

LAS

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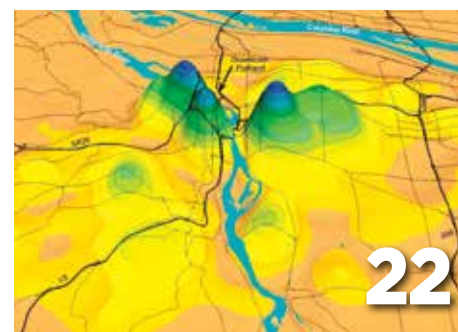
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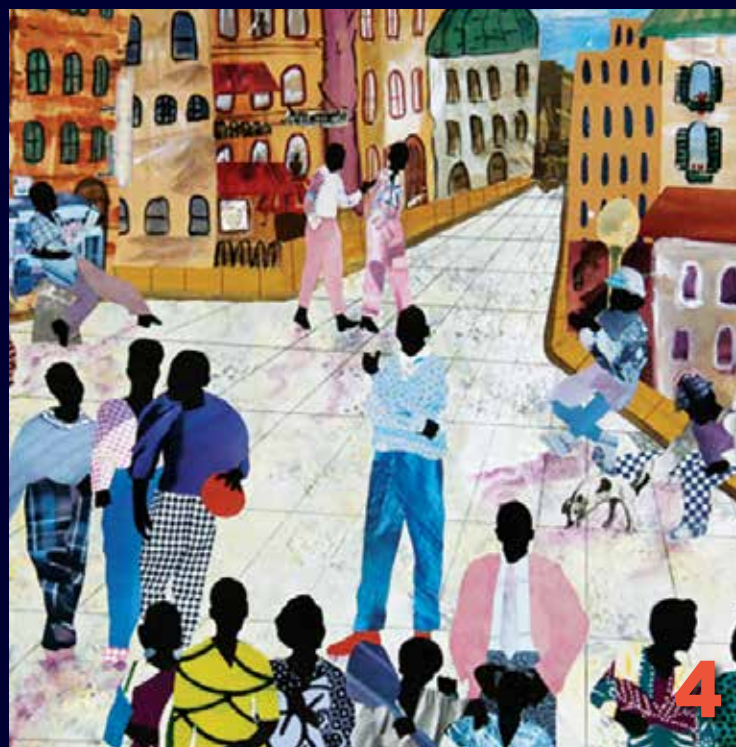
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GREETINGS FROM THE

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Dear alumni and friends,

I hope you enjoy as much as I do the cover of this issue of LAS News, which shows students measuring the trunk of an enormous sugar maple in Trelease Woods, a research forest owned by the University of Illinois. The image illustrates collaboration, curiosity, experiential learning, and the lessons we've acquired through time. It is inspiring and reflective of who we are in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

We have many exciting developments in LAS. Let me start by sharing one of our initiatives. We are preparing a five-year strategic plan that will position us at the forefront of liberal arts and sciences. In the coming months, we will engage faculty, students, and other stakeholders to identify strategic priorities and actions that align with those of our campus and the units within LAS for years to come. By doing so, we will expand upon what we're already doing well and advance our academic excellence on many fronts.

You may recall that our last magazine focused on faculty excellence. This will never be old news. We continue to enjoy the fantastic successes of our faculty. For example, six faculty members in LAS were recently named among the most highly cited researchers in the world by Clarivate Analytics. It's an incredible honor, and it's also indicative of our great potential. Meanwhile, our faculty hiring program this year has two foci: digital transformations and the role of diversity in society. Having expertise in these areas will position us to be leaders and educators of the future.

Our faculty excellence is matched only by the success of our students. We recently learned that nine recent LAS graduates and a current student received Fulbright grants to pursue international educational, research, and teaching experiences in 2019-2020. We take deep pride in such accomplishments, and we are taking innovative approaches to ensuring that our students are well prepared for the emerging jobs of the future. Increasingly, the most influential jobs are what some are now calling "hybrid," which includes blending technical expertise with the perspective gained through the liberal arts and sciences. In that context, we are excited about our Life + Career Design Initiative, which provides a holistic framework to help our students realize the awesome possibilities arising from their college experience.

Profound and seemingly permanent changes in the funding of public higher education in the United States have forced us to adjust our approach to maintaining preeminence as a comprehensive research university. We are moving forward thanks in no small part to the generous support of our friends and alumni. The College of LAS exceeded our Fiscal Year 2019 goal for the With Illinois philanthropic campaign, which allows us to continue and expand key college-wide initiatives. We are extremely grateful for your past and future support.

With best wishes,

Feng Sheng Hu,
Harry E. Preble Dean

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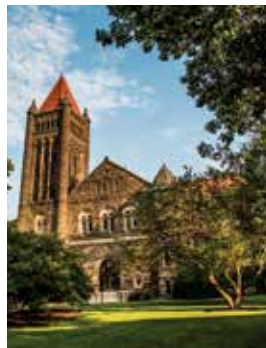
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William Conwill, in sunglasses, a professor in the Department of African American Studies, poses with Illinois students for a photo near Chicago's Oakwood Community Center. Students worked with a non-profit organization to strengthen community bonds on the city's south side. (Photo courtesy of *The Community Builders*.) ■

Timeline set for Altgeld Hall and Illini Hall project

The university is moving ahead with a plan to modernize learning spaces and increase capacity in data science and other mathematical sciences. The project includes constructing a new building on the site of Illini Hall by 2022 and renovating **Altgeld Hall** by 2024. CannonDesign, the Chicago architecture firm that designed the Lincoln Hall renovation, is planning the project. ■



A new partnership for the bees



A new partnership between Illinois and St. Louis-based Anheuser-Busch, LLC, will raise money for bee research at the university. The company has pledged \$5,000 to the **Healthy Bee Fund** at Illinois. In addition, the company will donate \$1 to the fund for every case sold of b, a new alcoholic honey beverage that went on sale in the Northeast U.S. in March. ■

Faculty and staff honored

A partial list of faculty honors this past winter and spring include:

- **Lincoln Excellence for Assistant Professors Scholars:** **Mauro Nobili**, history; **Aleks Ksiazkiewicz**, political science; **Xun Yan**, linguistics; **Patricia Gregg**, geology; **Anush Tserunyan**, mathematics; **Clara Bosak-Schroeder**, classics.
- **Ranked among world's most influential researchers by Clarivate Analytics:** **Lisa Ainsworth**, plant biology; **Prashant Jain**, chemistry; **Stephen Long**, plant biology; **Yi Lu**, chemistry; **Catherine Murphy**, chemistry; **Donald Ort**, plant biology.
- **Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities fellowships:** **Claudia Brosseder**, history; **Andrew Gaedtke**, English; **Eduardo Ledesma**, Spanish and Portuguese; **Ghassan Moussawi**, gender and women's studies and sociology; **Ramón Soto-Crespo**, English; **Dustin Tahmahkera**, American Indian studies.
- **American Council of Learned Societies fellowship:** **Marsha Barrett**, history.
- **Sloan Research Fellow:** **Diwakar Shukla**, chemical and biomolecular engineering.
- **Simons Fellowships:** **Philippe Di Francesco**, **Rinat Kedem**, and **Xiaochun Li**, mathematics.
- **Chancellor's Fellow of Indigenous Research and Ethics:** **Jenny Davis**, anthropology, American Indian studies, and gender and women's studies.
- **Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching:** **Brian Allan**, entomology; **Manisha Basu**, English; **Philipp Hieronymi**, mathematics; **Sandra Ruiz**, Latina/Latino studies and English; **Isaac Dilanni**, economics; **Karle Flanagan**, statistics.

