As always, the year is flying by. Students are finishing finals and they are looking forward to a well-deserved break.

Even though the students may be leaving campus, the university never really stops buzzing with the excitement of new ideas, and this issue of Life & Letters gives you a sample of some of our projects and people.

Dr. Robert Helmreich from our Department of Psychology is looking at issues that affect all of us at some point—safety in health care and aviation. The work he and his team are doing is proving to be vital in improving the safety processes in industry.

One of the important things we do in higher education, and in liberal arts in particular, is open the world to our students. One of our professors, Toyin Falola in the History Department, does this in an extraordinary fashion. A favorite among students, Dr. Falola is a force in teaching—admired by his peers and the recipient of numerous awards. You can read about how he helps his students broaden their vision of the world.

When it comes to a vision of the world, one of our students, Melisa Gerecci, has taken her experience and found a way to help her fellow students make the most of their education. She is one of only 18 national winners of the prestigious Beinecke Scholarship and will be building on her Plan II education in the coming years.

One of our newer faculty members, Dr. Tiffany Gill, has done some great work exploring the political and cultural influence of African American beauty salons. I think you will find her research about the activism that took place in beauty salons fascinating.

These are just a few of the people who are a part of the college community—educating students, influencing lives and being a part of the larger world. I wish you the very best in the coming year—please keep in touch.

Richard Lariviere
Dean, College of Liberal Arts
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To err, they say, is human. This truism is comforting when vases are smashed or foul shots come bounding off the backboard. But it isn’t so comforting when a surgeon leans over a body in the operating room or a patient is rushed into the emergency room. To err, in these cases, can be deadly.

In 1999, the Institute of Medicine reported that medical error was responsible for up to 98,000 hospital deaths each year in the United States. The medical industry took note, and improving patient safety became a fast priority. Many in the industry looked to Dr. Robert Helmreich and the researchers in his Human Factors Research Project at The University of Texas at Austin for help.

Helmreich is one of the leading experts in aviation safety in the country, and his team has been studying human error and teamwork in high-risk environments for more than 20 years. They’ve conducted research on everyone from Antarctic expeditioners to airline pilots, astronauts to heart surgeons. And not one of the group would say that the ultimate goal of their work is to prevent people from ever making mistakes.

“Error is part of the human condition,” said Helmreich. “We’ve got limited capacity, we don’t function super well under stress, and we get into situations where we make mistakes.”

Learning to contain the consequences of those mistakes and training teams to work more effectively to detect and recover from their errors is key to
Helmreich and his group’s work. They have a proven record in aviation and have expanded their work to include medicine as well.

“The medical world has sort of awakened in the past three or four years to the whole idea of system level error and human error in general,” said Dr. Dave Musson, a researcher at the lab whose background includes a decade practicing medicine in Canada.

“It’s a field that for years was driven by two things: high individual standards of perfection and tremendous fear of litigation. Both of these things have led to an intolerance toward error and suppression or denial of it when it happens.”

Many considered the aviation industry a close parallel to medicine in thinking about safety issues. Both industries involve high-risk environments, highly trained individuals working in teams, high regulation and a hierarchical structure. Thus, looking at how aviation has made strides in safety over the past two decades may offer clues for improving the medical industry.

Aviation has shifted from a reactive to a proactive approach. Instead of waiting for an accident to occur, the industry tries to identify vulnerabilities within operations and address them before an accident can happen.

The Line of Operations Safety Audit (LOSA) has helped airlines understand those vulnerabilities. With LOSA, trained observers actually sit in the cockpit with pilots and crew and observe them in normal operations during regularly scheduled flights. Early on, the goal was to examine team performance issues: How did the crew communicate with each other? How did information flow between the captain and first officer?

Since 1996, LOSA has shifted to look closely at the threat and error side of crew performance, including how things such as bad weather and equipment malfunctions are handled and how mistakes are managed. Thousands of observations have been conducted, and recently the International Civil Aviation Organization named LOSA a recommended practice for airlines around the world.

Bruce Tesmer, a captain at Continental Airlines and manager of two of their safety programs, says that the practice has enabled the industry to improve by identifying precursors to accidents.

“What they’ve done is offer practical research that has an answer at the end of it,” Tesmer said. “The whole industry is a winner in this endeavor.”

LOSA findings have helped aviation understand its own culture and how it contributes to or hinders safety. For example, where once a clearly defined hierarchy often prevented a first officer from even pointing out an error to the captain, now teamwork is much more the norm. And training for teamwork and communication is not just common; it is mandatory.

Helmreich and his team helped develop Crew Resource Management (CRM) training to teach pilots, crews and other airline personnel to work as a team to reduce errors. Simulations became focused on teamwork as well as motor skills. The dangers inherent in hierarchy were fleshed out. CRM training is now required of airlines across the world.

The industry has really caught on, and the hope is that the medical industry will follow.

“In the early days, CRM programs had the reputation of being like charm school,” said Bill Taggart, who has been developing programs and training aviation personnel for 20 years. “Today in commercial aviation it is totally accepted. Delta is one of the strongest proponents of it. We’ve been working with Southwest for over 15 years.”

Through LOSA, CRM and other approaches, including confidential error reporting for pilots and research into the differences in aviation protocol across cultures, the aviation industry has created a culture of safety that other industries hope to emulate.
Beauty and the Business: Professor explores political, social legacy of African American women beauticians.

When Louis Martin, deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee in the 1960s, wanted to attract black voters, he called the beauty shop, and it wasn’t to get a haircut. Martin knew that beauty salon operators were essential in getting political materials distributed and the community excited about a candidate.

