Wind turbine latest green project for campus

By Allen Babiarz
Contributing Writer

A 120-foot wind turbine will soon start going up on campus and partially generate some of the school's power thanks to a $155,000 state grant. The grant award from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) was announced Oct. 21. "Sustainability and efficiency have gone far beyond being buzzwords," said Warren Ribley, Director of the DCEO. "They are now part of our way of life. We need to develop an energy policy that recognizes and takes care of the environment." Ribley said Illinois' colleges and universities have been at the forefront of cutting-edge environmental initiatives. GSU's wind turbine will be part of that effort and will also create jobs and save taxpayer dollars, he said.

The 50-kilowatt turbine will be approximately 120 feet tall and is going to be built on the open land next to the Family Learning Center. Students will be able to monitor the turbine from a monitoring center on campus, while learning about the renewable energy it's producing.

GSU President Elaine Maimon said the turbine will be implemented into classroom activities for the university's science students, and also for the children in the Family Learning Center so they can "learn a valuable lesson about sustainability and environmental stewardship early in their lives."

Along with the installation of the turbine other energy-saving measures will be done, including retrofiting the current HVAC system and upgrading the current heating and air conditioning ducts. When all projects are complete, it is estimated that it will reduce 2,873 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Office of Public Affairs.

Construction of the project is slated to begin in January of 2011 and is expected to last six to nine months. Once complete, the turbine will provide 35 percent of the power for the Family Development Center and save about $14,000 a year in energy costs, according to Susan Rakstang, Vice President for Facilities Development and Maintenance.

The turbine is GSU's latest effort to create a more sustainable campus. In recent years some of the asphalt parking lots were replaced with permeable pavers and old boilers were removed and smaller more efficient boilers installed. Annually about 75 tons of recyclable materials are collected. The university is home to the state's largest solar-thermal system which heats the water used on campus.

Women granted right to vote because of good moral sense

By: Kimberly Snapp
Contributing Writer

This month marked the 90th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which grants women the right to vote.

In light of this week's election, Dr. Chelsea Haring, assistant professor of political science; Dr. Terri Pantuso, assistant professor of English; and Dr. Jason Zingsheim, assistant professor of communications, wanted to remind participants that this was, "The greatest cultural revolution."

The viewing of the movie brought a lot of points to light that helped lead the discussion. Dr. Haring mentioned that in the movie Wilson spoke of how women were finally allowed to vote not because they are equal but because they have a good moral sense.
Make tuition credit permanent

Courtesy of The Daily Princetonian
Via U-Wire

In his 2011 budget proposal, President Barack Obama called on Congress to make the American Opportunity Tax Credit permanent. This provides a $2,500 college tuition tax credit to individuals, whose modified adjusted gross income is $80,000 or less, or $160,000 or less for married couples filing a joint return, as well as smaller credits to families earning above this threshold.

The tax credit is set to expire at the end of this year. The credit modified and expanded the benefits offered by the Hope Credit, which already offered some families $1,500 per year in tax credits for education — for 2009 and 2010, making the tax credits available to a broader range of taxpayers and allowing credits to be claimed for four post-secondary education years instead of two. The American Opportunity Tax Credit was part of the $814 billion economic stimulus bill.

This credit should be made permanent for several reasons. With rising tuition costs in a still-faltering economy, this tax credit, though small, gives families a break when it comes to college tuition. According to Obama, the credit is worth $10,000 over four years and will help families invest in their children’s futures. Because the tax credit covers college-related expenses, families can get a break on more than just tuition. According to the Internal Revenue Service website, the expenses can include, but are not limited to: tuition and related fees, books, and other required course materials, such as lab equipment and art supplies. Furthermore, the credit is awarded per student, meaning a family with two students could receive $5,000 a year in tax credits for a total of $20,000 over four years. The Treasury Department reported that 12.5 million people used the credit last year. That means that in 2009, more than 12 million students from working class families received assistance in earning a college degree — thanks to a 90 percent increase in tax credits for education.

On Oct. 13, Obama met with college students to discuss how the students benefited from the tax credit and whether they thought the tax credit should be made permanent. Several students told the president that they were not aware the tax credit existed.

Despite not being heavily publicized, the American Opportunity Tax Credit still positively impacted the lives of many American students and their families. Congress should act on Obama’s request and make this tax credit available to future college-bound Americans.

‘Women’s Vote’ continued from page 1

Dr. Pantuso mentioned that even after the women gained the right to vote they still hadn’t totally succeeded at earning their rights because there were poll taxes, which discriminated against the majority of non-upper-class women.

Marilyn Yirku, Academic Coordinator of the Communications Programs, was in attendance of the discussion and had a grandmother who lived during these times and had many memories to share. Yirku shared that these women went through in the movie was very much real. Yirku pointed out that even after the vote was achieved, “It was all about money and power, and this was only a step.”

Upon the discussion of how the husbands of the activists reacted in the video, Ryan West, a communications major, spoke up about how men never had anything to say and reasoned that it’s because they had no justifiable reason to deny women these rights.

The discussion concluded that this was only a small step in a huge battle we are still trying to overcome. Dr. Haring said, “We fragment issues to groups.” This makes it harder to take care of the issue at hand. The discussion group led to a few issues we still need to work on as a society, wages, positions, and women negating themselves. In other words, men always mentor men, but women rarely mentor other women because the confidence isn’t there.

Dr. Haring left the group with this thought, “No matter how frustrated you are, remember people fought for the polls, don’t take that for granted.”
Parents heading to school to brush up on parenting skills

By Kimberly Snapp
Contributing Writer

If you have seen an abundant number of adults entering the Family Development Center at GSU do not be misled, they are there to attend “Parent University,” to improve or brush up on their parenting skills.

Parent University was conceived during a group effort from Carol Morrison, Executive Director of the Family Development Center, Shannon Dermer, Division Chair of Psychology and Counseling, and Dean Deborah Bordelon, College of Education. An advisory committee for the division of Psychology and Counseling and the Family Development Center were interested in doing something to benefit families in the community. One idea included workshops on parenting.

When the opportunity for a grant through Congressman Jesse Jackson’s office came up, it set everything into motion. Morrison started working on writing the grant to get everything under way. On Sept. 1 they received the grant and started working on setting up the workshops. Workshops started Oct. 4 and continue throughout the year.

Parent University has been created around three pillars according to the newsletter for the program. Those pillars are wisdom, the knowledge and the ability to access the knowledge to make healthy decisions for self, children, and family; skills, the learned abilities needed for effective and compassionate parenting, and support, the personal, and interpersonal resources needed for optimal health.

A few workshops have already passed. “Helping Your Child to Develop Self-Discipline” had a great turnout with about 30 people attending. Jon Carlson was the presenter and Morrison said, “Jon Carlson has a big following.” So far the workshops have been a big success.

Below is a schedule of upcoming “Parent University” topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of Workshop</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Nov 10</td>
<td>Jon Carlson</td>
<td>Motivating Your Child</td>
<td>5:00 to 7:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Dec 6</td>
<td>Jen Beebe</td>
<td>Bullying and Cyber Bullying</td>
<td>5:00 to 7:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Dec 8</td>
<td>Julia Yang</td>
<td>Positive Parenting</td>
<td>5:00 to 7:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, Dec 11</td>
<td>Collette Blakely</td>
<td>Dangers of Technology</td>
<td>1:00 to 4:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan 19 (tba)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Jan 24</td>
<td>Kim Snow</td>
<td>Step Parenting</td>
<td>5:00 to 7:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, Jan 29 (tentative)</td>
<td>Tim Pedigo &amp; Al Tuskenis</td>
<td>Attachment &amp; Parenting</td>
<td>1:00 to 4:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Feb 7 (tba)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Feb 16</td>
<td>Cyrus Ellis</td>
<td>Raising African American boys to men:</td>
<td>5:00 to 7:30 pm</td>
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Program cancellation disappoints some disabled students

By: Kimberly Snapp
Contributing Writer

During the start of the fall semester special needs students were welcomed with a disheartening surprise. ACCESS, also known as Student Support Services, was canceled because the university did not receive the necessary grant to keep the program going.

Student Support Services was part of the government program TRIO under the U.S. Department of Education. ACCESS was the name given to the program by former director Viola Gray, according to Kelly McCarthy, Associate Vice President, Student Support Services.

According to the U.S. Department of Education student support services funds are awarded to institutions of higher education through grant competitions. McCarthy said, “The grant application was submitted in Dec. 2009 and GSU received the bad news in mid-August that we would not be refunded.”

One student who used ACCESS’ services was Tammy Gore. Tammy is one of many disabled students on campus who used the program. Gore suffers from a degenerative spine disease which will eventually land her in a wheelchair. Gore has expressed her confusion and disappointment in the closing of the program.

Gore said she used the counseling services of the program, the help with finding financial aid and the study space available for the program and so much more. Gore has mentioned that because she is not in a wheelchair many professors have a hard time understanding that she is disabled and the ACCESS program helped her deal with situations like that.

Robin Swann, Coordinator Senior Status, would work with the professors to help them understand students needs as well as just listening to the students.

Another part of ACCESS that Gore appreciated was the study groups they held for people who needed them and the study access with free printing. This was in need for low-income students. Even though Gore was only in the program for a short time she feels, “there is nowhere to turn for help.”

“1 am confused and feel overwhelmed that I have to find out all this info on my own on top of taking five classes, writing papers, and studying for midterms,” Gore said. These overwhelming feelings led Gore to mention that she is considering going to another university where a program is in place to help her with her needs.

McCarthy mentioned that Dean Sherilyn Poole informed the students about the end of the program by mail. In the letter it stated that services would continue under the Academic Resource Center and Financial Aid Office. She also said, “The only service that will not be not offered is the exposure to cultural events not usually available to disadvantaged students.”
Data suggests that college students are getting lazy

By Lucia Panasci
Massachusetts Daily Collegian
Via U-Wire

A study by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, entitled "Leisure College, USA" makes the claim that college students studied about 14 hours a week in 2003 in comparison to the 24 hours a week students studied in 1961.

The findings of this study also show that this decline has nothing to do with the type of institution a student attends, whether or not they work, or what they choose to study.

The study was written by two professors from U. California, Mindy Marks and Philip Babcock. Babcock says the research was inspired by a similar survey that pertained only to students of U. California, "The study-time numbers looked quite low to us, and we wondered if this was true across the nation and if it had always been true."

The research that followed confirmed these low numbers in current study time clocked by university students.

The data collected by Babcock and Marks includes four sets of data coming from the years 1961, 1981, 1987-1989, and 1991-2003, which involves the responses of full-time students to a survey asking the number hours each studied per week. From these surveys the researchers were able to see an obvious pattern: Study time had gone down, and drastically at that. Hoping to find the cause of the decline, the duo looked at the changes in college culture that occurred over the time span. The two major possible reasons Marks and Babcock cited in their research that may have led to the major decrease in study time were the use of technology and falling standards in universities all over the country.

The use of technology would surely make tasks that would have taken longer before the widespread use of the Internet, such as writing a paper, quicker and easier to complete. However, the study shows that most of the decline took place prior to 1981, a time in which this access to technology was impossible. This means that while technology has had an impact on the amount of time students spend studying, the impact is minimal and recent with little relevance to the study's findings.

What might be causing this trend according to the research? Universities whose standards for students have dropped in recent decades, resulting in students today who do not need to work as hard in college as students in 1961. This conclusion is problematic as there is no precise way to test the standards of universities today and so many factors affect student study time. However those who believe this theory have several explanations such as student desire for leisure time and the catering of universities to such desires in an effort to attract students.
Distinguished Panelists offer perspective on ‘Girl with the Dragon Tattoo’

GSU’s discussion of Stieg Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” showed why the book is so popular, because whether you like the book or hate it, it can inspire a lively and wide-ranging discussion.

“The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” is the first book of the “Millennium” trilogy and is the story of journalist Mikael Blomkvist and hacker Lisbeth Salander as they try to solve a decades old mystery. It was chosen at GSU’s One Book One University pick this semester and has many on campus discussing the title, including a distinguished group of panelist representing a broad spectrum of GSU programs.

The panelists included David Green from CBPA, Shannon Dermer from COE, Cheryl Mejhta from CHHS, Tom Houlihan, a former newspaper editor, and Rosemary Johnsen from CAS. The moderator was Provost Terry Allison.

Green discussed how some of Lisbeth’s computer wizardry can’t be done in real life how they are done in the book. He also explained the three types, or hats, of hackers. A white hat hacker is someone who hacks only to help corporations tighten the security on their computers while a black hat is a hacker with malicious intent who maybe tries to steal or delete files. A gray hat is a mix of the other two, like a computer researcher who finds security flaws by illegal means.

Dermer felt the Swedish title of the book, which translates to Men who Hate Women, was more appropriate than the U.S. title. She also felt that the author put a lot of his own experiences into the story, saying “He is part of this book.” Dermer brought up how the author witnessed a gang rape of a girl named Lisbeth when he was 15 and did nothing to stop it. The book in Dermer’s point of view is about the question of what is good and what is evil. Mejhta said that the women who faced abuse had different, but typical reactions to how they are mistreated. She also brought up the notion that maybe Mikael did more damage to Lisbeth than her rapist guardian. Mejhta said Lisbeth, while hurt by her guardian, at least knew how to protect herself from him, but when it came to Mikael he showed her compassion and made her trust him, something which she was not used to.

Houlihan did not think Mikael was a good reporter. “This is not good journalism,” is how Houlihan described Mikael’s methods in the book. Houlihan felt that Mikael did not get the story on what one of the antagonists did and did not double check the facts he received about the other one which left Houlihan kept asking “what if?” Houlihan also felt the only justice in the story is delivered by Lisbeth.

“It’s a male fantasy,” is how Johnson felt about the book. She talked about how many female characters in the book wanted to have sex with Mikael. She also used a passage from the second book describing Lisbeth’s breast augmentation to illustrate her point.

While too few were in attendance, it was still a very thoughtful discussion and proof that popular fiction doesn’t have to be shallow and can have many layers and fodder for intelligent discussion. The book planned for the spring semester is Winesburg, Ohio by Sherwood Anderson.
Internet overload affects our attention spans

By Nick Pelster
Daily Nebraskan
Via U-Wire

The likelihood of you finishing this article is not good.

These first two sentences are already boring you.

After a few more words your eyes are going to scan down until something else catches their attention, and from there you may read a little longer, skim to the last paragraph, and finally move on to the next page.

Don't worry, I won't be offended.

It's not your fault.

It might not even be my fault.

Instead, blame the Internet.

Not only is it changing our brains, but it's changing society.

We have limited patience because our brain is being rewired to prefer reading brief segments of information over long blocks of text.

Shortened attention spans aren't only the result of countless distractions surrounding us throughout the day, but also what those things do to the neurological pathways transferring data through our brains.

So while the Internet gives us libraries of information at our fingertips and has revolutionized worldwide communication, it might also be making us dumber than the generations before us.

Is it all worth it?

Is losing the ability of deep, contemplative thought and long, deliberate reading worth the benefits of a hyper-connected race with the ability to pick up without years of schooling.

After words were broken up, hardbound books (as opposed to scrolls, which are impractical and difficult to navigate) made research easier for ancient scholars.

In 1450 the Gutenberg press was introduced and eventually made reading accessible to the lower classes of society.

Again, every new technology and innovation in reading and writing has, as a whole, made us collectively smarter and better off than before.

So why would the Internet be any different?

Evolution has nothing to do with our ability to read better than our ancestors; 2,500 years of reading with an alphabet is a sliver of time on the logic scale of human existence.

As a species who, for most of our being, needed to be acutely alert of our surroundings to avoid predators and other humans, long periods of blind focus on one thing goes against the evolved physical makeup of our brains.

Learning to read and write takes a considerable amount of time, and forces the brain to rewire itself in the process.

Therefore it is in our nature to focus our attention from one thing to another more so than to read a long book or engage in meditation.

Surfing the web may be more natural to us than reading a book, but that doesn’t mean it’s better.

With our attention spans shrinking because of the Internet’s bombardment of distractions, we lose the ability to form long-term memory.

Because of everything occupying our attention, our short-term, or working, memory is laboring overtime to keep up.

And as Carr states in “The Shallows,” “The depth of our intelligence hinges on our ability to transfer information from working memory to long-term memory and weave it into conceptual schemas (the concepts which aid us in complex decision making).”

These schemas are responsible for the creativity and original ideas that are needed to solve complex problems.

All of which are critical to the further advancement of society.

But with Facebook, Twitter, blogs, e-mail, text messaging, television, smart phones and more often being engaged all at once, the information overload is weakening our long-term memory, and the intuitive wisdom that goes with decision-making is being lost with it.

So what does it mean for society if we are losing our attention spans while gaining access to vast amounts of information at the same time?

For students it makes long reading assignments harder to digest, and lengthy papers require even more time and focus to write.

It may be good for a stock broker to be able to scan through piles of information in a short time, but for a lawyer looking through dry, lengthy summaries of court cases to keep their client free, one would hope they could concentrate on their work.

Or look at our president (notorious for spending time on his Blackberry), who is unable to commit to memory even the basic points of his speeches without the help of a teleprompter.

Would this be a sign of someone who can’t make major decisions because his brain hasn’t stored enough long-term memory?

Does he not have the schemas necessary to provide him with enough creativity to come up with the best solution?

Probably not, but it is a new way to start looking at the changing world around us.

None of this is meant to be a call for everyone to abandon the Internet and read James Joyce’s “Ulysses” this weekend.

But it should be a reminder that humanity and culture are not static, not even the physical makeup inside our heads.

Moving forward with new technologies, we should be aware there is a give and take involved, and we are giving away as much as we are taking.

While we distract ourselves with endless amounts of media, our ability to fully understand it is slipping.

And if you’re still with me and not halfway through the crossword by now, you’re either my mother or none of this applies to you.

To the latter, I’m envious, and to my mother, “Hi!”
Study finds different fonts may help students learn

By Prerna Ramachandra
The Daily Princetonian
Via U-Wire

It was only after hours of photocopying required readings that 2010 Princeton graduate Connor Diemand-Yauman, then a junior, realized that he had accidentally cut off the last few letters of each line. Little did he know that through deciphering these readings, he would formulate an idea for his thesis that would ultimately be written about in The Economist, featured on BBC News and published in the psychology journal Cognition.

“When I began reading the poorly copied passages, I was surprised to notice that I was concentrating and retaining the material better than usual,” the former USG president explained in an e-mail.

The experience sparked his interest in disfluency, or the subjective feeling of difficulty associated with cognitive tasks — an experience which has been shown to allow for deeper mental processing. In his thesis, Diemand-Yauman manipulated a different variable that contributes to disfluency: font style.

He ultimately found, through laboratory and classroom trials, that hard-to-read fonts allowed students to retain more information than easy-to-read fonts did.

Diemand-Yauman’s interest in disfluency coincided with those of his thesis adviser, psychology professor Daniel Oppenheimer, who worked with Diemand-Yauman to mold his personal experience into a rigorous study.

“Connor and I brainstormed possible thesis topics together for months,” Oppenheimer said. “The eventual thesis topic he worked on bore only a cursory resemblance to what he had initially thought of.”

Diemand-Yauman joined Oppenheimer’s research lab, and the two “met nearly every week — sometimes multiple times a week — and exchanged countless e-mails,” Oppenheimer said. He added that Diemand-Yauman also got feedback from other researchers after presenting at lab meetings.

The study had two phases. In the first, researchers gave two groups of students 90 seconds to memorize information about fictional aliens that was presented in three different fonts: an easy-to-read font, Arial, and two difficult-to-read fonts, Comic Sans MS and Bodoni MT.

In a quiz administered 15 minutes later, the group of students reading from a handout printed in a difficult-to-read font outperformed those reading from the easy-to-read handout by 14 percent.

The second phase looked at whether the results applied in the classroom. Students aged 15-18 in six different classes at an Ohio public school were given handouts that had been previously manipulated by University researchers, who formatted the handouts in different fonts. As in the first experiment, students learning from handouts in difficult-to-read fonts performed better on tests.

Despite the statistical significance of the results, the researchers acknowledged the study’s limitations, including that classroom subjects came from a high-performing school with well-trained teachers.

Diemand-Yauman also cautioned against making things too disfluent, as this “could potentially cause students to give up all together. Subtlety is the key.”

He added that he has been floored by the attention his research has received.

“I feel very honored to have worked so closely with Professor Oppenheimer on this project, and I am very happy about the publicity because I feel that this is a finding that educators need to know about,” he said.

While many educators believe that quality teaching depends on instinct and experience, Diemand-Yauman said that counterintuitive findings like his show that this is not the whole story.

Addressing the larger implications of this study on education, Oppenheimer explained, “Sometimes small interventions can have big effects on learning. The key take-home message of Connor’s work is that the research in cognitive psychology can be used to develop cost-effective ways of improving education.”

Steve’s Reviews

Come Around Sundown-Kings Of Leon

By Steve LaVoie
Contributing Writer

During the first half minute of this album, I kept thinking maybe this band can finally win me over, then front man Caleb Followill’s voice came in and threw any chance of that happening out the window.

“Come Around Sundown” is an album with some good sounds that get drowned out by the dull. If these tracks were just instrumentals they would have been great, but the vocals turn a very enjoyable listening experience into a game of seeing how long you can avoid yawning.

The sound feels like southern and arena rock mixed together, but after the first two tracks it feels like the band doesn’t know what the hell they want to be. The most enjoyable way to hear the album is to just listen to “The End” and “Radioactive” and forget the rest, especially the final track “Pickup Truck.” This track’s sole saving grace is that it breaks up the monotony of the majority of the record, the problem is it accomplishes this feat by being purely terrible. It’s a track that really just sounds like the band were falling asleep themselves, but that the album for some reason needed thirteen tracks instead of twelve.

While this album might be for fans of Kings Of Leon, and they may very well earn new fans with this latest effort, I just did not enjoy it. However there were definitely good things here so I can’t write them off completely but ultimately I have to say better luck next time.

1 ½ stars out of 4