See a complete list of faculty honors at go.las.illinois.edu/honors-fall19magazine. ■

LAS Alumnus delivers winter convocation address



Ankur Gopal (BA, '97, history), founder of Interapt, an IT service firm specializing in mobile and web application development for businesses, was the College of LAS' inaugural winter convocation speaker. Gopal has become known nationally for a successful IT training program in his home state of Kentucky. ■

Study: Career choices influence personality



A new study adds to mounting evidence that personality is not immutable, but changes throughout life, according to psychology professor **Brent Roberts**. He and researchers in Germany studied two groups of 16-year-olds: One that entered vocational training programs and another that continued in school. Six years later, those who entered vocational training self-reported more increased levels of conscientiousness, and less interest in scientific, business, or entrepreneurial activities, than their peers in academia. ■

Study of Arctic fish answers the puzzle of antifreeze protein



Though separated by a world of ocean, and unrelated to each other, two fish groups – one in the Arctic, the other in the Antarctic – share a surprising survival strategy: They both have evolved the ability to produce the same special brand of antifreeze protein in their tissues. A new study led by animal biology professor **Christina Cheng** with graduate student Xuan Zhuang describes in molecular detail how the Arctic fishes built the gene for their antifreeze from tiny fragments of noncoding DNA, regions once considered “junk DNA.” ■

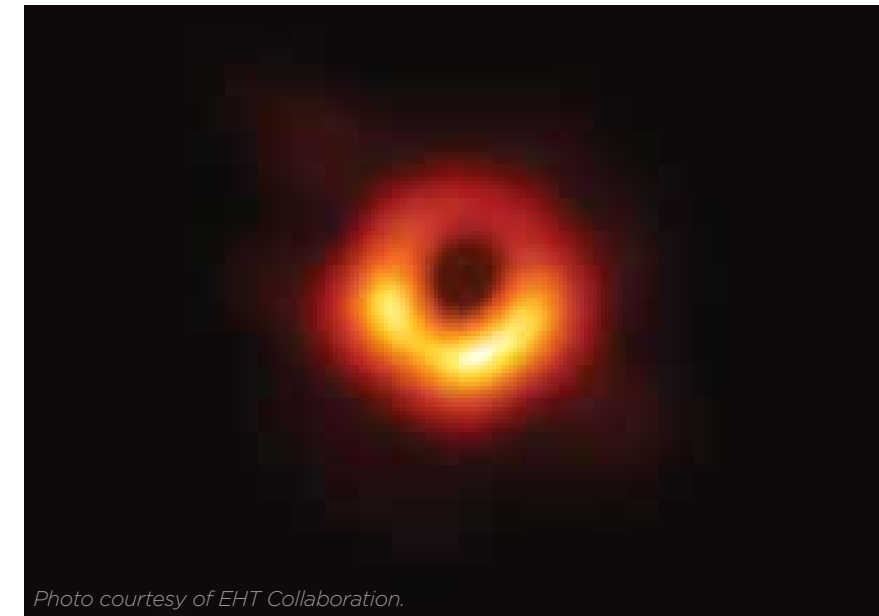
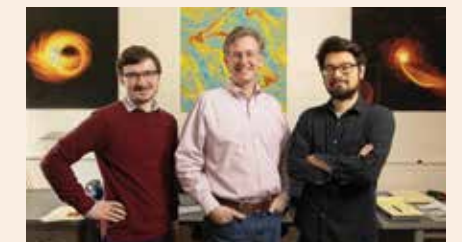


Photo courtesy of EHT Collaboration.

University of Illinois astronomy and physics professor **Charles Gammie** was head of the theory working group for the large, multi-institutional collaboration that captured the widely celebrated first image of a black hole. ■



Professor of astronomy and physics Charles Gammie (center) poses with physics graduate students Ben Prather (left) and George Wong (right).



Students had 36 hours to predict 2019 stock market activity at **Datathon**, a competition on campus coordinated by the Illini Statistics Club, the Department of Statistics, and Synchrony. ■

Researchers receive \$3 million to develop neural probe



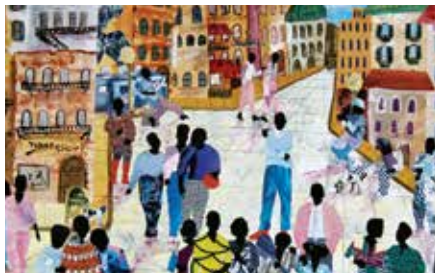
From left: **Rashid Bashir**, **Yurii Vlasov**, and **Jonathan Sweedler**.

A team of researchers from Illinois has received \$3 million from the National Institutes of Health's BRAIN Initiative (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) to develop a silicon platform technology for monitoring a broad range of neurochemicals in the brain with high spatiotemporal resolution and minimal tissue damage. The research team is led by professors **Jonathan Sweedler** (chemistry), **Yurii Vlasov** (electrical and computer engineering), and **Rashid Bashir** (bioengineering). ■



The *Cyindropuntia fulgida*, or **jumping cholla**, is one species of cactus tested by postdoctoral researcher Stephanie Crofts and animal biology professor Philip Anderson, who wanted to know how spine structure influences performance. (Photo by John Traeger.) ■

U of I system invests more than \$2 million in arts and humanities



Street Smarts II, by Allen Stringfellow

Ten professors and staff members in LAS are recipients of the **Presidential Initiative to Celebrate the Impact of the Arts and the Humanities**. The \$2 million initiative, launched by University of Illinois President **Tim Killeen**, is aimed at emphasizing the impact of the arts and humanities across Illinois. ■

The problem of parity



When will workplaces across the United States have an equal split between men and women? A model created by **Sara Clifton**, J.L. Doob Research Assistant

Professor in the Department of Mathematics, predicts that, in some professions, the answer could be never—unless interventions occur. For example, Clifton and her colleagues predicted that certain male-dominated fields in academia such as physics, mathematics, and computer science will never reach sustained gender parity in leadership levels without an effort to better integrate women. ■

Pesticides influence ground-nesting bee development and longevity



Alex Harmon-Threatt (left) and Nick Anderson.

A new study suggests that bees might be exposed to pesticides in more ways than we thought, and it could impact their development significantly. **Nick Anderson**, graduate student in entomology, and his advisor, **Alex Harmon-Threatt**, professor of entomology, led the

first-of-its-kind study that examines ground-nesting bees, which actually make up the majority of bee species. ■

What do we really know about e-cigarettes?



Attitudes about e-cigarettes don't always align with scientific research, said **Cabral Bigman**, a communication professor whose research focuses on health communication issues around vaping. Americans are more likely to confront people in public places who are smoking traditional cigarettes than people who are vaping, but scientists still don't fully understand the long-term effects of exposure to secondhand vapor or aerosol. ■

Explaining the Great Unconformity



William Guenther is in search of 1.2 billion lost years. Geologists call it the Great Unconformity. Originally observed in the Grand Canyon in 1869, the phenomenon describes two layers of rock that stretch across most of North America and come together despite an age difference of about 12 million centuries. Guenther, a professor of geology, has received a National Science Foundation CAREER grant of more than \$500,000 to explore the mystery. ■



The American Chemical Society designated a national historic chemical landmark in Noyes Hall for **St. Elmo Brady** (MS, 1914; PhD, 1916; chemistry), the first African-American to receive a PhD in chemistry in the United States. ■

Dealing with readjustment



Military couples look forward to joyful celebrations and reunions after long deployments. Reintegration may bring challenges, however, and communication professor **Leanne Knobloch** and her colleagues published a study in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* giving recommendations to families experiencing post-deployment. Among the findings: Support is necessary for at-home partners, who reported more difficulty with reintegration than returning service members. ■



Donald Ort (left), professor of plant biology and crop sciences, and researchers **Paul South** and **Amanda Cavanagh** study how well their plants modified to bypass photorespiration perform beside unmodified plants in real-world conditions. They found that plants engineered with a synthetic shortcut are about 40 percent more productive. (Photo by Claire Benjamin, RIFE project.) ■

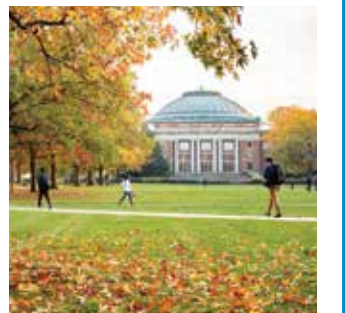
Chemistry student receives Graduate Student Leadership Award



Elizabeth Neumann, a doctoral student in the Department of Chemistry, is the winner of the fifth annual Graduate Student Leadership Award. Recognized in her department for her scientific work in analytical chemistry, Neumann is also a strong advocate for addressing gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment. She worked to create conversation on these issues in a university setting, leading to the adoption of new policies within her department. ■

LAS offers classes to meet new U.S. minority cultures course requirements

The College of LAS has increased courses that satisfy a new requirement that all U of I undergraduates take a course in each of the three areas of Western comparative culture, non-Western culture, and U.S. minority culture. The College of LAS offers more than half the courses that fulfill the new requirement. ■



This photo shows sediment mining in the **Surma River valley** in northern Bangladesh. Illinois geologist Jim Best is highlighting the potentially irreparable transformations occurring along the world's major rivers. (Photo by Jim Best.) ■



Alumnus commits \$1.5 million to the Department of Classics



The Department of Classics has received from alumnus **George Reveliotis** (BA, '96, history) an endowment commitment of \$1.5 million, one of the largest gifts to a humanities program on campus. The George N. Reveliotis Family Hellenic Studies Endowment will support a lecturer position, undergraduate and graduate scholarships and fellowships, study abroad opportunities, and a professorship in Hellenic studies. *(Photo courtesy of George Reveliotis.)* ■



Anthropology researchers studied a **fossilized sloth tooth**, which still held enough unaltered tissue for stable carbon and oxygen isotope analysis to provide about clues about the sloth's diet and environment. *(Photo by Stanley Ambrose.)* ■

