

Informational Report

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Many undergraduate students are interested in research opportunities but not sure where or how to start. Research Warriors, a new student organization on campus, hopes to help all WSU students kick-start their research experience. WSU celebrates research at all levels and is one of only 10 U.S. public universities in major cities holding the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's designation as an institution with "very high research activity." The university, along with Michigan State University and the University of Michigan, is a member of the University Research Corridor, which contributed \$16.5 billion in economic activity and more than 68,000 jobs to the state in 2016. Formed in March 2016, Research Warriors offers students writing workshops, social events and the opportunity to connect with faculty mentors through networking events and lab tours.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Wayne State University's Penelope Higgs, an assistant professor of Biological Sciences in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, has been awarded an Early CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation (NFS) for her work with the soil bacteria termed *Myxococcus xanthus*. Her continued research will aid in understanding bacterial biofilms and may help in the treatment of diseases caused by pathogenic bacteria. "*Myxococcus* is not a human pathogen, but many bacterial pathogens use similar mechanisms to build biofilms or become persisters. Biofilms and persister cells are more resistant to treatment by antibiotics or actions of the immune system, so it is imperative to understand how these behaviors are regulated," said Higgs.

In March, a select group of Wayne State University business students headed to the Renaissance Center to vie for \$1,750 in scholarship money as they compete in the second annual Mike Ilitch School of Business Elevator Pitch Competition. In the city's tallest and most iconic elevator, they practiced their opening lines on Detroit executives during the course of a ride to the top. The students had the 80 seconds ride up the Renaissance Center's 72 stories to give an "elevator speech" about themselves, describing their education, skills and career aspirations. Executives from Ally Financial, Quicken Loans, Comerica and Chrysler evaluated the students on their ability to sell themselves and present a positive, professional first impression.

FACULTY

Researchers from the Wayne State University School of Medicine's Department of Physiology have invented a tiny thermometer for measuring muscle efficiency that

could detect metabolic diseases such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy earlier than previously thought possible. The thermometer, dubbed the world's tiniest and most sensitive, is made up of metal alloy nanoparticles that can detect temperatures less than 1/1000th of a centigrade, or 1 mK, said Distinguished Professor of Physiology Bhanu Jena, the study's principal investigator and director of WSU's NanoBioScience Institute. As many as 50,000 of the nano thermometers could fit on one strand of human hair. "All life processes and every chemical reaction is governed by temperature, hence a precise assessment of temperature is critical," he said.

Supporting a patient or family's decision to remove artificial ventilation and allow for natural death requires palliative care, aimed at the prevention and relief of suffering. Nurses play a key role in this process. Wayne State College of Nursing Professor Margaret L. Campbell and her research team were recently awarded a five-year, \$2.4 million research grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research of the National Institutes of Health to test an algorithm intended to help nurses provide improved palliative care. Campbell and her research team will gather data from ethnically diverse patients in four medical intensive care units (MICUs) to scientifically test the algorithm based on an objective measure of distress — the Respiratory Distress Observation Scale (RDOS), which Campbell developed. The MICUs participating in the study include Henry Ford Health System, University of Michigan, Harper University and Detroit Receiving Hospitals.

STUDENTS

Christiana Lumaj, a 2016 graduate from the public relations program in Wayne State's College of Fine, Performing and Communications Arts, was recently named executive communications coordinator after less than a year at Ford Motor Company. She now reports to fellow WSU alum Raymond (Ray) Day, the group vice president of communications at Ford. Lumaj accepted a position with Ford as a product launch and events coordinator in May 2016. In her new role, Lumaj supports Ford CEO and President Mark Fields in his storytelling and stakeholder engagement. Her responsibilities include working with Day to provide direct communications support including managing global positioning, engagements and briefings for Fields.

For the second time in three years, two Wayne Law Mock Trial teams advanced to the final rounds of the regional Texas Young Lawyer's Association National Trial Competition, with both teams finishing second for 2017. In the final round, they faced off against teams from Case Western Reserve University School of Law and the University of Cincinnati College of Law, respectively. Eighteen teams from law schools throughout Michigan and Ohio participated in the February competition at Michigan State University College of Law in East Lansing. The teams tackled a criminal case where the defendant was charged with possession with intent to distribute heroin. Each team conducted five trials, representing alternatively both the defense and prosecution sides of the problem.