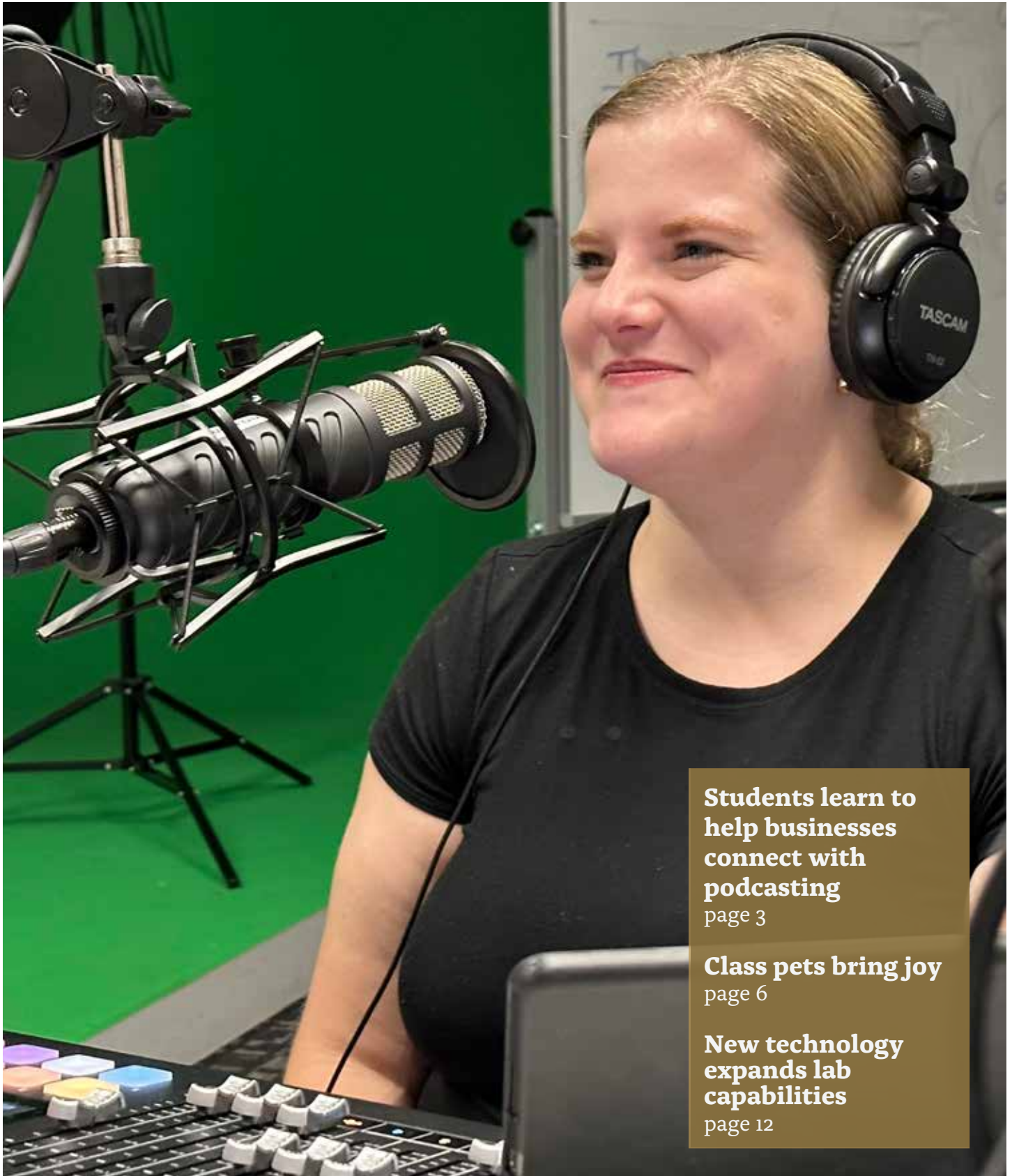


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Anderson University College of Arts and Sciences

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## Cover photo:

*Grace Ann Vargo records a segment for her podcast in the Podcasting for Business Communication course. For more about the course, see the story on page 3 of this issue. (Photo by Bobby Rettew)*

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# SYNTHESIS

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**Vol. 4, Issue 2 | Winter 2022**

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# Finding their voice

## Students learn to help businesses connect with podcasting

By Camden Segura

Anderson University students are now learning to help organizations use one of the most popular and fast-growing forms of communication -- podcasting.

A new course, Podcasting for Business Communication, guides students through the process of developing, writing, recording, editing, and marketing podcasts for organizations. It is taught by Assistant Professor of Communication Bobby Rettew.



Rettew photo

**Bobby Rettew**

“This course provides students with a survey of podcasting concepts and techniques using audio studio and location sound equipment,” Rettew said. “Areas covered include types of podcasts, storytelling, recording and editing, digital delivery techniques, audio equipment, digital distribution, and measuring audience engagement.”

Rettew has experience helping large clients create and market podcasts about their business or industry to achieve their communication goals through his own business, Rettew Creative.



Courtney photo

**Emerson Courtney**

“I wanted to help not only inspire what podcasting really is all about but also teach the business mechanics,” Rettew said.

Students begin by creating a brand, logo, title, and description of their podcast.

“We were given a spreadsheet that helps us plan out our episodes, episode titles, our guests, what we want the pod-

cast to sound like, and our target audience,” said Emerson Courtney, a sophomore communication major.

