Pott College earns top honors in 2012

When year-end awards and honors were rolled out at USI this spring, signs of success were clearly evident in the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. Faculty and students of the college earned a list of accolades that highlight the success of faculty, students, and programs. Honors ranged from recognition for community service and teaching, to academic excellence.

“I’m proud of the success of the faculty and staff in the Pott College,” said Dr. Scott Gordon, dean of the college. “The continuous improvement model that has become part of our college culture serves to elevate faculty, staff, departments, and programs to higher levels.”

Berger Award presented to Daniela Vidal

Daniela Vidal, program coordinator of Advanced Manufacturing at the University of Southern Indiana, is the recipient of the 2012 Sydney L. and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award. The award, presented by the USI Faculty and Academic Affairs committee, and made possible by the Bergers’ son Charles and his wife Leslie, is presented yearly to acknowledge distinguished community service among faculty members.

“Vidal’s work exemplifies USI’s commitment to outreach and engagement in our region,” said Dr. Zane Mitchell, chair of the Department of Engineering. “She translates her volunteerism into problem solving that directly benefits our University and the community at large.”

Vidal has a strong interest in cultural diversity and developing the workforce of southern Indiana. As a founding member and officer of HOLA (Hospitality and Outreach for Latin Americans), she was instrumental in founding the Juan Diego Center, which provides language and cultural training for the community.

Vidal joined the Department of Engineering in 2009 as coordinator of advanced manufacturing at the University of Southern Indiana. As a founding member and officer of HOLA (Hospitality and Outreach for Latin Americans), she was instrumental in founding the Juan Diego Center, which provides language and cultural training for the community.

She worked with a regional economic development team to provide an integrated approach to workforce and economic development that continues to foster job growth in the region. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Legal Aid Society, providing Vanderburgh County’s poorest citizens access to free legal advice and representation, and serves on the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation community steering committee.

“Since I was a very small child, I went with my mother to her work in the church in Venezuela,” said Vidal. “When we moved to Evansville in 1998, we felt this community had given us such great opportunities that we wanted to give back in the best way we could. That continues to be the driving force behind my passion for outreach; a deep sense of gratitude and wanting to always provide any help I can to build a better community. I believe in the motto: ‘be the change you want to see in the world.’”

Vidal joined the Department of Engineering in 2009 as coordinator of advanced manufacturing and industrial supervision. Prior to coming to USI, she was a product research scientist at Mead Johnson Nutritional and a project engineer for Proctor & Gamble in Caracas, Venezuela.
Banner year for Pott College

Welcome to the spring 2012 edition of the Periodic Review. The 2011-2012 academic year is almost in the history books and what a great year it has been. During the winter months, the Pott College moved office locations to accommodate the expanded administrative and staffing needs as a result of the recent merger. The Pott College office suite is now located in the Education Center room 1104 (ED1104). All of our other contact information has remained unchanged.

The Pott College is proud of the success and recognition many of our faculty and students have received. Some of the most prestigious University awards have been bestowed upon faculty and students who call the Pott College home. At our recent College Honors Convocation, we handed out over 200 awards and scholarships. In addition, we have had several students garner external awards and recognition for their scholarly activities and service. Our Pott College students continue to excel in the classroom and the community. In this newsletter, you will read about a variety of activities, accolades, and successes in a variety of areas, ranging from regional and national competitions to accolades for post-baccalaureate achievements. We are proud of our students and faculty and their continued success!

This spring, we broke ground on our newest facility, the Applied Engineering Center, which will house over $3 million in equipment and instrumentation for use by our students in the various programs within the Department of Engineering. We are very excited as this building emerges from the ground and takes shape. This facility will be a “learning factory” for our students, and a resource for business and industry in our region.

Summer 2012 will be quite busy as we will be offering a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses as well as professional development workshops. In addition, we begin work with our last class of students in our NSF-sponsored Early Undergraduate Research Program. The 18 newly selected student participants will begin working with faculty on a variety of research projects which encompass most every department and discipline within the Pott College. Thus far, this highly successful program has involved over 70 students and dozens of faculty. The experience the students receive from this program is invaluable.

