

Volume One, Issue One

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by DESIGN

newsletter

of the INTELLIGENT DESIGN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CENTER

WELCOME

Dear Reader,

If you are reading this, you probably have some interest in the discussion surrounding intelligent design and evolution. Whether you are passionately involved or first learning about the issues, I want to take a moment to welcome you to *By Design*, the quarterly newsletter of the Intelligent Design Undergraduate Research Center (IDURC).

The IDURC is a network of students (although non-students are welcome for membership) who are interested in intelligent design (ID) as an academic pursuit. The individuals in our organization have varying interests in the ID and evolution debate; but unite in desiring to see students and teachers given the freedom of speech, thought, and academia.

The IDURC is the student organization of the Access Research Network (ARN), which based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Should you have any questions about the IDURC or be interested in becoming a member, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you again for your interest in intelligent design and evolution (or, if you're just very bored, perhaps this will perk you interest) and I hope you will find this newsletter to be both helpful and thought-provoking.

With best wishes,

Samuel Chen
Director, IDURC

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Louisiana Passes Science Education Bill

By IDURC Staff

If I referred to something as “retrograde,” what would you guess I was referring to? A number of ideas may have just entered your head but was critical thinking among them? It was for the New York Times.

Last week, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal signed into law the Louisiana Science Education Act. The bill passed the Louisiana House of the Representatives with an overwhelming vote of 93-4 and was then unanimously passed by the state’s senate 35-0. Yet, the New York Times refers to this new legislation as “retrograde¹,” calling it an “assault on Darwin².”

What exactly does this bill, passed by a bi-partisan legislature, state? What in the bill makes it so offensive? Let’s take a look:

- Upon the request of a local school board, Louisiana’s State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is to
 - ...allow and assist teachers, principals, and other school administrators to create and foster an environment within public elementary and secondary schools that promotes critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of scientific theories being studied including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.
- Teachers are permitted, if authorized by the school board, to
 - ...use supplemental textbooks and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner.
- Teachers are required to first
 - ...teach the material presented in the standard textbook supplied by the school system...
- Louisiana’s State Board of Education reserves the right to veto any supplemental materials they deem as inappropriate.
- The inclusion of religion is not permitted under this law. Section 1D of the act states that it:
 - ...shall not be construed to promote any religious doctrine, promote discrimination

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for or against a particular set of religious beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or non-religion.

So what exactly is so scary about this law? Intelligent design is not mentioned. Creationism is not mentioned. The Bible is not mentioned. In fact, there is a clause guarding *against* the inclusion of religion. Why, then, are evolutionists in an outrage over this new law?

Evolutionists have long argued that “intelligent design” is nothing more than another term for “creationism.” They soon realized, however, that no proponent of intelligent design (ID) was actually advocating for the concept be taught in public school science classrooms. Rather, ID proponents have only fought for the right of students and teachers to think critically concerning the topic without suffering repercussions.

In light of this, we see the evolution lobby today refer to critical analysis, critical thinking, questioning Darwin, and anything remotely tied to academic inquisitiveness as “another term for creationism.” Seldom before has a concept been held on such a high pedestal that teachers are prohibited from discussing it fully and that students are prohibited from inquiring about it.

The Louisiana Science Education Act is needed to protect teachers and students from the harassment and intimidation that often comes when discussing the issue of evolution. It also provides legal clarity on the issue of teaching controversial issues such as, but not limited to, evolution.

This law, however, would not have been needed if we never allowed our nation’s education to sink to such a dismal state. Whether one accepts evolutionary theory or not, it is obvious that asking questions, searching for answers, and thinking critically has always driven—not stunted—learning. How ironic is it that the very evolutionists who claim to be defending science education are the ones standing in its way? So while we applaud Governor Jindal and the Louisiana State Legislature today, we hope for the day when common sense trumps blind ideology.