It was actually Marjorie Stewart Joyner, a Chicago beautician, whose local success inspired Martin to go national with his political outreach efforts. Like many of her colleagues, she helped create a space where black women could begin to excel in business, exercise their political muscle and have some fun.

Tiffany Gill, an assistant professor of history at The University of Texas at Austin, researches African American women beauticians, hair salon owners and beauty product manufacturers throughout the early 20th century to the present. Her dissertation, titled “Civic Beauty: Beauty Culturists and the Politics of African-American Female Entrepreneurship, 1900-1965,” was awarded the Herman E. Krooss Prize for best dissertation in business history at the Business History Conference’s (BHC) annual meeting held in Le Creusot, France at the Académie François Bourdon. The BHC is the largest professional organization of business historians in the world.

While conducting her research, Gill anticipated finding the gossip, funny stories and social aspects of the beauty business, but her research uncovered a much deeper story. “When I first started my research, I didn’t think it was going to go very far,” Gill said. “But then I found beauticians were popping up everywhere, in the most surprising places, so I began to plot the dots to figure out what the larger story was.”

Gill discovered stories of black women gaining economic independence and political power, as well as providing a social outlet to the community. “The whole idea of wanting to be respected as business women was a challenge they all faced when getting started in the industry and it continued throughout most of the 20th century,” Gill said.

“I think there are so many more stories to tell in terms of the history of African American women. There’s a lot of great work out there, but there is still much to be done.”

“Tiffany Gill, an assistant professor of history at The University of Texas at Austin, researches African American women beauticians, hair salon owners and beauty product manufacturers throughout the early 20th century to the present. Her dissertation, titled “Civic Beauty: Beauty Culturists and the Politics of African-American Female Entrepreneurship, 1900-1965,” was awarded the Herman E. Krooss Prize for best dissertation in business history at the Business History Conference’s (BHC) annual meeting held in Le Creusot, France at the Académie François Bourdon. Tiffany Gill, an assistant professor of history at The University of Texas at Austin, researches African American women beauticians, hair salon owners and beauty product manufacturers throughout the early 20th century to the present. Her dissertation, titled “Civic Beauty: Beauty Culturists and the Politics of African-American Female Entrepreneurship, 1900-1965,” was awarded the Herman E. 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When Italian poet Dante Alighieri wrote his masterpiece, “The Divine Comedy,” in the early 1300s, the most advanced technology for getting the 14,233-line poem down was with pen and paper.

If he were alive today, perhaps Dante would have chosen his writing tools differently. Given a Mac and Internet access, the epic poet might have designed a Web site instead to chronicle his allegorical journey from Hell to Paradise.

Fortunately for students at The University of Texas at Austin taking Dr. Guy Raffa’s course on Dante, that Web site already exists.

“In teaching the ‘Divine Comedy,’ you learn quickly that students need to visualize what’s happening,” said Raffa, associate professor of Italian in the College of Liberal Arts, who developed concepts over several years for the Web site that ultimately became Danteworlds.

“The user of Danteworlds needs to be able to see what Dante sees, as he journeys through Hell, up the mountain of Purgatory and through the spheres of Paradise. I was already thinking about how I was teaching the class and how this project would complement and enrich aspects of the teaching.”

Winner of a Silver award in the Teaching with Technology category in the 2003 Innovative Use of
In the year 2001 and again in 2003, faculty member Franco "Raffa" Raffa developed instructional technology projects to start thinking early about how they were teaching their classes, how the technology would help, and then to talk to as many people as possible who have technological expertise.

Support for Raffa’s visions of the site came through a College of Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Grant in 2001, and another in 2003. Working with a team, including Robertson and technology specialists from LAITS, Raffa developed his ideas of how images of Dante’s Inferno could help his students better understand and interpret the text.

One of the goals for the project was to make it accessible not only to his students, but to anyone, anywhere, teaching Dante. For that Raffa needed programming and technical assistance, support from his department, college and university resources such as the Center for Instructional Technologies, and student feedback. Raffa believes that instructional technology is a good way to bring together the different components of a faculty member’s teaching and research. The commentary and notes Raffa wrote for the project are a result of his Dante scholarship, as well as his teaching. The commentary for the site has even spawned new ideas for his research.

More and more, technological advances are being introduced into the classroom, changing the way faculty teach and students learn. While technology can be a critical component to the educational experience, its use is not a shortcut to good teaching, said Raffa.

“The good technology we have now must go hand-in-hand with good pedagogy,” Raffa said. “Faculty members need to think long and hard about how they’re teaching their classes, and then how technology can help them to, maybe, do it a little differently.”

Student comments from course evaluations show that students appreciate the multimedia approach the Danteworlds site offers.

“The Web site was invaluable to my understanding of the Inferno,” said one student. “The pictures, both old and new, added a new dimension to the reading—as did the audio recordings.”

Raffa found that students are improving by several measures. Quiz scores are better than before he used the Web site in his course. Students use the site to prepare for class or to review and enhance what they’ve learned from the class discussions.

In class, discussion can get to a higher level more quickly. Raffa can spend less time on some of the basic information in class, and talk about other things in the course related to the poem. That’s one of the pedagogical advantages of this project, he believes—changing the way the classroom teaching occurs and enriching the students’ experiences.

“We’ve been in Hell so far; now it’s time to move on, to Purgatory and then Heaven.”

Dante’s “Divine Comedy” has three parts. Raffa now is working on the second and third parts of the poem.

“We’ve been in Hell so far; now it’s time to move on, to Purgatory and then Heaven,” he said.

Experience from the Inferno project has helped. Raffa is in the process of writing the commentary, notes and study questions for the next parts, and collaboration with the Liberal Arts technology group is already in progress.

