

## National Geographic profiles Witmer

By Joseph Hughes

*National Geographic*, in its March 2003 cover story, profiles Ohio University researcher Lawrence Witmer and a new generation of scientists using unique methods to bring dinosaurs back to life.

The story, "Dinosaurs Come Alive," features a two-page photograph of Witmer playfully poised in his lab as though he were a specimen alongside other animal skulls. "To my boss I'm an anatomist," Witmer told reporter Joel Achenbach. "To my son I'm a paleontologist."

Witmer is pleased that *National Geographic* highlighted the most cutting-edge scientific research of dinosaurs. "I'm happy the exposure has come from the science rather than from simply working with dinosaurs," he said. "I recognize that when one works on dinosaurs that it plays into the public interest. But what we're doing is more rigorously lab-based, as opposed to the swash-buckling field expeditions commonly seen."

Witmer, guiding Achenbach around his Life Sciences



Larry Witmer, associate professor in biomedical sciences, said one of his missions is to raise the bar on dinosaur research.

Building laboratory, showcased his collection of manatee heads, ostrich parts and geese and ducks, among other skulls. Witmer, an associate professor in biomedical sciences, uses dissection and CT scanning to help reconstruct the soft tissue of dinosaur heads.

"Trying to understand what dinosaurs were like really is detective work," Witmer said. "As a detective tries to reconstruct the events of a crime no one witnessed, we're looking for subtle clues to flesh out dinosaurs. However, we look at

more than just dinosaurs. Examining a moose, rhinoceros, ostrich or alligator helps provide clues to how the dinosaurs' soft tissue interacted with the bone. Time stripped away the soft tissues – the muscles, blood vessels and eyes – from the dinosaurs. My job is to put them back, to clothe the bones and discover what it means for dinosaur biology"

The main intent of Witmer's research is not to critique or correct popular portrayals of dinosaurs. That's just often a by-product. "One of my mis-

sions as an Ohio University researcher is to raise the bar on dinosaur research. We're not looking for mistakes to correct; instead, we're asking biological questions about dinosaurs and approaching things in a highly scientific manner. As a result, we're finding that some previous claims are not justified," he said. Using a strict scientific method, Witmer said, strengthens dinosaur research.

Of greater importance to Witmer is his appearance in the article, "Dino Might! 10 Recent Discoveries That Have Rocked the Dinosaur World," in the March issue of *National Geographic*.

"I enjoy working with children," Witmer said. "I've taken this on as a bit of a mission, partly because of the state of science literacy in our country. That's the beauty of dinosaurs as a vehicle for promoting science. Few scientific disciplines can cut across as many demographic categories as dinosaurs.

My goal is to try to capitalize on the wide and fundamental interest in dinosaurs to teach about the scientific method. It's more important how we learn about dinosaurs than what we learn about dinosaurs."

Witmer's *National Geographic* feature is the second in recent months showcasing the region. As part of the magazine's "ZipUSA" series, the School of Visual Communication's "Dawn to Dusk" project highlighted the 45701 zip code for the January 2003 issue.

"*National Geographic* has such a reach, with about 40 million readers in 23 different languages," Witmer said. "It's nice to be able to carry the messages of our research and the strength of Ohio University and the College of Osteopathic Medicine to such a broad cross section of the world."

*Joseph Hughes is a graduate student writer with University Communications and Marketing.*

## Ohio University impact felt around the globe

By Jaime Ciavarra

Half way around the world, Ohio University professors and students are making a difference. In Indonesia, where ethnic tension and violence threaten many communities. The Ohio University Center for International Studies and the University of Indonesia are collaborating in anti-violence workshops, an effort that seeks to encourage Indonesian citizens to use peaceful action plans to resolve conflict. The first workshops took place Dec. 12-15 in Palembang, South Sumatra, and the project will grow to other parts of Indonesia this summer, said Ann Shoemake, a doctoral student in interpersonal com-

munication and participant in the workshop.

"South Sumatra citizens could strengthen their relationships and discuss controversial issues at these workshops," Shoemake said, noting that it has often been difficult for people to take initiative since the time of Soeharto's dictatorship.

The universities are partnered through the Center for Research on Intergroup Relations and Conflict Resolution (CERIC), a research program that responds to social conflicts in Indonesia. Through CERIC, Ohio University professors Michael Malley and Elizabeth Collins, and students Ann Shoemake,

Ihsan Ali Fauzi and Djayadi Hanan visited South Sumatra in December to organize and participate in the workshops, which were aimed at working with youth leaders to respond to conflict and keep it from growing, Shoemake said. About 30 people from local organizations, universities, the press and local government participated.

