



September 18, 2019

UNIVERSITY-WIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Executive and Budget Committees of the University of Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees have approved operating and capital budgets for the 2019-2020 academic year. These budgets follow the completion of the commonwealth's appropriation to the University — which includes a 2% increase in support for Pitt — and enable the University to make pivotal investments in student success, research innovation and academic excellence.
- Provost Ann Cudd has announced that 2019–20 academic year will be the *Year of Creativity* at the University of Pittsburgh. This is the Fifth "Year Of" and it follows the Year of Pitt Global.
- **Pitt** is partnering with the **Healthy Ride bike share program** to introduce first-year students to bicycling. All first-year undergraduate students and resident assistants will receive unlimited 30-minute rides during the academic year 2019–20 Fall and Spring terms.

INSTITUTIONAL MILESTONES

- The University has joined the American Talent Initiative, an alliance of 120 four-year institutions united in a goal of enrolling, supporting and graduating 50,000 additional talented, lower-income students by 2025. This is the University's eighth initiative since 2014 focused on enhancing access to a Pitt education.
- The Center for Urban Education at the **School of Education** was selected as the new home institution of the research education journal, *Educational Researcher*. **Dana Thompson Dorsey** will serve as a senior editor and **T. Elon Dancy II** will serve as an associate editor.
- The University of Pittsburgh was ranked third in the **15 Best Online Master of Science in Nursing Degree Programs for 2020** by Best Health Degrees.
- Mark G. Papa (Engineering '68) pledged \$3 million to support the **Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering**. This gift will enable steps toward positioning the department to revitalize an accredited undergraduate Petroleum Engineering degree.
- Pitt received a \$6 million grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation to support the development of a cortical vision research program in the **Department of Ophthalmology**.
- **LifeX Labs**, a life science startup accelerator launched by the University of Pittsburgh in 2017 has received a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to enhance its efforts in southwestern Pennsylvania.
- Pitt innovators matched last year's record number of licenses and options executed at 162 and set a new record for invention disclosures at 367. Pitt innovators were issued 91 U.S. patents and formed 17 startup companies based on intellectual property developed at the University.
- William Kramer has been selected as the next director of the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center, a joint research center of Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh

STUDENT MILESTONES

- **Senior Crissy Shannon (Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences)** took the field at the football season opener as the first woman drum major in the 108-year history of the University's Varsity Marching Band.
- **Esther Palacios-Barrios, Department of Psychology graduate student**, was accepted to the 2019 Ford Foundation Fellowship Program.
- **Fourteen Pitt students are part of the 2019 cohort of Millennium Fellows.** They are Scott Glaser, Leah Graham, Madhura Leninkannan, Devesh Malik, Katelyn Morrison, Jasmin Perrier, Luke Persin, Benjamin Raymond, Anisha Reddy, Chiara Rigaud, Zachary Ryckman, Sophie Tayade, Nadine Vandevender and Rhea Verma.

FACULTY AND STAFF MILESTONES

- **Walid F. Gellad, MD, MPH, associate professor of medicine and associate division chief for research, School of Medicine, and of health policy and management, GSPIA**, was named a winner of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers—the highest honor bestowed by the United States government to outstanding scientists and engineers. Gellad's research focuses on physicians' prescribing practices and on policy issues affecting access and adherence to medication.
- **Rory Cooper, director of Pitt's Human Engineering Research laboratories, was honored by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office** for his groundbreaking inventions in mobility transportation. Cooper's image and wheelchair invention were memorialized in a trading card that is part of the Inventor's Collection Card Series.
- **David J. Birnbaum, professor and chair of the Dietrich School's Department of Slavic Language and Literature**, was awarded a \$249,456 grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant will support a two-week summer institute on the theory and development of digital scholarly editions for 25 participants to be hosted at the university.
- **Lauren Russell, assistant director of the Center for African American Poetry and Poetics** was named the recipient of the 2019 Tarpaulin Sky Book Award for her book DESCENT.
- **Toi Derricotte, professor emerita of English** has been awarded the Phyllis Franklin award by the Modern Language Association. The distinction is the organization's highest award in acknowledgement of public advocacy for the humanities.
- **Piervincenzo Rizzo, professor of civil and environmental engineering at the Swanson School of Engineering**, has been selected by the Society for Experimental Mechanics to receive the 2020 A.J. Durelli Award, which is given to someone with an innovative approach in experimental mechanics.
- **Gelsy Torres-Oviedo, assistant professor of bioengineering in Pitt's Swanson School of Engineering**, recently received a \$805,670 CAREER Award by the National Science Foundation to apply a novel approach to improve locomotor learning in stroke patients.
- **Robin Brooks, an assistant professor in the Department of Africana Studies**, has been accepted to the 2019 Ford Foundation Fellowship Program.
- **Amanda Godley, faculty member of the School of Education**, has received a \$750,000, 3-year grant from the National Science Foundation. The project will apply artificial intelligence to the field of education and will develop a means for measuring the impact of student participation in group discussions in English courses.
- **Carla Ng, PhD, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, Murat Akcakaya, PhD, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, and Daniel Bain, PhD, assistant professor of geology and environmental science** have received a \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to work with Northwestern University to study nature-based strategies that can help prevent urban flooding.