

# The Campus

“Undergraduates who’ve only taken three courses in Islamic studies



## Islamic Studies Minor a Hot Commodity

THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING about the Muslim faith is so great that Richard McGregor is having an interesting problem with students taking part in Vanderbilt’s new minor in Islamic studies.

“I have undergraduates a year or two away from finishing who are getting job offers to go to Iraq,” says McGregor, assis-

tant professor of religious studies. “These students have only taken something like three courses in Islamic studies so far. There’s just this vacuum. They need people in a big, big way, and they’re coming after undergraduates before they finish.”

Undergraduates working on a minor in Islamic studies who turn down job offers are still

getting plum internships in New York and Washington, and many will use their language training to travel.

McGregor, who came to Vanderbilt two years ago to teach Islamic studies, launched the minor last fall. It’s a rigorous curriculum that includes a year of Arabic language study.

The war in Iraq, terrorist attacks and other world events have made an accurate understanding of Islam a rare commodity. “People’s awareness of this entire civilization, tradition and religion of Islam are coming from newspaper headlines about Islamic extremists, suicide bombers, American soldiers, Israeli soldiers,” McGregor says.

Students who participate in the minor in Islamic studies will get a much broader view of Islam. “We need to study Islamic law,” McGregor says. “We need to know about Islamic culture. We need to study Islamic history, and not all of it has to do with politics and empire. We should study economic and cultural history, intellectual history. We should talk about Islamic philosophy.”

Simple curiosity led to McGregor’s interest in Islam. “I come to it from the perspective of the study of comparative religion,” he says. “I’m from a Protestant Canadian background. Islam is very far out from where I started.”

McGregor says he’s happy to train liberals and conservatives alike, so long as they get an anchor of knowledge that will allow them “to swim in this stuff and not get swept away by it.”

## Vanderbilt Among Top Academic Workplaces

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY RANKS fifth among the “Best Places to Work in Academia,” according to an extensive survey of practicing scientists released Nov. 7 in *The Scientist*, a magazine catering to the life sciences.

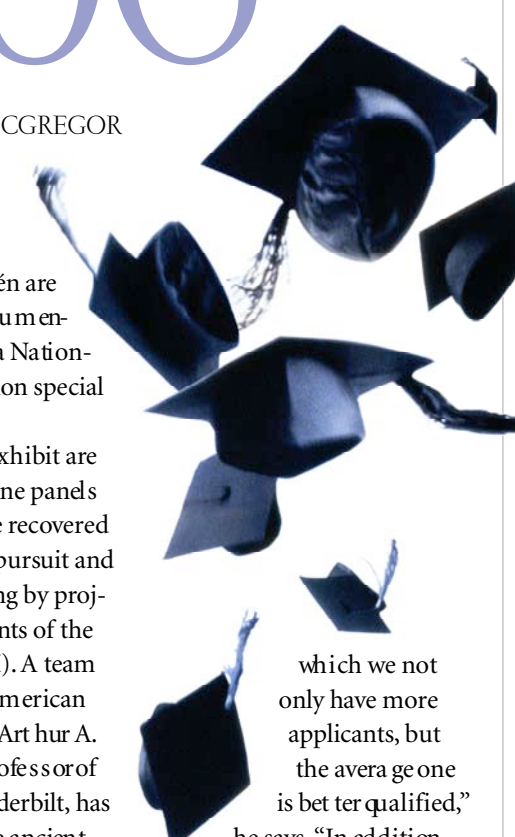
Clemson University (S.C.) topped the 2005 list of U.S. institutions, followed by the Trudeau Institute in Saranac Lake, N.Y., and the J. David Gladstone Institutes in San Francisco. The University of Florida in Gainesville placed fourth, one spot ahead of Vanderbilt.

Respondents were asked to assess their working conditions and environments by indicating their level of agreement with 41 criteria in eight different areas: job satisfaction, peers, infrastructure and environment, research resources, pay, management and policies, teaching and mentoring, and tenure.

