

SYNTHESIS

Spring 2020



Scalpels & artists' brushes page 4

Footloose in medieval Europe page 7

Stories of the hills page 8

Hogwarts comes to Anderson page 10

Anderson University's College of Arts and Sciences

Higher education is crucial in difficult times

By Wayne Cox, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences



Before COVID-19 infected or killed anyone, we were already ill. Before Zoom became a verb, before social distancing killed body language, before we lost chance encounters to prearranged meetings, before restaurant menus were replaced by pull-down menus, and before we scanned documents instead of the rooms we walked into, we were already suffering from a partisan affliction in our public discourse toward many broad issues, including race, religion, politics, and even education.

Benjamin Franklin once noted that “the invention of the machine or the improvement of an implement is of more importance than a masterpiece by Raphael. . .” and that “nothing is good or beautiful but in the measure that it is useful.” This admiration for the practical and this distrust of non-essential things such as art and intellect comes from the Puritans, whose thought, like the floaters in our eyes, remains in our vision of the world even today.

Perhaps this is one reason why higher education, especially in the last 40 years, has become a means to an end, something mistrusted and over-priced, a hurdle to jump over on the way to success and financial gain. It’s no coincidence that online mega-universities such as Southern New Hampshire (135,000 students) and for-profit universities such as Phoenix (95,000 students) have become so popular. It’s no coincidence that scientists and even doctors are no longer listened to or trusted with issues such as climate change or virus containment. To many, higher education has become part of an investment strategy, not something that challenges us and leads us to us examine ourselves in order to lead meaningful lives and be engaged with each other civically and intellectually.

But we should remember that Puritans, for all of their injunctions against impractical, worldly pursuits also founded the first university in the country long before we were a country—Harvard in 1636. The first motto of Harvard wasn’t simply “Veritas” but “Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae,” meaning “Truth for Christ and the Church.” They knew that just as we should grow in spirit, we should also grow in intellect. Many would still suggest, as am I, that one can’t deepen significantly without the other.

That’s why universities such as Anderson University, places that still tie together both of these things, are even more crucial in difficult times. College graduates on average, as AU President Evans Whitaker recently pointed out, “earn twice that of high school grads over their lifetimes — almost \$2 million more.” And we should also think about what success means apart from financial gain, what it means in a time of crisis, and what in terms of civic engagement for the rest of our lives.

The long-term impact of this current crisis on all of us is unknown. What’s certain, however, is that normal will change. For the current generation of students, this will be especially profound. But there is no better way to connect the dots of the present to the picture of the future than by being in a place that helps you do just this. That’s what “synthesis” means: creating something new by connecting something that already exists. Higher education in places like AU has survived and adapted for so long because it’s not just a financial investment but a vaccination against mindless disengagement and division.

St. Francis tells us that we should “start by doing what’s necessary, then do what’s possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible,” and more than ever, higher education is necessary.

SYNTHESIS

Anderson University
Vol. 2, Issue 1 | Spring 2020

Dr. Wayne Cox
Dean, *College of Arts and Sciences*

Dr. Jim Haughey
Associate Dean, *College of Arts and Sciences*

Dr. Carrie Koenigstein
Associate Dean, *College of Arts and Sciences*

Robert Reeves
Chair, *Communication Department*

David Locke
Adjunct Professor,
Communication Department

In this issue

- AU's silent teachers inspire across disciplines **4**
- iAttended app makes keeping attendance easy **6**
- Historian studies dance, sin and gender in medieval Europe **7**
- Wilhem explores Appalachian writers **8**
- Literature course analyzes Harry Potter series **10**
- Synthesis magazine's first issue wins awards **12**
- Astronomy professor leaves legacy of caring **13**
- Anderson University in the time of COVID-19 **14**
- Connect Club helping campus see the beauty in differences **16**
- Meet the new faculty in CAS **18**
- Students study impact nature has on stress reduction **20**
- Research explores student social media use **21**
- Ecology Club impacts environment and lives **22**
- Communication student lands internship with L.A. studio **24**
- Soccer player synthesizes sport and psychology **25**
- Biochemistry student works to find cure for sister's muscular disorder **26**
- 2013 grad is Distinguished Young Alumnus **27**

SYNTHESIS STAFF



Emily Biggers



Tucker Black



Kayla Campbell



Grant Collins



Madeiline Cromer



Claire Douthit



Bianca Dragul



Austin Gardner



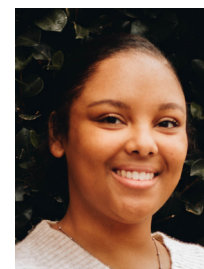
Caleb Madden



Caitlin Mayne



Emma Morris



Eden Smith



Gabrielle Tallman



Cloe Taylor



Bailey Westbrook

Photos by Emily Biggers

Scalpels & artists' brushes

AU's 'silent teachers' inspire students across disciplines

By Bianca Dragul

The room was cold but bright from the light that poured in from the large windows. One student lost track of time as her charcoal-smudged hand floated across the surface of her sketchbook. She looked closely at the forearm and sketched the details she saw.

Her subject? A "silent teacher" in Anderson University's on-campus cadaver lab.

Drawing students from the South Carolina School of the Arts recently joined science students to learn both science and art in the state-of-the-art lab. Professors and students use the phrase "silent teachers" to refer to individuals who have donated their bodies for teaching purposes after their deaths.

Both science and art students spent the fall semester researching the intricacies of the human body and came together to host the collaborative "Flesh and Bone" showcase to present findings from their studies.

Though participating in two distinct courses, both science and art students were able to make use of the lab for their individual research.

Carrie Koenigstein, associate dean of sciences, said the connection between fields helps students gain a greater perspective and reflects the university's effort to encourage collaboration between colleges.

Koenigstein said each semester, a small group of science students is able to participate in the Cadaver Lab Practicum, a course that allows students to select, research, and present on a specific anatomical system.

Science students make use of weekly lab hours to conduct research on cadavers. The lab and course are supervised by Nnenna Igwe, who has filled this role for three semesters.

Igwe said she teaches students to use dissection materials and prepares them to independently manage the lab space. "This is an experience you can only get if you're doing it yourself," she said.

Science students are actively learning in the cadaver lab, but they aren't the only ones conducting research.



Jo Carol Mitchell-Rogers, associate dean of the South Carolina School of the Arts, teaches an upper-level drawing class to art students that is centered around depicting the human body, with a focus on muscle, tissue, and bone structure.

Art students learn anatomy as part of the art class from Assistant Professor of Biology Anna Lee Travis. In assignments, individuals from the class draw what they learned about from the lab's skeletal model or cadavers they studied.

Mitchell-Rogers said students in her class are expected to master a technical understanding of the human body in their artistic work.

"(The students) have to transcend just illustration... The (drawings) have to be well composed; they have to be well-crafted," she said. "We've gotten some really interesting things."

The final project of the course requires students to complete four large-scale drawings of the human head and neck, torso, and either the leg and foot or

arm and hand. Each piece has two layers: one depicting skeletal structure and the other depicting tissue and musculature, said Mitchell-Rogers.

Art major Taylor Harrison said the class has helped her appreciate both science and art more.

“They overlap so much,” Harrison said, “and I think you don’t realize it until you bring both fields together.”

Harrison began her college career as a nursing major and remained in the program until her junior year when she began taking art classes and decided to change her major.

She now has a double concentration in painting and drawing and graphic design but has not forsaken her roots in the medical field.

Harrison said that bringing two different fields together allows individuals to accomplish more than they would apart.

“When you bring two different fields together...you realize that there’s so much significance in all of it and it becomes even more significant when you do bring them together. There’s so much more you can do,” said Harrison.

“You think they’re unlikely until you actually bring them together and realize that everything is connected. There are no boundaries,” she said. “It’s all the

same – just two different perspectives.”

“There were times that we were in [the cadaver lab] working with science students and it was just interesting because we were in there quietly drawing and they were in there quietly dissecting... we were working on the same cadaver with different purposes,” said Harrison, “but we were all studying; we were all learning.”

Harrison is not alone in her deep appreciation for the lessons taught by the silent

teachers. Biochemistry and dance double major Sofia Lawson participated in the Cadaver Lab Practicum during the first semester of her senior year.

Reflecting on her study of the central nervous system, Lawson said one of the most interesting components of the course was being able to use a hands-on approach.

“You truly learn so much more when you’re hands-on,” she said, “and you gain a greater appreciation of the human body.”

“All throughout anatomy and physiology and biology classes, we... see very small-scale components of tissues, but then to work with them on a larger scale and actually see where they are on the body...is really incredible,” Lawson said.

She added that conducting her research in the lab grew her appreciation of the “complexity of the human body.”