Natural History Building recognized by U.S. Green Building Council

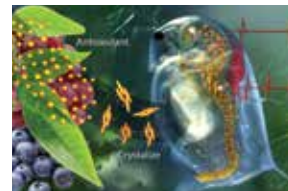


The Natural History Building received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, the most widely used green building rating program in the world, for energy efficiency and environmentally friendly construction practices in its \$79 million renovation. The building received points for water efficient landscaping, energy efficient heating and air conditioning, high levels of daylight for natural lighting, occupancy sensors, and continual energy monitoring. See a video about the renovation at go.las.illinois.edu/NHBvideo. ■



A study led by animal biology and entomology professor Andrew Suarez discovered that the **Dracula ant, *Myrmium camillae***, can snap its mandibles up to 90 meters per second, making it the fastest animal movement on record. *(Photo by Adrian Smith.)* ■

Illinois researchers develop new drug-delivery system



University of Illinois researchers developed a new drug-delivery system that senses high oxidant levels and responds by administering the right amount of antioxidant to restore balance. Chemical and biomolecular engineering professor **Hyunjoon Kong** and his team found a way to assemble crystals of catechin using a polymer that can sense when oxidant concentrations are high. The researchers plan to develop the polymer for pharmaceutical and environmental uses. *(Graphic courtesy of Janet Sinn-Hanlon, DesignGroup@VetMed, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.)* ■

Manfred von Richthofen, the so-called **Red Baron**, (pictured here), is glorified as an extraordinary German war pilot during World War I, but Illinois history professor **Peter Fritzsche**, who presented during the national debut of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center's Snoopy and the Red Baron exhibit, said that history largely obscures the disturbing realities of Richtofen's accomplishments, such as his targeting of gas tanks on slow-moving two-seaters, which account for most of his kills. *(Wikipedia public domain image.)* ■



Discovery Partners Institute announces first round of seed funding recipients



Real-time monitoring of indoor air quality, creating scholarly gaming environments, and developing sustainable solutions for cities are among the projects funded in the **Discovery Partners Institute's (DPI)** first round of seed grants. DPI announced nine recipients of its first round of seed funding awards, including three headed by professors in the College of LAS. These projects represent the types of work undertaken by DPI, a new research institute led by the U of I System. ■



Thousands of letters written by French novelist **Marcel Proust** are being digitized for public viewing by French professor **Francois Proulx**, the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and partners in France. *(Photo by L. Brian Stauffer.)* ■

Ralph S. Wolfe, who helped discover new domain of life, dies at 97



Ralph Stoner Wolfe, a professor emeritus of microbiology at the University of Illinois who contributed to the discovery of a third superkingdom of life, died Tuesday, March 26, at Meadowbrook Health Center in Urbana. He was 97. Wolfe joined the U of I faculty in 1953 and retired in 1991. His study of microorganisms that grow in oxygen-free environments was central to Carl R. Woese's discovery of archaea, a different branch of life. ■

"Journey Into Possibilities," by Indira Freitas Johnson, was installed in the LAS Student Academic Affairs Office and aims to encourage students along their college journey. *(Photo by Jesse Wallace.)* ■



Plant biologist elected to National Academy of Sciences



Stephen P. Long has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest professional honors a scientist can receive. Long is the Ikenberry Endowed Chair of Plant Biology and Crop Sciences at U of I. Working to address the effects of climate change on crop yield, Long uses computational and experimental approaches to improve photosynthetic efficiency. ■

Student wins Research Park award for marketing



Tonisha Thacker (BA, '19, sociology; BS, '19, chemistry) was named the most advanced marketing-business development intern out of around 500 Illinois students working at U of I's Research Park. As the communication and marketing intern for AARP's Tech Nest, Thacker handled internal and external communication, managed social media, and organized volunteer events among other tasks. She hopes to one day work for a non-profit. ■



Richard Powers (BA, '78, rhetoric; MA, '80, English), a professor emeritus of English at the University of Illinois, won the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for his novel "The Overstory." ■

PRACTICING DIPLOMACY

Larry Harris is bringing a little bit of Chicago to Cameroon



Larry Harris. (Photo by Marvin-Alexander Brooks.)

Larry Harris is the type of man who you can practically hear smiling through the phone. He's quick to joke and has an infectious laugh—you're bound to hear it often.

If you ask Larry (BA, '15, political science), he'll say that's the Chicago in him. He grew up on the south and west sides of Chicago before moving to Chicago Heights at 14 and says the overwhelming, consistent community support stuck with him.

Chicago is often regarded as a surly and even dangerous city, but Harris would politely disagree. That's just not his Chicago. When his family didn't have electricity and he had to study at the school library, it was the kind support from his neighbors and teachers that shaped him.

His father, who worked as a Chicago Transit Authority bus driver for thirty years, spent his entire career driving through Chicago's neighborhoods and interacting with countless people—and Harris saw his father's love for the work every single day.

"For me, Chicago is about the kindness of its people, and it informs who I am. It taught me to treat everyone like they are a person. To listen to them. Three times now I've met someone from Chicago abroad and they always say, 'I knew

you were from Chicago because you are so nice.'"

That's the type of attitude Larry is bringing to his work as a diplomat in Cameroon, a post he started in August 2018. Harris spent two years as a Rangel Fellow, in which time he completed a master's degree from American University in return for at least five years of foreign service. He was one of 30 applicants from across the country chosen for the program.

"There are so many very bright and capable students here at Illinois, but Larry stands out from the very moment one meets him," said Timothy Wedig, associate director of LAS Global Studies, when Harris was selected as a Rangel Fellow. "He has a genuine passion about life that is contagious and helps make him a natural leader."

Harris is spending his first year in Cameroon adjudicating visas for Cameroonians who want to visit the U.S. and, likely, he will be among their first impressions of Americans. That first contact is something Larry doesn't take lightly.

"This first impression will stay with them on how America is for a very long time. Regardless of any decision we make, it's important to put our best foot forward," he says.

His second year in Cameroon will be spent on the political side and most work will involve maintaining the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and the Cameroonian governments.

"I have the opportunity to serve my country, its people, and carry out U.S. policy throughout the world and represent one of the many diverse parts of this great country," Larry says. "Every single day will bring something different to my life."

Diplomacy is a "delicate dance," Larry says. "You are trying to get into lockstep with the other person, but you are also trying to lead the dance...to get them to see your side."

His post comes at a time of unrest in the Central African country. Amnesty International published a report this year detailing Cameroon's deadly cycle of violence between the French-speaking majority and the English-speaking minority.

The country is relatively stable compared to the rest of the region, but Larry is aware of the challenges that lie ahead. He and fellow U.S. diplomats will work together to advance U.S. interests and promote economic growth, security, and overall prosperity of the country.

After attending a cultural night at the Cameroonian embassy earlier this year, he found a new appreciation for all of the food, dancing, and diversity the country embodies. He brings this appreciation and his enthusiasm for diplomacy to the post.

He brings a dose of Chicago kindness with him, too.

"You need to listen to people not just for the sake of responding, but for true understanding. You have to try to understand where people come from and comprehend their values. Even if you don't come to an agreement, you understand each other better. We need more of that in the world." ■

Editor's note: This story, written by the College of LAS, first appeared in *Storied*.

By Jessica Bursztynsky

Douala, Cameroon. (Photo by Kayhan Ertugrul.)





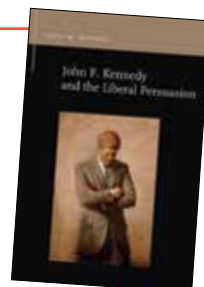
Books from LAS

From John F. Kennedy's political discourse to a history of America's Heartland, our faculty have written recently about a wide range of topics.

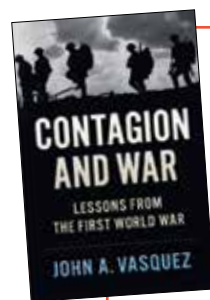
"Tria sunt: An Art of Poetry and Prose," by **Martin Camargo** (PhD, '78), associate dean for humanities and interdisciplinary programs in the College of LAS and professor of English, medieval studies, and classics, is the first English translation of the widely used 14th century text, which is a comprehensive guide to writing Latin texts. (Image courtesy of Harvard University Press.)



"John F. Kennedy and the Liberal Persuasion," by **John Murphy**, professor of communication, studies the political discourse of Kennedy, focusing on how the 35th president's rhetoric shaped his legacy while considering his messaging through a historical and linguistic context. (Image courtesy of Michigan State University Press.)



"The Heartland: An American History," by **Kristin Hoganson**, professor and director of undergraduate studies in the Department of History, debunks the myth of the rural and small-town Midwest as isolated from the rest of the world by detailing the region's deep, wide-reaching global connections. (Image courtesy of Penguin Press.)



