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New biology track prepares students for ecology, conservation work

Students with a passion for the environment and preserving the diversity of life can now follow a course of study at BGSU tailored to their interests. The biological sciences department last fall added a specialization in ecology and conservation (ECB) that will prepare graduates for the growing number of jobs requiring knowledge in both areas.

The curriculum provides a strong foundation in basic biology, genetics, ecology, evolution and conservation biology, with the addition of focused coursework in biodiversity, organismal biology, statistics and geographic information systems (GIS).

The curriculum gives a “unifying foundation that cuts across all organisms, habitats, environments and scales,” and provides a customized path and the proper sequence of classes, said ECB advisor Dr. Karen Root, biology.

“This is really timely,” said biologist Dr. Helen Michaels, lead designer of the program. “There’s a great deal of public support now for conservation and dealing with the environment’s problems. People realize that dealing with problems now will help put us ahead of the curve.”

“The nature of jobs has changed,” Root added. “There’s a call for this sort of expertise, and entry-level jobs are available with a bachelor’s degree. You’re a lot more competitive having that specialization right on your diploma.” She pointed out that locally, the Environmental Protection Agency is doing targeted hiring, the Great Lakes Initiative sponsored by Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo) has provided resources for protecting water quality, and the Toledo Metroparks has changed its focus to large-scale land acquisition to preserve and manage wild spaces. Jobs exist in the private sector, at the federal level, in consulting and with the U.S. Geological Survey as well.

Students who enroll in the ECB specialization tend to be aware of environmental problems and are motivated to help. “There’s a caring and a passion there,” Michaels said, to which Root added, “They’re concerned that nothing’s happening and they want to know what they can do.”

There are currently 12 students in the ECB track, including Rebecca Safron, a senior from North Ridgeville who exemplifies the attitude described by Michaels. “I like to do fieldwork in conservation and restoration of natural spaces and native species,” she said. “We have the ability to make wise and long-term choices to positively or negatively affect the environment. I believe we need to use our knowledge to protect what is most vulnerable.”

An emphasis of the new program is providing field experiences, independent research and internships for students to give them hands-on training in the skills they will need. Safron has had multiple experiences, ranging from assessing areas identified for planned burning in the West to monitoring a major green-turtle nesting site in Costa Rica to tracking diamondback terrapins in brackish-water estuaries in New Jersey.

Michaels and Root are also developing service-learning opportunities for students in such areas as restoration ecology so they may become involved in local issues. “The more we can connect with them, the better scientists they’ll be, and certainly they will be better citizens,” Root said.

The ECB track relates well to the environmental science program in the School of Earth, Environment and Society, say the two biologists. In fact, some students may choose to have an environmental science minor, or vice versa. One of Root’s jobs as advisor is to help students select which is best for them. “There’s a nice synergy there,” she said.

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The biology department has about eight tracks that comprise various aspects of the discipline. A basic course for all biology freshmen, Biology Today, features biology faculty in all the specializations talking about what they do, and is aimed at helping students see the possibilities. "The class is a very eye-opening experience. Biology is much more than only pre-med," Michaels said.

The ECB specialization enables those like Safron, who are ardent supporters of wildlife and natural habitat and keenly aware of the interconnectedness of human, plant and animal life, to prepare for meaningful work.

"It's important that people understand how their actions are affecting that which is around them," Safron said. "We are not exempt from the ecological and biological cycles. I think it would be such a boring world if species disappear and we go outside and never hear the peeping frogs or the singing birds. Some people are willing to live with those consequences—I'm not."

Alan Lord to assist Romanians as Fulbright Scholar

A dean at the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest wants his college to be the first in Eastern Europe to adopt a global model curriculum for information systems auditing and control.

Early next year, the principal author of the curriculum document, Dr. Alan Lord, the Ernst & Young Professor of Accounting at BGSU, will be in the Romanian capital to help make it happen.

Lord, who is also the director of Bowling Green's master of accountancy program, will spend about five months in Romania as a Fulbright Scholar. While there, from mid-January to mid-June, he expects to teach research techniques to doctoral students and international financial accounting issues to both graduate and undergraduate students, in addition to his work on curriculum development.

"Despite the globally expanding usage of information technology systems in business, there is a dearth of educational programs to train future professionals in how to govern, monitor, secure and audit information systems," Lord wrote in his project statement for the Fulbright award.

For four years, he was international academic relations chair for the Information Systems Auditing and Control Association (ISACA), which in 2004 published the model curriculum developed by the task force he chaired. BGSU was among the first institutions to adopt the curriculum and, of the 13 that have done so worldwide, remains the only one with both graduate and undergraduate programs in compliance, Lord said.