This collaborative effort, Lawson added, also helped her to appreciate both artistic and scientific perspectives of the body.

“It increases our awareness of different ways of thinking and viewing the world... we get so used to thinking one way due to what we’re studying,” said Lawson. “As a science major, I am used to thinking extremely critically all the time...to see into someone else’s mind through their artwork is pretty incredible.”

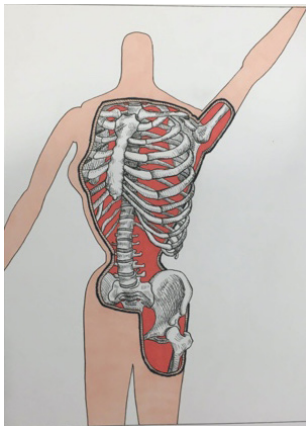
As someone who has danced since age 3, creative thinking is not foreign to Lawson. She said that seeing the art students’ work reminded her of the beauty of the body.

“I do think the human body is beautiful. It’s truly magnificent, but sometimes I forget that in my pursuit of understanding it,” said Lawson. “In my studies we focus so much on how (the body) works, what it does, why this does this... just to see it through a different lens is pretty incredible.”

Lawson said she would encourage students to look for opportunities for unlikely collaboration.

“Everybody sees the world in different ways and we need to be aware of how other people see the world because it can only enhance our mindset and expand our horizons,” she said.

“...it was just interesting because we were in there quietly drawing and they were in there quietly dissecting.”



One of art major Taylor Harrison’s projects compared actual human proportions to the unrealistic body image displayed by a Barbie doll.

Coding our troubles away

iAttended app makes keeping attendance easy

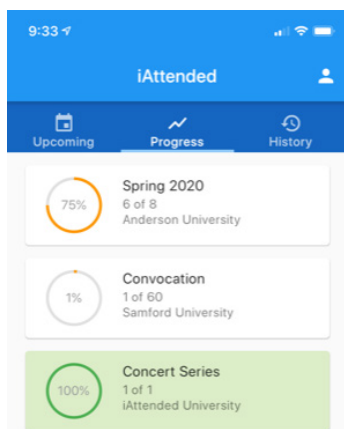
By Caleb Madden

A new app that allows students to easily record attendance for required events has been developed by an Anderson University professor.

The app, called iAttended, acts as a database that can record students' attendance at a campus event. Once a student downloads the app and signs into their Anderson University account, they are entered into the database and can get credit for events they attend.

iAttended, developed by Professor of Communication James Duncan, records attendance in three main ways. First, students can scan a QR code, a picture that holds a URL that allows a database to record attendance. Second, students can check via a location sensor. Third, students can enter a text code.

iAttended isn't just being used at AU. According to Duncan, who teaches app coding classes among other subjects, iAttended is also used by several other clients, including universities in Ohio and elsewhere in South Carolina.

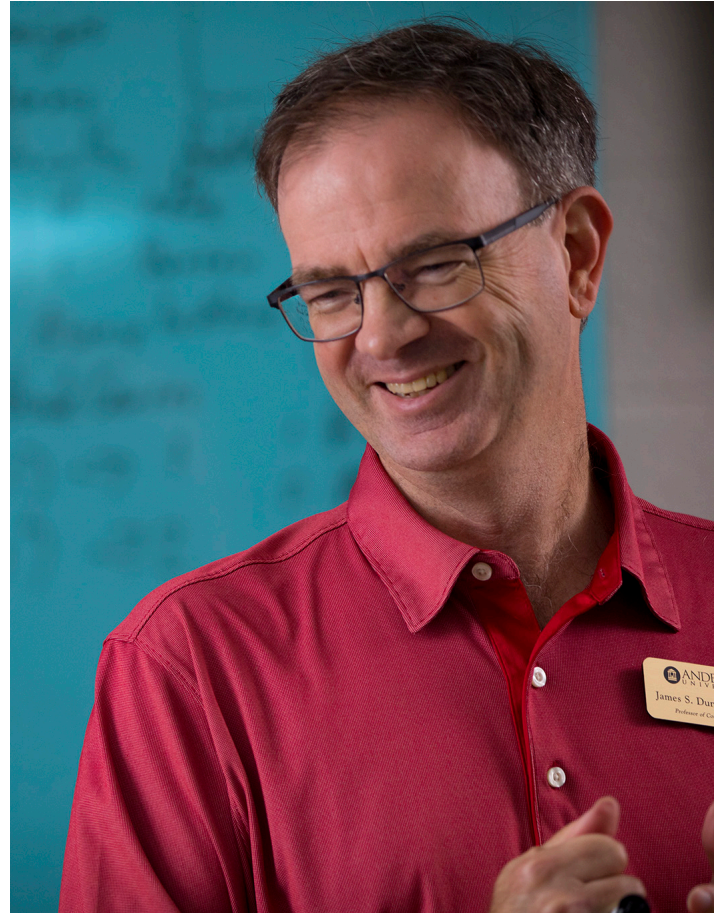


Duncan said the app began development in October 2018 and rolled out for everyday use in the fall semester of 2019. iAttended's primary purpose at AU is for recording chapel attendance. Students at Anderson University are required to attend eight chapel services a semester to graduate. The app makes the process of keeping track

of the requirement much easier.

Vice President of Christian Life Wes Brashier said he got the ball rolling on the development of the app because "the system that we have had was not working." Brashier said he and his team were facing issues with students not getting credit for the chapel services they attended.

"A lot of our hours every day, every week, were spent doing chapel credit revisions," Brashier said. Since the app rolled out, Brashier and his team have had a weight lifted off their shoulders.



James Duncan, professor of communication, developed the iAttended app. (Anderson University photo by Jason Jones)

"It solved the problem." Brashier said, "I'm like the Maytag Man. I have nothing to do." He said iAttended even saves money because his office doesn't have to pay part-time workers to help fix chapel attendance "mishaps."

Christian Life is not the only university entity that has benefited from the use of the app. The theater department used the app for recording attendance at their all-college meeting. According to Duncan, clients can use the app to keep attendance records for any number of things, including faculty meetings and staff meetings.

iAttended is not the first app developed by Duncan, who has been coding for 18 years. He also has a Shakespeare memorization app that helps actors memorize parts from the author's work.

Time to cut footloose?

Historian studies dance, sin, and gender in medieval Europe

By Grant Collins

Lynneth Renberg, an assistant professor of history at Anderson University, is hard at work researching and writing to combine two passions—medieval Europe and dance—into a single academic research writing project.

Renberg is writing a monograph based on her dissertation research for her doctorate at Baylor University, which she received in 2018. The project focuses on dance, transgression, and gender in England from about 1300-1600.



Photo by Holly Renberg

Lynneth Renberg

Renberg studies sermons, parish records, and other texts from medieval England to understand who was punished for dancing and what people were being taught to think about sin and dance.

“As a writer, my biggest problem is focus,” said Renberg. “So, writing and rewriting have involved kind of narrowing down until it says something meaningful as opposed to just listing a bunch of cool stuff.”

Since semester weeks are filled with classes, meetings, and the other responsibilities of being a professor, Renberg said she has been most productive over the summer, working about 50 hours a week.

She is on schedule to submit her monograph to a publisher this coming summer, commencing a lengthy revision process before it can be published, she said.

“The whole thing will be written by the end of the spring, but it will probably not see the light of day until another year and a half. That’s pretty standard for academic publishing,” Renberg said.

Although she studied dance growing up, Renberg first became interested in studying dance in medieval Europe while completing her master’s degree at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

“I never thought dance history was something I want-

ed to do. As an undergrad I didn’t even know it was something people studied,” Renberg said.

At St Andrews, she focused her master’s research on dance halls in England in the 1920s. “I kept running into these sermons and religious figures who kept preaching about how this is the worst thing to ever happen, how it is decaying the morality of our society,” said Renberg.

Wondering where this perception of dance originated, she traced the history.

“That’s how I ended up in the Middle Ages, looking at the questions of ‘How did we get from something that, in Scripture, can be positive or negative, to something that is pretty much entirely negative?’ and ‘Why is it pretty much always tied to sexual sin and often to women?’” Renberg said.

When her current research is finished, Renberg plans to pursue several other projects. Currently, she is starting to research how the Psalms were used to teach about the role of emotions in medieval worship.



Couples circling in a basse danse in a portion of “Dance at Herod’s Court,” an engraving circa 1490 by Israhel van Meckenem.



Stories of the hills

Unsplash photo by Justin Campbell

Wilhelm explores Appalachian writers

By Emma Morris

The walls of College of Arts and Sciences professor Randall Wilhelm’s office are surrounded by books. Among the names of legendary Southern writers included on his bookshelf is his own name.

