Art students and a prominent gallery owner embarked on a new venture together this fall with the opening of a special art exhibit, "Emerging Artists," at the Stremmel Gallery in Reno.

“We, in the department, are all slightly shell-shocked,” said University art professor, student adviser and former regent Howard Rosenberg. “We’ve been told that our students are doing work that is better than a lot of work seen all over the country. But, when something like this happens, and a major gallery is willing to curate and mount an exhibit of student work, that is really something and legitimizes what we’ve been told.”

After a visit with Rosenberg and a tour of students’ work in the University’s Sheppard Fine Art Gallery, Stremmel Gallery founder and director Turkey Stremmel ’72 (art) had the idea to showcase the work.

“That’s what’s exciting about this,” said Stremmel, who has helped launch successful careers for numerous artists. “It’s all new, fresh work. The students are all artistically talented, and each one is unique. Many have already started working with galleries, but it’s important to go over things of which they must be aware as they become exhibiting artists.”

Rosenberg joined the 16 chosen students at the Stremmel Gallery two weeks before the exhibit’s debut. They sat in the gallery’s main lobby intently listening as Stremmel gave professional tips and advice. She talked to the students about pitching artwork to galleries, building a portfolio, knowing the role of the gallery, understanding the role of an artist and what to expect the night of an opening reception.

“We had a rare opportunity where the gallery owner spent time with the artists and generously shared invaluable information about the inner-workings of the gallery business,” student artist Jane Kenoyer said. “I have learned so much in such a short period of time.”

An Oct. 1 opening reception for the students’ two-week exhibition was one of the Stremmel Gallery’s best-attended opening receptions ever. More than half of the exhibited pieces sold.

The artists included Bryan Christiansen, Ashlea Clark, Jeff Erickson, Jon Farber, Aby Henry, Ahren Hertel, Harmony Hilderbrand, Richard Jackson, Jane Kenoyer, Seth Mach, Justin Manfredi, Dominique Palladino, Jeremy Stern, Patrick Szucs, Melissa Test and Ashley Westwood.

—Natalie Savidge ’04

Inspiring a love of art

Watching Howard Rosenberg teach art history is a little like seeing Geppetto create his lively marionette. Rosenberg carves context out of blocks of history, fine-tuning his creation until it dances and sings under its own power. The man clearly loves what he does, peppered his lectures with Groucho Marx asides, making a subject with the potential to put most students to sleep come alive with relevance even the youngest of audiences can grasp.

“They don’t know how much they know,” he said of his students. “When they can put it into context, it all makes sense.”

In his 51 years of teaching, Rosenberg has taught all ages, from pre-primary through graduate school, and always about art. “Howard’s teaching methods represent best practices in education today,” said Andrew Kelly, campus principal of Procter R. Hug High School, where Rosenberg has worked with teachers and students. “He engages kids, piques interest and asks probing questions to get them to delve into the depth of knowledge that they already possess.”

Returning University art student Sandra Seley said, “Howard makes history much more human, more possible. He’s so knowledgeable and obviously very passionate, and that definitely comes across.”

After serving on the Nevada Board of Regents for 12 years, Rosenberg stepped down earlier this year due to term limits. He was known for keeping students as a top priority throughout his tenure as a regent. He is the Department of Art student adviser and teaches a variety of art classes at the University.

Rosenberg said his love affair with art and teaching has given him life. “Some people take care of themselves doing yoga, Pilates, meditation. I teach.”

—Kathie Taylor, Class of 2011
As the University’s competitive research in the field of renewable energy continues to grow, a new Renewable Energy Center will ensure focused, collaborative work across campus and better position the University to contribute to Nevada’s increasing national stature in this burgeoning field.

“The University is a leader in renewable energy research education in Nevada, and through this collaboration we can work to make Nevada a powerhouse in renewable energy in the entire country,” Professor Manoranjan Misra, director of the new center, said. The University has $14.4 million in current renewable energy research underway, with many more projects in the pipeline that are expected to receive grant funding.

“We have research on hydrogen fuels, biodiesel, wind power, plants-to-biofuel, geothermal and the many subcategories and components of these types of renewable power, and our work is not just for the sake of research,” Misra said. “We will continue to work to bring together education and industry to develop these systems here in Nevada, boosting the economy with jobs as well as sales of products and services.”

