By Betty Gabrelle

“These are the kind of projects that will help bridge the gap between the world of the ‘human footprint’ must be reduced to 50 percent,” says Professor of Environmental Studies David Orr. “This transition will require broad changes in our ideas, perceptions, and values—which makes it, in large part, a challenge to educational institutions.” Oberlin is ready to face the challenge. In June President Nancy Dye approved a proposal from the Environmental Studies Program Committee to design and construct a $2.5 million 10,000-square-foot environmental studies center to showcase the latest in ecological design and teach the latest in environmental thinking.

The project is anything but modest. Oberlin’s Environmental Studies Center will be one of the first structures of its kind built on any campus, here or abroad. Mini-

Shansi Extends Deadline for Winter Term Proposals to November 3

The Shansi Memorial Association has extended to November 3 the deadline by which it must receive proposals for Winter Term projects at its sites in China, Japan, Indonesia, or India. The association is offering a $10,000 competitive grant that will underwrite the travel and other expenses of a faculty member and between seven and twelve students during three or four weeks in January. But so far it has seen no competitors.

“We welcome proposals in any discipline;” says Carl Jacobson, Shansi’s executive director. “We’re amazed that no one has yet submitted a proposal. It would be a shame if no one took advantage of this opportunity.”

To prime the pump Jacobson offers these suggestions:

• Someone from the Environmental Studies Program or Biology Department could take students to work with members of the zoology departments at the American and Lady Doak colleges in Madurai, India, on environmental issues. One professor there is an expert on the fresh-water ecology of the area, while another heads the Madurai Environmental Protection Council. A recent campaign involved noise pollution; another, clearing out the storm-water systems, some of which was occupied by squatter communities.

• Students and a faculty member could work with a member of the Tamil Environmental Protection Council. A recent campaign involved noise pollution; another, clearing out the storm-water systems, some of which was occupied by squatter communities.

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• Yunnan University is located in the midst of an astounding variety of Chinese subcultures, and its faculty is very strong in the anthropology, history, and religion of the region. Some of the faculty members have good English skills and would be willing to work with Oberlin faculty. Visits to the various regions could be arranged.

• Jacobson and As-sociate Vice President David Love will help interested faculty de-velop their proposals and budgets. Biology professor David Benzing, who took 10 students to China last Winter Term, will share his experiences with those who ask.

The Shansi office (x8605) has detailed information about the sites and conditions of the grant.

Who Killed Steve Biko?

Ben Schiff and June Goodwin Tell the Story in a November Issue of the Nation Magazine

The November 13 issue of the Nation magazine will carry the first public revelation of a story well known in South African police circles. The story includes the name of the police officer who allegedly beat and killed anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko 18 years ago while he was in South African police custody. The narrative about the Biko killing is only one of many that Ben Schiff, professor of rhetoric, and award-winning journalist June Goodwin, his wife, collected for Heart of Whiteness: Afrikaners Face Black Rule in the New South Africa. The book’s publication date is November 6.

But readers won’t find the alleged murderer’s name in the book. The publisher, Scribner, would not publish it because—as Schiff says he understands—it is illegal law in foreign countries in which the publisher’s parent company maintains offices; laws would leave Scribner open to legal suit. Such suits are much more difficult to win under U.S. libel law, and the Nation, which does not maintain foreign offices, has thus far declined.

Both Scribner and the Nation publish the Goodwin-Schiff account that within police circles the alleged murderer reportedly went by a nickname that commemorates his deed: “Biko.” The Nation article gives the officer’s whole name and carries his denial of the nick-name and of his responsibility for the murder. Goodwin and Schiff’s book, based on more than 120 interviews, depicts white South Africa in a wide range of Afrikaner voices, from those who still believe in apartheid, to those who fought against that system from its inception.

“The book shows,” says Schiff, “why it’s wrong to be compliant about Afrikaner views of their role in governmental-design-plan-

Who's Who in the Project

Working closely with Orr on the project is the faculty-student Environmental Studies Program Committee, which Oberlin College-affiliated persons attended. Student sessions, of which there will be four, started September 20; the fourth will be November 9.

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Community-Planned Center Will Model Ecological Design

Now that the project is getting off the ground, Orr wants to involve the whole Oberlin community—College and town—in its planning. Along the way, he hopes, everyone will gain a greater mastery of ecological design. Town meetings, brainstorming sessions, focus groups, and intensive planning discussions with architects will occur through summer 1996. An all-faculty session is scheduled for October 31. Yesterday a number of students called together members of the College Administrative and Professional Staff for their opinions. The Oberlin Public Library hosted a public meeting about the center October 18 that 15 non-College-affiliated persons attended. Student sessions, of which there will be four, started September 20; the fourth will be November 9.