Wilhelm, assistant professor of English, is editor of “The Ron Rash Reader” and co-editor of “Summoning the Dead: Essays on Ron Rash” and “Conversations with Robert Morgan.” He is currently editing his fourth book, “Community Across Time: Selected Essays of Robert Morgan.”

Wilhelm was born and raised in the hills of Clemson, South Carolina. While in graduate school at the University of Tennessee, he began studying Appalachian literature, a genre he defines as stories from the Appalachian mountain range that spans the Eastern United States.

“The hills were alive with music and stories,” he said.

Wilhelm discovered the works of bestselling Appalachian writers Ron Rash and Robert Morgan, and he has since become a prominent scholar of their work.

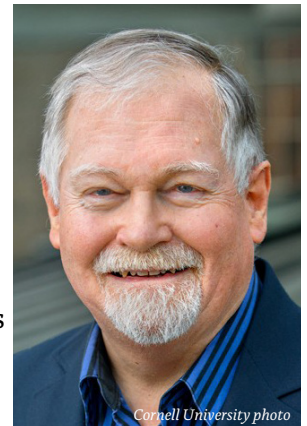


Randall Wilhelm

“Randall is an outstanding presence in the study of contemporary Southern and Appalachian writing,” said Morgan, a poet, fiction writer, and professor of English at Cornell University. “Many writers, such as myself and Ron Rash, owe him a substantial debt for the insights and range of his critical studies, editing, and lectures. His essays on my own work have shown me many things I had not realized before. Randall’s generosity is legendary, and his influence is inspiring.”

In addition to his four books, Wilhelm has published over 40 essays and has presented at over 30 national and international conferences from Mississippi to France. He is internationally renowned for his contribution to Southern and Appalachian literary studies.

“I’ve been extremely lucky to have such a dear friend and, also, a superb literary critic,” said Rash, a professor of Appalachian Studies at Western Carolina University and writer who has published numerous bestsellers including “Serena,” which was adapted into a film. “Randall is my ideal reader, and his writ-



Robert Morgan

ing on my fiction and poetry has been extremely important in garnering a readership in both the United States and overseas. Anderson University is extremely fortunate to have such an exceptional scholar on its faculty.”



Ron Rash

Wilhelm brings this scholarship into his classroom at Anderson University, teaching Appalachian and Southern works including those of Rash and Morgan.

“I bring in personal anecdotes and stories about the authors only to grant students an access hole into their work,” Wilhelm said. “The students can one day be them if they have the inclination and the perseverance. It’s important to show that these people are

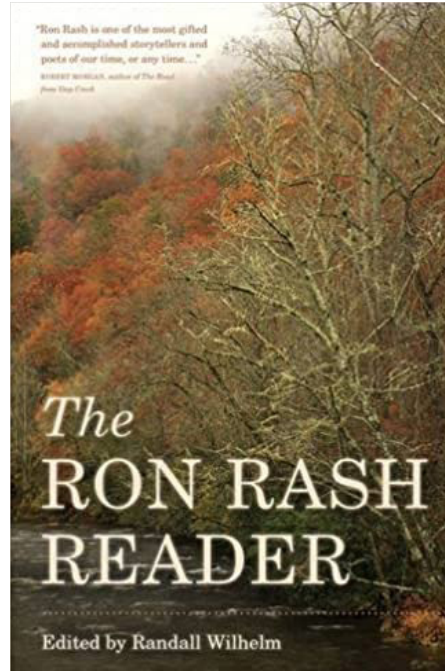
real people and they’re accessible.”

Wilhelm teaches Southern literature, and he even taught a special topics class on Appalachian literature a few years ago. Wilhelm also helped bring Rash to Anderson University in 2015 and 2019 for the annual Mims Lecture Series, an annual event hosted by the English department that brings notable writers to campus.

“The experience and privilege of being in Dr. Wilhelm’s Southern literature class shaped me both as a student of literature and as a writer,” said English major Lucy Kirkpatrick. “His passion for Southern literature (specifically Appalachian literature) is contagious. I can distinctly remember sitting in his class and realizing that I belong in the lineage of Southern writers whose work we were reading and that my own stories are worth telling.”

Anderson University awarded Wilhelm with the Faculty Scholar Award for fall 2020, a two-course release to help with his research.

“Known for his passion for Southern literature, Dr. Wilhelm brings such works to life in the classroom where students of this generation may learn and enjoy how the power of words can be used to capture the heart, mind, and soul of the human experience,” said Bob Hanley, English professor and chair of the English department. “A valued colleague and a champion for our profession, we appreciate his continued pursuit of excellence in academic writing and his



“The Ron Rash Reader” is one of four books Randall Wilhelm, assistant professor of English, has produced featuring the writing of Ron Rash and Robert Morgan.

desire to share with students the literary riches found in Southern literature.”

Wilhelm said it is important to him to invite students into Appalachian literature because it is an underrepresented area of writers who are often faced with a battery of stereotypes that are now being dismantled. He also said Appalachia is home to a rich ecosystem that has been stripped of its timber and minerals, and much of its literature focuses on the natural world.

“Appalachia has been a place that had so much natural wealth taken away, but the writing is its diamonds,” Wilhelm said.

His instruction and scholarship in Appalachian literature have shed a light on the region to his students at Anderson University and around the world.

“Over the years while I have known Randall Wilhelm I’ve been surprised again and again by his extraordinary energy, his erudition, and the depth of his insight into Southern and Appalachian literature, as well as his efforts to promote the work of modern and contemporary writers,” Morgan said. “Randall is an outstanding presence in the study of contemporary Southern and Appalachian writing.”

For Wilhelm, Appalachian literature is the stories of his home and his family. The stories of the hills are his retreat, a return to the stillness of nature and conversations without distractions. And Wilhelm is devoted to making sure these stories are penned and studied by generations to come, that these stories are never taken away.

Hogwarts comes to Anderson University

Literature course analyzes Harry Potter series

By Emma Morris

If you walk through Watkins Hall, you might hear the chatter of wizards, witches, and Muggles. But you will not find magic wands or flying broomsticks, only pencils gliding across notebook paper as students delve into the world of Harry Potter — history's bestselling book series that follows young wizard Harry Potter and his peers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

The seven-volume Harry Potter book series that many students grew up reading as children is now part of their college classroom at Anderson University. This is no mere fandom but an innovative literature class that teaches students to explore author J.K. Rowling's fictional world through a scholarly lens.

In the spring 2020 semester, 18 students from various majors studied the wildly popular series in the College of Arts and Sciences' first Harry Potter literature course. The course, coined "J.K. Rowling and Harry Potter," is a new section of ENG 219 Creative Inquiry Through Literature taught by Associate Professor of English Paige Ellisor-Catoe.



Paige Ellisor-Catoe

"A lot of the students taking the class have already read the series multiple times, are familiar with the characters, and could probably beat me at Harry Potter trivia," Ellisor-Catoe said. "But what they may not have done is move apart from their fan status to literary scholar status. One of the fun opportunities of this class is to show students that we can apply advanced critical thinking and analysis to works like these; it doesn't just have to be canonical staples like Shakespeare or the Canterbury Tales."

Creative Inquiry Through Literature satisfies the creative inquiry requirement of the university core curriculum, and the Harry Potter class offers students a unique spin on traditional literature courses.

Ellisor-Catoe said students read five of the seven novels in the series to gain an overview of Rowling's narrative arc. Rather than writing several lengthy



Students in ENG 219 Creative Inquiry Through Literature have the opportunity to apply literary analysis techniques to J.K. Rowling's popular series. (Photo by Paige Ellisor-Catoe)

literary essays or book reports, the class engaged in group inquiry and multimedia projects.

Students used advanced literary analysis to explore the young adult series, Ellisor-Catoe said. The class looked beyond plot to study character development and Rowling's creative choices.

"It's great to be a part of a class that is engaged and genuinely excited to read and discuss the material. It really helps facilitate meaningful discussion," said Asa Waters, a sophomore communication major who took the course. "And hearing all the different perspectives of my classmates and their insights on creative writing has been super interesting."

Although the Harry Potter novels are considered young adult fiction, the class opened doors for deeper discussions of themes including injustice, prejudice, abuse, and trauma. Ellisor-Catoe said that putting complex topics in the context of a magical world lets students probe real issues more fully from a different perspective.

“Even though it sounds kind of fun and escapist to talk about Harry Potter, it is actually scholarly, deep, interpretive work that is welcome in a lot of different fields,” Ellisor-Catoe said.

“It’s much more than just reading children’s books,” said Jenaë Walker, a senior biochemistry major who took the course. “Dr. Ellisor-Catoe has created an environment in our class that invites open discussion on topics such as social constructs and characterization, not only in the Harry Potter world but also in the one we live in.”

