

News & Views



Faculty and Staff Newsletter of the University of Oregon

January 27, 1997

Grant to revolutionize zebrafish research

University of Oregon researchers have received a \$1 million grant to upgrade and expand facilities and to bring on-line a globally accessible interactive database that, according to one researcher, "will revolutionize the way we do science."

Neuroscience will use the majority of the grant, awarded by the W.M. Keck Foundation of Los Angeles, to enlarge and renovate the aquarium facilities where researchers raise and tend zebrafish, inch-long tropical fish used in biomedical research. An internationally recognized group of research laboratories, led by five UO faculty scientists, use zebrafish--and the millions of embryos the fish produce--to investigate genetics and development.

The new aquarium facilities will be used, in part, to develop improved methods for raising and propagating large numbers of fish. Preparations for project construction have already begun within the UO science complex. Work should be complete in about one year.

Zebrafish have become one of science's most important and widely used laboratory animals since they were first cloned by the late George Streisinger, a UO geneticist. In 1981, Streisinger introduced the zebrafish as a model system for studying the genetic controls of development in vertebrate embryos.

"The W.M. Keck Foundation gift ensures University of Oregon preeminence in the field of genetic research using zebrafish," says Steadman Upham, vice provost for research. "It demonstrates continued validation for the vision of George Streisinger. And it stands as a testament to the high quality of the science being conducted by our zebrafish group."

About one-third of the W.M. Keck Foundation grant will be used to complete development of an on-line interactive database, which, according to its designers' plan, will contain all scientific knowledge about zebrafish.

"Labs all across the world are investigating zebrafish and producing important information, much of which may be lost without a central repository such as this database," says Monte Westerfield, Neuroscience director. "This database will allow ubiquitous access to all the information instantly via the World Wide Web."

Westerfield, who is designing and building the database in collaboration with Sarah Douglas, Computer and Information Science, underscores the importance of its interactive features. In an innovative departure from the peer review system, selected researchers with clearance will be able to add information directly to the database.

While most added data will not be subject to the traditional review cycle, he explains, safeguards will still protect the system. Information posted on the database will be checked for obvious mistakes, and, to ensure quality, all postings will be tagged with a marker indicating the researcher's confidence level in the datum.

"This is a revolutionary change in the way we do science. Not many other biological databases are going in this direction," Westerfield states. "We are confident that this database will dramatically improve the ability of researchers to do their research. This will put the sum of what is known about zebrafish directly into the hands of those who need it."

Jim Weston, Neuroscience, notes that the W.M. Keck Foundation's generous support is a timely and constructive gift.

"We have reached the maximum utility of the facilities we currently have," Weston says. "We could not continue to keep our 40-50 researchers working at the level we have been working without these improvements."

Maybe more important, he adds, is the effect the database will have on the international effort to extend the boundaries of zebrafish knowledge.

"We needed a way to share information across the entire zebrafish research community and this database will enable us to do that," he says. "I credit the Keck Foundation with perceiving the opportunity presented by database technologies and for supporting our use of them."

Besides Westerfield and Weston, other UO zebrafish researchers are Judith Eisen, Charles Kimmell and John Postlethwait.

The W.M. Keck Foundation, one of the nation's largest philanthropic organizations, was created in 1954 by the late W.M. Keck, founder of the Superior Oil Co. The foundation makes most of its grants in higher education, medical research, science and engineering. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded approximately \$500 million in grants while its assets have grown from \$250 million to more than \$1 billion today.

Three PAD VP finalists visit

Three university advancement professionals from Washington and California are visiting campus this month as finalists for the position of vice president for public affairs and development, according to Vice Provost and Dean Steadman Upham, search committee chair.

Rick Ventura, executive director of development for the University of California, Riverside, will meet with various faculty, staff, student, alumni and other groups on Jan. 27-29.

S. John Goodwin, associate vice president for development at the University of Washington, visited campus on Jan. 21-23.

Constance H. "Connie" Kravas, associate vice president for university advancement at Washington State University and president of the WSU Foundation, came to campus Jan. 8-10.

"We're extremely pleased with the quality and depth of this finalist group," Upham says.

Some 100 candidates from around the United States applied or were nominated for the post. Brodie Remington left in mid-October after six years as PAD vice president to become vice president for planning and development at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn.

Upham says the search panel expects to recommend a candidate by mid-February to President Dave Frohnmayer.

- Ventura, who has held his UCR post since 1993, saw support from private sources for the southern California campus increase to \$24 million in 1995, up from \$9 million. Previously executive vice president of the Urban Land Foundation, he held three presidential appointments from 1982-90, including assistant secretary for policy, budget and management in the U.S. Department of the Interior and deputy director of ACTION.

A graduate of California State University, Los Angeles, with bachelor's and master's degrees in history and political science, Ventura also has held posts at Whittier College and the University of Southern California, in the Reagan for President Campaign and with a Los Angeles fund-raising firm.