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This summer Craig (standing) conducted research with chemistry majors Helen Barnes '97, from Arcata, California; Emilio Morales '96, from Quincy, Washington; and Sonan Lyle, author of "the essence of a scholar–teacher." Since 1997, when Craig returned to his alma mater to begin his now nearly 40-year teaching career (he graduated in 1953), he has guided 107 undergraduate Oberlin students through chemistry research. Fifty-two (and counting) of his students have co-authored publications with him. One such student was David Evans '63.

Center . . . Continued from page 1

nents—including computers, computer programs, and communication protocols—which are connected to other people, and the con- necting goes on and on. The "guanxi" of his Success?

"Despite being a physical chemist, I have learned to be an interdisciplinary scientist," Craig continued. "Thus, my students and I have had interesting materials to study as well as temporary control over the investiga- tory process. The project is not yet completed as we are doing the moreslow- paced investigations that are characteristic of work done in college laboratories. Our suc- cess in synthesizing study groups was confirmed when a biochemist at the Univer- sity of Southern California called to ask how we had made 1,3-difluorocyclopropane. He had found this substance in one of our spectroscopy papers in the Journal of Physical Chemistry, after being told by his organic colleagues that this substance was unknown.

Craig’s first undergraduate research experience was during two summers at the National Bureau of Standards (NBS), where his father was a staff scientist. Craig calls those summer experiences “wonderful,” in part because they gave him the confidence to ask use the bureau’s instruments for his own work, which he did 10 years later. In 1961, Craig initiated another collaboration with the organization with which by then had changed its name to the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST). Still work- ing with the chemists and instruments at NIST, he says he is able to do it “because of knowing something about the operations.”

One such experiences at the NBS influenced him to provide similar opportunities for Ober- lin students, he says. "In 1965, the chemists at NBS coined the term ‘compan-panion in zealous research’—not only some of the people with whom he shares chemical information. Former Oberlin students and present colleagues figure impor- tant, but so do certain major scientific instruments (including computers) that make his work possible, fellow graduate and undergraduate students, an extraneous lack of need for many years now for summer research. In the course of his career he

The Observer

October 26, 1995

Norman Craig Wins ACS Undergraduate Research Award

What’s the Secret of His Success?

Like many visual artists, Norm Craig doesn’t talk long without sketching something. Like many poets he never discards a line of thought that doesn’t have immediate use. And like many politicians he makes and remembers connections with many people.

What has made Craig an outstanding chemistry professor—as noted not only by his peers at Oberlin but also by the American Chemical Society (ACS) and other national organizations—may be largely these personal qualities that he shares with other creative and effective people.

The ACS 1996 Award for Research at an Undergraduate Institution, to be conferred in March at the ACS annual meeting, together with his friend Craig that he was the subject of an article in the January issue of its journal, Chemical and Engineering News, will make more broadly known what his colleagues on and off campus have long acknowledged. The

Ohio, and additional mailing of- fices. Subscriptions are $16.


Letters to the editor directly related to campus events are welcome; those from employees and students take precedence over those from other correspondents. All letters are subject to editing; if time permits, the editor will consult with the corre- spondent about changes.

All Oberlin College Office of Commu- nications publications include a minimum of 10 percent postconsumer waste; the Observer’s paper includes at least 20 per- cent. Discounted copies may be recycled with office paper.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Craig’s sketches help his students follow his line of thinking and give others a hint of the excitement he feels about his research.

by organic chemists,” says Craig, an organic and physical chemist. “Most physical chem- ists don’t make compounds. Falling between these cracks meant I was doing zero research. And, not incidentally, he could ac- commodate the diverse speed and talents of student researchers. His love of chemistry is something students can do with little back- ground yet still understand,” he says.

All chemists are devoted to understand- ing the structure, function, and properties of molecules. Compounds are complex mol- ecules. Creating and then examining a series of molecules to discover what can illuminate the molecules’ structure— especially the bonds between the different elements of the compound.

“This decision to step out of the accepted mode of physical chemists and attempt syn- theses of needed, interesting molecules proved to be a key to finding a vibrant re- search niche for me as a college faculty member,” Craig told his Sigma Xi audience; the importance he attaches to that decision is revealed in an oral version of his speech: the sentence is set in italics.

"Despite being a physical chemist, I have learned to be an interdisciplinary scientist," Craig continued. “Thus, my students and I have had interesting materials to study as well as temporary control over the investiga- tory process. The project is not yet completed as we are doing the moreslow- paced investigations that are characteristic of work done in college laboratories. Our suc- cess in synthesizing study groups was confirmed when a biochemist at the Univer- sity of Southern California called to ask how we had made 1,3-difluorocyclopropane. He had found this substance in one of our spectroscopy papers in the Journal of Physical Chemistry, after being told by his organic colleagues that this substance was unknown.

