

THE CENTERPIECE

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- The **Illinois Innocence Project**, based at UIS, is gearing up for a major effort to expand its operations during the next five years. Recently, the Project completed the draft of a long-term plan that calls for significantly increasing the volume of innocence cases it handles. The plan also proposes new efforts in education and training in the problem of wrongful convictions, in research to shed light on why wrongful convictions happen, and in action to identify public policy solutions. Taking steps to extend the Project's reach is made possible by partnerships that have been established in the last year and a half with the University of Illinois College of Law and the Schools of Law at Southern Illinois and Northern Illinois Universities. In a first move to raise funds for expansion, the Project in late May submitted, through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, a grant request to the U.S. Department of Justice for money to support work on innocence cases involving DNA evidence in the state's northern counties.
- The wild tail end of the state's spring legislative session and **WUIS** Statehouse Bureau Chief **Amanda Vinicky's** rare one-on-one interview with House Speaker Michael Madigan gave the WUIS news department's blog its busiest day ever. News Director **Sean Crawford** said that the blog, started in early 2011, had more than 1,000 hits on May 30th, with over half logging on to hear the interview with Madigan. To hear the interview for yourself, click on: <http://wuisnews.wordpress.com/>
- Similar interest gravitated to the **Illinois Issues** blog. Statehouse Bureau Chief **Jamey Dunn's** coverage of the frenzy at the end of the legislative session was linked to numerous times in other political news blogs. It was also referenced by the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Southtown Star*, the *Quad City Times*, the *Southern Illinoisan*, NBC-Chicago, and *Chicago* magazine. Besides doing the blog, Dunn posted items on **Illinois Issues** Facebook page and Twitter and hosted public television political talk show, *Capitol View*.

- Thanks to the Center's **Office of Electronic Media** and UIS Information Technology Services, a member of the Illinois Army National Guard stationed in Afghanistan got to see his son graduate from Rochester High School on May 27. Via a live webcast, Lt. Col. Kyle Blumhorst watched his son Ross, an Illinois State Scholar, walk across the stage and receive his diploma.
- So far, 300 children have been screened for social and emotional challenges through a new project led by the Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois, an arm of Memorial Health Systems. The project, funded with a \$2 million grant from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation, is being evaluated under the direction of **Dave Gruenfelder** and **Peter Weitzel** of the **Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies**. The screenings were done by the SIU School of Medicine's Center for Family Medicine (90) and Matheny-Withrow Elementary School (210). The overall purpose of the project, known as MOSAIC, is to establish in Springfield a more universal system of identifying and treating children with social and emotional difficulties.
- **WUIS** Public Affairs Reporting Intern **Rachel Otwell** made her way onto NPR again last week. Otwell had a spot airing on NPR newscasts on a pair of lawsuits that are part of an effort to legalize same sex marriage in Illinois. The ACLU and another group filed the suits on behalf of several gay and lesbian couples. The lawsuits argue that Illinois' current marriage law, which defines marriage as between a man and a woman, is unconstitutional. The state began allowing civil unions last year.
- **Illinois Issues'** July-August edition on the environment examines the issue of proposed offshore wind farms in Lake Michigan. Does the production of more electricity outweigh degrading the aesthetics of the Great Lakes?
- **Papers of Abraham Lincoln** researcher **Helena Iles Papaioannou** came across something unexpected recently while searching the records of the Surgeon General in the National Archives in Washington, DC. Papaioannou discovered a copy of a 21 page report by Dr. Charles A. Leale, the army surgeon who was the first to reach the presidential box at Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865, the night Abraham Lincoln was shot. Leale wrote out his story just hours after the President died the next morning, but the text of that first report had remained undiscovered until now.
- The **Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies** is planning to sponsor a conference this coming fall on performance-based budgeting and its impact

on the budget process in Illinois. The state is now in its second year of implementing Governor Pat Quinn's "Budget for Results" program. In the new fiscal year beginning July 1 (FY 13), the program calls for state agencies to develop and complete strategy maps for what they are trying to accomplish and basic logic models of each program they operate. The agencies are then supposed to convert this information into metrics that will measure how well programs achieve their stated goals, and these metrics in turn will be used to inform the proposed state budget for fiscal year 2014 starting next July. One of the purposes of the conference will be to provide information to nonprofit organizations and state vendors that may be affected by the new budget process.

- The fourth edition of a textbook published by **Illinois Issues, Governing Illinois**, will soon be going to the printer and is expected to be available for the fall semester. The book explains how the various systems of government in the state work -- or sometimes don't -- and is used in classes for upper-level high school students and freshman and sophomore college students.
- **WUIS** is expanding its business fundraising efforts. **Myra Kuhn** joins the station staff this week as a business development officer. A native of the Quincy area, Kuhn worked most recently in sales for Quincy's Oakley Lindsay Convention Center. Kuhn, who was also development director for St. Patrick's School in Springfield, will join **John Wallenstein** in marketing WUIS to the business community in Central Illinois.
- A longstanding leader in the Center for State Policy and Leadership will retire at the end of June. **Richard G. Schuldt**, director of the **Survey Research Office**, will step down after 28-years at UIS. Schuldt has conducted and analyzed scores of surveys, from alumni questionnaires to community and statewide public opinion polls. His surveys have covered everything from awareness of "Click It or Ticket," safety of railroad crossings, business views of enterprise zones, corruption in Illinois government, civic engagement, residents' satisfaction with community living arrangements for people with serious mental illness or developmental disabilities, and remembrances at the end of the 20th Century. In addition to mentoring student researchers, Schuldt taught research methods for UIS' community arts management program and was a frequent guest speaker in political science and public affairs reporting classes. Please join the Center in wishing Mr. Schuldt well at his retirement reception on Tuesday, June 26th, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm in the Public Affairs Center Restaurant (first floor).

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