"One of the objectives was to voice various viewpoints, and to let these people of different backgrounds get to know each other," Shoemake said. "They most definitely did so."

Much of Indonesia's violence is due to inter-ethnic conflicts,

and to state versus separatist issues in the northern part of Sumatra and in West Papua. South Sumatra has the highest rate of stabbings in Indonesia. The workshops discussed reasons behind these conflicts and approaches to amending them. On the final day, teams of participants created action plans for reducing violent conflict and strengthening communities.

The workshops are part of a larger effort by CERIC to help the welfare of Indonesia through democratic dialogue, tolerance education, the media, public service announcements and conflict resolution programs for universities, Shoemake said.

CERIC received a Federal Partnership Grant to fund the projects.

"These projects are a wonderful chance to look at social situations around the world," Shoemake said. "It's inspiring. It has allowed me to re-examine our own society."

Tolerance education and conflict management workshops planned over spring break are rescheduled to take place in the summer due to the possibility of war with Iraq.

*Jaime Ciavarra is a student writer with University Communications and Marketing.*

## Researcher discovers compound that may help treat diabetes

By Adrienne Gavula

Type II diabetes affects about 16 million people in the United States. Xiao-zhuo Chen, associate professor of biomedical sciences, may have discovered a treatment with roots in his homeland.

Chen has discovered a group of new plant compounds that could be potentially useful. Chen grew up in China, where combining modern and traditional Chinese medical practices was commonplace. Having this background made the transition to his current biomedical research easier.

For over three years, Chen has been researching the effectiveness of the tropical plant Banaba, found primarily in



Chen

Southeast Asia, in treating Type II diabetes. The plant's leaves have a compound that helps reduce blood glucose without promoting fat growth.

"Type II diabetes and obesity are serious public health problems in the United States, and especially in Southeastern Ohio," Chen said.

The current treatment of Type II diabetes involves using insulin drugs to lower blood sugar. In addition to lowering blood sugar, anti-diabetic drugs promote fat growth, which can lead to or contribute to obesity already existent in the majority of diabetic patients and many other serious health problems such as high blood pressure and heart diseases.

Although diabetes cannot be cured, it can be treated. It is a disease that impairs the body's ability to use food. The hormone insulin helps the body change food into energy. Without insulin, sugar — the body's main energy source — builds up in the blood.

The native people of Southeast Asia have used the Banaba's leaves to treat diabetes and kidney disease for years. Chen and his group of researchers have isolated, identified and characterized the compound from the plant that lowers blood sugar without promoting fat growth. In addition to this discovery, Chen and his research collaborator have designed other compounds based on the one identified in the plant. Some

of the synthetic compounds are even more effective in reducing blood glucose and less toxic.

"The compounds from the plant and also the ones we designed can work as the starting material for the development of anti-diabetic and anti-obesity drugs," Chen said.

The newly discovered drug has not been approved for clinical testing in people, but it has been tested on animals. Ohio University owns the patent of the compounds that Chen and his researchers discovered through the Edison Biotechnology Institute and has licensed it to a company that will conduct further research and commercial development.

"I have always believed in

the effectiveness of some medicinal herbs with a long history of use and medical records," Chen said. "I knew we would eventually identify some compounds from them and that they will be useful in helping people with diseases that cannot be effectively treated with current therapeutics or therapy."

Chen's other research interests include potential use of the discovered compounds in treating cardiovascular disease, cancer and organ formation in embryonic development.

*Adrienne Gavula is a student writer with University Communications and Marketing.*

## Meeting the manuscript: Student follows research to England

By Camden Easterling

As a scholar of chivalry, Nick Capell will go the extra mile, or several thousand to be exact, for romance. This summer he traveled to London to meet a blind date in the British Library.

The Ohio University student was searching for antiquated manuscripts that he hoped would lay the groundwork for his senior thesis on the role of women in medieval society. The book was one of many in the genre of romance literature, including the Arthurian legends, that he examined at the British Library during a study abroad at Oxford

University in England.

Capell, an English and dance major, had long been fascinated by both old manuscripts and the adventurous tales of romance literature. His adviser, Associate Professor of English Marsha Dutton, suggested that the English libraries could serve as a rich resource for research in these areas. He chose to focus on women's roles in the medieval tournament, a fierce battle between two teams of knights, as shown in the illustrations that accompanied the old texts.



Capell

The books he discovered at the British Library were up to 500 to 700 years old, and many of the manuscripts were nearly in pieces due to old age and heavy use. Although the edges of the pages are already worn from centuries of reading, scholars must take care to turn the pages only at the very corner to minimize further damage.

Capell was eager to work with the texts, but also intimidated by the opportunity to actually handle them.

"It was the anxiety you feel when you're going on a blind date or meeting someone new," he said, his eyes lighting

up behind his tortoiseshell glasses. "And to finally be able to handle a manuscript, to finally be able to hold one, was so gratifying."

After the cautious turning of pages, he came across illustrations that showed women playing music and acting as referees of sorts. Medieval women previously hadn't been associated with these activities at tournaments.

"(The illustrations) illuminate that the stereotype of the passive damsel might not be substantiated by evidence," said the student, whose research is funded by grants from Ohio University's Student Enhancement Award worth

\$6,000 and Provost Undergraduate Research Fund for \$1,500, as well as the Midwestern Networkers Scholarship, for students studying abroad, equal to \$1,000.

Capell will continue his research, which he hopes to present at scholarly conferences during the year. And one day, he'd like to return to England for another tryst with the manuscripts.

"It was a good date," he said with a smile.

*Camden Easterling is a writing intern for the Office of Research Communications.*

## OUTLOOK

OUTLOOK is a weekly publication for the employees of Ohio University. It is produced by University Communications and Marketing, part of the division of University Advancement. Feel free to submit story ideas, event information, etc. Contact the editor three weeks in advance to have your item considered for publication in the print edition and two weeks in advance for the online edition. Send e-mail to [outlook@ohio.edu](mailto:outlook@ohio.edu) or campus mail to University Communications and Marketing, 102 Scott Quad, or call (740) 597-2938.

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## Calendar

### Lectures

**Around the World**, April 2, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Athens Public Library, 30 Home St. A series of talks on international lands and cultures continues with a presentation on Yemen by Sam Shehab, a master's student in international development studies. Light refreshments will be served. Contact: Jennifer at (740) 593-1842.

### Events

**Free Blood Pressure Screenings**, March 20, noon – 1:30 p.m., Baker Center Lobby. What's your number? Stop by to learn or monitor one of the most important numbers for better health – your blood pressure. It may be the most important 5 min-

utes of your workday. Contact: Missy Case at (740) 593-2093.

**Art on View/Governor's Youth Art Show**, March 22 – April 27, noon – 5 p.m., Tuesday – Saturday, The Dairy Barn. Art on View is a regional juried exhibition that includes artists from Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky. This showcases the best work of artists living and working within a 200-mile radius of Athens. Cost: adults, \$3; seniors, \$2.50; children under 12, free. Contact: The Dairy Barn at (740) 592-4981 or go to [www.dairybarn.org](http://www.dairybarn.org).

### Performances

**Midnight Movie: "Willy Wonka**

**and the Chocolate Factory,"** March 21-22, midnight, The Athena. For ticket information, contact the Athena Cinema Box Office at (740) 592-5106. Tickets: \$3.

### Training

**Spring <BR> WebTech Conference**, March 27, Baker University Center. The conference is a day packed full of information and demonstrations, and an opportunity to meet and network with other web technology professionals and gurus. To register and for more information, visit the [www.seomug.org](http://www.seomug.org), then follow the links to the online registration. Cost: Free, but seating is limited and registration is required.

## University meeting challenges to maintain/increase diversity on campus

By George Mauzy



Bill Smith, executive assistant to the president for Institutional Equity, recently discussed with George Mauzy

Smith the progress and goals for diversity at the University.

What role does racial diversity play at Ohio University?

Racial diversity is very important to higher education — period. Since Ohio University is in the business of higher education, it has to accept that diversity is a cardinal principle for higher education for this third century. The world is diverse and our students must be prepared to succeed in that world. They will better prepared if they have some experience, background and understanding of the larger context of diversity. Diversity is no longer an option, it is an educational imperative if we are to be a responsible educator and prepare our students to be competitive in the larger world.

As far as staff and faculty

diversity, higher education has a history of not being a good pipeline for supplying faculty and staff of color, so this is a major challenge. We have to be innovative and imaginative in terms of attracting competent people who are valued. The presence of diversity among faculty and staff at Ohio University is more generous than ever, but we have to keep improving those numbers. We must continue to be aggressive in the recruitment of these diverse individuals.



How has the diversity at Ohio University changed in your 25 years at the University?

