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Two more genetic risk factors for Alzheimer's found

BY DIANA LUTZ

Individual cells can keep time but not regular rhythm, study says

A vermicell-like structure is called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) just above the roof of the mouth and near the crossing of the optic nerves, comprises about 20,000 neurons. These cells, remarkably, contain the machinery to generate daily, or circadian, rhythms in gene expression and electrical activity. But the individual cells are sloppy and must communicate with one another to establish a coherent 24-hour rhythm, Herzig said.

These features make the SCN a flexible clock that can reset to stay in sync in an ever-changing environment. The underlying sloppiness is probably what allows us to adjust to local time when we cross time zones and to vary our sleep cycles with the season, said the WUSTL researchers.

The research was published this month in the online Early Edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"We've known for more than 15 years that unicellular organisms like cyanobacteria can keep a 24-hour rhythm, Herzig said.

See Cell, Page 2

A pinch of prevention

Arts & Sciences graduate student Kelly Theim gets a seasonal flu shot from Stephanie Hults at the Habif Health & Wellness Center last week. Seasonal flu shots are available now to students at the Habif Center; H1N1 shots also will be distributed to students when the vaccine becomes available. Last week, WUSTL reported its first cases of influenza A in a small number of students. These students were presumed to have novel H1N1 influenza because it is the predominant flu virus circulating. Students have reported only mild to moderate illness and have been recuperating in self-isolation. Some already have recovered and returned to normal activities.

"I think that having a family in the building where the students live can be quite grounding for them," Harper said. "The fact that they live in an apartment with Koepnick's daughter in the Danforth House in William Greenleaf Elliott residential college, aiming to interact more informally with students outside the classroom is extremely important.

"I think this program provides a very unique opportunity to explore student-faculty relationships beyond the restrictions of the regular seminar room," Koepnick said. "I have been teaching at the University for 15 years both at the graduate and the undergraduate level. But over the years, I have come to realize that we often know only very little about what makes our undergraduates tick and how we can effectively address their needs.

"Very much hope that the program will provide us with the opportunity to bridge the gap between the academic and the residential, the world of the mind and the everyday," Koepnick said.
Center for violence prevention to be introduced during Brown School Convocation

**By Jessica Martin**

Breaking the cycle of violence in young families and youth transitioning to adulthood is the focus of the new Center for Violence and Intervention Prevention (CVIP) at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. Led by Melissa Jonson-Reid, Ph.D., associate professor at the Brown School, the center will provide research expertise on child maltreatment, intersecting partner violence, sexual violence and suicide.

Jonson-Reid will introduce the work of the center during the Brown School’s Convocation address, “Violence Free Lives for Children and Families — Advocating, Evidence and Training” at 3:30 p.m. Sept. 24 in Brown Hall Lounge.

“There are many researchers and agencies in the region doing excellent work related to these issues, but often in isolation,” Jonson-Reid said. “A center like this provides a launching ground for new initiatives. It provides the ability to translate the excitement of education for future practitioners across disciplines, training for existing practitioners and communication with policy makers.”

John Constans, M.D., the Blanche F. Itelson Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, serves as center co-director.

Current CVIP projects look at violence prevention in adolescent girls and within the veteran community, the agency of justice, and gay and lesbian youth. The group thought specialized SCN network interactions, and a third one, which was wrong.

To show that different kinds of neurons that make different circadian clocks, like your liver or your lung. The SCN is built differently, it can self-sustain — it can keep on ticking for a very long time, because the SCN is built differently, it can self-sustain — it can keep on ticking like a good Timex.”

Erik Herzog

She washed off the TTX and then added it again to see if the cells were exposed to the toxin, they would behave the same way.

“We found cells that changed their behavior,” she said. “In the first time they were isolated, or uncoupled, with TTX, they continued to oscillate, but the second time, they stopped oscillating. But we also saw the reverse; cells that were non-oscillatory becoming oscillatory.”

Paradoxically, the slowness of the clock is what makes it so precise.

The SCN is the master clock that synchronizes other biological clocks, like your liver or your lung. Those peripheral clocks can keep 24-hour rhythms in gene expression, and none was more dependable than the other.