Raffa advises other faculty who are interested in developing instructional technology projects to start thinking early about how they are teaching their classes, how the technology will help that, and then to talk to as many people as possible who have technological expertise.

For Raffa, it has been a wonderful combination of factors coming together to develop the Danteworlds Web site, and he acknowledges the help he’s received. Raffa said he is fortunate because of the proliferation of support at The University of Texas at Austin for faculty using instructional technology in their courses.

Raffa’s teaching and scholarship have been energized through working on this Web project, and he’s eager to continue the journey.

Dawn Cizmar
Photo by Marsha Miller
When I lecture on the history of science, I often start by asking my students a simple question,” Hunt said. “Do you believe the Earth goes around the sun?”

We live in a world where “instant gratification” is the norm. In days gone by, patience was essential in every aspect of life—whether traveling via Model-T or waiting for mail to arrive by Pony Express. It’s easy to forget just how much the world has changed in the last century or so, and we tend to take for granted the inventions and innovations that facilitate the ease of our current lifestyles.

Every day we communicate instantaneously with people who are 100, 1000, and even 10,000 miles away. We do so via phones with cords and phones without cords, and on computers where sending an email can take minutes, or even seconds, to reach its intended party.

Most of us don’t consider these electronic feats any more amazing than turning on a television and watching the Olympics take place in Greece.

And they’re not.

They’re all equally spectacular.

Scientists such as Newton, Copernicus, Einstein and Darwin dealt with the spectacular—the marvels of ingenious thought. Their inventive spirits live on in the seemingly ordinary, yet truly extraordinary, routines of our lives. And while most of us take these avant-garde innovators for granted, Dr. Bruce Hunt—historian, student of physics and overall inquisitive guy—doesn’t.

“Growing up, I was always curious about scientific ideas—where did they come from?” he asked. “What made these theories important? How did they develop?”

Hunt took these questions and went searching for answers.

“My over-arching aim has been to raise questions about the nature of science with as many undergraduate students as possible,” Hunt said. “I want to give them a sense of science as a process, not just a body of facts. And I want to help them understand that today science underlies decisions we face in everything from politics and the military to economic and environmental issues.”
Given his tenure in the field, and his 19 years of teaching classes with upwards of 200 students in each, he appears to be making great progress toward that goal.

Hunt has authored more than a dozen articles on the history of physics, wrote the book “The Maxwellians” in 1991 and is working on a manuscript titled, “Power and Light: Physics and Technology from James Watt to Albert Einstein.”

“When I lecture on the history of science, I often start by asking my students a simple question,” Hunt said. “Do you believe the Earth goes around the sun? If so, why? It’s a pretty counter-intuitive belief, and very few people can give you evidence to back up why they believe it. But we all do believe it. We believe because we have a sense that somehow, somehow someone has proved it. Science has enormous intellectual authority. And it has had that authority for two to three centuries.”

Although Hunt teaches a variety of courses that span the evolution of science, his primary field of study is 19th century physics and technology. His specialties are electrical theory and telecommunications.

“So much has taken place in communications since the mid-1800s,” Hunt said. “Submarine telegraphs, which are telegraph cables running under the ocean, led to massive changes in international communication. Information could suddenly pass around the world almost instantaneously, and global markets grew enormously. And, partly through their work on submarine cables, scientists developed ‘field theory,’ which led to the discovery of electromagnetic waves—and eventually radio.

“During the late 1930s, war was on the horizon,” Hunt said. “However, the discovery of the fission of uranium – which was made in December 1938 – had nothing to do with making a bomb. It was pure ‘ivory tower’ science by German chemists and physicists.

“In 1939, scientists around the world began to realize the possible military applications of this discovery. The Germans were nowhere near as close to making a bomb as many people thought. But, driven by fear of Hitler, England and the United States began working together in 1941 to produce an atomic bomb before the Germans could.”

According to Hunt, the British eventually handed over leadership in the project and in 1942, the Manhattan Project was born in the United States. During the early 1940s, over two billion U.S. dollars were spent on mobilizing resources and technology at two different plants, one in the state of Washington and one in Tennessee. The plant in Tennessee focused on producing highly enriched uranium for a gun-type bomb (designed to smash together enough U-235 to produce a “critical mass” and so a nuclear explosion), while the plant in Washington focused on using reactors to produce plutonium for bombs.

“Many people don’t realize that the United States developed and used two very different atomic bombs in World War II, with completely different designs,” Hunt said. “The one that was dropped on Hiroshima was a uranium-based gun-type bomb. The one dropped on Nagasaki was a plutonium-based implosion bomb, in which the detonation of a jacket of explosives compressed a sphere of plutonium so much that it ‘went critical.’ While the plutonium implosion design had been tested once, in New Mexico in July 1945, the uranium gun-type design was never tested before the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

“In the 20th century, physics played a crucial role in another area of interest for Hunt—the atomic bomb.

“Of course, by the time the bombs were dropped on Japan, Germany was entirely out of the war, and the original impetus behind the program—the race against Hitler—was gone. I teach a course on the history of the atomic bomb, and I always ask my students to write a paper evaluating the American decision to drop atomic bombs on Japanese cities. That’s an important part of the history of science—to understand the consequence that can result from scientists’ work.”

Amy Crossette
Photos by Marsha Miller
Patrick Olivelle wrote the book on ancient Indian culture. In fact, he’s written many books – 16, to be exact – painstakingly translating huge tomes of ancient India’s essential literature and examining various aspects of ancient Indian life.

