

YSU participates in NSF's polymer research center

In 2001, Jessica Shipman's life took a turn.

At a time when many of her ninth-grade classmates at Warren Harding High School were obsessed with the latest installment of *Harry Potter*, 14-year-old Jessica was enraptured in *The Elegant Universe*, a book about string theory.

"From that time on, I was just hooked on physics," she said.

Now a junior physics and mathematics major at YSU, Shipman is one of the students who will be part of YSU's new and prestigious affiliation with the National Science Foundation's Center for Layered Polymeric Systems, known as CLiPS.

Led by researchers at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the \$19 million center focuses on layered polymers – combining thin layers of plastic or other synthetic materials to create products ranging from packaging materials to optical switches.

Partnering on the center with Case are the University of Texas at Austin, Fisk University in Nashville, University of Southern Mississippi and Cleveland Metro School District. The center also has six affiliates: Ohio Northern University, Rochester Institute of Technology, State

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Jim Andrews, left, and Tom Oder, faculty members in YSU's physics department, are joined by student Jessica Shipman in a lab in the basement of Ward Beecher Hall.

Site team recommends full, 10-year accreditation renewal

The site team from the Higher Learning Commission is recommending a full, 10-year renewal of YSU's accreditation.

After a two-day visit to campus last month, the site team gave a brief exit report before a packed crowd in the Board of Trustees' meeting room in Tod Hall.

The team reported that the university has met all five criteria set by the Higher Learning Commission. In addition, the team recommended approval of YSU's request to offer a doctor of physical therapy degree. The team also recommended approval of YSU's request to expand its online courses and degree programs.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools is expected to act formally on the recommendations as early as June.

In its verbal report, the team noted the university's growth in enrollment and diversity, the sense of loyalty and com-

mitment of faculty and staff, the success of the Center for Student Progress and the university's consistent commitment to and partnerships with the community.

The team also noted the need to address low morale, deferred building maintenance, lack of transparency in the budget process, compliance with General Education Requirements and faculty buy-in to data-driven assessment of student learning outcomes.

The team recommended a "focused visit" on assessment and a progress report on implementation of the university's expanded online courses and degree programs.

President David C. Sweet thanked Bege Bowers, as well as Janice Elias and



Bege Bowers



Janice Elias



Sharon Stringer

Sharon Stringer, for leading the team that put together the self-study for the HLC team site visit.

"All of us at the university are grateful for their commitment and hard work that have made this process a success," he said.

Sweet also thanked the dozens of individuals on and off campus "who served on committees, attended countless meetings and dedicated themselves to the preparation of the self-study report."

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eUpdate exclusives

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

- **There's a new way of finding out what's happening at YSU's Archives and Special Collections. The office has launched a new online blog at <http://ysuarchives.blogspot.com>.**
- **Insurance sales is one of Ohio's fastest growing occupations, and YSU's Metro College is responding with Ohio pre-licensure insurance classes starting up again this spring.**
- **Artist Fred Wilson, whose work has appeared in museums worldwide, is featured in the YSU Skeggs Lecture series 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, in Bliss Hall.**
- **The YSU Dance Competition Team performed at the USA Dance Ohio Chapter Sweetheart Ball at Kent State University in February.**
- **Nationwide, campus crime is on the decline and campus police departments are better equipped and prepared, a new report says.**
- **Overall median base salary for senior-level administrative jobs in colleges and universities increased by 4 percent, a new survey says.**
- **The number of doctoral degrees awarded by U.S. universities increased by 5.1 percent in 2006 to a record high of 45,596.**

Accounting pros say profiling works as fraud prevention tool



James Tackett

What can a business do to shield itself from internal theft and fraud? Three YSU accounting and finance professors recommend using psychological profiling as a tool to thwart corporate crime.

James Tackett, Fran Wolf, and Gregory Claypool, all professors in the Williamson College of Business Administration, collaborated for the article: "Profiling High-Risk Employees," published last year in the professional journal *Internal Auditing*.

Tackett, a certified fraud examiner, said psychological profiling of employees and job applicants is a relatively new armament in the fight against white-collar crime.

The idea, he said, is to make a pre-emptive strike against fraud before it happens by highlighting employees who exhibit anomalous behavior that correlates with corporate misconduct. Claypool and Wolf have extensive education in corporate fraud deterrence and psychology, respectively.

The professors listed three types of employees as most likely to engage in improprieties: those facing severe financial pressure, disgruntled employees motivated by revenge for a perceived injustice, and those who exhibit antisocial personality disorder. The highest possible risk classification, they wrote, would be an employee with a combination of antisocial personality disorder combined with financial problems or a grudge mentality.

Workers facing financial pressure are more likely to steal from an employer to pay their debts, the professors asserted, whether the money is owed for legitimate expenses, such as medical bills, or for drugs, gambling or other vices.

Disgruntled workers may commit fraud, but they might also find other ways to hurt the company, Tackett said, such as spreading rumors, blocking a committee's progress with needless delays or filibustering, or deliberately giving bad advice.

Tackett, Wolf, and Claypool cited studies that indicate 4 percent of the general

population suffers from antisocial personality disorder, also known as sociopathic or psychopathic disorders. "The corporate psychopath is deceitful, totally without loyalty, conscience, guilt, or empathy," the writers said, "and they ruthlessly exploit the corporate environment for personal gain."

The authors recommend that large corporations or agencies consider hiring a full-time profiler with an advanced degree in psychology. Small and medium-sized businesses can benefit from the profiling concept as well, Tackett said, by tightening up their hiring practices and being more alert to warning signs among incumbent employees.