The most obvious difference in diversity on campus today is that there are fewer African-American students than when I first arrived in 1978. This is primarily a result of selective admissions. When I arrived, Ohio University was an open admissions university where

Continued on Page 4

### Preliminary Faculty Data

	Minority Total		Black		Asian		Hispanic		Native American	
1993	84	11.6%	36	5.0%	39	5.4%	7	1.0%	2	0.3%
1994	85	11.8%	35	4.7%	41	5.8%	7	1.0%	2	0.3%
1995	90	11.9%	38	5.0%	41	5.4%	9	1.2%	2	0.3%
1996	95	12.3%	39	5.1%	41	5.3%	11	1.4%	4	0.5%
1997	102	13.3%	41	5.3%	43	5.6%	13	1.7%	5	0.7%
1998	99	13.1%	36	4.8%	43	5.7%	16	2.1%	4	0.5%
1999	94	12.4%	35	4.6%	42	5.5%	14	1.8%	3	0.4%
2000	94	12.3%	31	4.0%	45	5.9%	14	1.8%	4	0.5%
2001	101	13.2%	34	4.4%	47	6.1%	16	2.1%	4	0.5%
2002	118	14.5%	40	4.9%	56	6.9%	17	2.1%	5	0.6%

### Preliminary Administrative Data

	Minority Total		Black		Asian		Hispanic		Native American	
1993	82	11.8%	48	6.9%	29	4.2%	4	0.6%	1	0.1%
1994	84	11.7%	48	6.7%	26	3.6%	3	0.4%	7	1.0%
1995	88	11.6%	52	6.9%	25	3.3%	3	0.4%	8	1.1%
1996	78	10.0%	49	6.3%	20	2.6%	3	0.4%	6	0.8%
1997	82	9.8%	44	5.2%	27	3.2%	6	0.7%	5	0.6%
1998	96	10.8%	49	5.5%	36	4.0%	6	0.7%	5	0.6%
1999	102	10.5%	49	5.1%	40	4.1%	6	0.6%	7	0.7%
2000	112	10.8%	57	5.5%	38	3.7%	10	1.0%	7	0.7%
2001	125	11.2%	62	5.6%	48	4.3%	10	0.9%	5	0.5%
2002	121	10.5%	63	5.5%	46	4.0%	8	0.7%	4	0.3%

## Diversity provides competitive advantage in growing global community

By George Mauzy

The word diversity is often misunderstood and in many cases it is tied to the terms affirmative action and quotas, which has negative connotations for many people. In fact, many people are divided over the possible decision facing the U.S. Supreme Court, which is in the process of making a benchmark decision about the admissions policies of the University of Michigan that will affect every public university and college in the nation.

Ohio University Assistant to the President Erik Perry said he understands what diversity means and the important role it can have at Ohio University.

"Diversity is about character because it reflects one's ability to treat people with dignity, respect and fairness despite their differences," Perry said.

According to Perry, the increased importance of diversity is very apparent in today's world. As evidence, Perry pointed to the fact that about 80 percent of the U.S. population resides in the nation's most diverse areas — metropolitan cities. This happens to be the same place where most professional opportunities are located.

"This has implications for our graduates, not only in terms of the makeup of the workforce of which they will be a part, but the kind of leadership they will need to possess to thrive in the global community in which we live and work," Perry said.

"Diversity that is seriously valued and meaningfully included in the educational process can provide a competitive advantage (not only in



Perry

terms of salary) for our graduates. It is significant to enriching the educational experience and life readiness for our students because learners grow when they encounter the unfamiliar regarding classroom experiences and co-curricular activities. In addition, these encounters nurture the ability to think wider and deeper about challenging issues, allow us to become more dynamic in our response to change and increase our intercultural competence in diverse settings, especially regarding race, class and gender."

The Office for Diversity, under Perry's direction, focuses on assisting and collaborating with campus units regarding recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students from underrepresented groups. In addition, the office provides a support network for students in the Templeton Scholars and

King-Chavez-Parks Award programs. The office provides opportunities for the scholarship recipients to participate in research, scholarship, creativity, networking, community service and character education programs.

Perry and his staff regularly meet and collaborate with other University staff members who have diversity recruitment and retention responsibilities. The team has helped the office facilitate student engagement, promote intellectual excellence, deliver enriched academic advising support services and arrange mentoring for upper class students.

"People are asking how can they help improve diversity on campus," Perry said. "The best way to help is to give diversity significant consideration when refining, redefining and implementing key policies, programs and proce-

dures in their respective areas and to share their good ideas with our office."

