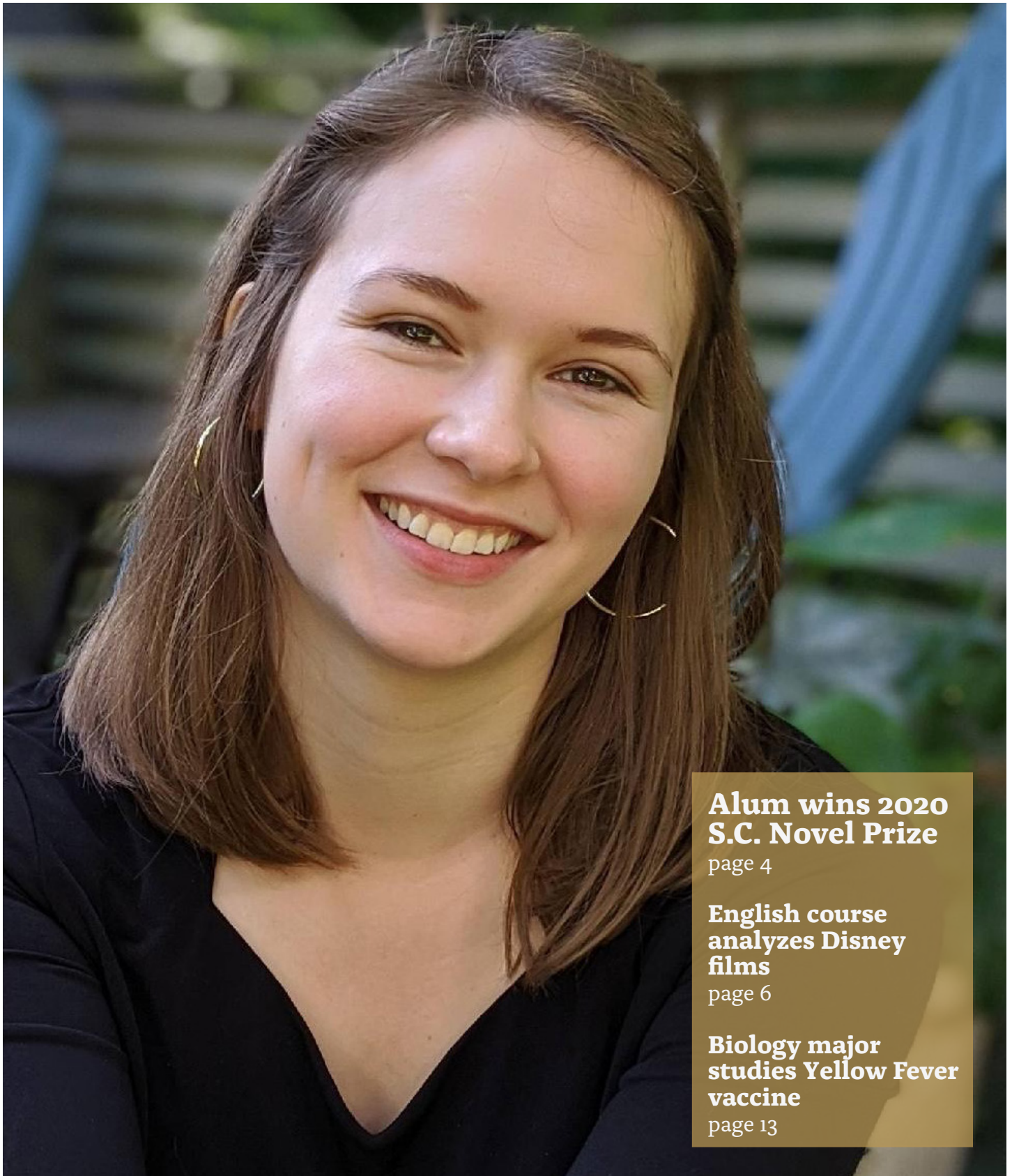


SYNTHESIS

Summer 2021



**Alum wins 2020
S.C. Novel Prize**

page 4

**English course
analyzes Disney
films**

page 6

**Biology major
studies Yellow Fever
vaccine**

page 13

Anderson University's College of Arts and Sciences

Education helps us address challenges

By Wayne Cox, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Joseph Stalin once said the following: “The death of a single Russian soldier is a tragedy. A million deaths is a statistic.”

As I write this column, India has just set another single-day record for new COVID 19 cases: 353,000 new cases of infection, according to government data. India is experiencing a huge wave of infections mainly because they let their guard down. Couples threw large weddings that they put off last year, Prime Minister Modi held large, maskless political rallies across the country, and those who canceled large events were mocked.

Meanwhile, here in the U.S. we are distributing vaccinations at a record pace, and we too are tired of wearing masks and physically distancing. Even though cases are on the rise in some areas, more and more people are being less and less safe. A recent Axios-Ipsos poll taken on April 20 found that the percentage of people social distancing or even self-quarantining is at the lowest levels since at least July 2020. For many of us, what’s happening in India now and here in the U.S. on Jan. 20, when we registered a single day record of 4,405 deaths, is just a statistic.

But for those who have lost friends or family to COVID-19, these numbers aren’t just statistics, but real, identifiable losses. For them, the risk is personal, and the sacrifices they make to take precautions an extension of empathy they feel for victims. George Loewenstein, professor of economics and psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, called this the “Identifiable Victim Effect.” “Identifiable victims,” he states, “seem to produce a greater empathic response, accompanied by greater willingness to make personal sacrifices to provide aid.”

When deciding how to open up again in the U.S.—what risks we should accept and when we should take them—we need to strengthen our objective response to the tragedy of COVID-19 and weaken the individual emotional response. The tragedy of one identifiable person can overwhelm the emotions, while the tragedy of millions can be summed up by a graph. Beyond

the statistics, there are many other less measurable impacts of the pandemic, from social awkwardness to alienation, suicides, and chronic health issues. We are all victims of this pandemic, and loss of life is just one of the impacts.

What can help us do this? The objectivity and insight we gain from education, especially in the arts and sciences. How we react to this, how we recognize the real threats tells us much about our education. For example, the number of Americans who say they will not take a COVID-19 vaccination is twice as high in rural areas, where the average educational level is lower. It’s no coincidence that distrust of higher education has also increased during the pandemic. Over the past four years, science has been consistently undermined in the political arena, and the claims that liberal professors indoctrinate or intimidate students to share their beliefs have grown louder. But research suggests something else at work instead: college is a time when students gain appreciation of multiple perspectives.

A recent study entitled “The Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey,” for example, shows that by the end of their first year, students come to view both liberals and conservatives more favorably than when they first arrived on campus. College isn’t so much about indoctrination as it is about meeting people with different views and learning to respect them, and interactions with fellow students influence them more directly than the classroom. “While students may come to college never having met someone on the political ‘other side,’” the researchers say, “it is hard to avoid doing so in college. Higher education encourages contact, debate, discussion and exposure to persuasion from different kinds of people, and it is more challenging for students to brand all liberals or conservatives as wrong-headed when they are studying, eating and learning alongside them. It appears as though the first year of college is doing what it should, exposing students to experiences that teach them how to think rather than what to think.”