He’s also written more than 40 articles that explore everything from ancient Indian language, religion and law to the cultural relevance of food, the social significance of hair, the role of women in ancient India and more. He’s been called one of the most productive scholarly contributors to the study of Hinduism. His acclaimed books have become “must have” resources for scholars of Indology, the study of India’s history, philosophies and cultures. He has lectured around the world and has received a multitude of awards, honors and fellowships for his books and his scholarship, including the Guggenheim Fellowship and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Fellowship.

“Outside of our differences, we have a basic connection in that we are all human, and because of that, we can find ways to communicate across languages, across cultures and across time.”

Olivelle said in describing his work with the texts of ancient India.
Those studying Sanskrit and Indian Religions at The University of Texas at Austin have the opportunity to connect with Olivelle daily. A professor at the university since 1991, this foremost expert in ancient Indian culture whose books have become standards in the field has also been chair of the Department of Asian Studies since 1994 and Alma Cowden Madden Centennial Professor in Liberal Arts since 2000.

In addition to his writing, his research and his teaching, Olivelle serves as a U.S. delegate for Oxford University Press, reviewing material related to world religions before it is published. Add to that his role as editor for the book series “South Asia Research,” published by Oxford University Press, and the book series “Sources of Indian Law” for Motilal Banarsidass, the largest publisher in India. Olivelle has also written reviews of more than 30 books about ancient Indian culture. Elected as vice president and president-elect of the American Oriental Society, Olivelle is also a trustee for the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Not surprisingly, when scholars talk about Patrick Olivelle, they often mention his massive contributions to Indology. But in his prolific 30-year career, what has Olivelle found to be most rewarding?

“I'm most proud of doing things that are not fashionable,” said Olivelle. “I've worked hard to help bring to light material that otherwise would not have been published. These are books that are not sexy to many of today’s publishers.”

Born in Sri Lanka, Olivelle pursued his interests on a winding path that eventually led to Austin. He studied philosophy and theology in Rome before receiving his B.A. from the University of Oxford in 1972 where he studied Sanskrit and Pali, an ancient Indian language used in Buddhist scriptures. He then went to the University of Pennsylvania, where he broadened his focus beyond Buddhism and was awarded a Ph.D. in History of Indian Religions in 1974.

From Pennsylvania, Olivelle went to Indiana University, where he taught in the Religious Studies Department for 17 years, and served as chair for six. While Olivelle enjoyed Indiana's Religious Studies program, he was one of only two people focusing on India, leaving him without much community in which to grow.

Olivelle was drawn to Austin in 1991 by a college friend who was then teaching Sanskrit at the university. That friend was Richard Lariviere, now the dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

“UT offered a much larger South Asia program, which has become even stronger over time,” explained Olivelle, who was attracted to the university’s Title VI program for South Asia, a national resource center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. “Coming here was the best move I could have made, because there are so many people with whom I can converse and collaborate. In fact, my shift from purely religious studies to a broader study of history and culture was due in part because I came here, and a different world opened up to me.”

Olivelle’s religious focus early in his career spurred his research on asceticism and Hindu culture, resulting in his award-winning book on the development of the Asrama System, an important religious institution, as well as his annotated translation of the early Upanisads, a group of significant philosophical Hindu scriptures in ancient India, for which he received the A.K. Ramanujan Translation Award. His focus has since shifted to the ancient Indian legal tradition of Dharmasastra, and he has just completed a seven-year project on a major ancient Indian text known as the Law Code of Manu. His published translation was released in February, and his 1200-page scholarly edition titled “Manu’s Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Manava-Dharmasastra” has just been released.

Those describing his translations often use words such as succinct, lucid, elegant, concise, meticulous, indispensable.

“Translation is both an art and a craft,” said Olivelle. “You have to have some artistic ability as well as the willingness to craft it, to rethink it, to find the precise description that conveys the true meaning.”

Ironically, Olivelle credits his strength as a translator to a lack of confidence in his English.

“I've found it helpful that English is not my native tongue,” said Olivelle. “This makes me less self-confident, less sloppy, more self-aware. I’m always second-guessing every word choice in order to attain the exact nuance.”

But, according to Olivelle, just as important as accuracy is context. In his books, Olivelle uses his vast research and knowledge of ancient Indian life to convey to

Olivelle, continued on page 21
Renaissance—A revival of intellectual or artistic achievement and vigor.

The Renaissance may have occurred centuries ago, but Melisa Gerecci, senior Plan II Honors student, still lives in the era made famous for widespread intellectualism, appreciation of the arts and an overall zest for learning.

Just as the Renaissance Era consumed Europeans during the 14th and 15th centuries, Gerecci is consumed with interest and knowledge in a wide array of topics. From art history to architecture, traveling back roads of Texas or touring the historic dwellings of Turkey, Gerecci likes to dabble in it all.

Gerecci, who has taken classes ranging from Italian to international relations, has definitely dabbled in it all during her undergraduate years and recommends the same for her fellow Longhorns. “Don’t be afraid to take classes that don’t seem related to your major,” said Gerecci. “Every discipline or topic is worth learning.”

Gerecci, a Houston native, credits her parents for some of her wide-ranging interest. Her mother teaches a single specialty, I like to know a little about everything,” said Gerecci. “A Plan II education has shown me that every discipline or topic is worth learning.”

As an academic co-chair for the Plan II Student’s Association, Gerecci has helped run Voltaire’s Coffee, which brings students and select professors together in a non-classroom environment. At these events, commonly held at professors’ homes, students are able to connect with faculty on a personal level while discussing cinema and literature.

Gerecci has also been involved in Plan II’s Faculty Advisory Council, which Gerecci said demonstrates the Plan II program’s emphasis on meeting student needs and desires. As a member of this council, she has helped review prospective course topics of Plan II professors.

