1. Dean Speak
Preparing the next generation of scholars

2. Inside the College
Fieldwork takes students to Latin America; Former professor inspires “body farms” around country; Art history students team with Nelson-Atkins; Physics researchers help explain mass extinctions

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College degrees prepare graduates to work across the globe

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What’s happening in the more than 50 departments and programs in the College

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From cancer research to quilting, molecular biosciences chairwoman is making her mark

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Alumnus establishes professorship aimed at improving health care

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Recent graduate uses liberal arts skills to fight violence
An exciting feature of being at an institution like the University of Kansas as a faculty member or student is that both teaching and research are valued highly. In addition to providing outstanding classroom teaching, the faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are actively engaged in research, scholarship and creative activities in a variety of disciplines. Indeed, the College faculty is busy collecting knowledge and creating art that makes its way into the textbooks, journals and public forums available to those inside and outside KU.

Graduate students are central to the teaching and research missions of the College. We currently have 1,945 students in 38 Ph.D. programs and 42 Master’s programs that are offered by our 52 academic departments and programs. The graduate students make tremendous contributions to KU as they prepare for careers in the academy and other walks of life. These students conduct research and engage in creative activities both as independent scholars and in collaboration with faculty members. They teach undergraduate students and make contributions to their learning experiences. They also serve on many departmental and institutional committees, providing valuable insight concerning the operation and general welfare of KU.

Enhancing graduate education in the College is a major goal of the College’s comprehensive strategic plan that was completed this past summer. We want to strengthen our programs wherever possible and create new academic opportunities for graduate students. We want to redouble our recruitment efforts to ensure that we continue to attract the very best students to KU. We want to increase the number of graduate students in the College and provide better support in the form of improved assistantship stipends and more fellowship opportunities.

In the end, I believe that strengthening our graduate programs will have a significant impact on the College and KU. Our undergraduates will benefit, our faculty will benefit and society in general will benefit from the outstanding graduate students who leave our program and make their impact on the world.

Joseph E. Steinmetz
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
GRANTS FUND
GRADUATE FIELDWORK IN LATIN AMERICA

BY ROBERT GORDY

For many KU students, summer break meant sleeping in, lounging by the pool and pushing away thoughts of the upcoming semester. One group of College graduate students, however, spent their vacation in quite a different manner: by living and researching in Latin America.

Ten students performed fieldwork in countries including Brazil, Venezuela, Guatemala and Costa Rica. Although the students represent an assortment of College disciplines, all share a common interest in Latin America and understand the region’s importance to the United States and the world.

“They’re really cross-disciplinary,” says Judy Farmer, the Center’s director of graduate admissions.

Farmer emphasizes the diversity of topics pursued abroad—from financial compensation for women’s housework to evolutionary biology and ecology. The trips ranged in length from two weeks to several months, and were made possible with the help of grants provided by the College, Robert Oppenheimer Fund and other supporters.

The quality of the summer fieldwork demonstrates the value of the Center for Latin American Studies, a program which has striven for excellence since its founding in 1959. Interdisciplinary programs in Latin American studies are available to both undergraduate and graduate students, and recognized academics provide teaching, mentoring and community programming on topics relevant to Kansans.

With an increasing number of students studying and performing fieldwork in the area, “we hope to be more viable when applying in the future for outside funding,” says Farmer. As an integral part of the University and a leader in Latin American studies, the Center will no doubt continue to excel for years to come.

ROBERT GORDY IS AN OMAHA, NEB., JUNIOR MAJORING IN HISTORY AND FRENCH
For many people, stumbling upon a decomposing body in the middle of a forest might be alarming, even nauseating. Not for the team of researchers who work at the “Body Farm”—this is what they live for.

The Body Farm, officially known as the University of Tennessee Anthropological Research Facility, was founded by former KU anthropology professor William Bass who taught on the Hill from 1960 to 1971. The facility was created to measure rates of human decomposition over time in various environments. Donated or unclaimed corpses are observed in different conditions to determine rates of decomposition and how sun or shade, for instance, affect those rates.

The idea for the facility is closely linked to Bass’ experiences in Kansas. While teaching at KU, Bass served as a consultant to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. During an investigation involving livestock, Bass was asked if he could determine the time of death from a cow’s skeletal remains. At the time he couldn’t, but this set in motion the idea that to advance in the field of forensic anthropology, scientists would have to familiarize themselves with decomposition rates. In order to do this effectively, Bass decided direct observation should be used.

Since that time, Bass has become a world-renowned forensic anthropologist. His expertise recently sent him to Beaumont, Texas, where he was asked by the son of J.P. “Big Bopper” Richardson, Jay Richardson, to examine the musical legend’s remains in hopes of quelling the rumors of foul play surrounding his death in the plane crash which also killed Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens. After Bass’ examination of the Bopper, he concurred with the original decision—the Big Bopper’s injuries were consistent with a high-impact crash.

William Bass is currently a professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and is the author of several books.

The Body Farm was the inspiration for a Patricia Cornwell novel of the same name and is the subject of the nonfiction “Death’s Acre” by Dr. William Bass, former KU professor.

Bass’ facility has been featured in several television programs, including “CSI” and “The Dead Zone.”

“Once you have absorbed and mastered the styles and techniques of the great historical masters, you then are free to create in such a way that you redefine the very tradition you have struggled to absorb as a student.”

You walk through a museum exhibit, each work of art flowing with luminescent colors linking one piece to the next like a ribbon wrapped around the room. Most people give little thought to the countless hours of planning required to provide this kind of experience.

The students in Marsha Haufler’s graduate seminar know firsthand what it takes thanks to a partnership with the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. Working alongside Marc Wilson, Nelson-Atkins director and CEO, the seminar will result in a new installation of the Chinese Painting Gallery, a centerpiece of the museum’s renowned Asian collections.

The seminar began out of a casual conversation between Wilson and Haufler, professor in KU’s Kress Foundation Department of Art History. Ten students, either at the M.A. or Ph.D. level, meet once a week at the Nelson-Atkins to discuss how to put together an exhibition.

“Having firsthand access to so many major masterpieces is a rare opportunity for the students,” Haufler said.

Two teams of students strategize plans for the exhibition, including selecting artwork, identifying themes and overseeing installations. One team’s plan—or a combination of both—will become the foundation for the new exhibition in the Chinese painting gallery. From then on, students will write gallery labels and text panels as well as plan interpretative programming.

“The process is something like mastering the Chinese writing brush in the greatest of all Chinese arts—calligraphy,” Wilson said. “Once you have absorbed and mastered the styles and techniques of the great historical masters, you then are free to create in such a way that you redefine the very tradition you have struggled to absorb as a student.”

