "mask," the public persona of musicians, he says, while the second book gets behind the mask—why people are interested in music.

Pearson is now involved in studying the relationship between blues and other African-American institutions and community events. This project, drawing on more than 100 interviews with well-known as well as obscure artists, has actually resulted in two projects—one a historical application, the other focusing on narrative and storytelling.

The former, he says, reconnects events in the African-American community such as weekend dances, house parties, country breakdowns and celebrations at jook joints, with the blues.

The anecdotal material reveals entertaining stories, folktales and jokes which provide personal versions of blues history. Pearson says many of the musicians he talked to are "outstanding, riveting talespinners."

"The musicians are all individuals, all different," he continues. They may come from plantations in Mississippi or have Ph.D.s. Pearson aims to convey the diversity and range of life circumstances and dispel existing stereotypes. He sees himself as a "conduit of information."

One prevalent stereotype Pearson is combatting is the image of blues as depressing: "People think of it as a depressed state of mind, the historical result of oppression, racism and economic subjugation. While these conditions characterize part of the African-American experience, they don't tell us how people were strong enough to sur-

vive and transcend these conditions." Most blues musicians have had positive lives, not sad ones, he adds.

He takes his mission of knocking down those stereotypes seriously. As lead scholar for The Blues Project, a series of public programs presented at Prince George's Community College in April-November 1993, Pearson continued educating new audiences about the blues. Distinguished blues scholars, experts and artists presented the origin, evolution and cultural legacy of the blues in lectures and demonstrations.

"Blues across the board is at a peak of popularity, which is great, but it also creates some problems in terms of trying to educate people," says Pearson. "There's a tendency historically for mass culture to appropriate African-American artistic developments, things that were created in African-American culture."

"This is certainly happening with the blues and it creates some problems," he explains, "because a lot of what we see on television pitches everything from blue jeans to potato chips to car commercials to what people think of as a blues soundtrack. But it's not really the same thing that blues meant when it was played at house parties and jook joints and taverns in Chicago. The sound is different - it's just the surface."

Pearson acknowledges that it's sometimes easy to complain when things become too successful. "But part of the African-American rejection of some of these forms have to do with the fact that they have been appropriated by white or mass culture and they no longer belong to them in the same way. In a way that's sad because it takes

away part of someone's heritage."

People have no idea where the string band tradition or an instrument like the banjo came from, Pearson says.

"They've grown up all their lives liking it or hating it, but assuming that it was essentially a white musical form because that's all they see. But the banjo is an African instrument and that whole string band tradition developed out of African-American rural communities."

He says music as a model teaches us a lot about what's happened in the United States and especially in the continuing interaction between the African-American and white populations. And it demonstrates the continuity of African traditions.

At the university, Pearson teaches classes in the English department on folklore, folklore and literature, African-American folksongs and the blues. He doesn't teach music in the sense of playing, but musicians enroll in his classes.

An accomplished musician in his own right, Pearson says he is not interested in playing professionally right now. "I would rather see some of the young African-American artists get that slot. There's not that many jobs out there. And I had my time to do it so now I'm more interested in playing for my own fun."

He adds that being a teacher and giving lectures in the community gives him enough public exposure without having to play. "I don't need it as a vehicle for self expression so much anymore."

When he does work with John Cephas and Phil Wiggins—the Bowling Green Blues Trio—"we'll do different things now. The first part [of the show] we sit on stage, talk and answer questions, then they go into the concert mode the second half. And people like that a lot because it's entertaining and very educational."

He sometimes writes record liner notes and small interview articles for magazines. "That's another way I can pay back some of the people I've talked to, because these types of articles help them in a promotional sense."

And the grammy nomination? It came in 1992 for best traditional blues album, "Roots of Rhythm and Blues: A Tribute to the Robert Johnson Era." Pearson produced the album with Don DeVito, Worth Long and Ralph Rinzler, who just passed away. According to Pearson, Rinzler was a very important person in American folklore and folk music and was the driving force behind the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Pearson also works with groups engaged in presenting traditional American music including the Smithsonian Folklife festival and the Library of Congress. He is president of the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

But mostly, Pearson teaches and writes and spreads the good news of the gospel of blues to whoever will listen: "Blues music is not sad, it is medicine for the soul—something to fix you up when you are down."

—JANET CHISMAR