

# LAStory

Newsletter of the College of Liberal Arts

Vol. 4, No. 2

## International colloquium explores “The Day of the Dead”

The International Interdisciplinary Colloquium moves to Latin America this year with “The Day of the Dead: Ceremonies of Passage,” on Tuesday, October 31, 2006, the first day of the worldwide Day of the Dead festival.

Pat Aakhus, instructor in English and director of International Studies, is project director for the colloquia. “We want to share experiences of global culture with the USI community and the Tri-state community, so we’re looking at our cultural inheritance from different parts of the world,” she said.

The colloquium is attended by approximately 2,500-3,000 students, faculty, and staff; high school students from throughout the Tri-state; and members of the community.

“We started out with one of the cradles of civilization, Athens, Greece, and then our inheritance from the Middle East in Mesopotamia. Now we’re going to Latin America, and in the future we’ll move to Asia.”

“The Day of the Dead” will be the third annual International Studies colloquium.

Past colloquia included “The Parthenon Project” in 2004 and “The Ram in the Thicket” in 2005. Faculty members present a series of 20-minute presentations from a variety of cultural perspectives, including art history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and literature, as well as creative medias such as original poetry, literary essays, and visual art.

“A subject doesn’t have to be approached in just one way; we can tap the richness of a subject by approaching it from different perspectives,” Aakhus said. “Students get an interdisciplinary approach to learning, and faculty get to learn from each other.”

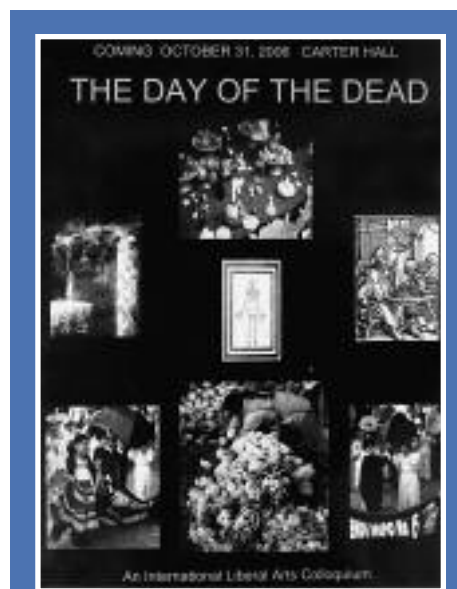
The Day of the Dead is richly celebrated in Latin America, but the festival also is observed in other parts of the world. About half of the presentations will focus on Latin American culture. Examples from other cultures include The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Day of the Dead traditions in Ireland and Rome, and a discussion of “voodoo death” and the neuroscience of fear.

Aakhus said that though the colloquium will examine the culture of death, it’s not morbid. “It’s about celebrations and ceremonies of death, the idea of the spirit and return, and what different cultures have in common there,” she said.

She said it’s appropriate that the Day of the Dead colloquium be held on Halloween.

“The rituals of Halloween that we celebrate have their origin in ancient Day of the Dead ceremonies: the Roman Lemuralia; Samhain, from Ireland, Britain, and France; and All Souls’ Day and All Saints’ Day in the Christian tradition. What they all have in common is reverence for the dead – in some cases an invitation to the departed spirits of family to visit, in other cases efforts to ward off unfriendly spirits. It’s about boundaries, hospitality, and the idea that there is life after death.”

The colloquium is sponsored by International Studies and funded through a grant by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence.



“Day of the Dead:  
Ceremonies  
of Passage”  
October 31, 2006  
Carter Hall

**Session One: 9 a.m.**

David Glassman, professor of anthropology: “Death, Burial, and Cosmology among the Prehistoric Maya of Mesoamerica”

Christopher Bloom, assistant professor of psychology: “Terrified: The Neuroscience of Voodoo Death”

Pat Aakhus, instructor in English: “Samhain and the Danse Macabre: Boundaries, Hierarchy, and Revolt – European Origins of All Souls’ Day”

*Day of the Dead – continued on page 6*

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## Dean's Message

### What's a Word Worth?

by David Glassman, Dean of Liberal Arts

The universal "they" say a picture is worth a thousand words. But exactly what is a word worth? I pondered this question recently. Certainly not all words in our vocabulary have the same ability to elicit expansive thought, abstract philosophizing, and unbound emotion. Nevertheless, I've come to the conclusion that a single word can indeed be as powerful as a picture – perhaps more so.