The students plan 10 episodes and are then instructed on how to launch their episodes, Rettew explained.

Hannah Crouch, a sophomore communication major, said the class also learns how to use the recording and editing equipment that they need for their podcasts.



Students record a podcast in the Chiquola Digital Media Studio as part of the Podcasting for Business Communication course. There are nearly 384 million podcast listeners globally, according to marketing analytics firm Demand Sage. (Photo by Bobby Rettew)

They then learn how to create a smooth flowing podcast episode as well as how to place ads within their podcasts.

Each student’s podcast is then streamed through Spotify, Apple, and many other podcasting platforms.

The final project for the course includes an evaluation of the podcast’s influence.

“They have to track the impact of their podcast, like how many listens it got, and generate a final business report about it,” Rettew said.

The goal of this new course is to help students learn to use podcasting effectively as a communication tool for businesses and other organizations.

“It is definitely teaching us something that is very useful in the workplace,” Courtney said.



Reeves photo

**Hannah Crouch**

# Environmental science degree sees first grads

By Hanna Bautista

Anderson University's newest science-focused major recently celebrated its first graduates.

The new major, environmental science, graduated its first student in May and three more in December. Environmental science students are prepared to work in various fields from government and environmental agencies and fisheries to marine biology-focused occupations.

Senior environmental science major Harlee Dennis said that she felt well-prepared as she approached graduation after many hours of experiential training during her outdoor labs.

"I am thankful for the hands-on opportunities and skills that I have been able to learn from our outdoor labs," Dennis said. "Having class outdoors lets us practice real-world applications of our study."

Travis Nation, coordinator for environmental science and associate professor of biology, said the university began the conversation to add the environmental science major nearly three years ago. He said the integration of existing biology-based courses with the addition of environmental science courses has resulted in a thriving new major.

"Our goal is to at some point be graduating at least eight to 10 people a year, so that would mean that there are 40 or 50 people in the program. I think that



*Sisters Harlee and Diana Dennis stand in front of Watkins Hall. They are among the first graduates of the environmental science degree program in the College of Arts and Sciences. (Photo by Ashley Kate Miller)*



*Environmental science students participate in an outdoor lab exercise at the Rocky River Nature Park near the Anderson University campus. (AU photo by Jason Jones)*



*Environmental science students wade the wetlands at Rocky River Nature Park collecting water samples. (AU photo by Jason Jones)*

makes for a pretty sustainable program,” Nation said. Anderson University developed the major to offer more science and biology courses with focuses outside of the medical field. Additionally, Nation said he sees the new major as a selling point for the university and an opportunity to draw in new students. Currently, class sizes for environmental science range from 20 to 25 students.



**Travis Nation**

Nation said the environmental science program has various outdoor and field experience opportunities -- a favorite part of the program for many students and professors.

Diana Dennis, a senior environmental science major, said she was drawn to environmental science because of the large outdoor learning component. In the

program, students routinely have outdoor labs at the Rocky River Nature Park, a 200-acre wetland property owned by the university.

“I enjoy the outdoor opportunities within this major. I find myself learning better from observations and hands-on experiences,” she said. “It is one thing to study images from a textbook, but another to be waist deep in waders, looking at it with your own eyes.”



*Piper Meeker, left, and Diana Dennis prepare to enter Rocky River Nature Park for wetland delineation training. (Photo courtesy of Harlee Dennis)*

# Class pets bring joy to AU students

By Emmerette Boice

When walking the halls of the science floor in Watkins Hall at Anderson University, you are bound to hear professors teaching and students rushing to get to class, but if you listen closely, you may also hear hissing and bubbling water.

These unexpected noises come from the permanent residents of the biology department, a ball python, three axolotls, and several hissing cockroaches.



**Carrie Koenigstein**

Fifteen years ago, the Anderson biology department students decided they wanted to have a department pet, said Carrie Koenigstein, associate dean of sciences and professor of biology. After researching animals, Koenigstein said she determined that a snake would be the perfect, long-living, department pet. Very shortly

after, Nagini, a ball python, came to live in one of the biology classrooms where she still resides today.

"When we got her she was a brand-new baby. She had eaten one meal. She was just a little tiny thing," said Koenigstein.

Nagini is a fan favorite of the department. She is around 4 feet, 6 inches long but is incredibly gentle despite her intimidating appearance. Nagini is often used as an example in the biology classes, whether in representing her species or as an exquisite example of muscle movement.



One of the three AU axolotls watches students studying in the biology department hallway. (Photo by Emmerette Boice)



Nagini, a ball python, rests her head on the hand of student worker AnnMargaret Phillips. Nagini has lived in the AU biology department for the last 15 years. (Photo by Emmerette Boice)

"Nagini has also visited church a few times for youth group events as well as a couple of elementary schools," Koenigstein said.

Joni Criswell, department chair and associate professor of biology, said she added axolotls to the department pet roster. Axolotls are small salamander-like aquatic animals.

Criswell said she had owned an axolotl for 10 years and saw in them a good teaching opportunity. Three axolotls now dwell in a spacious tank in the biology department hallway.

Axolotls are unique creatures as they remain in their physical juvenile developmental state when fully grown and have the ability to regrow limbs, which is a rare quality for a vertebrate animal.