As for any pandemic exit strategy, it’s clear that emotions and political leanings are a poor substitute for intellectual insight and objectivity, hospitality, faith, and purpose. These are the four pillars of Anderson University, and why education is central to any way forward.



Photo by Alli Kennedy

In this issue

| | |
|---|----|
| Alum wins S.C. Novel Prize | 4 |
| 2020 grad navigates career during pandemic | 5 |
| English course analyzes Disney films | 6 |
| Course teaches students to manage social platforms for businesses | 8 |
| Connections course uses cinema to explore history of human rights | 9 |
| Rettew brings career experience to classroom | 10 |
| CAS offers pre-law advising program | 12 |
| Biology major studies Yellow Fever vaccine | 13 |
| Technology kept CAS moving forward during pandemic | 14 |
| Project gives researchers better access to Rocky River Nature Park wetlands | 16 |
| Cancer Center develops iBook on research methods | 18 |
| AU Writing Center helps students communicate clearly | 19 |
| Video studio under development | 20 |
| Course teaches students to design websites | 22 |
| AU, Tri-County work together | 23 |

SYNTHESIS

Anderson University Vol. 3, Issue 1 | Summer 2021

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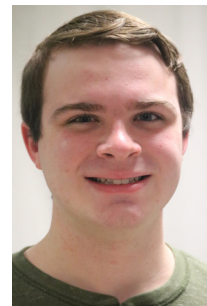
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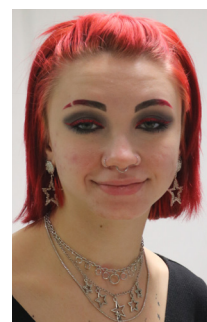
Connor Logan



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Asa Waters



Hannah White

Alum wins 2020 S.C. Novel Prize

By Kelli Eichelberger

For Anderson University alum Maris Lawyer, what was just a push to finish something she had been putting off turned into one of her greatest accomplishments to date – writing her debut novel, “The Blue Line Down,” which won the 2020 South Carolina Novel Prize.

“It was shock. I forgot that I had submitted it because it was done and then the pandemic hit,” Lawyer said. “When they sent me a notice saying that I was a finalist, I was floored – it wasn’t even on my radar.”

About a month later Lawyer was informed she had won.

Funded by the South Carolina Arts Commission to showcase exceptional writers in the state, the highly competitive competition offers one lucky winner an exclusive book contract with Hub City Press, an independent press in Spartanburg.

“It was really surreal when thinking that I had actually won it – shock is definitely the right term for how I was feeling. Just being a finalist was good enough for me,” Lawyer said.

Though winning the competition was a surprise, Lawyer is no stranger to the world of writing and storytelling.

“My family are all big storytellers and I think a lot of people that grew up in the South have that same experience,” said Lawyer, who began writing when she was 9. “We loved to read, we loved to listen to stories, so inevitably, I wanted to start making my own.”

“The Blue Line Down” is described by the publisher as “a breakneck tale of betrayal, loyalty, and unexpected homecoming.” It is available for pre-order now and will be available for purchase June 22.

The story, set in the 1920s, revolves around Jude Washer who lives in a small West Virginia mining town. When the mines take away his brother, he joins the Baldwin-Felts Agency, a private detective agency known for violent repression of labor union members. The character encounters much adversity on his journey as he seeks a place where he might be at home..

Lawyer said the novel was inspired by an Appalachian literature course taught by English professor Randall Wilhelm while she was an AU creative writing major.



AU alum Maris Lawyer (left) with Hub City Press Assistant Editor Kate McMullen. Lawyer was recently awarded the 2020 South Carolina Novel Prize for her debut novel, “The Blue Line Down.” (Photo by Meg Reid)

“That was the first year he taught that course and he did a phenomenal job. He introduced the Baldwin-Felts and that’s how I came to realize they didn’t show up in a majority of literature,” the 2017 graduate said. “He was the one that gave me the idea and for my senior seminar, an important class every senior must take before graduating, I chose to write the novel.”

Lawyer said she’s undecided about what’s next in her writing career.

“If I’m being honest, I didn’t even think I’d be published at this point – I thought I’d be in my 30s or 40s. Of course, if the book goes well, I’d love the opportunity to be able to write and publish other stories,” Lawyer said. “It’s a great feeling to get published and I’d love to continue riding that wave but for right now I’m so happy with what this opportunity has turned into.”

From student to essential worker

2020 grad navigates career during pandemic

By Ariel Leek

Anderson University alum Kasey Wessinger was preparing for her senior year when life as she knew it came to a halt. Like so many others, the COVID-19 outbreak robbed her of many traditional final year experiences, and changed the course of her undergraduate career.

Then when she graduated in December 2020 with a bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family studies, Wessinger found herself beginning her career as a mental health professional right in the midst of the pandemic.

Wessinger is now working as a mental health technician at Palmetto Lowcountry Behavioral Health, a psychiatric and substance abuse center in North Charleston. She recalls the stress of the fast-paced environment and the pressures of keeping patients safe and healthy.

"The first thing I learned was that communication is a very important part of the job," she said. "We have to be good at verbalizing our needs and the patient's needs if we want to keep each other safe."

Wessinger said that due to exponentially greater amounts of grief, isolation, income loss, and fear brought on by the pandemic, people everywhere are struggling.

According to Mental Health America, the country's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing mental illness, 2020 saw a 63% increase in the total number of depression screenings, and a 93% increase in anxiety screenings.

At the same time, Wessinger said, because of restrictions brought on by the pandemic, patients and mental health care professionals alike have had new obstacles to overcome.

A World Health Organization survey reported that the pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide.

As the demand for mental health services steadily increases, mental health professionals have earned the title of "essential worker."

Wessinger said she is humbled by this title and feels



Kasey Wessinger graduated in December 2020. The former Human Development and Family Studies major has since begun her career in the mental health field. (Photo by Ariel Leek)

very strongly about those in her position ensuring that they are caring for themselves.

"Working in this field has made me realize more than ever how important it is to maintain my own mental health, especially in times like these," Wessinger said.

"If I don't make sure that I am getting what I need to cope, I will not be giving my best to my patients."

Wessinger said that with more restrictions than ever before brought on by the pandemic, patients in health centers like hers have a difficult time coping.

On difficult days she says is grateful for the wisdom given to her by professors like Jennifer Triplett, associate professor of sociology, and reminds herself of why she is in this field.

"My ultimate goal is to help patients realize that there is a way out of the dark places and that their life has meaning and value," Wessinger said.

"My ultimate goal is to help patients realize that there is a way out of the dark places and that their life has meaning and value."

Once upon a time...

English course analyzes Disney films

By Lindsey Alexander

The stories and movies that many students have grown up with, such as “Cinderella” and “Hercules,” are now classwork for some of them as the “Creative Inquiry Through Literature” course offered at Anderson University is letting students analyze their favorite childhood Disney movies.