"Contagion and War: Lessons from the First World War," by **John Vasquez**, professor of political science, examines the factors that contributed to each country that entered World War I, including alliances, contiguity, territorial rivalry, opportunity, "brute force," and economic dependence. (Image courtesy of Cambridge University Press.)

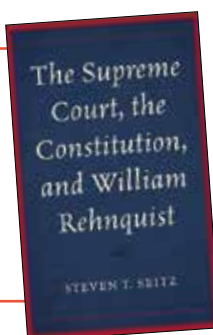
"Campania in the Flavian Poetic Imagination" edited by **Antony Augustakis**, professor of classics, and Joy Littlewood, explores the Campania region of Italy's historic portrayal by Flavian writers, who found it a source of literary inspiration, but also of geographical disaster. (Image courtesy of Oxford University Press.)



"Lookout America! The Secret Hollywood Studio at the Heart of the Cold War," by **Ned O'Gorman**, professor of communication, and **Kevin Hamilton**, professor of art and design and dean of the College of Fine + Applied Arts, details the influence of Lookout Mountain Laboratory, a U.S. Air Force unit which made hundreds of movies, processed film, and stored volumes of Cold War imagery during its operation from 1947 to 1969. (Image courtesy of University Press of New England.)



"The Supreme Court, the Constitution, and William Rehnquist," by **Steven Seitz**, professor of political science, analyzes Constitutional clauses and rules that have shaped the judicial branch's influence and function in American government, starting with the foundations laid by John Marshall and moving to the anti-Federalist era, the Civil War, laissez faire and social Darwinism, Great Depression redirection, the civil rights era, and the "often-hapless" efforts of William Rehnquist. (Image courtesy of Lexington Books.)



(Photos courtesy of Shakari Stroud.)



Teaching FOR AMERICA



SHAKARI STROUD teaches math through a highly regarded nonprofit organization

By Dave Evensen

LAS @Work

Shakari Stroud (BA, '17, anthropology) landed a position coveted by many new college graduates: She joined Teach for America, a nonprofit organization that places promising young teachers in schools in low-income communities to help improve the learning environment. As a middle school math teacher in Oklahoma City, she laughs, she cries, she deals with lost backpacks—and she is beginning to see the bigger picture on how to improve education in America.

What's a typical workday for you?

"Hey class! Alright, take out your homework." And it begins... "Ms. Stroud, I left my bookbag on the bus." "I left my homework in my locker. Can I do it real fast?" "See, what had happened was..." As a middle school math teacher, you have to stay on your toes and be ready to hear the craziest things while either holding back laughter or tears. My day goes from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. School dismisses at 3:55 p.m., but I stay behind to tutor some of my students.

What's the most important part of your work?

Building relationships with my students. That is the one relationship that must happen organically, because those relationships are how you learn the most about yourself and your students. The students I teach sometimes do not possess the proper resources, such as a parent, to guide critical social learning. As the teacher, I take on that responsibility. Our inner city youth have problems that many people don't want to deal with.

What about college and your major prepared you?

My liberal arts education taught me everything. I learned how to explore without getting overwhelmed. And anthropology is everywhere! The intersection of education and anthropology speaks to both micro- and macro-level challenges we are facing in the current tumultuous state of education. Through my major, I have learned how to develop my communication skills as I work with others on projects.

Read more LAS@Work features at go.las.illinois.edu/LASatWork. ■

(Not) lost in translation



Illinois alumnus' translation brings a well-respected novel to light

As one prominent critic put it, the novel “Lord,” by the late João Gilberto Noll, is about “the evasions of identity.” Ironically, it was the job of **Edgar Garbelotto** to translate the work into words that more people could understand.

Garbelotto (MFA, '19, creative writing) received his certification in translation studies in May and translated “Lord” from Portuguese into English, and his work has come to light as the novel was recently reviewed by The New York Times.

“Lord” was published originally in 2004, but since Garbelotto’s translation, Noll’s 164-page novel has received widespread attention in the United States.

The novel describes a Brazilian novelist who arrives in London on invitation, only to lose his way on the streets and become increasingly unhinged from his own identity.

When asked by the U of I how a graduate student managed to translate a book reviewed in The New York Times, Garbelotto, a native of Brazil, responded, “With the guidance of Joyce Tolliver, I took an independent study course with Elizabeth Lowe, one of the most prolific and successful translators of Brazilian literature into English.”

Tolliver is the current director of Illinois’ Center for Translation Studies, and Lowe is professor emerita and the center’s first director. The independent study class was titled Brazilian Literature in Translation, and Garbelotto and Lowe discussed a few authors that Garbelotto wanted to translate.

“I always had very clear in my head that I wanted to translate from my native language, Portuguese, into my second language, English, which is not the norm among translators,” he said.

Garbelotto eventually chose “Lord,” and sent a sample of his translation of “Lord” to Two Lines Press. Once the contract was signed, the work became collaborative and included Lowe, whom he described as his mentor.

“I was pleasantly surprised with the community I found (at Illinois),” Garbelotto said. “They root for you and want you to succeed.” ■

By Rick Partin, School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics, and the College of LAS

(Portrait photo courtesy of Edgar Garbelotto.)



In many societies, teenagers are repeatedly told that teens are more likely than younger children to take risks, ignore their parents, skip schoolwork, and succumb to bad influences. But stereotypes are not destiny, a new study suggests.

In the study, reported in the journal *Child Development*, researchers talked with students about the “stereotypes adults hold about teens,” then suggested that the teenage years are in fact a time when youth take on greater responsibility. The researchers asked the students to describe specific examples of teens behaving responsibly at home, at school, and elsewhere. They tracked how the students thought about teens and how they conducted themselves after this intervention, comparing them with control groups tasked only with describing teen behavior.

COUNTERING STEREOTYPES ABOUT TEENS can change their behavior

Research details a path to improved attitudes and test results



Eva Pomerantz

University of Illinois psychology professor **Eva Pomerantz** conducted the research with Yang Qu, a former U of I graduate student and a professor at Northwestern University; and Guohong Wu, a professor at Fudan University in Shanghai.

In the first of two studies, which involved 124 students from two middle schools in Shanghai, with one control group and one intervention group per school, “we found that we can change students’ ideas about teens,” Pomerantz said.

In the second study, the team looked at 319 students from three middle schools, again with matched control groups.

“After this very brief intervention, we had students in the intervention group saying, ‘I paid more attention in school; I took part in more discussions; I did my homework more; I didn’t hang out with kids who get in trouble; I didn’t lie and I didn’t cheat,’” Pomerantz said. The students in the control groups did not report as much constructive behavior in the daily reports, however.

“We now know that changing students’ stereotypes about teens can influence their behavior – in the short term,” Pomerantz said. “The big question is: Could we develop a program for long-term change?” ■

By Diana Yates, U of I News Bureau





Trelease Woods

Centuries-old forest offers lessons to students and professors alike

One morning last summer, a half dozen Illinois students climbed into cars and drove east of campus. They passed a few miles of houses and farmland before they turned onto a country road and parked near something unusual, at least for these parts. It was a forest. »

By Dave Evensen (Photo by Jesse Wallace.)

Trelease Woods

They put on their boots. They had a lot of work to do—and that’s an understatement, on the scale of giving someone a straw and saying, “We have a lot of work to do before we empty this pool.” The students’ job was to document every single tree in that forest, from saplings angling for sunlight to stately giants with trunks more than a meter in diameter.

There’s a unique kind of magnetism emanating from Trelease Woods. Partly because of its close proximity to the University of Illinois, which owns it, and partly because it’s so old and rare, the 60-some acres of woodland is one of the most-researched tracts of forest in the world.