On March 19, the College of Liberal Arts hosted its annual Honors Day Convocation, a celebration I freely admit is my favorite event as dean of the college. A packed Carter Hall was filled with students, parents and family members, Liberal Arts faculty, and several generous donors, all giving up their weekend afternoon to join us in celebration. More than 80 scholarships and awards were given out that day to the college's brightest and most ambitious students. It was incredible to listen to the accomplishments of these students as they came forward to receive their awards: double majors, 4.0 GPAs, international travel experience, prestigious internships, graduate school acceptance, etc.

As I looked out over the audience from my unobstructed vantage point on the stage, I saw that I wasn't the only one smiling with pride.

What I saw were parents and family members sitting patiently and quietly

until their student was called to the stage. Once named, they broke into heartfelt jubilation.

I scanned the Liberal Arts faculty. Their academic, stoic façades broke into smiles that revealed an underlying sense of pride that rivaled any parent's as their students were recognized. They, too, shared in their students' successes.

And I noticed our donors, who closely followed the printed program, waiting anxiously for the first sighting of their students who would be receiving the awards they graciously supported. None seemed disappointed after learning of their students' accomplishments. They also felt their students' success.

So how does all this relate to the original question posed here? The answer lies in the word "commitment." Students don't succeed through their efforts alone. Student success is the product of shared commitment – through the students' dedication to their studies, the instructional excellence provided by a committed faculty, and the emotional and financial commitment of family and community donors. The shared commitment so evident at our Honors Day celebration created a beautiful picture!



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The LA Story logo was designed by USI graphic design student M. Eric Hill '03.



## Uduehi wins Berger Faculty Community Service Award



*Dr. Linda Bennett, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, presented the Sydney and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award to Joseph Uduehi, associate professor of art education, during the College of Liberal Arts Honors Program on March 19.*

Dr. Joseph Uduehi, associate professor of art education, has been awarded the 2006 Sydney L. and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award. The award, presented by the USI Faculty and Academic Affairs committee, was announced during the College of Liberal Arts Honors Program on March 19.

Uduehi has worked on numerous community service activities and has been active in bringing art and art lessons to children in the community through art workshops, classes, and projects. Since 2000, he has organized and led the Saturday Art Workshop for Children series, offered each semester and during the summer at USI. Recently, he worked with the USI Art Club to create five scholarships for children to participate in the workshops each semester.

In addition to the instruction he provides through the Saturday Art Workshop and at the USI Children's Center, Uduehi teaches children's art classes in the community. He has led classes at Hands On Discovery Children's Museum, Patchwork Central, and elementary and middle schools. In 2004, he worked with children in the Saturday Art Workshop program and USI art education students to create a 4 by 16 foot mural at Tekoppel Elementary School. He also has lectured area art teachers about multicultural art history.

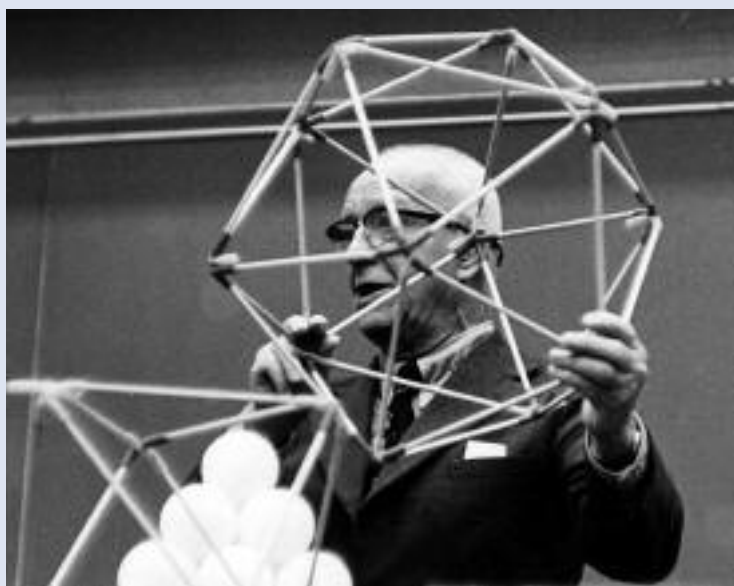
Joan A. Kempf, associate professor of graphic design, nominated Uduehi. In the nomination,

she wrote, "At a time when budget pressures in most elementary and secondary school systems have caused art programs to be decreased or cut, Dr. Uduehi's Children's Art Workshops and other service projects bring art and culture to our young students—and an exposure to the arts that they might not receive otherwise. In addition to his teaching responsibilities at USI, Dr. Uduehi does this extensive service on his own time, often on weekends and as a volunteer."