Taught by Senior Lecturer of English Karen Zagrodnik, the course focuses on the folktales, legends, and myths that have inspired Disney animated musicals.

The idea to study Disney animated musicals came from Zagrodnik herself, whose passion for teaching, Disney, and music shine through in and out of the classroom.

With a background in music and a love for Disney movies, Zagrodnik said she wanted to explore the creative processes of Disney while bringing her own energy and excitement about the topic to the class.

“I thought (Disney animated films) would be really fun to explore because you can draw on your own experiences and what you like about a piece and what it means to you,” said Zagrodnik. “And for me it was also the idea of the music. Thinking about lyrics and the creative process with writing the songs.”

This is not your traditional English course where students analyze a piece of literature, however. Rather, the course asks students to explore the creative processes of others while also drawing on their own creativity.

The course description states that the class “explores the processes that lead to the creation of literature” with a “specific emphasis on motivation, environment, innovation, and divergent thinking.”

“That description works two ways,” Zagrodnik said. “It’s what we’re asked to do in the class, which is to think about the motivations, the environment, the innovation, the uniqueness of the pieces, and the process, but I think that also works for students. We want them to be motivated. We want them to think



Karen Zagrodnik



about what’s influencing them, their environment. We want them to be creative and go beyond what their usual comfort zone is.”

Zagrodnik said the course also explores the larger cultural, social, gender, and racial issues and influences of the stories that make them universal and allow students to apply the literature to the world around them.

“My favorite part of this course has been digging into the details of different versions of very well-known Disney animations,” said Emma Erskine, an English literature major. “Not only are you learning an abundance of knowledge about Disney animations and the literature behind it, but you are learning about culture. For example, there is a myriad of different versions of Cinderella, but they are all so different and unique because they come from so many different cultures.”

Because of the creative emphasis, the course is highly interactive with daily class discussions and a movie pitch project at the end of the semester where stu-

dents get to go through the creative process of coming up with their own Disney movie idea based on folktales, myths, or legends.

Zagrodnik said that she asks students not only to learn about the creative process but to go through it themselves by applying the skills they have learned and creating something on their own.

“We want students to have fun in the class, to enjoy it, to feel like they’re being challenged in a different way than what can seem like a very passive experience of just reading literature,” said Zagrodnik.

Students are also gaining skills that go far beyond the classroom, such as critical thinking and creative problem-solving. One learning goal of the course as outlined in the syllabus says, “Students will be able to clearly formulate vital questions and problems; gather, assess, and interpret relevant information; and generate well-reasoned conclusions or evidence in support of a claim.”

“Employers today are looking for people who demonstrate strong critical thinking skills. So, this is a class that is working to help students develop those skills,” said Zagrodnik.

Because of the deep analysis and critical thinking that this class offers, students leave with a different perspective on the stories they grew up with and a skill set to carry with them.

“So far, the whole class has been amazing. I really enjoy discussing the stories that I grew up with on a deeper level,” said Grace Hartsell, an English major in the class. “I’ve learned the many ways of storytelling in movies. I had never thought about the movies this analytically or from this perspective, and I’ll definitely do more of it from now on.”

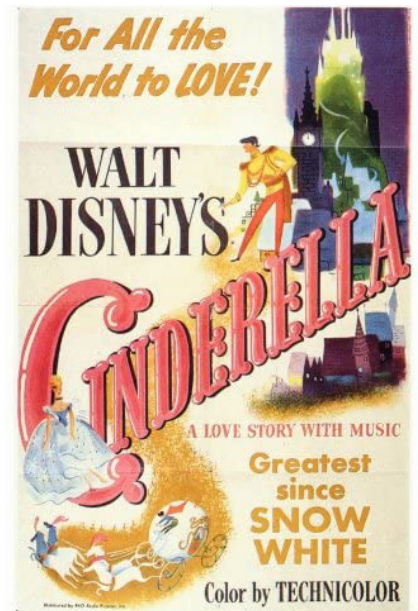


Photo by Annabeth Freeman

Andrew Thumpston

Perhaps my favorite skills I’ve gained from this class are the tools and techniques used to analyze and recognize themes, motifs,

and symbolism in movies. It has made watching Disney movies even more fun and much richer as I understand more of what is happening below the surface,” said Andrew Thumpston, a sophomore biology major. “The cool thing is that these skills can apply to any type of film but were quite fun to learn while watching ‘Cinderella’ and ‘Hercules.’”



Because of the wide variety of students that take this class and the universality of the topics studied, students across different majors can come together and build relationships that might not have been able to happen in other settings.

“I would certainly recommend this course for someone else because it not only allows the readers and viewers to think outside the box, it brings together a group of students into being really good friends,” said Alan-Michael Fluellen, a supply chain major

in the course. “By enjoying similar movies and working on the same assignments and projects together, it’s easier to build stronger relationships between people we’ve never even met before.”

Zagrodnik said “Creative Inquiry Through Literature” classes are heavily sought out by the English department faculty who want the chance to teach a topic that personally interests them.

“It’s a chance for the faculty to be creative too, but it also gives us a chance to teach on something that we don’t usually have a chance to teach,” said Zagrodnik.

Previous courses have covered topics such as the Broadway musical “Hamilton,” the Harry Potter novels, and works by C.S. Lewis and JRR Tolkien. There are two “Creative Inquiry Through Literature” courses offered per semester on average that are on a rotation of professors and topics. “Short Fiction into Film” is an anticipated future topic.

Media Magic

Course teaches students to manage social platforms for businesses

By **Kaleigh Jamison**

With more than 3.6 billion people now using social media, according to SproutSocial.com, helping businesses and organizations communicate effectively on social media platforms is a growing need.



Randi Plake

That's where "Social Media Management," a communication department course taught by Visiting Lecturer of Communication Randi Plake comes in.

Plake said the course, which is required of all students in the digital media concentration of the communication major, teaches students to manage social media messaging and monitoring for

organizations.

Since the focus of the course is on online social interactions, the class uses many online resources. Many of the projects include real-life work that social media managers do.

"I bring in examples from my time spent running social media for places like Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science," Plake said.

Because technology is constantly evolving, Plake said she continually updates her class resources.

"I didn't know much about social media before I took 'Social Media Management,'" said Connor Logan, a digital media student. "The discussion boards and interactive assignments really helped me understand the advantages of good social media marketing."

Plake believes that social media platforms will continue to improve in the future and many businesses already use paid programs to help them market more effectively.

Plake said she also believes social media will improve methods of protecting users' privacy.

"As a society, we are more aware of how social media platforms are using our data and the lack



With more than 2.7 billion people now using social media, helping businesses manage their presence on the platforms is a critical need. AU's "Social Media Management" course teaches ethical social media management skills. (Unsplash photo)

of privacy we have with technology," Plake said. "We're not willing to give up social media or our iPhones, so we want these companies to treat users fairly, or we may gravitate to other, upcoming social media platforms that don't mess with our data or mental health."