The exhibition will open in February 2008.

By Caitlin Tew

ART HISTORY STUDENTS TEAM WITH NELSON FOR REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

KU art history students collaborate with Marc Wilson, director of the Nelson-Atkins, on plans for a new installation of the museum’s Chinese Painting Gallery.

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The exhibition will open in February 2008.

Caitlin Tew is an Allen, Texas, junior majoring in strategic communications.
Dinosaurs were not the first to undergo a mass extinction, nor will they be the last. Two KU professors have proposed a theory which might help explain the consistently recurring die-offs throughout Earth’s history.

Adrian Melott, professor of physics and astronomy, and Mikhail Medvedev, associate professor of physics and astronomy, synthesized their hypothesis after a pair of researchers from the University of California-Berkeley discovered massive die-offs occur about every 62 million years. But scientists have struggled to pinpoint a cause for the consistency—until now.

For Melott and Medvedev, the clockwork-like movements of the solar system through the Milky Way and the galaxy’s own rush through the universe are the keys to understanding the mysterious cycle of extinctions.

“The galaxy is a thin disc, like a Frisbee,” said Melott. “But the galaxy’s motion is not like that of a Frisbee, but like a pie in the face.”

The pair asserts the north side of our Milky Way galaxy generates a shock wave as it moves through the universe. When the solar system periodically journeys up to the north boundary of the galaxy—about once every 64 million years—the shock wave exposes the Earth to a huge dose of radiation. This radiation could cause increased cloud cover, mutations, cancer and cataracts.

As for the next die-off, there is plenty of time to prepare.

“We’ve just passed the mid-plane of the galaxy,” said Melott, “We’re on the way up and we’ll reach a peak in about 10 or 12 million years. That’s when the radiation should start getting bad again—if our idea is right.”

Allie Milhon is a Topeka senior majoring in journalism and Italian.
Jayhawks around the world

BY ALLIE MILHON

You can find members of the Jayhawk family in every part of the world.

So what is it about Mt. Oread that inspires graduates to live, learn and work abroad? Expatriates say study abroad opportunities, classes with an international focus and even international students introduced them to global studies.

With more opportunities than ever before to gain an international experience, find out where KU degrees are taking your fellow alumni.

INTRO TO THE INTERNATIONAL

KU ranks eighth in the nation among public research universities in the percentage of students who study abroad. Danielle Monty-Mara, who lives in Burkina Faso and works as a program quality manager for Catholic Relief Services, credits her study abroad experience for her interest in international affairs.

“After my year of study abroad, I thought I wanted to join the Peace Corps so I did a one month volunteer program in Morocco to see if I could hack it. I’ve been hooked ever since,” Monty-Mara said.

An early love of France convinced alumna Kathryn Boyer, presently a Sweden resident, to study abroad in France. Boyer first participated in the Summer Language Institute in Paris which led to an Exchange Fellowship to conduct graduate research in Strasbourg, France.
LOVING OVERSEAS

Boyer also learned that love can strike at any place.

“My decision to live abroad came about from meeting a Swede in Paris. He had been living abroad in Paris and was ready to return home. So I ended up following him home to Sweden where we were married,” Boyer said.

KU has a long and honored tradition of welcoming students from more than 100 countries into our academic community. Henriette Javorek, who currently lives in Germany, found her international love on the Hill.

“While studying at KU, I met a German exchange student from Hamburg. We ended up getting married, and after three and a half years in Lawrence, we moved back to his home country,” Javorek said.

ACADEMIC ADVENTURES

Javorek now works as an assistant professor of modern languages and business psychology at Leuphana University Lüneburg.

“It has been a challenge learning German to where I can speak and write eloquently and actually teach in the language,” Javorek said.

Charly Pine, who lives in Tianjin, China, has found a place in academia as the educational administrator and U.S. director at the New Century Language and Culture Center. He says raising his three kids in China has been a great experience.

“They have been enriched by living in a different culture and making friends from different parts of the world,” Pine says.

Steve Kulich, who lives in Shanghai, China, is a professor and supervisor of a new intercultural communications master’s program and executive director of the SISU Intercultural Institute at Shanghai International Studies University.

“The sense that I have truly been able to be a bridge and link my students and colleagues with international opportunities they otherwise could not tap has been most rewarding,” Kulich says.

WORLDLY LEARNING

Captain John Bidwell of the United States Marine Corps is continuing his study of Slavic language in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bidwell is the only American at the University of Sarajevo earning his Master’s degree completely in Bosnian.

“It feels great being the only American because everyone knows who I am — even if they have never met me. They accept me and are eager to help me. They think I am crazy and very smart for studying in their language,” Bidwell says.

Bidwell has been deployed to Iraq twice and is currently participating in the Olmsted Scholar Program while on a “non-deployable” assignment. He says that it is very rewarding seeing how his children adapted to their new environment.

“They are seeing the world from a perspective that few of their peers back in the U.S. will ever know,” Bidwell says.

The College is currently working on new ways to ensure Jayhawks have what it takes to compete in the global economy. Goals in its strategic plan include establishing a Center for International and Global Studies, augmenting international curriculum and expanding study abroad opportunities.
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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>DANIELLE MONTY-MARA</td>
<td>BURKINA FASO</td>
<td>Program quality manager for Catholic Relief Services</td>
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<td>KU Degrees</td>
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<td>M.A. International Studies</td>
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<td>What influenced your decision to work abroad?</td>
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<td>A lifelong desire to travel and live abroad.</td>
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<td>Being extremely involved in the international community in Lawrence when my appetite by giving me the opportunity to travel vicariously.</td>
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<td>What advice would you give students currently pursuing degrees who are interested in living abroad?</td>
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<td>Learn a language, tap into the international community at KU, start networking and plan on grad school. Look at international job listings to see the job requirements for positions that interest you and start thinking about how to acquire those skills and abilities.</td>
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<td>What is your favorite thing about KU? The accessibility of professors and the fact that their focus is on teaching. And the campus, of course.</td>
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<td>HENRIETTE JAVOREK</td>
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<td>Assistant professor in modern languages and business psychology</td>
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<td>What professors had an impact on your current career?</td>
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<td>Van Kelly, professor and chairman of French and Italian, and his classes and mentoring have prepared me for a career in academia. He truly prepared me to face whatever challenges a professorship would throw my way.</td>
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<td>What advice would you give students currently pursuing degrees who are interested in living abroad?</td>
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<td>Do it and do it while you’re young! The experience you gain from living abroad goes beyond what you will learn from classes. It will allow you to think on your toes and see that you can succeed and excel in a brand new system. It will give you confidence and wisdom for the rest of your life.</td>
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<td>What is your favorite thing about KU? Mt. Oread in autumn, the fantastic architecture, the friendly environment, being situated in such a great town as Lawrence, KU basketball (Go Hawks!), it has truly become my “home away from home.”</td>
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<td>Professor and supervisor of a new intercultural communications M.A. program and executive director of the Intercultural Institute at Shanghai International Studies University</td>
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<td>M.A. Chinese Studies/EALC</td>
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<td>Currently completing Ph.D. at Humboldt University in Berlin</td>
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<td>Did any professors or classes while at KU have an impact on your current career?</td>
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<td>I am indebted to all the faculty of EALC who took me in as a M.A. student in 1990 and treated me as a colleague and friend, especially Keith McMahon, Maggie Childs, Wallace Johnson, Elaine Gerbert, Georgia Damis and others. I’m particularly grateful for Nobleza Asuncion-Lande for introducing me to the field of intercultural communication, teaching inspiring courses and co-chairing my M.A. thesis.</td>
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<td>What advice would you give students currently pursuing degrees who are interested in living abroad?</td>
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<td>Go for it! It certainly will put you on a different, less conventional track, but the enrichment, even the growth through unique and different challenges, all will develop you and eventually open special doors. Just realize it will take perseverance and much soul-searching, but that is also a very valuable process toward a clearer life purpose.</td>
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<td>What is your favorite thing about KU? Mt. Oread in autumn, the fantastic architecture, the friendly environment, being situated in such a great town as Lawrence, KU basketball (Go Hawks!), it has truly become my “home away from home.”</td>
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Name
KATHRYN BOYER
Country
SWEDEN
Occupation
Translator of art and culture texts for art historians and museum curators; proofreader/editor for her own company Boyer Ink; art history instructor for online courses through Gotland University; high school history teacher at a Swedish school in a program that offers approximately 20 percent of the courses in English.
KU Degrees
B.A. French
B.A. Biology
M.A. Art History
Ph.D. Art History
What has been most challenging about living/working abroad?
There are so many challenges; what’s most challenging is undoubtedly related to what’s going on in one’s life at the time (e.g., missing friends and family, being sick, trying to keep up with KU basketball). The challenges of my situation have led me to put together a patchwork life – multiple careers – but it offers a lot of flexibility as well as satisfaction.
What has been most rewarding?
The expanded perspective one gets living abroad is certainly a great benefit. And on the flipside, I think it’s positive for people to meet an American who defies, at least some of, the stereotypes most Europeans have of Americans. Also, an easier access to various sites in Europe has certainly been rewarding.
What is your favorite thing about KU?
The faculty members really took time to interact with me as a graduate student. They related with me in such a way that I felt greatly respected even though I had little to offer and much to learn. I learned so much during my time at KU and am excited to say that I am using nearly all of it in different capacities in my current career.

Name
CHARLY PINE
Country
TINGJIN, CHINA
Profession
Educational administrator, U.S. director, New Century Language and Culture Center
KU Degree
M.A. Chinese Language and Culture
What influenced your decision to work/live abroad?
A strong interest in international affairs. Interaction with international students during college caused me to become intrigued by different peoples and their cultures.
What advice would you give students currently pursuing degrees who are interested in living abroad?
Approach living abroad with a learner’s mentality. Develop the ability to ask good questions and listen carefully to people’s answers. Be willing to truly listen to new ideas and seriously consider their merit. Do your best to approach life, wherever you may be, with a healthy dose of humility.
What is your favorite thing about KU?
The faculty members really took time to interact with me as a graduate student. They related with me in such a way that I felt greatly respected even though I had little to offer and much to learn. I learned so much during my time at KU and am excited to say that I am using nearly all of it in different capacities in my current career.

Name
JOHN BIDWELL
Country
SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Occupation
Captain, United States Marine Corps; currently on leave studying at the University of Sarajevo in the Olmsted Scholar Program
KU Degree
B.A. Slavic
What professors or classes had an impact on your current career?
In my desire to continue both my language studies and my education, Professor Marc Greenberg had, and continues to have, an impact on me. I view him as a role model for both my interest in language study and for having cultivated in me an interest in the classical guitar.
How have your tours in Iraq impacted your current learning experiences?
I miss being around Marines. After the very serious work I was doing in Iraq, it is hard for me to find anything else that compares in importance and excitement. Sometimes I think I should be with the Marines. But other times, I feel like what I am doing here is nothing compared to other challenges I have faced, and I feel confident that I will reach my goal here. I was at a time in my career when I was required to take a break. I can think of no better way to take a break than to take advantage of my current opportunity.
What is your favorite thing about KU?
Men’s basketball and that KU offers an undergraduate Slavic major with an emphasis in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. I chose KU specifically for this reason.

Allie Milhon is a Topeka senior majoring in journalism and Italian.
CLAS AWARD RECIPIENTS

COLLEGE HONORS OUTSTANDING FACULTY AND STUDENTS

The foundation of any world-class university is its faculty. The best laboratories, libraries and facilities are meaningless without distinguished professors to use them to inspire students and contribute to our wealth of knowledge. That’s why the College awarded more than $20,000 this year to honor outstanding educators and recognize the next generation of scholars. The awards are made possible by the generous support of College alumni to KU Endowment.

The College takes great pride in the quality of our faculty and students. But don’t take our word for it. Read in the award nominators’ own words about how professors and students are making their mark on campus and across the globe.

Alice Bean
professor of physics and astronomy | Steeple Service to Kansans Award

“She has been a role model in the community for showing how women can succeed in science and, in particular, in physics. She has had students who attended one of her talks come up to her on campus and say that they are attending KU based on the talk.”

Stephen Sanders, professor and chair of physics & astronomy

Douglas McKay
professor of physics and astronomy | Career Achievement Teaching Award

“McKay is a hero of our department and the University and he deserves the award many times over. He has poured out his life for the students of the University of Kansas.”

John Ralston, professor of physics

John Younger
professor of classics | J. Michael Young Academic Advisor Award in Humanities

“I appreciate everything that he does to help me become a stronger student, and I know that the things that I learn from him will serve me in good stead in the future.”

Jeffrey O’Neill, student

Mark Mort
assistant professor, Division of Biological Sciences | J. Michael Young Academic Advisor Award in Natural Sciences

“Had I not met Dr. Mark Mort during my tenure at the University of Kansas, I doubt that I would have accomplished nearly as much as I have as an undergraduate, and I likely would not have as clear a vision of my future as I have; nor would I have the tools to make that vision a reality.”