Uduehi holds a Doctor of Education in art education and a Master of Art degree in art education and cinematography from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and a Bachelor of Art degree in painting and drawing and certificate of education from Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria.

The Berger Faculty Community Service Award recognizes a University faculty member for distinguished community service to groups, agencies, and institutions. The award was established in 1996 by Charles L. and Leslie Berger in honor of his parents, Sydney and Sadelle Berger.

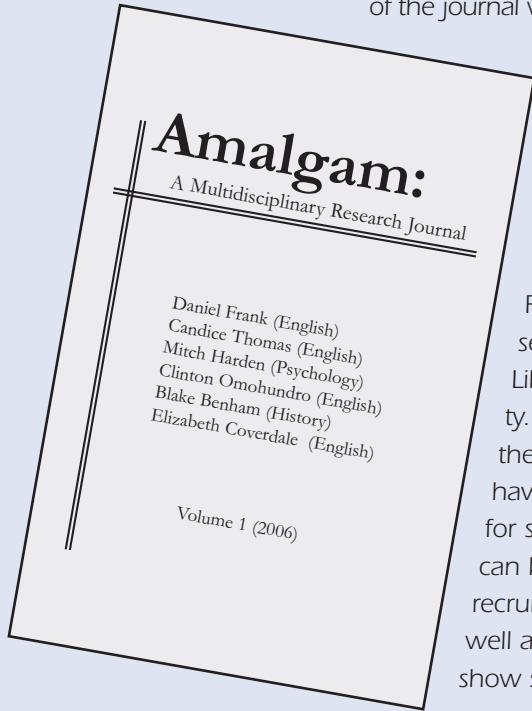
R. Buckminster Fuller, the engineer, mathematician, and architect perhaps best known for designing the geodesic dome, lectured at USI 30 years ago, on February 25, 1976. Fuller, 80 years old at the time, attracted an overflow audience to Forum I. His subject was "Utopia or Oblivion." Dr. Donald Pitzer, professor of history, said having the intellectual giant on campus "was uplifting, positive, intellectually charged—I just thought that he had given us a great boost. We were such a young institution, just barely 10 years old. Fuller said he felt that the places he was invited were the intellectually alive places on the planet." Fuller's lecture was part of the University's American Issues Forum. According to Dr. Darrel Bigham, professor of history, Fuller was the most celebrated of several AIF guest lecturers in the spring of 1976. "The AIF was one of several national efforts to encourage Americans to think about the American Revolution Bicentennial, which reached its climax on July 4, 1976," he said. In this photograph from the University Archives taken at the event, Fuller holds up one of his Tensegrity Spheres.



# Multidisciplinary undergraduate research journal debuts

A new multidisciplinary journal by and for USI students debuted in spring 2006. *Amalgam*, initiated by Craig T. Fehrman, a junior English and psychology major, showcases undergraduate research in the College of Liberal Arts.

Sophomore English major Jon Webb is co-editor of the journal with Fehrman.



Dr. David Glassman, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, helped Fehrman present his idea to Liberal Arts faculty. Glassman said the project would have a high value for students, and it can be used as a recruitment tool as well as a source to show students' work.

Students will handle all aspects of the production and distribution of *Amalgam*. The journal will provide an outlet for undergraduates to publish their research; serve as a compilation of high-quality student work; and recognize students for their best efforts.

Faculty advisors Dr. Michael Kearns, professor of English; Dr. Chris Bloom, assistant professor of psychology; and Dr. Jeannette Aley, assistant professor of history, chose the following research papers for the first issue:

Daniel Frank, senior English major: "The Knight Dismounted" (English);

Candice Thomas, junior English major: "Through the Eye of Her Needle: Examining Needlework in Contemporary Fiction" (English);

Mitch Harden, senior psychology major: "Chimps Don't Read Kant" (Psychology);

Clinton Omohundro, senior English major: "Politics and Contemporary Literature" (English);

Blake Benham, junior social sciences secondary education major: "The Largest Men We Have Seen': The Twenty-Seventh Indiana Infantry, 1861-64" (History);

Elizabeth Coverdale, senior English major: "Cyberculture and Gender Identification in Online Chat Communities" (English).