¹ Louisiana’s Assault on Darwin.” *The New York Times*. 21 June 2008.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/21/opinion/21sat4.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=Louisiana%20Science%20Education%20Act&st=cse&oref=slogin>

² *ibid*

DARE TO THINK, DARE TO DIALOGUE: THE CHALLENGE of *EXPELLED: NO INTELLIGENCE ALLOWED*

By IDURC Staff

On Friday, April 17, 2008, showings of a new Ben Stein movie opened in theaters across America. This time, however, it wasn't *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. It wasn't even comedy. Rather, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* is a documentary discussing the subject of evolution, intelligent design, and the freedom of speech, thought, and academia.

The movie shines a new light into an old controversy as it takes an inside peek at the consequences faced by professors and scientists today who dare ask questions about evolution's ability to produce the vast array of life today. A number of specific situations of blatant disregard for academic freedom and even respect are discussed in the film. The film also explores Darwinian evolution's role in past injustices.

Spencer Wagner of Denver University, the Associate Director of the IDURC, calls the film "brilliant," adding, "It's just about everything I would choose to say on the subject were I given 100 minutes to talk. And it does the job much more intricately and humorously than I am able to sitting on a couch or in a coffee shop."

A senior biology major and research associate with the IDURC recommends the film saying, "Regardless of your stance on the merits of evolution, if you have not yet had the opportunity, I highly recommend watching *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*."

Another research associate from the University of North Carolina calls the film a "brilliant exploration into the struggle for evolutionary exclusivity that is threatening to permanently undermine American universities' integrity." She adds, "Hopefully *Expelled* will help to ignite a national realization of academic biology's assault on science, education, and freedom."

“Regardless of your stance on the merits of evolution, if you have not yet had the opportunity, I highly recommend watching *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*.”

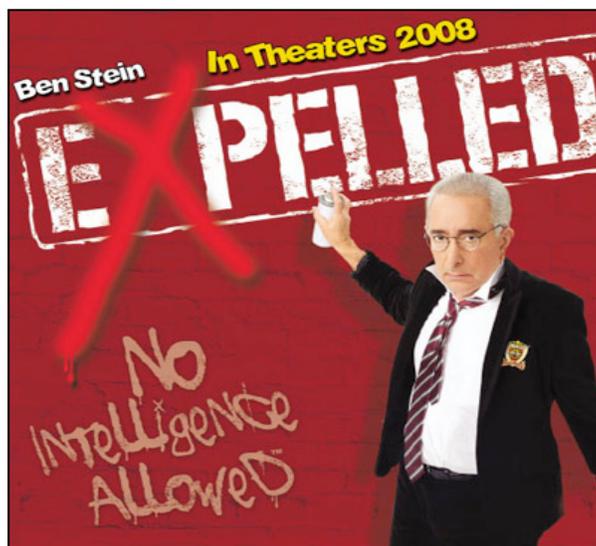
- Senior Biology Major

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Samuel Chen, a rising senior at Baylor University and the Director of the IDURC supports the film, saying, “*Expelled* unveils a side of academia that should outrage the public and embarrass any scholar worth his salt. The blatant disregard for dignity that many evolutionists so proudly exemplify shows just how deeply ingrained they are in their ideology. Anytime we are willing to trade open dialogue and critical thinking for hard dogma, a warning signal should sound. *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* sounds that signal.”

Regardless of the success of the film, however, there will always be critics. Yes, the film has had its share of bad reviews (it has also had its share of good ones). Yes, the film is facing a lawsuit at the moment (though the lawsuit has nothing to do with the content of the film). This, however, can be expected from a film willing to tackle one of the most controversial topics facing society today. The facts that the film presents are powerful. Cases of discrimination and harassment like those depicted in the film still occur. The question is whether people today will be frightened by these tactics or will be courageous enough to explore the issue for themselves. So take our challenge: go watch *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* and dare to think and to dialogue about this issue.



Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed
Take our challenge:
Watch this film, then dare to think and dialogue on it!

IDURC Announces the 2008 Casey Luskin Graduate Award

By Samuel Chen, Director, IDURC

On Monday, July 13, 2008, the Intelligent Design Undergraduate Research Center (IDURC) proudly presented the 2008 Casey Luskin Graduate Award, presented annually to a deserving college graduate for excellence in student advocacy of intelligent design.