The recordings showed that all the cells seemed to be able to keep a 24-hour rhythm — there are no special pacemaker cells — but they don’t seem to tell the same time. Neurons that make different circadian rhythms in gene expression, and none was more dependable than the other.

Sciences may be reprinted with appropriate credit to Washington University in St. Louis.

Washington University in St. Louis

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Executive Editor: Susan Wales McPherson
Assistant Editor: Tammy Ritterskamp

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Public service fair to feature more than 40 nonprofits

T he Gephart Institute for Public Service is sponsor of this year’s public service fair, which will take place from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Sept. 22, in the DuBartman Student Center Conference Room.

This even, open to students, faculty and staff, will feature more than 40 nonprofit organizations offering a variety of community service and internship opportunities.

Barack Obama has encouraged all Americans to dedicate themselves to community service,” said Amanda Moore McBride, Ph.D., institute director and assistant professor of social work at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act Obama signed into law includes commemoration of public service.

More than 1,000 WUSTL freshmen started the academic year giving back to their new community, volunteering to help clean and paint 12 St. Louis-area schools as part of the 11th annual event.

“President Barack Obama has encouraged all Americans to dedicate themselves to community service,” said Amanda Moore McBride, Ph.D., institute director and assistant professor of social work at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

The annual event began in 1999 with about 600 student volunteers helping to clean and beautify scenic trails. It has grown and flourished each year. Afterward, the volunteers return to campus.

Attendees will be eligible for a raffle drawing for gift certificates and other prizes. For more information, visit gephartinstitute.wustl.edu.

“The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act Obama signed into law includes commemoration of public service.”

Biasing the clock with different kinds of neurons in the SCN have not increased circadian rhythms in the brain and cerebrospinal fluid of Alzheimer’s patients.

The other gene, PICALM, appears to be involved in the breakdown of synapses, structures that allow neurons in the brain to communicate.

“SCN neurons did not have rigidly circadian rhythms in gene expression, and none was more dependable than the other.

PICALM elevates Alzheimer’s disease risk, levels of circadian rhythm tend to rise when brain tissue is injured or becomes inflamed, and some researchers have noted increased circadian rhythms in the brain and cerebrospinal fluid of Alzheimer’s patients.

The center also will be partnering with regional agencies to ensure ongoing translation from research to training and practice.

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Sleckman named Conon Professor

By Michael C. Purdy

Barry P. Sleckman, M.D., Ph.D., has been named the 20th director of the Conon Professor of Laboratory and Genomic Medicine.

Sleckman is the second faculty member to hold the Conon Professorship, which was endowed by Jack L. Ladd, O.D., the O. M. Carroll and Lillian B. Ladd Professor of Clinical Chemistry in Pathology and Immunology. Laddeson established the chair in part from funds earned through the development of blood tests to detect mycotic risk of cardiovascular disease in patients with diabetes, and School of Medicine researchers now say they know why.

They have found that diabetics deficient in vitamin D can't process cholesteryl normally, so it builds up in their blood vessels increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke. The new research has identified a mechanism linking low levels of vitamin D in heart disease risk and may lead to ways to fix the problem simply by increasing levels of vitamin D.

"Vitamin D inhibits the uptake of cholesteryl by cells called macrophages," said principal investigator Carlos Bernal-Mizrachi, M.D., assistant professor of medicine and of cell biology and physiology. "When people are deficient in vitamin D, the macrophages eat more cholesteryl, and they can't get rid of it. The macrophages are called foam cells, and become what scientists call foam cells, one of the earliest markers of atherosclerosis." Macrophages are dispatched by the immune system in response to inflammation and often are activated by diseases such as diabetes. Bernal-Mizrachi and his colleagues have says that in patients with inadequate vitamin D, macrophages become loaded with cholesteryl and eventually stiffness blood vessels and black blood flow.

