Work and wellness

University hopes new program will promote healthy living, reduce medical claims

During fiscal year 2006-07 Furman spent roughly $6 million on health care expenses for 720 employees and their families covered through the university’s Health Insurance plan, which is a defined-contribution CIGNA plan. Employees pitched in about $1 million. If the current trend continues, figures will be about $6.6 million and $1.1 million in 2007-08. As costs continue to increase (on average, about seven to 10 percent annually since 2000), health care is taking a greater toll on the university’s bottom line. While some employers address the increases by passing along a greater percentage of health care costs to employees, Furman has taken another approach. In recent years the university has tweaked the design of its health plan by adding deductibles, boosting co-pays and adjusting premium structures to mitigate increases.

With a growing — and aging — workforce, Furman launched a separate initiative this fall that it hopes will put a dent in future increases by targeting the other side of the supply-demand equation: you.

As part of a new university wellness program, more than 350 employees participated in a health risk assessment survey during the first week of October. Dr. Marcus Blackstone, who operates a practice in Simpsonville and is now attending to university faculty and staff on campus three days a week, conducted the exams. After completing a short survey, patients were weighed and measured. Nurses also checked blood pressure and took a blood sample to determine cholesterol and glucose levels.

Later that month, Blackstone will meet with the patients to custom-fit a plan to help them reach their health goals. The assessment is a component of a larger wellness program the university hopes will reduce the number of claims filed by developing a healthier, more productive workforce. Wellness programs are not new. Many companies began developing some form of health improvement program more than a decade ago. Some target specific areas, like smoking. Others are more comprehensive, involving group exercise, regular check-ups and peer encouragement.

According to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, the annual per-employee cost of hypertension is $392; heart disease, $1368; depression, $348. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that companies spend $3,856 per smoker each year in direct medical costs and lost productivity.

Collaboration = innovation

Visit Furman’s Computing and Information Web page at http://computing.furman.edu/ and click on the “Meet our CIO” link. Something interesting happens. An image of David Steinour, roughly the size of your thumb, walks onto the screen from the left. He stops, turns and faces the viewer.

“Hello. My name is David Steinour, and I’m the chief information officer here at Furman University.”

The eye-catching feature is called transparent Web video. It should be available to departments late next month. In the competitive arena of online student recruiting, transparent Web video could give Furman’s Web page a distinctive edge.

“Just imagine you are a prospective student visiting the Web page for the first time and click on a welcome link,” says Steinour. “Then an image of President Shi sitting behind his desk appears. He gets up, walks to the front of his desk and welcomes you to Furman. That’s different.”

The program is just one of several techy tools CIS is implementing at Furman. Another is an outdoor, interactive, touch-screen kiosk that will be installed in the welcome booth at the campus entrance. By touching the multimedia screen, visitors will be able to refine their campus search and get directions. The program can be updated daily with event news.

The kiosk will help a growing number of first-time visitors, drawn by the Southern Living Showcase Home and Swamp Rabbit walking trails, to navigate the campus.

Both ideas were generated from a research and development group that CIS established last May. The 16-member group meets monthly to brainstorm, check out new technologies and determine what application, if any, they could have at Furman.

Some ideas, such as Web imaging, work. Others do not. For example, the group researched a wireless digital pen that stores and converts handwritten notes to text that can be transmitted to a cell phone or home computer.

Steinour explains that a growing number of colleges supply students with laptop computers. The new digital pens, he says, would have been a more affordable option. The idea was discarded, though, because the pens were not compatible with both Macintosh and PC.

Because information services is a labor-intensive, task-oriented business, Steinour says staff have the tendency to hunker down in their offices. The research and development committee has helped the three divisions in the department (administrative systems, client services, and systems and technology) collaborate with colleagues and grow professionally. Committee members are assigned a to-do list after each meeting. Most often the tasks involve researching a product or calling on a university or business using a product.

“This helps us to build professional relationships in and out of Furman,” says Steinour. “It gets our folks outside their routine and encourages them to work together. It’s amazing what can come out of these conversations.”
Younts Center offers discount to ‘green’ customers

Through classroom instruction, building construction and campus projects, the message of sustainability resonates daily with faculty, staff and students.

This summer the university folded a different group into its conservation communications: customers. Each year, thousands of people visit the university to participate in camps, weddings and other events. During the 2006-07 fiscal year, the Younts Conference Center hosted 443 events, and 28 couples exchanged vows at Daniel Chapel.

Earlier this summer, Younts Conference Center staff began offering a 15 percent discount to groups hosting “green” meetings. To be eligible for the discount, groups must complete at least 10 of 17 items on a checklist.

The menu of items includes limiting handouts during presentations, choosing table centerpieces that can be given away or reused, substituting china for paper goods and glass or mugs for Styrofoam, and using cloth napkins and table covers. Banquet and meeting planners also have the option of asking for locally grown produce.

While less than a handful of customers have opted for the discount, Younts Center director Kay Cornelison says it creates a greater environmental awareness with clients.

“People are very interested in it. We have groups that do parts, but not many that do all ten,” says Cornelison. “It’s just going to take more time for this to catch on.”

As the Camps and Conferences staff promotes sustainability, other divisions of the Business Affairs department are doing their part as well.

Lighting replacements and other energy upgrades made by Facilities Services this year should result in an annual savings of $91,000. The department is replacing older toilets, urinals and showerheads with low-flow models and is using environmentally friendly cleaning products. Facilities Services also received an award from Habitat for Humanity for donating used equipment and furniture left over from the Dining Hall renovation and Townes Science Complex project.

To help create a greater awareness of energy consumption, workers have installed utility meters at Roe Art Building, Montague Village and the Intercollegiate Athletics Buildings. The department also helped organize and launch a friendly energy conservation contest between departments in Montague Village. (Story below.)

Energy accountability

George Hancock, a senior, spent a good part of his summer keeping an eye on the energy consumption habits of about 50 employees working in Montague Village.

And he learned firsthand about the power of observation.

While the staff—members of the computing and information services, marketing and public relations, financial services and business affairs departments—are not energy gluttons, more than a few were not in the habit of turning off office lights before dashing out for lunch. Others left their computers on overnight.

As part of the study, Hancock asked staff to complete a short survey in May and began quietly observing energy usage. Clipboard in hand, he often dropped by at lunch to record the number of computer screens, overhead lamps, desk lamps and other items that were in use.

With several weeks of data recorded, he arranged meetings with each department in mid-summer to review the information and promote the Montague Village Sustainability Project. During the remainder of the summer, Hancock would continue to monitor usage. The department with the greatest reduction during that time would be rewarded with a complementary lunch at Flat Rock Grill. Hancock also brought charts displaying the energy usage of each office and posted them in copy rooms and kitchen areas.

Some staff, unaware of the data collection, were surprised by the number of unused appliances left on in their absence.

With departments more conscious—and perhaps conscientious—of electricity usage, energy consumption plummeted. The number of unused appliances in use at Computing and Information Services fell 90 percent. Both Marketing and Public Relations and Financial Services experienced a 60 percent decrease while Business Affairs, which had an energy conservation plan in place, dropped about 30 percent.

“I’m really proud of the data that came out of this,” says Hancock. “Everyone did real well.”

The contest was sponsored by Aubrey Daniels International, an Atlanta-based company that specializes in workplace behavior. Aubrey Daniels, the firm’s founder, is a member of Furman Board of Trustees and a 1957 graduate.

While the contest and study certainly reduced energy consumption, gauging the monetary savings of each department is a bit tricky, says Hancock.

“There are only two electricity monitors for Montague,” says Hancock, adding that departments with more staff and equipment—such as CIS—can affect a bigger percentage change than smaller offices such as Business Affairs. “Our results were good. People started to think about energy consumption, and they changed their behavior.

One person told me that it changed the way she is behaving at home now, too.”

Editor’s note:

Even Derek Jeter ers from time to time. We did so in the last issue of Inside Furman when we ascribed “former professional baseball player” status to Tim Fehler, a history professor and shortstop for the famed Whippets, an intramural faculty/staff softball team. Fehler says rumors of his fictional feats on the baseball diamond surface from time to time. But the Inside Furman article was the first time the rumor has been printed. Though flattered by the falsehood, Fehler says he’s never been paid to play baseball.
As a teenager growing up in Mumbai, India, Kailash Khandke was more than familiar with American culture. Like many of his friends he could speak fluent English. He watched Hollywood movies and kept up with the latest news and trends.

But this did not prepare him to face the academic rigor of U.S. higher education. Shortly after arriving at the University of California-Davis to study economics in 1986, Khandke realized that he had to play catch-up.

“In India we had class all through the year but final exams only at the end of the academic year. Then you studied for a month and got through it,” says Khandke. “Here you had a quiz after a week. It took some adjustment for me. It was a real challenge. I was not prepared to think critically.”

Two UC-Davis professors saw promise in Khandke and mentored him through the transition period. Khandke went on to collect M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the university and taught at Middlebury College and Santa Clara University before coming to Furman in 1995.

Now, as the university’s new assistant dean of study away and international education, he’ll draw on his experiences as an immigrant to help Furman’s international students assimilate and adjust.

“Particular individuals in the faculty and administration have to this point informally kept the programs working and the university solvent,” the report states. “But in fact no one is truly ‘in charge’. Order must be brought to the study away program if it is to survive — much less expand — in a semester system.”

The study away subcommittee, chaired by Brent Nelson (Political Science), recommended that a reorganized Office for Study Away and International Education serve as a clearinghouse for study away programs once the new curriculum is adopted. The recommendations, subsequently approved, should improve both efficiency and cost.

Throughout the academic year Khandke will be working with members of the newly appointed study away standing faculty committee. Among their tasks will be to work with departments to develop programs and adapt current programs to the new semester calendar. The group will review and ask the faculty to approve new study away, affiliate and exchange programs. Khandke’s office will also serve as a coordinating arm with Administrative Services, University Housing and other departments that play a role in study away.

“We want to ensure that study away programs meet Furman’s high academic standard,” says Khandke.

About 300 students participate in study away opportunities each year. While some faculty have expressed an interest in scheduling programs for the new “May Experience” semester in 2009, Khandke suspects that the number of students participating in study away under the new calendar will remain roughly the same.

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Khandke working to reorganize study away programs
While promoting a healthier lifestyle, wellness programs can also cultivate friendships and improve company morale, says David Dejoy, director of the Workplace Health Group at the University of Georgia, which conducts research on workplace health and organizational effectiveness.

“Most of the literature about wellness programs is fairly convincing. They can help reduce costs,” says Dejoy. “But realizing the benefits may take some time.”

As an example, Dejoy says a health screening could detect diabetes in an employee. While the diagnosis may result in more claims initially, larger claims would be avoided later.

According to the American Journal of Health Promotion, it takes between three and five years to realize the results of an effective wellness program. On average, a wellness program will achieve a return on investment of $3.42 per dollar spent in health care costs and $5.82 in absenteeism.

Dejoy says universities offer an ideal setting for developing a successful wellness program because employees travel very little and have access to walking paths and fitness centers.