The recipient of the 2008 Casey Luskin Graduate Award will remain anonymous for the protection of the recipient. The many students, professors, and scientists who have been denied degrees or tenure and removed from positions and jobs for no other reason than acceptance of—or even sympathy to—intelligent design theory is very telling of the importance of keeping these bright young minds out of the crosshairs of those opposed to open-minded investigation and critical thought.

The recipient of this year's award is a graduate earning a degree in history. This student has demonstrated great courage in promoting intelligent design and academic freedom, working previously with the IDURC and also serving as an IDEA Club president. The recipient will receive a certificate of achievement, a \$100 award, and an autographed copy of Dr. Michael J. Behe's newest book, *The Edge of Evolution: the Search for the Limits of Darwinism*.

The Casey Luskin Graduate Award was established in 2005 and in 2007 its name was changed from the "IDURC Graduate Award" to the "Casey Luskin Graduate Award." The award is named for Mr. Casey Luskin, a graduate of the University of California at San Diego, who was the first student truly to step out of his comfort zone as an undergrad and take a stand for intelligent design—a stand that would be seen across the nation. His founding of the Intelligent Design Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center has been a great step forward for the intelligent design movement and, more importantly, for academic freedom everywhere. Today, Luskin continues his work with the ID movement as a lawyer and legal analyst for the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture in Seattle, Washington. Students everywhere today are indebted to the work that Luskin has done.

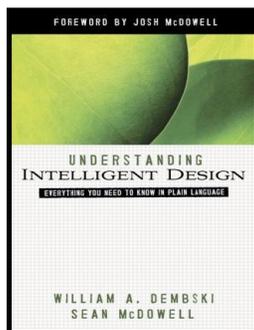
Each July, the IDURC will present the Casey Luskin Graduate Award to an outstanding student who has just completed his or her undergraduate degree and has demonstrated exemplary dedication to both the rigorous investigation and the widespread promotion of intelligent design.

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New Resource Alert

In each issue of this newsletter, we want to alert you to new resources that might be helpful to you, a student or teacher in your life, or just someone you know who is interested in the evolution and intelligent design debate. This issue, we are delighted to bring you two powerful books and a DVD set that will help you and those around you better understand the issue.

Understanding Intelligent Design: Everything You Need to Know in Plain Language by William A. Dembski and Sean McDowell



In the constant debate between evolution and intelligent design, it isn't surprising that many people actually know very little concerning intelligent design and what it actually is. In *Understanding Intelligent Design*, Dr. William A. Dembski and Sean McDowell explain intelligent design theory in plain, simple-to-understand language. The book is worth reading and is highly recommended for all students and anyone interested in the topic.

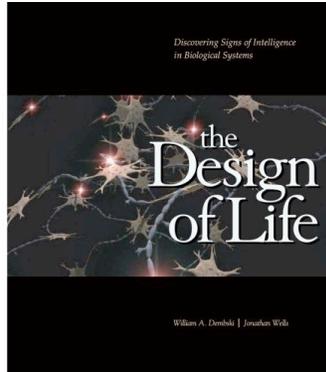
Praise for *Understanding Intelligent Design*:

“Intelligent design is often rejected, but rarely understood, especially by those who incessantly tell the rest of us to keep an ‘open mind.’ This is an age when sophisticated academics do not flinch at requiring public school students to watch ‘sex education’ demonstrations that involve bananas and condoms. Yet, these same intellectuals insist that our children be shielded from any literature that may cast doubts on materialism. This is why ID advocates would face less resistance in our more cerebral venues if someone somewhere would just label it as pornography. But, alas, that has not happened. So, you’ll just have to discover by your lonesome self what gets Richard Dawkins’ panties in a bunch. Start by reading this book and learning something. If you wind up disagreeing with portions of it or even the whole thing, that’s okay, for many of us (me included) have issues with and questions about ID as well. But some of us are far more suspicious of the thought-police that want to protect you from this new boogeyman.”