Provost Marc Johnson said, “Ultimately, we can become more community-driven and can use our science to help our community. We want to make the University easier to work with for industry and the business community. We want to train students for the increasingly technological workforce and build our capacity for research at the same time.”

The University has conducted renewable energy research for more than 10 years, including geothermal, biomass, hydrogen energy and solar. With the support of the NV Energy Foundation, the University has pioneered a new curriculum with its renewable energy minor that began in 2007. The collaboration primarily focuses on the work of four colleges: Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources; Business; Engineering and Science. A council of the deans of those colleges oversees the activities of the collaboration.

Faculty members serving as coordinators for the seven working areas are: Kwang Kim, hydrogen energy and storage; John Cushman, biomass; Lisa Shevenell, geothermal; Ravi Subramanian, solar energy; Mehdi Etezadi, power grid; Ted Batchman, curriculum; and Ron Timben-lebke, business, public policy and outreach.

The renewable energy collaboration has built a one-stop renewable energy Web presence so grant-giving agencies, students, faculty and the public can find information fast. A national-scale renewable energy conference is being organized for the fall.

“The complimentary expertise among these four colleges is an ideal example of how we can coordinate research efforts, and not just for renewable energy,” Johnson said.

—Mike Wolterbeek ’02
Fernandez discovers new way to calculate body’s weight limit

Most of us are familiar with Body Mass Index, or BMI, which is used to determine healthy body weight. But, calculating BMI involves a complex formula: weight in pounds is multiplied by 703, and then divided by height in inches squared. Charts or online calculators are then used to show a “healthy weight range” given an individual’s height that corresponds to the “healthy range BMI.”

If this sounds way too complicated, you are not alone. George Fernandez, Nevada professor of applied statistics and director of the Center for Research Design and Analysis, has found a simple way of calculating a “Maximum Weight Limit” that doesn’t require charts or online calculators.

“We need a Maximum Weight limit, or MWL,” he said, “one number that we know we can’t go over, just like a speed limit. This is a very simple calculation that most of us can do in our heads.”

For men, there is a baseline height and Maximum Weight Limit of 5-feet, 9-inches tall and 175 pounds, meaning that a 5-foot, 9-inch tall man should weigh no more than 175 pounds. For women, the baseline is 5-feet tall and a Maximum Weight Limit of 125 pounds.

From that starting point, a man can calculate his Maximum Weight Limit by adding or subtracting 5 pounds for every inch that he is taller or shorter than 5-feet, 9 inches. A woman adds or subtracts 4.5 pounds for each inch that she is taller or shorter than 5-feet.

Fernandez noted that his simple formula closely corresponds to BMI recommendations and could be very useful in medically underserved areas of the world, as well as for individuals without access to technology and charts.

“Anyone, anywhere can calculate their Maximum Weight limit if they know their height and this simple formula,” he said. “People can calculate this in their heads and remember this.”

—Claudene Wharton ’86, ’99M.A.

White House taps Sepúlveda for national museum commission

University Professor Emma Sepúlveda Pulvirenti, ’76 (Spanish) ’78M.A. (Spanish), was one of 23 people in the country appointed to the National Museum of the American Latino Commission last fall, by President Barack Obama and House and Senate leadership.

The commission will study the feasibility of, and create a plan for, a new national museum portraying the art, history and culture of the United States’ Latino population.

“I can’t think of a more qualified individual for this commission than Dr. Sepúlveda,” said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who appointed her. “Dr. Sepúlveda is an accomplished poet, writer and photographer and she has dedicated her life to work on behalf of Latinos in our state. Her professional expertise and her love for Hispanic culture and the community’s well-being tell me she will represent Nevada well and do a wonderful job on the commission.”

Sepúlveda, a professor of foreign languages and literatures, was the first Latina to become full professor at the University, and is the director of the University’s Latino Center. She has authored or co-authored 22 books, and has dedicated much of her work to educating non-Latino communities about the strengths and values of Latinos and immigrants who live in the United States.

“Professor Sepúlveda has touched diverse communities throughout the world through her human rights activism and academic scholarship,” said Heather Hardy, Nevada’s College of Liberal Arts dean. “Her appointment to the national commission is a well-deserved honor and reflects the value of her work on a national and global level.”