In this edition of the Periodic Review, you will read about many of our recent activities and accomplishments. Additional information on these and other items can be found on our website at www.usi.edu/science. I hope you find this edition of the newsletter both enjoyable and informative.

Dr. Scott A. Gordon
Scott A. Gordon, Dean
Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education

Education in Motion

Engineering student Jon Kerchief measures the momentum transferred from a jet of water to a cupped vane in the engineering fluid mechanics lab. The lab is one of several advanced learning environments featured in the Business and Engineering Center.
Distinguished Professor

Dr. Paul A. Kuban, associate professor of engineering, is the 2012 recipient of the Distinguished Professor Award. Colleagues selected him for his achievements in scholarship, teaching, and service.

He was recently granted a patent for an innovation improving technology for wired and wireless networks. The patent was the first issued to a USI faculty member for work done in conjunction with the USI Center for Applied Research in partnership with the Indiana University Research and Technology Corporation.

Kuban advises students and supervises design projects. He is the faculty sponsor for the student chapter of the Society of Automotive Engineers, and the USI Eagles wrestling team advisor. One alumnus, a nontraditional student, credits Kuban with helping him through college. “Dr. Kuban always made time to listen to my concerns as a student, be it my personal hurdles or my academic woes. He brings relevance to the academic teaching being presented.”

Kuban served on a team of intellectual property (IP) experts to refine an IP mining process for Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center. Their work is now a best practice within the Department of Defense Office of Research and Technology.

Outstanding Advisors

Three of the five faculty members recognized for outstanding advising of students are from the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. They include: Dr. Jeff Thomas, teacher education; Dr. Brent Summers, biology and assistant dean; and Dr. Ron Diersing, engineering.

Outstanding advisors are chosen for their strong interpersonal skills; availability to advisees, faculty, or staff; frequency of contact with advisees; appropriate referral activity; use and dissemination of appropriate information sources; caring, helpful attitude toward advisees, faculty, and staff; monitoring of student progress toward academic and career goals; and mastery of institutional regulations, policies, and procedures.

The honor comes with a $1,000 award, taken as a stipend or as professional development funds.

Outstanding Future Educators

Five students preparing for careers as teachers have been named Indiana Outstanding Future Educators by the Indiana Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE). The students were recognized at a luncheon in Indianapolis and graduated in April.

Recipients included: Theodore Clunie, a Spanish teaching major with minors in French, German, and mathematics; Kayla Dillon, a science teaching major; and Lilliana Mattingly, Sharon Morris, and Trevor Wagner, all elementary education majors.

Students are chosen for the selective honor based on recommendations made by university supervisors and cooperating teachers. IACTE is a professional organization of colleges and universities with undergraduate and/or graduate programs to prepare professional educators. It is an affiliate of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE).

President’s Medal

Phillip Behrens IV, a graduate of the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education, completed his college career at USI with a record of achievement in the classroom and significant contributions to student life. His hard work and dedication earned him the President’s Medal, the highest honor presented to a graduate in the Class of 2012. He graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in biology.

At USI he worked with Dr. Brent Summers, assistant dean of the Pott College, to document the ecological fitness of Indiana’s Blue River. He maintained a 3.957 grade point average and was on the Honor’s List each semester.

Behrens served as vice president and executive vice president of Phi Delta Theta social fraternity. He was invited to become a member of the Order of Omega, recognizing fraternity and sorority members who have attained a high standard of leadership.

Behrens plans to attend medical school and has aspirations of becoming a United States congressman.

“The continuous improvement model that has become part of our college culture serves to elevate faculty, staff, departments, and programs to higher levels.”
Brett Bielefeld receives scholarship funds from NASA

The Indiana Space Grant Consortium (INSGC) recently awarded a $1,500 scholarship to Brett Bielefeld, an engineering student at USI. This is the second time he has received the scholarship.

INSGC funds scholarships for students pursuing careers in STEM (Science, Mathematics, Engineering, and Technology) fields. Recipients are chosen on a competitive basis. Two students, Chelsea Heibel and Logan Storrer, received scholarships in the fall. The additional scholarship awarded to Bielefeld this spring is the result of supplemental funding that INSGC received from NASA.