- Dr. Francis J. Beckwith, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Philosophy and Church-State Studies, Baylor University
Author, *Law, Darwinism, and Public Education*

The Design of Life

by Dr. William A. Dembski and Dr. Jonathan Wells

www.thedesignoflife.net

We often hear that evolution is the bedrock of science and that without it, science would cease to exist. Dr. William A. Dembski (Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Chicago and Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Illinois at Chicago) and Dr. Jonathan Wells (Ph.D. in molecular and cell biology from the University of California at Berkeley and Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale University) team up to write a readable science textbook that uses intelligent design as a base for science. By teaching good science with intelligent design as its foundation, this book refutes the idea that evolution is the major unifying concept and bedrock of science. *The Design of Life* is an excellent book for an AP or basic college-level biology class and is highly recommended to all science students.

Praise for *The Design of Life*

“When future intellectual historians list the books that toppled Darwin’s theory, *The Design of Life* will be at the top.”

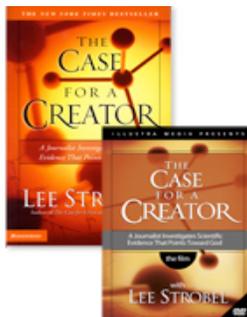
- Dr. Michael J. Behe, Ph.D.
Professor of Biochemistry, Lehigh University
Author, *Darwin’s Black Box* and *The Edge of Evolution*

“We are constantly told that nothing in science makes sense without evolution. Now, with the publication of *The Design of Life*, that charge no longer stands. Dr. William Dembski and Dr. Jonathan Wells show just how far-fetched the idea of science being strictly grounded in evolution truly is. *The Design of Life* is an excellent science text that teaches and makes sense of sound science—but with the backdrop of design, not random chance.”

- Samuel Chen
Director, Intelligent Design Undergraduate Research Center

***The Case for a Creator* (Book and DVD)**

by Lee Strobel

www.thecaseforacreator.com

Lee Strobel, a former award-winning legal editor for the Chicago Tribune, researches intelligent design as a journalist on an investigation. *The Case for a Creator* is the final report and the results are surprising. Strobel interviews a variety of scientists from different disciplines within science and each comes to the same conclusion—that there is substantial evidence to believe that the universe and living things are a product of design, not random chance. *The Case for a Creator*, both the book and film, is highly recommended as an excellent introduction for anyone interested in this topic.

Praise for *The Case for a Creator*

“Lee Strobel’s investigative prowess as an award-winning journalist coupled with the vast array of scientists he interviews makes *The Case for a Creator* an excellent survey of intelligent design. From cosmology and astronomy to biochemistry and physics, the book leaves no stone unturned and it overturns the fictitious, but often propagated, view that this issue is merely white-coated scientists versus black-robed preachers.”

- Samuel Chen
Director, Intelligent Design Undergraduate Research Center

IDURC Announces 2008 Casey Luskin Graduate Award

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This year’s recipient joins the recipients from past years, since the award was initiated in 2005, in demonstrating such excellence.

Much thanks needs to be given to the board of directors at the IDURC for their work in preparing this year’s award and for their efforts year round. A very heartfelt thank you also goes to Dr. Michael J. Behe of Lehigh University for his support of the work we do at the IDURC and for his autographing and inscribing *The Edge of Evolution* for this award.

As always, I must thank Mr. Dennis Wagner and Access Research Network for the donation of the \$100 award and for their continuous and generous financial support of the IDURC.



www.arn.org

"Free Minds...Ask Questions"

www.idurc.org

The Intelligent Design Undergraduate Research Center (IDURC) is a student organization dedicated to:

- 1) Investigating intelligent design as a viable scientific theory.
- 2) Promoting education and critical thinking about neo-Darwinism.
- 3) Supporting efforts of those trying to revise school standards to include discussion of the controversy surrounding evolutionary theory.
- 4) Providing a forum for high school and college students to present, debate, and discuss their ideas about intelligent design and neo-Darwinism.
- 5) Clarifying the debate concerning neo-Darwinism, intelligent design, and creationism.
- 6) Encouraging creative exploration of the aesthetic dimensions of design.

The IDURC (www.idurc.org) was founded in 2003 and is the student branch of the Access Research Network (www.arn.org), based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Mr. Dennis Wagner is the Executive Director of the ARN and Mr. Samuel Chen (Baylor University) is the Director of the IDURC.

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