Bernal-Mizrachi studied macrophages taken from people with and without diabetes and with and without vitamin D levels. In this team, led by research assistants Lisa Chen and Sherry Weng, M.D., exposed the cells to cholesteryl and to high and low vitamin D levels. The lower vitamin D levels were low in the culture dish, and macrophages from diabetic patients were much more likely to become foam cells. In the Aug. 25 issue of the journal Circulation, the team reports that vitamin D regulates signaling pathways linked both to uptake and to clearance of cholesteryl in macrophages.

"Cholesteryl is transported through the blood attached to lipoproteins such as LDL, the "bad cholesteryl," Bernal-Mizrachi said. The cells can be killed by oxygen radicals in the vessel wall, LDL or macrophages eat it uncontrollably. LDL cholesteryl then clogs the macrophages, and that's how atherosclerosis begins."

That process accelerates when a person is deficient in vitamin D, and people with type 2 diabetes are very likely to have this deficiency. About 1 billion people have insufficient vitamin D levels. Women with type 2 diabetes are about a third more likely to have low vitamin D than women who do not have diabetes. When human macrophages are placed in an environment with plenty of cholesteryl, their uptake of cholesteryl is suppressed, and they don't become foam cells. Bernal-Mizrachi said it may be possible to slow or reverse the development of atherosclerosis in people with diabetes by helping them regain adequate vitamin D levels.

He is studying diabetics who are both deficient in vitamin D and have high blood pressure to learn more about how vitamin D will lower blood pressure and improve blood flow. For this study, Bernal-Mizrachi is recruiting patients with type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. "They may not be taking insulin to control their blood pressure," he said.

For more information, contact nepetey@DOM.wustl.edu or call 362-0994.

Second cycle of grants supports patient research

By Gwen Ericson

Twenty-four research groups have received funding through grants from a $5 million Research Funding Program offered by the Washington University School of Medicine and the Siteman Cancer Center. The grants were awarded to support a wide range of research and clinical work.

"While we support research that moves ideas from bench to bedside, we also seek projects that will improve the quality of life for our patients," said Frank J. Bruno, M.D., professor of medicine (cardiovascular diseases). "We are encouraged by the diversity and excellence of the proposals we received."

Purdue took part in a panel discussion Sept. 3 on women's careers in medicine. The panel also featured Judith Lieu, M.D., assistant professor of osteopathology; and of women's careers in medicine. The panel also featured Judith Lieu, M.D., assistant professor of osteopathology; and

The 20th cycle of grants was awarded to 12 groups. The grants, ranging from $40,000 to $250,000, will support projects in basic research, clinical research and training, and community health.

• Research network for studies of children with unilateral hearing loss, Judith L. Lane, M.D., assistant professor of otorhinolaryngology
• Causes of fever in children 2-36 months of age, Gregory Bernal-Mizrachi, M.D., the Ruth L. Shuman Professor of Pediatrics
• Cellular immunity of hepatitis C virus and generation of epitope diagnosis, Michael Diamond, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of medicine (infectious diseases)
• Human and mouse linked research core facility, Matthew Ellis, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine (oncology)
• Human and mouse linked research core facility, for administrative claims data, Victoria Fraser, M.D., the J. William Campbell Professor of Medicine (infectious diseases)
• Community care for croup, Jane Garbutt, M.B.Ch.B., research associate professor of medicine (general internal medicine)
• Dissemination and implementation research core, Enele Proctor, Ph.D. (the Frank J. Bruno Professor of Social Work Research)
• Neuropathology of chronic, manganese exposure, Brad Racette, M.D., professor of neurology
• Characterization of CD14+ stem cells following AMD1070 mobilization, Michael Berridge, Ph.D., research assistant professor of medicine (oncology)
• The role of neurexin-1 mutations in autism spectrum disorders, Michael Tomasson, M.D., associate professor of medicine (neurology)
• Staging kidney transplant education to increase donation rates, Amy Waterman, Ph.D., assistant professor of medical education (general medical sciences)
• Venous disease in diabetes, Michael Tomasson, M.D., associate professor of medicine (neurology)
• Osteomyelitis in diabetic foot infections: Impact of bone biomarker changes on outcome, Michael Berridge, M.D., associate professor of medicine (infectious diseases)
• Surfactant in bone marrow failure, Monica Besal, M.D., instructor in medicine (neurology)
• Directional difficulty as a wind path into the window of pathology, Anne Cross, M.D., professor of neurology
• Role of accomodator control in Parkinson's disease, Naomi Ebert, M.D., assistant professor of otorhinolaryngology

The National Institutes of Health, the Edward Mallinckrodt Professor and Chair of Pathology and Immunology.