Ellisor-Catoe said Creative Inquiry Through Literature has brought a wave of excitement to the English department faculty and the general student body. The university core curriculum course steps away from literature survey courses to show students how rich literature can be, and this new model has been successful.

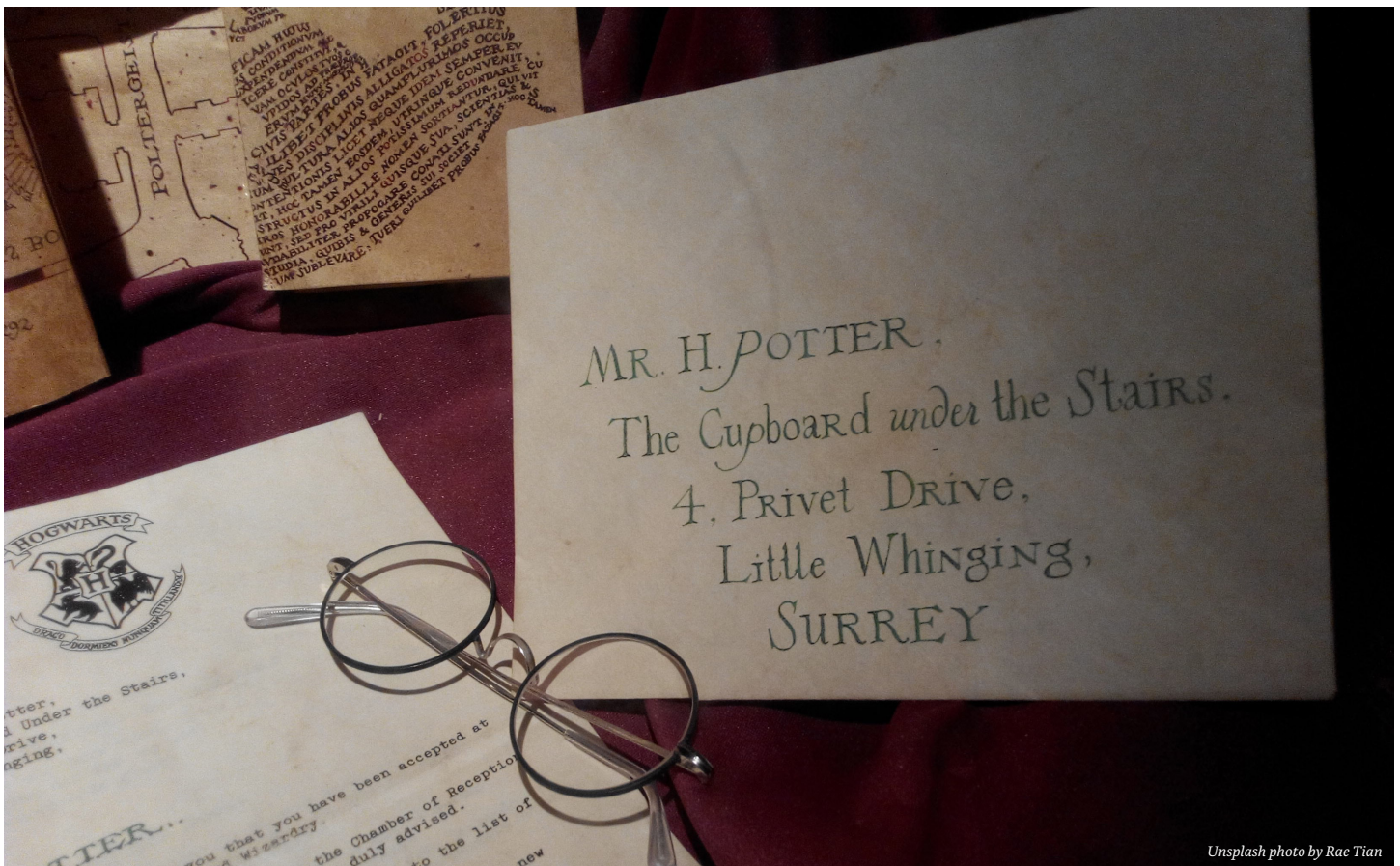
“The chief aim of English 219 is to allow students to explore the processes that lead to the creation of literature,” said Jim Haughey, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of English. “Obviously it’s impossible to read literature without discussing meaning but English 219 dwells more on the creative rather than the interpretive

“One of the fun opportunities of this class is to show students that we can apply advanced critical thinking and analysis to works like these.”

Paige Ellisor-Catoe

process. Faculty can focus on where a writer’s inspiration came from, what artistic decisions were made during the period of composition, how the writer’s environment helped shape the narrative, and what innovation and/or divergent thinking is reflected in the writing.”

Other sections of the College of Arts and Sciences’ Creative Inquiry Through Literature class include “Hamilton and Other Works of Lin-Manuel Miranda” and “Short Fiction into Film.” The English department plans to continue creating a rotation of groundbreaking courses for students to choose from to fulfill their core curriculum creative inquiry requirement.



Unsplash photo by Rae Tian

Synthesis magazine's first issue wins awards

By Kayla Campbell

Synthesis, the magazine of the College of Arts and Sciences, has been recognized with a Palmetto Award of Merit by the International Association of Business Communicators and a Silver Wings Award of Merit by the Public Relations Society of America.

The Spring 2019 issue of the magazine recently competed against projects from other universities across the state and was awarded in the student categories of both contests.

The Palmetto Awards allow communicators in businesses and organizations across the state to showcase their work and receive feedback. The Silver Wing award was earned through the Mercury Awards that judges the best public relations campaigns and tactical pieces of the past year.

"It was very rewarding to see Synthesis win the award," said Kara Rice, a senior communication major who served as the administrative design editor on the issue. "This publication required many hours outside the classroom and to see the hard work and dedication earn such merit, I was proud of my team."

The magazine is the main project for the COM 342 Editing and Layout course taught by former journalist and current Assistant Professor of Communication Robert Reeves. The project-based course allows students to apply the skills they've been developing in the communication major to create the publication, Reeves said.

"We have had this course for a number of years, but last spring changed the class into a project-based class as I wanted the students to have the opportunity to create a real publication that could help them build their portfolios," Reeves said.

Through the course, students apply their communication skills through writing stories and headlines, editing copy, shooting photos, and designing the pages of the magazine, Reeves said.

Rice said she saw working on the publication as an opportunity to enhance her skills in many areas.



"I gained transferable skills through the process of creating and designing the magazine. I learned how to improve my skills with software, teamwork skills, and task management," she said.

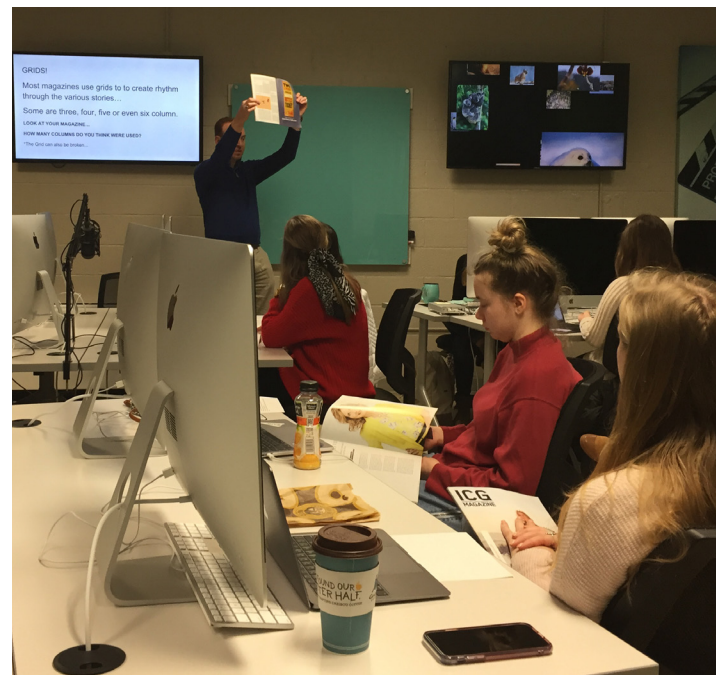
Senior Kayleigh Schneider, a communications major, worked as an editor and found that she learned valuable communication skills while writing and editing stories for the magazine.

"I developed better interview skills and better ways to research," Schneider said. "I feel like my work on the publication helped me communicate with professionalism and I learned skills to be able to write a good story," Schneider said.

The publication also provides students with a work sample to enhance their resumes, Reeves said.

"Synthesis magazine provides value to the students," he said. "Students can use it for portfolios and use it to beef up their resumes as they seek internships and jobs."