Bielefeld is majoring in engineering with math and physics minors. He is an active member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) USI student chapter and the USI Physics Club. He recently participated in the student design competition at the University of Missouri. He is also leading a team to design and build a vehicle for USI’s first appearance at ASME’s annual Human Powered Vehicle Challenge. Bielefeld has worked for the past two summers at Nidec Motor Corp. as an engineering intern.

INSGC is one of 52 consortia that are part of the National Space College and Fellowship Program, initiated by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1989.

Kinesiology and Sport
Students learn through community engagement

Students in USI’s Department of Kinesiology and Sport (formerly Physical Education) found ways to learn by doing. Students gained hands-on, real-world experience, while offering valuable services to the community.

Hearts on Fire 5K Race and March Madness 10K

The USI Sport Management majors planned, organized, lead, and implemented 5K and 10K races as part of the Southern Indiana Classic Winter Melt-Down Series. The events also included a youth series consisting of Evansville Vanderburgh School System students participating in the Welborn Foundation running and walking club and the YMCA running program. Proceeds from the events went to the Sport Management Scholarship Fund, professional development, and travel funds.

Sport Management Golf Scramble

The 2012 USI Sport Management Golf Scramble provided opportunities for students to interact with fellow peers and community members while putting on the annual event. The scramble promotes equal opportunity for participants and collaboration with advertising and business students. This year, students raised more than $3,200 toward professional development and travel funds.

SMART Youth Fitness and Nutrition Program

The SMART Youth Fitness and Nutrition After-School Program consists of the five components of fitness (body composition, aerobic fitness, flexibility, muscular strength/endurance, and nutrition). The program was designed for a low-socio-economic school with limited funds. USI students teach lesson plans focused on fitness and nutrition. The program was offered at Glenwood Leadership Academy, Cedar Hall Community School, Dexter Elementary School, and the Academy for Innovative Studies. Schools participated in a Fitness and Nutrition Olympics at USI in April.

The West Terrace Step Up Club

The West Terrace Step Up Club is a running and walking program for children in grades three through five. The program’s goal is to improve the fitness level of the young students by emphasizing running and walking as fun activities. USI students participated in the program each Wednesday from January through April, culminating in a triathlon on the USI campus this spring.

Solarbron

Students from physical education, health, and exercise science, collaborate to offer the Solarbron assisted-living community a semester-long wellness program. Utilizing background specific to their area of interest, students designed and delivered activities that successfully promote wellness to the Solarbron population.
Heibel spends eight-week internship in Ghana

Biochemistry major Chelsea Heibel, a junior from Fort Wayne, Indiana, is spending eight weeks in Ghana this summer with the World Endeavors volunteer program. The fully-funded trip, from May 10 to July 8, is part of a series of Global Engagement Internships offered by USI in 2012.

Heibel plans to pursue a career in medicine and found the internship appealing because it allowed her to customize her experience—matching her goals and interests with the needs of the local community in Ghana. “I want to go into medicine and I can see myself working oversees as a doctor in an underserved area,” she says. “I’m excited about being exposed to the rural landscape and learning the structure of their healthcare system and how doctors interact. I can’t believe what a great opportunity this is.”

Heibel’s plans included spending up to four weeks in the city of Kumasi, where she is staying with a host family in the city’s suburbs and working in the maternity wing of the local hospital. As a certified nursing assistant, the focus of her work at the hospital is working with pregnant women and young mothers. Faculty mentor, Dr. Kevin Valadares will also spend 16 days in Ghana with Heibel in June.

For the other four weeks, she hopes to spend her time in a rural area of Ghana addressing public health issues for underserved communities and understaffed hospitals.

This is Heibel’s first trip outside the country other than a brief trip to Canada. World Endeavors volunteer programs are traditionally known for their cultural immersion. Volunteers live in the communities they serve, learn the local language, meet the people, experience customs and traditions, and eat the local food. “Embarking on an international volunteer program is a life-changing experience that emboldens participants and inspires them to notice, care, and participate more fully in their world,” their web site states.

Math Department explores new teaching structure

The Department of Mathematics recently teamed up with Academic Skills Center to pilot a redesign for two math courses—intermediate algebra and algebra review. The primary change comes in the delivery of material. Students listen to or watch web-based, pre-recorded lectures from home or campus on their own time. Class time is then spent on course work in a lab setting or working on problems with an instructor.