Whether it’s planning an event at a professor’s home or giving the ‘thumbs up’ to a course or a freshman, Gerecci knows how to relate it back to her vast interests.

“I like to tie everything together. Rather than having a single specialty, I like to know a little about everything,” said Gerecci. “A Plan II education has shown me that an interdisciplinary approach with high standards is important in whatever you choose to do. I doubt I’d be ready—or inspired—to pursue museum work had I stayed in a single field.”

Gerecci’s standards may not yet garner international acclaim as Shakespeare or Da Vinci works did during the Renaissance, but she has had her share of achievements as of late.

Her zest for learning and pursuing academia recently earned her the 2004 Beinecke Scholarship. One of only 18 nationwide recipients of the $32,000 award, Gerecci distinguished herself as “highly motivated to pursue opportunities” through graduate school in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

Gerecci was awarded the scholarship, largely on the strength of her research on Texas artist Julie Speed, author of “Paintings, Constructions, and Works on Paper.”

Speed, whose “Queen of My Room” paintings have been displayed throughout Austin and Texas, shares Gerecci’s enthusiasm for the Renaissance Era.

Since the Renaissance centuries, Gerecci believes that art has been falsely misunderstood as an exclusive topic, or a product of “creative genius.” Instead, she hopes to convince young people to see art as an expression of human spirit.

With loads of fervor along with match her recently awarded funds, Gerecci plans to pursue a master’s in museum studies, followed by a doctorate in art history. She hopes her continued learning and research will enable her to influence young people who may otherwise never set foot in a museum or show interest in art.

“Everybody has the capacity to both create and appreciate art; it’s just a matter of having the chance to do so,” said Gerecci. “The opportunity to influence young people who might not regularly interact with the museum world fits my understanding of the art historian as necessarily an art educator—a scholar and authority fully engaged in the world of academic research, but also a passionate creator of programs and services.”

Whether your passion is for the paintings of Van Gogh or the passes of Vince Young, Gerecci encourages students to lay claim to the campus however possible. Gerecci says she will continue to lay her claim by learning and teaching others to recognize history and humanity. With this philosophy, we may see a revival of the Renaissance.

Joah Spearman • Photo by Marsha Miller
With several NFL games under his belt, former Texas star wide receiver Roy Williams has most football analysts raving about his abilities. They point to his eye-popping catches and numerous touchdowns as evidence that the Detroit Lions made a good deal by landing the talented wide receiver with the seventh pick in this year’s draft.

But according to Dr. Stephen G. Bronars, an economics professor at The University of Texas at Austin, thanks to the NFL Players Association and the league’s current labor agreement, he knew Roy Williams was going to be a bargain for the Lions from the moment they chose him.

“I would have said that on the day he was drafted that he’d be grossly underpaid because the Detroit Lions have to abide by the rules that they agreed to with the union,” said Bronars. “He’s going to be underpaid for his whole career—that’s just the way it’s going to be.”

These claims are based on a study Bronars recently conducted on the relative value of NFL draft picks to the teams that have them. What he found was that on average the marquee players in the league bring in significantly more revenue than they are paid in salary. According to Bronars, the players picked in the first two rounds of this year’s draft will be underpaid by about $400 million over the course of their NFL careers.

Bronars arrived at his estimate of the relative value of draft picks by looking at what other teams were willing to trade to get those picks. For instance, he figures that the San Diego Chargers’ right to pick Mississippi quarterback Eli Manning first in the draft was worth $70 million.

“That is what I expect the New York Giants to earn in profits from having Manning on their team if he is successful over his career, as the average No. 1 selection,” Bronars said. “In football, if you get the first pick in the draft, it’s worth a lot of money.”

Once Bronars analyzed the data and established that star players are being underpaid, he then asked himself why. The culprit? He blames the salary cap and minimum salary requirements set out by owners and the players union in the labor agreement they signed in 1993. Each team has a maximum amount that it can pay its players—currently around $80 million. In addition, players must be paid a minimum salary on a sliding scale based upon the number of years they’ve been in the league—currently $220,000 for a rookie.

Combine these requirements with the fact that every team needs to carry around 50 men on its roster to field a full squad with backups, and the current salary structure effectively prevents teams from compensating stars for anywhere close to their actual value.

“The current labor agreement really redistributes the resources from the very top players both to the lesser players in the league and lining the owners’ pockets,” said Bronars.

According to Bronars, who specializes in the study of labor unions, this outcome is not surprising: “Unions try to standardize pay. The general idea is if you’re in a union, you’re going to get taxed if you’re a go-getter achiever, and you’re going to be subsidized if you do worse than average.”

Needless to say, Bronars figures the results of his study aren’t going to be welcomed with open arms from officials at the NFL Players Association. On the other hand, he said, he’s considering sending copies of his report to prominent sports agents, who might want to use his findings when negotiating future deals for their clients, or as evidence that changes are necessary when the current labor deal expires in 2007.

But Bronars said it’s not just the best players who have been hurt by the labor deal—the league’s lesser talents are suffering, as well. Because the minimum salary increases the longer a player stays in the league, it makes financial sense for teams to replace mediocre veteran players with rookies, leading to increased personnel turnover.

“You think of why your career is cut short in football and you think injuries, but it’s also the union rules saying we’re going to price you out of the league,” Bronars said. “If you don’t more than double your productivity as you go from a rookie to a fifth-year player, you’re out.”

So the real winners under the current labor agreement, according to Bronars, are the owners. They’ve seen their profits soar and the value of their franchises skyrocket, all in large part due to the fact that they can underpay players like Roy Williams.

“It’s not that I want to screw things up and cause labor problems,” Bronars said. “It’s just I don’t know if the star players realize the extent to which they are getting hurt.”

