

## Mizzou Weekly

Feb. 8, 2012 Volume 33, No. 19

### MU researcher identifies new prehistoric crocodile species



CROCS Scientist Casey Holliday holds the Shieldcroc skull roof, which helped identify a new species of crocodile that lived 95 million years ago in Africa. Rob Hill photo

#### SHIELDCROC

Creature had glowing spot on skull roof, perhaps to convey mood

Imagine a hot and humid misty delta of streams and rivulets green with vegetation and low-hanging trees. Imagine a flying reptile gliding across the sky, a titanosaurus grazing on treetop leaves and crocodiles up to 40 feet long — some running on land, some with flippers paddling in the water, others dining on carcasses, plants or gulping down giant fish.

This was North Africa 95 million years ago, a region that had at least eight species of crocodiles of stunning variety. Last week, an MU paleontologist announced discovering yet another species from the Late Cretaceous period. Nicknamed "Shieldcroc," the animal was perhaps 25 feet long with a pancake snout and, most remarkably, a glowing raised surface on its skull.

"The fossils we're finding from this period indicate that the crocodiles we have today are really more boring than those living in the Age of Dinosaurs," said Casey Holliday, co-researcher and an assistant professor of anatomy at the School of Medicine. "In

fact, there is such amazing diversity then that it might be better to call the period the Age of Crocs."

The discovery was published last week in the journal of the Public Library of Science, PLoS-ONE.

#### Identifying Shieldcroc

Holliday has studied crocodiles since 2000, but it wasn't till 2005 that he began the process that led to identifying *Aegisuchus witmeri*, or Shieldcroc.

Holliday was working at Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and completing his dissertation on comparative anatomy of skulls of crocodiles and dinosaurs, when one day he opened a drawer to find two specimens tagged "Unidentified." The specimen that excited him was a 95 million-year-old skull roof, which he could hold in his palms, dug up years earlier in Morocco.

Immediately he knew he had something special. "I recognized it as being from a crocodile, but it had features I had never seen on a crocodile skull before," Holliday said.

Henry P. Tsai illustration



Despite the extraordinary find, Holliday couldn't thoroughly examine the skull for two years because of other pending projects.

Finally, in 2008, he got down to business.

On modern-day crocodiles and alligators, the skull roof between the ear cavities is about a half-inch. On Shieldcroc, that space is about three inches wide.

But rather than have uniform skull dimples, typical of the genus, Shieldcroc, Holliday discovered, had on its skull ridges, canals and smooth areas. Holliday said the anomalies are blood vessel scarring on the bone. This suggests blood circulated in a rise, or shield, atop the skull.

Many animals signal intimidation, territorial displays and mating desires through a surge of blood into a specific part of the body. Holliday suspects Shieldcroc's shield was used similarly, or perhaps to regulate brain temperature.

But we're not talking Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer here.

"We think it looked like an eye spot in the middle of the head," Holliday said. "The region probably had a different color, dark green as opposed to the light green of the rest of the body."

Holliday set out to identify Shieldcroc's species. He sent pictures of its skull cap to a colleague at Iowa State, who said it looked a lot like that of *Aegyptosuchus*, or Egyptian crocodile. As with Shieldcroc, *Aegyptosuchus* was discovered in North Africa and is about the same age.

After Holliday and other researchers examined Shieldcroc and the Egyptian crocodile, whose specimen is at BSPG (Bayerische Staatssammlung für Paläontologie und Geologie), it was decided that, while similar, Shieldcroc had enough unique attributes to declare it a new species.

"It was a good-news-kind-of day," Holliday said.

#### A fish eater, not a fighter

Shieldcroc probably had small teeth and a gaping, pelican-like mouth, researchers say. It lived mostly in the water and would be awkward on land.

Shieldcroc was no SuperCroc, or Sarcosuchus, both of whom lived in North Africa at the same time. At perhaps 40 feet in length and with more than 100 sharp massive teeth, Super Croc had the goods to prey on small- and medium-sized dinosaurs, most likely by dragging them into the delta waters where it drowned, crushed and ripped them to shreds.

Nick Gardner, an undergraduate Shieldcroc researcher at Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va., said Shieldcroc likely hid in underwater foliage or on the sandy bottom lying in wait for fish.

"There were lots of slow moving fish in this environment such as bichirs and coelacanths," Gardner said.

Neither Shieldcroc nor SuperCroc is a direct ancestor of modern crocodiles and alligators, Holliday said. Shieldcroc and its crocodilian contemporaries were extinct by about 75 million years ago, when the anatomically modern crocodiles and alligators (which are crocodilian forms with differently shaped snouts and rearranged teeth) arrived.

Even so, studying prehistoric crocodiles remains important, Holliday said.

Beside birds, crocodiles are our only living link to dinosaurs and can shed light on those creatures, he said.

Studying them also puts in context the plight of today's crocodiles as their environments in the Gulf Coast, the Caribbean, the Amazon, Southeast Asia, New Guinea and northern Australia becomes more endangered.

"By understanding how these animals' ancestors became extinct," Holliday said, "we can gain insight in to how to protect and preserve the ecosystems vital to modern crocodiles."

The Shieldcroc fossil will soon be returned to the Royal Ontario Museum, where it will be the centerpiece of a display on *Aegisuchus witmeri*.

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## MU officials help graduates manage student debt

OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Tuition increases impact student loans, debt

It won't be long before members of the Class of 2012 start lining up outside MU's Office for Financial Success in Stanley Hall.

The office's 15 volunteer financial counselors offer personal financial advice to students, faculty and staff year-round. But every spring OFS is crowded with graduating seniors who, shortly after they pick up their diplomas, are due to receive their first student-loan bills.

"We start to see people getting stressed about it the last couple of weeks of school," said OFS Director Ryan Law, an instructor in MU's Department of Personal Financial Planning. "The payments on their loans will begin six months after they graduate, and they start to ask, 'How am I going to pay it off?'"

Fortunately, most of them figure it out. Less than 3 percent of MU graduates who were scheduled to start repaying their loans in 2008 and 2009 failed to do so and defaulted on the debt, according to recent data from The Project on Student Debt. That's much lower than the national default rate, which rose from 7 percent in 2008 to 8.8 percent in 2009.

At 2.9 percent, MU's default rate is among the lowest of Missouri's 13 four-year public colleges, whose 2009 rates range from 2.1 percent at Truman State to 17.2 percent at Lincoln University. According to an analysis by Student Financial Aid, when compared to 12 peer institutions in the Midwest, MU's default rate is about average for a large public university.

As college costs inch up and state support lags, MU officials are keeping a closer eye on the amount of debt students are taking on.

Fifty-six percent of MU students relied on student loans in 2010. But since 2006, the average debt that students accumulated before graduation had grown by \$3,000 to \$22,145.

### Freshmen asked to think about debt

Wendy Carter-Fischer, assistant director of Student Financial Aid, said one area of concern is that more students are exhausting their federal aid before graduation. They then turn to private lenders, who may demand higher interest rates based on the borrower's credit rating and offer less favorable repayment terms.

Student Financial Aid also has seen an increase in applications to MU's long-term loan program, which is funded by contributions from donors. "We view that as a last resort for students because they will normally already have federal loans and some might have private loans," Carter-Fischer said. "That's giving them possibly another loan they will have to repay."

Last fall, MU began requiring students who apply for a university loan to meet with a counselor from the Office for Financial Success — the first step in what Carter-Fischer hopes will become a comprehensive debt-management initiative that would start as soon as a student steps on campus for the first time.

"We definitely feel counseling students on the front end, when they are coming in as freshmen, is important," she said. "A lot of the time students realize they are borrowing, but don't keep track of how much they are borrowing. It's an afterthought — their primary focus is paying for college and getting through school."

### Students prepare living-expense budget

Thomas Duffany, who became an OFS counselor a year ago and president of the organization last June, agrees. A senior who is married with two children, Duffany knows firsthand that students often develop a false sense of affluence. Conveniences too easily become necessities that are paid for by money that would have been better spent on rent and books.

Nor do many students anticipate the possibility that they may not have a job lined up after graduation or, if they do land employment, that it may not pay much at first. "A lot of students don't consider the things they'll want after they graduate, like buying a house or a new car or getting married and starting a family," Duffany said.

Before sitting down with an OFS counselor, students are asked to prepare a budget. Law said counselors offer a clear-eyed assessment of income and spending habits to help students set priorities.

Can a smaller, less expensive apartment meet the student's housing needs? Is a study-abroad adventure really worth taking on additional debt? Is work-study or other part-time work available?

"We have seen some students say, 'Wow, maybe I don't need this loan,' and they re-evaluate their priorities as far as expenses go," Law said. "Others are, 'Well, I just have to get through school.'"

In addition to working with Student Financial Aid, OFS counselors look for every opportunity to educate students about their student loans. They meet regularly with freshman interest groups, schedule presentations in residence halls and buttonhole incoming freshmen and their parents at Summer Welcome.

As for those about to graduate, Law said seniors need to know that, whatever their prospects upon graduation, there are ways to avoid defaulting on student loans.

"In some cases they have jobs, in other cases they're not there yet. So they need to be aware of the payment options," Law said.

"Everyone goes on the 10-year repayment plan, but that may not be the best thing," he said. "There's a 25-year plan for undergrads. You can get a deferment if you need to. You can get on an income contingent plan. Those are all important things for graduates to look at."

School	Year	Average Debt of Graduates	Average Debt of Graduates in Federal Loans	Fall Enrollment - Undergraduate	FY 2009 Default Rate
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	2009-10	\$16,664	\$14,449	18,955	2
Colorado State University	2009-10	\$21,224	\$17,325	22,221	2.2
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2009-10	\$21,543	\$16,866	31,477	1.3
University of Arkansas	2009-10	\$21,562	\$19,697	15,835	4.7
University of Missouri in Columbia	2009-10	\$22,145	\$18,483	23,799	2.9
Texas A & M University	2009-10	\$22,243	\$16,868	38,809	3.4
University of Wisconsin-Madison	2009-10	\$22,872	\$19,195	29,925	0.9
University of Kansas	2009-10	\$23,319	\$23,037	21,066	3
Purdue University-Main Campus	2009-10	\$26,360	\$17,689	32,500	1.9
University of Iowa	2009-10	\$27,391	\$19,986	20,574	1.9
Iowa State University	2009-10	\$30,062	\$21,047	22,521	2.6

Source: The Institute for College Access & Success

— Brian J. Wallstin

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## Free financial advice, tax help for faculty, staff and students

### OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Office moves to a more visible spot in Stanley Hall

Do you want to save more money? Get out of debt? Create a budget? Then check out MU's Office for Financial Success.

Counselors are on hand to offer faculty, staff and students free and confidential advice in all areas of personal finance, including managing student loans, financial planning and dealing with bankruptcy, credit and debt.

The office, a service of the personal financial planning department in the College of Human Environmental Sciences, re-opened Feb. 20 in 162 Stanley Hall. It's open from 4:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturdays.

The move, from the basement of Stanley Hall, makes the office more visible and open to the public, said Ryan Law, office director and an instructor in personal financial planning.

"We want this to be a place where people will feel comfortable when they come in to talk with our counselors," Law said.

Along with financial planning, the office offers tax preparation services through April 16. The service is on a first-come, first-served basis for anyone in the community who makes less than \$50,000.

Free tax assistance also is available in Room 005 Cornell Hall from 4:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays.

Both locations are closed March 24 through April 1 for spring break.

With questions or for more information about the Office for Financial Success, call Law at 882-9211 or email [lawr@missouri.edu](mailto:lawr@missouri.edu), or visit [pfp.missouri.edu/financial/index.html](http://pfp.missouri.edu/financial/index.html).

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### Expanded MU eye care opens in the northeast



**NEW TECHNOLOGY** Coy Cobb, an ophthalmic imager, works at the tomography machine, which evaluates the iris. Rob Hill photo

#### UNIVERSITY EYE INSTITUTE EAST

Facility offers children's wing, advanced eye care

Are you eyeing a new site for optical care?

MU staff and faculty have a new eye care facility to visit with more space and state-of-the-art eye equipment. University Eye Institute East opened Jan. 9 at 3215 Wingate Court near MU's Women's and Children's Hospital.

The institute significantly expands the eye care services that were offered at the old facility, University Physicians Eye Institute East, located on Portland Ave. on the west side of the hospital. The 7,900-square-foot center is triple the size of the old building.

Sue Mussatt, administrative associate at MU's Mason Eye Institute, worked with a committee to design the building. Mussatt and the committee planned several child-friendly areas in the institute. The waiting room in the new facility includes a separate play area where children can watch TV or play with toys.

A special section of the institute, separate from the adult examination rooms, is dedicated to children's eye care. The section includes six rooms, each having a unique decorative design.

Pictures of TJ, the Children's Hospital tiger mascot, getting an eye exam will soon adorn the walls. Gaye Baker, reimbursement coordinator for MU's Department of Ophthalmology, said the idea is to reduce children's fear.

"We'll do anything that helps reduce kids' anxiety when they're going through something that they believe to be very stressful," Baker said.

Adjacent to the waiting room is University Optical East, where patients can purchase prescription frames, sunglasses, pediatric glasses, contact lens and other eye-care products.

The additional space allows for a staff up to 20. Four attending physicians work among four exam rooms during a shift. Working toward their medical degrees, residents and fellows assist the attending physicians. A cornea specialist and physicians technicians, who conduct lab tests, also are on staff.

#### New Technology

The new facility also has several state-of-the-art pieces of technology.

One is the Fundus camera, which takes photos of the retina and other parts of the eye. Coy Cobb, facilities coordinator, uses the machine to detect epiretinal membrane, also known as macular pucker, a scar tissue that covers the macula and causes blurred vision.

Another piece is the optimal coherence tomography (OCT) machine, which maps the back of the eyes.

"If you think of geology and that you're doing core samples and you're looking at various levels in the soil, this looks at the levels at the back of your eye," Baker said.

The patient looks into a lens on the machine and fixates on a crosshair. The light bounces off the back of the eye and back into the machine where it is read. Each layer of the eye reflects the light differently. Cobb then analyzes the layers down to the micron level.

Before the technology's development in 1992, this type of examination was impossible, Cobb said.

"This is the latest and greatest version of the OCT," he said. "There's no better in the entire country than what you see right here."

The OCT can detect glaucoma, which Baker calls "the silent stealer of sight" because it shows few symptoms. In the facility's two visual field rooms, physicians can detect visual impairment when patients cannot.

Eye exams are recommended every two years, Mussatt said.

— Trevor Eischen

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### Jazz Series attracts name acts and music fans



Chucho Valdés, Cuba's premier pianist, will be at the Missouri Theatre Sunday Photo courtesy of CAMI Music

#### "WE ALWAYS SWING"

Series benefits university, community

The "We Always Swing" Jazz Series had just wrapped up its 12th concert season when series director Jon Poses invited Michael O'Brien, dean of Arts and Science, to lunch in spring 2007.

During the conversation, Poses said the Jazz Series wanted to bring the renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, led by trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, to Columbia. One possible date for the show was in February 2008 — a Sunday night that coincided with the start of the annual A&S Week celebration at MU.

"I said, 'If you can get Wynton Marsalis, I'll underwrite the show,' " O'Brien recalled. "And we did."

Since then, the College of Arts and Science has sponsored a major Jazz Series event every February.

This year, the fifth annual A&S Week "Signature Concert" features Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés and his seven-piece ensemble, the Afro-Cuban Messengers at 7 p.m. Sunday at the Missouri Theatre.

#### Educational component

But the college's support of the Jazz Series goes beyond a single concert a year. Three years ago, the series became an affiliated program of A&S, an arrangement that provides the nonprofit organization with key material and logistical support.

The college supplies the Jazz Series with computers and tech support, covers health and retirement benefits for two full-time employees, and helps out with marketing and communications.

O'Brien said the college's support of the Jazz Series pays dividends for the university and the community and benefits students, particularly those in the MU Jazz Studies program.

As a nonprofit organization, the Jazz Series has always had a robust educational component, including a Jazz in the Schools initiative and master classes for aspiring student and local musicians.

This year, the MU Concert Jazz Band, led by Arthur White, director of jazz studies and a member of the Jazz Series board, will perform at two children's concerts and an evening show with guitarist Russell Malone, the Jazz Series' Artist-in-Residence.

"Nothing breaks down any perceived barriers between the town and the university better than music and theater," O'Brien said. "For the town, music and theater become the public face for the university."

Poses said the affiliation with A&S has only strengthened the Jazz Series' standing in the community. It's also given him the resources to attract artists who might otherwise never make it to Columbia.

Three years ago, for instance, the Jazz Series was able to commission new music composed by the late trombonist and composer Bob Brookmeyer for the famed Village Vanguard Orchestra. A recording of the performance at the Missouri Theatre will soon be released on CD.

"I'm not sure we could do such a large-scale project like that on our own," Poses said. "The goal is always to have the shows pay for themselves, but the fact that you have some support allows you to take the initial risk."

The risk has paid off. In January, the Jazz Series learned it had received a prestigious grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. One of only 12 awarded, the grant will support performance and educational programs that feature musicians honored by the NEA as "Jazz Masters."

#### **Ticket sales are up**

Poses said A&S's support also has helped attract more firsttime ticket buyers, many of whom are MU employees and students.

A good example is this year's A&S Week "Signature Concert." In 2001, when Poses brought Chucho Valdés to Columbia for a performance at Columbia College, the Jazz Series sold 260 tickets for the show. Eleven years later, he said, paid attendance is expected to more than double.

"It's been really invigorating," Poses said of the affiliation. "It's energized the Jazz Series and energized me. On a personal level, the dean has become a friend and a colleague. He's helping the jazz series, and that means a lot to me."

— Brian J. Wallstin

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### CAFNR emphasizes study abroad



**CHINA MASK** Each year, about 170 CAFNR students study abroad. In June, students from the college are headed to China to better understand its food production. Ingolf Gruen photo

#### CHINA FIRSTHAND

Faculty says study abroad opens students' horizons

China here we come. In June, 20 graduate students in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources will travel to one of China's largest science universities to experience the country's expanding market. The visit is designed to prepare them for careers in a global food market, where China is a major consumer and producer.

The China trip is one of a handful of CAFNR study-abroad excursions, which enable students to investigate the global aspects of their studies by packing their bags and going there. Each year, the program places about 170 students in various parts of the world, said Matt Pournay, CAFNR study abroad director.

Last year, students went to Belgium to study European governmental and trade policies, and to the Czech Republic to learn more about the country's agricultural economics. Other students traveled to Thailand to be part of biodiversity and conservation work. Students interested in horses flew across the Atlantic to look at the Scottish equine market.

"Study abroad gives students a unique opportunity to gain a global perspective in their field of study," Pournay said. "It gives them a firsthand look at the interconnected nature of the world today and how they can operate and conduct business among other cultures."

The students heading to China will stay in residence halls at Jiangnan University, which has 30,000 students and 1,000 faculty. Its National Key Lab of Food Science and Technology is the only lab of its kind in China.

The trip will immerse the students in China's changing cuisine and business practices. Students will tour food factories and supermarkets, dine in restaurants to taste Chinese food firsthand and hear from food experts, said Ingolf Gruen, associate professor of food science. Gruen will introduce the students to the differences in U.S. and Chinese food production practices, visit traditional Chinese companies and speak with representatives of foreign food companies investing in China.

The study abroad program "is our way of getting our students ready for the global nature of the food industry," Gruen said.

— Randy Mertens

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## UM approves some fee increases at curators meeting

The UM System Board of Curators met Feb. 2 and 3 to discuss whether to raise tuition and fees at the four UM campuses.

Curators were presented with a proposal to raise tuition and fees to an average of 6.5 percent for fiscal year 2013.

No vote was made, and is not expected till late February. However, the curators did decide to increase other fees, among them a 3.3 percent increase to the information technology fee.

Some MU colleges and schools, the curators decided, will receive a hike to their supplemental course fees.

The Trulaske College of Business courses, for example, will receive a 32.8 percent increase, while the School of Journalism courses will receive an 18.3 percent increase.

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# Mizzou Weekly

Feb. 8, 2012 Volume 33, No. 19

## MU plant professors elected to general scientific society

Four members of the MU Interdisciplinary Plant Group were awarded the distinction of Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The new fellows are Gretchen Hagen, research professor of biochemistry; Michael McMullen, adjunct professor in plant sciences; Stephen Pallardy, a professor of forestry; and Jack Schultz, professor of plant sciences.

They will be presented with an official certificate, and a gold and blue rosette pin Feb. 18 at the 2012 AAAS annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the journal *Science*. AAAs members vote on elections to membership.

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## MU implements prescription delivery on campus three days a week

MU Health Care announced Jan. 31 it will start delivering prescriptions for free on campus to employees and students.

Deliveries will be offered 8:30 a.m.–noon each week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

For prescriptions made before 3:30 p.m., deliveries will be made next day.

Patients need to personally accept delivery. Payment at that time can be made by employees by using a credit card or payroll deduction.

Students can use a credit card or their TigerCard.

MU Health Care is providing the service through Smiley Lane Pharmacy and Green Meadows Pharmacy.

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## Symposium at law school addresses online bullying

A free symposium on cyberbullying will be held today, Feb. 9, 1:30–6:14 p.m. and Friday 7:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at 7 Hulston Hall.

Sponsored by the MU School of Law and the Missouri Law Review, the two-day symposium examines the effects of cyberbullying among elementary and secondary students.

"Cyberbullying: Emerging Realities and Legal Challenges" will feature national experts, including keynote speaker John Palfrey, co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University and vice dean at the Harvard School of Law.

Among the other speakers are Lyrissa Lidsky of the University of Florida College of Law, Barry McDonald of Pepperdine University School of Law and Ari Waldman of the California Western School of Law.

The symposium will address the extent to which the First Amendment restricts cyberbullying regulation, the psychological effects cyberbullying has on children and practical concerns facing teachers and school administrators as they implement legislative mandates to combat cyberbullying.

The event is open to the public. For more information, email [mulawsymposium@missouri.edu](mailto:mulawsymposium@missouri.edu).

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## Dramatic cuts to higher education happening nationally

State funding for higher education for fiscal year 2012 declined 7.6 percent nationally, according to the Grapevine Project, a study by Illinois State University and the State Higher Education Executive Officers released in January.

Overall, state spending on higher education is nearly 4 percent lower than it was in fiscal year 2007, the report said.

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