“I had one student who was able to finish the 15-week course in six weeks.”

“This is a reversal from the traditional class style,” says Betty Bleichroth, instructor in mathematics. A total of six instructors are taking part in the pilot program, teaching six classes with up to 38 students in each class.

Goals of the course redesign include increasing student mastery of mathematical concepts and procedures, decreasing the number of semesters spent completing math requirements, and decreasing overall cost.

The pilot program, called the Emporium Model, was designed over the summer and implemented last fall. Faculty members first learned about the concept at a conference and later attended the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) conference to learn more. NCAT is an independent nonprofit organization that works to improve student learning and reduce education costs. They also talked to and visited a college that was already using the NCAT course redesign. So far, more than 37 institutions and 200,000 students have been involved in course redesign projects nationally.

Under the redesign, students advance at different levels, moving on to the next lesson once they have mastered the current one. All chapters must be completed within the allotted course time, and target dates are set to keep students on track. Students are required to attend at least three hours of lab time each week. Two hours of lab time are flexible with students choosing from one of several labs. Those who fail a course can begin where they left off the next semester.

Bleichroth says there are both advantages and disadvantages to the new system, but so far the advantages seem to outweigh any disadvantages. “I had one student who was able to finish the 15-week course in six weeks,” she said. “So far I’m pleased with the results, but it’s early, and I’m still collecting data.” The program also has received a positive response from many students.

Members of USI’s Course Redesign Team include Bleichroth; Kathy Rodgers, chair of the Department of Mathematics; Nancy Myers, math specialist and placement testing coordinator; and Nelda Lord Wade, instructor in mathematics.
Dr. Jeff Thomas, associate professor of education, was recently selected to serve on the National Science Teachers Association’s (NSTA) Committee on Research in Science Education. He was one of three professionals selected to serve on the prestigious committee.

“It’s certainly an honor, and I look forward to focusing my efforts on this important contribution to teachers in the United States and across the world,” said Thomas.

Geological research presented

Geology students and faculty presented research findings at the regional Geological Society of America (GSA) meeting in Dayton, Ohio, in April. Jessica Heighton and Caleb Gravemier presented on projects on the White River in Michigan’s Manistee National Forest. They also were co-authors on research presented by Dr. Paul Doss, professor of geology. Dr. Joseph Dipietro, professor of geology, accompanied students Morgan Divine and Kristen Schmeisser to the meeting. They presented on research on the Himalayas. Other students attended the conference to evaluate and assess.

“The conference is a good way for students to gain exposure to job training, skills building, networking, and other experiences,” said Dr. Jim Durbin, associate professor of geology.

Geology students head west

Geology professor Dr. Jim Durbin, along with four students, John Byers, Samantha McBride, Michael Miller, and Brandon Root, traveled to southwest Texas and New Mexico, including a stop at Big Bend National Park in May as part of an annual field geology class.

The remote area along the booteel of Texas and following the bend of the Rio Grande River near the border with Mexico is rarely visited and one of the least-visited national parks in the United States. However, Durbin says the area has a tremendous amount of geological interest including dinosaur fossils, volcanic rock, and a variety of geological features not found in the Midwest.

“One of the reasons we offer this class is that if you don’t get out of Indiana and look around, you’re going to miss a lot of what’s really out there,” said Durbin. “We try to offer our students not only an opportunity to build enthusiasm, but also exposure to things they otherwise wouldn’t see.”

During the trip, the group visited several different geological areas, immersing themselves for up to three or four days in each location and taking field notes. Each student takes a one-credit-hour course on campus prior to the trip where they focus on one aspect of the trip, research the geology of that area, and read professional journals. In the field, they then give a presentation on their part of the trip for the rest of the group.

Durbin says most geology majors go on the trip at least once during their time at USI, some two or more times. A different faculty member accompanies the group each year. Over the years students have visited areas such as the Pacific Northwest; Dinosaur National Monument; Badlands, Mesa Verde, Canyonlands, and Theodore Roosevelt national parks; and locations in Canada.
Biochemistry Program touts growth

A bachelor’s degree program in biochemistry approved in 2009 by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education is seeing rapid growth and a warm welcome from students in the Pott College. Initially 10 students signed up for the major in the fall of 2010. Today, more than 35 students are pursuing degrees in biochemistry at USI or have graduated from the program.