**Joni Criswell**

They are also temperamental animals that require diligent care and specific living conditions to thrive, Criswell said.

“They routinely will get their toes or feet caught in something and instead of just struggling, it (the limb) just pulls off and it’s not a big deal for them because they’ll grow it back,” said Criswell.

The hissing cockroaches live in a small tank near the axolotls and are either an object of fascination or terror for people. The female hissing cockroaches are around the same size as a typical household cockroach, while the males are typically a little bigger.

According to Criswell, the hissing cockroaches, unlike common German cockroaches, make a sharp hissing noise, do not dart about as much, and have small suction cups on their legs that allow them to cling to whatever they are standing on.

**“I think they (pets) add an element of fun and excitement.”**

**Carrie Koenigstein**

She said the insects are used in biology classes and to scare the unsuspecting friends of biology students.

The animals are cared for by a student worker, AnnMargaret Phillips, a senior biology major with a minor in biomedical sciences who plans to go to veterinary school.



*A hissing cockroach displays itself in its tank on the biology hall. (Photo by Emmerette Boice)*



*Senior biology major AnnMargaret Phillips holds the department ball python, Nagini. Phillips is the caretaker for the department’s pets. (Photo by Emmerette Boice)*

She began taking care of the animals in the fall semester of her junior year.

Phillips cleans the animals’ living areas, feeds them and checks in on their health.

“Axolotls are very permeable to their surroundings,” said Phillips, meaning they are easily affected by their environment, and must be watched carefully. She said the ball python gets respiratory infections occasionally and must be monitored for them.

The students appreciate the presence of the animals in the department. When Phillips or a professor is around, the students can even get Nagini out of her tank and hold her.

According to biology student Brooks Davis, Nagini is “like a therapy snake.”

“I feel like anybody that’s in STEM will tell you that it’s hard... I see it a lot, people will come up here and sit and look at the axolotls, and it helps them,” Davis said.

“I think they add an element of fun and excitement,” Koenigstein said.

# Beekeeping course is all the buzz

By Colin Calvert

Anderson area residents and Anderson University students are learning to care for bees through a public course being offered at the Rocky River Nature Park on the AU campus.

The class, taught through the Anderson County Beekeepers Association, is available to anyone interested in learning at a hands-on level what the life of a beekeeper is all about.

“The course gives you a broad introduction into beekeeping, and into a bee’s life history -- how a beehive is set up, how a colony works, how it lives out its life,” said Laary Cushman, professor of biology, who has worked with ACBA to host the class. “(It covers) how to manage the beehive throughout the entire year in order to build it up to a point in which you can harvest honey from it.”



**Laary Cushman**

Cushman said the course emphasizes the importance of caring for bees.

“Many think they just pollinate roses and daisies and so forth, but they go after anything that has nectar, anything that has pollen, that will help them build their colonies up,” Cushman said. “There are more (nectar producers) than just fruit trees, crops, vegetables, and so forth. We have our whole ecosystem.”

He said public classes like this one allow people to appreciate the care and work that goes into caring for the bees, along with seeing the impact that bees make on the ecosystem. Cushman said that without bees, human nutrition would suffer tremendously and the environment would suffer along with it.

The course, taught by master beekeeper Dave Miller, who has been beekeeping for more than 20 years, and Tony Olekas, ACBA president, is designed to be an all inclusive learning experience.

The instructors provide students with an easygoing, classroom-like feel with textbook, lectures, and a variety of guest speakers. Participants are also loaned bee protection suits for working with the hives.

“The entire course is set up like a beginner’s science course,” Cushman said.



*Certified beekeeper Cheryl Bequette, right, and student Emily Stanton examine one of the hives at the Rocky River Nature Park. (Photo by Colin Calvert)*

In the learning area, there is a fenced-in section where the hives are stored and an outdoor teaching area for the lecture-based lessons.

Alekzandre Cushman is an Anderson University student who completed the public course.

“It was designed for total beginners,” he said. “This was really helpful for someone who knew next to nothing about beekeeping.”

Cheryl Bequette, a certified beekeeper who also serves as a campus safety officer, also played a large part in bringing the ACBA class to campus.

“It’s just...fascinating,” Bequette said. “We are on this planet to take care of God’s great Earth. Bees maintain our food supply; we need to preserve them.”



# Students exploring sports broadcasting

By Ryan Gundersen

Students interested in sport communication will have the opportunity to explore this field through the introduction of a new sports broadcasting course this spring.

The communication course, being taught by Adjunct Professor Tim Nihart, will give students the chance to get behind the microphone while helping the communication department gauge the demand for additional sports communication courses.

“I think it is a great opportunity to explore this field of communication,” said Associate Professor of Communication Robert Reeves, who chairs the communication department. Noting the recent addition of men’s and women’s lacrosse and the pending launch of football at the university, Reeves said the timing is right to explore sport communication courses.

“There is always going to be an audience in sports,” added Reeves. “Every professional and minor league team as well as every university with athletics needs people in communication.”

Nihart, who holds a doctorate in communication and journalism, is a former professional baseball player and college baseball coach.

“It’s going to give students who want to work in the realm of sports an opportunity that they wouldn’t have (had in the past),” said sophomore Colin Calvert, a communication major.

Calvert has already begun exploring sport communication by assisting Anderson University Athletics with Trojans sports livestreams.

