In Brief

Key University Leaders Begin Second Terms

Bradford Berk ’81M (MD/PhD), senior vice president and CEO of the Medical Center, has been re-appointed for a second five-year term. A former chief of cardiology, director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute, and chair of the Department of Medicine, Berk was first appointed CEO in 2008. During his tenure as CEO, federal research funding to the Medical Center reached an all-time high, and the Medical Center has opened a number of new facilities, including the Saunders Research Building and the Ambulatory Surgery Center. Inspired by his own experiences following a serious spinal cord injury in 2009, Berk has also driven the Medical Center to adopt a rigorous approach to patient- and family-centered care, an effort that is boosting patient satisfaction scores across the health system.

Ralph Kuncl, provost and executive vice president of the University, begins a second five-year term this spring. He has also been named the University’s chief research officer. First appointed provost in 2007, Kuncl has helped direct the University’s initiatives in high-performance computing, including the Health Sciences Center for Computational Innovation, which facilitates access to high performance computational resources for University researchers. He also has led efforts in corporate research collaborations, multidisciplinary initiatives, diversity, and online education. He’s been responsible for reviews of deans, the library, approximately 150 faculty promotion or tenure decisions, sustainability, and faculty-driven learning assessment initiatives.

Math Teams Add Up Top Finishes

For the fourth year in a row, a team from the University has placed among the top 15 in one of the nation’s most highly regarded mathematics competitions. The team of Xiaoming Tang ’12, Vincent Yu ’14, and Douglas Miller ’15 finished 15th among 460 teams in the William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition. They were coached by Dan Geba, associate professor of mathematics. A total of 4,440 students from 572 colleges participated in this year’s competition. Harvard took top honors, followed by Carnegie Mellon, Caltech, Stanford, and MIT.

Win at the Met Puts Eastman Student on Prestigious Stage

Eastman School graduate student Matthew Grills was one of five winners of the Metropolitan Opera’s National Council Auditions this spring. He and four other winners were chosen among nine finalists. His winning performance included the aria “Ah! Mes Amis!” from Donizetti’s opera La Fille du Regiment, an aria which, with nine high Cs, has been called “the Mount Everest for tenors”—and which Grills reprised a month later to win the 2012 Lotte Lenya Competition for singing and acting. Nearly 1,500 singers entered this year’s Met auditions, which are considered the most prestigious in North America for singers seeking to launch an operatic career. Past winners include Renée Fleming ’83E (MM), Susan Graham, and Jessye Norman. —Helene Snihr
University Joins National Effort to Improve Science, Engineering Education

Rochester is joining a national effort to develop a new generation of college-level science and engineering faculty. The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning, which began in 2003 with a handful of universities, has expanded to include 25 of the nation’s top educational institutions. Supported by the National Science Foundation and headquartered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the center’s mission is to improve the teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at colleges across the country. As a member, Rochester will have access to the teaching and learning innovations of other network members, as well as a platform for sharing its own successes, including the peer-led workshop model, the WeBWorK online homework tool for math and science, and diversity-oriented approaches for creating an inclusive campus environment.

—Peter Iglinski

Where Is Flat Pi?

Flat Pi—the mascot for the University’s Pi Week celebration—has begun a trip around the world to demonstrate the universality of the mathematical constant and the role of math in our lives. In a project of the Society of Undergraduate Mathematics Students (SUMS) that combined mathematics awareness and social media, the initiative provided math-minded people with copies of the paper icon and asked them to share photos of Flat Pi at sites around the world. As of the end of April, the mascot had been spotted in Alaska, Finland, South Africa, and Thailand. To follow Flat Pi, visit www.rochester.edu/news/flat-pi. —Peter Iglinski

“[Dick Clark] was able to position himself in the center of the television and music industry in the way that allowed him to have a career that spanned a half a century.”

—John Covach, a rock ‘n’ roll historian and chair of the Department of Music, talking on CNN about the death of Dick Clark, celebrated music producer, television personality, and “America’s Oldest Teenager.”

Barbara Walters

Craig Ferguson

Walters and Ferguson Headline Meliora Weekend 2012

Famed journalist Barbara Walters, a correspondent for ABC News, the host of The Barbara Walters Specials, and creator, cohost, and executive producer of The View, will be the keynote speaker at Meliora Weekend on Oct. 13. Comedian Craig Ferguson of The Late Late Show on CBS will be the headline entertainer as part of the weekend’s activities for alumni reunion, homecoming, and family weekend. More than 5,000 attendees are expected for four days of lectures, performances, seminars, and social gatherings, Oct. 11 to 14. For more information, visit www.rochester.edu/melioraweekend.