“I think our scientists really feel like they are part of the team, that their input is respected and responded to,” says Dr. Steven Gabbe, dean of the Vanderbilt University

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are getting offers to go to Iraq.” —PROFESSOR RICHARD MCGREGOR



which we not only have more applicants, but the average one is better qualified,” he says. “In addition,

we have a very large number of applications from schools that are not in our region.”

Applications from West Coast students are up 10 percent from last year, while there is a 9 percent increase in applications from Tennessee. Significant increases also are being seen in the number of applications from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states.

“Vanderbilt is becoming a more primary choice in the Boston to Washington, D.C., corridor, but I also want to emphasize that we are reaching out to bright, engaging students in all regions of the country,” Shain says.

Overall, applications for students of color are up 17 percent this year. Applications by male students are up 5.5 percent over last year, but there are still more women than men in the pool of applicants.

School of Medicine. “What they do in their laboratories has an important impact not only on science, in terms of discoveries that will hopefully benefit our patients in years ahead, but in training the next generation of scientists.”

According to the survey, the two most important factors for U.S. tenured or tenure-track life scientists working at non-commercial research institutions were doing work that provides “great personal satisfaction,” and working for an institution that provides “adequate health-care coverage for me and my family.”

## Archaeology Exhibit Tours Europe

MONUMENTS, SCULPTURES, jades, and other treasures recovered by the Vanderbilt University and National Geographic

Cancuén Archaeological Project are now on exhibit in a museum tour in Europe. Treasures recovered from the royal palace, ballcourts and artisan workshops of this ancient Classic Maya site dating from A.D. 650 to 800 have been on display in the exhibit *Cancuén: the Mystery of the Lost Maya City* at the Didrichsen Museum in Helsinki, Finland. In April the exhibit moves for one year to the National Ethnographic Museum of Sweden in Stockholm. From there it will continue to other venues in Europe and the United States before returning to Guatemala to become a permanent exhibit in the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography of Guatemala.

In Scandinavia the exhibit, heavily covered in television and newspapers there, is breaking historic attendance records. The

findings from Cancuén are being featured in documentaries in Europe and a National Geographic television special in the United States.

Highlighting the exhibit are beautifully carved stone panels and huge altars, some recovered from the 2003–2004 pursuit and arrest of a looter’s gang by project members and agents of the SIC (Guatemala’s FBI). A team of Guatemalan and American archaeologists led by Arthur A. Demarest, Ingram Professor of Anthropology at Vanderbilt, has excavated ruins of the ancient city of Cancuén, capital of one of the richest kingdoms of the Classic Maya civilization, located in the Petén rain forest of Guatemala. Among their discoveries is a royal massacre site containing the remains of 31 assassinated and dismembered Maya nobles found with precious adornment. The gruesome site is believed to record a critical moment at the beginning of the mysterious collapse of a great ancient civilization.

## Class of 2010 Applications Break New Record

THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS for Vanderbilt’s incoming freshman class has surpassed 12,000, the highest number ever, says William Shain, dean of undergraduate admissions. “Our 4 percent increase from last year is a continuation of a trend in



Stone panel (A.D. 798) depicts the Cancuén king appointing sub-lords.

## {Top Picks}

### Tong One of 2005's *Scientific American* 50

Vanderbilt psychologist Frank Tong has been named a research leader in the 2005 *Scientific American* 50, the magazine's annual list recognizing outstanding leadership in science and technology from the past year. Tong and his colleague Yukiyasu Kamitani, an investigator at ATR Computational Neuroscience Laboratories in Kyoto, Japan, shared the honor for their work in neural imaging. Tong and Kamitani were recognized for their work in functional magnetic resonance imaging, a special type of MRI technology that detects the brain areas that become active during certain mental tasks by registering variations of blood and oxygen flow.