“So far I have worked my way up to lead play-by-play broadcaster for all of Anderson’s sports. I am very excited to be able to take courses to help prepare me for a career in sports (communication),” said Calvert.

Reeves said the department is planning to add addi-



Communication major Colin Calvert, right, provides commentary for the livestream of a recent Anderson University volleyball game alongside alum Jalen Drummond. The communication department is offering a course in sports broadcasting this spring. (Photo by Benjamin Roberts)

tional courses in sport communication as well. These include Sports Reporting and Writing, and Sports Information Management and Media Relations.



The introduction of new sports such as lacrosse has created an increased interest in sport communication at Anderson University which is offering a new course in sports broadcasting during the spring semester. (AU photo)

# Boom! Pow! Wham!

Comic book characters used to better understand real-world heroes

## By Grace Cox

While she doesn't wear a cape and a mask (on most days at least), Katherine Wyma is introducing students to a world of superheroes. Wyma, a senior lecturer in English and part of the honors program faculty, teaches Contemporary Issues: The Superhero as a springboard to explore current events, societal trends, and contemporary problems.

The course uses project-based learning through which students create hands-on solutions to societal challenges. Wyma says in the syllabus that students will be "able to articulate the moral and ethical codes in the portrayal of superheroes, antiheroes, and villains in pop culture."

Students research historical influencing factors, watch films, read literature and form their own views on what a superhero should be.

"We specifically talk about the superheroes Wonder Woman, Black Panther, Spider-Man, and Batman," Wyma said. "Because I've enjoyed comic books for so long and read so many of them, it was very hard to narrow it down to what books we should cover, what movies we should watch, and what superheroes we should focus on."

She explained that the course gives students the chance to read comic books, learn about their favorite heroes, and comprehend what a real-world hero and anti-hero looks like.

Discussions take place during class, which aids both the students and the professor in learning.

"I saw myself learning from my students as well, which created a learning community," Wyma explained.

She said the assignments consist of readings, tests, brief essays, and a final project. The final project is a digital story that is displayed in various formats.

The projects submitted range widely, but according to Wyma, often include family photos, voiceovers, and music. The final project applies concepts from the



Wyma photo

**Katherine Wyma**



*Batman, a comic book superhero who is driven by the murder of his parents, is one of the superheroes examined in Katherine Wyma's Contemporary Issues: The Superhero course. Through the course, students examine the moral and ethical codes that guide various superhero characters and form their own views about what makes a true superhero. (Unsplash photo by Martin Lukasik)*

course material to individual personal heroes, or antiheroes.

"The cumulative project is a digital story. This story has more than one mode of communication, such as a voiceover, music, and photos," Wyma explained.

"The students had to put their story on a digital platform and discuss an everyman hero. Since we aren't all heroes, the assignment had students take these heroic characteristics and find them in people whom they admire," she said.



Pearce photo

**Sloane Pearce**



Superhero comic books and graphic novels have become a pop culture staple. (Unsplash photo by Erik Mclean)

Sloane Pearce, a communication minor, took the class in the spring of 2022.

For her final project, Pearce chose to focus on an antihero in the form of well-known rapper NF. Nathan John Feuerstein, also known as NF, is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, and record producer.

“NF is classified as a Christian rapper, but I didn’t think he ought to be. In my digital story, I used him to define what an antihero might be or might look like in reality,” Pearce said.

In her presentation, Pearce used NF’s music and deliberately picked images that reflected the antihero she believes he is. She illustrated why he is an antihero by using his messages, lyrics, and origins.

Using clips from NF’s music videos and images of him, Pearce could explain where he came from, what kind of rapper he is, and what sparked his career. Pearce said that she made it similar to a music video by integrating parts of his music videos with her voiceovers.

Emmerette Boice, a senior theater major, also took the course. She said she was eager to learn about



Boice photo

### Emmerette Boice

within a Christian environment through reading the graphic novel.

Wyma said it was challenging to develop the course but that she’s been pleased with the result.

She said she loves teaching the course and seeing its impact on students.

“I really loved being able to talk to the students and learn with them about the power of stories,” Wyma said.

these heroes because she believes “classic heroes are dying out.”

Boice said the course material was “very engaging” because it involved a thorough exploration of comic books and reading a graphic novel adaptation of the Bible’s book of Revelation.

She said she enjoyed learning about the various moral dilemmas that occur in life

# New technology expands lab capabilities

## Tools help students experience real-world research situations

By Olivia Growe

New technology is giving Anderson University science students hands-on experience in conducting research they might do in a real-world setting.

Wi-Fi-enabled microscopes are helping students study the structures of tissue, while portable electro-myography machines are helping students measure the health of muscles and the nerve cells that control them, said Jessica Nicks, assistant professor of chemistry.

Nicks said integrating the use of these devices through group and individual research projects, gives students the opportunity to work in simulated research studies similar to those conducted by medical professionals.

“Students can perform experiments in real time that test their hypotheses and answer the questions at the beginning of the lab,” Nicks said. “The technical skills developed when using this equipment, translate very well into a biomedical setting.”

Nicks, who holds a doctorate in biological science and neuroscience from the University of Florida, said that having the ability to measure human response based on visual incentives using the iWorx Roam EMG device or enabling students to view the images in microscopes on their iPad, mimics real-world technology they may use in the field.



The iWorx Roam EMG device can help students analyze data in real time. (Photo by Olivia Growe)

Additionally, the technology allows students to easily label and study their findings which provides new learning opportunities..