"Quite simply, he is a fantastic leader with vision and his colleagues and of cell biology and physiology. "When people are deficient in vitamin D, the macrophages eat more cholesteryl, and they can't get rid of it. The macrophages are called foam cells, and become what scientists call foam cells, one of the earliest markers of atherosclerosis." Macrophages are dispatched by the immune system in response to inflammation and often are activated by diseases such as diabetes. Bernal-Mizrachi and his colleagues have says that in patients with inadequate vitamin D, macrophages become loaded with cholesteryl and eventually stiffness blood vessels and black blood flow.

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Dorfman returns to WUSTL and takes dance theater ‘underground’

By Liam Otten

Does what you make do a difference? When can activism become terrorism, or vice versa?

Such provocative questions lie at the heart of “underground,” a ambitious, energetic, multimedia dance piece by acclaimed choreographer David Dorfman.

Dorfman’s new work combines three elements: a commissioned score featuring actor Zachary Quinto, and photo and video footage, photo collages and projected text.

Meanwhile, the soundtrack combines a commissioned score by Bestselling Award winner Jonathan Berger with songs by the groups M83 and Broken Social Scene.

“Underground,” a work in progress, was developed over a number of years in New York City and throughout North and South America, Europe and Asia. Among Dorfman’s numerous awards and recognition, Dorfman received a 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award from Olin Business School; the 2007 Martha Hill Fund for choreographers; and a 2005 Guggenheim Foundation fellowship.

Exhibits


“Listeria Monocytogenes Crossing of Host Phenotype.” Thomas N. Wright, dir., Center for the Study of Biological Systems. For more information, call 362-6950.

“Morphogen.” Scott Barolo, cell & Developmental Biology. Bldg., Rm. 311. 935-5495.


University Events

The Artist’s Book • Utopia Chaos • Overpopulation

Braff rescheduled

The Assembly Series program featuring sculptor Zach Braff has been rescheduled for 7 p.m., Nov. 12, in Graham Chapel. As always, visit assemblies.wustl.edu for last-minute changes to the schedule.

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Amidst the cultural and political turbulence of the 1960s, avant-garde artists and architects embraced new and experimental ideas that combined technological and social models as well as the potentials of emerging technologies to challenge the rigidities in urban design, developing projects that were at once complex and conceptually serious. Begun Friday, Sept. 18, the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum will present "Metabolic City," an exhibition surveying work by the British collective Archigram (which members include Bill Outlish, Tom Traylor, and Peter Cook) and the Japanese Metabolist architects (whose members include Kenzaburo Kurokawa, Masaya Nakamura, and Kiyonori Kikutake). The exhibition forms the basis for social interaction, and expresses the individual liberty that is only now entering mainstream practice.

"Metabolic City" explores visionary architecture of the 1960s

The Living Learning Center at Tyson Research Center has designed to meet the environmental requirements for becoming one of the greatest buildings in North America. It will feature approximately 70 drawings, plus models and conceptual projects, including rarely seen drawings from private archives and a selection of works by the museum's predecessors. The museum's exhibition explores theoretical and conceptual overlaps between these groups and their work. It is designed to be a living organism of its own, and forms the basis for social interaction at the museum. At the same time, they articulated their views in explicitly political terms, each pioneered articulating their views in explicitly political terms.

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Women’s golf wins 22-team invitational

Women’s golf team shot a school-record 346 to capture the 2009 Warburg Fall Invitational Sept. 13 in Waterloo, Iowa. In just its second season as a varsity sport, the team opened eyes last weekend as the Bears knocked off two teams ranked in the preseason top 20 poll. After shooting a 325 in the first day, the Bears fired a 306 for a two-day total of 631. Freshman Hannah Buck continued her consistent play by making a splash on the national scene in only its second season as a varsity program.