Wellness programs that fall short are often not given credit “structural and social support,” Dejoy says. “People might be afraid to participate because they don’t want to appear that they aren’t busy enough,” he says. “Some companies launch a health improvement promotion, but it runs under the radar. It needs to be integrated into the core of the organization, not stuck on the periphery.”

Successful programs should also include a strategy to bring unhealthy employees into the wellness fold. “Sometimes the employees that come for the evaluation are the ones that know they have a great cholesterol reading. They come to see how good the reading is,” Dejoy says.

Tom Hay, director of Human Resources, and benefits manager Giselle Williams spent much of September meeting with staff and encouraging participation in the Furman program. As an incentive, the university is crediting $200 toward a flexible spending account for all employees who do a health risk assessment.

“This is a great opportunity for our employees to get a free physical and to work with Dr. Blackstone to develop a plan that will make them healthier,” says Hay.

If part of that plan includes exercise, employees will be directed to Activate Greenville, a 12-month healthy living program that evolved from the popular Greater Greenville Shrinkdown. The program, to begin January 12, encourages participants to participate in at least 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise five days a week and to log the information online. By completing an online activity log, participants are eligible to receive prizes throughout the year.

Kelly Frazier, a lecturer in the Health and Exercise Science department and the university’s wellness coordinator, says university employees may form teams with their families, friends or co-workers to participate in Activate Greenville.

As part of the program, free on-campus lectures will be held during the year on such topics as weight management, exercise and diet.

What is an FSA?

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a tax-free financial account that can be used to pay for medical expenses that are not covered by health insurance.

Currently, only about 25 percent of Furman employees have an FSA, though they can produce significant savings. As an incentive to participate in both the health screening and FSA programs, the university will credit $200 to the 2008 flexible spending accounts of those completing a health screening. If you do not have a FSA account, you may enroll for 2008 later this fall. Employees choose the amount of money they want to allocate to their FSA. For example, benefits manager Giselle Williams began setting aside funds in her flexible spending account last year to pay for planned LASIK surgery.

After paying for the successful procedure, Williams was quickly reimbursed for expenses from her FSA account. Funds in the FSA accounts are not taxed. There is one caution, however. FSA funds not used by December 31 are lost. Therefore, only budget for definite expenses such as doctor visits, tests, prescriptions, and scheduled surgeries.

There’s a doctor in the house

And this one has an M.D.

Very few doctors make house calls anymore. But a growing number of them are making company calls. Many large businesses, seeking to control mounting health care costs, are turning to on-site preventive care.

Dr. Marcus Blackstone, who is now keeping office hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. in the Earle Infirmary, provides similar services to Fiberweb, which employs about 130, and to the cities of Simpsonville and Fountain Inn.

“Some employers have nurse practitioners on site,” says Blackstone. “But Furman and others take it a step further. By having a physician on site you get better care and more expertise.”

Employees enrolled in Cigna Health Insurance program can benefit from Blackstone’s services without a co-pay.

Tom Hay, director of Human Resources, says the service should encourage those who do not see a doctor regularly to get regular check-ups. It is not, however, designed to replace your regular family doctor.

“We have a very high number of emergency room visits,” says Hay. “That leads us to believe that some do not have primary care physicians.”

Blackstone, who graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in 1995, has operated his practice for 10 years.

Wellness to be discussed at fall staff forum

Wellness will be the central theme of the fall staff forum to be held 8–10 a.m. October 31 in the Watkins Room of the University Center.

Sponsored by the Staff Advisory Committee, the forum will feature a presentation by Dr. Marcus Blackstone. Kelly Frazier, the university’s wellness coordinator, will also speak. Additionally, Blackstone and his staff will conduct health risk assessments 7–10 a.m. November 8 in the Watkins Room of the University Center.

If part of that plan includes exercise, employees who do a health risk assessment will receive a $200 credit to their Flexible Spending Account early next year and are reminded to fast on the morning of the appointment, drinking only water or black coffee.

More than 350 employees received health-risk assessments October 1–5.
Activate Furman

If you are ready to lead a healthier lifestyle, Furman has resources to help you. In January, Furman will begin participating in Activate Greenville. This free 12-month healthy living program has evolved from the Greater Greenville Shrinkdown and Get Fit Greenville programs that have grown in popularity and expanded statewide over the past four years.

Online Tracking

The goal of Activate Greenville is to encourage at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity, such as walking, five days per week. This level of physical activity can lead to important health benefits, such as reduced risk of chronic disease and enhanced quality of life. Each week throughout the year, you will be able to track your physical activity on the program Web site, www.activategreenville.com. You may choose to participate alone or on a team with family members, friends, or coworkers. By completing the online activity log each week, you will be eligible to win prizes throughout the year.

Monthly Health Talks

Join us each month as we discuss how to navigate the supermarket, start an effective exercise program, maintain a healthy body weight, or reduce your risk for chronic disease. Health talks will be presented in Burgiss Theater on Monday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m. and Tuesday afternoons from 12 to 1 p.m. each month throughout the year (see schedule for more information).

Weekly Wellness Newsletter

Each week you will receive a brief e-mail wellness newsletter with practical tips to help you support a healthy lifestyle. Newsletter topics will include healthy eating, physical activity, weight management, smoking cessation, stress management, chronic disease prevention and children’s health.

Individual Nutritional Guidance and Exercise Training

As an exclusive benefit to Furman faculty and staff, we will offer free individual nutritional guidance, a PAC equipment orientation, and assistance developing a personal fitness program. Appointments will be available in January and February. Contact Kelly Frazier at ext. 2816 to schedule.

Weight Management Support

If you are trying to lose or maintain weight, monthly weigh-ins will be conducted at the PAC to provide the encouragement and accountability that you may need. Weigh-ins will be offered weekly during January and February and then monthly throughout the year.