Senior biochemistry majors Lyd Johnson, Jessica Rathbone, and Ashlyn Wren recently used the equipment



Biochemistry major Lyd Johnson, top, works with a study participant and the iWorx Roam EMG machine to conduct an eye reaction analysis. The device, along with Wi-Fi-enabled microscopes are providing Anderson University science students with opportunities to conduct experiments similar to those conducted in a biomedical setting. (Photo by Olivia Growe)

for a research project in which they measured a person’s ability to respond to visual stimuli. The students compared athletes’ and non-athletes’ ability to maintain focus on small symbols or letters.

“We saw firsthand the human’s desire to look where others look instead of focusing on the designated target,” Johnson said. “Having the capability to measure muscle contractions and nerve conduction provided us with an accurate representation of results.”

Nicks said add-ons for the iWorx equipment are being developed which will increase both the types and numbers of tests students can perform.

Nicks said the open-sourced software being used with the devices greatly increases their potential.



*Assistant Professor of Chemistry Jessica Nicks is helping students use new technology to simulate real-world research experiences. (AU Photo by Jason Jones)*

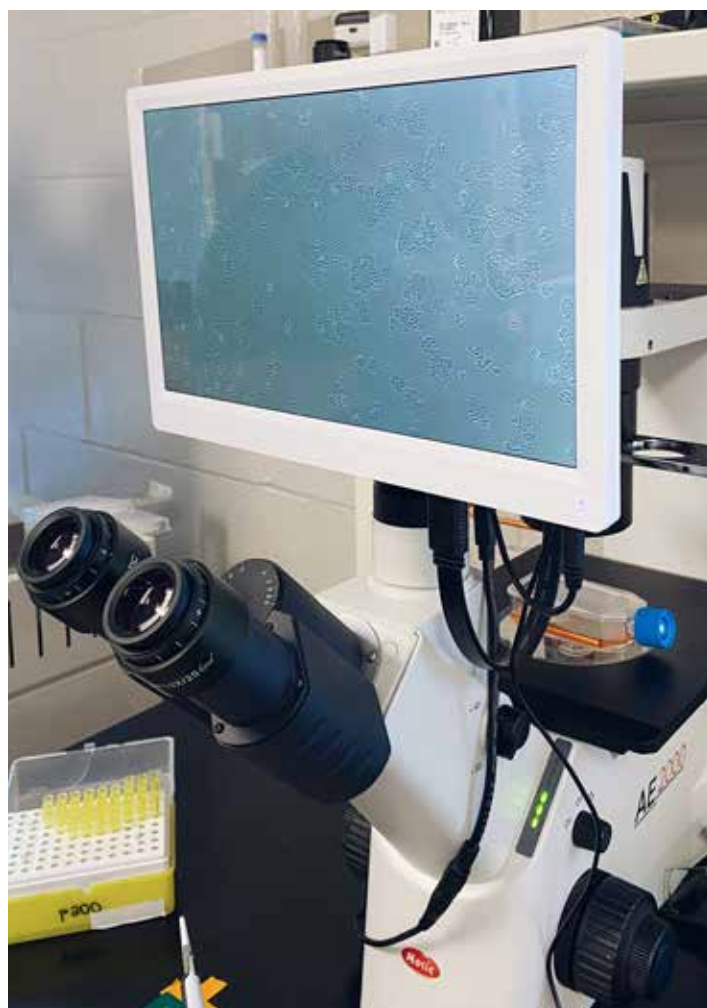
She said that because the software's code is designed to be publicly accessible, people are continuously adding new protocols anyone can view, modify, and distribute as they see fit. Open-source software is developed in a decentralized and collaborative way, relying on peer review and community production for advancement.

Nicks said other technologies such as Wi-Fi microscopes have been crucial in several classes and allow students to view the images they observe on a microscope on their iPads through an app that allows them to perform image analysis.

Elizabeth Keller, a senior biochemistry major, worked with these microscopes for a research project to track cell growth. She said it is difficult to take photos through the lens with standard microscopes, but with Wi-Fi-enabled microscopes and the app, studying and labeling the images has become much easier.

"It gives us a leg up. Most of the students are looking to apply for some sort of graduate program, and we need a way to stand out from everyone else," Keller said. "The great thing about the technology here at AU is that a lot of smaller colleges don't have the same caliber of technology. Anderson students have the same experience, technology-wise, that students at a larger university would have, while also getting the small intimate college experience."

Nicks said additional microscopes and equipment are integrated into the curriculum regularly to provide accurate real-life experiences for all students in the science courses. She said technology has been at the forefront of human education, constantly elevating educational capabilities to new levels.



*Wi-Fi-enabled microscopes enable students to clearly see cell states by transmitting images to their iPads or other devices. The students can then use image-analysis apps to study and label the items they see on the screen. (Photo by Olivia Growe)*

# Kayaking the mangrove forest

Environmental science class studies Florida's subtropical ecosystem

By Marissa Haskell

Anderson University science students got hands-on experience studying subtropical ecosystems and marine life in the Florida Keys last summer.

Twenty-one students, led by Joni Criswell, associate professor of biology, were involved in activities such as snorkeling to collect aquatic species for further observation, kayaking through a mangrove forest to study an unfamiliar ecosystem up close, and visiting a sea turtle hospital to learn about the effects of pollution on the environment.