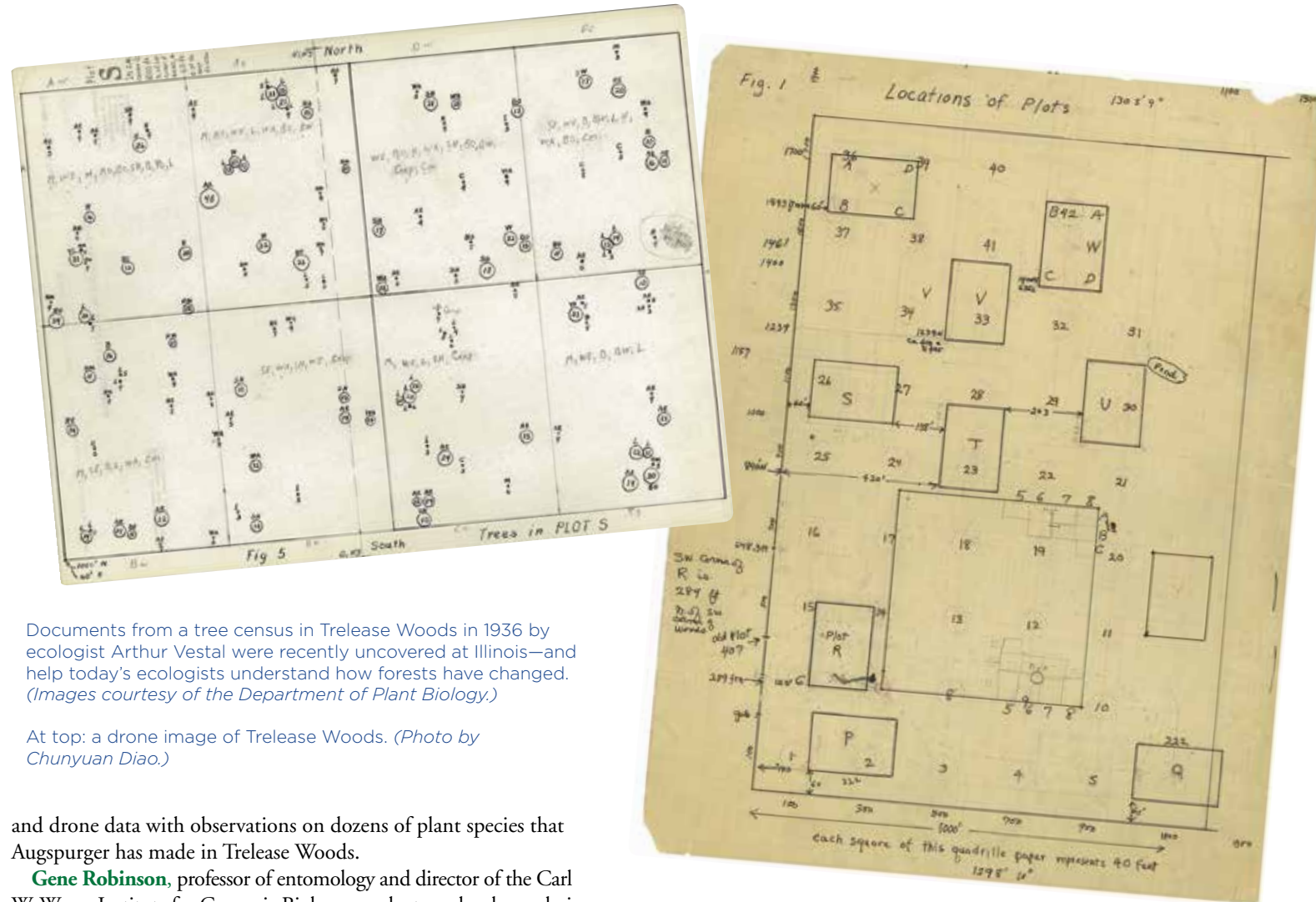
Nobody really knows how old it is, other than it pre-dates the United States as we know it. Trelease Woods is one of the last remaining fragments of the Big Grove, a prairie forest that existed for centuries in east-central Illinois before white settlers arrived in the early 1800s. Most of the Big Grove subsequently fell to loggers, but somehow Trelease Woods eluded the axe until 1917, when it was acquired by the university. Today it’s managed by the University of Illinois Committee on Natural Areas, and it has much to offer researchers and students.

Named for William Trelease, an eminent early 20th century botany professor at Illinois, Trelease Woods is host to several classes each year, from integrative biology to civil and environmental engineering. It’s the site of numerous, important research projects on topics ranging from butterfly ecology to mosquito control and genetics.



With trees an estimated 400-500 years old, Trelease Woods, located a few miles from campus, is one of the most-researched forests in the world. (Photo by Jesse Wallace.)

Carol Augspurger, for example, professor emeritus of plant biology, has been visiting Trelease Woods every week for 27 years to study the effects of climate change on forest phenology: the timing of leaf budding, expansion, coloration, and dropping. She collaborates with **Chunyuan Diao**, professor of geography and geographic information science (GIS), to compare satellite



Documents from a tree census in Trelease Woods in 1936 by ecologist Arthur Vestal were recently uncovered at Illinois—and help today’s ecologists understand how forests have changed. (Images courtesy of the Department of Plant Biology.)

At top: a drone image of Trelease Woods. (Photo by Chunyuan Diao.)

and drone data with observations on dozens of plant species that Augspurger has made in Trelease Woods.

Gene Robinson, professor of entomology and director of the Carl W. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, conducts molecular analysis on bees in Trelease Woods. The researchers are interested in identifying genes that orchestrate changes in social behavior and genes whose activity are affected by changes in the social environment.

“Trelease Woods,” Robinson said, “has been integral to our lab’s success.”

There’s also much to be learned from Trelease Woods about forest ecology. That’s why the students were there that morning last summer—and many mornings after that. They were collecting data for a research project led by **Jim Dalling**, head of the Department of Plant Biology, and **Jennifer Fraterrigo**, professor of natural resources and environmental sciences in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

If you had joined them, however, you might get the feeling that this research touched on something deeper than plotting coordinates and measuring tree diameters. Maybe you’d sense it before you even reached the tree line and peered into the dark, green gloom, and heard the creak of trunks, the scream of a hawk, or the knocking of a red-headed woodpecker on a hickory. Maybe

you’d sense it when you spotted the shadows of behemoths: massive bur and chinkapin oaks, some of which were saplings about the time that Galileo was arrested for arguing that Earth revolved around the sun.

A tree census

Dalling has been teaching ecology classes in Trelease Woods since 2006, but this particular tree census is part of his first research project there. Dalling’s background is in tropical forest research; prior to coming to Illinois, he participated in a census of 250,000 trees in Panama.

Recently, however, he came across departmental records about a tree census conducted in Trelease Woods in 1936 by eminent ecologist Arthur Vestal. It had thorough notes and locations for every tree in the forest. For someone interested in forest ecology, the old notes were invaluable.

“From Vestal’s work and an earlier paper in 1920, we know how many trees there were of each individual species and where they were distributed in the forest,” Dalling said. “There was probably nowhere else in North America where we can look back through time and see how the forest has changed.”

More tree censuses were conducted periodically in Trelease Woods from 1936 to 1948, and in 1964, 1976, 1986, and 2004. Some of the trees, Dalling said, appear to be 400 to 500 years old. Intrigued, Dalling, in collaboration with Fraterrigo, began a new tree census at Trelease Woods. The census, which will map and measure more than 40,000 trees, should be complete by this fall. The ecological “big data” generated by this project will be used by future students who visit Trelease Woods to study forest ecology.

They’re adding their research findings to ForestGEO, a worldwide network of researchers devoted to long-term studies of forests. The network includes more than 6 million trees in 70 research forests in 27 countries, but no sites have been documented for as long as Trelease Woods.

The researchers already know some things. For example, 80 years ago elm and ash trees filled Trelease Woods, but as they fell to disease and beetle infestation, sugar maples have taken their place. In 1922, there were 31 tree species in Trelease Woods; now there are about 20. And, Dalling notes, Trelease Woods has somehow been remarkably resilient to invasive species. There are very few non-native species in the woods.

Trelease Woods can also provide key insights into how carbon storage in deciduous forests has changed. As the number of fast-growing (and fast-decaying) sugar maples has increased, and the number of hard-wooded elms, ash, and oaks has decreased, Dalling said, the amount of carbon stored in the woods is on the decline.

There is, he said, a lot more to be learned.

Measuring the woods

The students filled buckets with their gear: iPads, tape measures, calipers, laser range finders, tags, hammers, nails, water resistant blue paint, and bug repellent. They split into teams, and although only 100 or 150 meters separated their work zones, the undergrowth in Trelease Woods was thick enough that most of the time they couldn’t see or hear each other.

(continued on page 18)



Laura Goralka uses a range finder to map the location of a tree. Students are on schedule to map more than 40,000 trees in Trelease Woods by fall. (Photo by Jesse Wallace.)

Trelease Woods

Guided by a grid system established by researchers in the 1930s, the teams worked their way methodically through the thickets, documenting every tree with a trunk wider than 1 cm at chest height. A team could cover about 600 square meters of forest each day—a decent-sized patch of woods, but just a fraction of the roughly 250,000 square meters that make up Trelease Woods.

They identified trees—as time went on, their printed tree guides became less and less necessary—and measured trunks with tape measures or calipers. They plotted locations using range finders, documented each tree in an iPad, tagged them, and marked them with a touch of blue paint.

As they worked, they learned other lessons from Trelease Woods: Teamwork, the nitty gritty (and sometimes creepy, crawly) realities of field research, and how to be precise and accurate in the face of the organic chaos that is an ancient forest.

April Wendling, who recently earned dual bachelor's degrees in Earth, society, and environmental sustainability and GIS, said that she's learning tree species identification skills, how to do field work, and other knowledge applicable to other labs and jobs.

"I grew up sheltered in the Chicago suburbs, so this is a new experience," she said. "I'm enjoying it. I'm getting torn up by mosquitos, but I'm enjoying it."