Before teaching, Plake managed public relations and social media for a community college in Connecticut, as well as a church. She soon began teaching a social media class and knew that's what she wanted to do in the future.

In 2018, Plake and her family moved to South Carolina where she began teaching multiple courses for AU, including "Social Media Management."

"I really like teaching at a Christian university," Plake said. "I feel like I can finally be myself in the classroom. I also enjoy discussing and viewing certain topics like social media ethics through the lens of the Bible."

Viewing the past through a new lens

Connections course uses cinema to explore history of human rights

By Asa Waters

A new course at Anderson University explores the history of human rights issues through their depictions in dramatic films.

The course, “Global History in Film,” focuses on a different film every week, with each film depicting a major event in the history of human rights. Films such as “Amistad” and “Lawrence of Arabia” provide students with a greater perspective on historical events such as slavery and colonialism.

Assistant Professor of History Ryan Butler teaches the course which is offered to students of all majors.



Ryan Butler

Butler said this diversity of majors lends itself nicely to the discussion-based structure of the course. These discussions provide each student with the opportunity to express their unique perspective on that week’s film.

“I think the opportunities for a connections course are incredible,” Butler said, noting that connections courses are a key part of

Anderson’s Gold Core Curriculum and often center around multifaceted topics that fall outside of any specific field. “You bring in people that are coming at an issue from so many different viewpoints. You don’t have to worry about groupthink as much.”

While the course focuses primarily on the events which are depicted in each film, students are also asked to consider the purpose of each film within the context of the era in which it was produced.

“Film has become a primary way that we remember the past,” Butler said. “We need to be aware that there are certain biases and narratives that are being pitched in film. Sometimes we can just passively imbibe it and take it as gospel. It’s imperative, as informed Christians, to not be passive receivers of these narratives, but to look at them thoughtfully.”

Lewis Hightower, a sophomore human development and family studies major, signed up for Butler’s class because of his interest in film.



The 1997 film, “Amistad,” is one of the films used to explore human rights issues in the AU course, “Global History in Film.”

“I love film,” Hightower said. “I like learning about the technical aspects of them like, ‘Why did the director choose to do this?’ or, ‘What is the symbolism here?’ So, when I heard Anderson was offering a connections class on film I was like, ‘Sign me up.’”

Hightower said the course’s focus on history and human rights has been an eye-opening experience for him and his classmates.

“We are looking at things that I never would have thought were human rights issues,” he said, “but Dr. Butler is framing it in a way that I realize, this is not just a normal issue, this is a human rights issue.”

Hightower added, “I do care about human rights issues a lot, so getting to connect that passion I have for people who are marginalized with something like film and blending those two things together has been cool.”

This blending and connecting of two seemingly disparate fields, film and history, is precisely what Butler had envisioned for the course.

“So many people today learn the things they do about history through film. It gives you a closeness and a proximity that a book does not,” Butler said. “Through film, you can approach significant moral problems in history and seek to share them in ways that are easily accessible.”

Business owner takes on professor role

Rettew brings career experience to classroom

By Lindsey Alexander

Bobby Rettew, an Emmy-winning communicator and owner of Rettew Creative in Anderson, has joined the communication department faculty.



Rettew photo

Bobby Rettew

University, Rettew went on to work as a photojournalist in broadcast television and won Associated Press and Emmy awards for his work. Later, he decided to go back and get a graduate degree in professional communications at Clemson.

"I realized that I had a really good skill set but I did not have the knowledge that went with that skill set," Rettew said. "I wanted to be more than just a camera person. I wanted to grow my knowledge, so I made a decision to apply to grad school."

After getting his graduate degree and working in television again for a few years, Rettew moved back to the Anderson area in 2008 and started a company downtown with a local businessman that sent video messages through email for hospitals, pre-Youtube. He later took over the business as a digital media company that serves clients in the southeast in video, podcasts, photography, content development, and new media.

Rettew lives near the campus with his family – wife Sarah, daughter Rose, 9, and twin boys George and Henry, 3 -- and said he has found Anderson University to be a very special place because of its emphasis on community.

"At any point in time, you can go outside and throw the ball and run on the front lawn with your kids and see a student that you're helping and have a chat with them," said Rettew. "There's something special about having an academic learning center right in the center of a town, especially a small town."

He describes his teaching style as active, conversational, and challenging.

"I really enjoyed that his teaching style was relaxed and felt more like a conversation," said Grace Ann Vargo, a sophomore communication digital media major who formerly had Rettew for her "Media and Society" class. "His teaching style was informative and genuine. He has an excitement about this topic and wants to share that with his students."

Rettew said he teaches with an active learning philosophy in which he helps students to learn but also learns from the students at the same time.

According to his students, Rettew has succeeded in teaching and articulating the knowledge he has with them and has taught them skills that they can carry with them after college.

"The techniques of camera use is one thing I will be keeping in mind after college," said Sarah-Beth Arnold, a senior communication digital media major who has had Rettew for three courses -- "Media and Society," "Introduction to Digital Photography and Photojournalism," and "Documentary Video Production." "The interview process and photojournalism will be specific knowledge I will take with me into my career as well."



Students in the Documentary Video Production course practice setting up for an interview. (Photo by Bobby Rettew)



Assistant Professor Bobby Rettew takes a socially-distanced selfie at Carolina Wren Park with students in his Introduction to Digital Photography and Photojournalism course during the fall 2020 semester.

Rettew said he allows students to practice and gain real-world experience right in the classroom.

“We’re not just going to talk about theory,” said Rettew. “We’re going to talk about practice and finding that intersection so that when you walk out the door, you’re prepared for the business world.”

Along with teaching practical skills for the workforce, Rettew has also passed along deeper lessons that students will always remember.

Rettew “has taught me to take pride in my own work and to create work that I am proud of, no matter what anyone else thinks,” said Vargo. “He has also taught me to be an effective communicator through taking a step back and examining before jumping to any conclusion. In order to be an effective communicator, I have to look at the general picture and then focus in on the details and look at the general picture again.”

Rettew stresses the importance of practice, hard

work, and preparation for the business world to all of his students with a bigger goal in mind than just sending them out into the workforce.

“My goal of teaching is to one day do business with those people,” said Rettew. “There is nothing more satisfying than a few years later, one of my students calling me and wanting to do business together and work on a project together. And that happens a lot, and I am very fortunate to be a part of that.”

Rettew said he likes to build relationships with his students and watch them grow, and he explained the rewards of investing in the next generation.

“There is nothing more fun than watching students’ stories unfold and watching young people become young professionals and building those relationships,” Rettew said. “It’s an investment in future equity. If you have an opportunity to invest in that future equity, your soul is rich!”

CAS offers pre-law advising program

By Asa Waters

Anderson University is now offering a pre-law advising program for students interested in pursuing law school.

The program is open for students of all majors and is centered around preparing students for law school by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed after graduation.



AU photo

Roger Flynn

Led by Roger Flynn, chair of department of history and political science, the program provides students with the guidance necessary to succeed in law school without requiring a separate major or minor.