DANIEL DUBOIS

### Seddon Lands in Hall of Fame

Dr. Rhea Seddon, assistant chief medical officer at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, was inducted into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame in November. A former NASA astronaut, Seddon flew three space shuttle missions between 1985 and 1993, including service as payload commander for the 1993 life sciences research shuttle mission. The Tennessee Museum of Aviation opened in 2001, and the Hall of Fame inducted its first honorees in 2002.



### Doc Hollywood

Dr. Travis Stork, 33, who is completing his residency in the Vanderbilt University Medical Center emergency room, was the star of ABC's matchmaking reality TV show *The Bachelor*, which aired during January and February. Stork was the eighth bachelor to star in the series, which pits 25 females in competition to win the heart of the leading man. A native of Fort Collins, Colo., Stork earned his medical degree from the University of Virginia and graduated magna cum laude from Duke University. The series was filmed in Paris, but Vanderbilt University Medical Center worked with Warner Brothers Telepictures in October to provide footage of Stork on shift in the ER.

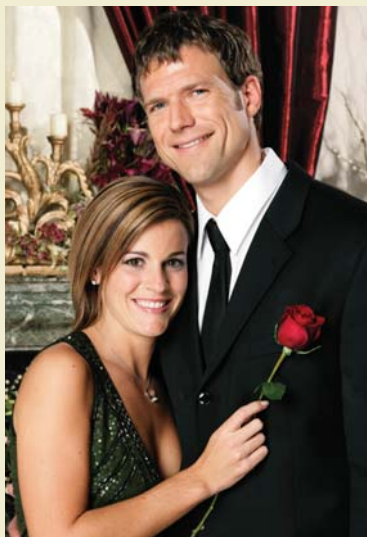


PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC TELEVISION

## Top Students Get Early Admission

WHEN WORD WENT OUT A YEAR ago to high-ability high school seniors that a new program could give them advanced admission to Vanderbilt's professional and graduate schools, no one expected quite the level of interest that resulted.

More than 470 students from all over the country applied to the ENGAGE Scholars Program, and nine of them are now in their second semester.

"ENGAGE" stands for Early Notification of Guaranteed Admission for Graduate Education, and the program is aimed at outstanding high school students with a demonstrated commitment to graduate or professional school education.

"With a continued record of academic success over the next four years, they are guaranteed a place in one of Vanderbilt's nationally ranked graduate or professional programs," says Lyn Fulton-John, director of the Office of Honors Scholarships and ENGAGE. The program emphasizes a broad liberal arts education, relieving participants from taking courses only to make themselves more attractive for acceptance into a graduate or professional program. Up to 50 percent of Vanderbilt's baccalaureate graduates will go on to graduate or professional school.

Of the nine members of the inaugural ENGAGE class, four are interested in graduate school in engineering, three in management, one in medicine and one in law. Participants also may choose to pursue an advanced degree from the School of Nursing, Divinity School or Peabody College.

While a few other universi-

ties offer early or joint admission to a single school or a limited number of programs, none offers such an array of choices as Vanderbilt.

"I've wanted to be an attorney in the JAG (Judge Advocate General's) Corps since about the 10th grade," says Hayley Curry, one of the first ENGAGE scholars. "It's a huge relief to know I'll have a place at such a great law school."

Students in the program are free to pursue any undergraduate major but, as ENGAGE scholars, must participate in an interdisciplinary program designed especially for them. The program will help secure the best students in the country for Vanderbilt's professional and graduate programs. The average SAT score of the first cohort of ENGAGE scholars is 1546; the average of the incoming class of 2009 as a whole is 1371.

## Vanderbilt Takes on Hispanic Diabetes Epidemic

EACH TUESDAY, AFTER A FULL day of work at Vanderbilt, Dr. Michael Fowler heads to the Siloam Clinic in downtown Nashville to combat an enemy threatening the health of the fastest-growing population group in the United States, Hispanic Americans.

The enemy is diabetes, and it is advancing at an incredible pace. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Hispanics are nearly twice as likely to develop diabetes as white non-Hispanics. About 2.5 million Hispanic Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes, and millions more may have the



Dr. Michael Fowler communicates in Spanish with patient Rosalea Rodríguez.

disease without knowing it.

