

## Final Banner changeover set for December

BY MOLLIE JAVERBAUM  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The final step of implementing the electronic Banner system is set for December, with the conversion of 63,000 academic histories from the old Student Information System to Banner. The academic histories will be the last of 11 sets of records — including the University's admission, financial aid and billing records, among others — to be converted into Banner.

SIS possess all the academic histories, or transcripts, for students who have attended the University since the fall of 1983, when it was implemented. After the transfer, the SIS system will be shut down permanently, and all student transcripts will be available only from Banner.

The conversion is currently in the second of four phases, said University Registrar Michael Pesta. The first two phases involve copying the SIS data and converting it into a test environment, which is a duplicate of the actual database. The team then compares the converted data to the original to check for inconsistencies.

"We are currently doing two things: checking the validity of the academic history data and simultaneously checking the Banner transcript program," Pesta said. "We run the transcript out of SIS, run it out of Banner and sit there and compare the two, line-by-line and course-by-course."

Pesta said the team is checking between 600 and 700 transcripts this way, selecting histories that contain examples of every transcript component, such as courses, grades, transfer credits and admission, Pesta said.

These phases are followed by pre-production — the "dress rehearsal," Pesta said — and production phases, in which the data is converted permanently into the actual Banner database. Pre-production is set to start in October, and production is set to follow in November.

"Once you know you've gotten it all correct," Pesta said about pre-production, "you do production conversion — now you're ready for prime time."

Following the data conversion, the registrar will also send out transcripts to certain student groups, such as Meiklejohn peer advisers, to be verified. During the first several weeks using Banner, the team will also manually compare each Banner transcript ordered to its SIS counterpart before sending it out.

With both registration and academic histories on Banner, the system will be able to check for fulfillment of prerequisites and bar students from registering for some courses if they have not fulfilled certain requirements. This will take effect for registration for the Fall 2008 semester, according to Associate Provost Nancy Dunbar, who is coordinating the Banner implementation effort.

Dunbar said University officials will remind faculty that prerequisites will be imposed and that professors can list recommended courses in their class descriptions instead of putting specific prerequisites into Banner.

"Some faculty list prerequisites with the intent to provide information to the student, and sometimes they really do want to make sure the student has taken a certain class and completed a certain subject matter," Dunbar said. "They'll have to think about when it is valuable for them to list something as a prerequisite and when it is not."

Converting the academic histories into Banner will make it easier for faculty advisers to view student transcripts and for students and alumni to order transcripts.

"Before, they had to send in or mail a check, but now students and alumni can log onto the Web site, order their transcripts and pay for them with credit cards, and we will produce and send them out the next day," Pesta said.

Rebecca Ruscito '09 said she sees this as a positive change.

"For me, to have everything in one place will make it more convenient, a little more synchronized," she said.

Ruscito said she does not think the enforcement of prerequisites will be an issue.

"If they really want to get into a class, those dedicated people will still talk to the professor," she said.



Courtesy of Kate Marino GS / Herald

Tyler Lucero '10 sifts soil at the First Baptist Church archaeology site.

## Archaeology class helps to dig up College Hill's past

BY NOURA CHOUDHURY  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This fall, 15 students enrolled in Archaeology 1900: "The Archaeology of College Hill" have started work on the second year of excavation at the First Baptist Church. Excavations at the church — the oldest Baptist church in the United States — are part of an ongoing collaboration between the church and the University's anthropology department, the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World.

The class, which is taught by Joukowsky Institute doctoral candidate Kate Marino GS, focuses on unearthing clues to the main uses of the church's meeting house in its early days. The church was built in 1775 and served as the third site for the original First Baptist Church founded in 1638 by Roger Williams, Rhode Island's founding father.

This year's excavation seeks to build on last year's findings, which were mostly ceramics, coins and buttons dating from as early as the mid-1800s. Marino said last year's most exciting discovery was a near-complete animal skeleton found near the front of the church, which the team suspects is the remnants of a pig roast. Quahog shells were also found near the side of the church, which the class concluded were evidence of frequent clambakes. The church's written record also verifies social gatherings such as clambakes throughout the church's history.

"This work opens up a new window to the history of the area. We're trying to expand upon what was in the written record," Marino said.

The class spends the first six weeks of the semester excavating and digging at the site and the remaining weeks analyzing artifacts in the lab. Marino and her team have isolated six test pits to perform their work, changing some of last year's locations after they yielded poor results. Though digging this semester has only just begun, Marino said she hopes to uncover evidence of American Indians in the region, although last year's findings did not yield any.