“We now have a program that students have been asking for,” said Dr. Jeff Seyler, chair of the Department of Chemistry and professor of chemistry. “It gives our students a lot more options, lets them tailor their course of study to their interests and, if they’re going into a medical profession, earn a more appropriate degree.”

The program graduated one person in 2011, three this spring, and expects to graduate seven in 2013.

“We’ve seen growth in the program and it’s a favorite among our incoming students,” said Seyler. “We anticipate continued growth in the program moving forward.”

Seyler said three of the five special invitation students who visited the campus for orientation in March were interested in the biochemistry program. The Office of Admission reported that as many as 33 fall 2012 applicants from across the state also had indicated an interest in biochemistry.

Biochemistry provides students the opportunity to earn an interdisciplinary baccalaureate degree separate from the currently existing degrees in chemistry and biology. Biochemistry is the scientific study of the chemistry of living systems and their fundamental chemical substances and reactions.

The new degree program offers two course tracks, an American Chemistry Society (ACS) approved program, and a non-ACS plan that puts more emphasis on biology. Both tracks provide chemistry- or biology-related research projects conducted under the supervision of Pott College faculty. It is the only biochemistry program at a public institution of higher education within 120 miles of Evansville.

Employment Possibilities

In recent years, biochemistry has become a major field of science offering expanded employment opportunities. Graduates of the USI program are prepared for advanced degree programs such as medical, dental, or pharmacy schools, or graduate programs in biochemistry, chemistry, or biology. They’re also prepared for employment in medical, industrial, or governmental positions as well as careers in biotechnology pharmaceutical research, environmental studies, and bio-fuel industries.

Biochemistry major Jared Hume views samples prior to loading them on a polyacrylamide gel for analysis.

Biology students gain insight at regional meeting

Dr. Mari Hopper, assistant professor of biology, and eight of her students attended and presented at the Indiana Physiological Society Meeting in February at Ball State University. Hopper is currently on the board of directors for the society.

The presentation was titled “Changes in physiological indicators of health in a cohort of college students between their freshman and sophomore years.” Presenters included Abby Arenas, Cassie Bedell, Jon Behrens, Rachel Gahagen, Jessica Lingafelter, Evan Niemeier, and Michelle Seivers.

Their presentation was based on an ongoing project at USI focusing on insulin resistance. Hopper says lifestyle typical of college students is prime for the development of insulin resistance. College also is a relatively high-stress environment. During the project, her students tracked changes in a variety of physiological factors in students as they progressed from freshman to senior year.

“It was a great meeting, and the keynote speakers were fantastic,” said Hopper. “Dr. Dustan Sarazan was particularly popular with the students. He showed raw video of apes in Africa that had been catheterized and carried blood pressure monitors while they went about their daily activity. He also shared pictures from the 1950s involving blood pressure studies in other species, including bears and giraffes.”

Students attending the Indiana Physiological Society meeting were, from left, Jared Richards, Michelle Seivers, Evan Niemeier, Rachel Gahagen, Jessica Lingafelter, Cassie Bedell, and Jon Behrens.
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Your gift strengthens programs and provides support for students and faculty.

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PERIODIC REVIEW

New engineering scholarship focuses on career in plastics

A new scholarship established by the Tri-State Society of Professional Engineers Association will be awarded annually to a USI upperclassman engineering student whose focus is in plastics and who plans to pursue a career in plastics. The student receiving the $1,500 Tri-State Society of Professional Engineers Scholarship is required to attend one meeting of the association.

Three faculty promoted

Three faculty members in the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education were recently promoted. Dr. Yalcin Sarol was promoted from assistant professor of mathematics to associate professor of mathematics. He has been at USI since 2006. Dr. Ken Walsh was promoted from assistant professor of chemistry to associate professor of chemistry. He has been at USI since 2006. Dr. Marco Lara Gracia was promoted from assistant professor of engineering to associate professor of engineering. He has been at USI since 2008. Each of the faculty members also received tenure at USI as part of their promotion.