“My job is to fill in the gaps for students who might be majoring in something other than political science or history,” Flynn said. “I encourage a broad background in both

knowledge and skills; tapping into almost every single college and degree on campus.”

The program, which is in its second full year of operation, has 30 students enrolled from several different colleges and departments.

Although still in its infancy, the pre-law advising program has already seen success, with the

first two students to complete the program having been accepted into multiple law schools.

“We’re batting a thousand right now,” Flynn joked.

However, simply getting students into law school is not the primary goal. Flynn said he wants to make sure that each student to come through his program has the tools they need to thrive in the next level of their education.

“It’s not just getting into law school; we also want to prepare students to be successful,” Flynn said.

Jayli Esber, a junior political science major, has been involved in the program since its inception. The

granddaughter of a Lebanese immigrant, Esber is studying to pursue a career in immigration law.

She said the pre-law program has helped her work towards making this dream a reality while not getting bogged down by the more intimidating aspects of law school.

“The whole purpose of this process is to prepare you as an individual and not to lose sight of that by focusing on things like the LSAT (Law School Admission Test),” Esber said. “I feel if I were not in this program, I would have done that. So having an advisor who is personable and is willing to help you on an individual level has been very beneficial.”

Esber, now an intern at Inga Law in Hartford, Connecticut, said the stigma around the difficulty of law school nearly pushed her away from pursuing a career

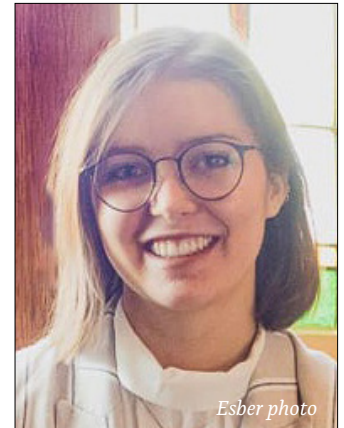
in the field. However, Flynn’s guidance, along with her internship, helped give her a much more grounded and realistic perspective on practicing law.

“Getting an internship at a law firm made everything very real and made these goals seem very attainable,”

Esber said. “I thought it would be very difficult to manage and very challenging, but it has had the exact opposite effect and (a career in law) now feels very doable.”

One of the ways the pre-law program reaches prospective students is by allowing them to talk with students who are currently involved in the program.

Esber, who has talked to many prospective students over the past three years, said the biggest piece of advice she could give them is to not listen to the rumors or stereotypes about law school but to get involved with the field and recognize that a career in law is attainable and worthwhile.



Esber photo

Jayli Esber

“I was very stressed about going to law school, to the point where I almost completely ruled it out. But with the experience and knowledge I have now, it seems very attainable.”

Biology major studies Yellow Fever vaccine

By Ashley Caputo

Jillian Taylor, a senior biology major who is minoring in chemistry and Spanish, is spending her summers a little differently than the typical college student. For the last two summers, she has spent her time studying the Yellow Fever vaccine.



Jillian Taylor

as regional director of the South Atlantic Region Vaccine Safety Hub at the Defense Health Agency's Immunization Healthcare Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Taylor said that people in the military get more vaccines than the typical American because they are often asked to travel to different countries.

"We were able to look at all of the military people getting the Yellow Fever vaccine and compare the rates of anaphylaxis (allergic reactions) to the average rates in America and just by having that large sampling pool, we saw that anaphylaxis to the Yellow Fever vaccine is much more common than anaphylaxis to other vaccines," Taylor said.

Taylor said that when they discovered that information, they took it further in order to determine what components of the vaccine were causing the anaphylaxis, and if it was something that could be taken out of the vaccine.

"We were just trying to compare the data on that and we also compared the data for 2019 to previous years and just how many anaphylactic episodes have happened in the past 20 years since 1999," she said.

McClenathan praised Taylor for her work on the project.

"I found Ms. Taylor's work ethic, attention to detail, interest and passion on the projects to be truly exceptional," he said. "Her efforts these past two summers have already resulted in national level presentations.

Yellow Fever is a disease caused by a virus transmitted by mosquitoes. It's most prominent in certain parts of South America and Africa and can cause serious illness and death.

Taylor got involved with studying the Yellow Fever vaccine through Dr. Bruce McClenathan, who she knew growing up who now serves



*Yellow Fever is generally transmitted through bites from the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention photo)*

Specifically, she was a co-author of a poster presentation during the federal healthcare system's premier research venue, the annual AMSUS (Association of Military Surgeons of the United States) meeting held at the National Harbor, Maryland, in December 2019, and her latest work was accepted for oral presentation at the 2020 Military Health System Research Symposium which is the Department of Defense's leading research venue."

Taylor said she loves the work she is doing.

"I've just been able to learn more about vaccines, what's in them, and how important they are. It also helps me learn more about how we can make the safest vaccines," she said.

Taylor said she knows that a lot of Americans have been nervous about the quality of vaccines, especially the COVID-19 vaccine.

"Through this research project I've been able to see how we can make vaccines safer and the actual rates of bad things happening to people when they receive them, and they're not as high as a lot of Americans think they are. You are unlikely to experience many side effects to most vaccines at all. But even with those, just seeing the importance of trying to make the side effects lower with each vaccine, I love that," Taylor said. "That was probably my favorite part of learning about that and just learning how to make treatments of all kinds safer for all patients in America."

Technology kept CAS moving during pandemic

By Ashley Caputo

Although the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges at Anderson University during the 2020-21 academic year, the College of Arts and Science's commitment to using the latest technology tools helped students and faculty continue to be successful.

Nearly every classroom in Watkins Hall, which houses most CAS courses, was equipped with cameras to allow for distance learning and faculty adopted a wide variety of software tools to help students both in and outside of the classroom.

"Technology during the pandemic has provided a bridge for my students to be able to attend classes while allowing for physical distancing or while under quarantine," said Traci Carter, instructor of mathematics. "Technology has also allowed students to go back and watch recordings of class, either because they didn't quite understand it the first time or if they were unable to attend live due to being sick or without internet access while in quarantine. These are all positive ways technology has benefited my classes this year."

Zoom, a videoconferencing platform integrated into AU's learning management system, was the most common technology used for online and split classes across the college. But other tools also played a key role in helping professors and students adapt to COVID-19.

"Due to the size of my classes and the need to physically distance, my classes have been altered to be 'HyFlex' classes where each class is split into two teams, the Black Team and the Gold Team," Carter said. "Each week, the Black team attends in person one day while the Gold Team attends in person on the other day. When a team is not attending class in person, they attend class virtually via Zoom. Each class is recorded and posted to Canvas for students to watch if they are unable to attend in person or virtually."

Carter said she also moved away from using the whiteboard during her classes due to students on Zoom having difficulty seeing the whiteboard through the classroom camera.

"I use my iPad and iPencil to instruct using my lecture notes on Notability (an iPad app that integrates handwriting, typing, drawings, and pictures) so students on Zoom or watching the recording can see the

material on my screen share," Carter said. "I can also save the Notability document to use as a reference, while in the past the material got erased from the whiteboard."