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**Faculty Meeting**

Conservatory Takes a Vote on Noon Classes, Discusses the Place of the Con in Oberlin College

At the October 10 meeting of the Conservatory Faculty, members debated whether the noon class experiment has been enough of a success. The president and co-chairman of Oberlin College, Dye said the president and faculty went on to discuss strategic planning, financial aid, financial reserves, and the double-degree program, among other topics.

Professor of Religion James Morris was one of the co-sponsors of an international symposium, Sudim ex, the Unité et Pluralité, sponsored by UNESCO, the French Ministry of Culture, and the Académie de Paris. Held September 13-17, the conference focused on the role of spirituality in everyday life. At the assembly Morris gave a public lecture, “La pensée d'un philosophe persan du 8ème siècle, ‘Ahmad ibn Elah.” I had heard Traditional Teaching of Ostad Ehali. A recent presentation by David Orr, professor of environmental studies, must have an impact on syndicated writer Donell, who has been a professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth. According to September, September, said he doesn’t even worry when downloading programs may contain viruses. Don’t retrieve enclosed files that you think might be application programs if you don’t know or trust the sender. Retrieving such an enclosure to a floppy rather than your computer scan a floppy that has an application program—especially an application program that could scan it.

**Electronic Obie**

Good Times: Not a Virus but a Hoax

By Linda K. Grashoff

A week or so ago a friend called across campus with a worry in her voice. “Have you heard about this Good Times computer virus?” It sounds really awful.

So far, most computer viruses are spread by E-mail attachments (enclosures, and viruses may contain viruses. Don’t retrieve enclosed files that you think might be application programs if you don’t know or trust the sender. Retrieving such an enclosure to a floppy rather than your hard disk is no protection; the virus could still infect other parts of your machine before your virus-protection program could scan it.

When serious threats are computer viruses at Oberlin, they’re software applications and programs. Let your computer scan a floppy that has an application program—especially an application program that could scan it.

**News Notes**

School of Oriental and African Studies September floor. What’s the common remedy: mopping carried a piece she wrote retelling a story Orr told Massachusetts, and Maine—among others—during her newspaper job in West Virginia, Vermont, and France-Inter radio networks commenting on his use of feature films to teach about religion and spirituality in his Oberlin classes and in recent workshops in Europe, India, and the Middle East. An English version of Morris’s lecture was read at the symposium’s London session, held at the University of London’s Department of Near Eastern Studies, and Metropolitan Life. There he gave the concluding address of his career. An English version of Morris’s lecture was read at the symposium’s London session, held at the University of London’s Department of Near Eastern Studies, and Metropolitan Life. There he gave the concluding address of his career. According to West Virginia, Vermont, and France-Inter radio networks commenting on his use of feature films to teach about religion and spirituality in his Oberlin classes and in recent workshops in Europe, India, and the Middle East. An English version of Morris’s lecture was read at the symposium’s London session, held at the University of London’s Department of Near Eastern Studies, and Metropolitan Life. There he gave the concluding address of his career. According to West Virginia, Vermont, and France-Inter radio networks commenting on his use of feature films to teach about religion and spirituality in his Oberlin classes and in recent workshops in Europe, India, and the Middle East.

**Other New Courses And a Correction**

The Observer learned about some new courses being announced late for inclusion in the last issue’s article “New Courses Sparkle the Curricula.” The departmen of Art, Geology, and Neuroscience and Biophysics introduced new courses.

Both seminars, Assistant Professor of Art Lynn Lukas is teaching a new course in the art department’s Visual Communication Processes series: Time-Based Media. The course introduces students to the basic techniques and concepts used to work in interactive multimedia, and covered media such as video and digital imaging.

In the second half of the spring semester, another course, Associate Axlom, visiting assistant professor of geology, will teach Rivers and the Environment, using case studies such as the Mississippi River floods of 1993 to discuss the characteristics and processes of rivers and river environments as they relate to wetlands and floodplain land-use management, river engineering and flood control, and water-resources management. The course is cross-listed in environmental studies.

Bradford Branton, visiting assistant professor of neuroscience, will teach Sensory Physiology and its accompanying laboratory this spring. The course will examine sensory systems and their functions. Topics will include aspects of neural transmission, mechanisms of sensory transduction, and the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying it in a variety of nervous systems. The laboratory will study several sensory systems to understand their structure, physiology, and function.

Alyssa Paul Billiard ’93, not Catherine Arusissian, is teaching the new music-education course, Teaching Children’s Singing, described in the October 12 Observer article.

**Premed . . .**

Continued from page 4

cal, and economic constraints on delivering health care to those who need it. Faculty and local practitioners would contribute a lecture or discussion of a topic of interest to them while a faculty advisor would be available to answer questions. The seminar could stand along as a separate program or become a part of an existing program. I am only proposing a solitary, one-time program of readings. If you were interested faculty. The seminars would focus on medical and other relevant readings in the humanities along the lines developed by Lantos and Coles. The seminars could stand alone or be coupled with students engaging in real-world internships or volunteer work in hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. By combining academic work and service, students would have an opportunity to reflect on their service experiences and put them into larger perspectives through discussions and reflections.

I am not proposing a new individual major or program. I am only proposing a solitary, multidisciplinary course on contemporary health care that would be offered either as a seminar for one or two and a suggested course of study that students could follow through electives outside their major. Whether we have the resources to develop and implement this modest proposal remains to be seen.

David Egloff is professor of biology. This article is adapted from a talk he gave at the October 6 Faculty and Administrative and Professional Staff Luncheon. He is preparing a formal proposal for the interdisciplinary course that he envisions in this piece.

**Princeton . . .**

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Observations

Premeical Curricula at Oberlin: How to Make More Humane Physicians

By David Egloff

One of the things I did on my sabbatical leave last fall was audit a course in the humanities at Harvard. I did it to hear how Robert Coles answered the question How does a child grow up to be a good person? As one of Oberlin’s designated premedical advisers, I did it to hear how Robert Coles answered the question How does a child grow up to be a good physician? Knowing Coles’ work, I assumed he would talk about the importance of intellectual growth, science and the scientific method, social responsibility, and altruism. Instead, he talked about empathy, compassion toward their patients and other health professionals. Is the undergraduate premedical curricular part of the problem or part of the solution? I am going to conclude that the latter is the case. But before I do, I will review briefly the recent history of U.S. medical education.

Premeical Requirements, Premeical Majors

Admissions requirements for U.S. medical schools have changed little since the great medical-education reforms of the early 20th century replaced for-profit proprietary medical schools with schools in accredited research universities. Typically, one or two years of chemistry and one year each of biology, physics, mathematics, and English have been required for the past 70 years for entrance to medical school. Colleges and universities, driven by the education of their undergraduate students, have often changed the admissions requirements, but not always the ones that a good professor of chemistry, biology, or physics includes in an introductory course.

Some undergraduate institutions established premedical majors during the first half of this century. Oberlin offered two premedical majors from the 1930s through the 1950s, one called zoology-premed and one called chemistry-premed. But by the mid-1950s medical schools and premedical advisers recognized that changes in premedical education were necessary because emphasis on undergraduate scientific preparation had become excessive. Education relating to many other qualities and skills required to be a good physician was being neglected in the premedical curriculum, the authors said.

Some medical educators advocated accepting students directly from high school so that medical schools could have full control of the premedical educational process. Thirty such programs in the country today accept 18-year-olds and grant them a B.S. and an M.D. degree after six years in a University of Chicago program.

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Can we improve on the performance I think yes, and for two years I have been working and lobbying for two changes:

1. I think Oberlin should join the vast majority of undergraduate institutions that have a health-careers committee that works aggressively for the inclusion of their undergraduate students in a health profession that fits their talents and interests.
2. I think we should identify and develop more curricular and noncurricular opportunities that will attract students to the health professions for the right reasons. One approach to the second suggestion is to provide more information so that students can make more informed choices about their careers based on their interests and skills. One kind of vehicle for doing this is something I used in Medicine and Ambiguity, a course I taught in 1994. The course consisted of reading and discussing narratives written by physicians and patients. It got the idea from John Lantos, a pediatrician and bioethicist who teaches a course called Medical Odysseys to undergraduates at the University of Chicago. Lantos’ students read, as did we, several recent accounts of what it feels like to be a care giver or a patient or a medical student. We read, among other books, Philip Roth’s Patrimony, Percue Klaus’ Other Women’s children, Audre Lorde’s The Cancer Journals, William Styron’s Darkness Visible, and John McPhee’s Heirs of General Practice. The McPhee book is about family practice in rural Maine and features Sandy Burstein 75.

At Harvard College and Harvard Medical School Robert Coles has been using both fiction and nonfiction for many years to increase future doctors’ sensitivity to their patients.

Medical humanities and science and society courses are a also a part of the Oberlin curriculum. Some have been run, prove just as valuable to future physicians.

Are Undergraduates Ready?

Colles and others argue that under-graduates are not ready to absorb these lessons. Undergraduates are young. Short of raising the minimum age for college to 21, perhaps we should provide at least one interdisciplinary course that will put students in a broad and meaningful context for them.

Can we improve on the quantity and quality of instruction? How much would an interdisciplinary course that would put students in a broad and meaningful context for them. How much would an interdisciplinary course that would put students in a broad and meaningful context for them improve on that performance I think yes, and for two years I have been working and lobbying for two changes:

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