Four retire from Pott College

Dr. Sherry Boyd, associate professor of education, joined USI in Spring 1989. She also was a visiting professor at Harlaxton College in Grantham, England, in Fall 1998. Her retirement was effective May 2, 2012.

Dr. James H. Divine, associate professor of education, joined USI in 1987. He served as manager of the Transition to Teaching Program from 1999-2010. His retirement was effective May 2, 2012.

Dr. Charles L. Price, professor of science education, joined USI in 1979. He held a number of positions during his time at USI including chair of the Department of Teacher Education from 1995-2005. In 1990 he was named USI Distinguished Professor. His retirement was effective May 2, 2012.

Dr. Jane Davis-Brezette, associate professor of physical education, joined USI in 1971. She held a number of positions during her time at USI including women’s tennis coach from 1980-1984, department chair of physical education from 1986-2010, and acting dean of the Bower-Suhreheinrich College of Education and Humans Services. She will be on sabbatical this fall, with retirement effective December 2012.

PERIODIC REVIEW
Peabody Award winner Chad Hartmann at home in the classroom

There’s no mistaking the passion that veteran math teacher Chad Hartmann ’95, education, has for his vocation. The Helfrich Park STEM Academy teacher is all energy as he moves from one student to the next during an early morning tutoring session in the school’s cafeteria. The volunteer time he spends helping students each morning is a testament to the drive and passion that earned Hartmann the Peabody Outstanding Leader in Education Award in January.

The award was one of only 36 earned by educators in Indiana and southern Illinois this year and came as a complete surprise to a modest Hartmann. He was nominated by the school’s principal and presented with the award at a surprise assembly. “The recognition for me and the school was just outstanding,” he says.

Hartmann has been a teacher at Helfrich Park for all of his 16-year career and in the same classroom for 15 of those years. From his classroom to morning and after-school tutoring to just about any time, he is accessible to his students. “The kids have my home phone number,” he says. “A lot of kids will call me at home and get help with homework. Sometimes having that access to a teacher is half the battle.”

He credits USI with preparing him for his career. A high school valedictorian and USI Presidential Scholarship recipient, he earned a bachelor’s degree in education in 1995, and a master’s degree in 2000. “I can’t speak highly enough about USI,” he says. He also taught night classes and summer courses as an adjunct instructor at USI for 10 years.

A native of Boonville, Hartmann always wanted to keep his roots close to home. “USI kept me here on the west side,” says Hartmann. “One of the great things about USI is that a lot of times people find work here in the area. That’s what happened for me. I would love to retire here. I’ve had other opportunities, but I just can’t imagine doing anything other than this.”

Ryan Hopf credits internships for career success

Ryan Hopf ’11, engineering, is a regional sales engineer in the Evansville office of Thermal Equipment Sales, Inc., where he is responsible for providing engineering support to consulting engineers, jobsite interaction with contractors, and direct sales and engineering support for the company’s service operations. He also handles sales calls, presentations, trade shows, and other customer-focused events.

While at USI, Hopf interned at AK Steel, Case New Holland in Pennsylvania, Bowen Engineering and Clark Deitz in Evansville, GAF Materials and Babcock & Wilcox Corporations in Mt. Vernon, and OFS Brands in Huntingburg. “I had a jump start on the ‘real world,’” he said. “I was able to learn and grow in areas that you can’t learn from a book, but rather gain by real life experiences.”

He resides in Evansville with his wife Sarah Hopf ’10, elementary education, who teaches in Washington, Indiana.
University of Southern Indiana is an affirmative action/equal employment opportunity institution.

Scott Gordon, Dean, Pott College
John Farless ’98, Newsletter Editor
www.usi.edu/science

Shaping the future through learning and innovation

2012 Calendar of Events

May 7–June 29  Early Undergraduate Research Program
June 3–8  GO STEM camp
June 30  Girl Scout STEMtastic summer event at Holiday World
June 3  Ohio Valley STEM Educators Conference proposals due
November 3  Ohio Valley STEM Educators Conference

The curvature of the earth and the edge of space can be seen in this image taken from a high altitude balloon launched by USI engineering students. The flight reached a maximum altitude of 21.2 miles, the highest flight for a USI balloon to date.

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