Anthony Zurcher
Photo by Marsha Miller
From Courtroom to Court TV

Catherine Crier’s career has taken her from the courtroom to Court TV. She is an Emmy, duPont-Columbia and Gracie Allen Award-winning journalist and the youngest state judge ever elected in Texas. She is host of “Catherine Crier Live” and executive editor of “Legal News Specials” at Court TV.

“You graduate with a set of skills that can take you in many different directions,” Crier said. “You might have 15 different career opportunities if you let yourself scan the universe and not allow yourself to be labeled.”

Crier earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and international affairs from The University of Texas at Austin. She received a Juris Doctor in two and a half years from Southern Methodist University School of Law.

Crier visited with liberal arts students this fall at a discussion hosted by the Liberal Arts Council, where she shared stories about her career and the importance of civic participation.

“Catherine Crier’s career has taken her from the courtroom to Court TV. She is an Emmy, duPont-Columbia and Gracie Allen Award-winning journalist and the youngest state judge ever elected in Texas. She is host of “Catherine Crier Live” and executive editor of “Legal News Specials” at Court TV.

“You have to work hard to find the news,” Crier urged the students. “If you’re only skimming the headlines, you’re sorely misinformed. The information is out there, but you have to be willing to dig for it.”

As a child growing up in Dallas, Crier was inspired by film portrayals of crusading lawyers like Clarence Darrow and Atticus Finch. As an adult, she holds the legal profession to high standards and is not afraid to criticize when she sees something wrong. As a district attorney, civil lawyer, and judge herself, she saw firsthand how the U.S. justice system operated, which prompted her to write the New York Times bestseller “The Case Against Lawyers.”

“The book is a plea for the return to common sense,” Crier said. “It decries a system of laws so complex even the enforcers—such as the IRS—cannot understand them. The other critical element is the manipulation and selective enforcement of these rules and regulations.

“Our founders trusted you and me to direct this country,” she added. “They designed a system that would prohibit tyranny by establishing the rule of law and guaranteeing both a political voice and liberty for all Americans. We have now abdicated control to the lawyers, politicians and bureaucrats and the damage to the American society is enormous. The good news? Many problems could be resolved if regular citizens recaptured their role as activists.”

Crier has embraced the unexpected throughout her career. She describes her move to journalism as somewhat accidental. A Christmas party led to an interview tape that got her the call from CNN to audition for an on-air position. She decided to go for it and earned her first job in broadcasting as co-anchor of CNN’s premiere evening newscast. She also co-hosted “Inside Politics” and “Crier & Company,” a political issues program featuring a panel of female policy experts who discussed national and international issues.

“I left the bench in my second term,” Crier said. “My second day on the air was the San Francisco earthquake.”

Prior to joining Court TV, she anchored “The Crier Report” for Fox News, and earlier was a correspondent on ABC’s 20/20 and regular substitute for Peter Jennings on ABC’s “World News Tonight,” and Ted Koppel on “Nightline.”

Crier has hosted Court TV’s signature prime time series “The System” and numerous other Court TV specials. Her work on the documentary “The Interrogation of Michael Crowe” was recognized with a duPont Columbia Award. She has received three Gracie Allen awards presented by the Foundation for American Women in Radio and Television, two years running for the Outstanding Program Host and for her special, “Grandmothers: Voices from Oklahoma City.”

In 1996, Crier received the Les Femmes du Monde Award sponsored by the Dallas Council on World Affairs. The Ex-Students’ Association of The University of Texas at Austin awarded her the 1990 Outstanding Young Texas Ex Award. She was recognized as one of TV Guide’s “Dynamic Dozen” in 1990. Also in that year, the American Bar Association’s Barrister magazine honored her among their “Twenty Young Lawyers Who Make a Difference.”

Crier lives in Westchester County, New York. In her free time, she raises and trains Arabian Horses. Crier also enjoys playing golf and scuba diving.

Michelle Bryant
For many college students, their only opportunity to learn from a chief might be through reading books. At The University of Texas at Austin, it’s quite a different story.

“Think of me as a ‘cultural mediator’ or ‘broker,’” said Toyin Falola, holding court in an office lined with an elaborate architecture of book and paper piles, and walls garnished with maps of Africa. One, an outline of the continent asking, “How Big is Africa?” shows China, Europe, and the United States—to scale—superimposed to fit inside.

“In a global age you have to look at the meeting points—what people have in common, how they behave the same,” Falola said. “These dynamics must be reflected in what we teach. Difference becomes not an enemy, but a source of power.”

Falola, a history professor at the university, is one of the world’s most prominent scholars of African history. He has been appointed a chief in the council to King Oba Asulu V, the Alauga of Auga, in Nigeria. The honor is bestowed upon those who have distinguished themselves in their professions and have contributed to the growth and development of their societies. In his role as a chief, Falola serves as a member of the king’s council, advising the king and contributing to the development of the society. Chiefs also review judicial cases governed by customary laws and promote the corporate interests of the people.

Falola’s role as advisor does not stop there. He is among six recent additions to the university’s venerable Academy of Distinguished Teachers. The academy is an elite group—about 5 percent of the university’s tenured faculty—entrusted to furthering the university’s instructional mission. They serve as advisors to the provost and the president, facilitate teaching events, and mentor new faculty. Falola intends to promote his ideas on intellectual exposure, perspective and cultural studies.

Greenwood Press and series editor of Classic Authors and Texts on Africa by Africa World Press.

The Association of Third World Studies has honored him with its lifetime award—2004 ATWS President’s Distinguished Leadership and Scholarship Award—“for the overwhelming recognition of his sterling leadership and productive scholarship” in general, and specifically for his recent book, “A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt.”