Faculty in the College of Accounting and Management Information Systems (MIS) at the Bucharest academy have been working on a series of courses that will contain the material for a program that meets the ISACA standards. Dean Pavel Nastase "wants to have a program in alignment with this model curriculum," which integrates traditionally separate accounting and MIS programs, Lord explained.

BGSU's Department of Accounting and MIS "is one of the world leaders in information systems auditing and control education," he said. Controls and auditing, along with security, are the components in the blended equation that, applied to business information systems, is designed to keep hackers out and files safe, Lord noted. "The demand for people in this area is phenomenally greater than the supply," he said.

He said Nastase wasn't aware of BGSU's prominence in the field when they first met in Bucharest several years ago. By November 2006, however, when the dean heard his American counterpart present a paper in Istanbul, Turkey, an ISACA chapter had opened in Romania

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and Nastase knew about Bowling Green's standing, Lord said.

The Romanian subsequently asked Lord to speak at the AMIS 2007 conference—he'll be a keynote speaker again this summer for AMIS 2008—and at the conference, invited him to spend some time at the academy. That, Lord said, was when he started thinking about the Fulbright Program, which, through its U.S. Scholar Program, sends about 1,100 Americans to more than 130 countries annually to teach and/or conduct research.

Lord will be doing both at the academy, which, with about 35,000 students, is the biggest business school in Romania, he said. Two of its graduates, he pointed out, have come to BGSU as master of accountancy students.

On the teaching end, he's likely to lecture, for instance, on a movement in accounting to get everyone in the world to follow the same financial accounting standards. In the United States, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles have been around for years, Lord said, while International Financial Reporting Standards have been used in about 100 other countries for the last decade. With stocks now trading globally, though, an effort is under way to harmonize the systems, he said.

He would also like to help younger Romanian academics with research. The English language couldn't be taught in grade schools there until the 1989 revolution deposed Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Lord said. As a result, senior faculty members generally don't speak English or read English-language literature, where their younger, English-speaking colleagues are interested in publishing their work. "I want to go and teach research techniques in the doctoral programs and try to help them get published in the Western literature," he explained, adding that if he can aid even a few students, it might filter down to others.

The program giving him the opportunity was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. Sponsored by the U.S. State Department, it is aimed at increasing mutual understanding between Americans and people in other countries.

BGSU doctoral student gets Fulbright to study Korean performing art

J.L. Murdoch was introduced to Talchum when she was teaching at an international school in Seoul about 10 years ago, but she didn't really know what it was.

The Ph.D. student at BGSU still has seen only pictures of the form of Korean folk theatre, but that will finally be changing. She will spend at least part of the 2008-09 academic year in South Korea studying Talchum for her doctoral dissertation, supported by a Fulbright Fellowship for Research.

While Murdoch is the fifth BGSU student to receive a Fulbright award, hers is the first fully funded research grant from the organization to a Bowling Green student, said Diane Regan, Fulbright program advisor in the Center for International Programs.

The subject of Murdoch's research is a form of drama that uses music, masks, dancing and stock characters, she said. She has seen extremely limited scholarly writing in English about Talchum—a void she hopes to fill eventually—but has read on Web sites that it serves as a kind of community therapy, with audiences invited on stage to participate. And the Bowling Green resident is interested in the use of theatre as therapy and for building community, which is also a factor that brought her back to BGSU and its doctoral program in theatre.

She earned a master's degree in teaching theatre from the University in 2006, then taught it to middle school and high school students in San Diego for one year. However, she said, "my preference is definitely the university classroom," so she went looking for a place to pursue her Ph.D.

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Murdoch said she considered theatre departments more focused on Asian theatre—at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, for instance—but decided she didn't want to be strictly an Asian theatre scholar and found BGSU's Department of Theatre and Film to be "more flexible" in its approach.

The word talchum means a form of play or dance (chum) performed while wearing masks (tal). Because one's identity is concealed behind a mask, it is also a way of releasing pent-up frustrations, so the dramas developed as entertainment expressing the thoughts of the general populace.

Murdoch was given some masks when she lived in South Korea and learned what they signify but didn't study Talchum until a couple years ago. At that time, her assignment for a final project in a BGSU graduate theatre class, to find an Asian tradition, led her to the Web and stoked her interest.

Based in Seoul but traveling throughout the country, she will be in South Korea either from August through next May or from January-October 2009. August-May is the normal 10-month schedule for Fulbright programs, but she has requested the January-October time frame because that's when the festivals that feature Talchum are held.

Murdoch is also in line for a grant to study the Korean language as part of the federal government's National Security Language Initiative. She will receive support to learn Korean—among the critical languages identified by the State Department, which sponsors the Fulbright program—before beginning her research in South Korea, Regan said.