*Amalgam* will be distributed annually at the College of Liberal Arts Honors Convocation. The current issue is available online at [www.usi.edu/libarts/amalgam](http://www.usi.edu/libarts/amalgam).

## Fehrman is 2006 Trustees Distinguished Merit Award winner



Fehrman

Craig T. Fehrman was named the 2006 Trustees Distinguished Merit Award winner, the highest recognition bestowed on a student during Honors Week. He received the recognition, which includes a \$1,000 award, during the College of Liberal Arts Honors Convocation on March 19.

Fehrman has excelled in academic and extracurricular activities at USI, taking on many responsibilities while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. He is a Resident Assistant, online editor for the *Shield*,

tutor in the Academic Skills Writers' Room, and vice president of the English honors society, Sigma Tau Delta, as well as initiator and co-editor of the new undergraduate research journal, *Amalgam*.

He assists Dr. Michael Kearns, professor of English and department chair, with the *Emily Dickinson International Society Bulletin*, and is a member of the dean of the College of Liberal Arts student advisory board.

In April, he presented his paper entitled, "How Long Has Charlton Heston Been Moses? A Study of the Medieval Bible (And How It Relates to Ours)" at the RISC conference, and another paper, "Did Chaucer Read the Wycliffite Bible," at the 27th Medieval and Renaissance Forum at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire.

The Trustees Distinguished Merit Award recognizes outstanding achievement not only in the student's major but also in the liberal arts and sciences that form the core curriculum of a college education. Each college nominates one student for the award. It is awarded to the one junior or senior at USI who best qualifies by virtue of the overall integrity of his or her student life. Selection is made by the Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate.

## Lilly grant enables Hitchcock to complete research on Spanish playwright



Hitchcock

An Excellence through Engagement Summer Research Fellowship funded by the Lilly Endowment will enable Dr. David Hitchcock, assistant professor of Spanish, to finish a research project on Spanish playwright Francisco Nieva.

Hitchcock, who came to USI in fall 2005 from Worcester State College in Massachusetts, wrote his dissertation on Nieva.

"The grant will allow me to make a few changes, and to formally add some additional research I've done over the years," Hitchcock said. "Since I began the work almost 10 years ago, I have met Nieva and interviewed him, and had the opportunity

to read some of his narrative work. I'm a theatre specialist so I've been focused on what he's done for the stage, but as he has gotten older he has written novels and short stories."

The fellowship runs from May 8 to July 14, 2006. "It will allow me to make those kinds of revisions necessary on a piece of work that is very much done in many ways, but will always need some tweaking," he said. "Good writing is always the result of many hours of rewriting and rereading your work. This will allow me to make those changes before I send the book to an academic press."

He will devote all his time during the first summer session to the project. "I will be living and breathing Francisco Nieva, and his plays especially."

Hitchcock said Nieva is an innovator. "Sadly, Spain's great legacy for the 20<sup>th</sup> century is 40 years of dictatorship, and that period was marked largely by rehashing Spanish

history, living xenophobically. It was a reactionary period.

"Nieva was a fresh voice to emerge despite that period. He brought Spain back into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and prepared a generation for its entrance into the 21<sup>st</sup>, so Spain began the new millennium on an equal footing with France, England, and Germany in terms of its ability to integrate new aesthetic modes and new approaches to life itself."

Hitchcock holds a Ph.D. in Hispanic literature from Cornell University; Master of Arts degree in Spanish from Middlebury College; and Bachelor of Arts degree from Hamilton College. His wife, Jean Hitchcock, is an instructor in Spanish.

"It's been a wonderful transition for me, a really great change and I am very appreciative of my colleagues in the College of Liberal Arts for everything they've done to make me feel welcome. We're very, very happy in Evansville."

## USI accreditation review in progress

USI is undergoing accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. The Association is one of six regional institutional accrediting associations in the U.S. Through its Commissions it accredits, and thereby grants membership to educational institutions in the nineteen-state North Central region. Institutions are reviewed every 10 years to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria for accreditation.

An accreditation review has two basic components:

- Over the past year, USI administration, faculty, and staff conducted a self-study to assess the University's strengths and challenges. The written report is nearing completion and will be filed with the HLC during summer 2006.
- A team of HLC evaluators will visit the campus in the fall to verify the accuracy of the self-study report and offer suggestions.

For USI's accreditation review, an Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee, appointed by the provost, is coordinating the University's re-accreditation process. The committee has broad representation from across the University. Campus-wide input has been an important part of the evaluation of the institution and the self-study report.

Public comment on USI or its self-study report, which will be published on the Web over the summer, is welcome.

## In Appreciation

The College of Liberal Arts would like to thank JoAnn LaMar, administrative associate, for her 16 years of service. Her retirement was effective in April. She plans to travel with her husband, Alan.

## Public relations and advertising major awarded All-GLVC honors

Jasmine Baines, a sophomore public relations and advertising major, excels on the basketball court. A forward on the women's basketball team, she was awarded honorable mention All-GLVC honors in a



Baines

vote by the league's coaches this season. The Jeffersonville, Indiana, native led the Screaming Eagles with 14.0 points and 5.1 rebounds per game in 2005-06. She finished the regular season ranked fourth in the GLVC in scoring and 12th in the conference in field goal percentage (.499). She ranked 14th in the league with 0.60 blocked shots per game. In 30 games this season, Baines scored in double figures in 24 games and had 20 or more points in five of those contests. She also posted two double-doubles. The women's team finished the season with a 15-15 overall record and a 7-12 mark in the GLVC.

Day of the Dead – continued from page 1

### Session Two: 10:30 a.m.

Michael Aakhus, professor of art: "Quetzalcoatl and the Lords of the Underworld"

Ken Carter, assistant professor of psychology: "Burial Rituals and the Birth of Consciousness"

Leslie Roberts, professor of French: "The Tibetan Book of the Dead"

### Session Three: Noon

Celebration of Day of the Dead: Reception and Art Exhibition

Jim McGarrah, assistant professor of English: Original poetry

John Gibson, lecturer in Liberal Arts: Original poetry

### Session Four: 1:30 p.m.

Guillermo Latorre, professor of Spanish: "From Halloween to Jalowin: Cultural Transmission and Adaptation"

Teresa Huerta, associate professor of Spanish: "Death as a Mirror of Life in Octavio Paz's The Labyrinth of Solitude"

David Hitchcock, assistant professor of Spanish: "Laughing in the Face of Death: Black Humor in Contemporary Mexican Literature"

### Session Five: 3 p.m.

Margaret Skoglund, associate professor of art: "Death and Life: Defiance of Time in Latin American Arts"

Hilary Braysmith, associate professor of art history: "You are Where You are From: Day of the Dead, North of the Border"

## Film crews document dean and associate dean at work

Documentary film crews were on the USI campus twice in as many weeks during the spring semester, documenting College of Liberal Arts faculty members at work.



*A crew from Florentine Films/Hott Productions film Michael Aakhus as he creates a print from a rare Audubon plate in the USI Art Studio.*

Michael Aakhus, associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and master printmaker, reenacted history for a Florentine Films/Hott Productions crew on January 25, pulling an impression from an engraved copper plate of naturalist John James Audubon's "Tell Tale Godwit" in the USI Art Studio.

In January, the current and former curators of the Audubon Museum, Alan Gehret and Don Boorman, were on hand as Aakhus, assisted by Brandon Gardner, instructor in art, pulled a print for the film crew led by producer/director Larry Hott.

Hott's production company is making a documentary about Audubon for the PBS American Masters Series. "Audubon: Drawn from Nature" is scheduled to air in September 2006.

Aakhus first made restrikes from the plate, part of the collection of the John James Audubon Museum in Henderson, Kentucky, for a ceremony in August 2002. That event was the first time prints had been created from the plate in 160 years. The plate is one of only 78 remaining from 435 in Audubon's masterpiece, *Birds of America*.

New York City-based Atlas Media Productions was at USI January 30 through February 2 to film three episodes of a new series for the Discovery Health Channel called "Skeleton Stories."

The episodes, "Homeless," "A Minor Mistake," and "Lady Killer," chronicle the forensic work of Dr. David Glassman, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, on three cases of homicide. Filming took place in the anthropology laboratory located in the USI Security Building.

Glassman is president of the American Board of Forensic Anthropologists and has worked more than 300 cases for federal and state agencies. He resumed his forensic work in 2004.

"I took a year off from doing major forensic work so I could adapt to the environment of USI and the activities that were required of me as dean," he said. "Now I'm beginning to continue in my research and anthropology activities at a slightly greater rate as time permits, and I will be involving students in the future."



*New York City-based Atlas Media Productions visited campus January 10-February 2 to document Dr. David Glassman at work. The film crew gathered footage for three episodes of a new series for the Discovery Health Channel called "Skeleton Stories."*

## Past and future meet in Graham's new book of poetry



Graham

A book of poetry by Matthew Graham, director of Creative Writing and associate professor of English, will be published by River City Publishing, a Montgomery, Alabama-based literary press, in April 2006.

The poems in *A World Without End*, Graham's third book of poetry, describe a childhood infused with adult longing, an adulthood choked with memories, and the redemption of love.

Graham described the thematic organization of the book as "fairly chronological, moving from childhood to adulthood and

the death of a parent—the first circle of adult hell. The speaker in the childhood poems seems to know or sense more than he should about himself and the future, and the speaker in the adulthood poems is many times looking back at his past for answers to the present.

"In the last poem in the book these two themes come together. While scattering his mother's ashes in a lake, the speaker notices a boy in the distance skipping rocks. The speaker sees his past and the boy sees his future."

He said he refers to "the speaker" instead of himself because the poems aren't necessarily autobiographical. "I think there is some distancing between me and the speaker in the poems. There's some fictionalizing going on. Plus there is always the difference between the writing self and the written self," he said.

*A World Without End* is available from the USI Bookstore.

Graham is co-director and co-founder of the RopeWalk Writers Retreat and the RopeWalk Writers Winter Retreat, as well as the RopeWalk Visiting Writers Series, and is poetry editor of the *Southern Indiana Review*.

He is the recipient of an Academy of American Poets Award, a Pushcart Prize, a Maryland State Arts Council First Book Award, two literary fellowships from the Indiana Arts Commission, and a fellowship from the Vermont Arts Studio.

Graham holds an M.F.A. from the Iowa Writers Workshop, an M.A. from John Hopkins University, and a baccalaureate degree from the State University of New York at Binghamton.

## Help strengthen the College of Liberal Arts and support USI students

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## Upcoming Events

### June

- 9 **The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe** The New Harmony Theatre (June 9-25)
- 11 **RopeWalk Writers Retreat** New Harmony, Indiana (June 11-17)

### July

- 7 **The Subject was Roses** The New Harmony Theatre (July 7-23)
- 8 **Reception, Matt Billman Exhibition** New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art (July 8-August 20)
- 23 **Ribbon cutting for new David L. Rice Library**, USI campus
- 28 **Side by Side by Sondheim** The New Harmony Theatre (July 28-August 13)

### August

- 26 **Reception, Kathryn Waters Exhibition** New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art (August 26-October 1)

### October

- 27 **College of Liberal Arts Faculty Colloquia Series: Dr. Guillermo Latorre**, Kleymeyer Hall, Liberal Arts Center
- 31 **International Interdisciplinary Colloquium "The Day of the Dead: Ceremonies of Passage"** Carter Hall, University Center

### November

- 17 **College of Liberal Arts Faculty Colloquia Series: Dr. Chad Tew**, Kleymeyer Hall, Liberal Arts Center

## Petranek is 2006 Cooper Award winner



*Petranek*

The University Core Council named Dr. Charles Petranek, professor of sociology, winner of the 2006 H. Lee Cooper Core Curriculum Teaching Award in April.

In nominating Petranek, Dr. Donald Pitzer, professor of history, wrote: "Chuck Petranek teaches students to think clearly, speak and write well, live according to consistent ideals, understand public issues, and use knowledge wisely. With friendship and wise counsel, he has related personally with hundreds of students, their families, and their careers."

The award will be officially presented at the Fall Faculty and Administrative Staff Meeting in August. It includes a generous stipend, a plaque, and additional monies for travel and related faculty development.

Focusing exclusively on teaching, the Cooper award honors a USI faculty member whose work in University Core courses has been especially creative and successful in furthering UCC goals.

As this year's winner, Petranek will deliver a presentation to the University community during the 2006-07 academic year.

Petranek holds a Ph.D. from Florida State University. He joined the USI faculty in 1973.

The Cooper award is named in honor of H. Lee Cooper, long-time friend and supporter of USI.

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