Gilbert Eyabi, professor of mathematics, said he was using technology in the classroom before COVID-19.

"Back then, I Zoomed students into the classroom who could not attend in person for various reasons. Another thing that helped me is that I had gradually started using the Notability App on my iPad as my whiteboard for teaching," Eyabi said.

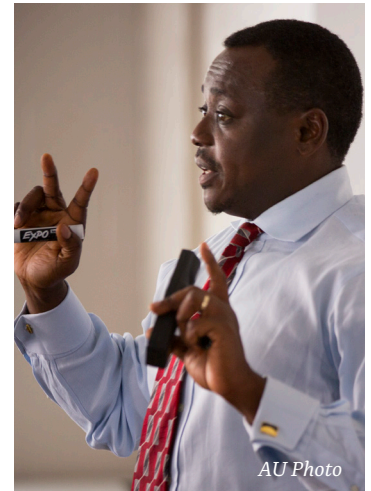
"When the pandemic hit, I was ready to go. I did not have to adapt my classes to run in a virtual or HyFlex format. I just did what I was already doing on a larger scale. Of course, I had to come up with creative ways to evaluate students and encourage attendance in a virtual setting."

Melina Phillips, junior actuarial science major and student worker for Eyabi, said he recorded his lectures through Zoom for his split class, which she edited and uploaded for his classes.

"Students have the option to go back and reference those class recordings and I think that's really good because even if you're in class sometimes you can miss things and want to go back," Phillips said.

Amanda Delong, a junior communication-digital media major said that recorded lectures allowed learning to be a bit more flexible, and students were able to learn at their own pace.

"We have online discussions that go with the reading and it's easier to kind of take time to think about what you want to say instead of being in class and on the spot, trying to think of what to say," Delong said. "It's nice to be able to sit down and write out 'these are my thoughts, and this is what I think' or 'these are the questions I have', or anything like that."



Gilbert Eyabi



Technology played a key roll in helping College of Arts and Sciences class move forward during the COVID-19 pandemic. These students are one part of an Introduction to Video Production course meeting in the CAS Digital Media Lab. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

Phillips said using Zoom is closer to an in-person learning environment than just watching a lecture.

She said that as a student, “you are there with classmates, peers, and professors, so you can have conversations and back-and-forth when you’re learning.” She said Zoom also has breakout rooms.

Randi Plake, visiting lecturer of communication, said technology is very useful in helping her to engage students.

“I use a lot of technology in my courses,” Plake said. “I have lecture videos every week. We watch video clips and films. We listen to podcasts, and my students use tools like Adobe Spark and Weebly to do assignments.”

Adobe Spark is an online and mobile design app that students can use to create social graphics, videos and web pages. Weebly is a template-based website and e-commerce service.

“I find that technology helps students to engage better,” Plake said “I try to bring technology into my courses that will benefit students who want to work in communication, so my students get experience with content creation and social media monitoring tools. However, if a professor isn’t familiar with the technology, it can negatively affect students’ experience. I never bring in technology that I am not comfortable with because I know it’s my job to help my students learn the tool.”

Eyabi said that teaching during the pandemic has been a challenging but rewarding experience. He referenced 2 Timothy 4:2, and said that Paul told

Timothy to be ready “in season and out of season” to preach the Word.

“The pandemic has taught me that teachers have to be ready in season – normal times – and out of season – pandemic times – to teach,” Eyabi said. “When the pandemic hit in the spring of 2020 and teaching had to go virtual in the middle of the semester, some of us who had been users of technology found ourselves teaching students course content, and also teaching other faculty how to teach with technology. Those were interesting days to say the least.”

Eyabi said that he may continue to use the HyFlex model to teach some courses even after the pandemic ends but he’s looking forward to going back to more in-person instruction.

That sentiment was echoed by other faculty members as well.

“In general, I just miss being around students,” Plake said of teaching online. “I can cultivate a class discussion through the discussion boards on Canvas, but I miss the chit chat and random things we might talk about before or after class.”

Carter said she misses seeing the students’ faces.

“So much of what guides my rate of instruction comes via my formative assessment of their understanding as seen on their faces,” Carter said. “Students may not ask a question but when their face shows confusion I know to restate or expound upon the idea. It is harder to gauge my students and their understanding when I can only see their eyes. I also miss their smiles!”



The boardwalk at the Rocky River Nature Park snakes 600 feet through the park's wetlands. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

On the Boardwalk

Project gives researchers better access to Rocky River Nature Park wetlands

By Cameron Cook

Choirs of frogs sing as the still marsh waters teem with life underneath your feet, each step echoing as you walk on the Rocky River Nature Park's new wetlands boardwalk.

The 600-foot boardwalk spanning a key section of wetlands provides visitors with a better view of the wetlands as well as easier access to the area for researchers.

The nature park is an approximately 200-acre tract off Old Williamston Road near the main Anderson University campus. It is owned by AU and managed by the Rocky River Conservancy, a private non-profit organization that aims to preserve the natural beauty of the wetlands.

Completion of the boardwalk was one of the long-term goals for the park, said Tom Kozel, a retired AU professor of biology who has overseen the project. Kozel said the boardwalk was built for about \$100,000



Tom Kozel



Photo by Cameron Cook

and to the highest quality so it will not only function well but also blend in with the environment. Even the curving and bending of the boardwalk was designed so that boardwalk would create as little disturbance as possible, he said.

Along with the boardwalk, the AU and the Conservancy has also completed other projects including an outdoor classroom and an elevated perch that helps visitors experience the nature park.



The new wetlands boardwalk at the Rocky River Nature Park provides researchers and visitors with the ability to observe the wetlands up close without disturbing the fragile ecosystem. (Photos by Robert Reeves)

Cancer Center develops iBook on research methods

By Connor Logan

Anderson University's Center for Cancer Research has developed an iBook to help new and current students learn about research methods and equipment used at the lab.

The iBook, called "The Cancer Research Center," was written by biology professor Diana Ivankovic and formatted by AU graduates Michael Stevens and Isaac Daffron, who were students at the time. The book is meant to help new and current students working at the center learn about new research methods and technology available to them.



Diana Ivankovic

Ivankovic recruited the students as well as the Anderson University Center for Innovation and Digital Learning to create the iBook.

"Since I came to Anderson University in 2004, my students would share papers and files to do cancer research but things would always get lost," Ivankovic said.

"Sometimes students would call me on weekends or late at night to ask questions and I wouldn't be there to demonstrate. Having papers is nice, but it's so much better to have someone on video to perform these steps. And that is what the iBook provides, both the written and visual examples."

"Having papers is nice, but it's so much better to have someone on video to perform these steps. And that is what the iBook provides, both the written and visual examples."

The advantages of an iBook, an electronic publication that uses the Apple iBook application, come in the features that are included. iBooks are more interactive and can include videos to help with the reader's learning experience.



