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EMILY REID/Arizona Daily Wildcat
Fulbright Scholar Andrew Gardner talks about his research plans. Gardner is one of 15 Fulbright scholars from the UA.

UA nets record 15 Fulbrights

BY KRISTINA DUNHAM
Staff Writer

A record number of UA students and alumni will be completing research overseas this year as Fulbright scholars.

This year, UA has more Fulbright scholars than ever before with 15, placing the UA within the top 10 public universities and the top 15 of all universities in the country in terms of the most Fulbright scholars.

Nearly half of the 36 applicants who applied to the Fulbright Program at the UA last fall were accepted, making up not only the largest number of Fulbright scholars in university history, but the highest percentage ever accepted, said Dr. Karna Walter, assistant

director of international studies and internships.

Nationally, about one-fifth of students who apply receive a Fulbright grant.

The Fulbright program, which awards grants to fully fund a year of research in almost any country, is open to graduating seniors and graduate students.

Eleven of the students who received a grant this year are graduate students

Walter said many graduate students apply to the Fulbright program because it is a good opportunity to pursue dissertation research.

Andrew Gardner, an anthropology graduate student, plans to use his fellowship in Bahrain, an island off the coast of Saudi Arabia, to do

just that. He will leave in late November to live among and study the population of Indian foreign laborers that live and work in the Persian Gulf Region.

Gardner, who spent much of his summer in the United Arab Emirates, is optimistic about his upcoming trip to nearby Bahrain.

He said that the UAE is similar to Bahrain because they are both fairly Westernized and have many of the same socio-political issues.

"I found that, despite some of the difficulties of being non-Muslim in an mostly Muslim culture, that the people are welcoming," he said. "They're interested in Americans, and I'm interested in them."

Hannah McLean graduated from UA last semester, and while

she isn't using her grant to work on a dissertation, she thought it would be a good way to spend her time between college and graduate school.

McLean has been in the Netherlands since mid-August and will spend the next seven months digging through legal archives for records on euthanasia to study physician-assisted suicide.

Warner said that other Fulbright recipients are working on projects that involve sifting through Belgian archives for medieval church records and utilizing satellite imagery to help African farmers decide when to plant their crops.

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Employees may pay more for retirement

Arizona could deduct 3 percent more of workers' salaries to finance state retirement program

BY STEPHANIE SCHWARTZ
Staff Writer

More than 6,000 staff members may be losing up to 3 percent more of their paychecks to retirement contributions starting July 1, if projections from the state agency in charge of setting retirement withholdings for those on state-based plans materializes.

The deductions for retirement are increasing for 184,000 state employees across Arizona due to losses in the stock market, the Arizona State Retirement System stated in mid-September.

The larger deductions will also go toward covering last year's increase of retirement benefits for those who were employed at UA for at least 10 years and who have been retired for five years.

State employees, including all classified staff at the UA and appointed staff, choosing to use the state's program currently pay 2.49 percent of their salaries for retirement contribution.

Under the new plan, employees could pay 5.1 percent, the ASRS estimated.

If the agency starts taking 5.1 percent, for example, administrative assistants who makes \$25,000 per year would have \$1,275 deducted from their paycheck instead of the \$622 now withheld.

The Arizona State Retirement Agency said there would certainly be more withheld

from paychecks for retirement. The question — which they have yet to answer — is just exactly how much.

The "best guess estimates," are available now, but the official number is expected in November, according to the ASRS.

About 45 percent of UA employees are classified staff, said Gordon Groat, vice president of the staff advisory council.

Aside from the 6,000 classified staff at the UA, any appointed staffers who choose to use the state's retirement program will also have more money deducted from their paychecks starting in July.

Of the 10,000 UA employees who are eligible for the state's retirement program, 4,000 are appointed staff and have the option of choosing between the state's program and an optional retirement plan with four different providers, said Marcia Chatalas, director of human resources and benefits.

The human resources department has not received any phone calls or concerns about the proposed increase, said Travis Vincent, an administrative assistant in the human resources department.

"Like any adjustment, the increase will bother a few people," Chatalas said. "The ASRS is trying to give people affected time to plan for it, telling them early."

Although he has not yet heard complaints about the increase, Gordon said he expects most employees do not know about the estimate retirement contribution due to other important issues with the university, like the \$16.6 budget shortfall.

At least one UA employee thinks the additional withholding is unfair.

"I don't think it would be fair to charge an extra 3 percent," said Donna Knight, an administrative assistant for law administration. "But, at the same time, I like working here so it wouldn't be worth quitting my job."

Withholdings for retirement have decreased from the past high of 7 percent during the past 10 years.

Deductions for retirement are the lowest they have been since 1990.

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SUSIE LEMONT/Arizona Daily Wildcat

Two students walk by the future home of the Alumni Plaza. Construction of the plaza is currently behind schedule because of changes made to include the cactus garden as well as slow fundraising.

Lack of funds delays \$2.5M Alumni Plaza construction

BY JAMES KELLEY
Staff Writer

Construction of the Alumni Plaza has been pushed back a year due to shortage of donations for construction and the time it took to redesign the area south of the Administration building to include the oft-discussed cactus garden.

Construction on the \$2.5 million plaza is now set to start in December 2003, rather than this December, said Mark Novak, landscape architect for campus and facilities planning.

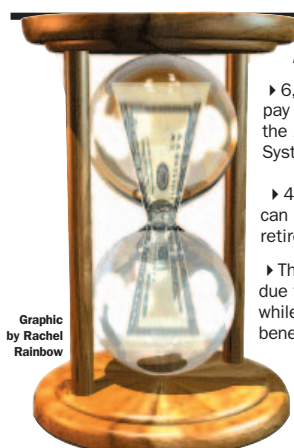
Novak, whose department is managing the project for the UA and the Alumni Association, said the August decision to delay the plaza was intended to give the association more time to raise funds to build the plaza.

"The delay is simply to give us time to work through the design process," said Kay Brown, who is on the association's board of directors.

"The design wasn't what we wanted and we needed more time after incorporating the cactus garden," said Jay Rochlin, associate director of the association. "Any University of Arizona project must have 85 percent of the funding in the bank and we didn't have that yet."

There was an outcry from members of the UA community when the association made its original proposal to move the Joseph Wood Krutch cactus garden to its original location near Old Main last year to make room for the plaza.

See **ALUMNI**, Page 6



A quick glance ...

► 6,000 classified staff at UA pay mandatory retirement to the Arizona State Retirement System.

► 4,000 appointed personnel can choose the state retirement program.

► The system has lost money due to an economic downturn, while ASRS has increased benefits for some.

► Deductions for retirement are currently the smallest they have been in 12 years.

Graphic
by Rachel
Rainbow