- Goodwin, who joined the UW development office in 1989 after practicing law with a Seattle firm for three years, has held posts of increasing responsibility during the past seven years. In his current position since January 1996, he oversees central and school- and college-based major gift fund-raising.

A magna cum laude graduate of Notre Dame in economics, Goodwin received his law degree from the University of Washington in 1986 and is a licensed member of the Washington State Bar Association.

Kravas, in her current WSU post since 1981, directs, leads and manages university-wide development efforts. WSU, in the final year of its first comprehensive capital campaign, has raised \$247 million toward its goal of \$250 million. Earlier at the Pullman school, she helped establish the WSU Foundation, was an education professor and helped faculty obtain research support in the Office of Grant and Research Development.

A magna cum laude graduate of Pacific Lutheran University in English literature, Kravas earned a master's degree in sociology and education from Indiana State University and a doctoral degree in administration and supervision from WSU.

Moccasin focuses on lending a hand

Extending a hand to students comes instinctively to Alicia Moccasin.

"I think it is the mother in me. I look at them as if they were my daughter or my son. I have met students from all over the world, and some of them have not seen their home or family in 5 to 10 years. I feel that if my daughter were elsewhere, I would hope there would be somebody like me to give her a hand," she says.

Moccasin has been an accounting assistant at the EMU since 1984, and she considers the best part of her job is working with students.

"There is always something new that is going to happen each day. Each student has something different going on in their life, and it really is a treat for me when they come in to chat about their experiences. I guess it goes back to the mother in me, and I always want to make time to listen and help them out if I can," she says.

Moccasin is not, however, an extended parent only to students at the university. As a volunteer Parent Committee Member of the NATIVES Indian Education Program, she works with Native American children in the Eugene, Bethel and Fern Ridge public schools to help them preserve their native heritage.

"We live in an urban setting, away from the reservations, so it is important that the children are able to be around native people in order for them to learn their culture and not lose their heritage. Learning the language is rather difficult because there are so many different dialects from the various tribes. But, children can still learn things such as drumming, singing and dancing," she says.

Moccasin strongly believes educating children is important in reducing racial and social tensions.

"I am trying to teach my kids that they are not better than anybody else, and it is important to educate other children in the same way.

"There are always going to be certain people," she continues, "who are going to see you a different way, and they will never change. But, you want these kids not to grow up believing that or, more importantly, acting that way toward other people."

When she finds time for herself, Moccasin enjoys gardening and beadwork, and says she would rather be "outside than stuck in the house with a book."

If things get a little too stressful, she just takes one thing at a time.

"There are days where you have to take a walk, let it go, and come back and do the best you can. I try not to hold onto stress. I just focus, take a deep breath, and I know I can do it," she says.

--COURTNEY HEDBERG, COMMUNICATIONS STUDENT

Pushkin expert bequeaths books to UO

The late Walter N. Vickery, professor emeritus of Russian at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has left his valuable collection of some 750 books on Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin--350 of them in Russian--to the Knight Library.

Vickery, who was the leading American authority on Pushkin, the greatest of Russian poets, spent his last years at Seeley Lake, Mont. Eileen Vickery, Chinese GTF, is one of his six children.

UO advocates set Lobby Day Feb. 11

The UO Alumni Association, in cooperation with Legislative Relations, invites UO alumni, off-duty faculty and staff, and other supporters of higher education to Lobby Day 1997 on Feb. 11

in Salem.

Advocacy training, organized by the Alumni Advocates network, is scheduled from 10:15-11:15 a.m. in Room 137 of the State Capitol.

"This session will offer volunteers information on how to communicate effectively with legislators," says Jayne Mickles, Legislative Relations assistant director. "Participants will learn about current UO programs and facilities and the legislative process as well as higher education's legislative strategy."

Gov. John Kitzhaber will join President Dave Frohnmayer, other UO officials, legislators and the UO Duck mascot for a tailgate-style lunch from 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the Capitol Galleria.

During lunch, Jane Ryland, president of CAUSE, will formally present the group's Award for Excellence in Campus Networking to Frohnmayer and Joanne Hugi, University Computing director. Selection of UONet, the university's computer network, for top honors in a national competition was announced in December by the association.

In the afternoon, the newly trained advocates will have a chance to try out their lobbying skills during brief appointments with legislators.

To register, call 6-5656. For information, call 6-5023.

Microcomputer program to close

Come Feb. 15, the Microcomputer Purchase Program will be no more.

"As much as we regret the program's demise, we are pleased to announce that the UO Bookstore expects to take over as the designated campus location for the UO/Apple Computer contract agreement as of Feb. 24," says Kathy Heerema, Microcomputer Services assistant director. "They also sell many other products that were available through the Microcomputer Purchase Program."

She says University Computing's decision to end the program, which offered educational discounts on selected hardware and software to UO faculty, staff and students, has not been made lightly.

"We are proud of the valuable services we have offered the campus community for the last 12 years," she says. "We have provided improved access to information technology, informed and unpressured sales consultation, good products tested and chosen to best address the needs of UO users and ensure campus compatibility, and low prices backed by continuing high-

quality support and post-sale auxiliary services."

Changing external factors in the marketplace, Heerema explains, meant the self-supporting enterprise couldn't be maintained and forced University Computing officials to make a prudent business decision.

"Fortunately, campus buyers have many other options for purchasing personal computer hardware and software," she says.

Microcomputer Purchase Program staff will continue to sell in-stock items until closing at 5 p. m. Feb. 14. They are checking the status of outstanding orders and, for those expected to arrive by mid-February, they will contact customers when items arrive for pick up. They also will notify customers whose orders are not likely to ship anytime soon.

"If we have to cancel part or all of an order due to this transition, we will provide full refunds so our customers will not have to forfeit their deposits," Heerema says.

A clearance sale of all remaining merchandise will begin Monday, Feb. 3, in the program's showroom, 202 Computing Center. Everything will be sold first-come, first-served, Heerema says.

University Computing technicians, 6-4403, will continue to install, repair and upgrade microcomputer hardware. Microcomputer consultants, 6-4412, still will answer questions about using hardware, software and related technologies, including network connectivity.

"We appreciate the patronage that has been given us and the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the university," Heerema says.

For information, browse <http://mpp.uoregon.edu/> or call 6-4402.

Our People

In the spotlight

International trade law expert Ibrahim Gassama, Law, recently was part of an Eminent Persons Group that made a fact-finding trip to several Caribbean nations whose banana-based economies are being threatened by a U.S. challenge at the World Trade Organization.

Neill Archer Roan, Oregon Bach Festival executive director, delivered a two-day seminar on

"Learning Organizations and Learned Audiences" during the Association of Performing Arts Presenters annual conference Dec. 16-21 in New York. OBF Communications Director George Evano led a workshop on "Creating Marketing Illustrations" for the same event. His workshop coincided with the festival's acceptance of the International Society for Performing Arts' International Graphics award for its 1996 poster "Bach and the Americas," which edged out more than 100 entries from 11 countries. Illustrated by Marilee Heyer and featuring typography and layout by Oslund Design, Inc., of Eugene, the poster was printed by Koke Printing.

Zary Segall, Computer and Information Science, has been elected a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc., "for contributions in the fields of performance visualization and dependability evaluation of parallel and distributed systems."

John Baldwin, Planning, Public Policy and Management, has been named to The National Faculty which seeks to improve teaching quality in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. National Faculty scholars, who conduct educational programs for teachers, are experts in their fields, superb teachers and excellent researchers.

Helen Neville, Psychology, and her brain research were featured Jan. 22 on the PBS series, "Scientific American Frontiers" with Alan Alda.

On the move

Risa Palm, dean of Arts and Sciences since 1991, will leave her position at the end of this academic year after two terms heading the university's largest college. A member of the Geography faculty, she will pursue other interests. Provost John Moseley plans to make an interim appointment for 1997-98 and to confer with college leaders before launching a search this fall.

William Orr, Geological Sciences, has been given emeritus rank and title, effective June 16, for 30 years of distinguished service as a teacher and author of textbooks and, with his wife Elizabeth, of books for popular and academic audiences on Oregon paleontology and geology. He will continue part-time teaching and as curator of the Condon Collection of Fossils for three years.

Beth Swank, Career Center, has been promoted to assistant director with responsibility for increasing connections between careers and course work. A UO employee since 1990, Swank will continue her career counseling duties, teaching the "College to Career" class and supervising interns in the Career Development Internship Program. She is president of the Oregon Career Development Association.

OPEU Local President Sue Bettin, University Housing, is on a leave of absence through July 6. She will serve as an Oregon Public Employees Union field representative, working from the

Eugene field office and assigned to the university.

In Print

Chang-rae Lee, Creative Writing, wrote a moving essay about his mother for The New Yorker that was picked for "The Best American Essays 1996" (Houghton Mifflin).

Terry Hummer, Creative Writing, has a poem in the winter issue of the magazine DoubleTake.

Richard Bear, Admissions, has published an online edition of Edmund Spenser's "A View on the Present Condition of Ireland" at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/veue1.html>.

Cynthia Jones, Environmental Health and Safety, co-authored "Pollution Prevention Practices in Oregon's Electronics Industry" with Anna Harding of OSU Public Health in the Journal of Environmental Health, vol. 59, no. 6 (Jan./Feb. 1997).

In memoriam

Jean Muir Woods, German emerita, died Dec. 2 in Portland. A 25-year faculty member, Woods, 70, was department head from 1984 until she retired in 1990. A specialist in 16th-century, baroque and 18th-century literature, she graduated from Wellesley College and the University of Oregon. A memorial service was held Dec. 9 in Portland.

Go back to [Winter Term 1997 Issues](#).

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