“Laskey Landscape” Roberto Jaime Deseda (left), a student in the Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design, chats with Leslie J. Laskey, professor emeritus of architecture, while two students relax in the “Laskey Landscape,” a large construction made of wood and metal located in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts’ Olin Foundation Central Courtyard. Combining modern joinery techniques with attention to human ergonomics, the piece was designed and built by Deseda and fellow graduate student Justin Beadle to promote interaction between Sam Fox School students. Construction, which took place over the summer, was funded by the Laskey Award, an annual $5,000 grant presented by Studio L, an at-large group of Laskey’s former students, friends, colleagues and patrons, in conjunction with the architecture school.

Sports

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WUSTL continues its fall season on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 19 and 20, at the Illinois Wesleyan University Fall Classic in Normal, Ill.

Men’s soccer remains unbeaten

The men’s soccer team posted a 1-0-1 week with a 2-1 win at Webster University Sept. 10 and a 1-1 draw with Rhodes College Sept. 11.

Sophomore Michael Chamberlin scored WUSTL’s only goal with just over four minutes to play against the Yeomen. Bear No. 2s1-1 victory

Against Rhodes, the Bears trailed 1-0 for most of the game before junior John Duncan re-established WUSTL’s lead on the first day of action against the Yeomen. The Bears fired a total of 340 yards of offensive in the game.

WUSTL (3-1-1) is back in action at 1 p.m. Sept. 21 at Webster in the third round of the Missouri Intercollegiate Soccer Conference. They will host Central Missouri at 2 p.m. Sept. 21.

Cross country teams win at Maryville

The men’s and women’s cross country teams each finished in first place at the Maryville Classic Sept. 12 in St. Louis.

The WUSTL women posted a perfect team score of 15 points as the Bears captured the top six spots in the race and landed eight runners in the top 10 in the standings. Both teams return to action Sept. 20 for the Southern Illinois University Saluki Invitational in Carbondale, Ill.

Community

Women’s Club offers ‘Meet the Leaders’ series

By Jessica Dauenhauer

Learn more about specific issues faced by women at Washington University, St. Louis and around the world at the “Meet the Leaders” panel discussion series, sponsored by the Women’s Club of Washington University.

The programs give the public an opportunity to meet and hear from community and University leaders who will feature short presentations by speakers followed by opportunities for questions and discussion.

Each session will be held from 8:30 a.m. at the Knight Center Room 211 (unless otherwise indicated) by Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program in Arts & Sciences.

Tickets are $20 per person or $55 per person for all three sessions.

The Women’s Club, founded in 1910 by faculty wives, offers its members opportunities to form friendships and grow intellectually through luncheons, lectures, courses and programs. The club also funds several WUSTL students.

For more information about the “Meet the Leaders” series or to register, e-mail Susan Colangelo at socol113@gmail.com or visit wustl.edu/womans.

Off-campus safety seminar Sept. 17

Quadrangle Housing will host its annual Neighborhood Safety Seminar at 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17, at the Regional Arts Commission building located at 30 Delmar Blvd., across from the Pageant Theater.

Members of the Washington University Police Department, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department and the University City Police Department will discuss and answer questions regarding safety and security measures for those living in off-campus neighborhoods. Topics to be covered include personal safety measures, vehicle safety and home protection.

This event is free of charge and open to members of the WUSTL community and area residents.

For more information, contact WUSTL Police Sergeant Mark Glenn at 314-935-5084 or mark.glen@ wustl.edu.

“Students” see first-hand that we are humans and have human needs just like the other adults in their lives.

Jana Harper

Koopnick and Harper have numerous programs planned for students at their residential college this year. The first, “Surviving College I,” is a program of practical tips for first-year students on communicating effectively with faculty members. It will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 20, in Danforth Student House.

In collaboration with the Office of Campus Life, they’re also starting the Danforth Photo Project, another opportunity for Danforth residents to document their transition into the University community.