—Claudene Wharton ’86, ’99M.A.
As part of its highest academically performing incoming-freshman class, the University welcomed nine new National Merit Scholars this fall, who joined the 16 already enrolled at Nevada.

National Merit Scholar Matt Klippenstein, 20, (above) is a sophomore biology major who graduated from Bishop Manogue High School in Reno. He hopes to become a physician, perhaps an orthopedic surgeon.

“It’s enabled me to concentrate more fully on my academics,” he said of the National Merit Scholarship, “and to also have some free time to enjoy what the campus has to offer.”

Reno’s Damonte Ranch High School graduate Teila Irwin chose Nevada this fall over options in Massachusetts and Oregon because of the National Merit Program and nationally recognized College of Engineering. “I’m really glad that the University offers such a large scholarship for National Merit Scholars,” Irwin said. “Without it, I might not even be able to go to college.”

Irwin is an electrical engineering major, involved with the University’s Women in Science and Engineering Program, Honors Program and the Nevada Wolf Pack’s rifle team. The University offers National Merit Scholars $60,000 in scholarship funding: $15,000 per year for four years.

University President Milton Glick made recruiting more National Merit Scholars one of the University’s strategic initiatives when he joined Nevada in 2006. Following a three-year effort, Nevada has a record-breaking number of scholars, with 25 enrolled, and is now a sponsor school listed in recruitment materials sent to students across the country contending for National Merit Scholarships.

“In addition to our new National Merit Scholars, this year’s freshman class came to us having performed better than any others in terms of high-school GPA, ACT and SAT scores,” said University Vice President for Student Services Shannon Ellis.

The increase in academic performance comes after new, more rigorous requirements for admission—a 3.0 grade-point average in core high school classes such as English, math and science—took effect last fall.

“Really bright students lift the level of the educational experience for everyone,” Glick said. “As you achieve a critical mass of these students, teachers begin to teach differently. They have higher expectations and students respond accordingly.”

Overall, the University’s enrollment for fall 2009 (16,862 students) is flat compared to last year’s enrollment (16,867 students). However, full-time equivalency increased 1.4 percent, with more students taking a minimum of 15-credit hours per semester. Retention rates are also continuing to improve.

In addition, diversity is continuing to increase. Enrollment of students of color is up 3 percent, including a 5 percent increase in Hispanic students.

—Natalie Savidge ’04
Students win bronze in national DNA-engineering competition

A team of a dozen University undergraduate students spent their summer working to introduce the genes that synthesize cinnamon oil into plants that can then be used as an eco-friendly mosquito killer.

Their synthetic biology project competed with those from 120 teams worldwide at the annual International Genetically Engineered Machine competition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in November. The team earned a bronze medal, along with other bronze-level teams such as MIT, Brown University and Cornell University.

“‘This teaches them how to become strong molecular biologists and biochemists,’” Christie Howard, faculty adviser said. “‘They’ll take all these skills with them after the competition.’”

The University team chose to engineer a product of cinnamon oil into duckweed, a small aquatic plant that is a source of food for mosquito larvae.

“Our goal is to transform the genes that produce cinnamaldehyde (cinnamon oil) so the oil can be used to control mosquito populations without using chemically synthesized, potentially harmful pesticides,” said Janice Cho, the creator of the idea. “More than one million people die worldwide each year due to mosquito-transmitted diseases. The introduction of this new duckweed into mosquito-prone areas could make a big difference.”

Synthetic biology combines science and engineering in order to design and build novel biological functions and systems. This is the first team from Nevada to participate in the five-year-old competition that includes schools such as Harvard, Stanford, MIT and University of California, Berkeley.

“There aren’t many universities where undergrads can do this type of creative and independent research,” said team member Nick Tschernia.

The team has received support from the Nevada IDEA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence Program and the University’s biochemistry department, Office of Research, and College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources.

—Mike Wolterbeek ’02

Nevada senior named one of country’s top Latino students

Cesar Garibaldo, a Nevada senior majoring in information systems and accounting, was named one of the country’s top 35 Latino business students by the Hispanic College Fund.

Garibaldo has been supporting himself since he was 16 years old, earned a 3.8 grade-point average and Millennium Scholarship at Reno’s Hug High School, and is on the dean’s list in the College of Business with a 3.7 overall GPA, and a 4.0 GPA within his majors.

He has earned $19,000 in scholarships from the Hispanic College Fund during his four years at the University, being chosen as one of the top 500 students of about 40,000 who applied for the scholarships each year. However, this year Garibaldo was chosen as one of the country’s top 35 scholars, earning him a trip to attend the Karen Marquez Institute in Washington, D.C., where he spent a week learning from and networking with the nation’s top CEOs and governmental leaders.

“The week in Washington, D.C., was one of the most amazing experiences of my life,” he said. "It really changed my life. I’m proud to have been selected and to have been able to represent my school.”

Garibaldo’s passion is database design, and he is currently an intern at Microsoft. He already has a job offer from J.P. Morgan, where he served an internship last summer.

Cesar Garibaldo shares his national recognition with University President Milt Glick, left, and College of Business Associate Dean Kambiz Raffiee.

Garibaldo’s family immigrated to the United States when he was 4 years old. Concerned with the neighborhood and violence where they were living in the Los Angeles area, his mother decided to move the family to Reno when he was 12.

—Claudene Wharton ’86, ’99M.A.
Knowledge Center receives national technology award

The University’s Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center recently received top honors, along with Temple University’s Alter Hall, for the “Best Education AV Project” in the country, a 2009 PRO AV (audiovisual) Spotlight Award.

The judges for the PRO AV Spotlight Awards were particularly impressed with the center’s all-fiber, high-definition distribution system. “Our consulting firm, Wrightson, Johnson, Haddon & Williams, designed the building’s audiovisual systems to utilize HD-SDI [high-definition serial digital interface] over fiber,” explained Steve Zink, the University’s vice president for information technology.

The system allows for high quality audiovisual transmission and use throughout the building, including in the 168-seat Wells Fargo Auditorium that features surround-sound, three-screen, high-definition projection, and video capture and streaming. There is also the Digital Studio Classroom where table microphones auto-steer Sony HD cameras, an Orion nine-monitor video-wall and two HD videoconferencing suites.

Besides the “education” category, the PRO AV Spotlight Awards included recognition of corporations, health care providers, government and others. The judges stated that the education category was the most competitive, but that they chose Nevada’s and Temple’s projects based on their demonstrated innovation, collaboration and appreciable return on investment.

Noting that the Knowledge Center was the University’s most ambitious construction project in its century-plus history, Zink said that it is designed to be a resource for the entire state and that it is very difficult to do it justice in words. “You really need to come see it. People are awestruck with its capabilities, technology, comfort and architecture.”

Visitors to the center can arrange a free, guided tour by contacting (775) 682-5653 or ressel@unr.edu. Self-guided tour brochures are also available at the center’s information kiosk.

—Claudene Wharton ’86, ’99M.A.
A meat-y partnership: Tahoe Burger fare made with Wolf Pack Meats

Tahoe Burger owners Jayne Owens along with husband-and-wife team Donna Eaton and Greg Peters enjoy telling the story behind their burgers.

"People are interested to hear that the cow used for the meat they’re eating today was just standing in a field down the street a couple days ago," Owens says. "We hear lots of positive feedback about that."

All meat used in hamburgers at the newly opened Tahoe Burger restaurant, located in northwest Reno at 6280 Sharlands Avenue, comes from Wolf Pack Meats, operated by the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources and situated on land at the Main Station Field Laboratory on Mill Street.

"They came in and got about 30 pounds of beef for a taste test" says Mike Holcomb, Wolf Pack Meats manager, remembering the day he first got the call from Owens. "Then they let us know we were the favorite, and the process all started from there."

Favorite it was. In fact, as Owens recalls, the taste test revealed a hands down winner. "It was overwhelming," she remembers of the taste test, which took into account the opinions of about 70 of the owners’ friends and family. "The taste, the quality—everyone really enjoyed the burgers made from Wolf Pack Meat."

She says the partnership with a local meat provider is in line with the team’s business philosophy. "We want the local community to support us, so it’s important we support local business," she says, noting the restaurant also uses a local bakery for its bread.

Peters highlights an additional benefit to using Wolf Pack Meats: the flexibility of the partnership.

"We had no idea how to anticipate volume, so Mike was great to work with as we figured it all out in the beginning," he says.

Now, the locally owned restaurant has a demand for about 1,000 pounds of fresh, local ground beef weekly, which Holcomb estimates makes about 4,000 burgers.