Student Zack Purdun begins the process of splitting cells at the Anderson University Center for Cancer Research. An iBook has been produced to teach research techniques. (Photo by Connor Logan)

"Anderson is an Apple Distinguished School so... we decided to make the book an iBook rather than just a normal e-book," said Chad Treado, CIDL associate director.

The iBook contains 16 chapters that include old and new methods in cancer research.

Each chapter includes information on specific techniques as well as step-by-step videos.

The iBook was released on the iBook store and has a five-star rating.

Ivankovic said she hopes the iBook will not only help those students in AU's cancer research program but will also help other researchers as well.

What's the Point?

AU Writing Center helps students communicate clearly

By **Kaleigh Jamison**

On the second floor of Thrift Library, there's a comfortable room with a welcoming atmosphere. Young tutors sit at the ready as their classmates enter with puzzling papers. Ideas bounce, and eventually, intimidating assignments become unique works of inspiration.

The Anderson University Writing and Multimedia Center focuses on strengthening and encouraging every writer who enters.

Tutors in the lab are trained by Assistant Professor Drew Stowe, an English professor who has a doctorate in Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design. Since 2016, Stowe has trained young writers to become tutors through the Writing Center Practicum.

"The main goal of the Writing Center is to help students become more competent and confident writers," Stowe said.

The tutors themselves are other Anderson University students.

"Early on in college, I realized that a lot of the tools and methods I used for writing were not widely known by other students," said Morganne Tankersley, a writing tutor. "I became a tutor because I wanted to share not only those tools and methods, but also my excitement and joy for writing with other students."

Students can make Writing Center appointments on the Anderson University website simply by creating an account and selecting a time. Students are also welcome to stop by during drop-in hours.

"I strongly encourage writers not to wait until the last minute to work with a tutor," Stowe said. "My advice for students who are considering visiting the Writing Center is to start early and visit regularly."

When COVID-19 first altered the university's schedule in 2020, all tutoring sessions were conducted online. As time progressed, the Writing Center began offering limited in-person visits, however, and by the end of the spring semester, offered online, in-person, and e-tutoring.

Online sessions allow tutors to communicate through a video call at a specified time, whereas e-tutoring permits tutors to provide feedback directly on a paper and send it back without physical contact.



Tutors are encouraged to motivate and reassure every writer that visits the Writing Center. (Photo by Patrick Ford)

A writing session can range from 30 minutes to an hour. Regardless of whether a student is in the brainstorming stage or final draft stage, tutors are equipped to help.

"Many writers come to the Writing Center and aren't confident in their writing, which, in turn, can affect their confidence in their ideas. Oftentimes, the real issue isn't with their arguments, but with the way they are communicating them," Tankersley said. "It's so cool to be able to see their eyes light up when they realize that they do have good thoughts, but also have a trajectory for how they can fix the issues they have with expressing themselves."

According to the AU Writing Center website, all writing assignments are welcome, whether it's a lab report or fictional story. Tutors learn how to cite sources in several different styles, as well as how to locate different resources to help along the way.

"The Writing and Multimedia Center isn't magic, but it might be the next best thing," Stowe said, "We can't fix your writing in an instant, but if you work hard, our tutors will help you find resources to learn and to put those ideas into practice across different media and disciplines."

Video studio under development

By Kyle Booth

A new video production studio is being developed at Anderson University Chiquola Center Studios in downtown Anderson.

The new studio will enhance the communication department's video production courses and will be used to serve the university and Anderson community, said Robert Reeves, assistant professor of communication and chair of the communication department.

Reeves said the department has already been using one room in the downtown space it shares with the School of the Arts as a classroom and is moving rapidly to turn the space into a production studio. An adjacent room will serve as a control room.

The room is already equipped with a cyclorama, a curved green screen to accommodate virtual sets, Reeves said.



AU photo by Jason Jones

“We have the lighting grid and we’ve done sound mitigation work in the room,” Reeves said. “What we want to do in the next is equip it.”

Reeves said when complete, the room will be used to teach studio production courses and give students more hands-on experience in producing video programming. A podcasting station that can be used for



both audio and video podcasts is also planned.

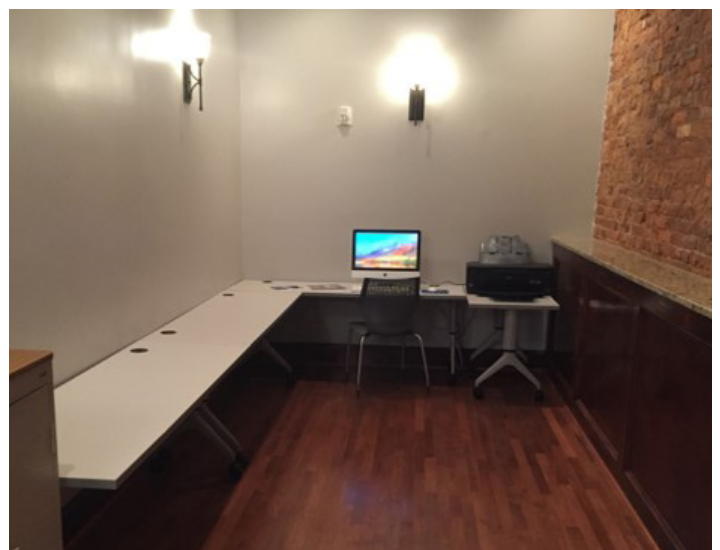
Reeves said the university as a whole will benefit from the studio because it will enable students to produce a wide variety of programming.

“I can see a whole host of uses,” Reeves said. “We’ll easily be able to use the studio for a number of program types. I can see us recording interviews with special university guests, addresses to campus by the president, coaches’ shows for our growing athletic programs, and much more.”

The studio will be capable of producing a newscast, hosting interviews of authors for the English department, and even help School of the Arts students create performance reels, Reeves said. He said the department is planning to use wireless cameras and microphones which will allow for field production outside the studio itself as well.

He said the department is not just looking at serving the university, however. Collaborations with local government and businesses for advertising projects and video documentaries are also possible once the studio is established.

Reeves said the department is moving rapidly to equip the studio. The facility was the featured project for the College of Arts and Sciences during the uni-



This room adjacent to the studio will become a control room. (Photo by Robert Reeves)



The Chiquola Digital Media Studio in its current classroom configuration. This will become open studio space for cameras and crew. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

versity's recent A Day fundraising emphasis. While work will be ongoing, it's expected that the studio will begin seeing use in the fall semester.

"This studio has long been a dream for our department," Reeves said. "It's exciting to begin seeing the project come together."



Above, Anderson University's Chiquola Studios are located in the heart of downtown Anderson. At right, a worker installs the lighting grid in the Digital Media Studio. (Photos by Robert Reeves)





Unsplash photo

The view under the hood

Course teaches students to design websites

By Hannah White

Behind every beautiful website lies lines of code that tell the web browser how each item should look and function. AU's "Introduction to Web Development" course helps to reveal the secrets under the hood of every site.

Taught by Paige Meeker, professor of coding and app development, the course teaches students to code their own webpages and offers them an edge in the communications field. The course introduces students to using HTML, CSS, PHP, JavaScript and other web coding languages.