The couple plans biweekly dinners in their apartment with WUSTL students. They also are working with the faculty associates of Danforth to plan a series of film discussions, a raffle trip on the riverboat, and a panel discussion on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall organized by Koepnick.

“Teaching and researching, Koepnick hopes the family’s presence is educational for students. The Koepnicks hope that the students will glean from our presence here in fact that the world is a beautiful place and it is important that Koepnick highlighted his desire to show that we take the lives of our students as seriously as our minds,” he said.

WUSTL student organizations offer opportunities to build community and friendships and grow intellectually through luncheons, lectures, courses and programs. The club also funds several WUSTL students.

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Cowsik receives award for work in cosmic ray physics

By SUSAN KILENBERG McGANN

R

Bramantie Cowsik, Ph.D., professor of physics and director of the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences, recently received the O’Ceallaigh Medal for his "outstanding contributions to cosmic ray physics.

He received the award during a ceremony held July 7-13 in Lodi, Poland. The International Union of Pure and Applied Physics’ Cosmic Ray Commission and the Institute of High Energy Physics’ Advanced Studies sponsored the award, which is named for Cormac O’Ceallaigh, a physicist from the Dublin Institute who made many seminal contributions in the field of cosmic rays. He was considered one of the most distinguished physicists from Ireland.

In 1999, Cowsik was awarded the O’Ceallaigh Medal recognizes significant contributions to the field of cosmic ray physics over an extended career. Cognitive scientific contributions span over four decades. Before he moved to India, he taught and did research for more than four years at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai, India. While at the institute, he served as director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) for 11 years prior to joining WUSTL's physics faculty in 2002 as a professor.

Considered one of the world’s preeminent astrophysicists, he has made the same number of major contributions to cosmic ray astrophysics. "For many who measure the elemental and isotopic composition of cosmic rays, it is a source of great excitement to see how the universe, and the cosmic ray transport, in the galaxy, ramp's enduring mystery is the formulation of the 'leaky box' model," said Martin J. Israel, Ph.D., professor of physics and a fellow in the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences.

"Although that model was first put forward in Physical Review 42 years ago, it remains the basis for substantial work today," Israel added.

Considered the father of astroparticle physics, Cowsik has made several seminal and continuing contributions to neutrino physics, geography, and almost every aspect of high-energy physics. He has contributed to the understanding of particle physics, cosmology and gamma-ray astrophysics. While at the IAS for 11 years, he was instrumental in building the world's highest ground-based observatory in Haunde, Ladakh, in the Himalayas.

"He served as director of the alumni annual fund nearly 10 years ago, it remains the basis for substantial work today," Israel added. Cowsik majored in history and mathematics at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and earned his Ph.D. in physics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1975.

Cowsik received numerous awards and fellowships, including the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with these people," said Bill Carrig, Ph.D., associate vice chancellor for students and dean of Campus Life. "They are such competent professionals. With other Campus Life staff, we will work to shape the future direction of how we work with students in their co-curricular activities." Carrig added.

Cowsik has been a professor of psychology and information management and technology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis for 11 years and served as the director of the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences. He has worked closely with Hayes Garcia, a fellow in the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences.

"They are such competent professionals. With other Campus Life staff, we will work to shape the future direction of how we work with students in their co-curricular activities." Carrig added.

Cowsik has also received the O’Ceallaigh Medal from the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics’ Cosmic Ray Commission and the Institute of High Energy Physics’ Advanced Studies.

"They are such competent professionals. With other Campus Life staff, we will work to shape the future direction of how we work with students in their co-curricular activities." Carrig added.
Kreuter brings health information to key communities

I think historically we’ve been health and medical professionals haven’t done a good job of that," says Kreuter. "What we need to do is make health information and healthy living as easy for people as possible — easy to understand and easy to act upon.

The current direction of the HCRL is to use technology to connect people to existing programs and services that can help them.

Kreuter and his team built computer kiosks designed to deliver breast cancer information and put them in beauty salons, laundromats, health centers, churches, social service agencies and public libraries. "Having the kiosks in these locations was the best access to women who needed this information the most," he says.

