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U of I Extension offices merge, downsize

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By [SUSAN DeMAR LAFFERTY](#) slafferty@southtownstar.com

As the University of Illinois Extension Service closes offices across the state, the effect on popular programs such as 4-H and Master Gardeners, may not be known immediately.

What did become known in late June is that the Will County office will merge with those from Grundy and Kankakee counties, while the South Cook County regional office in Matteson moved last week to a smaller site.

It's all part of a sweeping statewide reorganization plan -- one that will take a year to fully implement -- in response to unprecedented cuts in state funding.

As the extension service strives to slice \$7 million from a \$65 million budget, it has reduced the number of offices from 76 to 27 and will cut the number of directors and educators to further reduce administrative costs, said Gary Beaumont, spokesman for the U of I Extension.

The extension service provides agricultural expertise to farmers and gardeners, answers horticultural questions, operates 4-H, nutrition and health programs and other services.

"For people who use extension services, all this is under the hood. People should continue to call the extension office," Beaumont said. "These administrative changes should be transparent to the public, but it's very traumatic for the extension service."

Reducing staff

Employees were offered a voluntary separation program, and those who accepted must depart by Aug. 15. Remaining staff can apply for any position in the extension service statewide and will be selected by mid-October.

While county offices are merging statewide, there will be smaller satellite locations in each county, with hours to be determined locally.

There will be one director instead of three for Will, Grundy and Kankakee counties, said James Oliver, regional extension director.

The goal also is to halve the number of educators in the state from 180 to 90, he said.

While the Cook County extension service is not merging with another county, it is downsizing its staff and facilities.

The extension office in Matteson moved July 1 from a 10,000-square-foot facility on Miller Circle Drive to 1,800 square feet at 4749 Lincoln Mall Drive.

A physical presence in each county is critical, said Beth LaPlante, Kankakee County director.

"We're so volunteer-based. That is what drives us. They need a spot to come to," she said.

Slower service?

The merged county extension offices will create a new committee -- scheduled to meet July 15 -- with two members from each county, to provide input and make recommendations on programs, staff and location, LaPlante said.

She believes the public will notice a change -- less staff may mean slower service.

"Our volunteers will notice it more than the general public," she said. "We will still provide quality programs and address the needs of the community. It will change, but I don't know how."

While the counties will share staff and resources, Will County extension service chairwoman Dianne Ross said Tuesday any money raised in each county will stay in that county.

The Kankakee County extension service is the only one of the three funded by its own property tax levy.

Will is the largest county of the three and offers the most programs but has relied on contributions from the county board and fundraisers.

All extension offices receive state and federal funds.

The Will County board this year matched those funds up to its \$25,000 limit.

"There is more and more need for extension services, but if the state is not providing money, we have to move forward," said Debra Jo Kinsella, Grundy County director.