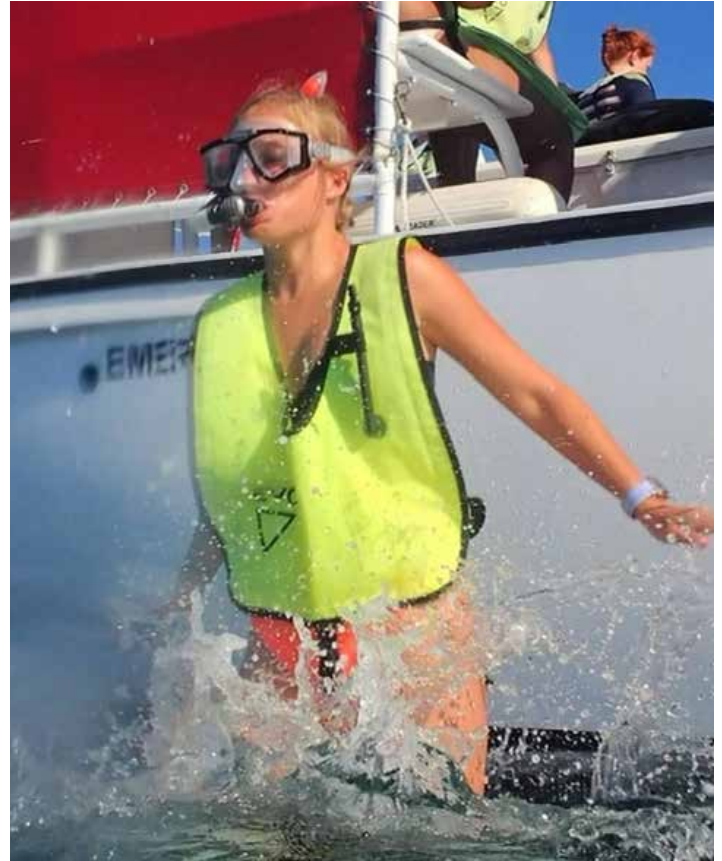
Criswell said the travel course allowed students to apply what they had previously been taught in their lecture-style classes about ecosystems.

"The lab was an opportunity for students to see and experience things that we don't have here in South Carolina. Students see firsthand the human impact on environments," Criswell said.

Students stayed on Pigeon Key Island, a privately-owned island that is only open to educational groups. The island is two miles wide with no direct access to land. The group took a boat to the island and was housed there for the trip.

Criswell said she partnered with the instructors on the island to plan activities and set learning goals for the trip.

Harlee Dennis, a senior studying environmental sci-



Harlee Dennis jumps into the ocean to collect aquatic species to bring back to the research center for further observation. (Photo courtesy of Harlee Dennis)



Anderson University students kayak through a mangrove forest at Pigeon Key Island as part of a travel course to study subtropical ecosystems last summer. (Photo by Harlee Dennis)



Students prepare for a snorkeling expedition to gather specimens for study. All students received safety and snorkeling training before getting in the water. (Photo courtesy of Chloe Powell)

ence, said the purpose of the lab course was to gain a better insight into the biodiversity among the sub-tropical regions of the United States.

“We kayaked through mangrove forests to see firsthand what this type of ecosystem looked like,” Dennis said. “We collected aquatic species such as sea cucumbers, lobsters, and starfish around the island by snorkeling and putting them into mesh bags. We then brought them back to the research center where we placed them into holding tanks and observed them.”

Chloe Powell, a junior majoring in biology with a minor in biomedical science, said she was able to learn about different plants and animals that are not native to South Carolina.

**“It is one thing to go to the zoo and see wildlife behind a fence or a Plexiglas wall. It is another thing to be in the wild and see animals in the natural environment.”**

**Joni Criswell**

“We learned about the species of animals around the island and conservation efforts that are being made to keep our oceans and beaches clean,” Powell said.

“We also really loved watching Dr. Criswell fall out of her kayak in the mangroves,” she joked.

Dennis said students also participated in efforts to clean the island and discovered just how much pollution can wash up along the shoreline.

“We learned how detrimental pollution can be to aquatic species and their environment,” Dennis said.

Students also visited a sea turtle hospital, which has an ambulance to transport injured turtles to a rehabilitation center, where they are cared for in hopes that they can be released back into the wild.

Dennis said they listened to a lecture from a staff member about how boat traffic can be harmful to sea turtles.

“We also saw firsthand the effects of pollution on turtles at the hospital as we walked around the center looking into the big tanks that held the turtles,” she said.

Criswell said students’ appreciation for animals changes when they’re seen in their natural habitat.

“It is one thing to go to the zoo and see wildlife behind a fence or a Plexiglas wall. It is another thing to be in the wild and see animals in the natural

environment,” she said. “There is a bigger impact for firsthand learning than hearing about it or seeing it online.”



*Students show off some of the aquatic species found around Pigeon Key Island for research and observation. (Photo courtesy of Chloe Powell)*



*The Turtle Hospital ambulance is used to transport injured sea turtles to the rehabilitation center. Boat traffic can be especially dangerous for sea turtles. (Photo by Harlee Dennis)*

# CAS adds neuroscience major

By Alley Pridmore

*Freshman honors student Parker Rose was unsure of what he wanted to study after applying to Anderson University. He had an interest in philosophy and the sciences but wasn't sure how to combine the two. Then he discovered a major that would let him explore both the scientific aspects of the nervous system and how it impacted thinking -- neuroscience.*



Pridmore photo

**Parker Rose**

Neuroscience, a multidisciplinary science that combines aspects of physiology, molecular biology, psychology, computer science and other disciplines to understand how the brain and body work, was added as a new major this fall.