While the incidence of diabetes is low in their native countries, adoption of an American lifestyle after entering this country prompts a rapid rise in disease incidence. “I think we should hand out diabetes medicines at the border when people come into the country,” says Fowler, assistant professor of medicine in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism.

The impact of this epidemic is felt at the Tuesday night clinics. “It’s always a packed house,” Fowler says.

He is working to establish a practice at the Vanderbilt Eskin Diabetes Clinic specializing in treating diabetes in the Hispanic population. Through advertising in Spanish newspapers and word-of-mouth, Fowler hopes to draw Spanish-speaking patients to Vanderbilt for their diabetes care. He recently secured grant support to study how best to provide services.

Non-English-speaking patients often harbor a distrust of medical science. But Fowler, who majored in Spanish in college and has studied in Spain, finds having a Spanish-speaking medical staff helps break down the walls and puts patients at

ease. “If patients can explain things to you in their own native tongue, they are much more comfortable with the doctor.”

Several lab staff, nurse educators and dietitians at the Vanderbilt Eskin Diabetes Clinic also speak Spanish. Fowler hopes to recruit additional Spanish-speaking faculty and encourage other faculty to learn Spanish.

“The complications [of diabetes] are preventable, and diabetes is absolutely controllable if we catch it in time,” Fowler says.

## Lawson to Return as Visiting Professor

MORE THAN FOUR DECADES after a national furor over the expulsion of James Lawson from Vanderbilt University, he will return as a distinguished university professor for the 2006–07 academic year.

“This is for me an unexpected, even momentous personal instant in my journey,” Lawson said. The announcement was made Jan. 18, when Lawson was named Vanderbilt’s 2005 Distinguished Alumnus.

Lawson’s expulsion from Vanderbilt Divinity School and the resulting resignations of faculty members in protest embroiled the campus and the Nashville community in a nationally reported controversy for months in the spring of 1960. Eventually, a compromise was forged to stop most of the resignations and allow Lawson to complete his degree in Nashville. Lawson instead

chose to transfer to Boston University.

During his visiting professorship, Lawson will teach at least one course and give at



NEIL BRASSE

least one public lecture each semester, participate in discussion groups with faculty, and work on his autobiography.

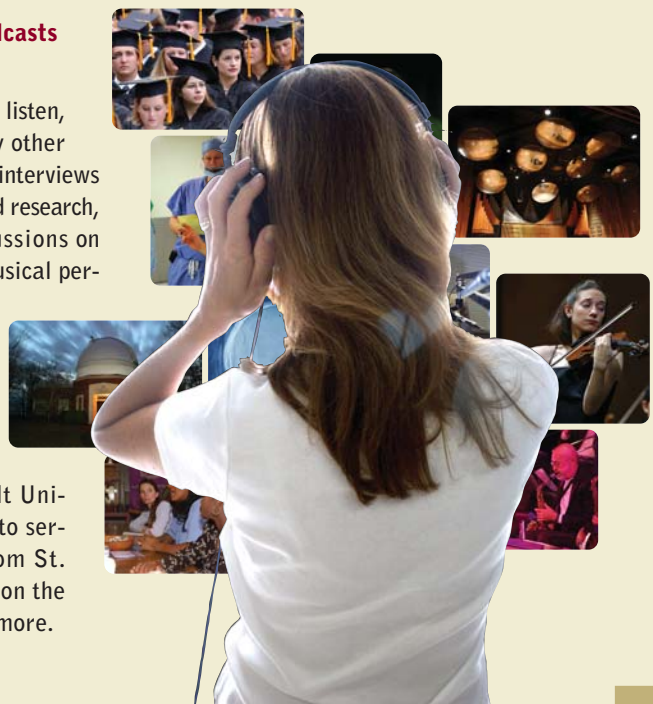
Lawson is pastor emeritus of Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, where he served for 25 years before retiring in 1999. As a young man he studied the Gandhian