He has been elected to the Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL) for his contribution to Nigerian history. The NAL is the national academy for the humanities and social sciences, founded to give recognition to excellence and represent the interests of scholarship nationally and internationally. Fellows of the academy must have contributed original research of the highest order, and their impact on scholarship and society must be imaginative, creative and unique.

Falola, continued on page 21
about issues surrounding safety. He quickly discovered that the medical industry is even more complex than aviation, though the stakes are every bit as high, if not higher.

“In the U.S. a lot more people die as a result of medical error than die in aviation accidents,” he says, “but medical death is much less visible than a hole in the ground with smoking wreckage.”

The high incidence of medical death is what galvanized the industry—including patient safety groups and insurance companies—behind making changes. Ultimately, this may mean overhauling the system.

“Problems in the medical industry span the spectrum from how you name drugs—a lot of drugs have similar names that are easily confused—to how you train physicians in medical school and acculturize them into the profession,” explains Musson.

“Fixing problems requires changing the way the medical system works, which has always been beyond the ability of one individual.”

Take, for example, the situation at the average hospital. A quality assurance or safety department may exist, but such areas tend to deal with low-level personnel. Physicians rarely receive any training in their hospitals, in part because they don’t work for the hospital itself but rather act as independent contractors. The culture of medical school has guided the physician to believe that patient safety ultimately lies entirely on his or her shoulders, encouraging a strict hierarchy in patient care. Meanwhile, different teams may form for each patient.

Or consider the not atypical story of an anesthesiologist who went to work on a patient and confused the drugs he was using. Because the pharmacy had purchased drugs from a different vendor than the doctor was familiar with, the medicine to wake up the patient was packaged almost identical to the paralytic, so the anesthesiologist re paralysis the patient. Fortunately, he caused no long-term harm.

“There’s no consistency in the system,” says Musson. “It’s like every town invents its own stop signs, its own color lights. When you’re passing through Waco the red light means go, and in the next town the yield sign means stop. Nothing is the same anywhere.”

Yet improving patient care is critical. One means of doing this is helping the industry change from one of individuality to one of communication and teamwork. The Human Factors Research Project is trying to adapt the CRM training developed for the aviation industry to medicine.

Taggart has trained medical personnel on communication, safety and teamwork at several academic medical centers—including Johns Hopkins—and integrated care programs. At Johns Hopkins, a four-hour training program has become the backbone of Hopkins Hospital’s safety training. At Kaiser Permanente, clinical teams at Kaiser facilities across the country have received human factors training. One key has been determining how to approach the training with tools appropriate to the industry.

“One valuable piece of this work is that it has taught me how to engage professional culture in a way that is productive,” says Dr. Michael Leonard, an anesthesiologist who is one of the patient safety leaders at Kaiser.

Leonard says that the process is still in its early stages, but his hope would be to see the medical industry at a place where teamwork is the focus and effective communication is in place. “Medicine needs to move from a culture of individuals to one of collaborative, team-based care,” he says.

Creating measures for assessing the effectiveness of such training will be a crucial next step, says Taggart. “Our aviation expertise lets us measure whether or not a particular training intervention brings about change in terms of attitudes toward safety and teamwork,” he says.

At the same time, studies are underway to try to untangle the medical industry at a more systemic level. Musson is undertaking a project that will look at emergency room operations in a number of hospitals across the country to determine where mistakes are typically made and what types of interventions might help minimize those mistakes.

Human error research in the medical industry is admittedly in its early stages. And it faces tremendous challenges.

“Medicine as an industry is difficult to study because people are busy, our kind of research can be intrusive, and it’s a world that has tremendous fears of litigation and bad press,” says Musson.

However, the motivation is there. Just as every pilot wants to deliver passengers safely to their destination, every doctor wants to be part of healing—not harming—a patient. Taking a hard look at the industry and ways to improve it becomes the necessary corollary to that desire.

“People in medicine in general are pretty altruistically motivated,” says Musson. “They go into it because they want to make things better. People actually want to deliver good health care. We’re one of the few places that has a formal history and research agenda in managing human error. This is why people want to work with our lab.”

Vivé Griffith
Photos by Marsha Miller
**Beauty and the Business**

Continued from Page 6

“I had a good time going through the pictures and tracing back her political legacy,” she added. “She had a great impact on the black community in Chicago, but little is known about her anywhere else. She was an independent business woman who wanted to use her salon as a community space for African Americans.”

In the 1940s, Joyner opened up her salons and beauty school to the United Service Organizations’ (USO) black men who were not allowed to partake in any of the USO-sponsored social activities due to segregation.

“They didn’t have any kind of military places where they could hang out and have fun,” Gill said. “Joyner really had a keen sense of understanding that she had an institution and wanted to open it up to the community.”

In other civil rights activities, Gill discovered stories of beauticians having one client under the hair dryer while taking another down to the voters’ registration drive. Some beauticians even hosted meetings in their beauty salons to educate people on how to vote and to inform them about different political happenings.

While black beauticians made economic and political strides, their salons also became a rite of passage for many young women, as well as providing them with a space for social interaction. And for the black women of the early 20th century, the salon may have provided them with their first experience of feeling truly pampered and beautiful.

“The fun thing about this topic is that almost every woman has had an experience at the beauty shop,” Gill said. “It is very much a part of a young woman’s socialization. I think particularly for a certain generation of women that came of age before the civil rights movement, it was one of the main places where they were socialized into what it meant to be a woman. How to act, how to operate with boys, how to carry themselves.

“It was also a place where people shared gossip,” she added. “Many young women grew up listening to the chatter at the beauty shop.