Activity Classes and Leagues

Group exercise classes

Yoga, Pilates, CardioPower, Step, Body Fit, Cycling are offered in the PAC.

Cost: $40 for 12-week fall and spring terms, $25 for 7-week winter and summer terms.

Contact Karen Frazier: ext. 2816

Faculty/Staff Basketball

Monday/Wednesday/Friday, PAC gymnasium, 12:15 p.m. Just show up.

Cost: $40 for 12-week fall and spring terms, $25 for 7-week winter and summer terms.

Contact Karen Frazier: ext. 2816

Faculty/Staff Volleyball

Tuesday/Thursday, PAC gymnasium, Noon, beginning October 16. Contact Kelly Frazier: ext. 2816

Purples and White Golf League

Spring and summer, e-mail Vince Moore.

Corporate Shield running/walking races

Furman reimburses up to $20 of entry fees per race, email Scott Munn.

Important Dates

Thursday, November 8

Employee Health Fair, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Watkins Room

Health Risk appraisals with Dr. Blackstone, PAC Lounge.

Contact Human Resources to schedule an appointment.

January 14: 12:30–7 p.m.

Activate Greenville kickoff, Carolina First Center

January 15, 12–1 p.m.

The Shape of a Healthy Diet, Burgiss Theater, Kelly Frazier, M.A.

January 21, 6–7 p.m.

The Shape of a Healthy Diet, Burgiss Theater, Alicia Powers, Ph.D.

February 18, 6–7 p.m.

Starting an Effective Exercise Program, Burgiss Theater, Kelly Frazier, M.A.

February 19, 12–1 p.m.

Starting an Effective Exercise Program, Burgiss Theater, Alicia Powers, Ph.D.

March 17, 6–7 p.m.

Navigating the Supermarket, Burgiss Theater, Alicia Powers, Ph.D.

March 18, 12–1 p.m.

Navigating the Supermarket, Burgiss Theater, Kelly Frazier, M.A.

April 15, 12–1 p.m.

Resistance Training for Beginners, Burgiss Theater, Kelly Frazier, M.A.

April 21, 6–7 p.m.

Resistance Training for Beginners, Burgiss Theater, Alicia Powers, Ph.D.

May 18, 6–7 p.m.

Weight Management That Works, Burgiss Theater, Alicia Powers, Ph.D.

May 20, 12–1 p.m.

Weight Management That Works, Burgiss Theater, Kelly Frazier, M.A.

Additional events will be added throughout the year. Please check the university’s online calendar for details.

Eating green

Eating a balanced diet is a vitally important part of any health-improvement plan. For the growing number of Furman personnel committed to promoting sustainable living, Dining Services now offers a variety of environmentally friendly choices. For example, a major effort has been made to offer local produce while in season.

“To define local we have set our boundary to a 150-mile radius from campus. The faculty and staff dining room may boast cucumbers, yellow squash, zucchini, tomatoes, sprouts, and other garden variety foods as they are in season,” says Susan Presto, director of Dining Services. Local produce is a more environmentally friendly choice than produce that has been shipped across the country or world because less fuel is used to transport the product. Local foods also benefit the consumer. Since local produce may be allowed to ripen on the plant, it is typically more flavorful than food that is picked before its peak. It may also contain more nutrients than produce that sits in storage because some nutrients deteriorate each day after produce is picked from the field.

In an effort to reduce the amount of saturated and trans fats in foods, Dining Services now uses Mazola ZT (Zero Trans Fat) at all campus dining locations. This frying oil is made from a combination of corn and sunflower oil, which both contain mostly unsaturated fats.

The department also uses 100 percent bleach-free recycled napkins, reusable dishes and cleaning cloths, and bulk packaging where possible. It participates in the campus recycling and composting program and even recycles the used fryer oil to create biodiesel fuel or animal feed. Prepared unused food products are used internally or donated to Loaves and Fishes. The Tower Café offers Fair Trade Coffee and the Paladen Food Court may soon sell local milk and other organic and natural products.

Rich Letteri makes strides toward a healthier lifestyle

A few months ago Rich Letteri (Communication Studies) saw his another battle an early stage of ovarian cancer. He decided that it was time to make some changes in his own lifestyle. “It was enough to make any Italian boy feel guilty enough to quit smoking,” says Letteri. He also felt fatigue throughout the day and was diagnosed with high blood pressure. “I used to smoke a pack of cigarettes a day, usually skipped breakfast, and didn’t exercise,” he recalls.

Letteri and reviewed his eating and physical activity habits and found a few simple solutions to help him meet his goals. He says he had heard about the value of eating breakfast and healthier foods but says, “I wasn’t motivated to change until I understood why it was important. Now I eat balanced meals throughout the day with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats.”

He has also made exercise a priority. With the help of health and exercise science professor Tony Caterisano, Letteri learned how to use some of the equipment in the Furman Fitness Center and developed a personal fitness program to meet his goals. “I fit in an hour workout during the day and sometimes walk or engage in some other form of physical activity later in the day,” he says.

Through these lifestyle changes, Letteri has lost close to 20 pounds. He advises anyone who wants to live a healthier life to “take weight off at a reasonable pace, exercise, and enjoy yourself!”

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Kiely named director of Hopkins Nanjing Center

There will be very few Ian Kiely sightings on campus for the next two years. Kiely, who joined the university in 2001, was recently appointed the American Director of the Hopkins Nanjing Center, a highly selective academic program housed on the urban campus of Nanjing University in China.

Founded 20 years ago, the center is a joint venture between Johns Hopkins and Nanjing universities. It employs roughly 35 faculty with an enrollment of 130 and offers a graduate curriculum that covers international relations, economics, history and international law. American and Chinese students accepted into the program must be fluent in both English and Mandarin. Some students gravitate to government jobs in international diplomacy and law. Others take jobs with international companies or go into academics.

Kiely replaces Robert Daley, a former U.S. State Department official who has held the post for the past six years. As the American director, Kiely will work with his Chinese counterpart, Huang Chengfeng. "A lot of my job will be diplomatic, making sure everyone gets along," says Kiely, who has agreed to remain at the post for two years. "I’ll also be working to increase the quality of education at the center."

Kiely describes the school as a complete immersion experience for U.S. students. "They live with Chinese, eat with them. A lot of my job will be diplomacy, making sure everyone gets along," says Kiely, who has agreed to remain at the post for two years. "I’ll also be working to increase the quality of education at the center."

Kiely's wife Jing and children Clair, 5, and Angelica, 3, have just settled into the director's on-campus apartment. A native of Boston, Kiely graduated from Yale University and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Hawaii in 1976. "What Furman has done in the past five years, though, Furman's Department of Asian Studies has gained national prominence and is now approaching the status of the country's top programs, such as Middlebury, Wesleyan and Williams. "What Furman has accomplished — getting the people they have — would be impressive at any college. Their people have been able to take their program to a new level," says John Berninghausen, Truscott Professor of Chinese Studies at Middlebury. Berninghausen, who visited campus earlier this year, adds, "I could sense the excitement and growth there. There are innovative teachers and scholars with vision. And there has been administrative leadership."

Much of the growth can be linked to a $1 million gift from Beth and Ravenel Curry '63 in 2004. The funds were used to hire two full-time faculty members and to establish several programs that have given Asian Studies a higher profile. Three years ago, for example, the department established a Summer China Experience program that funds a two-week trip to China for 16 incoming freshmen and two faculty members. The Furman students join Chinese students at Soochow University for a weeklong comparative cultures seminar, followed by a tour of several cities and rural areas.

To date, Rich Letten (Communication Studies), Kristy Maher (Sociology), Cleve Fraser (Political Science) and Lloyd Benson (History) have accompanied the Furman students to China. As a result, all have added an Asian component to their existing course.

Furman has also sponsored several high-profile lectures and symposia during the past four years that have addressed human rights, economic and political issues in Asia. Among the lecturers have been James Lilley, a former U.S. ambassador to China and South Korea, and several prominent labor and human-rights activists in China.

These programs — combined with current events — have sparked an on-campus buzz about Asian Studies. In just three years, the number of Asian Studies faculty and majors has doubled. The department has also attracted top faculty. For example, Kiely, a Yale graduate who earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, joined the faculty in 2000 after interviewing with 20 universities.

"This is the most exciting place to be for building an Asian Studies department in a private, liberal arts college," says Kiely. "There is an unusual combination of devoted and innovative faculty that enjoys working together, along with financial resources. It's like a perfect storm." In September the university became one of just a handful of liberal arts institutions to offer four years of Chinese language instruction. Department chair Kate Kaup says this is a necessary step if the department is to continue to grow.

"We are attracting students who want to come to Furman to major in Asian Studies," says Kaup. "The student interest will only continue to grow as we now offer four full years of Chinese language and are expanding our course offerings. We can now offer an outstanding curriculum with authority."

The growing focus on Asian Studies comes during a time when China and India are taking a larger role in the global economy. China's economy grew more than 10 percent last year and is now the fourth largest in the world behind the United States, Japan and Germany. China will also host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. Given China's growing impact on the world stage, college graduates who speak Chinese and understand the culture are in great demand.

"I remember when parents would say, 'What is my kid going to do as a Chinese major?" says Berninghausen, who founded the Middlebury Chinese Studies program in 1976. "They don’t ask that anymore."

Department of Asian Studies gaining national notoriety

When Furman's Department of Asian Studies was awarded a State Department grant through the Associated Colleges of the South in February to establish and manage an intense nine-week Chinese language course for U.S. students at Soochow University in China, many in the academic community took notice.

The grant generated interest from large universities with long-established Asian Studies programs.

"When we received that grant, I think it woke up a lot of people," says Jan Kiely, an Asian Studies/history professor. Moreover, three Furman students were among the 20 selected from more than 400 applicants for the tuition-free program.

Furman professor Harry Kusshu directed the program, which featured eight weeks of language instruction and a two-week trip to China for 16 incoming freshmen and two faculty members. The Furman students join Chinese students at Soochow University for a weeklong comparative cultures seminar, followed by a tour of several cities and rural areas.

To date, Rich Letten (Communication Studies), Kristy Maher (Sociology), Cleve Fraser (Political Science) and Lloyd Benson (History) have accompanied the Furman students to China. As a result, all have added an Asian component to their existing course.

Furman has also sponsored several high-profile lectures and symposia during the past four years that have addressed human rights, economic and political issues in Asia. Among the lecturers have been James Lilley, a former U.S. ambassador to China and South Korea, and several prominent labor and human-rights activists in China.

These programs — combined with current events — have sparked an on-campus buzz about Asian Studies. In just three years, the number of Asian Studies faculty and majors has doubled. The department has also attracted top faculty. For example, Kiely, a Yale graduate who earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, joined the faculty in 2000 after interviewing with 20 universities.

"This is the most exciting place to be for building an Asian Studies department in a private, liberal arts college," says Kiely. "There is an unusual combination of devoted and innovative faculty that enjoys working together, along with financial resources. It's like a perfect storm." In September the university became one of just a handful of liberal arts institutions to offer four years of Chinese language instruction. Department chair Kate Kaup says this is a necessary step if the department is to continue to grow.