Business owners and managers can improve their chances of detecting a problem employee or job applicant, he said, by studying the subject of profiling. Tackett suggests reading *Snakes in Suits*—a book by Paul Babiak and Robert Hare that the professors cited as one of the sources for their article.

"Clearly, having a job applicant sign a waiver for a background check is wise; references should always be checked," he said. "When hiring employees in a position of trust - a position where they could do significant damage - a credit check is also prudent. If the applicant won't agree to a background investigation, it should be a red flag."

Dishonesty is a common trait for people with antisocial personality disorder, so the authors advise employers to check the facts listed on an applicant's resume, including educational credentials and past employment. While it's not uncommon for job seekers to exaggerate their accomplishments, Tackett said, blatant lies on a resume signal trouble.

Ideally, the authors wrote, employee profiling should be used during the hiring process, and applicants who fit a high-risk profile should not be hired.

Those already on staff who exhibit any of the high-risk traits should be monitored, they said, but disciplinary action should be based upon performance, not profiling results. "Watch them, but don't harass them," Tackett advised. ■

Story by Cynthia Vinarsky

Youngstown STATE UNIVERSITY

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Susan Moorer, coordinator of Diversity Initiatives, has been appointed to the Performance Improvement Committee at Humility of Mary Health Partners.

Silvia J. Imler, assistant professor, Counseling and Special Education, presented "Understanding Contextual Factors: Becoming Culturally Responsive Teachers" at the 6th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Education in January in Honolulu. Imler and **Sally Lewis**, assistant professor of Counseling and Special Education, presented "A Response to Intervention in Closing the Achievement Gap for All Children" at the same conference.

Paul Rohrbaugh, instructor, Educational Foundations, Research, Technology and Leadership, had the article "Class Warfare: The Use and Application of Simulation Games in Teaching," published in issue 21 (January 2008) of *Against the Odds: A Journal of Historical Analysis and Simulation*. Rohrbaugh has also been invited to present on the design and use of simulation games for teaching at the 3rd International

Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences in Prato, Italy in July.

Johanna Krontiris-Litowitz, professor, Biological Sciences, presented "The importance of articulating scientific reasoning in the classroom: If they can tell it, they know it" at the International Lilly Conference on College Teaching in Oxford, Ohio.

J. Douglas Faires, professor, Mathematics and Statistics, is a co-author of two books that will be published by the Mathematical Association of America. The books, *Contest Problem Book VIII* and *Contest Problem Book IX*, feature collections of problems from the American Mathematics Competitions.

Will Greenway, professor, English, has had three of his poems, "Up Mill Creek," "Twm Siôn Catti's Cave" and "Daytona," published in the Winter/Spring 2008 edition of *Cave Wall 3*.

Helene J. Sinnreich, director of Judaic and Holocaust Studies, History, has been awarded a fellowship from the International

Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. She plans to take the fellowship in the spring of 2009.

Arlene Floyd, director, Associate Degree & Tech Prep Programs, has been named to the leadership team for the Great Lakes Girls Collaborative Project, a regional affiliate of the National Girls Collaborative Project and funded by the National Science Foundation to advance gender equity in STEM careers. The Great Lakes collaboration includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Randy Hoover, professor, Teacher Education, and **Kathy Shook**, instructor, Counseling and Special Education, presented a paper at the 50th annual conference of the American Association of Teacher Education in New Orleans. The paper was titled "Nesting Standards in Thematic Unit Plans." Hoover also served as a session organizer at the conference for a set of papers dealing with innovations in standards-based education. ■



Bridge contest

Students from seven area high schools participated in the first annual Mahoning Valley Miniature Bridge Building Competition in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center in late February. Students designed and constructed balsa wood bridges that were later load-tested. The goal of the competition was to promote an awareness of civil engineering as a career field and to provide students with an educational opportunity to apply their knowledge to a real world application. The YSU Department of Civil Engineering was among the event's sponsors.



Polymer research center

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University of New York in Fredonia, Pennsylvania State University in Erie, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana and YSU.

At YSU, the academic collaboration will include work in polymer physics and polymer engineering within the physics and chemical engineering programs. Facilitators are Jim Andrews, professor of physics; Doug Price, associate professor of chemical engineering; and Tom Oder, assistant professor of physics.

Andrews, who has spent most of his career researching optical materials and polymers, said YSU was chosen as an affiliate because of its growing research programs, its strong focus on undergraduate education, and its educational outreach in the YSU service area.

“The research leaders at Case were impressed with the way YSU’s new College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics facilitates collaboration among the engineering and science disciplines,” Andrews said.

As part of CLiPS, YSU will be involved in several outreach efforts to

educate the general public about polymer science and how polymers are used in everyday life. Part of that effort could include the development of a program in the Ward Beecher Planetarium to educate children and adults about polymers. Andrews calls the program a “polymerium”

The CLiPS program also provides

hands-on research opportunities for YSU undergraduate students involving state-of-the-art synthetic materials. In addition to working with Andrews, Price and Oder on their research, YSU students will be eligible to participate in an NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates summer program at Case. ■

HLC report

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“And, finally,” Sweet said, “I want to thank every member of the faculty and staff for their honesty during this process and their continued commitment to the success of the university and its students.” ■



First daughter

Youngstown and YSU remained a major focus of the candidates in the Democratic primary season as Chelsea Clinton visited campus Feb. 26. About 300 students, faculty, staff and community members attended the hour-long question-and-answer session in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center as Clinton campaigned on behalf of her mother, U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton. YSU previously hosted rallies by U.S. Sen. Barack Obama and U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy.