Provost takes on “Skid Monster”

The latest tool in safety driving

They look like yellow training wheels but they help provide a visual example of how even the slightest acceleration can lead to a full spin-out.

EIU Provost Blair Lord tested out the skid monster, Friday, September 9, in the parking lot behind O’Brien Stadium. Joining him was Chair of the CEPS Philanthropy Board, Lou Hencken, and Dr. Robert Bates, Chair of the Department of Health Studies.

“It was like a carnival ride,” said Lord. “This gives new meaning to the administrative golf cart rides.”

Dr. Bates, who went through training this summer on how to steer with the device, took both administrators through a brief demonstration of how the Skid Monster works. Attached to the rear of the vehicle in place of its regular tires, the two small wheels can spin freely, helping to simulate how it feels to spin out on slick and icy streets.

Bates explains that driver instructors can control the spin with the flick of a switch inside the car. The Skid Monster gives students the opportunity to become better instructors and safer drivers. This device demonstrates that it is easier to keep a vehicle in control than attempting to regain control.

“It’s made to duplicate higher speeds,” said
Alum honored for excellence in teaching

Jason Pound, alum of Eastern Illinois University, was recently honored for excellence and innovation in the classroom. Pound, who graduated from Eastern in 2004 says that he loves math, a subject that has always come easy to him.

Switching from computer science his junior year at Eastern, Pound found mathematics more valuable and decided to pursue a degree in teaching.

“Math is the building block of so many things,” said Pound. “There is so much I can do with it.”

Pound was nominated and chosen to receive the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ 2011 Excellence in Middle School Mathematics Teaching Award. Although Pound knew he was nominated, he was not sure that he would be chosen.

“It felt wonderful to be recognized,” said Pound.

Pound brings into play a more hands-on, interactive method of teaching, using technology to help his students explore math concepts. Equipment such as the SMART Board is used as well as games using blocks and fun activities for better learning.

“I try to make the math apply to the student’s lives,” said Pound. “I encourage them to come up with their own solutions, without so much lecturing.”

While he was still a student at Eastern, Pound said he was inspired by his mathematics professor, Dr. Peter Andrews, chair of the mathematics department. Pound reminisced on the way Dr. Andrews was able to take a sometimes complex subject and make it simple.

“He really made things exciting,” said Pound. “He broke things down for us to understand.”

Pound had been teaching in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, for more than six years and plans to continue to make a difference in the lives of his students.

“I like to keep my students engaged,” said Pound, “Make them more a part of the lesson.”
New faculty member plans to make a difference

Originally from Indianapolis, Indiana, Dr. Teresita Hunt lived in Nashville, Tennessee for many years where she attended college and taught French, Spanish, and ultimately English in metropolitan high schools.

Hunt first earned her undergrad degree in English at Fisk University, and there she also earned a master’s in sociology. She then earned her second master’s and doctorate of education at Tennessee State University.

Working as a high school instructor, Hunt said she witnessed many teachers that did not have a thorough knowledge of what they should be doing in the classroom. Although she said she loved working with kids, she decided that a change needed to happen to be more effective.

“I had a love for wanting to teach students how to become teachers; be qualified teachers and effective teachers,” said Hunt. “So I wanted to move up to a different level.”

Hunt said she wanted to make a difference in the lives of children by becoming an instrument of learning in the lives of college students, to train them on how to teach and to be better equipped for the classroom.

This semester, Hunt is teaching one graduate class, SED 3300, Instrumental Tasks in the Secondary School and also an undergraduate level course in curriculum development and theory practices. Hunt plans to help generate a fresh set of skilled and capable teachers.

“I hope to produce confident, effective, well-prepared teachers,” said Hunt.

Outside of the classroom, Hunt says that she enjoys just having fun, working out and traveling. In life, she believes that many obstacles and challenges arise, but it is how they are dealt with that makes all the difference.

“Regardless of what life offers, always persevere,” said Hunt.
Students in the College of Education and Professional Studies travel to Esslingen, Germany

Students immersed themselves in a whole new culture, experienced new traditions, and learned a diverse way of teaching during a three week journey to Esslingen, a midsize historical town in Southwest Germany.

Participants stayed at the beautiful youth hotel near the historic downtown and indulged in Germany’s beautiful scenery, museums, various historical sites, shops, theaters, music venues, and lots more.

The students visited schools to find out about the education system in Germany and to study aspects of German culture.

Stephanie Deiker, Junior, Elementary Education major was one of many CEPS students who ventured to the beautiful country this summer.

