



First, I have to thank everyone for helping to get the academic year started. For various reasons, this year had its hurdles. Nonetheless, the faculty and staff members of the Department have come through. Thank you, each and every one of you, most sincerely.

We will soon have an office with a window vacant for senior faculty member. If you have been here long enough that you forget the blue color of the sky, and you want to see if it is raining or just hot humid out a window, let me know BEFORE Friday, 14 September.

Finally, I must note that Ted K. is teaching meteorology in the new collaborative classroom. He pulls real-time weather maps off the internet and challenges his students to predict the weather better than the web-site. I have my hat off to Ted for taking all the modern technology that we have and using it to teach a course that is fresh, modern, and relevant. On his first day of class, the website predicted an overcast, but dry night. I was awoken by heavy rain sometime around 4:00 AM. How many of his students had the courage to go against the website and put rain into their forecasts?

Are you adding something new and fresh to your course? I hope so. . .

-- Lou

## Department News

### **Staff Performance Management Administrators Review Form**

JSU started the first phase of the staff performance evaluation process with a review of all administrators. For this process, administrators are the provost, vice presidents, associate vice presidents, academic deans, department heads and directors. All administrators will be reviewed anonymously by their direct reports. Please click on the link below to access your administrator's review form. You must enter your supervisor's name, position title and department. You should also enter the review period, which is September 1, 2011 - August 31, 2012. Your name is not required on the form. You will also be asked to check the box that corresponds to your working relationship to the person being reviewed. Please click submit upon completion of the form. You will have until September 14, 2012 to submit this form.

<http://www.jsu.edu/hr/review/>

Please contact the Office of Human Resources should you have questions regarding the process.

## **BlendKit 2012**

BlendKit2012 is an open online course focused on blended learning. It is a 5-week course, Monday, September 24 - Monday, October 29, 2012. During last summer's BlendKit2011, approximately 200 faculty/designers from seven countries registered to participate as part of the cohort engaging with the BlendKit Course materials and with each other. BlendKit2012 will build on the successes of last year's open, online course by adding to the existing course:

- an LMS-based communications hub for registered participants
- two participant roles for registrants: 1) participant and 2) auditor
- certificates for successful completers of BlendKit2012
- new guest faculty for weekly webinars
- additional faculty case study audio interviews

For more information on BlendKit2012 and the underlying BlendKit Course materials, please visit: <http://bit.ly/blendkit2012> If you are interested in either auditing or participating actively in BlendKit2012, please complete the registration form at: [http://bit.ly/blendkit2012\\_registration](http://bit.ly/blendkit2012_registration)

## **Preview Day, 29 September**

Announcing the September 29th Preview Day. The browse session will be in Stephenson Gym from 9:30 - 12:00. Bottled water will be provided at your table but refreshments will not be available. Please let Joe Morgan know if you are willing to help.

## **University News**

### **American Red Cross Blood Drive on September 7**

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive on September 7 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in front of the Merrill Building. Please call Amy Vaughn at ext. 5501 to set up an appointment.

### **Mock Grant Proposal Development Training Session Will Be September 18**

Please join The Institute for Research and Collaboration staff for the first monthly Mock Grant Proposal Development Training session. The first session is scheduled for September 18, 2012 from 2:00-4:30 in the Gold Room. The IRC staff will guide faculty through the pre-award, award, and post award phases of a grant. Attendees will participate in developing a response to a Request for Proposal and following the necessary steps to complete the process within JSU. Also, participants will receive instruction in the award and post award grant processes to include budget assignment and development, reporting and forms. At the end of the training, the participants will be able to successfully start developing a grant using the resources available within the Institute for Research and Collaboration. Please email [irc@jsu.edu](mailto:irc@jsu.edu) or call extension 8159 to reserve your seat.

## **Student Opportunities**

### **Student Travel Grants**

We have funding from Sam Kinsaul to support student travel to present research work at conferences. Applications are due by 30 September 2012. See **Lou** or **Tracy** if you need an application. Requests up to \$500 can be made.

## Reserve a Study Room for Your Group at the Library

The newly renovated group study room on the fourth floor of the Houston Cole Library is now open to JSU students. Equipped with a big screen TV, a computer, and other facilities, the group study room is an ideal place for your group. Reservations for using this room may be made by phone to the Circulation Desk (256-782-5758); in person at the Circulation Desk; or by using the online [Group Study Room Request Form](#) on the Library's web site. No more than 8 persons per group, please. The current operation hours are:

Sunday: 4:00 pm - 10:00 pm (12:00 am during Extended Hours)

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 am - 10:00 pm (12:00 am during Extended Hours)

Friday: 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

Saturday: 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

## Top Ten List

### Top 10 science apps

Source: <http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/blog/5707/top-ten-science-apps>

As many, like me, are learning to use the iPad in the collaborative classroom, we are finding a world of Apps, and no idea what is good or bad or indifferent. To help out, here are the top 10 science apps:

**10. The heart rate monitors:** who could resist the tricky little way these suckers recognize color change on your finger to measure your pulse? Finding your veins with your fingertips is a thing of the past; now you can instantly check just how that caffeine hit is playing out, or if you've reached your optimum exercise level.

**9. MuPsych:** music to meet your mood - MuPsych collects data about the user's mood as they listen to music of their own choosing, based on real-time survey responses. The brainchild of PhD student [Will Randall](#), after two weeks of entering data, the app can pick your favorites from your playlist based on what you're feeling.

**8. Science XL:** when is a word not a word? Researchers at Aix-Marseille University in France developed a computer-based exercise to test whether [baboons could learn to differentiate between words and non-words](#). Now you can too, and contribute your test results in the name of behavioral science.

**7. Kepler candidates:** from the outer reaches of the galaxy comes news of planets around distant suns. Keep track of them all with this app, which regularly updates the candidate exoplanets discovered by NASA's Kepler space telescope.

**6. The Magic of Reality:** technically a book, and released as an app, Richard Dawkins's stunning explanation of the beauty of science touches adults and kids alike, and the app also has some awesome extras, from illustrations brought to life to narrated fly-throughs of the universe.

**5. Inside the World of Dinosaurs:** a 3-D exploration of mega monsters from the Triassic to the Cretaceous, narrated by Stephen Fry. Some of our favorite dinosaurs engage in *Matrix*-style fight scenes and graphics.

**4. NASA App HD:** NASA's wealth of astronomy data brought to life with the space organization's spectacular imagery, videos and up-to-date info.

**3. QuakeWatch:** watch out for the biggest, closest and latest quakes around the world and zoom in using Google's fabulous access to satellite imagery, or share your own earthquake

notifications.

2. [Transit of Venus app](#): if you missed it in June 2012, this will be the closest you can get to witnessing the transit that in 1769 brought James Cook to the Pacific. The transit isn't due to happen again for another 105 years.

1. **COSMOS!** If you haven't downloaded the latest issue, I won't spoil the surprise on the front cover. After months of development we're still so excited to be presenting the stories you've enjoyed in an entirely new format. Best of all it comes with [a free issue](#).

#### Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact **Tracy Casey** before noon on Thursdays at: [tscasey@jsu.edu](mailto:tscasey@jsu.edu) or phone (256) 782-5232.