"It sounded super interesting and I just kind of love that aspect of science: the brain, the nervous system, and how it all works together," Rose said.

"Neuroscience goes alongside philosophy in certain ways."

Rose became the first student in this new interdisciplinary major overseen by the biology and behavioral science departments. Joni Criswell, associate professor of biology, and Robert Franklin, associate professor of psychology, are leading the new major.

The two professors said that the major had been in the works for more than a year and that there has been much support for the new program.

"It's an initiative that has support from both faculty and administration because it's a growing area," Franklin said.

Criswell and Franklin said neuroscience-related fields are expanding.

"The trend...across the board is that in general, we want different approaches to medicine," Criswell said.

She said people do not want just medicine as treatment; they want to understand how changes in behavior can affect their daily lives.

"A lot of aspects of medicine now are behavioral medicine where it's like 'how do you get people to do healthy things?'" Franklin said.

The major guides students toward classes that would best benefit them for their future careers, whether

that is to prepare for medical school or to prepare to be a health researcher.

"If you come in saying 'this is what I want to do after I graduate,' the major allows you to gear classes towards (that)," Criswell said.

Rose said that the first two years in the major are similar to that of a biology major. It is not until the third year when neuroscience students begin taking major-specific courses.

Right now, a few of the neuroscience courses are being offered through a consortium, which Franklin described as an online platform where a group of institutions collaborate on offering classes when starting a new program.

"There's also a few neuroscience-specific classes that we've been offering as either biology or psychology classes that students take as well," Franklin said.



*Neuroscience major Parker Rose completes a lab sheet in his chemistry class. Chemistry is important for neuroscience students as they begin studying the brain more in depth. (Photo by Ryan Davis)*



Eventually, the university hopes to be able to host all neuroscience courses on campus.

Franklin said he is excited for the use of Biopac teaching kits in these classes, which allow students to see how neurons function throughout the body. Biopac kits include all the tools necessary for students to conduct their own experiments and record their own research in the realm of neuroscience.

Franklin said that these new technologies allow students the possibility to do additional research.

Both professors have high hopes in the growth of the program.

“We at least know that there is potential,” Criswell said. “There are a lot of people that come into tours on the biology side that want to know if we have anything in neuroscience.”

Rose said he is excited about where he and the program are going to end up in the next few years.

He said he is unsure of the exact career route he wants to go, but he said that chiropractics is a possible future option.

Even with all the current uncertainty, the freshman is eager to dive into the program.



*Parker Rose studies quantum mechanics on the second floor of Thrift Library. This topic allows students to start learning about atoms and subatomic particles and make their way to more specific studies of the brain. (Photo by Audrey Keller)*

“The main thing for me is just being able to focus my attention towards the specific aspects of science that fascinate me the most,” Rose said. “I’m just excited to move into uncharted territory.”

## Love and Law

# Couple finds careers and each other at AU

**By Drayton Farmer**

In college, many students dream of excelling in school, falling in love, and going on to achieve their dreams after they graduate. Bryce and Kamryn Goodwyn have made that happen and more.

The political science alums graduated in December 2021 and May 2022 and married in July. They are both now working on law degrees at Regent University School of Law in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

The couple came from different areas of the country on athletic scholarships to attend Anderson University -- Bryce from Canton, Ga., to play soccer and Kamryn from Richmond, Va., to run track.

Kamryn said attending AU felt right from the start.

AU “felt safe and a great place to pursue what I wanted to do,” she said. “It really felt like a place I could grow and be around people who were so loving.”

Bryce said the sense of community is one of his best memories of Anderson. He said growing his



*Bryce, left, and Kamryn Goodwyn pose on one of AU’s iconic white swings. (Photo courtesy Bryce and Kamryn Goodwyn)*

relationships with God and his teammates, as well as with Kamryn, made his time at AU the “most pivotal” in his life.

# New majors in app, game development added

By Jacob Robinson

Majors in app development and game development were added to the communication department's curriculum this fall to accommodate the growing need for programmers with these skills.

Both bachelor of science degrees require 120 credit hours to complete through courses that are provided on campus through AU faculty and online through a consortium of private colleges and universities in which Anderson University participates.

Robert Reeves, associate professor of communication and communication department chair, said apps have become a vital form of communication for business.

"This is a growing field within communication," Reeves said. "There are jobs to be had. Every time you turn around there is a new app out there. These apps have become important tools in the toolbox for organizations to use to interact effectively with customers and other important groups."