"We are attracting students who want to come to Furman to major in Asian Studies," says Kaup. "The student interest will only continue to grow as we now offer four full years of Chinese language and are expanding our course offerings. We can now offer an outstanding curriculum with authority."

The growing focus on Asian Studies comes during a time when China and India are taking a larger role in the global economy. China's economy grew more than 10 percent last year and is now the fourth largest in the world behind the United States, Japan and Germany. China will also host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. Given China's growing impact on the world stage, college graduates who speak Chinese and understand the culture are in great demand.

"I remember when parents would say, 'What is my kid going to do as a Chinese major?" says Berninghausen, who founded the Middlebury Chinese Studies program in 1976. "They don’t ask that anymore."
The Riley Institute at Furman and the Department of Asian Studies launch a five-part lecture series titled “China’s Global Rise”.

Asian Studies wins Freeman Foundation grant to take 17 South Carolina history and social studies teachers on a summer tour to China and Japan.

Ravanel Curry ’63 and his wife, Beth, donate $1 million to Furman to support programs in Chinese Studies.

Timeline:

2004
The Riley Institute at Furman and the Department of Asian Studies launch a five-part lecture series titled “China’s Global Rise”.

2005
Furman hires a professor of Chinese language and literature to develop Chinese courses.

Sixteen freshmen take part in the university’s first Summer China Experience.

Four graduating seniors are selected to teach English for one year at a sister institution in China.

Asian Studies offers a fall Chinese Film Festival with nine screenings for students and the community.

The second part of the China’s Global Rise series brings internationally renowned specialists to Furman’s campus for a two-day conference on China’s economic transition.

2006
The third installment of the Global Rise series, “Human Rights in China,” attracts wide community participation and brings analysts and activists from across the country and China to Furman.

The Curry China Studies Faculty Grant is launched to provide faculty opportunities to conduct fieldwork in China.

Furman’s first collection of Asian language books is established in the Asian Studies Suite/Reading Room.

Furman hires a professor of Asian economics.

Ten freshmen take part in the university’s second Summer China Experience.

A second group of four graduating seniors are selected to teach English in China.

The Greenville Chinese Culture Association partners with Asian Studies to offer a Chinese Moon Festival on campus.

Fall in China program moves to Suzhou, and student internships are established as part of the program.

2007
Competitive student grant opportunities are established for Asian Studies majors.

Furman receives federal funding to offer a nine-week intensive Chinese program in Suzhou, China.

Fourteen freshmen take part in the university’s third Summer China Experience.

Two graduating seniors are selected to teach English in China.

Hindi language instruction is offered for the first time.

Chinese language instruction is expanded to four years.

Japan Foundation Grant supports expansion of Japanese language instruction beyond two years through independent studies.

Student exchange program is formalized with Soochow University in Suzhou, with eight students participating in the first year.

The Chinese Moon Festival is held again.

Intensive “fast-track” Chinese language study is offered to students participating in the fall in China program.

2008
Eighteen students will participate in the university’s first India Abroad program.

The university will welcome two visiting professors from Suzhou.
Athletics

The Paladin Club had another record-breaking year in 2008-07. The end of the fiscal year saw a surge in our numbers as we reached an all-time high of 1,541 members and more than $1.25 million donated for athletic scholarships. Every penny raised goes straight to scholarships for our deserving student-athletes.

The 2007-08 year has started well, and we have even loftier goals for dollars raised and membership. Please consider supporting Furman athletics by becoming a member of the Paladin Club. Call Carolyn Has ton at 294-3649 to join.

Paladin Club Day and Hall of Fame Day took place at the football game against Wofford on September 29. The Athletic Hall of Fame inducted six new members at a banquet before the game. They were Melkin Bell ’50 (men’s basketball), Will Bouton ’02 (football), Megan Dunigan ’02 (women’s tennis), Louis Ivory ’50 (football), Kimberly Currier McAdams ’44 (softball) and the late George H. Prutt ’50 (football, basketball, golf). If you are interested in traveling to away football games to show your support, the Paladin Club will be taking a bus to Georgia Southern on November 10 and Western Carolina on November 17. For more information, please call Rebekah Gregory at 294-3647.

The Paladin Club planned another exciting event. On Saturday, October 13, the Blue Shoes SK was held in conjunction with the Furman Invitational track meet.

The Blue Shoes SK raises money for the men’s and women’s track and field and cross country programs. In just its second year, Blue Shoes has already helped raise more than $1.8 million for our student-athletes.

Olympic marathon champ Frank Shorter was the event’s featured speaker.

— Rebekah Gregory

Dining Services

Summer brought changes to our management team. Adam Summer was promoted to location manager at the Paladin Food Court and Chip Mecca added Adam’s food production manager position at the Dining Hall. Chip is a Johnson and Wales graduate and brings excellent culinary skills to the job. We’re happy to welcome in Chip and congratulating Adam.

In addition, this summer all managers were certified in adult CPR and first aid.

Traditions Grille at the golf course pro shop is open seven days a week. We are serving sandwiches, wraps, hamburgers, hot dogs and many other goodies. Rumor has it that the cheeseburger is the best in Greenville.

The Pala-Den Food Court has a new sushi company — Sushi with Gusto. Adam has also added a new to-go area and a bakery location next to Freshens. New organic products will be available in the coming months.

The Dining Hall and Pala-Den will be using fresh local produce, as available, and the DH will be showcasing new menu items as well. As always, Einstein’s is still serving hot fresh bagels as well as scrumptious sandwiches.

Catering has been busy this summer, with many campus events and wedding receptions. We’ve even done several wedding receptions at the same time at different locations on campus.

— Susan Presto

Financial Services

Bill Berg and Ken Abernethy were helping to deliver Furman’s annual reaccreditation materials to the review team on the Tuesday after Labor Day.

Mary Lou Merkt challenged Financial Services to have the university and federal audits completed, bound and delivered in time to be included. Mind you, most the years the auditors start their audit on the Tuesday after Labor Day, and the process goes on for four weeks or more with bound copies being delivered just in time to include in the October trustees briefing book.

We not only accepted the challenge, we actually beat it. The audit reports were delivered to Ken and Bill on August 30. Many people made this feat possible. I can’t name them all, but all are greatly appreciated.

Financial Services met a second and slightly different challenge this summer. Along with Marketing and Public Relations, Computing and Information Services and Business Affairs, we competed weekly (through a rating system devised by a Furman student) in a contest to reduce our energy consumption. We turned off monitors, overhead lights, appliances and desk lamps when they weren’t being used. Some want the extra mile and asked Facilities Services to remove every other bulb in overhead lights because our large windows provide plenty of natural light. (See story on page 2.)

In an unexpected way, the energy conservation contest was just the thing we needed to pull together and outwork every other department at Montague Village. It made an otherwise very busy summer enjoyable!

— Linda Sarratt

Marketing & P.R.

Since our last report we’ve welcomed four new people to our office.

Stacy Seigler is working in the print shop and graphics area as production assistant. Before coming to Furman, she served as a production coordinator at TPM in Greenville. Stacy is an Upstate native and Greenville Tech graduate.

Many of you have already met Marie Newman-Rogers, our department assistant. Marie joined our group in February and dove right in. She navigated the university directory project quite well this fall and is now joyfully awaiting in United Way-related duties.

— John Roberts

Residence-hall advisors to freshmen halls and members of the Religious Council have also organized United Way fundraisers.

Of course, most donations to the United Way are generated through employee payroll deductions. Last year, Furman raised more than $191,000 for the United Way of Greenville County, up from $182,000 in 2005.

While giving increased, the percentage of employees participating fell from 58 to 52 percent. The fundraising goal for 2007: $180,000.

Chandra Dillard, Furman’s director of community relations, says the campus campaign began October 8 and will conclude October 26.

The university-wide campaign began September 6 with a goal of $14 million. Eighty-eight percent of every dollar donated to the United Way goes directly to 40 Greenville County health and human services agencies.

Jane Dorn has contracted with us for the last eight years to design the Furman magazine. She’s officially part of our office, as a graphic designer and photography coordinator. Jane has a degree from Louisiana State University and brings not just talent, but a steady hand and calming influence.

Adam Murphree ‘06 is our Alumni News magazine. Adam worked for Computing and Information Services last year as a fellow. In our office, he serves primarily as a videographer. If you haven’t visited our friendly Montague Village confines recently, you need to know that many of us changed offices over the summer. What follows is a quick summation of who moved where.

On the former Hall side of the building, Jane took Chandra Dillard’s old office. Chandra is now in the office formerly occupied by John Roberts. Ryan Fisher has moved in with some of the gadgets, folks near the Print Shop. He’s where Roxanne Chase used to be; Roxanne is now in Carol Anne Laney’s former office, next to Jane.

Carol Anne moved down the hall to the now retired Charlie Register’s old spot, which she shares with Debbie Segall, who vacated in favor of the new office, which sits across from Ryan.

In the department’s other wing: John moved into Ryan’s old digs.

Greg Carroll, Gayle Warth, Vince Moore, Nancy Spitzer and Jim Stewart had the good sense to stay put. The copy room and bathrooms also chose not to move. This should clear up any confusion.

— John Roberts

Giving your time, talent and treasure

E ach year, the university asks employees to donate a bit of their treasure to the United Way of Greenville County. Some, too, are asked to give their time by volunteering for a speaker, or perhaps to serve as a United Way loaned executive. But this year, Furman wants more: your talent.

As part of the annual fall fundraising drive, Furman will host a faculty/staff talent show 7 p.m. Monday, October 22 in the Watkins Room of the University Center. Admission is $3 per person with proceeds being donated to the health and human services agency.

President David Dyck, who once shared the stage with Peter, Paul and Mary, headlines the event. Apparatus will also be made by The North Village people (a collection of talented up-and-coming University Housing staff) and the popular “Acoustics”, a blue grass band comprised of staff from Computing and Information Services.

The event is being organized by the Association of Furman Students. If you have a talent to share, please email APR President Christina Henderson

“This year we are trying to get more students involved in fundraising,” says Chandra Dillard, who is organizing the United Way campaign at Furman. “Students are very creative and can come up with all sorts of ideas to encourage giving.”

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Roger A. Sneed, Assistant Professor of Religion
B.A., M.A., University of Tulsa; M.Div., Emory University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Virginia

Monica Black, Assist. Professor of History
B.A., University of North Carolina; M.A., Ph.D., University of Virginia

Raj Kumar, Visiting Instructor in History
M.A., Leiden University; Ph.D. Candidate, Harvard University

Deb Bucci, Lecturer
B.A. Ohio State University, R.I., Owens College; M.A., Furman University

Karen L. Buchmuller, Assist. Professor of Chemistry
B.A., The College of Wooster; Ph.D., University of North Carolina

Craig H. Caldwell III, Visiting Assistant Professor of History
B.A., Furman University; M.A., University of North Carolina

Carolyn Carrier, Lecturer in Music (part-time)
B.M., Furman University; M.M., University of North Carolina

Sharon Ann Young Cherry, Visiting Professor Modern Languages and Literatures
B.A., Kalamazoo College; M.A., Univ. of Chicago; Ph.D., Northwestern University

Randall Lawrence Childress, Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics
B.A., University of Alabama; M.A., Ph.D., University of Florida

Lucia V. Galleno, Visiting Assistant Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures
B.A., M.A., Catholic Univ. of Peru; Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley

Michael W. Huntsberger, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies
B.A., The Evergreen State College; Ph.D., University of Oregon

Christina Lacey, Visiting Assistant Professor of Physics
B.S., M.Sc., Ph.D., University of New Mexico

Jennifer Lohfzentz, Visiting Instructor in History
B.A., Simon Fraser University, M.A., Queen’s University; Ph.D. Candidate, York University

Catherine McKee, Murphy Lecturer in Modern Languages and Literatures (part-time)
B.S., M.A., Ph.D., University of Virginia

Alica Baby Powers, Assistant Professor of Health and Exercise Science
B.S., M.S., Ph.D., Auburn University; Ph.D., University of Southern Mississippi

Ika Rasch, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures
University of Wuppertal; Ph.D., University of Utah; Ph.D., University of Michigan

Michael Williams Rooddy, CPT, Assistant Professor of Military Science
B.B.A., Campbell University

Not pictured: Pongrácz Sennyey, Associate Librarian
B.A., Middle Tennessee State University; M.A. (Medieval Studies), Western Michigan University; M.L.S., Ph.D. Candidate, University of Illinois

Roger A. Sneed, Assistant Professor of Religion
B.A., M.A., University of Tulsa; Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

Susan Cooke Ugurlu, Visiting Assistant Professor of Art
B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; M.A., Bilkent Univ. in Ankara, Turkey; Ph.D., University of Exeter, UK

Dake Wang, Assistant Professor in Physics
B.S., Sichuan University, China; M.S., Ph.D., Auburn University

Marie Watkins, Assistant Professor of Art
B.A., Furman University; M.S., Clemson University; M.A., Tulane University; Ph.D., Florida State University

Mark Yates, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology
B.S., Furman University; M.S., Clemson University; Ph.D., University of Mississippi

35 years
Gayle Warth ............... September
Carolyn Lancaster ............... September
Carol Daniels ............... October
Barbara Grissop ............... November

Joyce Hawkins ............... June
Vince Moore ............... July
Shirley Dewitt ............... December

30 years
Shirley Margolis ............... June
Francis Dobson ............... June
Sandra Silvers ............... June

20 years
Stephen Allen ............... June
Jeff Kerscher ............... June
Kenneth McCauley ............... July
Phil Hedrick ............... July
Jason Dickert ............... August
Reno Valdivieso ............... August
Jennie Winchester ............... August
Susan Fair ............... August
Ellen Crambaker ............... August
Tom Briggs ............... August
Christine Williams ............... August
Christine Doughty ............... August
Angela Hellis ............... August
Janet Nazer ............... August
Ansel Swan ............... October
Brad Brandon ............... December

25 years
Bobby Lamb ............... July
Scott Blais ............... July
Glenn Thrift ............... July
Cheryl Williams ............... July
Margaret Praytor ............... September
Rhonda Childress ............... September
Earl Ferguson ............... October
Don Fowler ............... November

Bobby Lamb ............... August
Tyra Bowlin ............... August
Clayton Burton ....... August
Jeff Redderson ............... August
Kyle Martin ............... August
Gael Sisson ............... August
Dexter Caldwell ............... August
Jack Edens ............... August
Bible Blackston (ARARM) ............... August
Astrid Truman ............... September
Marie Burgus ............... September
Todd Duke ............... October
Larry Hudson ............... November
Diane Rainey ............... November
Evelyn Oronfı ............... December

Larry Richardson ............... August
Belinda Hilliard ............... August
Allan Goosel ............... August
Barbara Kamieniecki ............... August
Darlene Klesk ............... December

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Darlene Klesk ............... September

Laurie McLellan.............. August
Sue McElroy ............... August
Braden Hines ............... August
Karen Smith ............... August
Phil Lent ............... August

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MILESTONES
NEW FACULTY 2007–08

ANNIVERSARIES

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9
With a groundbreaking held September 27, The Woodlands at Furman is scheduled to be completed in early 2009.

The continuing care retirement community will be located near the REK Center for Intercollegiate Golf and will include 144 independent living residences, 32 assisted living apartments, 16 memory support suites and 30 private nursing residences.

Ed Marshall, director of special projects, says approximately 65 percent of the available spaces have been pre-sold.

The Woodlands at Furman will employ about 110 people. The facility, which will include a library, bistro, formal and casual dining areas, spa and massage therapy rooms, classrooms, an outdoor wood-burning fireplace and barbecue, and a fitness center, is being developed by Greystone Communities, Inc., on property leased by the Furman University Foundation.

Once completed, the retirement center will become the first university-linked retirement community in South Carolina. Other university-linked retirement communities in the region are located near Davidson, Duke, Appalachian State, Elon, Washington & Lee, Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia.

What to you do to stay fit?

“I try to reduce the number of snack- and highly processed foods. For exercise, I run twice a week and weight train three times a week. Finally, I get thrashed in paddleball once a week by Dr. ‘Doc’”

—Wade Worthen

“I try to get at least 60 minutes of aerobic exercise six days a week, and I try to manage stress by setting aside additional time for friends and family.”

—Barbara Foltz

“I run every day at lunch and try to get a lot of fruits and vegetables in my diet.”

—Tracy McDonald

“I have a daily routine of cardio, weight-bearing exercises, and positive nutrition. I also maintain regular check-ups with my physician.”

—Beth Felkel

“I walk every day on campus at 6 a.m. I attend the fitness classes in the PAC and I play golf once a week. And most importantly, I do not smoke.”

—Jean Adams

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