Paige Meeker

The class "...gives you a little bit of an edge to have on your resume that you can code in HTML, that you can use CSS, and that you can use software," Meeker said.

Meeker said nothing more than a text editor is needed for basic coding.

"I like to start from scratch in coding," Meeker

said. As an introductory course, Web Development teaches the basics of developing and creating designs that are fully customizable.

Meeker said she encourages students to be creative in the course as it allows them the opportunity to create something from scratch rather than rely on a template-based web service.

The first couple of topics in the class, HTML and CSS, are core scripting languages for students to learn in regards to any programming.

"They are languages that say 'I want the page to look a certain way' and so there's tags around it that say I want this this to be bolder, I want this to be a header, or I want this to be a paragraph or I want a list of things," Meeker said.

The course also teaches students to code in PHP and Javascript as well as use web design software like Dreamweaver, and WordPress, she said.

"In the lab we have Dreamweaver, which is a high end professional grade software for web development," Meeker said.

AU, Tri-County work together to help students

By Connor Logan

Students who have earned certificates in media arts at an area technical college can now finish their bachelor's degree at Anderson University.

AU recently completed an articulation agreement that will allow Tri-County Technical College students to transfer and take needed upper-level courses to earn a bachelor of arts degree in communication.

The Media Arts Production Bridge Program is the first articulation agreement that allows Tri-County students to earn a bachelor's degree in a traditional undergraduate program at AU.

"The combination...will give students more opportunities as soon as they graduate and as life goes on," said John Woodson, media arts program director for Tri-county Technical College.

Robert Reeves, chair of AU's Communication Department, said the program will be a major benefit for students who start their post-secondary education at Tri-County and discover they have a real affinity for communication through digital media because they will be able to easily continue their educations without losing time starting over in another program.

"We think it's going to be a very beneficial partnership for both us and Tri-County. More importantly, it's going to benefit students because it's going to provide another opportunity to expand their education."

"It's going to help certain students to be able to expand their knowledge and to actually finish with a higher level degree," Reeves said.

Wayne Cox, dean of Anderson University's College of Arts and Sciences, said the program is going to help students who are actively looking to become a student at AU but may have not been able to attend the university in their first year.

"It's for the student who may not have the opportunity to come to AU in the first place," Cox said.

Reeves said he sees the agreement as beneficial for all involved.



An AU student works on a video editing project in the Digital Media Lab. Through a new articulation agreement with Tri-County Technical College, students from that school's media arts production program can now transfer to AU to complete a bachelor's degree. (Photo by Connor Logan)

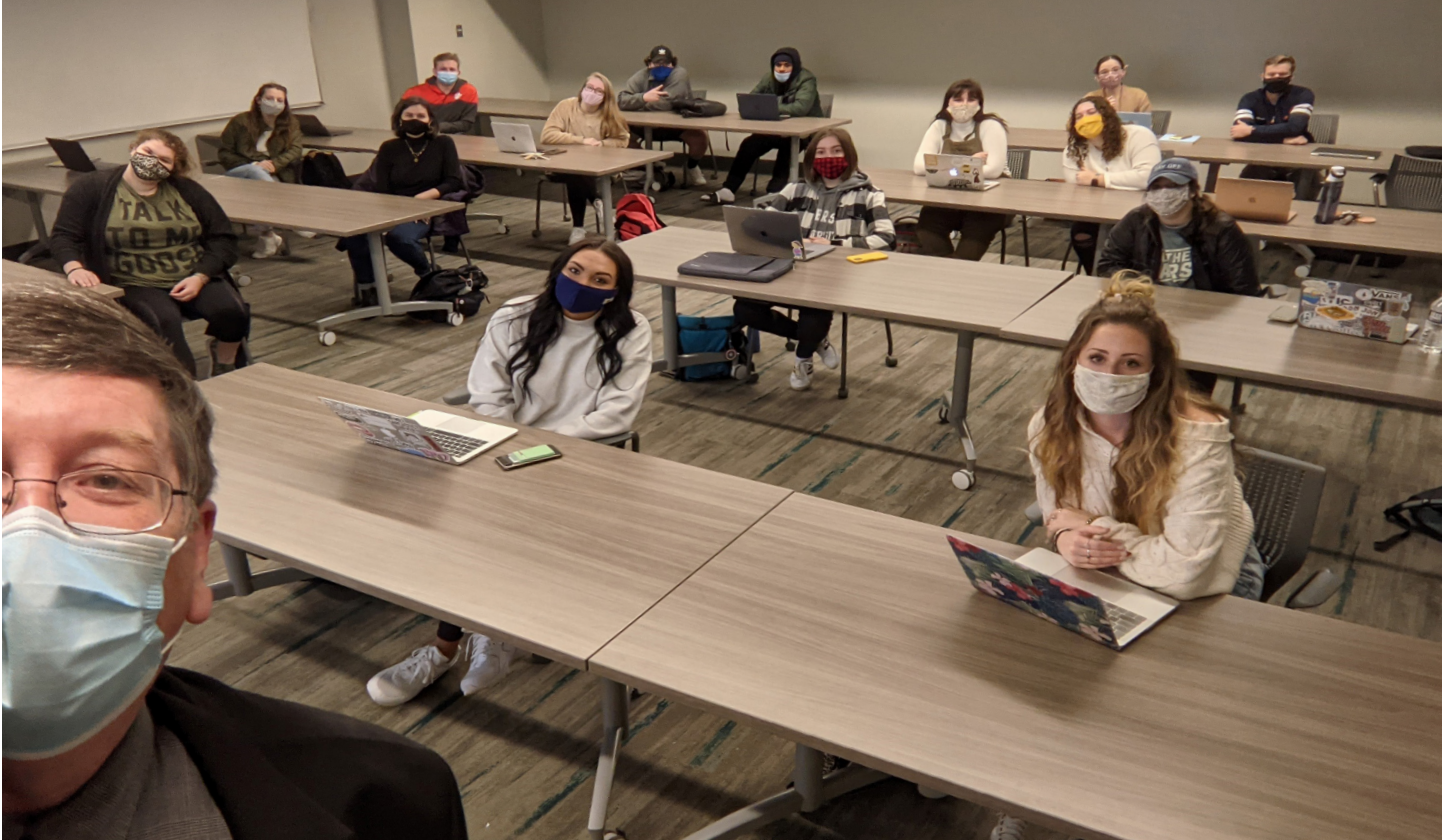
"We think it's going to be very beneficial partnership for both us and Tri-County. Most importantly, it's going to benefit the students because it's going to provide another opportunity for them to expand their education," Reeves said.



Tri-County Technical College in Pendleton. (TCTC photo)

SYNTHESIS

Anderson University
316 Boulevard
Anderson, SC 29621



The 2020-21 academic year was the year of COVID-19. Anderson University was able to conduct classes throughout the pandemic by following cleaning, physical distancing, mask-wearing protocols and carefully monitoring cases on campus. Here students in the COM 320 Principles of Public Relations class pose for a selfie at the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester.