

Campus switches to Blackboard course management software

Good-bye Web CT. Hello Blackboard 9. YSU is changing its course management software from Web CT to Blackboard 9, a move that university officials say will help improve the capability and reliability of the technology that faculty use in their course work.

“This change to the Blackboard 9 platform will provide a significant upgrade to our course management and should greatly enhance the experience for both faculty and students,” said Mike Hrishenko, interim executive director of Technology Services.

“And, just as important, we will have true around-the-clock, seven-days-a-week technical support for the new software. So far, we are getting rave reviews from faculty who are using the new software.”

Course management software is used by about 450 YSU faculty members to manage their class work and communicate with students. Faculty can post their syl-

labi on the site, as well as assignments, lecture materials, videos and just about any other item that the faculty member chooses to help enhance the educational and communications process of the class.

WebCT, started in the mid 1990s, was the world’s first widely-successful course management system for higher education. At its height, it was in use by more than 10 million students in 80 countries. In 2006, WebCT was acquired by Blackboard Inc., and the name is being phased out in favor of the Blackboard brand.

Hrishenko said YSU has been using the WebCT course management platform for nearly a decade, and he said the move to Blackboard 9 was important for several reasons.

First, in 2011, support for WebCT will end. “So, time was running out,” he said. Second, while WebCT was internally hosted on YSU’s server, Blackboard 9

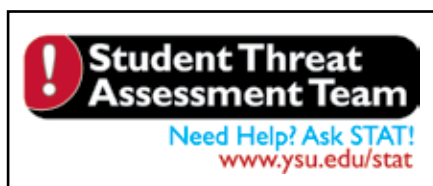
(continued on back page)



Student Threat Assessment Team proactive in stopping campus problems

YSU’s Student Threat Assessment Team, entering its second year of operation, continues to work proactively in preventing and responding to threatening student behavior on campus.

The seven-member team, comprised of representatives from Student Affairs and the YSU Police Department, was created in response to recent campus crises across the nation, such as the shooting at Virginia Tech University nearly three years ago.



Since forming last spring, STAT has received and responded to about 25 calls for intervention and assistance, said Martin

Manning, associate director of Student Life and a STAT member. Reports are generally filed by faculty members, department chairs

or deans, with concerns ranging from emotionally-distressed students to disruptive classroom behavior, such as threatening comments or behavior by a student aimed at an instructor or classmate.

(continued on back page)

Meet the press...

Late last month, Cynthia Anderson conducted her first news conference since the Board of Trustees named her the university’s seventh president. Here, she does an interview with WFMJ TV. Anderson, YSU vice president for student affairs, will replace David C. Sweet, who retires on June 30.



eUpdate exclusives

For more news about YSU, read these and other stories in eUpdate at <http://cfweb.cc.ysu.edu/marketcomm/index.cfm>.

- An episode of WYSU 88.5 FM's public affairs program "Lincoln Avenue," hosted by YSU Professor Sherry Linkon, has been awarded a 2010 Ohio Public Images Media Award.
- YSU President David C. Sweet's white paper titled "Growing a University in a Shrinking City" is featured in the latest release of *Presidential Perspectives*, a higher education leadership series for college presidents.
- University Theater presents the comic drama "The Cripple of Inishmaan" March 25 to 28 and April 1 to 3 in Spotlight Theater in Bliss Hall.
- The YSU Poetry Center presents "A Reading by Dora Malech and James Galvin" in the Ohio Room of Kilcawley Center 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 25. The reading is open to the public, and admission is free.
- Justice Maureen O'Connor of the Supreme Court of Ohio will be the guest speaker at YSU's third Annual Diversity Leadership Recognition Celebration on Thursday, March 25 at Mr. Anthony's in Boardman.
- The Center for Nonprofit Leadership at YSU has received a \$15,500 grant from the Ohio Campus Compact to participate in the "Pay It Forward: Strengthening Communities through Student-Led Philanthropy Initiative."

Youngstown STATE UNIVERSITY

The YSUUpdate is published every other week during the academic year and once a month in the summer by the Office of Marketing and Communications. 8-003

Marketing and Communications
133 Tod Hall, Youngstown, Ohio 44555-3519
racole01@ysu.edu 330-941-3519
cevinarsky@ysu.edu

Astronomer Durrell part of Hubble research group



Pat Durrell

Imagine finding a living dinosaur in your backyard. An international team of astronomers, including Pat Durrell, associate professor of physics and astronomy at YSU, has found the astronomical equivalent of prehistoric life in our intergalactic backyard: a group of small, ancient galaxies that has waited 10 billion years to come together.

Durrell, a research associate at Pennsylvania State University before joining the YSU faculty in 2004, is also director of YSU's Ward Beecher Planetarium. One of his primary areas of research is the study of ancient star clusters, both within and outside of galaxies.

On this project, he was heavily involved in the planning and targeting of the observations using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. He also led the part of the project dealing with the oldest star clusters, known as globu-

lar clusters, which are located around all of the galaxies in the group.

Encounters between dwarf galaxies are normally seen billions of light-years away and therefore occurred billions of years ago. But these galaxies are relatively nearby, only 166 million light-years away, according to a news release on HubbleSite.org.

New images of the galaxies by Hubble offer a window into what commonly happened in the universe's formative years, when large galaxies were created from smaller building blocks, the news release says.

"We found the oldest stars in a few ancient globular star clusters that date back to about 10 billion years ago," said astronomer Sarah Gallagher of the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, leader of the study. "Therefore, we know the system has been around for a while."

The team's results appear in the February issue of *The Astronomical Journal*.

For more information, and to view a Hubble image from the study, visit eUpdate at <http://cfweb.cc.ysu.edu/marketcomm/index.cfm>. ■

Congressman Ryan honored at spring commencement



Tim Ryan

U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, D-17th, will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree at YSU's spring commencement on Saturday, May 15.

Ryan will receive the degree and speak at the commencement ceremony for undergraduate students at 10 a.m. in Beeghly Center. Commencement for graduate students will be 2:30 p.m., also in Beeghly Center.

Ryan, a native of Niles, holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Bowling Green State University, and a law degree from Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, N.H.

After serving as a member of the Ohio State Senate, Ryan was elected to Congress in 2003 and is now in his fourth term in office.

He is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations. He also serves on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Related Agencies; the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, ; and the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies. ■

World travel a bonus for student researchers

YSU senior Ben Detwiler had never traveled much before he signed on as a research assistant in physics professor James “Jeff” Carroll’s nuclear isomer lab three years ago.

Since then, the electrical engineering major’s part-time job has taken him to Hawaii, Germany, California, Chicago and Washington D.C., all expenses paid.

But world travel is just one of the perks that Detwiler and other student research assistants enjoy, said Carroll, while working on a nuclear isomer research project supported by \$4 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Defense.

“These students get to share in groundbreaking experiments and work with state-of-the-art technology,” he said, adding that many student-researchers have also co-authored academic papers published in prestigious physics journals and presented their work at physics conferences around the world.

Last October, for example, Carroll took four members of his team to Waikoloa, Hawaii, for the annual meeting of the American Physical Society Division of Nuclear Physics, held jointly with the Japan Physical Society, where the students presented posters describing aspects of their work with isomers.

Detwiler went on that trip, along with his brother Tim, a senior also majoring in electrical engineering; Trevor Balint, a senior physics major; and Isaac Mills, a senior education major. All four were awarded travel support by the society on the strength of their research submissions.

“It was pretty cool to get the input of other scientists, but it made me a little nervous at times because I knew they had a lot more experience than we did,” Ben Detwiler said. “No one else there was doing research on isomers, so there was a lot of interest in our work.”

Detwiler was part of a team that traveled to Germany to perform experiments at the GSI Helmholtz Center for Heavy Ion Research, that country’s top nuclear research institution. He’s also conducted several experiments for the grant-funded research at an Army lab in Washington.

Groups of student researchers have accompanied Carroll on three separate trips to Japan to perform experiments at the Radioactive Ion Accelerator Complex there. The most recent trip was funded by a private company, Ecopulse Inc.

Carroll said he chooses research assistants representing a wide range of academic majors, not just physics, and prefers to hire freshmen or sophomores so they can work

for several years on the project. “I want students to get immersed in the research, to develop ownership in it, to become partners in it,” he said.

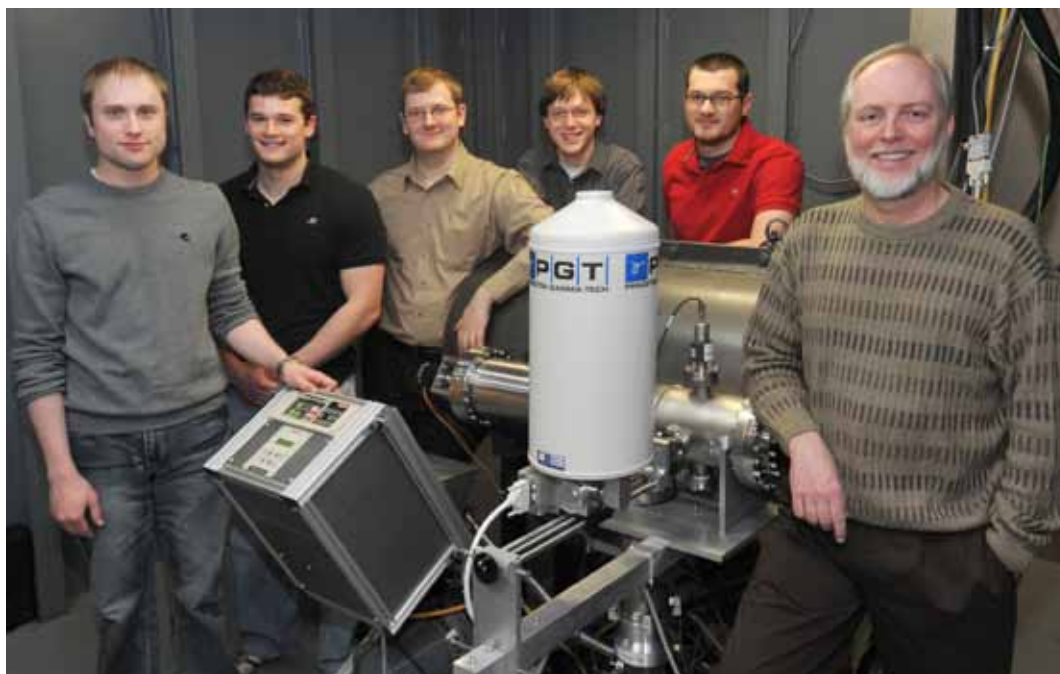
Gregg Sturuss, chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, said Carroll’s use of student lab workers helps to fulfill the department’s mission to teach through research. “We believe this kind of experience enhances students’ education and improves their status for entry into graduate school or future jobs,” he said. “Their experiences really rival those for graduate students on every level.”

An internationally-respected nuclear physicist, Carroll has been awarded more than \$4 million in federal research dollars on a competitive, single-investigator basis since he joined the YSU faculty in 1995, the largest amount ever awarded to a single faculty member at YSU. Carroll also had a paper published recently in the *Physical Review Letters* and featured on its website, prl.aps.org, his third publication in that prestigious international physics journal and one of nearly 80 peer-reviewed publications overall.

Ron Propri, a YSU alumnus who worked with Carroll as an undergrad, and Phil Ugorowski, formerly a post-doctorate student in the isomer project, were among his co-authors.

“Acceptance of a publication in *Physical Review Letters* is quite an accomplishment,” Sturuss said, estimating that fewer than 10 percent of research physicists have published in the journal. “It shows that the work done is more than accepted as quality research; it indicates that the work is of interest to all physicists.” ■

James Carroll, right, professor of physics, is shown in his nuclear isomer research lab in Moser Hall with students, from the left, Geoff Trees, Ben Detwiler, Isaac Mills, Trevor Balint and Tim Detwiler. From Japan to Germany, Carroll and his team of students have traveled the globe as part of the research.





Wind tunnel...

YSU unveiled a new wind tunnel in Moser Hall during a news conference last month. The wind tunnel was built by Northern States Metals, a Youngstown-based metal fabricating and alternative energy firm, as part of a partnership between the firm and the university. Answering questions from the press are, from the left, Martin Abraham, dean of the YSU College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Ganesh V. Kudav, engineering professor; and Robert Voytilla, chief financial officer for Northern States Metals. Read the full story in eUpdate at <http://cfweb.cc.yosu.edu/marketcomm/index.cfm>.

STAT

(Continued from page 1)

Once the report is made, STAT assesses the situation and arranges an appropriate plan of action, said Judith Gaines, executive director of Student Life and a member of STAT.

“We pull together what has been reported, look at what has happened, what needs to be done and which person will take charge of handling the issue,” she said.

Actions range from working with the student individually through residence life and the counseling center, to meeting the student at their classroom prior to class to discuss concerns.

“It is very situational,” Gaines said, “but the most important thing we do is connect the dots and communicate in a nonthreatening, confidential way that ensures the safety of all parties.”

Communication is key, Manning said. “Before, just as was the case in many campus incidents like Virginia Tech, lots of people knew that a student had problems, but the information was never shared,” he said.

The group strives to be proactive, rather than reactive. “So far,” said Manning, “we have been able to step in and redirect before things get out of hand, which is exactly our goal.”

For more information, or to enlist the help of STAT, visit www.yosu.edu/stat/. The site includes referral forms and a Faculty

& Staff Help Guide with team contact information.

In addition to STAT, YSU has implemented further preventative safety measures campus-wide. The Wireless Emergency Notification System, or YSU Alert System, designed to warn students via text and email of any potential threats to safety, became active this past fall. ■

– Story by Melissa Sullivan

Members of STAT:

Lt. Mike Cretella,
YSU Police Department

Erin Driscoll,
Associate Director,
Residence Life

Jack Fahey,
Executive Director, Student
Services, and Ombudsperson

Judith Gaines,
Executive Director,
Student Life

Anne Lally,
Counselor, Career and
Counseling Services

Martin Manning,
Associate Director, Student Life

Danielle Meyer,
Director, Housing and
Residence Life

Blackboard 9

(Continued from page 1)

is hosted on Blackboard’s server, giving the new software full disaster recovery capabilities. And, finally, Blackboard 9 is easier to navigate, supports many different media, and includes blogging capabilities, improved grade management, the ability to customize courses based on personal preferences, and tools to check for plagiarism.

YSU’s transition to Blackboard 9 started last fall with 12 faculty mentors, Hrishenko said. This spring semester, about 20 courses are being taught using the Blackboard 9 software. An additional 12 faculty mentors will use and assist with the platform over the summer. Both WebCT and Blackboard 9 will remain in operation through the end of August, at which time WebCT will be shut down, he said. All courses previously taught using WebCT will need to use the Blackboard 9 software for fall semester 2010.

Faculty can register for Blackboard 9 training via YSU’s Instructional Technology Center website at <http://itc.yosu.edu>. Click on “workshops,” “current” and “workshop registration page.”

Blackboard 9 provides around-the-clock support for all faculty and students by calling 330-941-1595 (or 1595 from campus phones) and selecting option 2 on the menu. Support is also available via the “Blackboard Support” tab on the YSU Tech Desk website at <http://techdesk.yosu.edu/>. ■