It turns out that counting trees is a good way to learn appreciation for the woods. For **Alan Sherrill**, a senior majoring in natural resources and environmental science and minoring in GIS, working in the woods is an unexpected life development. He grew up playing videogames and working in fast food restaurants, but now he speaks about the forest with an environmental consciousness that might have made John Muir smile.

"Something like a tree falling can happen, and then there's a succession. It opens up the light and allows undergrowth to grow.

Soon there's a meadow of flowers because of the opening," Sherrill said. "It's crazy how things can change so rapidly from a tree falling in the woods."

Nearby, **Catarina Kim**, a sophomore in integrative biology honors, and **Laura Goralka**, a senior in integrative biology, plotted their way through the trees. Kim wants to someday pursue a

career in animal ecology and conservation; Goralka wants to pursue nursing.

"It's not my career path," Goralka said, of the tree census, "but it's definitely about the experience of working in a lab and working with people. I'm thinking about being a research nurse."

Kim said this is one of her first jobs. "I think I'm learning how to take very precise and accurate data, and also working with a team, which is something I think is great," she said.

The pair made good progress as the morning wore on, but small things began to occur that reminded them of the still significant gap between their world and this one. They stumbled across a deer carcass; a wicked-looking spider temporarily delayed a trunk measurement. As they sought their bearings, Kim pointed toward an old research marker pounded into the forest floor.

"Do you see that yellow post?" Kim said. Goralka squinted into the underbrush, but the light was diffuse, and the angles and colors presented by the woods were strange. Try as she might, Goralka couldn't see it, even though it was just a few yards away. ■



April Wendling and Alan Sherrill measure tree trunks and map locations in Trelease Woods. Students said that the tree census has deepened their appreciation and understanding of forest ecology. (Photo by Jesse Wallace.)

Editor's note: To watch a video about the Trelease Woods tree census, visit go.las.illinois.edu/TreleaseWoodsVideo.

Study: 87 percent of LAS graduates land jobs or other opportunities soon after commencement



New graduates from the College of LAS

continue to be successful at securing a first destination soon after graduation, according to an analysis of alumni at Illinois. Those who have landed jobs are also drawing larger salaries for their work.

According to the **Illini Success initiative**, a campuswide effort to gather career-related information about recently graduated bachelor's degree recipients, 87 percent of LAS graduates from the 2017-18 academic year secured a first destination within six months of graduation. First destinations include employment, continuing education, or volunteer/service positions.

By comparison, the percentage of graduates securing a first destination within six months of graduation stood at 86 percent in 2016-17 and 83 percent in 2015-16. Additionally, the average full time salary of LAS graduates within six months of graduation was \$55,325 in 2017-18. The median signing bonus was \$5,000. The salary figure is third among colleges on campus, after the College of Engineering and Gies Business.

The numbers reflect alumni who graduated during the August 2017, December 2017, and May 2018 graduations. The results

come from surveys, employer and college reports, and the LinkedIn social media network. The Illini Success initiative was able to gather career information on 2,189 of the 3,162 LAS graduates from 2017-18.

"This year's report indicates that our graduates continue to successfully move to the next stages of their careers, whether they choose employment, more education, or service," said **Feng Sheng Hu**, the Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS. "Our LAS graduates leave campus with a strong foundation that will help them pursue the careers of their dreams."

The Illini Success initiative is spearheaded by The Career Center, but it receives support from units all across campus. Career data has important implications, from addressing the questions and concerns of prospective students to answering accreditors who are measuring institutional quality. ■

By Dave Evensen

Editor's note: Find more Illini Success numbers at go.las.illinois.edu/IlliniSuccessFall19

Seeing the deeper value in

GOLD

The **GOLD NANOCRYSTALS** created by Catherine Murphy carry huge potential

By *Dave Evensen*



Photo courtesy of Catherine Murphy.

The gold nanoparticles created by **Catherine Murphy**, the Larry R. Faulkner Endowed Chair in Chemistry, range in size from 5 to 100 nanometers. To get an idea how small that is, consider this: Your fingernails grow about 1 nanometer per second.

These nanoparticles' optical properties have incredible potential in fields from green energy to fighting disease. Murphy is renowned for her pioneering research in this area of inorganic chemistry. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and she was named to the Clarivate Analytics Highly Cited Researchers list for being one of the world's most influential scientists. In October, Murphy will be inducted as a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, one of the oldest honorary societies in the nation.

How long have you been at the University of Illinois?

I've been here for nine years as a faculty member and four years as an undergraduate (Editor's note: Murphy earned bachelor's degrees in chemistry and biochemistry from Illinois in 1986).

What are you currently researching?

In my lab we make nanocrystals of gold, control their size and shape and therefore optical properties. We do a lot of surface chemistry on them and are developing them for sensors, bioimaging agents, and photothermal therapeutics.

What is the impact of your research?

We want nanotechnology to save the world, one particle at a time! For my particular work, some of the lines of research we are working on might be able to help with neurodegenerative disease.

What is your most significant achievement?

Our past work, in which we developed good procedures for making our nanomaterials, has been widely adopted around the world and has been commercialized. The work we are doing right now is always the most exciting work to me! Right now we have projects on controlling cell behavior with nanoparticles and controlling the molecular display on nanoparticle surfaces. ■



Vivid volcano images in Sir William Hamilton's book were painted by Italian artist Pietro Fabris.

THE ART OF Mount Vesuvius

The eruptions of the Mount Vesuvius volcano in the 1760s and 1770s set off a public fascination with volcanoes. Sir William Hamilton, the British ambassador to Naples at the time, studied the volcano extensively and wrote one of the most celebrated and beautiful books on Mount Vesuvius.

The Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois has acquired an edition of Hamilton's book, "Campi Phlegraei," which is Latin for "fields of fire."

The library purchased the book with gift money donated by Jim (BS, '66, business; MS, '67, management) and Lionelle (BA, '66, English; MS, '67, library science) Elsesser of St. Louis, who are supporters of the University Library. The Elsessers made a \$500,000 donation to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library to be used for materials for special collections. "Campi Phlegraei" was purchased in fall 2018.

"It's the most beautiful book ever published on the volcano, a gorgeous scientific treatise of the 18th century. It's an absolute prize," said **Gillen D'Arcy Wood**, a U of I English professor who specializes in late 18th- and early 19th-century literature and has written a book on the massive 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia.

"We have a really great collection, but going through the literature, we realized we didn't have this monumental work," said Adam Doskey, a curator in the rare books library. "It was a milestone in the study of volcanoes."

The library purchased its copy from a New York dealer. Doskey estimates fewer than 100 copies of the book exist today. There are two other copies in Illinois, at the Newberry Library in Chicago and at the University of Chicago.

Hamilton's book spurred the public fascination with volcanoes and made Mount Vesuvius a must-see stop on the European Grand Tour for upper-class Englishmen. The volcano was a cultural phenomenon as well as a geological one, Wood said. ■



Illinois obtains a celebrated rare book on one of the world's most famous volcanoes

By *Jodi Heckel, U of I News Bureau*

A deeper level of GEOGRAPHY



Growths in technology enable geographers to better understand some of the most complex landscapes of all: human societies.

By Heather Schlitz

Mei-Po Kwan had spent years using research methods that some believed to be incompatible before she stood on a sidewalk in Humboldt Park, Illinois, arming people with daily activity diaries, sound level monitors, and pollutant sensors—tools to map the patterns of their lives and what they were exposed to.

The professor of geography and geographic information science tracked her research subjects' daily movement, emotions, and the measurements collected by the sensors to analyze how they were impacted by social and environmental stressors. Then, she and her colleagues resorted to another, less technological research method: They interviewed them.

Kwan's research falls into the field of hybrid geography, which goes beyond the understanding of research methods as quantitative or qualitative. To many, geography is a physical science, defined by surveyors poised behind tripods, Rand McNally road maps—or maybe GPS apps on smartphones.

Over just the past few years, however, with the rise of supercomputing, data science, global positioning satellites, and other technology, along with old-fashioned interviews, the work

of geographers is revealing mountains of new and distinct insights into not only our environment, but also human behavior.

In Kwan's case, hybrid geography merges qualitative geography—part of which studies human behavior—and quantitative geography—a numerical, statistics-driven approach—which were traditionally separated in most geography departments. Reviewers and editors at prominent journals were telling Kwan to limit herself to one or the other.

She saw major flaws with that divide, however.

"When attempting to solve major problems like poverty, lacking food, climate change, I don't think just engineering scientists can be sufficient," Kwan said. "You also need social scientists and scholars from other fields who can complement them. They can work together to solve major issues."

She began to conduct several well-received studies using hybrid geography. Among her innovations was the development and use of a new approach, called geo-narratives, to analyze narrative materials like life histories using geographic information systems. Such an approach involved equipping volunteers with journals and GPS devices. She

found that people's daily routes reflect their economic and social constraints and point to larger-scale issues in urban development.

Shaowen Wang, head of the Department of Geography & Geographic Information Science and founding director of the CyberGIS Center for Advanced Digital and Spatial Studies and a Romano Professorial Scholar, thinks the field of geography is as old as music, but the vast pools of data available through the modern digital transformation are giving geography a dramatically new tune.

At Illinois, the Department of Geography was renamed the Department of Geography & Geographic Information Sciences (GGIS) in 2012 to better represent the field's explosive growth. In the 1980s, GIS software could only run on highly specialized computer workstations. Now, cyberGIS—a rapidly growing field pioneered by Wang and his collaborators—is pushing GIS into pervasive cyber environments and harnessing big data and high-performance computing to broaden discovery and innovation across many domains.

Wang has a world map in his office covered with colorful pins, representing the places he's traveled. While he continues to travel, with the sheer quantity and variety of geospatial data available to analyze, Wang said he rarely works in the field anymore. Today, Wang traffics in terabytes and petabytes.

For example, he's used big data and created advanced cyberinfrastructure to analyze how social media Tweets can predict the spread of the flu, and create computer simulation models for mass emergency evacuations.

"I still feel like we're scratching the surface," Wang said. "I'm feeling excited, but I'm also feeling like I wish I could be cloned so I could do more. So much is happening."

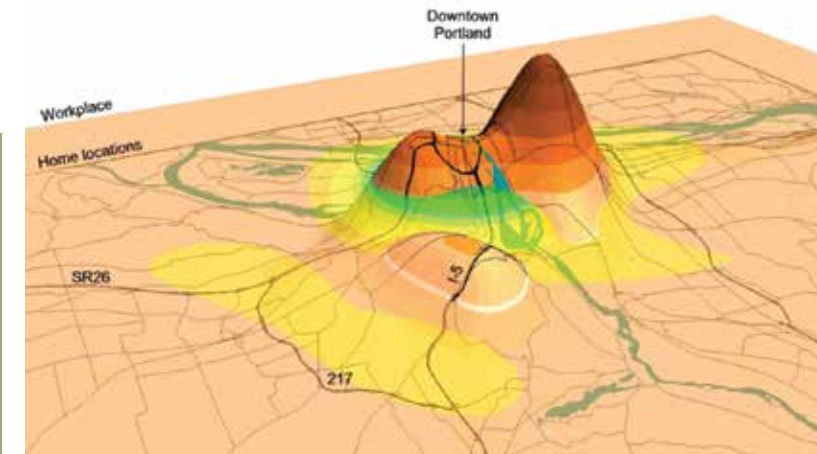
Bruce Rhoads, professor of GGIS, is still amazed by how technological capabilities have improved in his field. As the capabilities have improved, the scope of his research has expanded into the social sciences.

Rhoads specializes in the dynamics of rivers and the movement of sediment across landscapes. He and his colleague, **Jim Best**, professor of geology and GGIS, use a multi-beam sonar device to map the bottom of rivers when water reaches the top of the banks and the flow rearranges the river bed.

The device allows Rhoads and Best to "see through" the water to understand processes normally obscured by deep flow. By rapidly producing rainbow-colored 3D images of the changing bottom, the device shows how the river moves sediment and shapes its channel.

Rhoads and other scientists, including colleague **David Wilson**, professor of GGIS, have combined research methods to address an issue urban and suburban neighborhoods care about: beautiful, healthy, and stable rivers.

"A key area of research in river science is to examine the ways in which people manage rivers and the extent to which scientific information on the ecology, hydrology, and geomorphology of rivers plays a role in that management," Rhoads said. "This type of research lies at the interface between the natural and social sciences."



Using activity-diary entries from more than 10,000 people, Mei-Po Kwan created a 3D density surface image of home and employment locations in Portland, Oregon.

He added: "Trying to bring together very different ways of thinking and very different ways of doing analysis is still something we're trying to accomplish within geography," Rhoads said. "It's not an easy problem."

Murugesu Sivapalan, professor of GGIS and civil and environmental engineering, founded the field of socio-hydrology, a field that uses a combination of natural and social sciences to address the myriad problems related to water. Sivapalan has won awards for innovating new ways for policy makers to consider the interactions between water and people.

"The field is quite exciting because we clearly saw the need," Sivapalan said. "There are problems that are being solved wrongly because of the lack of involvement of social and human aspects."

In Sivapalan's childhood home in the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka, for example, the government decided to jumpstart the country's economy by expanding agriculture. The subsequent uptick in water usage drew too much water from the already-dry region, causing saltwater from the Indian Ocean to leak into the ground. Pesticides and fertilizer sprayed onto the massive rice, tea, and coconut plantations also permeated into the ground, igniting concerns about the safety of the drinking water.

Sivapalan criticized short-term solutions, such as piping water in from other areas, as temporary bandages.

"They are very narrow engineering solutions, and they're not addressing the core issues which I warned about," Sivapalan said. "Ten years later something else will be coming because they're not looking at the root causes of the problems. A sustainable solution requires long-term, visionary thinking."

Sivapalan is confident that solutions coming from the field of socio-hydrology will have staying power. After only seven years, the field has graduated 30 doctoral students and produced more than 160 research papers.

"It's especially exciting to see young people coming in. Socio-hydrology is going to stay for a long time," Sivapalan said. "There's a real need for trained people to push the field forward and really help solve problems." ■

(Opposite main) Using GIS data, Mei-Po Kwan rendered 3D images of more than 22,000 commercial and industrial parcels in downtown Portland, Oregon. (Opposite lower left) FluMapper, an application created by CyberGIS at Illinois, demonstrated how massive amounts of social media data can help understand the risk of flu.



The making of a NATIONAL PARK

By Craig Chamberlain, U of I News Bureau

INDIANA DUNES was recently named a national park, the newest in the country. A professor explains how it happened.



There's now a national park in Indiana at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Illinois political science professor **Robert Pahre** studies and teaches the politics around national parks, often using Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as a classroom.

Why wasn't Indiana Dunes National Park created sooner?

The idea dates to 1916, the same year Congress created the National Park Service. Director Stephen T. Mather wanted to add parks east of the Mississippi River as a way to broaden political support for his new agency. A lot of people in the Chicago area saw the Dunes as worthy of being a national park. Local politicians were not convinced. They thought the sand dunes might be valuable for industry. Park advocates ended up settling for the creation of Indiana Dunes State Park in 1925. The national lakeshore, on land surrounding and beyond the state park, came four decades later.

What makes Indiana Dunes worthy of national park status?

A national monument generally protects just one thing, such as Devils Tower in Wyoming or Capulin Volcano in New Mexico. A national seashore or lakeshore has mostly recreational resources. A national park generally has several different kinds of resources, such as Yellowstone's geology, wildlife, and wilderness. Indiana Dunes has remarkable biodiversity. The United States has more than 400 National Park Service units, and Indiana Dunes is generally listed among the top five or 10 in biodiversity.

Why did the national park designation happen now?

There's a wide range of people in the region who wanted a national park. Even the heavy industry of steel mills, power plants, and the Port of Indiana like the quality of life that comes from being next to a national park. A regional plan, the Marquette Plan, sees the natural beauty of the area as part of a community where people want to work and live. That vision helped provide the political support for the national park designation. ■

A new LIGHT on Learning

THE SCHOOL OF MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR BIOLOGY CREATES AN INSPIRING NEW SPACE FOR INSTRUCTION AND ADVISING

By Abby Paeth



(Photos by BLDD Architects.)

Katie Frye, a teaching assistant for MCB 150, enjoys engaging, active learning classrooms, and other advanced facilities for her students. That's because Frye, a graduate student in the Department of Microbiology, conducts her office hours and teaches in the learning center located in Burrill Hall. The School of Molecular and Cellular Biology Learning Center for Instruction and Advising was completed in fall 2018 as part of a \$5.2 million renovation that turned the former Biology Library into a 21st century learning environment.

"It's amazing," Frye said. "I love everything about this new learning center and the new classrooms. They're so much better than what we used to have."

Milan Bagchi, director of MCB and the Deborah Paul Endowed Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology, said he

thinks the learning center has enhanced the student experience.

"This welcoming and aesthetically pleasing space has really enhanced the student experience at the university," Bagchi said.

The learning center was created after the university decided to close the Biology Library, with the book collections moved to the Funk Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Library and other sections of the University Library. After that decision, the School of MCB proposed to convert it into the learning center.

The 12,000 square-foot learning center is four floors and includes a 30-station computer classroom, a free-form seating area for relaxed working, and four smaller rooms with glass walls for the Writer's Workshop, conflict exams, small group work, and meetings.

Bagchi estimates the learning center can accommodate about 200 students, advisors, instructors, and faculty members at any one time.