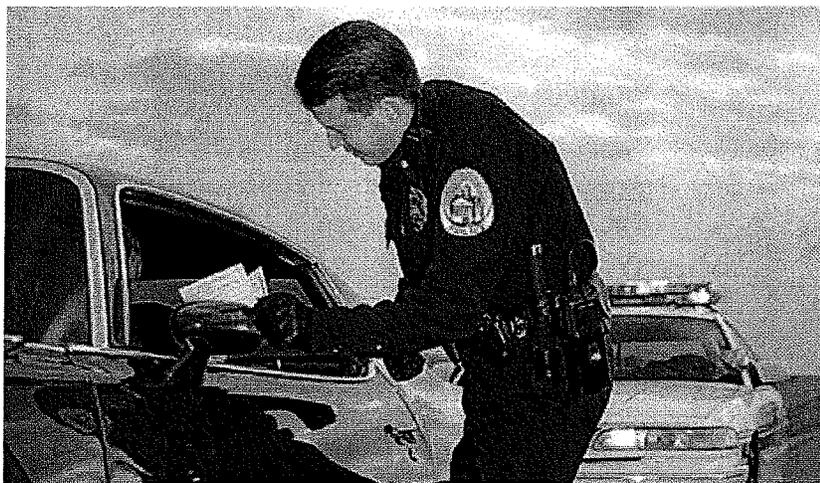

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Thursday, July 8, 2010

Springfield minorities stopped more often

Trend verified for fifth consecutive year

BY PATRICK YEAGLE



Minority drivers in Springfield had more than double the chances of being pulled over by police during 2009 compared with white drivers, according to data on traffic stops released July 1 by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The data come from the Illinois Traffic Stop Statistics Study, which directs police agencies to collect information about the race of stopped drivers, as well as information on searches, reasons for each stop and more. An analysis by the [University of Illinois at Chicago](#) shows minority drivers in Springfield are almost two-and-a-half times as likely to be pulled over as white drivers, while making up an estimated 15.8 percent of the driving population. Springfield police stopped 8,966 minority drivers in 2009, comprising 38 percent of the total 23,011 traffic stops.

The study determines the ratio of minority driver stops by dividing the percentage of minorities stopped by the percentage of minority drivers in a community. A ratio of one means minority and white drivers have the same chances of being pulled over. Springfield's 2009 ratio was 2.47, meaning minorities in Springfield were 247 percent more likely to be pulled over while driving than white drivers. That ratio is down from 2.66 in 2004, when the report was first released, but up from a low of 2.15 in 2005.

Minorities are also searched more often by police in Springfield, according to the data. In 532 stops of minority drivers (5.9 percent) in 2009, police requested permission to search the drivers' vehicles, compared with 346 requests for white drivers (2.5 percent). Searches of minority-driven vehicles were performed 488 times (5.4 percent of all stops), while only 325 searches (2.3 percent of all stops) were performed on vehicles driven by white drivers.

Contraband such as weapons, drugs or stolen property was found in 45 searches of minority-driven vehicles, a 9.2 percent "hit rate" – compared with 41 instances of contraband found in vehicles driven by white drivers, a 12.6 percent hit rate.

Springfield Police Chief Robert Williams declined to comment on the numbers until an independent expert at Western Illinois University had evaluated the data, though he said it may be misleading to look at the numbers without the context of individual stops. He illustrates his point with the example of drunk drivers and accidents.

"If 34 percent of accidents were caused by drunk drivers, then that means 66 percent were caused by sober drivers," Williams hypothesizes. "By comparison, it looks safer to drink and drive."

Williams, who is African-American, says the department educates its officers about racial profiling and follows safeguards put in place by the state.

"We're always mindful of it," he says.

Statewide, minority drivers fared better in 2009 than in previous years, but were still 12 percent more likely to be pulled over than white drivers. That disparity has decreased steadily from 15 percent in 2004.

The law requiring the study was introduced in July 2003 by then Illinois Sen. Barack Obama and signed into law by former governor Rod Blagojevich.

Municipalities surrounding Springfield displayed varied results from the traffic stop data. In Jerome, at the southwest edge of Springfield, minority driver stops made up about one quarter of the total 2,891 stops, though minority drivers make up an estimated 10.5 percent of the population there. Jerome's minority stop ratio was 2.44 in 2009. The Sangamon County Sheriff's police force had a ratio of 1.78, meaning minority drivers had a 78 percent higher chance of being pulled over than white drivers. The county-wide estimated minority driving population is about 10.5 percent.

To view the 2009 traffic stop data, visit tinyurl.com/23m87jv.

Contact Patrick Yeagle at pyeagle@illinoistimes.com.

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July 4, 2010

College E-Mail Gets Caught in Google's China Fight, and Other Overseas Adventures

By Jeffrey R. Young

The frustrated e-mails from Chinese students began arriving just days after the end of the semester at Binghamton University. "Why can't we get into our university e-mail accounts?" the students asked.