## {Virtual Vanderbilt}

[www.vanderbilt.edu/news/podcasts](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/news/podcasts)

### Podcast Potpourri

Vanderbilt podcasts allow you to listen, via your iPod, computer, or any other mp3 player, to news stories and interviews about Vanderbilt people, events and research, as well as lectures and discussions on timely topics. You can enjoy musical performances by Blair School of Music faculty, hear conversations about the universe with astronomers from Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory, learn about new research and treatments being discovered at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, listen to sermons and other offerings from St. Augustine’s Episcopal Chapel on the Vanderbilt campus, and much more.





“I should be this barefoot, abused black girl in Arkansas. However, I have traveled and taught all over the world.”

— Activist and poet Maya Angelou, speaking to a Memorial Gym audience of more than 3,500 on Feb. 27

NEIL BRANKE

movement in India before becoming an integral part of the Civil Rights Movement. Lawson was dubbed by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as “the leading nonviolence theorist in the world.”

Lawson helped organize sit-ins by African American students, which led to the end of racial segregation of lunch counters in downtown Nashville. He also was active in civil rights struggles in Alabama and Mississippi.

“Permanently expelled from Vanderbilt University, James Lawson would have done fine and well,” said James Hudnut-Beumler, dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School. “But Vanderbilt could not be fine or well without confronting its troubled soul. ... James Lawson has progressively helped this university find its conscience—and dare I say— its soul.”

### Children’s Hospital Takes Services to Guatemala

CHILDREN IN POVERTY-STRICKEN Guatemala have among the worst growth rates in the world due to rampant malnutrition and lack of quality medical care. Half the country’s population of 14.2 million is children under the age of 18.

In February a team of 14 surgeons, doctors, nurses and staff members from the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt took part in a weeklong surgical trip to Guatemala. They screened patients and performed 35 pediatric urologic surgeries on children at San Sebastian Hospital in Guatemala City.

Many of the surgeries they performed were on children much older than those who might receive the same procedures in the United States. Limited resources and lack of specialists cause many children

to suffer disabilities and conditions that would be corrected much sooner in the U.S.

Children’s Hospital partnered with The Shalom Foundation, a Middle Tennessee-based nonprofit humanitarian aid organization, and the Guatemalan Pediatric Foundation, a nonprofit based in Guatemala that provides health services and helps coordinate international medical missions and trips.

The groups plan to continue their partnership, and Children’s

Hospital has committed to participate in other surgical trips to Guatemala in the future. Children’s Hospital has committed with Shalom to help create sustainable programs to provide health-care services, educate the community on health issues, provide staffing for surgical trips, and share technology and information related to advances in health care in the country. In the future, elective international rotations for pediatric residents and nurses from the U.S. may also be offered.

### Meth Costly in Lives and Health-Care Delivery

IN 2004, TENNESSEE AUTHORITIES seized 1,574 meth labs in the state—a whopping 75 percent of the total in the Southeast and second only to Missouri across the United States. To fight the use and manufacturing of methamphetamine in Tennessee, Gov. Phil Bredesen has enlisted a group of local and state partners, including Vanderbilt University Medical Center. In November they launched a \$1.5 million statewide methamphetamine education campaign, “Meth Destroys.”

The issue is an important one to Vanderbilt, according to Dr.



Recovery room nurse LaDonna Reyka in Guatemala with young patient Christofer Davila and his mother

SUSAN KOHARI

Jeffrey Guy, director of the Vanderbilt Regional Burn Center. In 2004 as many as one-third of the patients in the Burn Center had been involved in meth explosions, which are responsible for an estimated \$5 million to \$10 million a year in uncompensated care. The number of meth patients has since reduced to about 10 percent, but many of the cases rely on self-reporting.

"It's not like a gunshot wound where there is no denying how it happened," Guy says. "On a lot of this stuff we rely on self-reporting, and even when the patients come here, you don't know who has the meth burns."

Meth is typically consumed in a white powder form that can be snorted, smoked or dissolved in water to be injected. Effects of chronic meth abuse include psychotic behavior and brain damage. Health risks include depression, psychosis, skin infections, high blood pressure, hepatitis C, kidney damage and severe tooth decay.

The "Meth Destroys" effort includes television and radio spots, brochures, posters, billboards, a Web site, and other sources of information dissemination.

"We have seen a reduction in the number of really big explosions," says Guy. "But even if you have four or five of those a year, economically, you are still taking it in the teeth."

## Owen Students Win Three National Competitions

TEAMS OF STUDENTS FROM the Owen Graduate School of Management emerged victorious at three of the nation's premier case competitions last fall.

Case competitions have become a common tool for MBA students to test skills in strategic thinking and problem solving. This year Owen students have bested teams from top business schools around the world at contests hosted by Carnegie Mellon, Ohio State and Thunderbird, and posted finishes in the top echelons at competitions held by the National Society of Hispanic MBAs (NSHMBA) and the National Black MBA Association (NBMBA).

A team of four Owen students came out on top in a field of more than 321 teams from 83 universities and 18 different nations at this year's Global Innovation Challenge. Their work earned them the title of "Most Innovative MBA Team in the World" and a \$20,000 prize. Owen students took second place in this same competition last year.

At the second annual Key-Bank Minority Case Competition, hosted by the Fisher College of Business at Ohio State University, the Owen students' solution earned team members the top prize of \$6,000. Owen students also won the top spot in the 10th Annual International Operations Case Competition at the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. Widely regarded as one of the most significant case competitions in the operations field, this year's invitation-only contest included 15 student teams from the United States, Canada and China.

"Their accomplishments reflect two of the hallmarks of an Owen education: cutting-edge thinking and real-world knowledge," says Jim Bradford, dean of the Owen School.

## {Inquiring Minds}



KRT/MICHAEL HROQUE

### SAT May Predict Life Satisfaction

When taken in the early teens, the SAT test may foretell success and life satisfaction. Psychology researchers David Lubinski and Camilla Benbow at Vanderbilt's Peabody College, along with Rose Mary Webb (Appalachian State University) and April Bleske-Rechek (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire), say high SAT scores at young

ages can reveal cognitive and creative potential for future success as doctors, engineers and professors. Their study provides evidence that students who scored in the top .01 percentile of their age group on the SAT before age 13 were more likely than a comparison group of graduate students to later achieve an M.D. degree, earn an annual salary of at least \$100,000, or secure a tenure-track position in a top 50-ranked institution. The findings were reported in the March issue of *Psychological Science*.

### Research to Probe Cancer Treatment's Effect on Offspring

Can high doses of chemotherapy and radiation that young cancer patients receive cause inherited health problems for their children? Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center member John Boice and an international team of colleagues have been awarded a \$4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to try to find out.



KRT/DAVID ELLIOTT

"Our initial data indicate that the level of adverse genetic effects among children of cancer survivors is not remarkably different than seen in the general population," says Boice. "This suggests that the human genome may not be as susceptible for inherited effects as other species, despite high exposures to radiation and chemotherapy." Over the next five years, the study team will continue to identify survivors and their children, as well as siblings of cancer survivors.

### Canals Reveal Underpinnings of Early Civilization

Ancient canals discovered in the Peruvian Andes offer long-sought proof that irrigation was at the heart of the development of one of the earth's first civilizations. The discovery by Vanderbilt anthropologist Tom Dillehay and his colleagues, Herbert Eling of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Coahuila, Mexico, and Jack Rossen of Ithaca College, was reported in the Nov. 22 issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Preliminary results indicate one of the canals is more than 6,700 years old and another is more than 5,400 years old. They are the oldest such canals yet discovered in South America. Anthropologists had presumed the canals that helped support early Andean civilization had lain closer to the surface and were hence destroyed by human activity and nature over time. Dillehay and his team found that the canals had not been destroyed but had been buried by sediment.