As the magazine continues, Reeves plans to enter more students' work for the opportunity to be recognized, he said.



David Locke, a professional graphic designer who served as an adjunct faculty adviser for the Synthesis magazine team, discusses magazine covers during a class this spring. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

Astronomy professor leaves legacy of caring

By Madeline Cromer

Kind, dedicated, and passionate are just a few of the words that colleagues and students use to describe the late Jonathan Jennings, an adjunct professor in Anderson University's College of Arts and Sciences who died Oct. 21 after a short illness.

Jennings loved the Anderson community and the opportunity to teach what he loved at a school that he loved, said his wife, Janis Jennings.

"Teaching at Anderson University truly was one of his favorite things," she said.

A career educator who was involved in education at almost every level, Jennings had taught physical science and astronomy at AU since 2011. He held degrees from Clemson, Furman and South Carolina State universities.

"He always loved being in education one way or another," Janis Jennings said.

Jennings began his teaching career as a junior high science teacher in 1971 and worked extensively in the classroom and as an administrator, acting as both an assistant principal and a principal.

He was most passionate about the field of astronomy.

"He loved teaching astronomy. That was probably his favorite thing to do," she said, adding that the 2017 complete solar eclipse was one of her most cherished memories of her husband.

"Right outside of (Thrift) library, he set up as many telescopes as he could get. He spent all the time preparing (for the solar eclipse) because he enjoyed the sky," Janis Jennings said.

Rocky Nation, Biology department chair and associate professor of biology at AU, said he shared in Jennings' love for the sky. He said that they often discussed astronomy together.

"He was dependable and consistent and went out of his way to speak and get to know me," Nation said.

Former student Reagan Nelson said she was struck by Jennings' care for his students. She said that even during the hospital stay before his death, he was still checking in on his students.

"It really became clear to me that he loved what he did and his students," Nelson said.

Another former student, education major Haley Bost, shared a similar sentiment.



Jonathan Jennings looks into the night sky during a stargazing presentation in front of Thrift Library. Jennings, who died Oct. 21, had taught astronomy in the College of Arts and Sciences since 2011. He had been teaching since 1971 when began as junior high science teacher. (Photo courtesy Janis Jennings)

"He always seemed to be excited to be in class and teaching us, and that made me want to listen to what he had to say," Bost said. "That's definitely something I'll take forward into my future as a teacher."

Heavily involved at Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson, Jennings was a deacon and taught Sunday school classes. According to his wife, Jennings was family oriented and cared deeply for their sons, James and John.

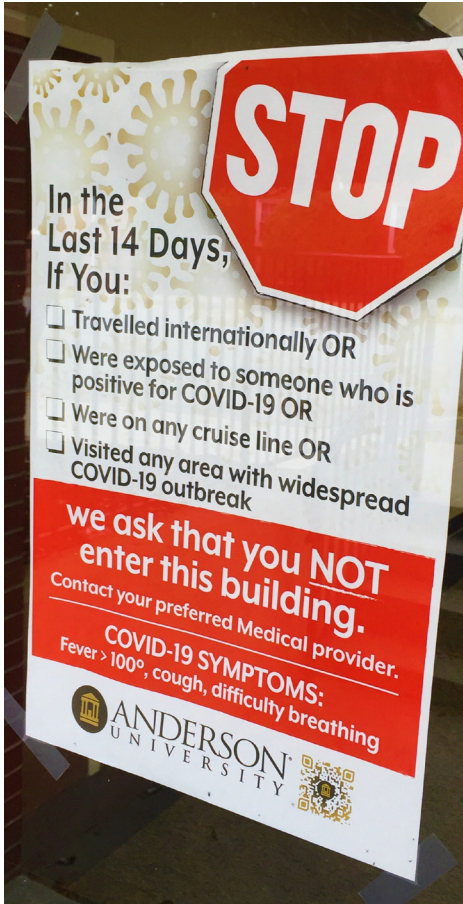
Carrie Koenigstein, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, saw the value of his work to the Anderson University community.

"Dr. Jennings invested his time in his community and in people which continues to inspire me to do the same. He retired from full-time work in the school system, but then found new ways to impact his community by teaching at Anderson and volunteering with his church," Koenigstein said.

Anderson University in the time of COVID-19

Spring 2020 will go down as the semester of the coronavirus. As the global pandemic shut down much of the world, classes moved online, leaving a beautiful but hauntingly empty campus. (Photos by Robert Reeves)





Strengthening the AU community

Connect Club helping campus see the beauty in differences

By Bianca Dragul

Since childhood, Jordan Anderson has had a passion for fostering diversity. His family, whom he describes as being culturally diverse, has always encouraged him to consider different opinions and to value the cultures of others.

“Diversity is rooted inside of me,” said Anderson, a senior communication major who has a rich multi-racial heritage with a background stemming from white, black, and Native American racial identities. “(My family) pushed culture and pushed diversity issues in my life as being something really important and to always think about different ends of the spectrum, think about different opinions, and value peoples’ culture.”

Anderson is taking his passion for promoting diversity to the Anderson University campus through the Connect Club, a student-led club with a mission “to celebrate and promote diversity on the campus of Anderson University through empowerment, education, and love.”

The club is contributing to AU’s broader goal of bringing greater diversity to its campus as stated in its current list of institutional priorities.

Anderson said his education has given him the opportunity to combine his passion for diversity with his studies. As a student with a digital media concentration, he said communication plays a crucial role in understanding others and their needs.

“Sometimes we are naive to different topics because they aren’t something that we talk about on a daily basis or they’re not something that we feel...directly affect us,” Anderson said about people’s hesitation to discuss racial issues. “But if we’re all brothers and sisters in Christ, we should be concerned about the concerns of other people.”

Anderson is not alone in these efforts. He is joined by other students who share a common goal of bringing diversity awareness to campus.

First-year political science student, Ericka Dash,

serves as event coordinator for the Connect Club, which has nine members on its leadership team. She said she was initially drawn to the inclusivity of the club.

“This is not just a club for a certain race. Everyone

“...if we’re all brothers and sisters in Christ, we should be concerned about the concerns of other people.”

Jordan Anderson

can be involved,” said Dash.

Dash said she hopes to promote more diversity in the world of politics. She is particularly interested in seeing more black women in American politics and would like to be involved in politics in the future.

Dash said her education in political science has equipped her to contribute to conversations about diversity on campus.

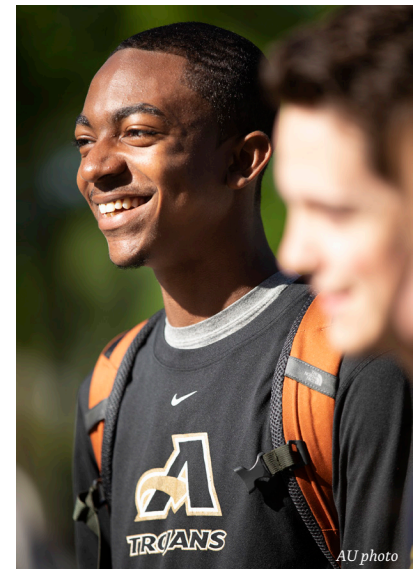
“My major can go hand-in-hand with diversity...I am learning more about diverse politics, diverse people groups, diverse countries,” she said.

Anderson said he quickly identified with the club’s mission during his first Connect Club meeting. He now serves as the president and his primary responsibilities include vision casting, planning events, and liaising between various offices on campuses.

One of the Connect Club’s primary contacts is James Noble, vice president for diversity and inclusion. Noble has an integral role in the diversity conversation on campus.

Noble said diversity is an important topic for students to discuss and that education is a channel by which students understand diversity.

“The more we learn, the more we should do...we have





Anderson University students gather to talk at the university's International House. The university is actively working to promote greater racial and cultural diversity among the faculty and student body. (AU photo by Jason Jones)

to begin to put our faith in action," Noble said.

He said appreciating differences is an important component of diversity. "Love puts us all on the same plane...we can be different and still love each other," he said.

Lauren Crawford, a senior psychology major, said she has developed a greater appreciation for diversity during her time in the College of Arts and Sciences.

"In the classroom, we are taught to be completely respectful of what anybody else is saying...we're all different," she said.

Crawford said that embracing differences, though sometimes difficult, is unifying.

"I think it's so important for all of us to be connected with each other. I don't think there needs to be those separations in society...we need to be able to understand each other and respect each other," said Crawford.

An aspiring licensed counselor, Crawford said that these values have guided her time at school and have prepared her for her future in working with different people. She reiterated the importance of being aware of others and their uniqueness.

"We need to get uncomfortable and we need to push past what is hard in order to love on each other and relate to each other in a deeper sense," Crawford said.