It turns out the university was caught in the cross-fire of China's public battle with Google, which provides free, Web-based e-mail service to Binghamton and hundreds of other American colleges. Google recently refused to follow the Chinese government's Internet-censorship rules—policies some refer to as "the great fire wall of China"—and in response the government there has blocked access to some of Google's servers. So when the Binghamton students flew back home to China for the summer and tried to check their university e-mail (known as BMail), they hit a dead end.

"The first day when I came back to China, I found the Web site I used previously for BMail was unavailable when I tried to check my e-mail," Wei Huang, a sophomore at Binghamton who is now home in Zhejiang for the summer, told me last week in an e-mail. "I was waiting for the notification of admission from SOM [the university's School of Management], and if I couldn't have access to BMail, I wouldn't have known that I had successfully transferred," he said.

When Mr. Huang and other students wrote to complain, Ellen H. Badger, director of international student services at the university, immediately thought of all the ways e-mail was supposed to be used during the summer—including a weekly newsletter to stay connected to the university's students (451 of whom hail from China) and many messages to new students (92 of whom are from the country) telling them about housing information, meal plans, and the like. These days colleges do so much routine business by e-mail, it is dizzying to think of how those tasks would get done without it.

In this case the solution turned out to be easy—routing students to a different Web address on the university's servers to check their mail, or encouraging them to log in to the university's encrypted

network first. (Google has outlined the fix on one of its corporate blogs.) Within 48 hours of learning about the problem, the university had sent a message to all of its Chinese students with instructions on how to get around the blockade.

Making end runs around the great fire wall and dealing with the fallout of policy decisions made by giant companies are part of a whole new set of technological challenges American colleges encounter as they accept more students from foreign countries, expand their partnerships abroad, or set up branch campuses overseas.

Even if your campus hasn't gone global yet, there's plenty of reason to think it soon will. That's the argument in the new book *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World* (Princeton University Press) by Ben Wildavsky, a senior fellow at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. "With universities around the globe vying for market share, recruiting students and fostering overseas partnerships have become de rigueur," he writes.

So when relying on technology to deliver teaching and services, colleges increasingly need to think globally.

Here are three tips that may help colleges see this big picture and overcome the technical hurdles. They are based on several interviews with college leaders who were in the first wave of educators—and in some ways, innocents—abroad.

1. Follow the Business

When Carnegie Mellon University decided to set up a branch campus in Qatar several years ago, the first thing the university's top technology officer did was call a friend at Alcoa, the multinational aluminum giant that operates in 44 countries. "I said, 'Let's have a conversation of what you worry about as far as international,'" said the Carnegie Mellon administrator, Joel M. Smith.

One piece of advice he heard seemed cryptic at first: "Watch out for A4 paper problems." The code refers to the standard size for business paper in Europe and many other parts of the world. It's slightly longer than the 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -by-11-inch paper common in the United States. So what? Mr. Smith asked.

"Then I got a fax from Qatar that was cut off at the bottom," he said, noting that the lost inch or so of paper kept a key detail from reaching him in Pittsburgh. "That became kind of emblematic that you can't make the assumption that the rest of the world is on U.S. standards."

Tony O'Driscoll, a professor at Duke University's business school,

applies the lessons he learned as a former IBM executive to help the school's global M.B.A. program, in which a class of students travels together to several different countries, including India and China. "What works for enterprise doesn't *necessarily* work for eduprise, but some of it does," he told me, pointing to online collaboration with distant colleagues as an example. He now requires students to use Flip video cameras to conduct interviews about business challenges in different countries, and then work online with classmates to edit the films and post them online using a multimedia dropbox called CourseCommons.

2. Know That Connections Vary

One common assumption is that Internet access will always be easy to come by. While many countries boast networks as zippy as or even speedier than those in the United States, connection can be prohibitively expensive. Other countries lack robust links at any price. "Bandwidth abroad is not universally available like it is in the U.S. or Europe," said Robert Ubell, vice president for enterprise learning at New York University's Polytechnic Institute, noting that India, China, and Africa are among the most difficult places to log on.

Such infrastructure gaps lack an easy fix. Mr. O'Driscoll, of Duke's business school, said the institution was looking into "Internet in a box" systems that let officials set up local networks if they travel to places with limited Internet service.

3. Assess the Gear You Already Have

Starting an overseas venture does not necessarily mean outfitting yourself with telemetry to run a Mars rover. For instance, videoconferencing may simply call for an expansion of what your college already uses.

The videoconference is a key tool to making global education partnerships work. Paul M. Horn, senior vice provost for research at New York University, called it "critical." Luckily the prices of video links have come way down over the past decade, and they are now reliable enough to hold class between two distant locations without fear that a glitch will force a lesson to end early.

While some colleges are buying the Cadillac of videoconference gear, institutions may already have tools robust enough for international collaboration. Mr. Ubell, of NYU, said many colleges had already purchased licenses for Wimba or other conferencing systems that they may not be using, and an international partnership may be just the time to dig out the manual and give the system a try. In some cases, low-cost systems like Skype, which allows video calls, can be enough to coordinate research by

professors or student projects. "You don't always need a whiz-bang solution," he told me.

In the end, global connections create more chances for things to go wrong—especially when you can't just walk down the hall to resolve an argument. But even if just a few of their students hail from far-off lands, colleges should make sure their systems can be reached wherever students and professors may roam. So if your institution is very diverse, advised Frank Saraceno, associate director of information-technology services at Binghamton, "your approach to technology needs to be diverse as well."

College 2.0 covers how new technologies are changing colleges.

Please send ideas to jeff.young@chronicle.com.

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News

Animal Studies Beyond Biology

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In his first year as an assistant professor in the University of Iowa's archaeology department, Matthew E. Hill made a move that many other junior faculty would've considered risky: he said he wanted to teach an undergraduate seminar on animals and culture.

"When I first proposed the course, I thought I would get a more negative response -- 'Oh, it's fluffy' -- and I still worry about some of my colleagues having that attitude," he says. "But my chair and other people have been supportive, interested."

Hill first taught Animals, Culture and Food, in the fall of 2008 and will offer it again this fall. Leaders in his department are "real happy that I've been able to fill the class," attracting not just anthropology majors, but also students studying nursing, engineering, visual art and several liberal arts fields.

"Any time animals come up in any of my more traditional archaeology classes, there's kind of an excitement in the room," he says. "I realized there's an interest in learning more about human-animal interactions. I'm trying to fulfill a need." He plans to teach a course next spring on humans' ancient and modern relationships with dogs.

Hill's courses aren't outliers, but part of an emerging group of courses that meld approaches and texts from law, religion, ethics, literature, visual art, ecology, sociology and other fields to consider the role animals play in human culture. Animals have long been on the curriculum in veterinary colleges, agriculture colleges and biology departments -- but the new animal studies is about the humanities and social sciences. The American Academy of Religion and the American Sociological Association have in the last decade created sections to focus on animals. Faculty from about four dozen institutions, mostly in the United States, have [posted syllabuses](#) for their courses on animals in human culture to H-Animal, a discussion group hosted by H-Net.

The field that has perhaps been most amenable to examining humans and other animals is the law. By the Animal Legal Defense Fund's own count, more than 120 law schools in the United States and Canada have offered courses on animal law since 2000. In 2000, the group identified just nine law schools with courses on animals.

Pamela D. Alexander, director of ALDF's animal law program, says that students are demanding courses on animal law. "A lot of it is coming grassroots, from the students. More and more students are going to law school because they want to fight for animals," she says. "Animal rights is one of the greatest social justice movements of our time. It's captivating and alluring to students to get involved in this, to recognize that the human-animal bond is not reflected in the law as it is in society."

Practicing lawyers, she adds, will likely come across some cases involving animals during the course of their careers. "Animal law permeates into all the traditional areas of law," she says, citing high-profile animal cases involving constitutional, family, criminal and estate law.

Paul Waldau, president of the Religion and Animals Institute and former director of the Center for Animals and Public Policy at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, says he thinks the real surge in law schools offering courses on animals has happened because of the introduction of courses at top-ranked schools and the media attention they garnered.

In the summer of 1999, Harvard Law School and the Georgetown University Law Center both announced plans to introduce courses on animal law during the coming academic year. "Harvard adopting the course was a key event," says Waldau, who as a visiting

lecturer has taught the class every other academic year since 2002. "The law school and its reputation gave the field the respect it needed to expand." He's also taught animal law at the law schools of Yale and Suffolk Universities and Boston College.

Alexander teaches one at the University of Chicago Law School and, before joining ALDF, co-taught a course at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "Our goal is to see every law school teach animal law," she says. "The fact that a place as conservative as the University of Chicago offers animal law says a lot about the field."

But Waldau stresses that law isn't the only discipline that needs to build a robust study of the interaction between humans and animals. "You need teachers, economists, communities of faith, journalists to all understand animals," he says. "That kind of dissemination, the osmosis of animal studies and the permission to care needs to spread widely."

At Tufts, he's taught courses on ethics for veterinarians, and this summer he's teaching a Harvard Summer School seminar on religion and animals. (In addition to a J.D., Waldau has a Ph.D. in religion.) In religion, he says, animals are often studied only as symbols when they ought to be studied as "real living beings."

His summer course is not an exhaustive survey but an attempt to help students "unlearn some of their biases, talk to other people and ask questions" about how humans and animals interact. He's focusing on Christianity, Islam and several indigenous traditions. "It's a rich topic and it's fun. Some students are more interested in religion, some in animals," he says. "They obviously self-select."

At Southwestern University, Laura Hobgood-Oster, a professor of religion, first offered a course on animals and religion in the fall of 2001, after students in her course on religion and ecology expressed interest. The course filled with 20 students and attracted a waiting list of 20 more. She's taught it several more times since – including at least once during each of the last four academic years – and it always fills.

"Some students say they never even thought about animals and religion having anything to do with each other," Hobgood-Oster says, but the course's examination of animals – mainly through the beliefs of Christianity, Buddhism, the Lakota Sioux and market capitalism – changes that. "Students come to see how much religion tells humans about how to treat animals."

The course also includes a week of discussion of the modern animal rights movement that developed following the 1975 publication of *Animal Liberation*, by Peter Singer, now a professor of bioethics at Princeton University, and the writings of Tom Regan, now an emeritus professor of philosophy at North Carolina State University. Their work and the work of a few others, Hobgood-Oster says, sparked broader interest in animals outside biology departments that was first reflected in research and has slowly migrated into course offerings.

Students, she says, "say that more than any other course they've taken, this one leads them to question their basic assumptions" about life. "We break down that human-animal binary and allow students to consider that it might be a faulty assumption that humans are not more important than or superior to other animals."

Faculty at Baylor University hope that their new course on animals and human society, set to begin this fall, will encourage students to question what they want to get out of their college years. The course is being offered in the university's Engaged Learning Groups program for freshmen, which aims to help students adjust to college by intertwining living and learning.

Susan P. Bratton, chair of Baylor's environmental science department and author of three books on Christianity and environmental ethics, says her goal is to create "a social environment that turns into a robust learning environment, and a way to do meaningful things for others." The other course leaders are experts in conservation biology, music and wildlife ecology.

Forty-six incoming students have registered for a combined residential and academic experience. More are on a waiting list contingent on the availability of dormitory space. (The students will live in a newly renovated dorm with one wing for male students and another for female students.)

The course will be graded but only worth one credit each semester, mixing short reading and writing assignments with trips to a zoo and a rodeo, as well as service learning opportunities that students will choose. Based on their applications to the program, the students' interests vary greatly, Bratton says. Some students are interested in hard sciences, while others plan to major in the humanities and arts.

"We have everything from the deer hunting crowd to people who are very, very committed to vegetarianism and animal protection."

— Jennifer Epstein