“This was by far the best experience I’ve ever had,” said Deiker. “I always wanted to go to Germany and the opportunity was way too perfect to pass up.”

Dr. Bettina Becker, secondary education instructor believes it is essential for students, especially education majors, to observe and get involved in as many diverse classroom settings as possible.

“I think it’s very important to have international experiences,” said Dr. Becker. “If we don’t understand what other students in the world go through, what their lives are like, what school is like—we don’t really have an advantage point of working at our own system.”
Alum finds strength in earthquake

On February 22, 2011 a 6.3 earthquake shook New Zealand’s South Island city of Christchurch, collapsing buildings, destroying thousands of homes, and causing multiple fatalities.

Along with those amid the devastation was Maegan Wilton, an elementary education graduate of Eastern Illinois University.

Wilton, who graduated in December 2010, moved to New Zealand to live with her then fiancé. Hoping to work as an elementary teacher in Christchurch, she found a job as a relief preschool teacher instead.

“Unfortunately, the job market there is very similar to the job market here and it is very hard to find employment anywhere,” said Wilton.

Working only as a substitute, Wilton was not called into work the day of the earthquake. Sitting at home applying for jobs, Wilton says neither she nor the people of New Zealand were prepared for the devastation that rocked the city of nearly 400,000 citizens, including her fiancé who is from the island country.

Wilton said she felt the ground shake but thought little of it since Christchurch had experienced a 7.1 earthquake last September which caused periodic aftershocks since then, so Wilton didn’t move immediately.

“Within seconds, the shaking became so violent,” said Wilton. “It felt different from any aftershocks I had felt.”

Startled, Wilton said she ran under a near door frame.

“It honestly felt like the house was thrown into a stormy sea, rocking to and fro so violently,” said Wilton. “I just started balling my eyes out—I couldn’t control my tears.”

Even after the earthquake stopped, said Wilton, she couldn’t tell if the ground was still moving or if it was her legs shaking. Trying to call loved ones felt impossible since all phone lines were swamped. Wilton tried calling her fiancé --who was out of town--but could not get through.

“I could not get a hold of anyone, except my mom back in Chicago,” said Wilton. “I’m sure I freaked her out, sobbing on the phone hysterically, but I just needed to talk to somebody--anybody.”

With broken glass throughout the house, and the neighbor’s chimney destroyed in her front yard, Wilton walked to her mother-in-laws house. On her way, she witnessed people panicked and scared; gridlocked in traffic, trying to get home.

Violent aftershocks were occurring every ten to fifteen minutes said Wilton.

Story continued on next page
“For two days, I ate, slept, and breathed on my mother-in-law’s couch, glued to the news, waiting for any word,” said Wilton.

Many people died that day including Wilton’s friend, Sam Gibb, a newscaster there. There is not a single person in Christchurch, said Wilton, who was not affected by the loss of a loved one.

“Before that day, an earthquake to me was just a single event that happened in time and people moved on from it. Boy, was I wrong,” said Wilton.

After the earthquake, everyday life, as Wilton knew it, was completely changed. Standard amenities were no longer easily accessible. Wilton says that water from the tap had to be boiled for at least three minutes before drinking; all sewage pipes were muddled, resulting in people having to create makeshift toilets in their backyards; the entire inner city was still shut down, resulting in terrible traffic patterns; and people were leaving the city left and right out of fear.

“It was by far the scariest time of my life,” said Wilton. “It just didn’t seem real. It looked like a movie set and I felt like I was living in a third world country, which New Zealand is far from.”

Life for Wilton, she said, went on pause for the longest time. It was not until she returned to the United States, that things went back to normal.

Wilton and her fiancé exchanged vows in New Zealand at the Cargo Inspection Area of Christchurch Airport but plan to have a big wedding next year. The couple now lives in Mount Prospect, Illinois.

The experience in New Zealand, Wilton said, was life changing.

“I do believe I have grown into a much stronger person because of it,” said Wilton.

Tool to promote safety behind the wheel

SKID MONSTER cont. from pg 1
Bates. “It helps students become better driver Ed teachers.”

This new safety driving tool was purchased for the Health Studies Department with money raised by the CEPS’s Philanthropy board earlier this year combined with college funds.

“I am confident that this will help in the abilities of our students to learn how to maneuver in the case of a skid,” said Hencken. “I feel ready for the snow and ice now.”

“We are very fortunate to get it and we’ll be using it quite a bit,” said Bates, who said that he hopes to not only use the Skid Monster for academic purposes, but also to someday train law enforcement personnel on how to maneuver their vehicles in urgent situations.