The center also houses the MCB Advising Suite, six active learning classrooms, and the MCB Instructional Program Office.

Melissa Michael, assistant director for undergraduate instruction for MCB, said the unveiling of this new learning center represents the culmination of more than a decade of planning.

"Now students can attend class, see an academic advisor, attend office hours, attend a workshop, study or meet friends to work on a project all in the same building," Michael said. "We are hopeful that this will make life a little easier for our students and will help to foster a sense of community." ■

Classics, adventure, and a renowned scholar

William Oldfather's personality—and affinity for hiking—brought the university together during hard times



It's tempting to think of professors of days gone by as stiff as the stone from which their busts are often hewn. But **William Abbot Oldfather** was not—as comedian Tom Lehrer once famously lampooned college elites—an “ivy covered professor in ivy covered halls.” He was adventurous, opinionated, passionate, and driven. And before his untimely death in 1945, he had a major impact on in his field, becoming one of the greatest American classical scholars.

The son of Presbyterian missionaries, Oldfather was born in what is now modern-day Iran in 1880. He was a descendent of Daniel Boone on his mother's side, which seems almost evident from his love of adventure. He canoed rivers of the Midwest and Canada, the lakes of Alaska, and once embarked on a trip on the Boneyard Creek that literally took him from his backyard on Green Street in Urbana, Illinois, to the Wabash River and beyond.

When he wasn't on the water, he could often be found on foot, enjoying long hikes. It wasn't unusual for him to walk 35 miles a day, and during his studies of Greece he is said to have “tramped” more than 1,000 miles.

His educational journey took him from Hanover College in Indiana, to a master's degree at Harvard, and a PhD at the University of Munich, where he was greatly influenced by some of the leading

classicists of his day. In 1909 he arrived at the University of Illinois where he would remain until the end of his career, becoming a full professor in 1915 and the head of the Department of Classics in 1926.

By all accounts, Oldfather, who married and had two daughters, was a passionate professor, with penetrating eyes, a swinging stride, and a “growling laugh” who “gripped the hearers with intellectual excitement.” Where others merely lectured, he enlivened, directing Greek plays and teaching a popular course on ancient sports that included student track and field games on the Quad.

Over the years, he became one of the greatest driving forces for research among the classical scholars of the 20th century and a man whose methods of studying literature changed the field. Outside the confines of the classroom, however, he served another important role on campus. Through the Saturday Hikers' Club, which he founded shortly after his arrival at the U of I, Oldfather provided a unifying spirit that would help guide the university through two world wars and a global depression.

According to the first edition of *The Saturday Hikers*, a club newsletter published in 1944, the club was a group of outdoor-loving men from the university that included “distinguished scholars and scientists whose academic activities are described on many pages of ‘Who's Who’ and in the ‘American men of Sciences.’”

Every Saturday at 2 p.m. regardless of the weather, they arrived at Oldfather's house at 804 W. Green St. in Urbana wearing their roughest clothes in anticipation of long day of softball, camp-fire cookouts, and free-flowing discussions that covered topics from the

role of religion in institutions to the effects of depopulation after the war and the atomic bomb. These fireside chats allowed some of the leaders of the university to ponder the great questions of the day in an informal, inter-departmental exchange.

In the club, there was no artifice or formality, although, typical of leadership roles in the era, members of the group were predominantly male. Of the 164 members mentioned in that first edition, there were deans, provosts, and professors from nearly every field of study, with descriptions that extolled not their scholarly achievements, but their skills as a left-handed hitter, their ability to harmonize, or their tendency to carbonize a “dandy steak.” Bill, as Oldfather was recorded in the group's adventures, was known for his tricky throw, strong convictions, “and still stronger language.”

Of course, it's Oldfather's reputation as a renowned classicist for which he will most be remembered. When he wasn't publishing articles, conducting research, or mentoring a generation of doctoral students, he was hard at work making the Classics Library at Illinois a renowned center for classical study. Through skillful acquisition, he amassed one of the top three collections of its kind in the nation, on par with those found at Harvard and Berkeley. He also helped make Illinois a center for philological inquiry, which studies how



The *Parade of Wooden Hikers*, a watercolor by former zoology professor Richard Kudo, depicts the Saturday Hikers Club in 1944. William Oldfather is in the lead. (Images courtesy of the University of Illinois Archives.)

literature and language developed.

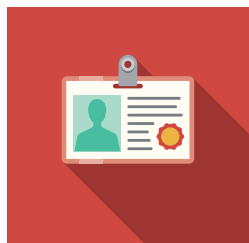
In an article published almost 70 years after his death, **Ariana Traill**, professor in the Department of Classics, said, “Oldfather's masterly text and translation of the philosopher Epictetus is on every faculty member's shelf and his portrait still hangs on the wall, reminding students of his connection to our program.”

Had he been one of those “ivory covered professors in ivory covered halls,” it's possible he may have yet made many contributions to the field that he loved, but ultimately his love for adventure led to a different end. According to news reports, on Sunday May 27, 1945, William Abbot Oldfather died while attempting to “shoot the dam” in his canoe on the Salt Fork River, just north of Homer, Illinois. In his final moments, he left the world just as he lived it—the captain of his own ship, rushing forward in eager anticipation of what could be discovered just beyond the horizon. He was 64. ■

By John Turner

The power of EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Some **89 percent** of recent Illinois graduates participated in internships, study abroad, research projects, and other forms of experiential learning as a student—and **36 percent** said the experience led directly to a job. Here are some stats on experiential learning in LAS.



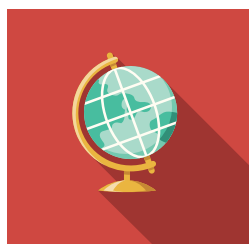
252

STUDENT INTERN PLACEMENTS through Applied Technologies for Learning in the Arts and Sciences (ATLAS) (since Summer 2018)



120

STUDENT INTERNS employed to help conduct the Life + Career Design Initiative in 2018-19



LAS STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD:

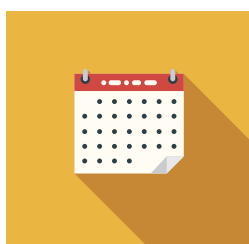
2014-15: **488** | 2016-17: **489**
2015-16: **530** | 2017-18: **544**

2018-19: **617**



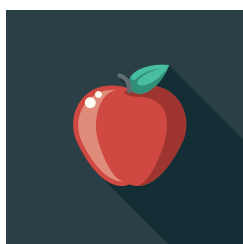
18

LAS-SPONSORED SEMESTER-LENGTH study abroad programs in 2018-19



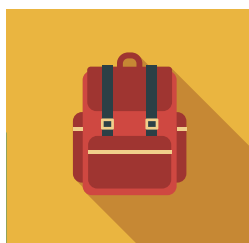
409

LAS students **STUDYING ABROAD** for a **SEMESTER OR LONGER** in 2018-19



12

LAS FACULTY-LED courses abroad in 2018-19



208

LAS students **STUDYING ABROAD** for a **SHORT-TERM OR FACULTY-LED PROGRAM** in 2018-19



15,978

Sum of **UNDERGRADUATES** (LAS and non-LAS students) enrolled in **RESEARCH-RELATED** LAS courses in 2018-19

Sources: ATLAS, LAS International Programs, LAS Career Development, Illini Success Initiative

LEARN FROM LAS ALUMNI



>> LAS.ILLINOIS.EDU/ALUMNI/EXPERTS

The LAS alumni community is almost 172,000 strong and filled with successful professionals in virtually every field. Check out the college's series of short videos where alumni share ideas about how to succeed in your career.

Pictured here: **Steven Thayer (BA, '88, economics)** shares his advice for starting a business. Steven is a founding partner at Handler Thayer, LLP, and has extensive entrepreneurial experience.

ENGAGE AND CELEBRATE ALUMNI

The **LAS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** is essential to connecting alumni with the College of LAS. Consider applying for the board of directors, or nominate an inspiring individual for an alumni award. go.las.illinois.edu/alumni-volunteer19

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EMPOWERING OTHERS BY EMPOWERING HERSELF

NIDHI SHASTRI has been a writer, a speaker, a newscaster, and a podcaster devoted to helping those who are underrepresented. But to help others find their voice, she had to find her own.

As a sophomore, she switched majors to political science and earth, society, and environmental sustainability. She began to learn the intricate ways that politics intertwined with the environment, and she took the lessons outside the classroom. Nidhi did everything from helping to create a national clean jobs report to raising support for orphans with disabilities, serving as a multicultural advocate for University Housing, and creating a podcast about the lives of African and Asian immigrants.

Nidhi is thankful for the Gary V. Kaiser and Patricia Kaiser Scholarship, which has allowed her to explore her field of study.

Visit go.las.illinois.edu/nidhi to read Nidhi's story and learn more about how scholarships give students like her the ability to empower others, and themselves.