Thomas Ryan O’Leary, earned ecology & evolutionary biology bachelor’s degree in 2007

Dan Bernstein
director and professor, Center for Teaching Excellence | J. Michael Young Academic Advisor Award in Social Sciences

“In the process of taking his class and the independent study, I found a new love for the degree I began almost four and a half years ago. He sparked the fire that was beginning to go dim, and he let me take it to a new direction.”

Destiny Frankenstein, earned psychology bachelor’s degree in 2006

Craig Lunte
professor of chemistry | John C. Wright Graduate Mentor Award

“I do not feel that I would be the scientist that I am today without Professor Lunte’s leadership. Professor Lunte has been, throughout the entirety of my graduate school career, someone who has met and exceeded my expectations as a graduate advisor.”

Eric Crick, chemistry Ph.D. student
Joann Keyton  
professor of communication studies | Byron A. Alexander Graduate Mentor Award

“I consistently walked away from each class period feeling simultaneously satisfied to have learned so much, challenged by the ideas discussed, and eager to pursue further study. Another graduate student and I remarked that Dr. Keyton wants the best from us and the best for us.”

*Amber Messersmith, communication studies doctoral candidate*

Robert Rowland  
professor of communication studies | Byron A. Alexander Graduate Mentor Award

“Dr. Rowland is exceptionally thoughtful and caring toward students; he is creative and engaged while holding us to high standards; and he provides an inspiring role model for blending teaching, leadership, service to the university, and research with mentoring students.”

*Cynthia Frewen Wuellner, earned communication studies Ph.D. in 2007*

Robert Timm  
associate professor and associate curator, Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center | Byron A. Alexander Graduate Mentor Award

“[Dr. Timm] exudes an honest concern for his students’ academic progress and overall well-being while he allows us room to make our own decisions, learn from mistakes, and explore ideas. He consistently considers his students to be a top priority.”

*Heather York, earned EEB Ph.D. in 2007*

Joshua Steward Campbell  
earned geography master’s degree | Outstanding Thesis Award for “Archaeological Predictive Model of Southwestern Kansas”

“In my 30 years here at KU, I have seen few, if any, seminal master’s theses. I did, however, feel compelled to nominate Josh’s thesis for the Outstanding Thesis Award because of its clever and innovative approach to the age-old problem of where to look for prehistoric archaeological sites.”

*William Johnson, professor of geography*

Pelle Darota Danabo  
doctoral student in philosophy | Howard J. Baumgartel Peace and Justice Award

“In his dissertation he critiques the attempt to impose liberal democracy, rooted in possessive individualism, on African countries. I expect Mr. Danabo will play an influential role in his home country [Ethiopia], and that his ideas will help to build a lasting peace and democratic institutions that can further the cause of justice.”

*Ann Cudd, professor of philosophy and director of women’s studies*

Erik S. Nielsen  
sociology master's degree student | Outstanding Research Project Award for “Ethnic Boundary Systems in Darfur: The Eventful Temporality of Racial Polarization”

“I will say at the outset that Erik Nielsen is one of the most impressive students I have worked with in the 30 years I have been at the University of Kansas. [He] is a serious scholar who can identify a potentially interesting sociological research question, develop it theoretically, and conduct the necessary research to conclude the project.”

*Joane Nagel, professor of sociology*

Department of History  
Excellence in Undergraduate Advising Award

“History advisors have molded and improved my experience at KU, and I will carry their influence with me as I begin my adult life.”

*Taylor Price, student*
AFRICAN & AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES
Professor Bryant Freeman is retiring after a long and distinguished career. As the departmental specialist in Haitian Studies, Freeman and KU drew national attention when the U.S. Government consulted Bryant for an accurate translation of the controversial resignation letter of former Haitian President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He was a trainer for the U.N. observers in Haiti, and served as an advisor to the U.S. Peace-keeping forces in Haiti. The U.S. Justice Department honored him with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Service to the Haitian People.

AMERICAN STUDIES
Professor Bill Tuttle has returned to KU this fall to teach his two final courses in American Studies before retirement. This past spring, he held the John Adams Distinguished Fulbright Chair in American History, and he taught at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. In February, he spoke at Leiden University, and in March he spoke at Utrecht University and was invited by the U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, Roland Betz, to lecture in the Hague. In honor of Professor Tuttle, an annual lecture series will be inaugurated in spring 2008.

ANTHROPOLOGY
Professor David Frayer spent five weeks in Europe working on research projects concerning Neandertals and skeletal remains of early farmers in Pakistan. He also attended a conference on the Liang Bua (“hobbit”) site in Indonesia. Frayer is working with an international group which maintains that the “hobbit” is a pathology, not a new species. Professor John Janzen has been asked by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology to guest curate a major exhibition. Associate Professor John Hoopes taught a summer course at the University of Leiden.

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE
Chairperson Ed Morris was elected Fellow of the Association for Behavior Analysis. Instructor Wilma Holt retired. Professor Steve Fawcett and Assistant Professor Jerry Schultz received a grant from the National Institute for Drug Abuse to test a community change model with substance abuse coalitions.

BIOINFORMATICS
Assistant Professor Wonpil Im received a prestigious fellowship award from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Im’s research focuses on computer simulations of protein structure and function. The Sloan fellowship is an extraordinarily competitive award, involving nominations for the very best young scientists. Selection from this remarkable group of nominees is an indication of the high esteem in which his work is regarded in the scientific community.

CHEMISTRY
Katie Koch, a B.S. graduate from KU and current Ph.D. candidate in chemistry working with Professor Ward Thompson, spoke at a town hall meeting on the America Competes Act held at the Dole Institute for Politics in late May. Koch shared her perspectives of how direct support for her research through a NSF Doctoral Fellowship award, and an opportunity to attend a leadership conference in Europe featuring talks by Nobel laureates have shaped her career.

CHILD LANGUAGE
Two students who graduated in 2007 are now lecturers. Filip Smolik is now a lecturer at the Institute of Psychology, Academy of Sciences, in Prague, and Tracy Hirata-Edds is now a lecturer in Applied English Center at KU. Stacy Betz, a graduate in 2005, recently moved to an appointment as assistant professor in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington.

CLASSES
This past summer, Professor John Younger excavated in Greece at Mitrou, a small island in the north Euboic Gulf that was settled from 3000 B.C. to 1000 B.C. Younger was the Field School director, and his duties included teaching 25 students how to excavate, giving lectures and leading trips to archaeological sites in central Greece. Professor Emma Scioi led a summer institute called “Rome: Discovering the Ancient City in Context.” Her students stayed in Rome and Pompeii.

CLINICAL CHILD PSYCHOLOGY
Director Michael Roberts received a Kemper Award this fall. Since 1991, Roberts has been a professor at KU and director of the university’s Clinical Child Psychology Training Program. According to Gregory Simpson, chairman of the psychology department, “He is a demanding teacher; mentor and leader; but the fruits of these characteristics are easy to see in the success that his students have in obtaining internships and ultimately career positions.”

COMMUNICATION STUDIES
Four alumni from the department have served
as university presidents: Jo Switzer at Manchester College, Noreen Carocci at Newman University, Howard Keim at Hesston College, and Bobby Patton, formerly President at Central Missouri. Several others serve in other important academic leadership positions including Mary Lee Hummert, vice provost for faculty development at KU, and recently appointed vice president for academic affairs at Canisius College, Scott Chadwick. The old adage that effective communication is the chief coinage of leadership is well supported by the success of these COMS graduates.

EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
The department welcomed a new assistant professor in Korean languages and cultures, Kyoim Yun. Yun earned a Ph.D. in folklore with a specialty in Korean shamanism from Indiana University. Assistant Professor Crispin Williams will be on leave in 2007-08 with a postdoctoral fellowship in East Asian archaeology and early history awarded by the American Council of Learned Societies in cooperation with the Henry Luce Foundation. Three recent M.A. graduates have moved on to Ph.D. programs: Ernest Caldwell to Chicago in Chinese, Chris Mayo to Princeton in Japanese and Brenton Sullivan to Virginia in Tibetan and Chinese.

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
In anticipation of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Center for East Asian Studies will host an international conference, “Olympian Desires: Building Bodies and Nations in East Asia,” from April 10-12, 2008. Look for the debut of the new Internet site mapping East Asian plants on the KU campus. The Center welcomed new faculty members Maki Kaneko (History of Art), Yang Lu (History), Akiko Takeyama (Anthropology), and Kyoim Yun (East Asian Languages and Cultures), as well as Asian Art Curator, Kris Imants Ercums.

ECOLOGY & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY
Two new colleagues joined EEB this year: Mark Holder, a theoretical systematist; and Caroline Chaboo, a systematic entomologist. Mark Mort was promoted to associate professor with tenure and we were delighted to learn that Town Peterson was selected as a University Distinguished Professor; and, at about the same time, he was selected as the 2007 recipient of the prestigious Olin K. Petefish Award for Research Achievement in the Basic Sciences, awarded by the Chancellor as one of four Research Achievement Awards at KU.

ECONOMICS
In August 2007, Assistant Professor Ronald Caldwell joined the faculty of the Department of Economics. Caldwell recently completed his dissertation “Essays on the Effect of Expectations about Future Opportunities on the Human Capital Development of Minority Children.” Caldwell has a Ph.D. in economics and an M.S. in pharmaceutical outcomes research and policy, both from the University of Washington. His primary areas of specialization are labor economics, health economics and the economics of race.

ENGLISH
Garth Kimbrell, senior English major from Wichita, won the nationwide 2006 Norton Scholar’s Prize contest with his essay written for David Bergeron’s Shakespeare class, on Coriolanus. Kimbrell graduated with distinction in May, and entered the graduate program in English at Stanford. The department said goodbye to three colleagues who have contributed immeasurably to its work: Beverly Boyd, Vic Contoski, and Dennis Quinn. Together they represent a century and a half of teaching and scholarship.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
Lecturer Sharon Ashworth and Associate Professor Dietrich Earnhart of the Environmental Studies Program led 13 highly motivated students to Freiburg, Germany, in June. The study abroad program “Environmental Studies of Europe” included two courses: “Environmental Sustainability and Unsustainability: Focus on European Environments” and “Environmental Economics.” As field trips, the students visited the Council of Europe, a restored segment of the Rhine River; a solar panel factory; energy efficient housing developments; and an organic winery.

EUROPEAN STUDIES
Director Diane Fourny attended a professional development seminar on the European Union at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. Assistant Professor Nathan Wood took a month-long research trip to Cracow, Poland, Lviv, Ukraine; and Vienna, Austria. Associate Professor Julie Kaarbo traveled to Turkey to continue research on Turkish Foreign Policy. Professor Jan Kozma used her sabbatical in Rome to complete a scholarly introduction to her new translation of Grazia Deledda’s novel, “Honest Souls.” Assistant Professor Margot Versteeg took 34 students to Barcelona, Spain, as faculty director of the department’s Summer Language Program.
FRENCH AND ITALIAN
The department organized and sponsored the third annual Tournées KU French and Frenchophone Film Festival from October 1st through November 15th. More than 850 people attended last year’s film festival. The department congratulates senior Italian majors Natalie Johnson and Kristina Clement, who received Undergraduate Research Awards for 2007.

GENETICS
Faculty in the program continue to excel in research by obtaining extramural research funding from the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies. Students are supported by research assistantships from the agencies above as well as by the KU Self Fellowship program. The Genetics Program is a Master’s and Ph.D. program that includes faculty and students from across the College, including anthropology, ecology and evolutionary biology, molecular biosciences and philosophy.

GEOGRAPHY
Two graduate students, Cristin Burke and Thomas Overly, received Fulbright awards for study and research abroad. The Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers awarded Professor Bill Woods the 2006 Carl Sauer Award for outstanding Latin American scholarship. Professors Stephen Egbert and Brian Wardlow, Ph.D. student, received the Leica Geosystems first place award for best scientific paper and the John I. Davidson President’s first place award for best practical paper for a paper they co-authored for Photogrammetric Engineering and Remote Sensing. Jude Kastens of the Kansas Biological Survey was also a co-author.

GEOLOGY
The students of the Department of Geology are an outstanding group who are raking in international accolades. This spring, the Geological Society of America and AAPG announced the results of its annual competitions for student grants, and it turns out that KU geology students received more grants than any other university in both competitions. Student research visibility also appears to be at an all-time high. Just this past spring, three KU geology students received best paper awards in regional, national and international competitions.

GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
The 31st Symposium of the Society for German-American Studies was held in April. Over 120 scholars from Germany, Austria and the United States participated with presentations. Chairperson Bill Keel was elected president of the society. The department also hosted several of the attendees for an additional week to conduct research interviews with German dialect speakers in western Kansas. A TV crew from Hamburg visited in April filming for a special on “Low German in Kansas,” which aired in Germany on June 3, featuring Lecturer Scott Seeger.

HALL CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
The Center hosted Von Hardesty of the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum as a Simons Public Humanities Fellow in the spring. The Center also sponsored a number of public programs including Humanities Lecture Series talks by Princeton University’s Kwame Anthony Appiah and KU professor Maria Carlson, the documentary film premier of “Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience” and the Emily Taylor and Marilyn Stokstad Women’s Leadership Lecture given by former U.S. Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker.

GERONTOLOGY
Chiu ng-Ju Liu, a 2006 Ph.D. recipient, received the 2007 American Psychological Association Division 20 Doctoral Dissertation Award in Adult Development and Aging for her dissertation “Comprehension of Health-Related Materials by Older Adults.” Her dissertation will be published in Educational Gerontology. Liu examined a new model of the comprehension of common health-related texts in older adults. Liu is currently a post-doctoral research fellow with the Health and Disability Research Institute, School of Public Health, Boston University.

HISTORY
The department is a partner with the Olathe District Schools on a three-year, U.S. Department of Education “Teaching American History” grant which funds seminars and workshops designed by KU faculty for 16 Olathe history teachers. In June 2007, Associate Professor Karl Brooks led an intensive two-week workshop on the theme “Debating the Common Good,” which included a field trip to the Brown v. Board National Historic Site and individual research in the archives of the Dole Institute of Politics.

HISTORY OF ART
There have been many recently published books written by history of art faculty. These include: "John Steuart Curry and Modern History..."
Painting” by Distinguished Professor Charles Eldredge; “Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, And Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture” by Associate Professor Amy McNair; and “Sheer Presence: The Veil in Manet’s Paris” by Associate Professor Marni Kessler. Recent fellowships have been given to Professor Amy McNair, Assistant Professor Sally Cornelison and Associate Professor Marni Kessler.

HUMANITIES AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION
Humanities and Western civilization is pleased to announce the appointment of Christopher Forth as the first Jack and Shirley Howard Teaching Professor of Humanities & Western Civilization. He is currently a reader in history at the Australian National University in Canberra, where he has been teaching for the past ten years. Forth is a modern European intellectual and cultural historian with special research interests in the history of gender, sexuality and the body. He will join the KU faculty in the spring 2008 semester.

INDIGENOUS NATIONS STUDIES
Indigenous nations studies and linguistics graduate student Kelly Berkson participated in the American Indian Language Development Institute in June 2007 at the University of Arizona. As a participant, Berkson developed school projects and curricular materials for the preservation and revitalization of languages and cultures. She transcribed storybooks based on the oral tales of a Zuni elder; these books will be used by children in schools. Her capstone project involved curriculum development for teaching Tututdinae, an Athabascan language from southwest Oregon.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
Three M.A. students received Foreign Language Area Studies awards through the African Studies Center: Huma Khan studied Arabic in Morocco in summer 2007; Megan Holroyd received the academic year award and will study Swahili while beginning her Ph.D. in geography; and incoming student Dylan Bassett received the academic year award to study Wolof and African culture. Additionally, student Kate Austin received a Graduate Direct Exchange scholarship to study this year at the University of Hamburg.

KANSAS AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER
The Kansas African Studies Center concluded a highly successful Summer Institute for Teachers in June. This two-week intensive course introduced area teachers (and some from as far away as Illinois), graduate and undergraduate students, and other participants to an interdisciplinary approach to studying and teaching about Africa. KASC is pleased to announce the final approval of its new Graduate Certificate in African studies, available to graduate students across the university interested in Africa, from this academic year onward.

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
A group of students traveled to Nicaragua on an alternative break to explore the impact of neo-liberal economic policy and free trade on the Central American country, with a special focus on fair trade and cooperative alternatives. Upon returning to KU, participants shared their experiences at a brownbag at the Center for Latin American Studies. Students who participated in the Nicaragua trip have planned to continue strengthening ties to communities they met through activities during fall 2007.

LINGUISTICS
The department, to celebrate its 40th anniversary, hosted the Mid-America Linguistics Conference (MALC) in October. Associate Professor Joan Sereno received a W.T. Kemper Fellowship in recognition of teaching and advising excellence. Kristi Bond was awarded a NSF graduate research fellowship, providing $100,000 for three years of graduate study. Professor Allard Jongman became associate editor of the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, and Professor Akira Yamamoto retired after 34 years of service.

MATHEMATICS
Professor Saul Stahl received the Carl B. Allendofer Award at the Summer MathFest in San Jose. Stahl was recognized for his article, “The Evolution of the Normal Distribution.” Professors Thomas Creese and Ben Cobb retired in the spring. Both professors began their careers at KU in 1964. Professor Satyagopal Mandal and Assistant Professor Jeremy Martin were awarded National Security Agency grants. Professor Wei Zhang Huang, Associate Professor Atanas Stefanov, and Assistant Professor Myunghyun Oh were awarded National Science Foundation grants.

MOLECULAR BIOSCIENCES
Dean Joseph Steinmetz was named a University Distinguished Professor. He holds faculty appointments in the Department of Psychology and the Department of Molecular Bioscience. Steinmetz’s research interests are in the general
area of behavioral neuroscience. He is interested in how the mammalian brain encodes simple associative learning and memory tasks. According to Kathy Suprenant, chair of the Department of Molecular Biosciences, “Dean Steinmetz is renowned for his scientific breadth, integrative work and influence in the worldwide research community.”

MUSEUM STUDIES
The Museum Studies Program continues to grow, with over 150 graduates in its 26 year history. Current students have recently been awarded highly competitive internships at the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum, Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum and the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian. Graduates of the program enjoy over a 77 percent placement in the museum field after finishing their Master’s degree. They are represented in a wide variety of prestigious institutions, from KU’s own Natural History Museum to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum and many places in between.

PHILOSOPHY
Philosophy is pleased to welcome two new faculty members this year. Associate Professor Derrick Darby specializes in social and political philosophy and African-American philosophy, focusing on rights, freedom and the relationship between race and liberal political thought. His book, “Hip Hop and Philosophy: Rhyme 2 Reason,” co-edited with Tommie Shelby (Harvard), was published in 2005, and has recently appeared in Portuguese translation. Assistant Professor Scott Jenkins specializes in German philosophy, especially Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche.

PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY
Professor Judy Wu has been designated a University Distinguished Professor. Her work in condensed matter physics has had great impact within her discipline while bringing honor and distinction to the university. Professor Alice Bean was selected as a 2007 recipient of the Steeple Service to Kansans award. As a particle physicist, Bean has led the Quarked™ project which brings the excitement of high-energy physics to grade-school children through multimedia presentations.

POLITICAL SCIENCE
Professor Ron Francisco received the Best Data Set award from the American Political Science Association’s Comparative Politics Section for a publicly available data set that has made an important contribution to comparative politics. Chairperson Elaine Sharp has been designated the Norton Long Career Achievement Award winner by the American Political Science Association’s Urban Politics Section. Professor Philip Schrodt has been elected president of the American Political Science Association’s section on Political Methodology. The University of Michigan Press has just published Assistant Professor Alesha Doan’s book “Opposition & Intimidation: The Abortion Wars and Strategies of Political Harassment.”

PSYCHOLOGY
Assistant Professor Patricia Hawley was awarded a Kemper Award this fall. Distinguished Professor Susan Kemper will be presenting a series of lectures on “Language and Aging” as part of a weeklong course on “Cognitive Changes Across the Lifespan: A Behavioral and Neuroscientific Perspective” organized by a consortium of the Universities of Geneva, Bern, and Zurich. Professor John Colombo has been named associate editor of Child Development. The department celebrated the career of Dr. Lawrence Wrightsman with a lecture by Dr. Wrightsman.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Distinguished Professor H. George Frederickson has received the Lifetime Contributions to Social Equity Award for 2007, given by the Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs of Virginia Commonwealth University. Assistant Professor Kelly LeRoux has received the Emerging Scholar Award from the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action. KU MPA graduate, Tom Muenlenbeck, city manager of Plano, Texas, has been awarded the National Public Service Award for outstanding public service.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
Associate Professor Dan Stevenson is the new chair for the department. Assistant Professor Bill Lindsey’s new book, “Fertility and Pleasure: Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan,” has been published. Assistant Professors Michael Zogry and Sergey Dolgopoloski both recently had book manuscripts accepted by major university presses. Zogry was also awarded an American Academy of Religion Individual Re-
search Grant for 2006-2007. Assistant Professor Margaret Rausch is a Humanities Research Fellow at the KU Hall Center for the Humanities, where she will work on her book concerning Ishelhin (Berber) women’s ritual gatherings.

RUSSIAN, EAST EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES
Director Erik Herron will be spending the fall 2007 semester in Lviv, Ukraine on a Fulbright fellowship. He will be teaching and conducting research at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Upon his return in December, he will be on sabbatical and will be completing a book dealing with elections in the post-Soviet region. Associate Professor Bill Comer will be acting director for CREEs during the 2007-08 academic year.

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
Professor Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova was invited as a special guest of Warsaw University to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Polish Institute. During her stay, she began negotiations for a new KU study abroad program in Warsaw. Spring 2007 BA recipient Michelle Tran began attending Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government in fall 2007. Professor Stephen M. Dickey accompanied the first group of KU students on the new Croatian-language study abroad program at Zadar University, Croatia in summer 2007.

SOCIOLGY
Assistant Professor Jessica Vasquez joined the faculty in the fall of 2007. Assistant Professor Brian Donovan has received a Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Classroom Teaching. Graduate Student Elizabeth Legerski received awards for both Outstanding Graduate Teaching and Distinguished Service from the KU Graduate School. Graduate Student Lori Wiebold-Lipsch has been awarded the Robert K. Merton Award from the Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy.

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE
Assistant Professor Robert Bayliss received the 2007 Jessie Marie Cramer and Ann Cramer Root Faculty Award for outstanding research in support of his forthcoming book “The Discourse of Courty Love in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Theatre.” The department received the 2007 Departmental Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning by the KU Center for Teaching Excellence in recognition of curricular innovations and mentoring from the basic language requirement through the Spanish major and the Ph.D. program.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING SCIENCES & DISORDERS
Associate Professor Holly Storkel was awarded a Kemper Award this fall. Storkel is a nationally recognized scholar in speech-language-hearing, with particular expertise in language acquisition and phonological development disorders. Hugh Catts, chair of the speech-language-hearing department, said of Storkel, “Holly is well recognized for her program of research, which is funded by the National Institutes of Health, and for her service at the national level, which includes service as an associate editor of one of our leading journals. But at her core, Holly is an educator.”

THEATRE AND FILM
“Fall From Grace,” a film created by 2007 KU film graduate K. Ryan Jones, was premiered at the South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin. Jones’s documentary about Rev. Fred Phelps, and his Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, started as a class project in the fall of 2005. The sold-out Kansas Summer Theatre production of the musical “Pageant” was brought back for four encore performances in late August. Directed by KU alumnus Bill Russell, who wrote the show with fellow alumnus Frank Kelly, “Pageant” is a beauty pageant with six contestants vying for the title of Miss Glamouresse.

WOMEN’S STUDIES
Associate Professor Hannah Britton won the Ned N. Fleming Trust Award for distinguished teaching. Director Ann Cudd’s book “Analyzing Oppression” was awarded the 2007 Byron Caldwell Smith award. Professor Ann Schofield won a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Society to pursue her research on mourning. After spending a week there, she continued on to Oxford to pursue this research further, while finding time to learn how to ride a bicycle in order to commute like a native through the old English town.

SAMANTHA BENNETT IS A 2006 GRADUATE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND WOMEN’S STUDIES.
As a first generation College graduate, Kathy Suprenant has traveled all over the country in pursuit of her degrees and research. Finally settling at the University of Kansas in 1985, Suprenant has been instrumental to the Department of Molecular Biosciences as chairwoman, researcher and tireless advocate for her students. With pastimes ranging from rugby to quilting, Suprenant took a break to discuss her influences, interests and explorations.

A CONVERSATION WITH KATHY SUPRENA NT

BY ABBY LEE

Kathy Suprenant was saddened to see parrot fish and saddle-backed butterfly fish strung alongside soldier fish in a Tahitian fish market, the inspiration for her quilt titled “Too Pretty to Eat.” Machine pieced and quilted with commercial and hand-dyed cottons, antique buttons and beads.
When did you first know you wanted to be a scientist, and do you feel you’ve had to overcome any challenges in a typically male-dominated field?

I always wanted to be a scientist. My parents gave me a nice little microscope when I was in the fourth or fifth grade and I used to spend the summer running around the back yard with a razor blade to slice off pieces of plants and small bugs (gross, I know) to examine in the microscope. I still have that microscope in my lab and it works. The only issue I have with working in a traditionally male-dominated field is why don’t they make functional pockets in women’s business suits?

Your research centers on RNA complexes known as “vaults” and their major vault proteins. What have you discovered about these entities and what is their relationship to cancer?

Our cells have thousands of vaults and no one knows exactly what they do. Vaults are very abundant in healthy dividing cells and in cancer cells. No one knows why vaults are abundant in cancer cells. Recently, a Dutch group of researchers published an important paper in Science magazine showing that vaults may mediate resistance to certain bacterial infections of the lung. The small community of vault researchers is very excited about these results, but in the end we still do not know what vaults do or how they confer bacterial resistance.

My lab recently discovered that the major vault protein is very similar in composition and structure to a bacterial protein that confers resistance to tellurite, an oxyanion of elemental tellurium (Te)!

Elemental tellurium is very toxic to humans. Our work shows that vaults respond dynamically to tellurite and other toxic oxyanions such as selenite and arsenite. Needless to say we are very interested in the function of these intriguing organelles and we would like to understand how this stress response to oxyanions is related to bacterial infections.

You’ve secured millions of dollars of grant funds for your students. What’s your secret?

I wish there were a secret! I am afraid that it is mostly hard work and a lot of luck. And when your grant is not funded you need to be CALM. Then the process starts all over.

You were the faculty advisor to the women’s rugby team, how did that come about?

I think I must look like a rugby player! Jackie Vogel played on the rugby team while she was a graduate student in Professor Bob Palazzo’s lab and she asked me if I would be the advisor (Jackie currently is a faculty member at the prestigious McGill University in Canada). I was the advisor to the rugby team for two years. I remember being a little squeamish about signing the insurance papers for a group of strong and confident women that covered their legs in Vaseline to slip away from the defenders (and to stop the bleeding) and shouted ‘kill her’ throughout a game that appeared to have no time outs.

As an accomplished quilter, how do you come up with the ideas for your patterns?

My ideas for a quilt design come from my training as a biologist. Currently I am representing the cells and tissues of the human body in a series of small quilts. One or more of these pieces will address social issues surrounding stem cells, genomics and gene therapy. These quilts are not very functional and would hardly keep a baby warm at night. Some are as small as five inches square and most do not exceed 40" by 60". I also embellish the surface of my quilts with beads, ribbon, stitching and even found objects like small rocks.

Top: Suprenant, pictured in front of her award-winning eighth grade science fair project, says she always wanted to be a scientist.

Bottom: As chairwoman of the Department of Molecular Biosciences, Suprenant has secured millions of dollars in grant funds for her students.
Every day, the results of University of Kansas alumnus Irving Johnson’s research make life better for millions of diabetics.

A leading scientist in the pharmaceutical industry for 35 years, Johnson is known for his research that led to the genetic engineering and commercial production of human insulin.

Johnson, who earned his doctorate in zoology from KU in 1953, is still promoting research. In 2004, he established the Irving Johnson Professorship in Molecular Biology with a $507,000 gift to KU through KU Endowment. And now he’s added $500,000 more to that fund.

Johnson’s contributions are generous and important, said Kathy Suprenant, chair of the Department of Molecular Biosciences.

“It’s remarkable that he’s enhanced the already attractive gift.” Suprenant said. “This is going to help us in recruiting a top-flight molecular biologist.”

Johnson’s gift includes the professorship as well as scholarship funds for a graduate student or postdoctoral researcher who will assist the professor.

“I wanted to endow a chair of molecular biosciences so that other students in Kansas could have the courses that they need to be able to do biomedical research,” Johnson said.

Johnson’s career has reached impressive high points. He collaborated with Jonas Salk on several projects, including the polio vaccine. He discovered a new class of cancer-fighting drugs for treating childhood leukemia, and he supervised the development of the antidepressant Prozac. In 1984, Johnson received the first Congressional Award for Science and Technology. And in 2005, KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences honored Johnson with the Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award.

The 82 year-old Johnson, who lives with his wife, Alwyn, in Stonington, Maine, spent much of his childhood living in various Kansas towns as his father, a highway engineer, moved around the state on road projects. A World War II veteran, Johnson earned his bachelor’s degree at Washburn University before enrolling in graduate school at KU.

Johnson said biomedical research — and the funding for it — are critical to improving health care for everyone.

“I think there are hardly any limits to what can be done in biomedical research anymore,” Johnson said. “I hope that my endowed chair and the graduate student and postdoctoral support I’ve given will be helpful in achieving those goals.”

The gift will be managed by KU Endowment, an independent, nonprofit organization serving as the official fundraising and fund-management organization for KU. Founded in 1891, KU Endowment is the first foundation of its kind at a U.S. public university.
Most college graduates don’t think to themselves, “I hope I can get a volunteer position, explore a new city on a shoe string, and live in close quarters with other volunteers!” However, my year in the Westmoreland Volunteer Corps serving as the community educator for children at the DC Rape Crisis Center was more than I could have hoped for when musing with other KU graduating seniors about the future.

My time in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences gave me the confidence to give my all. My Spanish major taught me to listen on subtle levels. Beyond knowing where to put one’s tongue when pronouncing local slang or what the vocabulary meant in a new novel, one had to learn culture and respect it.

Bachelor’s degree in tow, I moved to Washington, D.C., and began teaching children from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade about good touches and bad touches. I taught children how good touches feel, practiced saying no to bad ones and brainstormed about safe adults available to help. College didn’t teach me to use puppets, but did prepare me with the skills to find the actress inside of myself.

I traveled to each corner of D.C., giving over 350 presentations to more than 6,000 students. Despite the miles, the most magnificent journeys happened right in the classrooms. Children asked real questions that forced me to examine the world and my beliefs. They asked things adults blush about, such as if I had been abused and what rape really meant. They coaxed me from tidy, politically correct answers to truly questioning my ideas on race, privilege and perceptions.

Children do not just push people to grow, they love wholly. At the end of many presentations, one child would come up and hug me. Instantly, I was engulfed by 60 arms, reaching to show affection and send me off to the next classroom. If you have never experienced a group hug in a kindergarten classroom, I highly recommend it.

Next my KU degree will take me to Colombia, working with Christian Peacemaker Teams, a violence-reducing NGO. Thanks to my time at the DC Rape Crisis Center, I feel ready. The children of our nation’s capital reminded me to be transparent, question myself and fill each journey and interaction with an abundance of love.

RACHEL CLOUD IS A 2006 GRADUATE IN SPANISH.

Top: Posters drawn by children at the DC Rape Crisis Center, demonstrating who to tell if they receive a “bad touch.”

Bottom: As a member of the Westmoreland Volunteer Corps, recent graduate Rachel Cloud used puppets to teach children sexual assault awareness.
The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Kansas is now taking nominations for The 2008 Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award. Nominations are due August 15, 2008. For more information, go to clas.ku.edu (follow the Alumni & Friends link) or contact Lindsey Hoover at linzy@ku.edu or 785.864.3663.