“I want to add to the stories of these women’s lives and make a contribution so they won’t be forgotten,” Gill said. “The kind of research I like to do gives importance to people that have been overlooked. I think there are so many more stories to tell in terms of the history of African American women. There’s a lot of great work out there, but there is still much to be done. I hope this work continues to raise questions about the relationship between gender, race and identity.”

Gill plans to expand her research internationally to include South America and the Caribbean. She also plans on conducting her own oral histories at the next national convention of beauticians.

Michelle Bryant
Photo of Professor Gill: Marsha Miller

Save the Date!
March 5, 2005
Olivelle
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modern readers the environment and culture in which the ancient texts were written. This helps the reader to further understand the texts, and has won his translations a great deal of praise.

“The translator provides the lens through which the reader understands the text,” Olivelle said. “And we all have subconscious presuppositions that affect our views. What I try to do is let the ancient texts speak for themselves.”

Currently, Olivelle is working with a few of his students on a dictionary of terms used in ancient Indian law. He is also developing a side-by-side presentation of the four earliest legal texts of India, comparing the position of each on various topics, which will be published in 2005. In addition, he is working on a book about how the human body was culturally constructed in ancient India.

“What excites me most about my work is taking unfamiliar territory and making it familiar,” said Olivelle. “This enables us to see that human beings, irrespective of time, cultural and language differences, have similar questions – to which they have often given very different answers.”

Olivelle sees a connection between the ancient world and the modern-day world through common human situations and struggles. He believes we can learn a great deal by examining how others have handled these familiar struggles.

“We may see that ours is not the only, or the best, answer. And, people a thousand years from now may look smilingly at us, and our answers, just as we now look at the people of ancient India.”

One scholar described Olivelle’s output of books and articles as almost superhuman. But ironically, this award-winning author, gifted translator, prolific pundit and professor who has made several lives’ worth of contributions to the field of Indology during his 30-year career, says his greatest challenge is... time management.

“I can be busy all day long, but before I know it, the day is gone and I find myself wondering, what did I really do today? Nothing substantial has been accomplished.”

It turns out that, like the rest of us, Patrick Olivelle is only human after all.

Melissa Anderson
Photos by Marsha Miller

Falola
Continued from Page 18

As a teacher, Falola acknowledges the importance of good communication and keeping his students’ interest.

“History is not chemistry,” Falola said. “Students don’t have to be interested in chemistry; they’re taking the class because they’re invested in a future tied to it. History is different because knowledge is not tied to a market. The ability to communicate is not negotiable.”

To begin this communication, Falola makes extensive use of captivating visuals, from scenes from his native Africa to New Orleans voodoo festivals.

“Spend as much time as you want defining it,” he said. “It’s not real until you see it.”

A second favored technique was cultivated in his native Nigeria: storytelling.

“I want students to stop taking notes,” he said, “and listen for a while.” Not only does storytelling make lessons more fun, but it can introduce a new level of meaning. By using proverbs and anecdotes, teachers say that what we teach is relevant to day-to-day living, useful for human interaction.

“Most important is the realization that knowledge is analytical, not descriptive,” Falola said. “Each class is a controversy, a discussion; each discourse moves knowledge forward. Each lesson poses a question.

“Right now I don’t have an answer,” he tells his students. “I’m inviting you to be part of that answer.”

Christa French
Photos by Marsha Miller

Class Notes

David Dye (Psychology, 1970) has taken the position of deputy assistant secretary of labor for the Mine Safety and Health Administration. Dye has been with the U.S. Department of Labor since June 2001, where he served as deputy assistant secretary for the Employment and Training Administration.

Julie MacLemore Endowed Scholarship in Liberal Arts

The general assumption is that recent graduates of The University of Texas at Austin like to come back for football games and meet friends at Thirsty Thursdays—and that’s true. What is generally not assumed is that recent graduates will make endowment level gifts. After all, they are generally starting their careers, buying their first homes, marrying and having children. It’s a time of life when expenses generally outpace income.

For Dan MacLemore it seemed impossible to contribute in any way other than by volunteering his time. He and his wife, Shannon, wanted a deeper involvement in the educational mission of the university and felt a strong allegiance to the College of Liberal Arts where he received a bachelor’s degree in Government in 1999.

Dan and Shannon talked about how his mom had put him through college and graduate school. He told Shannon he wanted to give back to the university and do something for his mom at the same time. “Education was so important to her,” he said. “So we decided to set up a scholarship in her name.”

Agreeing to put aside $250 each month, they realized they could endow a scholarship. And with it they would establish the Julie MacLemore Endowed Scholarship in Liberal Arts—in honor of Dan’s mother.

The scholarship was established by the end of November 2002 and in December of that year Dan and Shannon gave his mother a Christmas gift—the documents establishing the Julie MacLemore Endowed Scholarship in Liberal Arts. She cried.

“Young alums can do a lot more than get together for social events,” Dan said. “They can help the university achieve its goals by giving their time and service. They can even make gifts of endowments that will provide permanent support for the university. They can have a lasting impact.”

Clare Hudspeth • Photo by Sherre Paris
The nation is confronted with a severe shortage of teachers. The demand for teachers is forecast to increase during the next decade. As a flagship institution, The University of Texas at Austin is positioned to provide leadership in response to these shortages.

UTeach-Liberal Arts, established in 2000, is the secondary teacher preparation program for undergraduates. The College of Liberal Arts and the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin have collaborated to transform secondary teacher certification from the ground up. UT-Liberal Arts puts the collective wisdom of public school teachers, recent graduates and university faculty together to guide and teach the secondary school teachers of tomorrow.

For more information about how you can help the UTeach-Liberal Arts program, contact the Development Office at 512.471.8861.