We’ve had success with the kiosks in the last five years, and we are constantly striving to improve them," says Kreuter. "The newest version of the kiosks will have telephones connected to cell phone technology. When a woman using the kiosk indicates that she has never had a mammogram or that she hasn’t had one in the last two years, the phone will ring, and on the other end will be a person from a local health center that provides mammograms who can schedule an appointment for her and come and pick her up if necessary."

Another expanding project in the HCRL’s work with African-American newspapers across the country to help them integrate more cancer coverage into their newspapers. African-Americans have higher rates of cancer and cancer death than other populations.

"It was important to find a way to get information to this population, and black newspapers provided a way to do that," says Kreuter. "The HCRL created a news service that provides cancer stories to these newspapers. Each story is specific to each newspaper’s community."

“We found in the first five years of this project was that offering this news service significantly increased cancer coverage in these black newspapers, and that readers of those papers made some changes as a result of it,” says Kreuter.

In a second phase of the project, the HCRL is partnering with the American Cancer Society (ACS) to make the cancer stories even more localized. Local staff members at ACS offices around the country will gather local pictures, quotes and facts for the news service to further customize each story for their community.

Culture shift

The HCRL’s Center for Cultural Cancer Communication is one of only five centers of excellence in cancer communication research nationally, as designated by the National Cancer Institute.

“I think there is an increasing awareness among people in health and medical fields that we need to do a better job of communicating with those we serve,” says Kreuter.

“There is a growing demand for tools and approaches and resources that can help us do a better job in interacting with the public and with health initiatives," he says.

Kreuter, who holds a second appointment with the School of Medicine, notes that this shift among health professionals is welcome.

“There are still a lot of folks who think of cancer prevention and education as the pamphlet rack outside their waiting room,” he says. "They don’t think of communications as innovative or scientific or able to change how people think and act — but it can do all of those things.”

Closing full circle

Kreuter always has worked in communications; he currently serves on the faculty of Saint Louis University before joining the Brown School in 2008.

"When I was 22, I certainly did not think I would have a social impact and that I didn’t quite know how to do that,” he says.

Kreuter found his direction while studying health behavior and education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

I was no longer promoting sports teams or university research; instead, I learned how to use the same tools to encourage healthy behaviors and social action," he says. "I’ve had a real love of the field since I entered it.”

Academia called, and Kreuter served on the faculty of Saint Louis University before joining the Brown School in 2008.

"When I was 22, I certainly did not think I would be back here, and certainly not in this capacity," he laughs.

Rather than focusing on athletics, Kreuter now is an integral part of the University’s public health initiatives. He currently serves on the Faculty Advisory Council for the University’s new Institute for Public Health.

“Being a part of public health at the University has been very exciting, and I think the most impressive part of it to me, has been the insistence of University leadership that public health be a campus-wide effort across disciplines," Kreuter says. "One of the things that really appeals to me about the University’s approach is that we’re really viewing public health as not just a series of traditional public health disciplines but rather a series of problems that require many disciplines to address them effectively; he says. "It’s a unique approach nationally, and it’s going to prove to be a very effective approach.”

Since joining the Brown School, Kreuter also has played a lead role in the development of the school’s new master of public health degree.

"With his emphasis on impacting vulnerable populations and communities, Matt’s work truly exemplifies the intersection of public health and social work," says Edward F. Lawlor, Ph.D., dean and the William E. Gorton Distinguished Professor. "He has helped us create a public-health curriculum that exposes students to perspectives from a wide range of disciplines, including communications," Lawlor says.

Outside the ‘U’

In his spare time, Kreuter enjoys the outdoors with his family, working in the yard, and hiking in Montana.

“I’ve retained my love of sports since leaving the sports information office, but I’m happy to leave the bus rides behind,” he jokes.

Matthew W. Kreuter, Ph.D., professor at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, talks with Jennifer Morgan, assistant in the Health Communication Research Laboratory and student in public health. "With his emphasis on impacting vulnerable populations and communities, Matt’s work truly exemplifies the intersection of public health and social work," says Edward F. Lawlor, Ph.D., dean and the William E. Gorton Distinguished Professor.