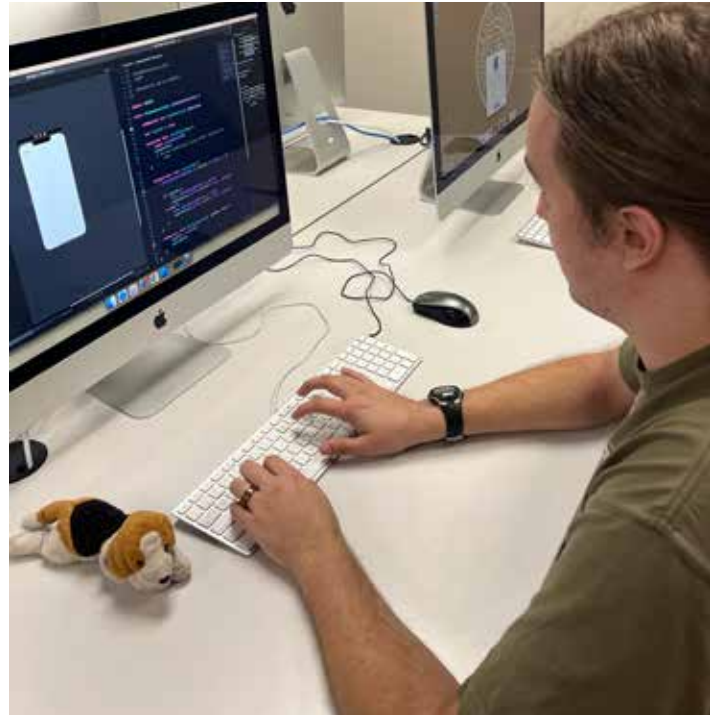
Paige Meeker, professor of coding and app development, said she's excited about the new majors because they are focused on much needed skills in society. She said that while there are approximately 700,000 coding jobs open across the United States, there are only about 80,000 college graduates with the needed skill sets.

"Just as students need basic literacy in reading, writing, and mathematics, in today's world there is also a need for a basic literacy in computing," Meeker said. "The three 'R's have become four: Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic, and 'Rogramming," adding that there are not many careers that do not benefit.

Meeker said students in both new majors are guided methodically through a series of courses that teach the skills needed to create the applications used on phones, tablets, watches and computers. Game development majors focus these skills on developing apps for entertainment and learning.

She said students do much of their work using Apple's Xcode, a software program used to design the way a mobile application will look and function for a user. The software is used for coding, testing, and debugging applications.

"They might begin by designing the app, placing buttons, placing labels, placing texts, changing colors backgrounds...and then they open up the code, and connect their design to the code," Meeker said.



Senior Zack Freeman works on an app coding project in the digital media lab in Watkins Hall. Anderson University recently added majors in app and game development. (Photo by Jacob Robinson)

Zack Freeman, a senior communication major with a minor in app development, said he feels he's developed important skills through the various coding courses he's taken.

"Understanding how the apps you interact with and the websites you interact with function has been very interesting," Freeman said. "It's just a really cool thing when you go to a certain website or you go to a certain app and you understand what went into it."

## Coding: Game Development

Includes courses in game design, the cognitive psychology of games, coding, content and system design, algorithms and data structures, mobile interface design, and security. Students also learn multiple coding languages including Swift, Java, C#, and Python.

## Coding: App Development

Includes courses in coding, programming in multiple languages (including Swift, Java, and Python), web development, algorithms and data structures, mobile interface design, and security. Students also complete an app development capstone project.

# Team conducts volunteer study for Meals on Wheels

By Maegan Mosher

Students in Anderson University's Public Relations Research and Evaluation course recently conducted a semester-long research project to help the local Meals on Wheels organization communicate more effectively with its volunteers.

Meals on Wheels-Anderson provides lunchtime meals to senior citizens and others who are disabled or homebound in Anderson County. The organization uses volunteers each weekday to prepare and deliver the meals.

"We have asked the class to connect with our current volunteers to seek information that will help us market our need," Executive Director Laurie Ashley said. "Basically, we are trying to get to the root of why people volunteer so that we will know the target market."

Ashley said the research will be used to inform the organization's efforts to increase the number of volunteers so it can serve more people.

The research consisted of an e-mailed survey distributed to current volunteers that gathered demographic data as well as information about volunteers' motivations and communication preferences. The



*A Meals on Wheels-Anderson volunteer embraces a client while delivering a meal. (Meals on Wheels-Anderson photo)*

students also conducted focus groups with current volunteers to add depth to the survey data.

The students then analyzed the data and prepared a formal report for the organization's leadership.

"The goal of this project is to provide data to Meals on Wheels-Anderson to help them be more informed on their volunteer behaviors and tendencies," said senior public relations major Cooper Reynolds.

Reynolds said the skills he learned from the project will allow him to conduct research and make well-informed, data-based decisions in future jobs.

This is the fourth year that students in the research course have conducted research for an organization in the Anderson community.

Associate Professor of Communications Robert Reeves said that he likes to work with local nonprofit organizations because it allows students to gain valuable professional experience while giving back to the community.

"This is an opportunity to give students experience conducting public relations research, have them interact with a real client and produce a product that is going to have real-world implications," Reeves said.

Additionally, students walk away from this course with a professional research report to include in their portfolios when they apply for internships, jobs and graduate programs, he said.



*Public Relations Research and Evaluation students visit the kitchen where Meals on Wheels-Anderson meals are prepared for clients throughout the Anderson area. The students conducted a research project during the fall semester to help the charity better understand volunteer motivations and communication preferences. (Photo by Robert Reeves)*

# SYNTHESIS

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*Student Milena Ulrich tries out her cooking skills using a virtual reality headset during her COM 101 Media and Society course recently. The course explores the role and function of mass media in culture, including through the use of technology. (Photo by Kenzi Miller)*