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## UST Adds New Biochemistry Major

UST will now offer a major in biochemistry—one of the fastest growing fields in science—as another degree option for students interested in studying the sciences.

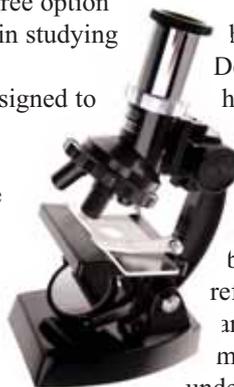
The program is designed to give students a strong chemistry and biology background in both the theory and practice of biochemistry. Students will be exposed to the breadth of biochemistry through classroom, laboratory and research experiences.

“The biochemistry major gives our students a degree option that directly opens up many

exciting opportunities for them,” said Michelle Steiger, assistant professor of chemistry.

The program will be housed in the Chemistry Department, but will draw heavily on supporting courses in biology.

In biochemistry, biological questions are addressed using chemistry-based approaches. The major reflects the chemical theories and techniques that are fundamental to increasing the understanding of biological phenomena, but also requires the interdisciplinary tools in biology, mathematics and physics that will be necessary for success.



## University Welcomes New Basilian Superior, Fr. Robert Barringer, CSB

Fr. Robert Barringer, CSB, joins the University of St. Thomas as local Superior of the Basilian Fathers, replacing Fr. Robert Crooker, CSB, professor emeritus of theology. Prior to his appointment, Fr. Barringer served in Sugar Land as the Master of Novices for the Basilian congregation.

Originally from Canada, Fr. Barringer graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in classics in 1967. After finishing

his undergraduate degree, he won the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship and went to Oxford in 1967 to study theology for three years. He later came to Houston to teach theology and classics at UST as a Basilian scholastic before being ordained in 1974.

After returning to Oxford to obtain his doctorate, Fr. Barringer taught at St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto and was later appointed president of St.

Joseph's College at the University of Alberta. In 1993, he was elected Superior General of the Basilian Fathers and stayed in that position for four years before moving to Colombia in 1998 to assume responsibility of the Basilian formation process there.





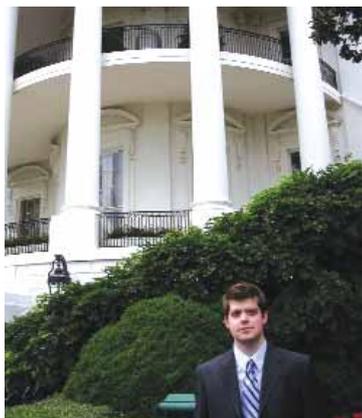
**Laurels • Submit by Feb. 15**

Submit your work to Laurels literary magazine at laurels.mag@gmail.com or at Malloy Hall, Room 234.

## Mr. Joerns Goes to Washington

UST graduate John Joerns spent the fall of 2007 working in the center of the nation's capital after being selected as a White House intern. Specifically, he worked under a special assistant to the president in the Office of Public Liaison, a department that coordinates the president's involvement with various causes and organizations.

Joerns' internship was nothing short of exciting. On his first day, he witnessed the final departure of former Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and the resignation of former Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez. In between the long hours he spent each day doing everything from answering phones, to taking care of schedule and travel arrangements, to helping with events and briefings and acting as a personal assistant to his boss, Joerns encountered many well-known political figures.



During the internship, he saw Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, got an autograph from Justice Antonin Scalia, met Justice Clarence Thomas, spoke with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger by phone and, along with a group of about 100 interns, had a private gathering with President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney.

Joerns also attended a White House press conference and heard lectures by news reporters Dan Rather and Helen Thomas at a National Press Club event. In fact, Joerns said it was not uncommon to see many other public figures walking around Washington, going about their business or getting coffee from a local Starbuck's.

Joerns said he is grateful he had the opportunity to spend a semester working for the White House. In particular, he was very impressed by the devotion, commitment and vibrant energy of the staff.

"The White House staff members were busy, energetic and even funny," Joerns said. "They were all very hardworking people that really made you feel like a part of the team."

Joerns graduated with a B.A. in political science in spring 2007. He plans to attend medical school at Tulane University in fall 2008.

SAVE THE DATE

## Deans in Jeans



Deans in Jeans is a time for UST faculty and staff to visit students in Guinan Hall in a casual setting. Deans in Jeans will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 30, in Guinan Hall. Contact Joe Morton at [mortonj@stthom.edu](mailto:mortonj@stthom.edu) to sign-up.

## Mexican Foreign Policy



Jorge Castañeda will speak at UST at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30, in Cullen Hall on U.S.-Mexico relations. Castañeda is a renowned public intellectual, political scientist and prolific writer, with an interest in Latin American politics.

## Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas



Celebrate the opening of the spring semester at the Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas, 12:45 p.m. Thursday Jan. 31, in the Jerabeck Gym. Lunch will follow in Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center. All UST students, faculty and staff are invited.

## Is Iran a Threat to America?



Activist Massoud Nayeri will discuss "Is Iran a Threat to America?" at 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 1 in Guinan Hall. In this talk, Nayeri makes the case that Iran is not a threat to the U.S., critiquing the rhetoric that has been growing regarding this supposed threat.



## Child Rights Lecture

The University of St. Thomas Center for International Studies will bring Jo Becker, to campus for a presentation on “Child Soldiers: From Human Rights to Children’s Rights,” 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29 in Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center.

Becker is the Children’s Rights Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch. According to Human Rights Watch, since 2001, the participation of child soldiers has been reported in 21 ongoing or recently armed conflicts in almost every region of the world. Children are more likely to become child soldiers if they are poor, separated from their families, displaced from their homes, living in a combat zone or have limited access to education.

Many children join armed groups because of economic and social pressures. These children believe the rebel group will offer them food and security. Others are forcibly recruited or abducted by armed groups.

There are no exact figures, but hundreds of children under the age of 18—with some as young as 8—serve in government forces or armed rebel groups.

Doors open at 6 p.m. Lecture is free and open to the public.



## 2008 Aquinas Lecture

Join the Center for Thomistic Studies for the 2008 Aquinas Lecture featuring Msgr. John Wippel, professor of philosophy, The Catholic University of America, at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31, in Cullen Hall. He will discuss “Thomas Aquinas and the Controversy Concerning Unity of Substantial Form in Human Beings.”

In what would prove to be one of his most controversial positions, Thomas Aquinas maintained that each human being possesses a single and unique substantial form. In this lecture, Aquinas’s philosophical reasons for strongly defending his position will be presented, followed by an examination of different philosophical and theological objections, and some ecclesiastical condemnations that were directed against it. This 13th century controversy, with its implications for personhood, the relation of body and soul and the soul’s immortality, remains vitally important today.

Msgr. Wippel is an internationally prominent metaphysician and expert in medieval philosophy. He is the author or editor of numerous books and articles.

For more information, call Pamela Butler at 713-525-3591.



## Find Relief at Fat FAFSA

In an effort to enhance and promote student participation in the financial aid process, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) will host the fourth annual Fat FAFSA during Financial Aid Awareness Month, noon-2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5, on the Academic Mall.

This financial festival will include on-site community leaders, student loan providers and computers for students needing to apply for aid or complete their required exit counseling. UST’s Financial Aid professional staff will provide information on the FAFSA process, scholarships, grants, student and parent loans, college work study and loan consolidation.

The event will include a money machine and a mobile computer vehicle. Red beans and rice will be served, and Sugar Bayou, a local area band, will perform during the event. It is free and open to high school and college-age students and their families.

For more information, contact the OSFA at 713-942-3465.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is available at <http://www.stthom.edu/fatfafsa>.

# Departments Undergo Organizational Adjustments

UST is experiencing organizational shifts as many faculty members will take on new positions within their departments.

Dr. Jean-Philippe Faletta, associate professor of political science and director of UST's service learning program, has been named the Quality Enhancement Plan director.

The QEP consists of the freshmen learning community by way of paired courses and the Odyssey course. The director oversees and implements the program.

Responsibilities include serving as a member of the QEP team, coordinating faculty development opportunities as they relate to components of the program and drafting and integrating annual outcome assessments and accountability reports for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

"Dr. Faletta was on the initial team that designed the original QEP project," Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. John Hittinger said. "He brings an enthusiasm to the project and a commitment to our students."

In his new position as QEP director, Dr. Faletta will replace Dr. Shelia Waggoner, professor of mathematics, who has recently

been appointed chair of the mathematics department. Dr. Waggoner will begin her tenure as chair in June 2008.

"Dr. Waggoner is a preeminent mathematics professor and a dedicated and proven leader," said Dean of Arts and Sciences Dr. Dominic Aquila. "I look forward to working with her to advance the great work of Dr. Michael Colvin to a new degree of excellence."

In addition, Dr. Randall Smith, associate professor of theology and chair of the curriculum committee, has been named coordinator of the Odyssey program for the 2008-09 school year.

"Dr. Smith is a superb course organizer who is deeply committed to students and liberal education," Dr. Hittinger said.

Dr. Kerry MacArthur, associate professor of English, has returned from sabbatical, retaining his duties as chair. Dr. Clinton Brand, associate professor of English, was acting chair of English during Dr. MacArthur's sabbatical. He will remain in his current position as associate professor.

"I am very grateful to Dr. Brand for his conscientious leadership of the department of English

during Dr. MacArthur's sabbatical in the fall 2007 semester," Dean Aquila said.

In addition to these recent shifts, Dr. John Palasota, associate professor of chemistry, has been promoted from assistant dean of Arts and Sciences to associate dean of Arts and Sciences.

"Dr. Palasota is a gifted professor and a natural leader," Dean Aquila said. "His new post as Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences will provide him with a wider latitude to exercise leadership."

Finally, two professors will remain in their positions as endowed chairs. Dr. Gustavo Wensjoe, associate professor and director of the Center for International Studies, has been reappointed to the Cullen Trust for Higher Education/Fayez Sarofim Chair in International Studies. The Cullen Foundation Chair in Economics, held by Dr. Javed Ashraf, professor of economics and finance, has been extended for one year.

*Star View* is published by the Office of Public Affairs as a means of informing the UST community about University and campus news.

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