Diversity not only adds an important dimension to the learning process, it also exposes faculty, students and staff to different life experiences. Ohio University is currently adding more culturally diverse courses to its general education curriculum.

"It is important that diversity remains, in some meaningful way, a part of our everyday life thereby making our behaviors naturally more inclusive," Perry said. "It is very important that graduates of Ohio University are prepared to function in today's diverse global community."

George Mauzy is a media specialist with University Communications and Marketing.

## Diversity 101 course adds variety to student selection

By George Mauzy

This spring University College will offer Diversity 101, a new two-credit course offered that will address the topic of diversity in the United States.

"I believe this course will introduce students to a range of issues and concepts related to diversity and it will create the conditions for them to learn about the value of diversity," said Dean of University College David Descutner. "Students will learn how important it is to acquire a deep understanding of difference in all of its forms – be it gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or physical ability, and by doing so acquire an appreciation of difference."

Students who enroll in the course will explore how individuals and groups have interpreted, confronted and transformed their individual and collective identities.

"It concerns me that a student may spend four or five years on campus without being exposed to a single diversity course," said Ohio University Assistant Director of Institutional Equity Yegan Pillay, who is the founder and instructor of the course. "As an institution of higher educa-

tion, we do a great disservice to our students by not preparing them for life beyond college."

Pillay said Diversity 101 was designed to examine contemporary debates, theoretical expositions and social interactions that have been influenced by race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, ethnicity, age, class and ability.

"All predictions and estimations make it apparent that the current demographic changes necessitate initiating and developing the Introduction to Diversity course," Pillay added.

Descutner thinks the course will engender curiosity among students and lead them to take other courses in which diversity plays a major role.

"A course like this prepares students to live and work as citizens of the multicultural, global world that is our university and our wider society. It also will encourage them to embrace and learn from difference," Descutner said.

*George Mauzy is a media specialist with University Communications and Marketing.*

## Reporting of hate/bias incidents made easier

Students, faculty and staff wishing to report an incident of hate and/or bias can now do so through an innovative Web site. The "Zero Tolerance" page, hosted by the Office for Diversity, defines what constitutes a hate-motivated violation of Ohio's Student Code of Conduct and reiterates the University's commitment to a just and diverse community.

Once individuals read a confidentiality statement, they can report an incident online through an easy-to-follow form or go to one of 12 campus offices.

For more information, call Janice Edwards, associate vice president for Student Affairs, at (740) 593-2580 or visit the Web site at [www.ohiou.edu/diversity/zero/index.html](http://www.ohiou.edu/diversity/zero/index.html).

# U.S. Energy Consumption and the Environment



## 2003 Baker Peace Conference April 3 – 4, 2003

Bruce Babbitt,  
U.S. Secretary of the Interior,  
1993-2001

Keynote Address:  
April 3, 8 p.m.  
Templeton-Blackburn Alumni  
Memorial Auditorium

### PANELS

April 4, Baker University Center Ballroom:

• The United States and Global Warming  
9:30 a.m. - noon

• Oil Dependence and National Security  
1 - 3 p.m.

• Fossil Fuels versus Renewable Energy  
Resources: The Politics of U.S. Energy Policy  
3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

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## Q&A

### Continued from Page 3

every state resident that met basic requirements was admitted. The end result is that there are now fewer African-American students who qualify for admission to Ohio University and the competition for these students is fierce.

Our retention rate for students of color has improved markedly during my stay. In 1982, only 54 percent of African-American students returned to school. That number is now more than 79 percent most years. That improvement is something that a lot of us are very proud of because it has caused a difference in the culture and climate of the University. Retention helps the

students be all that they can be and eliminates the idea of Ohio University having a swinging door type of racial environment.

Faculty and staff numbers are also higher today. We have made impressive strides in numbers and have improved our retention in this area.

How could the U.S. Supreme Court's University of Michigan court case on admissions affect Ohio University and higher education?

In regards to racial diversity, the court case will have a significant impact on the manner in which schools like Ohio University maintain and

increase their racial diversity on campus. If the court rules against the University of Michigan's admissions policies, then the ruling will force us and many other universities to come up with new strategies to accomplish diversity. The schools that are not committed to diversity will use it as an excuse to do nothing, but that will not be the case at Ohio University. We will continue to develop acceptable methods to increase racial and ethnic diversity no matter what the legal guidelines are.

*George Mauzy is a media specialist with University Communications and Marketing.*



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