Calling student Fulbright recipients "junior diplomats," Regan added that the State Department is supporting Murdoch's research because it believes her work can be beneficial in the spirit of the Fulbright program. Established in 1946 under legislation sponsored by Sen. J. William Fulbright, the program aims to increase mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries through cultural exchanges.

Murdoch also holds a master's degree in theatre from Regent University in Virginia Beach, as well as a bachelor's degree in theology and secondary English education from Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, Pa.

Lu in Stockholm by invitation of Nobel committee

Very few people can expect to receive an invitation to address a Nobel symposium, but for Ohio Eminent Scholar Dr. Peter Lu, the call has come twice. Lu was asked to address a Nobel Symposium on Single Molecule Spectroscopy in Chemistry, Physics and Biology in Stockholm, and is there this week. In 1999, he was invited to present at the Nobel Conference on Spectroscopy of Single Molecules in Physics, Chemistry and Life Science.

"The speaker list contains some of the top scientists in the world. It's gratifying to see Peter's name listed among them!" said Dr. Michael Ogawa, chair of the chemistry department. Participants are coming from U.S. and international research institutes and universities including Stanford, Columbia, Harvard, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Max Planck institute for Biophysical Chemistry.

Lu, who joined the photochemical sciences department in 2006, is well known in the scientific community for his pioneering work analyzing the interaction of single molecules with enzymes and proteins. These complex interactions are important to metabolism, and understanding them will allow scientists to better address biological problems.

"We are so pleased to have recruited Dr. Lu to BGSU," noted Dr. Donald Nieman, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "He is internationally recognized for his research and is a wonderful collaborator who has already made substantial contributions to the Center for Photochemical Sciences—a true center of excellence at BGSU."

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Learn about Campus Solutions at June BG@100 Open Forum

The June BG@100 Open Forum will feature an Introduction to the BG@100 Campus Solutions Academic Structure. The forum will be held at 1:30 p.m. Thursday (June 5) in 315 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Academic Structure is the foundation of the PeopleSoft Campus Solutions modules and their functions. It encompasses the institution's colleges, schools, academic departments, programs and subject areas. Academic Structure serves as the basis for the course catalog and schedule, grading scheme and all related tables that must be created prior to implementation.

In their presentation, BG@100 project team members will explain the primary components of BGSU's Academic Structure and their relationship, and compare them to the current Student Information System (SIS) components.

All faculty, staff and students are invited. Project team members will also answer questions regarding BG@100 and the phase-in of Campus Solutions beginning in August.

Fourth annual Office of the CIO golf outing slated

The Office of the CIO extends an invitation to participate in its fourth annual golf outing on Friday, July 25, at the Stone Ridge Golf Club.

Registration includes lunch, 18 holes of golf, complimentary range balls prior to the round, two drink tickets, and appetizers following the competition. A 50/50 drawing will be held and prizes awarded. Teams of four will compete in a best-ball scramble format.

Further details and registration information are available at: www.bgsu.edu/offices/cio/golf. The registration deadline is July 11. Register early to reserve a spot for your team.

CALENDAR

Monday, June 2

First Six-Week Term Begins.
Sundaes on Mondays, free ice cream, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Falcon's Nest, Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Tuesday, June 3

Dissertation Defense, "Family Webs: The Impact of Women's Genealogy Research on Family Communication," by Amy Smith, School of Communication Studies, 1 p.m., 310 West Hall.

Wednesday, June 4

E-Portfolio Workshop, with Dr. Milt Hakel, 207 Olscamp Hall. To attend, email Camille Consolvo at cconsol@bgsu.edu.

Thursday, June 5

Administrative Staff Council, with guest CFO Sheri Stoll, 1:30-3 p.m., 207 Union.

Friday, June 6

Board of Trustees, special meeting regarding transitional leadership, 10 a.m., 311 Union.

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FACULTY

Family and Consumer Sciences. Instructor (Apparel Merchandising and Product Development). Call Deb Wooldridge, 2-7851. Deadline: June 9.

Music Composition and Theory. Instructor. Call Marilyn Shrude, 2-8508. Deadline: June 12.

Music Performance. Instructor. Call Bill Mathis, 2-8576. Deadline: June 13.

Philosophy. Instructor. Call the department, 2-2117. Deadline: June 16.

Public and Allied Health. Associate/Full Professor. Call Robert Harr, 2-2833. Deadline: Aug. 1.

Labor Postings

<http://international.bgsu.edu/index.php?x=facinfohires>

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions.

Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY

Elton Ringer, 85, died May 19 in Bowling Green. A professor emeritus and former associate vice president for planning and budgeting, he also served as controller, business manager, and associate vice president for operations and for resource planning over the course of his 42-year University career, from 1945-87. He taught accounting, management, business and sociology.