The class, which took only a few months to organize, began the project last fall largely thanks to the cooperation of the First Baptist Church, said Susan Alcock, professor of classics and director of the Joukowsky Institute. The church has been enthusiastic about collaborating with the University in the past — Brown's annual Baccalaureate ceremony for graduating seniors is held there — and the class served as

a bridge between the University and the congregation, she added.

"I'd really like to thank the church — they should be acknowledged. This (project) really came from them," Alcock said.

Though the class is immediately focused on determining past uses of the church building, the larger continuing project of "Archaeology of College Hill" is to contribute to a greater understanding of College Hill's past. One of Alcock's aspirations is for the class to forge stronger bonds between the greater Providence area and the Brown community.

Alcock said she hopes to continue the project in the future for these reasons and for the rich experience it provides archaeology students.

"I've been delighted by the range of experiences that the students have been able to have. They've looked at aerial imagery of the site, they've done remote sensing, they've done historical research," Alcock said. "It's been more than just sinking holes into the ground."

For Madeline Ray '10, the course is everything Alcock described plus the opportunity to learn practical skills such as excavation. "I like digging up stuff. I used to dig up stuff in my backyard at home, and I decided to do it for real here," she said.

Cindy Swain '09 was drawn to the class by its hands-on opportunities as much as its historical aspect. "I had done some fieldwork before, and I wanted to do more. It just seemed like a fun class, and it was a good change of pace," she said.

The semester's findings will culminate in a final publication. Each student will contribute a five-minute oral presentation that will be combined with video footage from the semester in a final DVD and presented to the church congregation. These may also be posted online. The results of last year's investigations were published in a paper titled "Churchyard Archaeology: Archaeological Investigations at the First Baptist Church in America."

The class, which meets to excavate on Mondays afternoons, welcomes visitors to the site to observe the process. Students can also read field notes and look at photos from the dig site at the course's page on the Joukowsky Institute's Web site. Marino hopes that one of the results of the class will be to get more students interested and exposed to archaeological methods.

"Compared to Rome and Portugal, this is way different," Marino said. "This place isn't isolated from the real world — it's right here."

## Laptop thefts double, DPS investigating

BY KRISTINA KELLEHER  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A total of 10 laptops have been reported stolen to the Department of Public Safety so far this semester, according to a Sept. 27 crime advisory e-mail sent to students by DPS. That number is more than double the number stolen in the same time period last year, Mark Porter, chief of police and director of public safety, told The Herald.

Seven of the 10 laptops were stolen from residence halls, two from academic and administrative buildings and one from a vehicle.

In most cases this year, students reported that they had left their door unlocked in their residence hall for a short time, during which the theft occurred, Investigative Supervisor Lt. Kevin O'Connor told The Herald. In none of the stolen-laptop cases this semester has the department found evidence of forced entry.

Damage to the door and door frame was reported in a Sept. 3 incident at Olney House. However, the damage was not substantial, O'Connor said, and while it may be evidence of an attempted break-in, it was not the level of force required to force entry into a room. The damage reported in that case also "wasn't consistent with the other thefts," Detective Mark Edmonds, a campus police officer, told The Herald. Edmonds and O'Connor are part of DPS's investigations unit.

The department currently has no leads in any of the cases, according to O'Connor. He also said DPS has "no reason to believe that there is any outside criminal activity that is influx. ... We believe it's more an



Alanna Tisdale / Herald

The Department of Public Safety is investigating the recent rash of laptop thefts.

internal matter."

O'Connor and Edmonds suggested the rash of thefts was likely the result of student-on-student criminal activity. DPS has been in contact with the Providence Police Department about the crimes, but O'Connor said the Providence Police were not aware of any increase in laptop thefts in the area.

The investigations unit at DPS has found other laptops stolen from students by students in the past. Last year, it recovered one laptop stolen in this manner and was able to resolve the matter without criminal charges, O'Connor said.

The detectives work with officials at Computing and Information Services to try to track stolen computers on Brown's network by IP addresses and ethernet IDs. Edmonds recommends that community members document their computer's IP address, Ethernet ID and serial number, all of which

make tracking and recovery more likely.

He also stressed the importance of timely reporting. "Students wait thinking it will show up," he said, instead of reporting crimes immediately. A two-to-three day wait in reporting can allow a thief to access the computer's system, clean it out and resell it before police tracking even begins, Edmonds said.

Students who want extra security for their property should consider using CyberAngel, Edmonds said. CyberAngel is software that allows police to track stolen computers. Connie Sadler, director of information technology security at CIS, said CyberAngel can now be purchased for a discount at the Brown Computer Store by students, faculty and staff, but only for Windows.

"There is nothing comparable

*continued on page 6*