Jamie Alexander, assistant professor of human development and family studies, has also contributed to the discussion around diversity on campus.

"The truth is, diversity doesn't always mean that you're going to see obvious differences," Alexander said. "These underlying values and belief systems, culture that's been transmitted to us (are things) we can't always see on the outside."

Alexander said she encourages students to consider diversity in their future careers. She explained that this is important in understanding others. She also admitted the difficulty of such a conversation.

"It's hard, but it's necessary," said Alexander, "and it's beautiful."

There are many lessons to learn from this growing movement on AU's campus. Anderson urged students to be confident in their voice and to consider the life of Christ and how he communicated to people.

"(Communication) is very important for understanding...and for growth," Anderson said.

Meet the new faculty in CAS

By Caleb Madden

The College of Arts and Sciences added six new faces to the faculty during the 2019-20 academic year.

Krissie Butler, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Spanish, Department Chair for Modern Languages and Cultures

Why AU? I went to a small private Christian liberal arts school, even smaller than AU, for my undergraduate degree. I really enjoyed my experience there, and I would say that would be my reason why we chose AU.



Teaches? I teach intermediate Spanish, Spanish 450, advanced grammar classes, literature classes, and civilization classes.

Background? I went to Asbury University for my undergraduate degree. I went to the University of Kentucky for my Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic studies. That includes doing research in Cuba and presenting in Cuba as well. I also lived in Spain and Mexico for that.

What's cool about AU? The students. The students are fantastic. I love my students. I love my classes. They make my job amazing.

Hobbies? Read. I read like a fiend. I read both fiction and nonfiction. I have a hobby of reading the medieval period, even though that's not my area whatsoever. I also love to work out.

Ryan Butler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History

Why AU? I am convinced that the premium Anderson University places on the integration of faith and rigorous intellectual inquiry best cultivates the whole person and best prepares students for all of life.



Teaches? I teach non-western world history (Africa, Asia, Latin America).

Background? I got my Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Wheaton College. I received my Master

of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary. My Doctor of Philosophy in history is from Baylor University. I am interested in studying the history of Christianity, slavery and abolition, social reform, the Atlantic world, and imperialism.

Laary J. Cushman, Associate Professor of Biology

Why AU? Anderson University has a strong history of academic rigor founded on Christian values that allows its students to grow both in knowledge and faith. As a believer and scientist, this was important to me, as I began my search for a teaching career at a liberal arts college. I began as an adjunct teaching night classes and was impressed by the current faculty's freedom to explore the intersection of faith and evolution. That made an impact and built a desire to join a great community.



Teaches? I'm currently teaching Introduction to Cell Biology and the lab, Principles of Biology 3, and have taught Biology 160, Introduction to Life Sciences, and Science 101.

Background? I received my Bachelor of Science in biology with a minor in technical writing at the University of South Carolina-Aiken. I got my Master of Arts in religion from Liberty University with a minor in the minor prophets. My Master of Science in plant and environmental sciences is from Clemson University and I will finish my Doctor of Philosophy in biology (plant population genomics) at Clemson in 2020. I'm a professionally-trained field scientist with expertise in environmental consulting, wetland ecology, and endangered species. My family and I also served for two years in the pastorate at a Baptist church plant in rural Kansas while they transitioned to a permanent pastor.

What's cool about AU? The fellowship between believers. Whether student, staff, or faculty, we all strive towards a higher goal of pleasing Christ.

Hobbies? I have too many, mostly centered around the outdoors and arts, but I cherish the time I have with my family as we take "adventures."

Kayode Karunwi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Physics & Coordinator of the Pre-Engineering Degree Program

Why AU? I loved the opportunity of integrating faith with science and helping students develop critical thinking abilities.

Teaches? General Physics 1 and 2 and University Physics 1 and 2.

Background? I am originally from Nigeria. I have a Bachelor of Science in physics from Illinois Wesleyan University, a Master of Science in physics from Clark Atlanta University, and a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in bioengineering from Clemson University. Right before I came to Anderson University, I was teaching at Yachay Tech in Ecuador, and right before that, I taught at Kennesaw State University in Georgia.

What's cool about AU? The personal interaction with students and engagement with the community, as well as the thread of faith seen across various events on campus.

Hobbies? Reading, playing the piano, playing chess.

Paige H. Meeker, Ph.D., Professor of Coding and App Development

Why AU? I like the Christian mission of the school. I also find the students to be engaged, interested, and hard workers.

Teaches? I am currently teaching Coding 1, Mobile Interface Design, and Web Development. I will teach the other coding courses in the programming and app minor in the future.

Background? I have a Bachelor of Science in computer science from Furman University and a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in computer science from the University of South Carolina. I have been teaching at the college level professionally since 2001 and as a graduate student since 1995. I'm coming to AU after 13-and-a-half years of teaching at Presbyterian College. I grew up in Camden, South Carolina, and everyone thought I would major in music in college, as I was an avid pianist. However, about seventh or eighth grade, computer science stole my heart, and I switched keyboards.

What's cool about AU? I enjoy the Christian atmo-



sphere, chapel, and my students are great. Everyone is very supportive of one another. The campus is very pretty as well. It's a fun place to work.

Hobbies? I enjoy reading, walking, coding, and quilling. Quilling is an art form – the art of paper filigree. I also enjoy horseback riding, though my children are far superior in their abilities than I will ever be.

Josiah Reiswig, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Why AU? Teaching at Anderson University affords me the opportunity to teach mathematics from the uniquely Christian perspective that Christ holds mathematics together (Colossians 1:15-17). This affects my classroom in both explicit and implicit ways. It also influences my drive for mathematical research. At Anderson, I am able to see students grow from their first calculus and proof-based courses to their senior research projects or student teaching. Seeing students grow in their mathematical skills and involving students in research is one of my most rewarding aspects of working at Anderson.

Teaches? I teach statistics, Calculus 1 and 2, differential equations, and college geometry. I also advise students on research projects.

Background? I am originally from the Fargo/Moorhead area on the border of North Dakota and Minnesota. I attended Minnesota State University-Moorhead and earned a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics. I earned a Doctor of Philosophy in mathematics from the University of South Carolina. My research interests are in graph theory and combinatorics. I look at problems related to the distance between objects in an interconnected network.

What's cool about AU? Being able to join with many faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and fields of study in the common goal of providing a rigorous, Christ-centered education for students is truly an honor. I also enjoy seeing students grow and be challenged in their faith and mathematical reasoning during their time at Anderson.

Hobbies? I enjoy spending time with my wife and watching Anderson University athletics. I am also an avid board-gamer with an embarrassingly large board-game collection, which I don't use as much as I would like.



Students study impact nature has on stress reduction

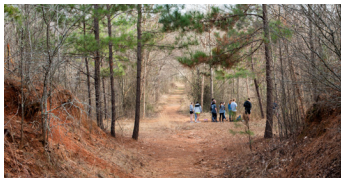
By Madeline Cromer

It's long been believed that getting out in nature helps to reduce stress and an Anderson University research team is seeking to quantify the impact.

Since spring 2019, two Anderson University College of Arts and Sciences professors and three students in the college have been conducting a research project to find the effects of nature on stress levels.

Stemming from a mutual interest in nature between Rocky Nation, associate professor and chair of the Biology Department, and Robby Franklin, associate professor of psychology, this project has also involved biology students Eli Goodwin and CheyAnn Strasinger and psychology student Anna Grace Clark.

To understand the connections between nature and stress, the team conducted research that measured physical reactions to stress with experiments conducted in Watkins Hall on the AU campus and at the Rocky River Nature Park, which is managed by the university.



Rocky River Nature Park

“From our research, we knew that most studies conducted on natural settings and stress showed beneficial responses on stress levels, health, and physiological processes

such as sleep and attention. However, studies conducted on physiological responses such as salivary cortisol, EEG, heart rate, heart rate variance, and blood pressure were rare,” Strasinger said. This rarity of research was the motivation to conduct the research, she said.

After conducting many experimental sessions, the research group found that spending time in nature does positively affect physiological symptoms of stress, such as heart rate and heart rate variability, according to both students and faculty involved in the study.

“We found that just 20 minutes in the woods led to a significant reduction of heart rate and increased heart rate variability, both of which are markers of reduced stress,” Franklin said. “Lower heart rates and higher heart rate variability are associated with better health in general.”

Nation said researching stress reduction is important, especially in a college setting.

“We think it's very practical because college students



The research team for an interdisciplinary research project on stress reduction in nature presented its findings at an undergraduate research symposium at the Milliken Research Center in Spartanburg recently. From left to right are professor Rocky Nation, students CheyAnn Strasinger, Eli Goodwin and Anna Grace Clark, and professor Robby Franklin. (Photo courtesy Rocky Nation)

suffer the ill effects of stress and anything that can help manage that stress is a relevant topic to pursue,” he said.

Strasinger said the team hopes that by understanding more about how stress works, better ways of managing stress can be found.

“College students are bombarded with reasons to be stressed out every single day, so this study is important in understanding how we can manage those stressors,” she said.

The group had the opportunity to share its findings at the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Research Symposium and received a \$3,400 grant to continue their research on the topic.

“This interdisciplinary research helped each of us gain an appreciation for the knowledge and wisdom found in our respective departments,” Strasinger said. “New ideas were brought to the table and we were able to discuss our vastly different perspectives on general research.”

Nation said the connection between biology and behavioral science is a natural one.

“It's...a great example of two departments working together on what is naturally an interdisciplinary subject,” Nation said.

Research explores student social media use

By Tucker Black

Want to engage Anderson University students more effectively on social media? Try Instagram in the later afternoon and early evening.

This platform is the most efficient way to reach, inform, and interact with students on social media, according to research conducted by students in the COM 360 Public Relations Research and Evaluation course last November on behalf of Anderson University's office of marketing and communications.

In the fall of 2019, five students conducted research to gain insight into students' use of social media and the perceptions they have of the official social media accounts of the university. Under the supervision of Assistant Professor of Communication Robert Reeves, the students worked to meet the needs of their client, Andrew Beckner, the executive director of public relations at AU. The final product of their efforts was a report full of insight on student social media interaction.

"We started out by setting goals and developing ideas about what information we wanted to gather," said communication major Morganne Tankersley, one of the student researchers. "Then we looked at methods (of research)."

The team conducting the research included communication majors Bianca Dragul, Amber Hathaway, Kaitlyn Jenkins, Savannah Smith, and Tankersley.

"There were two big things we did for the research project – a survey and focus groups," Jenkins said. "Then we divided up our goals and objectives in our team of five (for data analysis)."

The quantitative statistical data were provided by 486 students who responded to an online survey through the Qualtrics survey platform. Questions attempted to capture such information as which social media platforms were being used most and the students' purposes in using them as well as understand their perceptions of the material the university uses on its social media platforms.

Focus groups were created to gather qualitative information. Divided into two groups, 12 volunteer students answered questions about the effectiveness of Anderson University's social media messages. These groups helped the COM 360 students hear directly from students about their thoughts and feelings about the content and what they wanted to see



From left to right, Design and Print Coordinator Caroline Denton and Executive Director of Public Relations Andrew Beckner listen as student Kaitlin Jenkins presents social media research findings. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

changed. This focus group feedback helped to provide additional context and nuance to the survey data, the students said.

The results of the research were presented in a written report and in-person presentation to AU marketing and public relations staff members.

"They produced a research document that was far and away better than anything I could have expected," Beckner said. "It really was a professional-level report that we utilized immediately...I was just so impressed with not just the report but the presentation. They did a phenomenal job."

Beckner said maintaining and growing student engagement through social media is a crucial part of the university's efforts to communicate effectively with both current and prospective students.

"One of the things I'm interested in is that are we effectively communicating with current and prospective students about who we are," Beckner said. "I think the most important thing is that we want students to be engaged with the story we're telling, and we want them to be a part of what we're doing."

Ecology Club impacts environment and lives

By Grant Collins

Improving humanity's ecological impact on the planet does not have to be a solitary, tedious attempt to eliminate waste products, buy locally-sourced food, or cut back on electricity use. Instead, it can be a communal venture with like-minded individuals passionate about caring for the earth, according to members of Anderson University's Ecology Club.

The Ecology Club organizes numerous activities for students to get involved to conserve and enhance the local environment, such as constructing community gardens, beekeeping, and cleaning up the trails that wind through the woods and swamps of the nearby Rocky River Nature Park.

The student-based club attempts "to make a positive ecological impact in the Anderson area while trying to train students to lead and take on projects themselves," said Kyle Myers, biochemistry senior and the current president of "Eco Club." This goal is achieved through varied creative outings and meetings.

Myers said one of his favorite meetings was an event held this spring, appropriately titled "Pine and



A wild turkey is captured on a trail cam at the Rocky River Nature Park. (AU photo courtesy Tom Kozel)

Twine." During the event, participants were taught how to weave baskets out of pine needles, an area tradition since Native Americans owned the land, and to make pine needle tea, which has health benefits like strengthening the immune system.

Through its events such as Pine and Twine, the Ecology Club creates opportunities to educate about resourceful uses of the environment, ecological history, and conservation.

"One of the great things that we love to do is basically to spread the education about ecology and conservation in ways that people see as fun and attractive, rather than just 'Don't litter!' or 'Try not to keep the lights on all the time!'" said Myers. "We were able to show people that we can still be provided for by our environment by even the most mundane things, but also it was really just a lot of fun to drink tea and make some baskets."

James Dudit, the founder and first president of the Ecology Club, emphasized the importance of ecological history and plants that were once used for food, medicine, and tools.

"This knowledge used to be passed down generation to generation, but much of it has been lost to both the genocide of Cherokee culture in our region and the quick industrialization of our country," said Dudit. "I hope that this club can have a lasting impact at AU in bringing some of these practices and knowledge back as they have inherent value in connecting us with our world and local habitats."

But the Ecology Club is not just about ecological education. For its members, what makes the organization special is its community.



A beaver dam at the Rocky River Nature Park. (AU photo courtesy Tom Kozel)



A drone gives a birdseye view of the Rocky River Nature Park. The Ecology Club helps to manage the 132 acres of wetlands and forest owned by Anderson University. (Anderson University photo)

“One of the coolest things about Ecology Club that I’ve noticed has been that we have attracted people from all different majors to come in,” said Myers. “People who would never interact with each other are becoming friends because they are going out and doing these service-based projects together.”

Myers said that since many members in the club have ambitious pursuits toward medical school, dental school, or graduate school, working together toward a common goal on the service projects allows the members to relax and enjoy spending time together.

“We’re not competing with each other whenever we’re trying to just, you know, clean up some trash,” Myers laughed.

Carter Collins, the president prior to Myers, noted that the Ecology Club is less focused on the organizational, academic aspect and more on the community and friendships developed through caring for the earth together.

“We were friends first, then stewards, then a club,” said Collins.

For Myers, Dudit, and Collins, the Ecology Club was not only an opportunity to get out and serve their community together. It also greatly impacted their experiences as college students and individuals.

Myers said he performed poorly in high school, so upon entering college, he was adamant about succeeding academically. His goal was simply to do well and graduate on track to become a physician. Friends along the way were not really part of the plan, he said.

However, it was his experiences with the Ecology Club, of getting out in nature and working on service-based projects with other students, that overturned his freshman worldview.

“Ecology Club sort of gave me that opportunity to lay back, relax a little bit, get out of the library, get out of the lab, and go work with my hands and spend time with people,” said Myers.

Dudit said that thanks to his role in Ecology Club, he is constantly reminded to return to the environment and its cultural heritage. Now in graduate school, he seeks ways to incorporate this mindset into his work, which has challenged him to view problems from various perspectives.

Collins said the club impacted his view of leadership as he assumed the role of president.

“I realized quite quickly that to keep the club connected, it was important for me to connect personally with each of the members and inspire them to do things that they cared about,” he said.

Breaking into Hollywood

Communication student lands internship with L.A. studio

By Kayla Campbell

For Rachel Funchess, spending the summer on a Hollywood sound stage was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

The 21-year-old communication major got to have that experience at L.A. Castle Studios after an Anderson University professor connected her with a Netflix executive.

Funchess secured the internship before she embarked on a seven-day trip to Los Angeles with her classmates in the COM 492 Hollywood on Location: Studio History and Today's Digital Media Careers course she was taking to explore the film industry. She stayed a month in Hollywood after the course ended where she gained experience, skills, and connections in the industry.

"Some days we would have a 12-hour shoot day with 30 or more people," Funchess said. "Some days we wouldn't shoot at all and I would edit videos or give tours to potential clients who wanted to shoot there. I learned quickly to go with the flow and work as if I were just another crew member."

Assistant Professor of Communication Gorman Woodfin, a former Hollywood reporter for the Christian Broadcasting Network, said L.A. Castle Studios works with the productions of Netflix, Disney, and HBO.

Funchess said that through the internship she made connections with several film industry professionals with whom she remains in contact.

"It is so exciting knowing that I still have people out there who support me and believe in me. There is always someone out there willing to give you advice and help you on your path," she said.

Funchess said the skills she learned in her communication classes prepared her for the demands, roles, and responsibilities for her internship. She added that the experiences she gained in her classes at Anderson University also provided her the communication skills to be confident in her job as well as open up as a person.

Funchess, who maintains her own YouTube channel with more than 15,000 followers, said



Rachel Funchess presents during a video production class. The communication major spent part of last summer working for a production studio. (Photo by Gorman Woodfin)

she aspires to return to Los Angeles to work full-time after she graduates. She is looking to work in film, corporate video production, or social media marketing.

As she looks towards the future, one piece of advice especially resonated with her.

"One of the editors from Disney gave me a piece of advice that I will never forget," Funchess said. "He worked as an editor in Charlotte for over 20 years before he made it to Disney, and now he's living his dream. He taught me that even if I don't get to move out there immediately, it doesn't mean that it's not in your plan."

Funchess' desire to learn more about production and postproduction in the film industry from professionals led her to take the trip to Hollywood with her classmates.

Woodfin said the trip to Hollywood allowed students to make connections and gain firsthand experience in the film industry.

"My big driving factor for the Hollywood trip is that I wish someone would have taken me out to Hollywood in my twenties," Woodfin said. "I want my students to consider if working out in Hollywood is something they could see themselves doing."

Soccer player synthesizes sport and psychology

By Bailey Westbrook

On any given day at the Anderson University athletic campus, Melanie Maddox is likely to be seen showing up early to practice to set up equipment, running drills with players, meeting one-on-one with teammates to offer encouragement or a listening ear, or assisting her coach.

For three and a half years, Maddox has been a player on the Anderson University women's soccer team, but this spring she is leading in a different capacity. After playing her final season last fall, Maddox has returned to serve the team as an intern.

As a senior psychology major, Maddox is required to complete an internship prior to her May graduation. By pairing her passion for soccer with her leadership abilities, she landed the spot as team intern.

"Every day looks different," said Maddox, adding that she is using her knowledge of soccer along with her psychology education to help the players.

She said her role as an intern allows her to use her strengths to serve where she is needed. Whether assisting her coach with office tasks or preparing inspirational and encouraging messages to share during team meetings, Maddox assumes many roles as the team intern.

"Having a background in psychology helps give me a different perspective. It has taught me to listen more and to ask more than surface-level questions," Maddox said. "Recognizing that people bring more to soccer practice than what you might think is important. If they're having an off day, it's probably not soccer-related."

Robby Franklin, associate professor of psychology, said internships are an important part of completing the psychology major.

"Being able to complete an internship experience assists our students by helping them discern whether they wish to pursue a line of work or career further," Franklin said. "It also helps to take away any mystery that may be present

regarding what the career would look like on a daily basis."

Throughout her collegiate career playing midfield, Maddox started 65 of her 66 career games.

"Melanie has been a constant for the team through many changes over her four years here," coach Sarah Jacobs said. "She has always been steady and reliable. In addition to

her leadership, she has also had an outstanding playing career anchoring the midfield and acting as the glue of the team. Melanie's success has been recognized as she has earned multiple All-SAC awards through her career."

Maddox said she's learned about a lot more than soccer from her coaches.

"Throughout my soccer career, coaches have always encouraged me to lead in a silent way and by example," said Maddox. "I realized I didn't necessarily have to have a vocal presence to be a leader. Over time my consistent quiet leadership turned into more visible roles

as team captain and now an intern."

Jacobs said Maddox's unique leadership style has served the team well.

"Mel is a true servant-leader and always puts the needs of the team above her own. She is a quiet observer and leads by example in her work ethic and character, but is not afraid to make her voice heard when needed," she said. "She shines in one-on-one conversations with her teammates. She is an encourager but also has high standards for herself and the team. She helps push the team to higher standards on and off the field."

Players on the team say they know that they can count on Maddox.

"The team knows they can count on her. She is a silent leader that leads by example," player Bethany Morgan said. "Players on our team can always look to Mel for support and guidance! She is always trying to help whether that be on or off the field."



Melanie Maddox in action. (Photo by Nancy Campbell)

Biochemistry student works to find cure for twin sister's muscular disorder

By Emily Biggers

For many students deciding on college, the choice of what career path to take is a tough one. However, for biochemistry major Emily Payne, the choice was quite clear.

Payne is using her research through her biochemistry degree to find a cure for her twin sister's rare muscular disorder.

Payne and her twin sister, Caroline, are both carriers of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a rare genetic disorder that causes the muscles in the body to become weak and damaged over time. It is eventually fatal, according to Duchenne.com.

However, what's unique about the sisters' situation is that while they are both carriers of DMD, only Caroline is fully symptomized.

Due to this unique circumstance, Emily Payne became interested in studying and researching genetics, specifically embryology. Since she is a carrier of DMD, she says that there is a chance the disorder could be passed on if she has children.

"Being a carrier, I knew that I was going to have to think about the risks of having kids naturally and doing IVF," Payne said. "The more I read into it, the more I got interested in becoming an embryologist."

Payne's sister lives a different story. Caroline Payne, a recent Western Carolina University graduate, is fully symptomized by DMD. While there are no mental symptoms, there are some physical effects that required some adjusting for the Payne family.

Emily Payne said her sister uses a wheelchair for any walking that is not around the house. This led her family to restructure their house to become wheelchair accessible.

In her time at WCU, Caroline lived in a room by herself which Emily said was a little scary.

"Because DMD is a muscular disease, there's a lot of muscle deterioration and weakness and you're unable to do almost anything on your own," she said.

Caroline is now living back at home where she is attending graduate school online.

During her time at Anderson, Emily has been working on a capstone research project focused on finding a



Students work in a science lab in Watkins Hall on the Anderson University campus. (Anderson University photo by Jason Jones)

cure for DMD. Through this research project, Payne said that she has learned many lab techniques valuable to her research that will be an asset to her work after graduation.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry Jessica Nicks has been assisting Payne with her research.

"Emily's research will shed light on a novel family presentation of DMD," said Nicks, adding that the research examines a unique way in which the disease inherited.

Payne said she will be working her way towards graduate school to further her research education after graduation.

She will also be working at Piedmont Reproductive Endocrinology Group, one of the nation's leading fertility clinics.

Where are they now?

2013 grad is Distinguished Young Alumnus

By Emily Biggers

Anderson University alum Jarred Whitlock recently received the Distinguished Young Alumnus Award to recognize his outstanding post-graduation achievements. This award is presented to an alumnus no older than 40 who exemplifies the educational philosophy of the university.

Whitlock graduated from Anderson in 2013 as a biology major and is now working as a postdoctoral fellow at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Bethesda, Maryland, where he conducts research on muscular dystrophy.

Whitlock said that though most of his research didn't start until he started graduate school, his biology degree helped build the foundation for his research.

Like many beginning college students, Whitlock came to Anderson unsure of what he wanted to do with his future.

"I wanted to do something medical but I wasn't sure what that was," Whitlock said.

With help from professors such as Associate Dean of Sciences Carrie Koenigstein and Professor of Biology Tom Kozel, Whitlock began to realize he liked doing research rather than diagnosis and treatment.

"As always, there were frustrating setbacks in his research project," Koenigstein said. "I saw Jarred learn how to handle the annoyances of research science and adjust to seeing them as challenges to conquer rather than as reasons for frustration."

After he obtained his bachelor's degree, Whitlock went on to earn a doctorate from Emory University where he began his research on muscular dystrophy and published a paper on his findings.

Whitlock said that he didn't only obtain a solid educational foundation from Anderson, he also took with him a strengthened faith. During his junior year at AU, he faced a personal conviction about his faith that strengthened his beliefs and became a huge part of his life.

"Most of the people I work with in my department are agnostic," he said. "My faith helps me in my workplace because it gives me understanding of where they are coming from in their beliefs."



Jarred Whitlock, AU class of 2013, receives the Distinguished Young Alumnus award from Anderson University President Evans Whitlock during the 2020 Founders Day celebration on campus on Feb. 12. A biology major while at AU, Whitlock is now doing postdoctoral work and conducting research to find a cure for muscular dystrophy. (Anderson University photo)

Koenigstein said Whitlock has continued to give back to the university since his graduation.

"Jarred has reached out to our department while in graduate school and during his postdoctoral work to let current students know about summer research opportunities in the labs he works in," said Koenigstein. "He has also stayed in touch with us to offer scientific advice on emerging research techniques."

In addition to Anderson's Distinguished Young Alumnus Award, Whitlock has also received the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Fellowship from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, and the Society of General Physiologists.

SYNTHESIS

Anderson University
316 Boulevard
Anderson, SC 29621



Assistant Professor of English Kolawole Olaiya takes advantage of a nice day to hold class outdoors. (AU photo)