"We’re very happy with the partnership," says Ron Pardini, acting dean of the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources. "It’s examples like this that highlight the University’s commitment to partnerships with local business."


Nevada Silver & Blue wins at Nevada Press Association contest

Nevada Silver & Blue won first prize for best feature and best portrait in the 2009 Nevada Press Association contest’s magazine division. Josh Culpepper ’09 (English literature) was an intern when he wrote “Junk, Clutter, Obsession” for the summer 2008 issue. Dave Smith of Las Vegas won for his portrait of Dr. Echezona Ezeanolue, his resident and young patient on the cover of that issue. Other winners include: John Trent ’85/’87, ’00M.A., second, best feature for his story about former Wolf Pack basketball coach Sonny Allen; President Milton Glick, second, best local column; Patrick McFarland ’97, second, in-house advertising; third, best page one design; Theresa Danna-Douglas, third and honorable mention, best portrait; David Calvert Class of 2010, third, best feature photo; and Ken Kempcke, third, best explanatory journalism.

—Melanie Robbins ’06M.A.

Josh Culpepper ’09
Reynolds School receives grant to promote chemistry using social media

The National Science Foundation has awarded $100,000 to Todd Felts, assistant professor of public relations and director of graduate studies, to incorporate use of social media to describe the importance of chemistry and the environment and to promote the discipline to future generations of chemists.

“This prestigious award is both visionary and unique in its support for interdisciplinary collaboration between chemistry and non-traditional disciplines of journalism and public relations,” Felts said.

“This grant allows us to study and communicate about the environment in Nevada. Student coursework and assignments in integrated marking communication and participatory journalism will become the foundation of a national model.”

Reynolds School undergraduates will create awareness and marketing campaigns for YouTube and other social media networks that promote careers in chemistry and describe the importance of chemistry in society.

The NSF grant allocated $300,000 to Daniel De Lill, Department of Chemistry postdoctorate scholar, for the study of minute particles called ligands to improve real-world applications in light-emitting diode (LED) displays, such as those used in televisions.

De Lill’s research is in collaboration with Los Alamos Research Laboratory.

—Zanny Marsh ’09MJM

Barsky joins School of Medicine as new chair of pathology

The University of Nevada School of Medicine announces the arrival of Dr. Sanford H. Barsky as professor and the new chair of the Department of Pathology. Barsky is a well known, highly regarded and entrepreneurial breast cancer researcher who will also serve as chief of pathology of Nevada Cancer Institute in Las Vegas and as vice president of academic liaisons of NVCI at the Reno campus.

Barsky comes to Nevada from Columbus, Ohio where he served as The Donald A. Senhauser Endowed Chair of Pathology, chair of the pathology department and chief of pathology services at The Ohio State University College of Medicine since 2004.

He earned his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh, completed pathology residency training at Harvard Medical School and an additional research fellowship with the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health. He is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology.

Barsky has taught at George Washington University and the University of California Los Angeles Schools of Medicine and served as deputy coroner for the City of Los Angeles.

—Anne McMillin

Vehicle powered on algae visits campus

The first cross-country test of algae-produced gasoline rolled through campus in September, with Governor Jim Gibbons on hand to discuss the vehicle, its technology and even to take a test drive.

The “Algaeus,” a Toyota Prius plug-in electric hybrid car that runs on gasoline made from algae and electricity, stopped in Reno on its way from San Francisco to Washington, D.C.

The visit highlights work being conducted on campus. As part of Nevada’s Renewable Energy Center, researchers have several algae-to-biofuel projects underway, notably a successful cutting-edge demonstration scale project to produce low-cost, hardy, salt-loving green algae and a practical, economical process to grow, concentrate and harvest abundant year-round crops on otherwise unusable arid lands.

At a meeting for the Society for General Microbiology in Scotland, Professor John Cushman from the department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology said new sources of biofuel will take pressure off traditional crops. “Salt-loving algae could be the key to the successful development of biofuels,” Cushman told the audience.

The Algaeus appeared on campus at the Marguerite Wattis Petersen Athletic Academic Center, which recently received Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) Silver certification by the U.S. Green Building Council, symbolizing the University’s commitment to sustainability.

— Mikalee Byerman ’94, ’98M.A.