More than 800 students and members of the community attended a recent series of lectures, films and a panel discussion exploring the social, economic and environmental impacts of drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale.

Highlights included: “Boomtown or Hometown? What Marcellus Shale Communities Can Learn from the Oil Sands,” by Michael Evans and Dennis Vroom, both from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo; “Who are Those Guys? A Qualitative Analysis of Transient Gas Workers in the Marcellus Shale Region,” by Matthew Filteau, doctoral student, rural sociology program, Penn State; and the final event, a panel discussion on natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale featuring representatives from industry, higher education and government.

The series was sponsored by BU’s Green Campus Initiative, Institute for Culture and Society, Institute for Human Rights and Social Justice, College of Science and Technology and the College of Liberal Arts, following the theme “Natural Gas Extraction in Marcellus Shale: Evaluating the Impacts.”

Speed Limit

With the London Olympics only a few months away, Reza Noubary is already fielding calls from reporters worldwide who want to know more about the theory he developed to predict how fast the 100-meter dash can be run.

“One reporter is coming all the way from Japan for an interview. He asked me where the Bloomsburg airport was,” says Noubary, professor of mathematics, computer science and statistics.

What makes his theory unique is that it doesn’t just take into account the physical limits of the human body in terms of muscle mass, energy or other factors. Noubary’s work does, however, account for the physiology of a runner. He has spent countless hours looking at past records and how the progression over time can help him make an accurate prediction.

In August 2009, Olympic champion Usain Bolt of Jamaica broke his own world record in the 100-meter dash by over a tenth of a second with a time of 9.58 seconds. Noubary says runners are getting closer to the limit, but are not quite there yet. His predictions put the ultimate record right around 9.40 seconds.

He has been quoted and cited in a number of publications, including ESPN: The Magazine, Sports Illustrated and The Guardian. He expects that he’ll be a major source for magazines and newspapers again as his theories continue to be lauded for their accuracy. “My predictions were actually much closer than others at the last Olympic games in Beijing,” Noubary says.

Noubary, a former member of the Iranian National Soccer Team, is currently working on two more books dealing with the math and science behind sports. But what motivates him to put so much effort into the subject? “I love sports, and I love math, and I was able to bring those two things together,” he says.
In Agreement

BU President David Soltz and Donald Snyder, president of Lehigh Carbon Community College, recently signed an agreement formalizing BU’s Bachelor of Applied Science in Technical Leadership which will be offered at LCCC’s campus starting this fall.

The Bachelor of Applied Science in Technical Leadership, the first in PASSHE, addresses the growing demand for technical skills combined with professional skills. A student who has earned an Associate of Applied Science degree from a community college will build upon that degree with courses in information technology, communications studies, accounting, business education, information and technology management and general education. The program also will be open to those already in the workforce.

The new BU program is a partnership with LCCC and the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute (LCTI), both located in Schnecksville. All bachelor’s degree requirements may be completed at LCCC and students enrolled at LCTI can enter the program at the high school level.

Speakers at the signing ceremony called the partnership a “model” for institutions across the country. In addition to Soltz and Snyder, speakers were Audrey Larvey, chair of LCCC’s board; Clyde Hornberger, retired executive director of LCTI; and Kathleen Howley, PASSHE’s senior associate vice chancellor and student affairs.

BU hosts biology convention

More than 80 students and faculty from 13 institutions in four states attended the Northeast District 2 Convention of Beta Beta Beta, the Biology Honor Society, hosted by Bloomsburg University.

Meghan Duell of Paxinos, a senior biology major and member of the BU Honors Program, won the Frank G. Brooks Award, the first-place prize in the oral presentation category, for “Honeybee Stress: Behavioral and Physiological Implications of Flumethrin Treatment.” Duell is eligible to compete at the national Tri-Beta Convention held in Puerto Rico. John Hranitz, professor of biological and allied health sciences, is her mentor.

Brandon Dunbar of Jim Thorpe, a senior biology major and member of the BU Honors Program, received second prize in the poster category for “Effect of Composted Materials on the Incidence of Pythium splendans induced-root rot disease.” His mentors from the Department of Biological and Allied Health Sciences are Barry Nolt, assistant professor, and Judith Kipe-Nolt, professor.

Radar Observations

Michael Shepard, professor of geography and geosciences, completed a series of radar observations of asteroids at the Arecibo Observatory that he began last fall, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. He presented the preliminary results of his analysis, “Radar Observations of Seven X/M-class Main-Belt Asteroids,” at the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in Houston, Texas. He was accompanied by BU senior Shane Levengood, a computer science/geoscience major from Elizabethtown, who presented work he did last summer under the grant. His poster presentation was “A GUI-Based Open-Source Program for Viewing and Illuminating Asteroid Shape Models.”

Inch honored by TechQuest

Scott Inch, professor of mathematics, computer science and statistics, recently was named TechQuest Pennsylvania’s 2012 Technology Educator of the Year. Winners were recognized in 11 categories during a ceremony in Harrisburg’s Whitaker Center for the Arts and Sciences.

More than 100 statewide organizations and individuals submitted over 200 nominations for this year’s Pennsylvania Tech Awards. Inch’s award, Technology Educator of the Year, was presented by Gannett Fleming, and finalists were Andy Petroski, director of learning technologies at Harrisburg University, and Lisa Butler, Spanish techbook creator and Hershey Middle School Spanish teacher.

Inch developed and teaches the courses in BU’s bachelor’s degree in computer forensics program. The program prepares students for careers extracting and analyzing information from computers, cell phones and similar devices involved in criminal activity. As computer forensics specialists, they may be employed with law enforcement, homeland security agencies, law firms or private companies.

TechQuest Pennsylvania is an organization that represents the technology industry in the state Capital.